



A Summary of Illinois Data from the *Uncertain Times: Funding Insecurity Puts Afterschool Programs at Risk* Web-based Survey

Today, a minority of Illinois students benefit from afterschool programs while many youth in the state are unable to enroll because space is limited and funding is not keeping pace with demand. Afterschool programs provide a critical support that helps children do better in school and reassures parents that their children are safe and well cared for after the school day ends. Unfortunately, program leaders report that they are serving a high-need population; are serving more children than expected; and are struggling to maintain funding. Nearly all respondents to this web-based survey say that more children in their communities could benefit from afterschool programs, if programs were available.

88 Illinois afterschool providers took the survey. They represent 489 program sites and serve more than 230,000 children. 60% percent of respondents are located in urban communities, 22% are in suburban communities, and 18% are in rural communities. The survey finds that in Illinois during the 2005/2006 school year:

- 69% of afterschool programs operated at or above maximum capacity.
- 88% of respondents say that there are children in their communities who need afterschool programs and don't have access to them.
- 60% of respondents say that funding is down a little (28%) or a lot (32%) in the last two years. Another 24% say it is unchanged. Just 13% say funding is up a little and just 3% say funding is up a lot.
- If programs are able to see an increase in funding in the future, they are most likely to increase the number of students they serve.
- Afterschool programs in Illinois are serving a high-need population. More than half of respondents (67%) say that more than three in five students qualify for free or reduced price lunches.
- Parent fees are the most accessible funding resource in Illinois. 39% percent of respondents rate parent fees as accessible or very accessible. Only 31% of respondents rate 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the only federal funding stream solely devoted to afterschool programs, as accessible or very accessible.
- 38% of respondents feel fully secure about their funding for the next 1-2 years. Only 16% feel fully secure about their funding for the next 3-5 years.
- Program operators in Illinois consider the top three barriers to participation in afterschool programs to be: transportation; not all children in one family are able to attend afterschool; and older youth need to work or care for younger siblings.

In sum, *Uncertain Times* finds that many afterschool programs in Illinois are fully subscribed but still unable to meet the demand, and that budget cuts and stagnation prevent them from reaching more youth and families in their communities who could benefit from afterschool.

Topline Illinois Results from *Uncertain Times*:

Which of the following best describes your program's capacity during the 2005-2006 school year? (check one)

- 34% We operated above maximum capacity and served more students than we had budgeted to serve.
- 35% We operated at maximum capacity.
- 31% We operated below maximum capacity and served fewer students than we had budgeted to serve.

Number of respondents: 88 (100%)

What percentage of program participants qualified for the federal free or reduced lunch program? (check one)

- 3% none
- 16% 1-30%
- 7% 31-60%
- 67% 61-100%
- 7% Unknown

Number of respondents: 88 (100%)

During the 2005-2006 school year, what types of activities did your program offer youth? (Check all that apply)

- 88% Arts/Music/Cultural Activities
- 83% Homework Help
- 82% Reading
- 77% Mentoring
- 72% Science, Math and/or Technology
- 64% Services for Parents and Families
- 63% Community Service
- 58% Violence prevention programs
- 57% Obesity Prevention/Nutrition/Athletics/Recreation
- 50% Drug, Alcohol or Tobacco prevention programs
- 36% Career and/or College prep
- 22% Language and/or ESL services
- 22% Other
- 18% Pregnancy prevention programs
- 15% Services for Children with Disabilities
- 14% Mental Health Services
- 11% Medical and/or Dental Services

Number of respondents: 88 (100%)

In addition to after school, did your program offer services during the following times? (check all that apply)

39% Before school
 60% Holidays and/or inter-session
 46% Weekends
 15% None of the above
 Number of respondents: 88 (100%)

Did you offer a summer program?

91% Yes
 9% No
 Number of respondents: 88 (100%)

How has your funding changed over the last 2 years? (check one)

32% Funding is down a lot
 28% Funding is down a little
 24% Funding is unchanged
 13% Funding is up a little
 3% Funding is up a lot
 Number of respondents: 75 (85%)

In the future, if you receive more funding, what change would you be most likely to make to your program? (Check one)

31% Serve more children
 11% Increase staff pay and/or benefits
 10% Decrease staff/student ratio
 7% Add transportation services
 5% Add family services
 5% Add professional development
 5% Add variety of activities offered in the program
 5% Raise standards or criteria for hiring staff
 4% Add field trips
 4% Add social services offered
 4% None. I wouldn't make any changes.
 3% Increase school-community partnerships
 1% Add or increased food services offered
 1% Cut or decrease fees
 1% Increase daily hours or number of days of service
 0% Add holiday and/or weekend service
 0% Add summer program
 0% Other
 Number of respondents: 74 (84%)

Funding Security for the next 1-5 Years

	Illinois	National
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Number of respondents: 74 (84%)	Not/ Somewhat Secure	Secure/Very Secure	Not/ Somewhat Secure	Secure/Very Secure
1-2 Years	62%	38%	53%	47%
3-5 Years	84%	16%	80%	20%

Methodology: UNCERTAIN TIMES used web-based survey software and the survey was emailed to more than 10,000 contacts in the Afterschool Alliance database in August and September of 2006. Recipients were encouraged to forward the survey to afterschool program staff, and programs were asked to be certain that only one person per program completed the survey and to provide responses from a site-level coordinator when possible. 2,614 responses were reviewed. 503 of them did not provide sufficient data to be included in the final analysis or were duplicate responses; therefore the final sample was 2,111 responses which represent approximately 9,813 afterschool sites serving more than 1.5 million children. (Many respondents are responsible for multiple sites.)

Complete State Level Results Available Upon Request