



Rhode Island
**AFTER
SCHOOL
PLUS** Alliance

Governor Donald L. Carcieri
Office of the Governor
State House, Room 115
Providence, RI 02903

February 25, 2009

Dear Governor Carcieri:

On behalf of the more than 500 members of the Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance (RIASPA) we urge you to invest in Rhode Island's economy through **support of expanded learning opportunities including afterschool and summer learning programs** in your commitment of funds from the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* (ARRA). Afterschool and summer learning programs enhance the academic, well-being, and social and emotional development of children and youth, help parents work, and prepare children for further education and employment. The recommendations provided below will **keep Rhode Island workers employed, provide new jobs, help parents find work, and prepare Rhode Island's future workforce.**

As you know, Rhode Island will receive over a billion dollars from ARRA over the next two years. More than one quarter of the funds available are dedicated to education and/or children and youth. Afterschool and summer learning programs provide the state a direct avenue for getting this money into the economy as quickly as possible.

There is also a great need for additional funding for afterschool and summer learning programs. For example, both the Rhode Island Department of Education and United Way of Rhode Island held Requests for Proposals recently, and received a combined request of \$8.64 million for total available funding of approximately \$2.5 million dollars. This leaves a total of more than \$6.1 million for programs that requested money but can not be funded, no matter how high their quality may be.

RIASPA estimates that for each million dollars spent on afterschool and summer learning programs, 556 children or youth will be served and 43 jobs will be saved or created.¹ While 43 jobs created or saved does not sound like a lot, when compared to the stimulus bill as a whole, the cost savings is substantial. Rhode Island is slated to receive over \$1 billion from the ARRA and create or save 12,000 jobs at the cost of \$85,000 per job. The stimulus funds slated for education and child care totals \$266 million. The 43 jobs created or saved per million dollars spent on afterschool and summer learning programs come at a cost of \$23,000 per job. This represents quite a substantial savings compared to the general cost of creating or saving jobs from the overall stimulus money available.

The following recommendations are ways that funds from ARRA can be used to support afterschool and summer learning programs help grow Rhode Island's economy and workforce:

¹ This is based on recent research conducted by RIASPA that determined that the cost of an afterschool program in Rhode Island is \$1800 per child/youth and the ratio required by the Child Care Assistance Program of 1 adult for every 13 children served.

$\$1,000,000 / \$1800 \text{ per student} = 556 \text{ students}$
 $556 / 13 \text{ children/youth to adult} = 43 \text{ jobs}$



State Stabilization Funds

Funds Available: \$134.9 million for Education Block Grant and \$30 million for Flexible Block Grant.

- **Fund the full slate of qualified 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) afterschool programs.** RIDE received 32 applications totaling more than \$5.67 million dollars for the 21st Century Community Learning Center afterschool program in 2009, but only has funding of \$2 million available. Rhode Island's 21st CCLC programs provide students with the benefits of responsible adult mentors and additional learning opportunities outside the traditional school day, and has a proven track record of increasing student academic achievement.
- **Restore Rhode Island's Child Opportunity Zones (COZs) to full funding.** The COZs received decreased funding of \$23,000 in recent years, down from \$65,000. Restoring funding will enable the COZs to reach out to more families. Rhode Island's COZs are school-linked centers that bring schools, families, and communities together to promote success in school for all children and youth.
- **Provide support to enhance existing Expanded Learning Time (ELT) projects such as the Rhode Island Expanded Learning Opportunities and School Redesign project.** The project is developing a pilot program in a core urban school district to connect students' participation in expanded learning opportunities such as afterschool and summer programs to credit towards high school graduation. As you know, the expanded learning time of the Governor's Urban Education Task Force has also recommended the creation of ELT pilot programs. ARRA funding can help support these pilot programs.
- **Create the Rhode Island Afterschool and Summer Learning Fund administered by RIDE.** Funds can be distributed by RIDE through grants to qualified afterschool and summer learning programs, which can include schools, school districts, and/or community-based organizations who demonstrate a compelling need in the community that they serve.

Education Funding

Funds Available: \$48.1 million for Title I and \$43.3 million for IDEA (Part B Grants).

- **Encourage local school districts to support afterschool and summer learning programs such as 21st CCLC and COZ programs and others.** Title I and IDEA funds can support such things as expansion of the number of children served, enhanced summer programming and transportation.
- **Utilize School Improvement grants to fund afterschool programs.** RIDE can work with school districts on how afterschool programs can be included in school improvement grants.

Child Care

Funds Available: Total CCDBG Economic Recovery Funds - \$5,224,128; CCDBG Funds Excluding Targeted Funds - \$4, 542,144; Targeted Funds: Quality Expansion - \$431,873; and Targeted Funds: Infant/Toddler - \$250,111.

- **Change the age limit that children may qualify for child care assistance from 12 to 15 years of age.** Potential high school dropouts can be identified in the middle school years. Afterschool programs have proven to have a positive effect on grades, attendance, and social/emotional development. Allowing more students to attend afterschool programs through support of the Child Care Assistance Program can bring needed supports for graduation for students.
- **Provide grants from the Department of Human Services to organizations who serve middle and high school students.** Supplying grants is an excellent way to fund organizations who serve middle and high school students. These students often do not want to be seen as attending a "child care" program. Funding grants allows organizations to recruit middle and high school students for their programs more easily.



- **Change the re-certification requirements for the Child Care Assistance Program to enable families to continue receiving a child care subsidy until their income grows above 225% of the federal poverty guidelines.** This recommendation would increase continuity and stability of access for children and families. This recommendation eliminates the disincentive for parents to earn more money or work more hours.

Training and Employment Services

Funds Available: \$5.7 million for youth activities

- **Funds are used for many of the activities afterschool programs engage in on a daily basis including:** basic and remedial education, work experience and training programs, mentoring programs, support services such as transportation, and academic enrichment activities to develop leadership, decision-making, and citizenship skills.

Other parts of ARRA Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs Can Support

- **Afterschool programs have direct, daily contact with parents, teachers, and their community.** A benefit of this is that afterschool programs can help spread the word about other aspects of the ARRA that may be available to parents in the community such as:
 - **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, the new name of the Food Stamps program)**
Funds Available: \$52 million
 - 91,000 Rhode Island citizens will be newly qualified for food stamps. Food stamps have been shown to generate \$1.73 to \$1.84 for every \$1 in food stamp expenditure.
 - **Child Tax Credit Expansion**
 - The refundability threshold for the child tax credit lowered to at least \$3,000 in earnings from \$8,500 or more in tax year 2008 and \$12,500 in tax year 2009. Under the expanded credit, a family with two children may qualify for the full Child Tax Credit if it has earnings of \$16,333 or more.
- **RIASPA can develop a plan for afterschool programs to conduct outreach** to the parents of children in their program who may qualify for the food stamp program or the child tax credit.

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss with you how afterschool and summer learning programs can get Rhode Islanders working while supporting the development of our children and youth. If you need more information, please contact Jeff Gale, Director of Policy and Communications, at 401/331-2638 or jeff.gale@afterschoolri.org.

On behalf of afterschool educators across Rhode Island, we look forward to being part of the solution for our current economic climate.

Sincerely,

Sarah Cahill
Executive Director
Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance

Ellen Ruggiano, Community Relations Manager
Board Chair
Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance

CC: Beverly Najarian, Office of Economic Recovery and Reinvestment, Director
Peter McWalters, Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Commissioner
Gary Alexander, Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Secretary
Sandra M. Powell, Department of Labor and Training, Director
Janet Durfee Hidalgo, Office of the Governor, Education Policy Advisor