



## Roadmap to Afterschool for All Executive Summary

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Quality afterschool programs are improving and transforming the lives of children and youth across the nation. Research shows that afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working parents. They give children opportunities to see new worlds, put school lessons into practice, discover their talents and explore career paths, and help them develop the academic, social and professional skills they need to succeed in an increasingly competitive global economy.

Despite all we know about the benefits of afterschool programs, most children are missing out. On any given day, more than 14 million children and youth are on their own after school while just 6.5 million are in afterschool programs. Meeting the need for quality afterschool programs will take a commitment from more than a single funder, funding stream or even sector. It will require significant public investment and systems change at every level –local, state and federal—and an organized, nimble and effective movement pressing for change. It will take an investment from the private as well as the public sector, from corporations as well as philanthropies. The Roadmap to Afterschool for All study was designed specifically to inform that progress and to be a catalyst for increased investments at all levels.

With the help of researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health and support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Atlantic Philanthropies, the Afterschool Alliance initiated the Roadmap to Afterschool for All - a scientific study that for the first time assesses the current investment in afterschool programs from the public sector, parents, foundations and businesses, and estimates the additional investment needed from each sector to provide quality afterschool programs for all children. This survey-based research project was designed to meet the following goals:

- Better understand current funding for afterschool;
- Create a funding roadmap that will help sustain and expand quality afterschool programs;
- Inform a long-term legislative agenda at every level and
- Create real benchmarks for measuring progress.

### Methodology

Fifty school districts from which to interview afterschool program staff were randomly selected from a list of school districts available from the National Center for Education Statistics. Sampling with probabilities proportionate to size (PPS) was used to give districts with higher enrollment a higher chance of being sampled. Within the 50 selected districts, we developed a sampling frame of afterschool programs using national partner organizations' databases and contacts, internet searches, online program databases, school district contacts, statewide afterschool networks, resource and referral agencies and local afterschool ambassadors to locate programs. While we made every effort to find all programs, there is no way to ensure that we identified every program. When the sampling

frame was completed, a random sample of programs was selected within each district. The number of programs for each district varied depending on the total number of afterschool programs in the district. In total, we sampled 3,177 programs and completed interviews with 537 programs. After accounting for the ineligible programs that were sampled, we achieved a response rate of 60.4 percent. A detailed questionnaire was used to obtain basic descriptive information about programming offered and children served as well as funding information from all sources (federal, state, local, philanthropy, private, tuition, in-kind). Data were collected in the fall of 2007 and spring of 2008 and were based on the 2006-2007 school year.

## Key Findings

Parents are paying the lion's share of afterschool costs. This is true even among programs serving high poverty children.

Funding of all types is insufficient - Nearly one-third (32%) of programs reported that their expenses exceeded their revenues.

We need greater investment from all sectors to help ensure that all children and especially the neediest children are able to access quality, affordable afterschool programs - programs that keep kids safe, inspire learning and help working families.

On average, the cost per child is \$3190, which is consistent with other recent research on costs.

Parents are paying the majority of the afterschool bill. On average parents pay more than three-quarters (76%) of the cost of afterschool through tuition and fees.

- Even in low-income communities, parents pay more than half (54 percent).
- On average, families are paying \$2,400 per year per child for afterschool programs.
- Low-income families are paying an average of \$1,722 per year per child.

Currently the federal government contributes only 11% of the cost of afterschool, while 29% of the children in afterschool meet the federal government's definition of low-income and in need of federal assistance.

Previous research revealed that cost is a top factor in selecting an afterschool program, second only to whether or not the child enjoys the program. The *Roadmap* finds that long-standing programs are more likely to charge parent fees and less likely to serve low-income children. Combined, these data tell us that what we have now is an afterschool system for those who can afford to pay that leaves those who cannot with few, if any, options to help keep their kids safe and give them opportunities to learn after the school day ends.

We need a roadmap that establishes concrete objectives for achieving, in the not too distant future, afterschool for all students. This roadmap must:

- Account for the economic reality that some parents are unable to afford fees, while others can.

- Recognize the important role of multiple funding sources - governments at all levels, philanthropic support, businesses, parent fees.
- Account for a broad range of programs from a variety of sponsors, reflecting rich diversity of American communities.
- Focus on approaches that sustain successful quality programs, while allowing innovative new programs to develop.

The *Roadmap to Afterschool for All* recommends a well orchestrated partnership across sectors that reflects a societal commitment to ensuring that all kids have access to quality afterschool programs.

The basis of the *Roadmap to Afterschool for All* is the federal government's commitment to ensuring that all children have access to a quality education and the *Roadmap* includes afterschool programs as a key component of a quality education. The *Roadmap* focuses the federal investment on ensuring the 5.6 million low-income children who need afterschool have access to quality programs.

The *Roadmap* requires a total federal investment of just under \$18 billion (\$17,935,775,000) - an investment that would reduce the burden on low-income families while helping provide 5.6 million low-income youth with academic enrichment, healthy snacks and in some cases even dinner, and a safe environment in the hours after school.

The *Roadmap to Afterschool for All* maintains other sectors' investment levels and increases them by the same percentage as the federal share (nearly eight times the current investment) in order to support children in need of afterschool, but who do not meet the federal government eligibility criteria for support.

The federal government can begin working up to its share immediately with the FY2010 federal appropriations process. Significant increases to 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC and the Child Care Development Block Grant could go a long way to help families quickly.

## Conclusion

To ensure that all children have access to quality, affordable afterschool programs, everyone must do their part. Today, a variety of sectors play a role in funding afterschool programs, but the burden falls disproportionately on families. In the *Roadmap*, the federal government is demonstrating the leadership that Americans have a right to expect. If the *Roadmap to Afterschool for All* is followed, families will continue to carry a large share of afterschool costs, but the federal government will do much more to ensure that children whose families cannot afford quality afterschool still have access to programs. State and local governments, as well as private funders including philanthropies and business and religious organizations, can help meet the needs of families living near poverty levels, and families that can afford to pay for afterschool care will continue to do so.

If we are to truly make quality, affordable afterschool programs available to all who want and need them, we need increased investment from all sectors. In these difficult economic times it is especially critical for the federal government to show leadership and play a key role in making sure that all children have access to the afterschool programs that can help keep them safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. Voters believe in the value of afterschool and want to see increased investments. According to 2008 polling, nearly nine in ten voters (89 percent) say that, given the dangers young people face today, afterschool programs are important. Seventy-six percent want the new Congress and their newly elected state and local officials to increase funding for afterschool programs.

This is a moment when the nation is coming together to address huge challenges, and setting priorities for the future. An investment in afterschool programs is an investment in the next generation, which needs new opportunities to learn, in new ways and at new times outside the traditional school day. Unless we put the afternoon hours to good use and give every child safe, supervising, enriching activities, we lose a real opportunity to give children a brighter future, strengthen families and improve our economy. Now more than ever, we need to increase the investment in quality afterschool programs from all sectors. The *Roadmap to Afterschool for All* is designed to point the way - but the real test of America's commitment to its children will be whether we travel down the road this report maps out.

For more information download the *Roadmap to Afterschool for All* report at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).

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