



A Summary of Iowa Data from the *Uncertain Times: Funding Insecurity Puts Afterschool Programs at Risk* Web-based Survey

Today, a minority of Iowa students benefit from afterschool programs while many youth in the state are unable to enroll because space is limited and funding is not keeping pace with demand. Afterschool programs provide a critical support that helps children do better in school and reassures parents that their children are safe and well cared for after the school day ends. Unfortunately, program leaders in Iowa report that they are serving more children than expected; are struggling to maintain funding; and are reliant on parent fees and social services because federal funding is not enough to support the needs of their rural and urban communities. Nearly all respondents to this web-based survey say that more children in their communities could benefit from afterschool programs, if programs were available.

62 Iowa afterschool providers took the survey. They represent 170 program sites and serve more than 16,000 children. 61% percent of respondents are located in rural communities, 31% are in urban communities, and 8% are in suburban communities. The survey finds that in Iowa during the 2005/2006 school year:

- 74% of afterschool programs operated at or above maximum capacity.
- 82% of respondents say that there are children in their communities who need afterschool programs and don't have access to them.
- 33% of respondents say that funding is down a little (19%) or a lot (14%) in the last two years. Another 47% say it is unchanged. Just 16% say funding is up a little and just 4% say funding is up a lot.
- If programs are able to see an increase in funding in the future, they are most likely to serve more children.
- Two in three respondents say that parent fees are a source of funding for their program. 21% of respondents receive funding from the department of social services. Yet, only 15% of respondents receive funding from 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the only federal funding stream solely devoted to afterschool programs.
- 58% of respondents feel fully secure about their funding for the next 1-2 years. Only 42% feel fully secure about their funding for the next 3-5 years.
- Program operators in Iowa consider the top three barriers to participation in afterschool programs to be: transportation; cost; and lack of available slots. In fact, 84% of program operators say that transportation is a slight or significant barrier.

In sum, *Uncertain Times* finds that many afterschool programs in Iowa are fully subscribed but still unable to meet the demand, and that states with numerous rural communities are highly dependent on parent fees and social services to provide programs in their communities. Parents who can afford it are bearing a great burden, and families who cannot afford it or find transportation are making the tough decision to leave their children home alone after the school day ends. A lack of sufficient funding prevents afterschool programs from reaching more youth and families in their communities who could benefit from afterschool.

Topline Iowa Results from *Uncertain Times*:

Which of the following best describes your program's capacity during the 2005-2006 school year? (check one)

- 13% We operated above maximum capacity and served more students than we had budgeted to serve.
- 61% We operated at maximum capacity.
- 26% We operated below maximum capacity and served fewer students than we had budgeted to serve.

Number of respondents: 61 (98%)

During the 2005-2006 school year, what types of activities did your program offer youth? (Check all that apply)

- 87% Arts/Music/Cultural Activities
- 71% Homework Help
- 66% Science, Math and/or Technology
- 65% Community Service
- 61% Reading
- 52% Obesity Prevention/Nutrition/Athletics/Recreation
- 34% Drug, Alcohol or Tobacco prevention programs
- 32% Services for Parents and Families
- 31% Mentoring
- 26% Services for Children with Disabilities
- 24% Violence prevention programs
- 23% Other
- 22% Pregnancy prevention programs
- 19% Career and/or College prep
- 19% Language and/or ESL services
- 10% Medical and/or Dental Services
- 8% Mental Health Services

Number of respondents: 62 (100%)

In addition to after school, did your program offer services during the following times? (check all that apply)

- 53% Before school
- 44% Holidays and/or inter-session
- 21% Weekends
- 27% None of the above

Number of respondents: 62 (100%)

Did you offer a summer program?

- 68% Yes
- 32% No

Number of respondents: 62 (100%)

How has your funding changed over the last 2 years? (check one)

- 14% Funding is down a lot
 - 19% Funding is down a little
 - 47% Funding is unchanged
 - 16% Funding is up a little
 - 4% Funding is up a lot
- Number of respondents: 57 (92%)

In the future, if you receive more funding, what change would you be most likely to make to your program? (Check one)

- 26% Serve more children
 - 16% Add variety of activities offered in the program
 - 9% Increase staff pay and/or benefits
 - 7% Add field trips
 - 7% Decrease staff/student ratio
 - 6% None. I wouldn't make any changes.
 - 4% Add family services
 - 4% Add professional development
 - 4% Add summer program
 - 4% Cut or decrease fees
 - 4% Increase daily hours or number of days of service
 - 4% Increase school-community partnerships
 - 2% Add social services offered
 - 2% Add transportation services
 - 2% Other
 - 2% Raise standards or criteria for hiring staff
 - 0% Add holiday and/or weekend service
 - 0% Add or increased food services offered
- Number of respondents: 55 (89%)

Methodology: UNCERTAIN TIMES used web-based survey software and the survey was emailed to more than 10,000 contacts in the Afterschool Alliance database in August and September of 2006. Recipients were encouraged to forward the survey to afterschool program staff, and programs were asked to be certain that only one person per program completed the survey and to provide responses from a site-level coordinator when possible. 2,614 responses were reviewed. 503 of them did not provide sufficient data to be included in the final analysis or were duplicate responses; therefore the final sample was 2,111 responses which represent approximately 9,813 afterschool sites serving more than 1.5 million children. (Many respondents are responsible for multiple sites.)

Complete State Level Results Available Upon Request