

The State of City Leadership for Children and Families

2009



National League of Cities
Institute for Youth, Education, & Families



About the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families

The Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute) is a special entity within the National League of Cities (NLC).

NLC is the oldest and largest national organization representing municipal government throughout the United States. Its mission is to strengthen and promote cities as centers of opportunity, leadership, and governance.

The YEF Institute helps municipal leaders take action on behalf of the children, youth, and families in their communities. NLC launched the YEF Institute in January 2000 in recognition of the unique and influential roles that mayors, city councilmembers, and other local leaders play in strengthening families and improving outcomes for children and youth.

Through the YEF Institute, municipal officials and other community leaders have direct access to a broad array of strategies and tools, including:

- Action kits that offer a menu of practical steps that officials can take to address key problems or challenges.
- Technical assistance projects in selected communities.
- The National Summit on Your City's Families and other workshops, training sessions, and cross-site meetings.
- Targeted research and periodic surveys of local officials.
- The YEF Institute's Web site, audioconferences, and e-mail listservs.

To learn more about these tools and other aspects of the YEF Institute's work, go to www.nlc.org/iyef or leave a message on the YEF Institute's information line at 202/626-3014.

AfterSchool



Afterschool

Key Goals:

- Keep young people safe during the hours when they are most likely to engage in risky and dangerous behaviors and be in harm's way.
- Link out-of-school and in-school learning to improve student achievement.
- Give young people opportunities to develop their talents, skills, interests and character.
- Support working parents who are not available to supervise their children in the before- or after-school hours or during school vacations.

Innovations:

- Organizing an array of quality programs at neighborhood campuses.
- Realigning transportation to coordinate neighborhood learning opportunities.
- Unifying afterschool providers behind a citywide literacy initiative.
- Providing hands-on job experience for teens during out-of-school time.

Emerging Trends:

- Expanding out-of-school time opportunities for older youth.
- Tracking afterschool program participation and its impact on student outcomes.
- Building citywide systems of high-quality, out-of-school time programs.

Established Trends:

- Advancing statewide afterschool network initiatives on funding and policy.
- Developing afterschool program quality standards.
- Using GIS technology to map needs and create online program locators.
- Enhancing parks and recreation programming.

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Innovations

Organizing an array of quality programs at neighborhood campuses.

Providence, R.I., is a national leader in afterschool programming with its development of three neighborhood "AfterZones." These "neighborhood campuses" encompass a specific geographic area rather than an individual building, and link providers to offer an array of high-quality programs for middle school youth. At each AfterZone, between 300 and 500 neighborhood youth receive color-coded enrollment forms to choose from a multitude of fun and engaging learning opportunities, including: sports and recreation programs; arts, music, dance, filmmaking and theater; academic programs in math, literacy and science that engage high school and college tutors; creative clubs; field trips; youth leadership opportunities; and college and career exploration.

Providence, R.I., is a national leader in afterschool programming with its development of three neighborhood "AfterZones."

The genesis of the AfterZone model was Mayor David Cicilline's formation of the Providence After School Alliance (PASA) in 2004, through which the mayor brought together more than 100 public and nonprofit partners to develop a citywide system of high-quality programs. PASA is an independent, nonprofit intermediary that strengthens the capacity of afterschool providers to expand access and improve program quality. The mayor chairs the PASA

board of directors, which includes the chief of police and school superintendent and representatives of city and state agencies, youth programs, postsecondary institutions, families and youth. In 2006, with support from national and corporate funders, PASA launched the AfterZone initiative with \$400,000 going to each neighborhood campus over a three-year period. AfterZone neighborhoods were selected based on their concentrations of youth, families and facilities (e.g., gyms, classrooms, libraries, community centers).

To establish an AfterZone, a PASA manager/facilitator assists networks of neighborhood providers with the development of a governance structure. At the heart of this structure is a core coordinating group composed of lead administrators from neighborhood middle schools, libraries, recreation and community centers, community-based programs and licensed child care providers, as well as parents and youth leaders. One of the lead partners is responsible for placing an AfterZone coordinator in each of Providence's eight middle schools; the coordinator is hired and supervised by PASA in consultation with the coordinating group. This group also oversees the AfterZone budget and is expected to collaborate with other local program providers, arts and cultural program specialists, community stakeholders and other existing leadership structures managing neighborhood youth services. By bringing all key stakeholders to the table, these networks are able to strengthen existing programs and develop new ones. AfterZones enable partners to improve quality, variety and participation in several ways:

- Coordinating a common schedule of programs for at least four days per week and offering parents a comprehensive, bilingual course bulletin and program guide;
- Opening public and private facilities through joint funding and staffing decisions;
- Using the youthservices.net Web-based tracking tool developed by CitySpan technologies and offered by PASA to track registration, attendance and retention;
- Working with the city to create a transportation system linking youth to programs at multiple locations;
- Providing youth participants with healthy snacks; and
- Participating in ongoing evaluation and self-assessment.

