

# NYSAN Policy Brief

## Afterschool Funding in New York State: The Case for a More Coordinated System

**Q**uality afterschool programs keep kids safe, help working families and support learning. In today's society, schools and families can't do it alone. Kids need access to structured and engaging learning, enrichment and development opportunities beyond the traditional school day. A number of new research studies prove that high-quality afterschool programs can bolster academic achievement and, equally important, foster the development of critical social and emotional learning.

By virtue of its large population and its historic support for youth development, New York State has dedicated more funding, particularly public funding, to afterschool than most other states. Afterschool programs in New York are paid for by a varied mix of public funding from local, state and federal sources, registration fees and private donations.

This mixed financing is both a strength and a weakness of afterschool in New York State. Diversified funding helps address young people's many different needs and encourages creativity, flexibility and collaboration with other systems. Diversity also means that each funding agency can impose its own objectives and administrative requirements. This fragmentation can be inefficient, creates confusion for providers and, most troubling – makes it difficult for policymakers and the public to see the full picture of how the state's resources are deployed to ensure that all young people are receiving the services and supports they need.

At a time when New York State is striving to dramatically improve educational opportunity for all its children and youth – especially those who are most disadvantaged – the state must invest in reforming and expanding its financing system for afterschool programs.

This policy brief offers guidance to state policymakers on how to approach this challenging task. The brief includes an overview of the major sources of public funding for afterschool programs in the state and analysis of how the current system can be improved to increase program quality and access. It concludes with suggestions for steps the state should take to begin building a more coordinated and effective system.

### NYSAN

NEW YORK STATE AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK

New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN) is a statewide public-private partnership dedicated to promoting young people's safety, learning and healthy development by increasing the quality and availability of programs during non-school hours. The positions taken and statements set forth in this document do not necessarily represent the views of all NYSAN members. For a copy of this and other NYSAN publications, visit [www.nysan.org](http://www.nysan.org).

### Afterschool Funding Supports Diverse Programming

In New York State, as in the nation, the afterschool field comprises a wide variety of programs and services delivered in the hours outside of school.

- ◆ **Age of students served:** Afterschool programs serve students from kindergarten through high school.
- ◆ **Location:** Programs take place in school buildings and in community-based facilities such as community centers, libraries, houses of worship and YMCAs.
- ◆ **Schedule:** Programs are offered both before and after school, and during weekends, holidays and summer breaks. Some require regular daily attendance while others, especially for older youth, allow drop-in participation.
- ◆ **Activities:** Many programs provide a comprehensive mix of academic, enrichment, arts and recreational activities, while others focus on a single pursuit. Some integrate specialized programs to target particular community needs, including health care services, youth employment support, drop-out prevention, mentoring and adult education.

- ◆ **Unmet need:** While the major afterschool and school-age care programs in New York State have been estimated to serve more than 400,000 kids, at least 600,000 remain without adult supervision during the critical afterschool hours.<sup>1</sup>

## New York State and City Administered Funding for

Program Name	Administering Agency	FY 2008 Allocation (\$ millions)	Source of Funds	Local Match Required
Advantage After School	NY State Office of Office Children and Family Services (OCFS)	\$28.2M Preferred	Federal <sup>+</sup>	No
Beacon Program	City of NY Dept. of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)	\$46M	City and Federal	Yes
Contracts for Excellence	NY State Education Dept. (SED)	\$111M <sup>*</sup>	State	No
Extended School Day / School Violence Prevention	SED	\$30.2M	State	No
Out-of-School Time (OST) Programs for Youth	DYCD	\$98M (plus \$11M from YDDP)	City and State	No
School-Age Child Care	OCFS through County Departments of Social Services	\$230M <sup>#</sup>	State & Federal	Family Co-payment
Special Delinquency Prevention Programs	OCFS through County Youth Bureaus	\$9.38M	State	No
Summer Youth Employment Program	NY State Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance through local Workforce Investment Boards	\$35M	Federal	No
Supplemental Educational Services	SED	N/A	Federal	No
21st Century Community Learning Centers	SED	\$100.1M	Federal	No
Youth Development / Delinquency Prevention (YDDP)	OCFS through County Youth Bureaus	\$29.5M	State	Yes

<sup>+</sup> Advantage After School funding was transferred from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families to the state General fund for FY 2009.

