

## *Uncertain Times 2012*—New York Afterschool Programs Still Struggling in Today's Economy

Afterschool programs provide a lifeline for families and communities across the nation, providing a safe and supervised space for kids to engage in creative, educational activities with caring adults and mentors. But a rocky economic climate and tightened budgets at the local, state and federal levels have put these programs at risk.

*Uncertain Times 2012*, conducted between April 25 and June 8, 2012, is the third installment of the Afterschool Alliance's *Uncertain Times* survey series that assesses the impact of economic conditions on afterschool programs. While many studies have evaluated the impact of programs, *Uncertain Times* is the only research to examine the fiscal health of afterschool programs and their ability to meet the needs of their communities. Based on 1,012 survey responses, the national report finds that afterschool programs are struggling to meet the needs of children and families in their communities, as they face shrinking resources and dismal prospects for new support. Hardest hit are programs serving disadvantaged communities—the very population that has the most to gain from afterschool and summer programs.

In New York, compared to the national average, the effects of the economy are more severely impacting afterschool programs. Based on responses from 86 program providers—of which 61 percent are located in urban communities, 32 percent in suburban communities and 17 percent in rural communities—New York afterschool programs are facing greater budgetary problems and are forecasting a significantly bleaker financial future than afterschool programs as a whole nationally.

Afterschool programs serve as a safety net for communities that are struggling: helping kids stay away from risky behaviors, keeping kids in school, contributing to students' academic success and providing peace of mind to working families.<sup>i</sup> In New York, 100 percent of afterschool providers report that their communities are deeply affected by the tough economic times and they are more likely than afterschool programs overall to report that they are not able to meet the needs of their communities. Afterschool programs in New York are also serving a high needs population—an average of 66 percent of children served qualify for free or reduced price lunch, 18 percent have special needs or learning differences and 17 percent are Limited English Proficient.

**Key data for New York include:<sup>ii</sup>**

## CURRENT BUDGET

	New York	National	Difference
My program's budget is in worse shape today than it was at the height of the recession	55%	39%	↑16
My program's funding is down a little or a lot from three years ago	71%	62%	↑9
My program's budget is inadequate to meet the needs of the community	72%	57%	↑15

## PROGRAM SERVICES

	New York	National	Difference
Children in the community need afterschool care, but are unable to access it	94%	88%	↑6
My program would need to at least double its capacity to meet the needs of all kids in the community	26%	24%	↑2
Loss of funding caused major cutbacks or shut down sites	19%	16%	↑3

Top three changes New York afterschool programs instituted due to a loss of funding or budget stagnation:

1. Field trips cut or reduced
2. Staff layoffs
3. Staff hours reduced

## COMMUNITY INFORMATION

	New York	National	Difference
The challenging economic climate is affecting my community	100%	97%	↑3
The community is showing very little signs of recovering from the economic recession	62%	55%	↑7

## FUTURE OUTLOOK

	New York	National	Difference
The challenging economic climate will affect my program during the 2012-2013 school year	90%	85%	↑5
My program's funding for the next 1-2 years is less than secure	78%	61%	↑17
My program's funding for the next 3-5 years is less than secure	91%	81%	↑10

<sup>i</sup> The Afterschool Alliance. (2012). *Afterschool Essentials: Research and Polling*. Retrieved from [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/2012/Essentials\\_4\\_20\\_12\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/2012/Essentials_4_20_12_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> Percentages are based on afterschool program providers who agree with the following statements.