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PASA increases AfterZones' capacity by offering comprehensive professional development opportunities to program staff, including an eight-week training course in youth development principles and periodic workshops. PASA also offers competitive grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000 to help afterschool providers pilot innovative practices and trains youth workers in a common set of program quality standards using the Rhode Island Program Quality Assessment Tool. This tool, developed by PASA with the High Scope Center for Youth Program Quality, is now being used by all providers receiving 21st Century Community Learning Center funding throughout the state. In addition, each AfterZone receives logistical support from PASA for communications, transportation, public relations, administrative costs, facilities development, technology and stipends for parent outreach and recruitment.

As the city develops a sustainable, full-day learning strategy for young people that builds on neighborhood assets and makes the most of limited resources, Mayor Cicilline has continued to leverage city and donor funding to support the AfterZones. In the coming years, the city hopes to serve more middle school youth and expand the AfterZone model for younger children and older youth. For more information, see: www.mypasa.org.

Related innovations:

- Nashville, Tenn., has begun to implement the AfterZone model.

Realigning transportation to coordinate neighborhood learning opportunities.

The St. Paul, Minn., Circulator bus system connects young people in three neighborhoods with high-quality out-of-school time programs at libraries, parks, recreation centers, schools and community organizations such as the YMCA and Boys and Girls Club. These free shuttle buses make extended learning opportunities accessible to children and youth ages 7 to 18 after school and on days when school is not in session. However, the Circulator is more than a way to provide safe and reliable transportation to local programs. It also serves as the focal point for coordination among community-based networks of afterschool program providers and residents.

The origins of the Circulator date back to a community organizing effort in 2003 initiated by the Neighborhood Learning Community on St. Paul's West Side, where residents, city parks and recreation staff and more than 17 neighborhood groups and service providers came together to discuss transportation barriers to youth participation in out-of-school time programs. With funding from a state-based foundation, this group began running shuttle buses to a set of neighborhood programs and providing parents with bus route maps and coordinated bus and program schedules. The Circulator buses led to a shift in focus from program or organization-specific transportation to a more holistic, community-wide approach. In addition, new initiatives, such as a collaborative summer camp program in St. Paul's West Side, have sprung from the development of the Circulator.

St. Paul's Circulator is more than a way to provide safe and reliable transportation to local programs. It also serves as the focal point for coordination among community-based networks of afterschool program providers and residents.

Realizing the potential of the Circulator system to improve student learning, promote civic engagement and give young people a safe place to go during non-school hours, Mayor Christopher Coleman sought to expand this transportation option to other neighborhoods in 2007. The East Side Circulator began running that summer in the Dayton's Bluff and Payne-Phalen neighborhoods, providing children and youth with 3,600 rides, a number that grew to 4,200 the following year. In October 2008, Mayor Coleman announced the launch of school year-round services for the East Side Circulator. The coordinator of the mayor's broader Second Shift out-of-school learning initiative secured state and private funding for the operation of the new buses and led monthly neighborhood planning meetings at a local library. Although many partners provide in-kind support, the primary funding source for the East Side Circulator is a Minnesota Department of Education grant that funds other East Side Learning Collaborative afterschool and summer programming.

Due to different neighborhood characteristics (e.g., geographic area covered, number of school-age children) and their operation by separate neighborhood groups, there are several differences and similarities in the design of the eastern and western Circulator systems. While the Neighborhood Learning Community and the University of Minnesota's Center for Democracy and Citizenship have been instrumental in operating the West Side Circulator, city parks and recreation staff and the East Side Learning Collaborative coordinate the East Side system. In both cases, there are restrictions on how old a child must be to ride unaccompanied by a parent, guardian, or older sibling; in addition, parents on the East Side must register their children in advance, sign a consent form and provide emergency contact information. Youth Job Corps workers ages 18 to 21 are assigned to each East Side bus to ensure child safety and help young people connect to the learning sites along the route. Both systems use the same logo on local bus stop signs, but there are scheduling differences between the two Circulators. As a city task force considers expanding the Circulator to additional neighborhoods, an East Side/West Side Advisory Group developed Circulator guidelines in November 2008.

During preliminary evaluation interviews conducted by the University of Minnesota, 100 percent of interviewed youth program providers in neighborhoods without the Circulator noted that transportation was a barrier to afterschool participation, while not a single provider in neighborhoods with the Circulator mentioned transportation as an obstacle. Survey results also show that 76 percent of youth-serving organizations in Circulator neighborhoods stated that youth get to their programs via the Circulator buses. For more information, see: www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?NID=340.

