

A media outreach newsletter published by the Afterschool Alliance

# AFTERSCHOOL FUNDING PRECARIOUS, SURVEY FINDS

As children head back to school, and parents worry about whether their kids will be safe and supervised each afternoon when the school day ends, a new survey finds that many afterschool programs are fully subscribed but still unable to meet the demand in their communities. The new web-based survey finds that budget cuts and stagnation are taking a toll on afterschool programs, and the youth and families they serve.

Uncertain Times: Funding Insecurity Puts Afterschool Programs at Risk finds that fewer than half of afterschool programs say their funding is fully secure for the next two years, and just one in five has secure funding for three to five years – and that afterschool programs are serving a high need population, and serving more children than expected. Nearly all respondents say that more children in their communities could benefit if there were more afterschool programs.

"By not providing stable, secure funding, we're playing Russian roulette with the afterschool programs that are critical to our children and families," warned Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "Quality afterschool programs are doing remarkable work helping students with homework, pairing them with mentors, engaging them in sports and fitness activities, and helping them to explore new interests. But programs cannot serve all the children who need them when they are underfunded and have uncertain futures. We can, and must, do better." Volume 7, Issue 8, September 7, 2006

More than 1,600 afterschool program leaders responded to the survey, which also finds that:

- 75% of afterschool programs operated at or above maximum capacity during the 2005/2006 school year.
- 86% of respondents say that there are children in their community who need afterschool programs and don't have access to them.
- Afterschool programs are serving a highneed population. At more than half the programs surveyed, more than 60% of the students served qualify for free or reduced price lunches.
- Nearly half of programs responding to the survey (47%) say that funding is down a little (23%) or a lot (24%) in the last two years. Another 30% say it is unchanged. 17% say it is up a little, and just 5% say it is up a lot.

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# LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL

Is your program planning a *Lights On Afterschool* event on or around Thursday, October 12? Have you registered your event at *www.afterschoolalliance.org*? If not, there's still time! Be part of a day when a million Americans will send the message that we need to keep the lights on and the doors open for our kids. When you register your event, you will receive *Lights On Afterschool* posters, and regular emails with tips to help you plan an event that engages sponsors, involves lawmakers and generates coverage in the media. *To register and learn more, visit www.afterschoolalliance.org*.

# OUTREACH

Back-to-school season is an ideal time to advocate on behalf of afterschool. Below are a sample letter-tothe-editor and a sample letter to your Member of Congress. Submit the letter-to-the-editor to a local newspaper on its website, and submit the letter to Congress at www.afterschoolalliance.org, going to the blue Contact Congress button on the left.

To the Editor:

With summer break over and classes back in session, parents across the area are again focused on making sure their children are safe and constructively engaged in the hours immediately following the regular school day. Research demonstrates that the late afternoon hours are when children are most likely to engage in risky behaviors.

Many families solve the problem by enrolling their children in afterschool programs, knowing that they keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and relieve the worries of working parents. But programs are in too short supply and, as a result, the parents of 15 million children say their kids aren't enrolled in an afterschool program because one is not available to them.

In the *No Child Left Behind Act*, Congress and the President mapped out a multi-year roadmap for increasing federal funding for afterschool. If they'd followed the map, we'd be a lot closer to serving those 15 million kids. But they didn't, and many programs are cutting back or closing down as a result. This fall, Congress will again take up the question of funding for afterschool. As it does, let's hope our elected representatives recognize the value of afterschool programs for our kids, families and community.

Dear Representative:

As you know, later this fall, Congress will take up the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. As it stands now, the bill provides just \$981 million for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers initiative, the principal federal funding stream for afterschool programs. That's far less than the authorized \$2.5 billion. In fact, since passage of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, funding for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century initiative has never reached the authorized level, and we're falling farther behind each year.

As a result of this ever widening shortfall, a wildly popular and plainly effective program is now funding afterschool care for 1.5 million fewer children than *No Child Left Behind* called for. I hope you'll agree that we need to do better for our kids.

Afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire learning, and help working families. They provide a vital service for families in our state and across the nation. But we need more of them. I realize you face difficult budget choices, but this is too important an investment to delay. Please support efforts to increase funding for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century initiative when the appropriations bill comes to the floor.

