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Most Afterschool Programs Have Been Helping Meet Urgent Needs of Students and Families in the Pandemic, But Many Are Uncertain About Their Role and Resources Going Forward, Survey Finds

WASHINGTON, DC – Out-of-school-time programs are a vital piece of the school reopening puzzle, with most expected to provide expanded services and supports in the school year about to begin, including providing safe, engaging, educational activities for students during the school day, when schools are physically closed. But many programs do not yet have the resources or clarity they need to prepare for the new school year. That is the core finding from [a national survey](#) of afterschool and summer program providers that was released today.

“In many ways, out-of-school-time programs are uniquely positioned to help during the health and economic crises the pandemic has brought, but this survey shows that many programs are struggling themselves,” said Jodi Grant, executive director of the Afterschool Alliance. “Programs are stretching and scrambling to help students and families who are hurting, including many who are low-income, by delivering meals and enrichment kits, providing innovative virtual learning, checking in with children and families, developing constructive actions for students who want to advance racial justice to take, caring for the children of essential workers and first responders, and much more. At the same time, programs have uncertain budgets, unclear mandates for the school year, and resources that are far from adequate if they are to help solve the enormous problems their communities face.”

The online survey was conducted by Edge Research for the Afterschool Alliance from May 28 to June 30, with a total of 914 program providers from 47 states and the District of Columbia completing it. Findings include:

- While challenged on multiple fronts, afterschool programs continue to provide critical supports in their communities. Overall, 70 percent of respondents report serving students in some capacity since the pandemic hit.
 - Three in five afterschool programs (and 67 percent of those serving predominantly low-income students) are serving youth and finding ways to stay connected to youth.
 - 48 percent (and 54 percent of those serving predominantly low-income students) are serving as a meals site, delivering meals, or distributing other resources to families.
 - 47 percent of afterschool programs (and 54 percent of those serving predominantly low-income students) are connecting families with community resources.
- Nearly one in five (18 percent of) afterschool programs have been providing care for the children of essential workers in the pandemic.

- The wellbeing of the children and families they serve is a priority for afterschool programs. An overwhelming majority of survey respondents report high levels of concern about their students and families. For example, 86 percent are “extremely” or “very” concerned that their students were experiencing learning loss and 78 percent are concerned about losing touch with students in need due to COVID-19.
- 84 percent of respondents report they are concerned that they will not be able to provide services in the fall. More than eight in ten program providers say funding (84 percent) and better guidance and resources to protect the health and safety of staff and students (82 percent) are “extremely” or “very” important right now.
- 45 percent of respondents report that they have laid off or furloughed staff and of that group, two-thirds (67 percent) report that 50 percent or more of their staff who have been affected.
- Despite the challenges program providers report, 52 percent of respondents are optimistic about the future of their afterschool program.
- At the time the survey was conducted, 61 percent of respondents planned to offer summer programming.

“It’s clear that out-of-school-time programs are going to have expanded mandates and additional challenges this year,” Grant added. “They will need to be adequately funded to provide the help families and communities need.”

“We’re going to have to receive more funding to continue doing what we’re doing now,” said Miguel Garcia of Fort Worth Afterschool, which provided nearly a million full dinners to students during the last school year, noting that providing meals when students are attending school virtually is a major challenge.

A fact sheet with the survey results is [here](#). A PowerPoint with key findings is here: <https://3to6.co/survey-results-ppt>. The topline results are [here](#).

A recording of the press briefing at which it was released, featuring Jodi Grant as well as Ayana Melvan of United Way of Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Afterschool Network, Miguel Garcia of Fort Worth Afterschool, Fort Worth Independent School District in Texas, and Tony Yungeberg of Valley Heights Community Education in Kansas is [here](#).

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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.