Related innovation:

- In St. Paul's twin city, the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board began running its "Youth Are Here" buses, which provided 5,000 rides in the summer of 2007.

Unifying afterschool providers behind a citywide literacy initiative.

Stemming from a report by the Greater Louisville, Inc., (GLI) Education Task Force in 2003, Louisville, Ky., Met-

ro Government and Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) joined GLI to launch the Every 1 Reads partnership. Every 1 Reads maximizes the afterschool hours to pursue a community-wide goal of having every JCPS student read at or above grade level — based on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) — within four years. Mayor Jerry E. Abramson has been instrumental in promoting the afterschool component of this initiative, and in encouraging local afterschool providers to join Every 1 Reads. Since 2003, the partnership has made major strides, helping to cut the overall proportion of novice readers in half — from 18.6 percent to 9.4 percent — a difference of nearly 10,000 students. The proportion of students writing below grade level fell by nearly two-thirds, from 25.8 percent in 2003 to 9.35 percent in 2008.

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Every 1 Reads relies on both out-of-school and in-school strategies, including a new, consistent curriculum, professional development, interventions with struggling readers and more regular diagnostic assessment. In 2008, Every 1 Reads engaged more than 10,000 volunteers in tutoring JCPS students who are reading below grade level. Volunteers must participate in an orientation session to learn JCPS protocol for tutoring students and submit information for a background check. Further tips and resources are available to volunteers from the National Center for Family Literacy and the Louisville public library.

An important element of Every 1 Reads is the city's effort to unite afterschool providers behind a single focus on literacy. Out-of-school time programs are utilized as a key point of intervention with struggling readers. Program providers at 53 endorsed Every 1 Reads sites receive training and networking opportunities and a "starter kit" with age-appropriate literacy materials. To find an Every 1 Reads youth literacy afterschool program, parents can visit a Louisville Metro Office of Youth Development Web site mapping programs by neighborhood and age group. This office also chairs a community engagement committee with Metro United Way, JCPS and the Urban League, and provides funding to more than 60 nonprofit afterschool programs engaged in the partnership.

Endorsed afterschool program providers are connected with TraxSolutions (formerly called KidTrax), one of the most innovative components of Every 1 Reads. Since 2001, the city has assisted providers with use of this data management system to track the impact of participation in afterschool programs on academic achievement. Students participating in afterschool programs scan their bar-coded TraxSolutions Cards, which also serve as library cards and bus passes. Nonprofits must use TraxSolutions to receive city funding for afterschool programming, and the city has provided money to help these organization use the tracking system. In addition to monitoring participation, TraxSolutions software (developed by nFocus) integrates JCPS data on test scores, truancy rates and suspensions. This system not only allows partners to assess the effect of programs on student achievement; it also helps educators and youth service providers work together to intervene with youth who are struggling in school. Data show that the proportion of students who participate in Every 1 Reads site programs and read at or above grade level improved from 78 percent in 2005 to 87 percent in 2008. In addition, JCPS found that students participating in community-based programs twice or more per week had better academic performance than students with little or no participation.

Municipal officials have supported the partnership in other ways as well. City leaders helped raise more than \$8 million in corporate and private funding. Mayor Abramson also sponsors an awards program to recognize schools that make significant progress in reducing the number of novice readers or that have less than two percent of students reading below grade level on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System. More than 20 schools received the Mayor's Top Reading School Awards of Excellence in 2009. Individual volunteers, teachers, businesses and organizations can receive additional recognition on the Every 1 Reads Web site. For more information, see: www.every1reads.com.

Providing hands-on job experience for teens during out-of-school time.

Chicago’s “apprenticeship training” model is at the cutting edge of a new focus on out-of-school time programs for teens and older youth. These programs give Chicago youth hands-on work experience in a variety of fields. Although they are not sponsored by unions and do not lead directly to jobs, they share many characteristics with traditional apprenticeships and have a proven track record of developing marketable skills and job readiness for thousands of young people. Central to Chicago’s efforts is a nonprofit organization established and chaired by Maggie Daley — wife of Mayor Richard Daley — called After School Matters (ASM), which this past year provided youth ages 14 to 21 with more than 600 programs that develop authentic workplace skills and help them explore careers. The city’s parks, libraries, family and support services and cultural affairs departments join more than 100 community organizations and 63 schools in partnering with ASM to create 30,000 program slots for youth throughout the city. Either directly or in partnership with other agencies and community groups, ASM runs programs primarily at local parks, libraries and schools, with support from a blend of city and private funding.

With more than 600 programs that help young people develop authentic job skills and explore careers, Chicago’s “apprenticeship training” model gives youth hands-on work experience in a variety of fields.