Sincerely,

# **FUNDING NEWS**

The Afterschool Alliance has a new resource that can help afterschool providers generate support from the business community for both *Lights On Afterschool* and for programs. "Funding Forum 4: Attracting Business Sponsors for *Lights On Afterschool* and Beyond" discussed the ways businesses can help sustain afterschool programs in their communities, and are often willing or even anxious to lend support.

*Lights On* is October 12th and, in past years, a number of afterschool programs reported success in recruiting business sponsors using *Lights On Afterschool* as the initial hook. The new Funding Forum report provides step-by-step information on how to approach business allies to create relationships or strengthen existing relationships. *To view the report, go to www.afterschoolalliance.org/funding\_forum.cfm.* 

The Afterschool Alliance also has new information for afterschool providers on qualifying and applying for funding through Supplemental Educational Services (SES), part of the *No Child Left Behind Act* which, among other things, provides tutoring support for children outside of the school day. Providers will find tools and tips for applying, as well as information for parents and additional research on SES, at *www.afterschoolalliance.org/supp\_main.cfm*.

### **GRANTS/GIFTS AVAILABLE**

#### Grants for Afterschool Programs in Southern California

Teachers, administrators and teams composed of teachers and/or staff members at K-12 public and private schools that fall under the Southern California Edison International service area may apply for the company's New Era Awards for Excellence in K-12 Education competition. Grants of \$5,000 to \$10,000 will be awarded to programs that support underserved youth in one or more of the following: science and/or math; college and/or workforce readiness; energy efficiency and conservation; or programs that enhance learning and achievement. *To apply, visit www.edison.com/newera*.

#### Grants for Education and Job Enhancement

The Staples Foundation is offering grants of \$1,000 to \$25,000 to community programs that enhance education and job skills for disadvantaged youth. The deadline for the application is September 15. *For further information, visit www.staplesfoundation.org.* 

### Gifts in Kind

Gifts in Kind International, a non profit organization that provides product donations, including computers, software, office supplies, clothing and personal-care products, is soliciting applications from tax-exempt organizations with a need for physical resources. Afterschool programs may sign up for membership through the organization's web page to become eligible for donations. *For further information, go to www.giftsinkind.org.* 

Funding continued from page one...

- When programs are forced to make changes due to budget cuts or stagnation, the most common response is to increase the fees parents must pay.
- If programs are able to see an increase in funding, they are most likely to increase the number of students they serve.

Programs funded by 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) grants are more likely than programs without that funding to have at least 60% of their students qualify for free or reduced price lunches, according to **Uncertain Times**. Three in ten 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs (29%) operated above their maximum capacity in 2005/2006, and another 54% operated at maximum capacity.

The bi-partisan *No Child Left Behind Act* authorizes \$2.5 billion for the federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) afterschool initiative in FY 2007, but funding has fallen far behind authorized levels. Congress is on track to provide less than \$1 billion next year. "Every day, 14.3 million children leave school without a safe place to go," Grant added. "Federal funding shortfalls have squelched the growth of afterschool, and most states are unable to pick up the slack. Programs are left to cobble together support that often is inadequate to meet the need."

**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 of 2006. For this first wave of data, the final sample included 1,628 responses which represent some 7,857 afterschool sites serving 1.5 million children.

More information from the survey will be released in October, in conjunction with Lights On Afterschool! It's not too late to be counted. Leaders at programs that have not already taken the survey should go to http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=5523 2423346 to complete it. It will take approximately 15 minutes. Give afterschool programs a stronger voice – today!

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#### GAO FINDS ONGOING CHALLENGES WITH TUTORING

Tutoring mandated by the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), known as supplemental educational services (SES), is still facing "speed bumps" as states and school districts try to implement it. A new report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) concludes that, while some states have increased monitoring of SES by district and private providers, many still lack an effective mechanism for determining how well districts are administering the programs and whether the tutoring is helping to raise student achievement. The GAO also finds that student participation in SES remains low, which may result from poor coordination and confusion.

