Uncertain Times 2009: Recession Imperiling Afterschool Programs and the Children They Serve

From April 9, 2009 to May 7, 2009 the Afterschool Alliance surveyed afterschool programs on how the economy is affecting their programs and communities. 1,447 programs responded to the survey, representing 8,587 afterschool sites serving more than 1.2 million children. Overall, program leaders report that they are serving a high need population, struggling to maintain their funding and are worried about how the recession will affect future 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.

How would you characterize the community that your afterschool program serves?
34% Rural
31% Suburban
43% Urban
Number of respondents: 1439 (99%)

On average, how many days a week does your program operate during the school year?
2% one day
6% 2-3 days
87% 4-5 days
4% 6-7 days
Number of respondents: 1446 (99%)

What percentage of participating students are in elementary, middle and high school?
76% Elementary
29% Middle School
15% High School
Number of respondents: 1433 (99%)

What ethnic groups (by percentage) are served by your program?
5% Asian/Pacific Islander
36% African American
47% Caucasian
25% Hispanic/Latino
4% Native American
6% Other
Number of respondents: 1410 (97%)
What percentage of program participants are female and male?
52%  Female
48%  Male
Number of respondents: 1406 (97%)

What percentage of program participants qualify for the federal free or reduced lunch program?
Average is 67%
Number of respondents: 1445 (99%)

What percentage of program participants are Limited English Proficient?
Average is 14%
Number of respondents: 1397 (97%)

What percentage of program participants have special needs/ disabilities?
Average is 11%
Number of respondents: 1399 (97%)

Including the 2008-2009 school year, how many years has your program been in operation?
5%  1
13%  2-3
15%  4-5
28%  6-10
39%  11+
Number of respondents: 1435 (99%)

What is the primary affiliation of your program?
34%  Community-Based Organization/Local Non-profit
31%  School-Based
16%  Nationally Affiliated Nonprofit
9%  Other
4%  Private for-profit
4%  Faith-Based Organization
1%  Library/Museum
1%  College/University-Based
Number of respondents: 1437 (99%)

What types of activities is your program offering youth over the 2008-2009 school year? (Check all that apply)
92%  Homework Help
86%  Arts/Music/Cultural Activities
82%  Reading
73%  Science, Math and/or Technology
65%  Community Service
61%  Obesity Prevention/Nutrition/Athletics/Recreation
60%  Mentoring
52% Services for Parents and Families
41% Drug, Alcohol or Tobacco prevention programs
34% Violence/Gang Prevention
25% Career/Internship or Workforce Development
24% Language and/or ESL services
24% Services for Children with Disabilities
23% College Preparation
16% Other
16% Pregnancy prevention programs
13% Mental Health Services
9% Social Justice (Local or State Advocacy)
8% Medical and/or Dental Services

Number of respondents: 1435 (99%)

Does your afterschool program offer high school students credits toward graduation?
16% of those who serve high school students offer credits towards graduation
Number of respondents: 1433 (99%)

In addition to after school, did your program offer services during the following times? (Check all that apply)
48% Holidays and/or inter-session
37% Before school
22% Weekends
30% None of the above
Number of respondents: 1414 (98%)

Do you offer a summer program?
81% Yes
19% No
Number of respondents: 1442 (99%)

What do you anticipate your enrollment for the summer 2009 to be relative to the summer of 2008?
14% Much higher
27% A little higher
23% No different
19% A little lower
8% Much lower
6% May or will not be able to offer a summer 2009 program
2% Not applicable (no summer program in 2008)
Number of respondents: 1137 (79%)
Based on your experience, how easy is it to obtain the following sources of funding? (Please provide an answer for each funding source.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Not Accessible</th>
<th>Somewhat Accessible</th>
<th>Accessible</th>
<th>Very Accessible</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21st Century Community Learning Centers</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental Educational Services</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other Federal Education Grants (Title I, etc.)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care and Development Block Grant</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child and Adult Care Food Program (snack and supper funding)</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State government (D.O.E., D.O.J., D.C.F., etc.)</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government (City, County)</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School District</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation/Business</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation/Philanthropic organization</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith-based organization</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College/University</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Fees</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of respondents: varied (85%)

How has your funding changed from two years ago (2006-2007 school year)?

- 36% Funding is down a lot
- 26% Funding is down a little
- 21% Funding is unchanged
- 6% Not Applicable (i.e. Program is new)
- 8% Funding is up a little
- 2% Funding is up a lot
Number of respondents: 1273 (88%)

What were your sources of Federal funding? (Check all that apply) [NOTE: Some of these funds, such as the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant, are awarded through the state but are actually federal funds. Please check the appropriate box here under federal funding and do not include the same funding source in question 35 as a state source of funding awarded through the agency that administers these federal funds.]

- 35%  21st Century Community Learning Centers grant
- 27%  None
- 25%  Other
- 23%  Child and Adult Care Food Program (snack and supper funding)
- 9%  Child Care and Development Block Grant
- 8%  Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- 7%  Other Title I education funds not listed
- 6%  Safe and Drug Free Schools & Communities
- 6%  Supplemental Educational Services
- 2%  Innovative Programs
- 1%  Earmark
- 0.2%  Comprehensive School Reform

Number of respondents: varied (89%)

What were your sources of State funding? (Check all that apply. Do not include federal funds such as 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Title I funds, or others included in the previous question.)