<sup>\*</sup> Allocation of education funding subject to Contracts for Excellence is determined by individual school districts. In FY2008, the 56 districts statewide that received funding subject to Contract for Excellence requirements dedicated \$111 million to increasing "time on task", including extended school day and year initiatives, as well as afterschool programs.

<sup>#</sup> Estimated expenditures of NY State Child Care Block Grant funds on subsidies for school-age child care in all settings, including home and family care, as well as center-based programs.

<sup>^</sup> CBO = Community-based organization.

### The Structure of State Funding for Afterschool

As the chart above illustrates, New York State and City operate many different funding streams that support afterschool and related child care, extended learning and other youth development programs. Through these major public initiatives alone, the state invests more than \$700 million annually.

In addition, many providers integrate significant funding from other sources. Federal programs such as Americorps, Safe & Drug Free Schools and Child Care Food programs help provide key staffing, nutrition and other supports. Other initiatives for teen health services, drop-out prevention and youth employment are sometimes linked to afterschool programs. Additionally, foundations and other private philanthropies across New York State donate millions of dollars per year to help afterschool programs offer innovative arts, academic enrichment, recreation, mentoring, service learning, leadership development and other activities.

Many of these public and private initiatives have common goals and serve similar populations, but impose different administrative and regulatory requirements on program providers. While increased investment is needed across the board, there are also efficiencies to be gained from improving coordination across initiatives and agencies, both public and private.

### The Need to Expand Afterschool Opportunities

The fragmented administration of programs makes it very difficult to aggregate and determine total statewide participation in afterschool programs. The only available state-level study, conducted in 2002 by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids New York, found that the state needs 600,000 additional afterschool slots to serve all kids who are unsupervised afterschool or would prefer to attend an afterschool program if one were available. In another indicator, a 2006 survey by the Afterschool Alliance of providers in New York State found that 80% were operating at or above the maximum capacity they had budgeted to serve.<sup>2</sup>

# Afterschool and Related Child and Youth Programming

Target Population	Distribution Process	Capacity-Building Set Aside	School-CBO <sup>^</sup> Partnership Required
K-12 students	Competitive grants	No	Yes
New York City students age 6 and up, and adults	Competitive grants	Non-profit organization partners with DYCD to provide technical assistance	Yes
K-12 students with the greatest educational needs	Formula	No	No
K-12 students	Competitive grants with annual continuations	Yes	Yes
K-12 students with priority to high need neighborhoods in New York City	Competitive grants	Private foundation funds raised for technical assistance and evaluation	Yes
Low-income children ages 5-12	Formula to counties for family subsidies	4% for quality improvement activities	No
High-risk children and youth ages 0-20	Per-capita formula & competitive grants	No	No
Low-income youth ages 14-17	Formula	No	No
K-12 students in low-income schools that fail to meet academic progress targets	Reimbursement based on student enrollment	No	No
K-12 students with priority to low-income and low-performing schools	Competitive grants	3% for professional development, technical assistance and evaluation	Yes
Children and youth ages 0-20	Per-capita formula	No	No

## The Costs of High-Quality Programming

The cost of delivering a high-quality afterschool program is dependent on variables such as program model, location and size. A review published by The Finance Project determined that the middle cost range across the country is \$1,300 to \$2,000 per student per year.<sup>3</sup> However, these estimates did not always account for essential in-kind contributions, such as facilities or student stipends, which increase the actual cost of providing afterschool programs for youth.

In New York State, few of the existing funding streams provide sufficient resources to meet the full costs of delivering a high-quality program. Providers particularly cite transportation and professional development as critical under-funded program components. In addition, the challenges of accessing and blending multiple funding streams can be daunting to navigate, especially for smaller providers.

## Funding System Barriers and Opportunities for Program Improvement

Information collected by NYSAN reveals five common areas of fragmentation where a more coordinated statewide strategy could positively impact afterschool program quality and availability.

