



NEWS RELEASE
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Federal Afterschool Dollars for New Jersey Missed the Mark in 2005

Planned Growth of Afterschool Programs at Standstill, Despite Vast Unmet Need

New research into state grant-making under the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative reveals that New Jersey was one of 26 states that were not able to make any new grants to afterschool programs in 2005. The Afterschool Alliance conducted the research.

According to ***Impossible Choices: How States are Addressing the Federal Failure to Fully Fund Afterschool Programs***, federal funding for afterschool programs in the state was \$19,871,889. All of it was needed to keep previously funded programs operating. Based on current cost estimates, 21st CCLC programs in the state were able to provide afterschool opportunities for approximately 19,872 children and youth in New Jersey this year.

According to the report, the grant-making standstill is the direct result of the federal government's failure to realize the vision of *No Child Left Behind*. Because Congress and the President did not provide the *No Child Left Behind* promised level of funding to support growth, New Jersey could not fund any new afterschool programs this year. Like many other states, New Jersey committed to multi-year grants several years ago, and was then left with only enough money to fund existing grantees when the increases authorized by *No Child Left Behind* did not materialize.

“States have been caught by a one-two punch from the federal government,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “The states expected that Congress and the President would live up to the funding commitments they made in the *No Child Left Behind Act*, and planned accordingly. But since funding for afterschool has been frozen, many states are finding that their multi-year grants consume their entire 21st Century Community Learning Centers budget. As a result, they are unable to fund new programs. What that means is simple but sad: No new afterschool programs for the millions of kids and families who need them. We know that lawmakers face tough choices, but shortchanging our kids is not a good solution.”

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To compile the data in *Impossible Choices*, Afterschool Alliance researchers contacted state education agencies in every state and the District of Columbia, by phone or e-mail. Researchers confirmed what they were told in those conversations by consulting agency websites and other sources, where available.

“There is vast unmet need for afterschool programs in New Jersey and throughout our country,” Grant added. “By promising funds and then not delivering, the federal government forced states to make an impossible choice between supporting the afterschool programs that parents have come to depend on, and making grants to new programs in communities that are currently unserved. We need to do both if we are to generate and sustain the growth in afterschool programs that America’s families need. We look forward to working with the Administration and Congress to increase afterschool funding next year.”

The full report is available on the web at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Impossible_choices.cfm. To identify and contact local afterschool providers in individual states, contact the Afterschool Alliance media office at 202/371-1999.

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private, and nonprofit entities working to ensure that all children have access to afterschool programs by 2010. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

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