ASM programs build on the city’s gallery37, an open-air art studio set on an undeveloped city lot in 1991 to offer afterschool and summer arts programs for teens. Through ASM, youth advance up a “ladder of opportunity” beginning with pre-apprenticeships that introduce teens to the workplace and teach teamwork, communications and critical thinking skills. Teens who complete these programs can then apply for apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships, which are interactive afterschool programs that develop and refine specific skills through hands-on projects in a given professional field. Youth ages 16 to 21 who reach the top of the ladder apply these skills at internships with businesses, government agencies and nonprofits. For instance, gallery37 apprentices work on commission-based graphic design projects for clients while learning how to use digital design technology tools. Interns for gallery37 work in art galleries, assist professional artists or work on arts administration at various organizations. Their high-quality art products are displayed and sold at the Gallery 37 retail store at Chicago’s downtown Gallery 37 Center for the Arts.

ASM has expanded this model to several additional program areas:

- **tech37:** Apprentices learn website design, digital video production, robotics and how to repair and refurbish computers. Interns for the Algebra Project, a math literacy initiative developed with DePaul University, train apprentices to facilitate math workshops for younger teens and document the program through videos.
- **science37:** Apprentices take part in hands-on life science labs, learning about the development of pharmaceutical drugs and visiting Abbott Molecular laboratories, where professional scientists discuss DNA science and global health issues.
- **sports37:** Teens learn how to coach and referee for youth sports leagues, and apprentices can gain experience managing a Little League baseball stadium. The city Department of Transportation trains interns in bike repair and maintenance.
- **words37:** Apprentices take part in theater, creative writing and communications programs, and produce newspapers through the True Star Journalism program. Interns gain hands-on journalism experience at local newspapers, where they learn skills ranging from layout and design to advertising and photojournalism.
- **club37:** As the only ASM program model that does not follow the apprenticeship approach, teens attend structured, supervised, drop-in activities such as sports and dance.

For each of these programs, ASM recruits skilled professionals from Chicago to teach and train students in their career fields, and in each case, participants have opportunities to apply and showcase their abilities. In addition, ASM programs (excluding club37) simulate the job market by requiring teens to apply and interview for apprenticeships and offering a stipend to students in return for mandatory attendance. Teens can apply at partnering community organizations and can learn more at a biannual ASM Recruitment Expo. With donor support, the Chicago Out-of-School Time project has supported the expansion of the ASM program model, and through this initiative After School Matters will develop a replication guide to share the model with other program providers. For more information, see: www.afterschoolmatters.org

Related innovations:

- Baltimore has adapted the apprenticeship model with After School Matters II.
- Denver's Arts Streets program recruits local artists to provide youth apprenticeships.

Emerging Trends

Expanding out-of-school time opportunities for older youth.

According to a 2004 report by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST), cities generally direct their afterschool efforts toward younger children for a variety of reasons: an emphasis on early intervention; a focus on the child care needs of parents of elementary school children; and a belief that high school already offers numerous extracurricular activities — even if the reality is that these opportunities have been reduced due to budget cuts. In addition, the Afterschool Alliance has estimated that 6.5 million children in the U.S. participate in afterschool programs, but only 8 percent of them are in high school. Teens with no place to go after school are more likely to use alcohol, tobacco and drugs, skip or drop out of school and engage in criminal behavior or sexual activity. More than 2 million high school students say they would participate in programs if they were available.

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To respond to this demand, a growing number of cities are organizing more out-of-school time activities for middle and high school-age youth. As in Chicago, many of these programs prepare youth for life after high school, helping them explore college and career opportunities or enhance their skills and talents. The NIOST report finds that most afterschool programs for high school students involve youth mentoring, academic support, community service and career development or internship opportunities. For instance, Beacon Centers in New York City, Philadelphia and San Francisco keep public schools open beyond school hours to provide educational, career development and enrichment activities for youth of all ages as well as GED, English as a Second Language and parenting classes for adults. At these centers, youth receive tutoring and college preparation; they can also choose from a variety of arts and sports programs. Parents can obtain information on child care or health insurance.

A growing number of cities are organizing more out-of-school time activities for middle and high school-age youth.

One of the primary distinguishing aspects of afterschool programs for older youth is that these youth often have more choices about how they spend their time out of school, as well as competing responsibilities such as part-time jobs. To ensure youth participation, cities seek to engage young people in designing relevant programs aligned with their interests. In Hillsboro, Ore., The Zone is a city-county-school collaboration that serves more than 800 older youth. Students plan programs and provide input and leadership to determine the wide variety of choices available. With funding from the city, foundations and the Washington County Commission on Children, The Zone engaged students in developing a marketing plan to promote participation, which included a mascot appearing at school assemblies.

