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Unmet Need for Afterschool Programs in African American Community Grows

New Household Survey Finds African American Parents Strongly Support Afterschool Programs

Washington, DC — While 24 percent of African American students – some 2.4 million children and youth in the United States – participate in afterschool programs, another 4.5 million African American students would participate, if an afterschool program were available. The findings come from [America After 3PM](#), a new household survey commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance. The survey spans 30,000 U.S. households and includes in-depth responses from 13,709 families, including 1,499 African American families. It finds that the unmet need for afterschool programs is especially high among African American, Hispanic and low-income families.

“Our country is nowhere close to meeting the demand for afterschool. In fact, the unmet demand for afterschool programs among African American families is large and growing,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “It’s clear that African American families value afterschool programs, because they keep children safe, inspire them to learn, help working families, and promote healthy habits. But our public policy shortchanges millions of children of all races and ethnicities, leaving them without the programs they want and need. Federal funding for afterschool programs has been stalled for years. We need to increase federal support for quality afterschool programs.”

According to the household survey, 10.2 million U.S. children now participate in afterschool programs, up from 6.5 million in 2004. But the unmet demand for afterschool nationwide increased to 19.4 million U.S. children in 2014.

“Due to the fact that most students come from homes where both parents are working, we have a duty to provide safe havens for our children during the crucial hours from 3 to 6 pm,” said former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, founder of After-School All-Stars. “Afterschool programs do remarkable things for our children, families and communities. Reams of data show it, and I’ve seen it in my own work. These programs help kids with homework, teach them teamwork, engage them in community service, pair them with mentors, help them to be physically fit, involve them in activities like rocketry and robotics, and much more. Afterschool is a wise investment but, unfortunately, we’re not investing nearly enough. America After 3PM shows that we are meeting only about one-third of the demand for afterschool programs. We need federal, state and local governments, philanthropies and businesses to step up and provide the resources that will put us on the path to making afterschool available to all.”

Other key findings from the 2014 survey include:

- **Demand for afterschool is greatest among African American, Hispanic and low-income families.** Participation in afterschool and unmet demand for afterschool are much higher among children from low-income households than those from higher-income households, and higher among African American and Hispanic children than white children. The parents of 60 percent of the nation's African American children not currently participating in afterschool programs would enroll their child, if a program were available, as would the parents of 57 percent of Hispanic children not currently enrolled. The same is true of 35 percent of white children.
- **African American parents say that afterschool programs are an essential source of support for working parents—giving them peace of mind when at work and helping them to keep their jobs.**
 - Four in 5 African American parents agree that afterschool programs help provide working parents peace of mind about their children while at work. Agreement jumps even higher—to 88 percent—among African American parents with a child in an afterschool program.
 - Seventy-nine percent of African American parents agree that afterschool programs help working parents keep their jobs. Among African American parents with a child in an afterschool program, 84 percent agree.
- **African American parents face specific barriers in finding an afterschool program for their children.** African American parents who would like to enroll their child in an afterschool program were much more likely to cite lack of a safe way to get to and come home from afterschool programs and lack of available afterschool programs as barriers to participation than white parents.
- **African American parents with a child in an afterschool program are highly satisfied with their program, both overall and with specific program features.**
 - More than 9 in 10 African American parents (92 percent) said that they are satisfied with their afterschool program overall, higher than parents overall (89 percent).
 - African American parents are very satisfied with the safety of the afterschool environment (90 percent), their child's opportunity to interact with his or her peers (87 percent) and their afterschool program's quality of care (85 percent).
- **African American parents—including parents with children in afterschool and children not in an afterschool program—recognize the multitude of benefits children gain from participating in an afterschool program.**
 - More than 3 in 4 African American parents (77 percent) agree that afterschool programs help children gain workforce skills, such as teamwork, leadership and critical thinking.
 - Seventy-four percent of African American parents agree that afterschool programs can help excite children about learning.
 - Seven in 10 African American parents agree that participating in an afterschool program can help improve children's school day attendance.
 - More than 7 in 10 African American parents (71 percent) agree that afterschool programs can help improve children's behavior in school.

- **African American parents strongly support public funding of afterschool programs.** Overall, 84 percent of parents report that they favor public funding for afterschool programs, but 91 percent of African American parents support public funding for afterschool programs to help ensure that students in communities with few opportunities for children and youth are able to access and afford afterschool programs.

America After 3PM details afterschool program participation rates by race, ethnicity, gender and income, describes the types of activities afterschool programs offer, examines barriers to participation, reports on parental views of program quality, and more. It provides in-depth information on children who are unsupervised after school, as well as those who would be enrolled if an afterschool program were available to them. In addition to the national data, *America After 3PM* offers state-level data as well as a snapshot of national participation and demand for summer learning programs. Summer and state-by-state results are available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

Findings from *America After 3PM* are based on in-depth interviews with 13,709 households with children, completed by way of an online survey using a blend of national consumer panels. Shugoll Research collected and analyzed the data for *America After 3PM*. In order to participate, respondents had to live in the United States and be the guardians of a school-age child living in their household. The online interview took approximately 15 minutes to complete. All interviews were completed between February 28 and April 17, 2014.

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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. More information is available at www.AfterschoolAlliance.org.