



**NEWS RELEASE**  
August 22, 2012

Contact: [Gretchen Wright](#)  
202/371-1999

## **New Survey: Afterschool Programs Still Struggling in Recession's Aftermath**

### ***New York Providers Are Particularly Hard Hit***

WASHINGTON, D.C.—As the nation's children head back to school, a new survey released today by the Afterschool Alliance holds tough lessons about the outlook for afterschool programs: Amid a rocky economic climate and budget-tightening at the local, state and federal levels, many afterschool programs face shrinking resources and uncertain prospects even as they are already struggling to meet the needs of children and families in their communities.

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 in the state—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. In fact, 100 percent of New York programs report that their communities are deeply affected by tough economic times, and they are more likely than afterschool programs nationally to report that they are not able to meet the needs of their communities.

More than half of New York afterschool programs (55 percent) report that their budgets are in worse shape today than at the height of the recession in 2008, a result that's 16 points higher than the national figure (39 percent). More than seven in 10 New York programs (71 percent) report that their funding is down "a little or a lot" from three years ago, nine points above the national result (62 percent). That leaves many afterschool programs—which provide children with a safe and supervised space, hands-on educational opportunities, and access to homework help, mentors and other caring adults—unable to fully support the children in their communities who are most in need of afterschool now, and without the financial security to do so in the future.

Funding pressures have forced programs to make difficult decisions. The top three changes instituted by New York afterschool programs as a result of funding cuts or budget stagnation are: elimination or reduction of field trips, staff layoffs, and reduction of staff hours.

The results are part of the Afterschool Alliance's [Uncertain Times](#) survey project, the only research effort to examine how the economy affects afterschool programs. The Afterschool Alliance previously conducted *Uncertain Times* surveys in 2006 and 2009.

“This continual chipping away of local, state and federal funds for afterschool programs over the last several years adds up to substantial hardships for working parents and a real loss of learning opportunities for children across New York state,” said Nora Niedzielski-Eichner, executive director of the New York State Afterschool Network.

Among other key findings of the new *Uncertain Times* survey:

- More than nine in ten New York programs (94 percent) report that children in their communities need afterschool care but are unable to access it, six points higher than the national result (88 percent).
- More than two-thirds (72 percent) report that their budgets are inadequate to meet the needs of their communities, 15 points higher than the national result (57 percent).
- More than one-quarter (26 percent) report that they would need to at least double their capacity to meet the needs of all the kids in their communities, two points higher than the national result (24 percent).
- Nineteen percent of programs report that a loss of funding caused major cutbacks or shut down sites, three points higher than the national result (16 percent).
- Nine in ten programs (90 percent) anticipate that the challenging economic climate will affect their programs during the 2012-2013 school year, five points higher than the national result (85 percent).
- New York afterschool programs serve a high-needs population, with an average of 66 percent of children qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches, 18 percent with special needs or learning differences, and 17 percent classified as Limited English Proficient.

“The latest *Uncertain Times* results are a painful reminder that the nation’s slow road to economic recovery is a particularly rough journey for the afterschool programs that children, families and educators rely on,” said Jodi Grant, executive director of the Afterschool Alliance. “These programs are not a luxury; they’re vital to a bright future for children all across the country.”

“In the midst of these harsh economic realities, afterschool program leaders are being forced to make painful decisions,” Grant added. “The students they serve are at risk of being denied access to afterschool programs, which keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. Afterschool providers need enough resources to help all the students and families who need them. We are far from that funding level today.”

Policy recommendations by the Afterschool Alliance to help speed up recovery for afterschool programs include increasing support for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, the only federal funding stream dedicated to before-school, afterschool and summer learning programs; increasing funding for the Child Care Development Block Grant to provide child care vouchers to more eligible families; allowing existing federal funding streams—such as those for STEM

(science, technology, engineering and math) skill-building and youth health initiatives—to help support afterschool programs; and including language in the Workforce Reinvestment Act and the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act to help before-school, afterschool and summer programs reach middle school and high school students.

To view the full 2012 survey, *Uncertain Times: Afterschool Programs Still Struggling in Today's Economy*, go [here](#).

*[Uncertain Times 2012](#) used Web-based survey software to poll more than 26,000 contacts between April 25 and June 8, 2012. Results are based on 1,012 survey responses, representing 4,947 afterschool sites serving more than 567,470 children in urban (45 percent), suburban (30 percent) and rural (31 percent) communities across the United States.*

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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](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*