Addressing barriers to and incentives for participation is another key concern. In Omaha, Neb., former Mayor Mike Fahey and the Greater Omaha Afterschool Alliance, in collaboration with the school district and the Sher-

wood Foundation, brought a Middle School Learning Center Initiative to scale in most local middle schools with support from state and federal grants. Each site offers incentives such as iPods, savings accounts, gift cards or field trips for program attendance and improved grades. Cities such as Salem, Ore., and Palm Desert, Calif., keep programs affordable by charging low user fees and accessible by sponsoring programs at local schools. Salem also highlights the importance of building relationships between teens and skilled, trusted adults — a variety of programs connect youth with police officers, firefighters and state Department of Fish and Wildlife staff. The cities mentioned above report that their afterschool programs have had positive impacts in a number of areas, such as improving public safety and student academic achievement and reducing truancy, dropout rates, childhood obesity and substance abuse.

Selected cities providing out-of-school time programs for older youth: Boston; Chicago; Denver; Fort Worth, Texas; Hampton, Va.; Hillsboro, Ore.; New York City; Niles, Ill.; Omaha, Neb.; Palm Desert, Calif.; Philadelphia; Salem, Ore.; San Francisco.

Tracking program participation and its impact on student outcomes.

Like Providence and Louisville, a growing number of cities are taking advantage of new technology to track the impact of afterschool program participation on student success. Students swipe membership cards at program locations, allowing cities to monitor attendance at multiple school and community-based sites through a central data tracking system. Cities that collaborate with their school districts can go one step further by integrating these data with information on student performance and behavior. For example, the City of Detroit’s Youth Connection works with more than 100 afterschool providers to gather data on 18,000 participants through EZreports software for the Youth Connection Data and Information System, which is funded by a U.S. Department of Education grant. Michigan State University researchers then correlate the data on number of hours in attendance and type of program activity with information on grades, attendance and conduct from Detroit Public Schools. Their analysis has shown that students with higher participation in afterschool programs demonstrated higher test scores and grades and better attendance and behavior.

Cities are taking advantage of new technology to track the impact of afterschool program participation on student success.

Similarly, residents of Washington, D.C., began using the city’s new DC One Card (dconecard.dc.gov) at public libraries, recreation centers and summer employment programs in 2008. D.C. Public School students in grades six through 12 will also begin to use the DC One Card as their school identification in the winter of 2009. In addition, the card doubles as a subway and bus fare card for youth, and will eventually be used by city employees for access to city buildings. While the One Card system does not track the activities of individuals, it provides useful feedback on participation in city programs. In Boston, the Triumph Collaborative’s management information system tracks services used by youth at parks, libraries, transportation, schools and afterschool programs, as well as other qualitative information for each student. Since 2004, the Jacksonville, Fla., Children’s Commission has used a system to track participation in afterschool programs, mentoring, early learning and child care, parenting and family programs.

Selected cities that use management information systems to track program participation and impact: Boston; Chicago; Detroit; Grand Rapids, Mich.; Jacksonville, Fla.; Louisville, Ky.; New York City; Providence, R.I.; San Francisco; Washington, D.C.

Building citywide systems of high-quality, out-of-school time programs.

In many communities, the decentralized growth of out-of-school time programs has resulted in a fragmented set of opportunities scattered across schools, parks, recreation centers, libraries, museums and community organizations. Without a coordinated approach, these programs fail to reach a large number of disadvantaged youth while duplicating services in other neighborhoods. In recent years, municipal efforts to reduce this fragmentation have facilitated the development of citywide afterschool systems that promote access, build supply, improve quality and ensure sustainability over time.

Municipal leaders play key roles in the success of these initiatives; they can build public will for expanding and improving programs, convene stakeholders and keep partnerships vibrant, ensure that planning and policy development is based on reliable information about current services and needs and designate or recruit a local entity to coordinate citywide efforts.

In recent years, municipal efforts have reduced the fragmentation among out-of-school time programs, facilitating the development of citywide afterschool systems that promote access, build supply, improve quality and ensure sustainability over time.

In Pasadena, Calif., the city provided a one-time donation to support financially struggling school-based programs in 2001, which prompted Mayor Bill Bogaard to explore ways to sustain these programs over time. Two years later, the mayor worked with other members of the city's Partnership of Children, Youth and Families to champion the development of a citywide system that now involves 60 service providers. The city conducted an assessment to gauge program needs and launched a major public outreach campaign to inform residents about the benefits of afterschool programs. City officials conduct regular surveys to ensure they are meeting parents' and students' needs, and provider staff receive quality training around a set of program standards. Major sources of funding derive from a private foundation and the State of California.