- 39%  None
- 22%  Department of Education
- 20%  Other
- 16%  Department of Children and Families
- 15%  Department of Social/Health and Human Services
- 5%  Department of Justice/Juvenile Justice
- 2%  Earmark

Number of respondents: varied (85%)

What were your sources of local or private funding? (Check all that apply. Please do not include in-kind contributions in your answer.)

- 47%  Parent Fees
- 43%  Private donations/donation containers/fundraisers
- 31%  Foundation/Philanthropic organization
- 24%  Corporation/Business
- 23%  City or County funds
- 22%  School District
- 13%  None
- 11%  Other
- 10%  Faith-based organization
- 4%  College/University

Number of respondents: varied (89%)
If you have had to make cuts in your program due to funding loss or stagnation over the past few years, what changes have you made as a result? (Check all that apply)

- 53% Reduced or eliminated field trips
- 45% Reduced variety of activities offered in the program
- 42% Reduced staff pay and/or benefits
- 38% Added or increased fees
- 34% Reduced or eliminated professional development
- 28% Increased staff/student ratio
- 28% Reduced number of children served
- 25% Reduced daily hours or number of days of service
- 24% Reduced or eliminated transportation services
- 22% Reduced or eliminated summer programs
- 15% Other
- 15% Reduced or eliminated holiday and/or weekend service
- 13% Reduced family services
- 11% Reduced or eliminated food services offered
- 9% Reduced school-community partnerships
- 7% Reduced or eliminated social services offered
- 6% Lowered standards or criteria for hiring staff

Number of respondents: varied (54%)

How secure is your funding for the next 1-5 years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Secure</th>
<th>Somewhat Secure</th>
<th>Secure</th>
<th>Very Secure</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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</table>

Number of respondents: 1241 (86%)

Are there currently children in your community who need afterschool care and are unable to access it?

- 85% Yes
- 15% No

Number of respondents: 1231 (85%)

About how many more kids would your program need to serve to meet the needs of all kids in your community?

- 9% Less than 10% more than are currently served
- 13% 10% more than are currently served
- 37% 25% more than are currently served
- 8% 75% more than are currently served
- 16% Double what are currently served
- 6% Triple what are currently served

www.afterschoolalliance.org
11% More than triple what you already serve
Number of respondents: 1159 (80%)

In your opinion, do you consider the following items to be barriers to children being able to participate in your program or others like it in your community?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not a barrier</th>
<th>Slight barrier</th>
<th>Significant barrier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Fee/Cost</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older youth need to work or care for younger siblings</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of available slots in program</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of interest</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative perception of program or afterschool</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not all children in one family are able to attend afterschool because programs are not available for all age groups</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough knowledge about program or afterschool</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of respondents: 1212 (84%)

In your opinion, how much does the current economic recession seem to be affecting your community?
62% Very Much
34% Somewhat
4% Not Much
0.6% Not At All
Number of respondents: 1226 (85%)

Have you experienced any of the following in your community? (Check all that apply)
95% Increased unemployment
78% Failing or shrinking businesses
68% Persistently high food prices
59% More kids going hungry or families struggling to provide food for children
56% Persistently high gas prices
Some programs have reported that the recession has caused them to lose funding that had already been committed and on which they were counting – either because of emergency cutbacks by state or local governments or grant commitments that will not be fulfilled. To what extent has this been a problem for your program?

- 14% Our program lost a significant amount of money because of the recession, causing major cutbacks in our program, or causing us to shut down one or more sites
- 17% Our program lost a significant amount of money because of the recession, but we will be able to continue operations as before
- 26% Our program lost a small but manageable amount of funding
- 43% Our program has not lost funding because of the recession

Number of respondents: 1202 (83%)

Compared to two years ago (the 2006-2007 school year), is your program’s budget today:

- 47% Inadequate to meet the needs of students and families in your community
- 27% About the same
- 19% Adequate to meet the needs of students and families in your community

Number of respondents: 1202 (83%)

Looking to the 2009-2010 school year, how much do you anticipate the recession will affect your program?

- 37% Very Much
- 52% Somewhat
- 8% Not Much
- 3% Not At All

Number of respondents: 1202 (83%)

Have you approached, or are you planning to approach, local or state agencies to attempt to access the following sources of funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the economic recovery package)? (Check all that apply)

- 36% Innovation or Incentive Grants
- 31% Child Care and Development Block Grants
- 24% Title I
- 17% State Stabilization Funds
- 43% None of the above

Number of respondents: 1153 (80%)
Which of the following would be helpful to you in trying to access funding being provided to local and state agencies through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to support your program? (Check all that apply)

- A list of who to talk to about various funding sources (82%)
- Examples of how funds might be used for afterschool programs (76%)
- Easy access to official guidance and regulations (65%)
- Talking points to use in approaching agencies (54%)

Number of respondents: 1120 (77%)

Methodology: Uncertain Times 2009 used web-based survey software. The Afterschool Alliance emailed a link to the survey to more than 10,000 contacts in its database in April 2009. 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. 1,834 responses were reviewed. 387 of them did not provide sufficient data to be included in the final analysis or were duplicate responses. Therefore, the final sample was 1,447 responses which represent approximately 8,587 afterschool sites serving more than 1.2 million children. (Many respondents are responsible for multiple sites.)