States are having difficulty monitoring SES program administration as well as provider competence, the GAO finds. While student participation in SES has increased nationally from 12 percent of eligible students receiving services in 2003-2004 to 19 percent in 2004-2005, that number is still low and some 20 percent of districts required to provide SES had no students receiving services.

To produce the report, the GAO interviewed all 50 state SES coordinators, nearly 200 districts that are required to offer SES and more than a dozen SES providers. SES directors and tutoring providers reported challenges in creating clear tutoring contracts and evaluating providers and programs. About half the districts did not notify parents that the tutoring was available before the beginning of the school year due to delays in receiving school improvement results from the state. Providers also said confusing parental notification letters and enrollment forms may discourage participation. Reaching students in rural areas was a particular challenge, as was reaching those with limited English language proficiency and those with disabilities.

*Education Daily* reports that House Education Committee Chairman Howard "Buck" McKeon (R-CA) said that SES is crucial to the success of NCLB. "I remain concerned with the low overall rate of participation and an apparent lack of awareness that these important services are, in fact, available to an increasing number of students," he said.

GAO recommendations include:

- The Department of Education should collect and disseminate information on promising practices used by districts, including providing more detailed guidance on crafting parental notification letters and examples of districts that have successfully involved school officials in the initiative.
- The Department of Education should consider expanding the pilot program that allows districts rated in need of improvement to provide tutoring in order to reach more eligible students in need and thereby increase participation rates.
- To improve federal and state monitoring of the initiative, states should require districts to report the amount of money spent on SES each year and the percentage total Title I money this represents, as well as the total number of students eligible for and served by the program.

#### **Department Expands Pilot Program**

In response to these recommendations, the U.S. Department of Education announced in

August that it will expand two pilot programs related to SES implementation.

The first allows school districts to offer SES tutoring prior to school choice. NCLB requires underperforming schools that fail to meet academic targets for two years to offer students the option to transfer to other schools; after three years, underperforming schools are required to offer tutoring. Last year a successful pilot program in select Virginia school districts allowed schools to reverse the order. This year, the Virginia schools will continue in the pilot program, as will 19 school districts in Alaska, Delaware, Indiana and North Carolina.

A second pilot program allows schools that have been labeled "in need of improvement" to run their own tutoring programs, even though NCLB would have required them to hire tutors outside the school district. Last year the Chicago and Boston school systems participated in this pilot program, boosting student participation in tutoring.

"In the limited experience we had last year with Chicago and Boston, we saw good things happening for kids," Deputy Secretary of Education Raymond J. Simon told *Education Week.* As a result, school districts in Anchorage, Alaska; Memphis, Tennessee; and Hillsborough County, Florida, will be allowed to participate in the pilot program this year, and Chicago and Boston will continue in it.

For information, go to www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/07/072 62006a.html. To view the GAO report, visit www.gao.gov/new.items/d06758.pdf. For information on how to qualify and apply for funding through SES, information for parents and additional research, go to www.afterschoolalliance.org/supp main.cfm.

# IN THE NEWS...

Arizona - Rock star Alice Cooper announced plans to create a teen center offering a wide variety of afterschool programs, sponsored by his Christian non-profit organization, the Solid Rock Foundation, located at Grand Canyon University. "The Rock," as the \$3 million project has been dubbed, will include a multi-use concert hall, sound room and recording studio, basketball courts, rock climbing walls and a coffee house. "With Grand Canyon's support, we are fulfilling a vision we've had for several years - to provide teens and children with a central place to learn, have fun, and explore their creativity in a supportive environment," Cooper said. For information, visit www.srfrock.org.

California – Students at the Challenge School in Hillsborough and San Carlos are getting a full dose of cultural immersion by learning Mandarin, Chinese calligraphy, cooking, geography and music. The afterschool and summer school program was started by Mei Zhang, originally from China, who worried that, as a second generation American, her daughter was losing the ability to communicate in Mandarin. The school's enrollment has grown, and today many of its students have no background in Chinese language or culture. Zhang told Inside Bay Area that Mandarin language skills will benefit students when they enter the workforce.