Baltimore's After School Strategy illustrates the role of intermediary organizations in building out-of-school time systems, and uniquely relies on three of these organizations rather than one. The After School Institute provides training and technical assistance in meeting quality standards. The Family League of Baltimore City manages contracts and evaluates program quality. Baltimore's Safe and Sound Campaign advances policy and funding strategies, organizes system partners and strengthens providers' capacity. In 2004, these organizations, which are all funded by the City of Baltimore, developed a cohesive out-of-school time program model that provides academic, enrichment and athletic programming at school sites for more than 9,000 of the city's 85,000 public school students. Under Mayor Sheila Dixon's leadership, the city now provides the largest source of funding for afterschool.

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Finally, New York City's Out-of-School Time program serves more than 85,000 young people ages 5 to 21 each year. The city's Department of Youth and Community Development coordinates the resources of approximately 200 community organizations, hundreds of schools and 10 city agencies to offer 608 free programs across the city, with a heavy concentration in high-need neighborhoods. Programs must meet state school-age child care regulations and have low staff-to-student ratios. The After-School Corporation and the Partnership for After-School Education serve as intermediaries to promote quality and build program staff capacity. Since Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg launched the program in 2005, the OST Initiative budget has grown to more than \$116 million in 2009, with the vast majority of funding from the city's general fund supplemented by additional private funding.

Selected cities developing citywide afterschool systems: Baltimore; Boise, Idaho; Boston; Chicago; Denver; Grand Rapids, Mich.; Florence, S.C.; Fort Worth, Texas; New York City; Pasadena, Calif.; Providence, R.I.; San Francisco; St. Paul, Minn.; Washington, D.C.

Established Trends

Advancing statewide afterschool network initiatives on funding and policy.

In several states, municipal leadership is the driving force behind statewide afterschool networks that shape state policy and funding for out-of-school time programs. These 38 networks engage municipal and school district officials, program providers, advocacy groups, state departments of education, governors' offices and other key leaders to improve state policies and local practices. City officials can partner with their networks to increase state support, enhance program quality, build public will and strengthen local partnerships. The cities of Indianapolis, Salt Lake City and Grand Rapids, Mich., each spearheaded the creation of their states' afterschool networks. In Salem, Ore., and Denver, senior municipal staff serve on steering committees or the boards of their networks.

Since 2002, the networks have successfully lobbied for new afterschool funding streams. As a key champion of the city’s Lighthouse Program, former Bridgeport, Conn., Mayor John Fabrizi joined forces with the Connecticut Afterschool Network in 2006 to persuade state lawmakers to create a \$4.5 million budget line item for afterschool programs. The City of Bridgeport was able to access \$500,000 of these funds. Current Mayor Bill Finch continues to support the Lighthouse partnership, which now operates at 29 school sites and employs more than 200 teens through its training and employment programs. St. Paul, Minn., Mayor Christopher Coleman joined Youth Community Connections — Minnesota’s statewide network — to support passage of legislation in 2007 increasing state funding for afterschool community learning programs by \$5.3 million, of which \$1 million went to the City of St. Paul and its community partners. Local leaders from Grand Rapids and Detroit worked with the Michigan After-School Partnership to amend the state’s Child Care Licensing Act so that afterschool programs serving older youth were not held to the same regulations for staff-child ratios and facility requirements as programs for young children. This policy change produced significant cost savings and increased the number of programs eligible for state funding.

City officials can partner with their statewide afterschool networks to increase state support, enhance program quality, build public will and strengthen local partnerships.

However, statewide afterschool networks are more than a vehicle for advocating for funding and voicing local needs to state policymakers. The networks also help cities share best practices and enhance program quality. In 2008, New York’s network helped the City of Rochester conduct a “funding scan” to analyze new public and private financing options that could potentially support afterschool programs. The City of New Brunswick has benefited from technical assistance from the New Jersey School-Age Care Consortium in developing programs on obesity prevention, financial literacy and environmental awareness. Finally, cities such as Providence, R.I., and Tampa, Fla., have worked with their networks to develop uniform statewide quality standards and assessment tools to help providers evaluate their programs.

Developing afterschool program quality standards.

Afterschool program quality spans a spectrum ranging from programs that amount to mere babysitting to high-quality activities that promote healthy youth development, enhance students’ academic abilities and attitudes and cultivate their interests and social skills. Program quality is consistently linked with positive child and youth outcomes. For instance, attendance in Fort Worth After School (FWAS) programs are correlated with better school attendance and math and science test scores. Students with high attendance in these activities also reported better grades and more self-confidence.

Because there is no common definition of quality, many cities have developed or adapted sets of standards by which to evaluate their local programs.