## Goals and Outcomes

Statewide and nationally, the afterschool field is reaching a consensus on the goals and characteristics of high-quality programs. Still the state's many funding streams use differing language and indicators to describe their intended goals and outcomes, while targeting different subpopulations, activities and settings. Without an overall vision and alignment of goals and outcomes – across public and private funding streams – program providers will continue to struggle to blend funds, and policymakers will have limited ability to know if the state's investments are meeting young people's needs.

## Quality Standards and Regulations

Health and safety regulations and comprehensive quality standards are essential components of a high-quality afterschool system. New York State has the building blocks in place, but lingering inconsistencies, for example between the licensing requirements for school-age child care facilities and the State Education Department's (SED's) health and safety standards, need to be resolved. Notably, the quality framework developed for the NYSAN Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool has been adopted by both SED and the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development. It would be useful to build upon these agencies' actions to reach broad consensus on a quality framework to be used for

program capacity-building, licensing and accreditation standards.

### Workforce Development

Research shows that the education level of afterschool staff and their ability to engage young people in challenging activities and meaningful experiences are central to program quality.<sup>4</sup> It is essential that afterschool programs have a well-trained, diverse and professional workforce. Unfortunately, the current system devotes insufficient attention to staff recruitment, development and retention, particularly for the field's large part-time workforce. State funding streams need to allow larger set asides for professional development. Further, the state needs to invest in expanding education opportunities and building career pathways for youth workers, including advanced credentialing, college and university programs, loan forgiveness and creation of more full-time, benefitted positions, e.g., combining school-day and afterschool jobs.

### Partnerships

Research and experience also show that collaboration between community-based organizations (CBOs), schools and other partners, such as local businesses, libraries, arts or government agencies, helps produce more comprehensive, engaging and sustainable afterschool programs. Some state funding streams require formal partnerships, while others do not. To facilitate a more coordinated system and deeper operational collaboration - especially between schools and CBOs that deliver afterschool programs - state policies should encourage partnerships.

### Data Collection and Administration

Not surprisingly, the fact that many different state, city and private agencies administer afterschool funding, brings with it different systems for processing applications, charging fees, collecting data and monitoring programs. Some funding streams, such as 21st Century Community Learning Centers, are

administered by a central state agency with substantial data collection and reporting requirements. Others, such as Youth Development/Delinquency Prevention, provide funds to counties based on a per capita formula and allow for more local control in the distribution and monitoring of funds. Some funding streams permit programs to charge fees, often on a sliding scale, while others prohibit fees entirely. When it comes to data collection, individual programs can find themselves spending undue time submitting the same information in multiple formats to different funders. A statewide system should have more alignment in program application, fee administration, data collection and monitoring processes.

### Conclusion: Develop a More Coordinated Statewide Funding System

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This summary of New York State's afterschool funding landscape should make clear that the state can and should do more to maximize its investments in programming during the out-of-school hours. State policymakers should begin by establishing a state task force or other interagency leadership body to further investigate the needs and opportunities for funding coordination. This body should be empowered to develop a comprehensive statewide plan for afterschool. Such a plan should:

- ◆ Identify administrative reforms to improve efficiency, such as alignment of standards and regulations across programs, and development of common application and reporting processes.
- ◆ Provide comprehensive support for program quality improvement and workforce development.
- ◆ Encourage partnerships and operational collaboration between schools, CBOs and other stakeholders.
- ◆ Ensure adequate resources to deliver and sustain high-quality programs for all young people who need them.

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<sup>1</sup> Fight Crime: Invest in Kids New York. *New York's After-School Choice: The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime or Youth Enrichment and Achievement*. 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Afterschool Alliance. Survey: *Uncertain Times: Funding Insecurity Puts Afterschool Programs at Risk*, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Lind, Christianne and Nanette Relave, Sharon Deich, Jean Grossman and Andrew Gersick. *The Costs of Out-of-School Time Programs: A Review of the Available Evidence*. Washington, DC: The Finance Project, May 2006.

<sup>4</sup> National Institute on Out-of-School Time. *Pathways to Success for Youth: What Counts in After-School*. A Report of the Massachusetts After-School Research Study (MARS). November 2005.