Michigan – Detroit youth have been jamming to their own beats as part of the new Motown After School program at Southeastern and Detroit School of the Arts in a program sponsored by Motown founder Berry Gordy Jr. The young musicians produced a CD – "Young Dynasty Entertainment" – featuring ballads and rap songs. They were scheduled to hold a free performance at the City Theater in downtown Detroit in August. "We were trying to figure out how to best celebrate the Motown legacy in Detroit. We wanted to share the magic, the family love, support and teamwork," executive producer Tanya Heidelberg-Yopp told the *Detroit News*. The program plans to expand to other schools in the fall.

Nebraska – Libraries in Omaha are planning to lift their ban on noise in order to reach out to teens and draw them back to libraries. The "Dance, Dance Revolution" video game encourages participants to break a sweat by dancing to its pulsating beats; it is one of many new video games being introduced to the library system. Supporters of the project believe that once in the library, the teens will be more likely to browse the books. According to the Omaha World-Herald, Joan Giesecke, dean of libraries at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said, "Just as with CDs and video tapes, libraries will pick up all kinds of new media as a way to share resources as a community. You want young people to have a safe place in the community that they can gather."

**New York** – The After-School Corporation reports that afterschool has been supporting the development of the next generation of comic book superheroes. Young artists in the Opening Doors and Building Bridges afterschool program at Martin Luther King Jr. high school in Manhattan took part in the Comic Book Project, where they focused on improving their literacy and illustration skills. Some of the comics were published and distributed at the Lincoln Center Barnes & Noble bookstore. *To view the winning comics, visit www.comicbookproject.org/nyc2.pdf*.

**Pennsylvania** – As part of the state's welfareto-work transportation program, Governor Ed Rendell announced that \$45,000 will be provided to the Red Rose Transit Authority to offer free or reduced cost transportation services for low-income residents going to work or taking their children to afterschool programs, reports the *Lancaster New Era*.

# AFTERSCHOOL FOR ALL: PROJECT 2010

It's that time of year again. Local department stores are running low on backpacks and notebooks, families are planning their final summer getaways, and those big yellow buses are shaking off the dust and rust as another school year approaches. Soon, youth around the nation will be heading back to the classrooms.

Unfortunately, after the school day ends, more than 14 million of them will be home alone until their parents return from work. Studies show that in those critical afterschool hours, from 3 to 6 PM, children are susceptible to juvenile crime, substance abuse and other risks. Now more than ever, *Afterschool for All: Project 2010* needs your help to raise awareness about the need for more afterschool programs to keep our youth safe and expand their opportunities to learn.

The *Project* has 3,424 partners who have pledged support for afterschool programs for all youth. New partners include the National Society of Black Engineers and the YMCA of Greater Miami. In coming months, this column will highlight opportunities for members of your community to join this critical initiative and share success stories about *Project* partners who are championing afterschool. To share your testimonials, email *mcoichy@afterschoolalliance.org. For more information or to join, visit http://www.afterschool2010.org/join.cfm* 

### IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

"We have tried to expand, and we have expanded, afterschool programs and summer programs. And I think it is very important to have those services in the community where kids can get to them." -- Durham Councilwoman Diane Catotti, *Herald-Sun*, July 31, 2006

"[The state] can and must do more to close the achievement gap in our underserved schools – that is why I support increased tutoring and afterschool programs, as well as getting more experienced teachers in schools that need the most help."

-- California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 2006

## WHEN AN APPLE A DAY ISN'T ENOUGH

Youth across the nation are being asked to join the Campaign for Children's Health Care's effort to raise awareness about the nine million children in this country who do not have health insurance and the millions more who are underinsured. The Campaign is sponsoring an essay contest "When an Apple a Day Isn't Enough," for children ages nine to 18 to explain how the ability to go to the doctor or go to the hospital affects their lives and the lives of those around them.

Winners will be selected from two age groups (nine to 13, and 14 to 18) from each state and will receive cash prizes of \$250 each. A grand prize winner will be selected from each age group and be flown to Washington, DC, with a parent or guardian for an awards ceremony in February 2007 that will include a \$2,500 prize. The afterschool program or institution that submits the most entries will receive a \$2,000 cash award to be used for school supplies.