However, because there is no common definition of quality, many cities have developed or adapted sets of standards by which to evaluate their local programs. In conjunction with an independent formal evaluation, FWAS compiles standards into a “report card” to assess its 84 school-based programs. St. Louis uses standards created by the National Association of Elementary School Principals, which are divided into minimum basic standards and indicators that demonstrate high quality. In Grand Rapids, the team of 185 afterschool providers and community partners that comprise the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Network used the National Afterschool Association’s Standards for Quality School Age Care as the basis for local standards that measure the following indicators:

- Program and activities (e.g., a planned daily schedule, staff work with youth to plan and evaluate activities, activities have educational, social-emotional, physical and life skills outcomes);

- Administration and staffing (e.g., staff per child ratios, family involvement policies, staff qualifications and training and professional development);
- Human relationships (e.g., interactions that encourage learning and critical thinking, positive reinforcement and encouragement of responsible choices);
- Indoor and outdoor environment (e.g., adequacy of program space); and
- Safety, health and nutrition (e.g., criminal background checks for staff and volunteers, safe program space, appropriate supervision, availability of drinking water and healthy snacks and emergency medical procedures in place).

School-based providers in Grand Rapids must meet additional standards set by the state, and the ELO Network developed a modified version of their standards for single purpose programs. In addition, the network developed a self-assessment tool that offers program staff a checklist to determine how well they are meeting each standard and develop a plan to improve program quality.

Efforts to develop quality standards require active collaboration with the stakeholders providing afterschool programs, as well as input from youth, parents and funders. For instance, YouthNet of Greater Kansas City, Mo., and local agency partners involved youth directly in its standards development process and surveyed teens in local schools. YouthNet conducts customized trainings to help agencies address needs in meeting the standards. Professional development, technical assistance, peer networking and links between funding and program standards can also drive improvements in local program quality.

Using GIS technology to map needs and create online program locators.

More than a dozen cities have used geographic information systems (GIS) technology to map the location of afterschool programs, providing city officials with a better understanding of local needs and resources. By collaborating with police departments, schools and other agencies, municipal leaders can overlay additional data that shows whether afterschool programs are appropriately targeted. Some cities map census data illustrating which neighborhoods have high concentrations of young people while others compare school attendance and achievement statistics with the location of afterschool services. The City of Denver identified neighborhoods with crime hot spots and high teen pregnancy and poverty rates, and then compared the data with information gathered from more than 700 afterschool providers. This mapping process, conducted with support from the Colorado Afterschool Network, gave city leaders a better understanding of the availability, quality, capacity and impact of programs in every neighborhood.

Denver is one of a handful of cities that have taken their mapping efforts one step further by publicly sharing the data through an online program locator (www.denvergov.org/denvermaps/afterschool). The mayor and superintendent launched this website at a high-profile event, and the Denver Mayor's Office of Education and Children regularly updates the program database. Boise, Idaho, followed a similar process, first analyzing programs in relation to poverty and crime rates, then reallocating city funding for a mobile recreation van to help fill program gaps. Mayor David Bieter's Council on Children and Youth then made a searchable database of programs available to the community through the Boise After3 Web site (see www.after3boise.com). Parents and youth can search for programs by street address, neighborhood, age group, or program type. The website maps programs offered by numerous public and community agencies.

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Other cities have adapted the program locator model in different ways. In Morgantown, W.Va., a collaboration of the city, youth commission, Vision 4 Our Children Committee and a countywide afterschool coalition developed an expanded program locator for afterschool, preschool and day care programs (www.morgantownparentzone).

org). The Afterschool Chicago Web site, coordinated by the Chicago Out-of-School Time Project and the city's Department of Family and Support Services, contains thousands of programs sorted by eight program interest areas: academic, career, creative, health, life skills, religious, community and sports. The afterschoolchicago.org site is powered by Google Maps, allowing the site to show the location of afterschool programs for youth ages 6 to 21 in relation to public transit, schools, parks and libraries. The site presents information about program dates, times, fees and age range. The New Haven, Conn., Department of Youth has constructed a very similar site as Chicago's. In Boston, the BOSTONavigator site (www.bostonnavigator.org) uses similar technology and includes comprehensive information on program goals, enrollment requirements, transportation options, parent involvement, wheelchair accessibility and whether program staff are bilingual. Key partners include the city's Youthline, Build the Out-of-School Time Network (BOSTnet), Boston Public Schools and Boston After School and Beyond.

Enhancing parks and recreation programming.

City parks and recreation departments are often at the center of municipal partnerships with schools and nonprofits to improve out-of-school time programming.

Through San Francisco's Rec Connect program, for example, the city systematically builds partnerships between recreation centers and community-based organizations as it strives to provide high-quality afterschool programs for all elementary and middle school children by 2010. Launched in 2005, Rec Connect operates at five recreation sites with \$1 million from the city's Department of Children, Youth and Families, \$1 million of in-kind support by the Department of Parks and Recreation and additional resources from the United Way and local foundations.