The contest will be accepting entries from September 5 to October 13. *More information is available at www.childrenshealthcampaign.org/events/nat ional-essay-contest/. Please contact Beth McCarthy at (202) 879-0299 or emccarthy@familiesusa.org with questions.*  AAAAA

# RESOURCE

#### **Preparing Youth for the Workforce**

The Afterschool Alliance has published a new Issue Brief, "Afterschool Programs: Helping Kids Compete in Tomorrow's Workforce." The report examines the skills needed to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace and the role that quality afterschool programs traditionally have had in preparing youth for the workplace. The brief also provides examples of programs and practices that are helping prepare children for the workforce of the future. *To access the report, visit www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue br.cfm*.



### MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

# September 14 – 15, September 28 - 29, 2006

The America's Promise Alliance will host regional forums to share best practices and encourage greater collaboration within communities to see that all young people have the fundamental resources they need to succeed. The regional forums will take place in Charlotte, North Carolina on September 14 – 15 and Indianapolis, Indiana on September 28 – 29. Another forum will be held in Denver, Colorado in October. *For information and to register, visit www.americaspromise.org/100Best/regionalf orums.cfm*.

#### ✓ September 20 – 22, 2006

The North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs (NC CAP) will host its annual statewide summit, "SYNERGY: Windows of Opportunity," at the Joseph S. Koury Convention Center in Greensboro. *For information, visit www.nccap.net/about/conference.cfm*.

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The Bridge from School to Afterschool and Back: Responsive Rich Relevant conference will be held in Vancouver, Washington. The conference, the only one of its kind for administrators, educators and policy makers in the afterschool field, will include sessions on childhood obesity, family literacy and English language learners. *For more information and to register, visit http://schoolsoutwashington.org/index.cfm?fu seaction=page&sectionid=60.* 

#### ✓ October 23 – 25, 2006

The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory's National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning will host a regional training Mid-South Region Fall Afterschool Training Roundup: Building High-Quality Afterschool Programs in Oklahoma City. The event will offer opportunities for afterschool leaders to network and learn through professional development opportunities. *For further information and to register, visit www.sedl.org/afterschool/registration/2006\_r oundup.html.* 

#### November 19 – 25, 2006

The Alliance for Children and Families and the Annie E. Casey Foundation will sponsor the National Family Week celebration. Afterschool programs are invited to participate along with hundreds of groups and thousands of individuals across the country to promote the premise that children live better lives when families are strong, and families are strong when they live in communities that connect them to economic opportunities, social networks and services. *For more information, visit www.nationalfamilyweek.org.* 

#### November 29 – December 2, 2006

The National Community Education Association will hold its Annual Conference at the Nugget Hotel in Reno, Nevada. *Please visit*  www.ncea.com/meetingsandconferences.aspx for information and to register.

#### ✓ December 4 – 7, 2006

The National Association of Workforce Development Professionals, the Great Lakes Employment Training Association and the National Youth Employment Coalition are sponsoring the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual National Youth Development Symposium in Chicago, Illinois. Last year's symposium drew more than 600 workforce development, youth development, and education professionals from across the country. *For further information, visit www.nawdp.org/youthsymposium.htm.* 

More information on upcoming conferences and events is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org/states/calendar \_main.cfm.

# USE A4A FOR DISCOUNT ON SCHOOL SUPPLIES

The Afterschool Alliance partnership with Discount School Supply gives friends of afterschool a ten-percent discount on all school supply orders. To receive the discount, put the code A4A (it stands for Afterschool 4 All) in the pink promotional box when ordering supplies at *www.discountschoolsupply.com*. Or mention it when you call 1-800-627-2829 to place an order.

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs by 2010. More information is available at *www.afterschoolalliance.org.* The Alliance is proud to count among its founding partners the Mott Foundation, U.S. Department of Education, JCPenney Afterschool Fund, Open Society Institute/The After-School Corporation, the Entertainment Industry Foundation and the Creative Artists Agency Foundation. \*\*\*\*\*\*

The *Afterschool Advocate* is produced for the Afterschool Alliance by PR Solutions, Inc., Washington, DC; Phone: 202/371-1999; Fax: 202/371-9142; E-mail: advocate@afterschoolalliance.org.