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This strong support leverages the city's recreation center infrastructure with the additional capacity of YMCAs, Beacon Centers and other community organizations to provide a broad range of options for children in some of San Francisco's most disadvantaged neighborhoods. Site partners commit to achieving the objectives laid out in a jointly developed Rec Connect Roadmap guided by positive youth development and family support principles. Rec Connect sites have offered new programs such as teen financial literacy, ballroom dance, a debate club, a youth leadership council and "signature projects" showcasing best practices, including a girls' basketball league. More than 5,000 children and youth participated in these free multi-session classes and programs in 2007-2008, and 90 percent of participants feel there is a wide range of activities from which to choose.

In other cities, strong partnerships between parks and recreation departments and school districts are increasing the number and quality of opportunities available to children and youth. The City of Boise, Idaho, recently expanded programming in community centers that are located in three new schools. The Vancouver, Wash., Parks and Recreation Department sponsors its Kids First! programs at local elementary schools and provides free, nutritious snacks through a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant.

For children who do not live near afterschool recreation programs, more than two dozen cities have developed mobile afterschool centers that bring programs to schools, parks and housing complexes in underserved neighborhoods. This trend is particularly apparent in California and other areas with a heavy reliance on car transportation.

In Fresno, for example, a 40-foot ScienceMobile sponsored by the city's Community Services Division brings mobile science workshops to more than 50,000 students throughout the county and surrounding communities. The mobile science lab visits schools, events and community organizations and organizes hands-on projects in life and environmental sciences, robotics, chemistry, physics, geology and solar energy. The vehicle is equipped with satellite technology and wireless Internet access to present interactive television and computer workshops. These programs were launched by a cross-sector team in 2003, and continue to be supported by a partnership of the city,

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school district and National Science Foundation. Other key cosponsors include local colleges and universities, the police department, state agencies and businesses.

In most other cities with mobile afterschool programs, parks and recreation staff operate recreation vans containing sports equipment, arts and crafts and board games. Some cities, such as Poway, Calif., use these vans to set up portable skate parks, while St. Paul, Minn., offers a mobile climbing wall. The City of East Palo Alto, Calif., trains and employs teens to run programs for younger youth through its Mobile RecCorps Program. Mobile recreation vans tend to operate only during the summer at parks that do not have recreation centers or in neighborhoods that are not within walking distance of local parks.

FOUR NEW IDEAS TO CONSIDER

Afterschool

Rethink the traditional school day to create a citywide learning environment. Out-of-school learning can occur in nontraditional settings throughout a community. These settings may be as diverse as local museums, theaters, farms and construction sites, or may involve job shadowing of small business owners or working alongside scientists on environmental projects. By envisioning a seamless learning system that bridges the in-school and out-of-school hours, cities, school districts and community organizations can redefine student success to include critical life and workforce skills. Career exposure, internships, afterschool programs and project-based learning approaches can be combined with dual enrollment options for high school and college credit to make learning more fun, relevant and useful. The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation's New Day for Learning framework provides a valuable guide for city leaders seeking to move in these directions.

Use out-of-school hours to prepare young people for success in the global economy. Because many employers place a high priority on the ability to interact cross-culturally, out-of-school time programs can prepare young people for the new labor market by enriching students' knowledge of languages, international issues and culture, communications and technology. City leaders have additional opportunities to build stronger connections between afterschool programs and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) initiatives that equip students with much-needed technical skills. By working with museums, science organizations and private businesses, cities can help children and youth gain access to knowledgeable professionals who can make STEM skills interesting and relevant.

Promote environmental education as part of a "green city" effort. Cities are often at the forefront of efforts to promote sustainable development, energy conservation and resource management. City officials are well positioned to work with school districts and afterschool programs in providing sites and facilities (e.g., parks, forests, wetlands, rivers and municipal buildings) where young people can learn about local sustainability efforts. For instance, teachers and program providers can use these sites to conduct "hands-on" lessons on the environment and how to "green" the local community. Joint use agreements between cities, school districts and community organizations can be amended to make these sites accessible and knowledgeable city staff can lend their expertise on local environmental programs and green practices.

Professionalize the afterschool field through the development of career ladders. The quality of afterschool programs is often limited by a lack of training for and high turnover among staff. Cities, school districts and postsecondary institutions can collaboratively tackle this problem by providing educators and afterschool staff with opportunities for professional development and training and then linking these opportunities to career ladders. Professional development may focus on best practices from other city afterschool systems, peer networking opportunities, training in the use of quality self-assessment tools and improved evaluation techniques. Municipal leaders can also encourage joint trainings for school staff and afterschool providers, create opportunities for shared planning time and increase communication and alignment of afterschool programs with academic goals.

