



National League of Cities

Expanding Afterschool Opportunities

Issue #4

action kit for Municipal Leaders



Institute for Youth, Education, and Families

Dear Municipal Leader:

This kit was created not just for you, but for the children, youth, and families in your community. It is based on the latest research and best practices from across the nation and offers a wide-ranging menu of opportunities for municipal leadership to make children, youth, and family issues a community-wide priority. Whether you are ready to launch a major initiative or are just getting started, the ideas in this kit will help you move forward.

NLC's ongoing series of action kits for municipal leaders, published by the new Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, will address each of the Institute's five core program areas: education; youth development; early childhood development; the safety of children and youth; and family economic security. The goal is to give you and other municipal leaders throughout the country the ideas and the tools you need to take action on these all-important issues for the future of our cities and towns.

Mayors and city councilmembers all across America know that our communities' success depends on the health and well-being of the nation's children, youth, and families. Now is the time to act on this knowledge. As a municipal leader, you have the ability to focus the attention of your community on the needs of children, youth, and families. Working with your colleagues in local government, you can strengthen municipal policies, support effective programs, and bring diverse partners to the table in order to make things happen.

NLC and its Institute for Youth, Education, and Families are eager to assist you in these vital efforts. We encourage you to use this action kit to get started, and we hope you will contact us whenever we might be of assistance. Institute staff are readily available to provide additional information about the strategies highlighted in each of the action kits and to help you identify steps that make sense for your community.

*Donald J. Borut
Executive Director
National League of Cities*

*Clifford M. Johnson, Executive Director
Institute for Youth, Education, and Families
National League of Cities*

About the National League of Cities:

The National League of Cities (NLC) is the oldest and largest national organization representing municipal governments throughout the United States. NLC serves as a national resource and advocate on behalf of over 1700 member cities and for 49 municipal leagues whose membership totals more than 18,000 cities and towns across the country.

The mission of the National League of Cities is to strengthen and promote cities as centers of opportunity, leadership, and governance.



About NLC's Institute for Youth, Education, and Families:

The Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, a special entity within the National League of Cities, helps municipal leaders take action on behalf of the children, youth, and families in their communities. NLC launched the Institute in January 2000 in recognition of the unique and influential roles that mayors, city councilmembers, and other local leaders can play in strengthening families and improving outcomes for children and youth.

As a national resource to cities and towns across America, the Institute provides guidance and assistance to municipal officials, compiles and disseminates information on promising strategies and best practices, builds networks of local officials working on similar issues and concerns, and conducts research on the key challenges facing municipalities. NLC's Council on Youth, Education, and Families guides and oversees the Institute's work.



Why Focus on Afterschool?

An estimated eight million school children between the ages of five and 14 go home to an empty house on a regular basis. Many of these children are left alone for as many as four hours a day.

For cities and towns across America, these unsupervised hours after school ends mean both heightened risks and missed opportunities.

- ✦ Afterschool hours provide an ideal time to reinforce children's learning gains and supplement the academic curriculum offered at school.
- ✦ Most juvenile crime is committed between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., with the crime rate tripling in the first hour after school is out.
- ✦ The afterschool hours are also prime times for teenage sexual activity, drug use, and automobile accidents. For example, teens not enrolled in afterschool programs are three times more likely to experiment with drugs. They are also more likely to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, and engage in sexual activity.
- ✦ Afterschool programs provide a safe environment where youth can engage in fun and constructive activities, while also contributing to worker productivity by reassuring parents that their children are in a supervised setting with caring adults.

In response to these realities, many communities have created afterschool programs (a term commonly applied to programs before and after school as well as during periods when school is not in session) to promote learning, keep children and youth out of trouble, and meet the needs of working parents. These programs are enormously popular: 94 percent of all Americans believe that school-age children need structured activities during afterschool hours, and 86 percent of police chiefs believe that afterschool programs greatly reduce youth violence and crime.

Many schools and community-based organizations run afterschool programs, and they are important partners in the development of an effective afterschool system. Without leadership from municipal officials, however, they usually cannot forge a community-wide strategy that works for all children.

This action kit illustrates the many ways in which municipal leaders can craft such a strategy to expand afterschool opportunities, and in the process, advance the goals of public safety, academic achievement, and youth development in their cities.

Opportunities for Leadership

Almost every city and town in America offers some activities for children and youth during afterschool hours. A remarkably diverse set of institutions and organizations provide these recreational and expanded learning opportunities, including schools, libraries, museums, faith-based and community-based organizations, police departments, and city and county departments of youth services, parks and recreation, health, and workforce development.

Municipal governments frequently provide direct financial support for afterschool programs run by local agencies. These funds augment resources otherwise available through federal and state grants, private contributions, and fees paid by parents. City investments in afterschool opportunities can have a big impact, even when they are modest in size and scope, because local officials can utilize these funds in ways that leverage other resources and respond to the community's greatest needs.

At the same time, municipal financing is only one of the ways that city leaders can strengthen afterschool initiatives. Mayors and city councilmembers can serve as a catalyst for far-reaching efforts that address a number of other key challenges, including:

- ◇ *Promoting partnerships* that make it possible to forge a shared vision of afterschool challenges and opportunities;
- ◇ *Building public will* to sustain a strong municipal role in the development of a local afterschool system over time;

- ◇ *Assessing local resources and needs* through surveys and data analyses;
- ◇ *Improving quality* so that programs effectively deliver on the promises of safety, academic achievement, and cultural enrichment;
- ◇ *Broadening access* to ensure that all children, including those from low-income families and neighborhoods and from diverse cultural backgrounds, have opportunities to participate; and
- ◇ *Financing a citywide system* for afterschool opportunities that supports stability and long-term growth.

In each of these areas, municipal officials can play leadership roles by focusing public attention on key issues, convening major stakeholders, and setting an agenda for citywide progress. The stature and influence of mayors and other city leaders are often essential in order to bring community partners to the table and to develop local action plans.

City officials may be tempted to think of afterschool programs as someone else's responsibility. Most of the funding for afterschool initiatives will not flow through the city's budget, and most of the programs operating in the community will not be run out of municipal agencies. Nonetheless, city officials are uniquely positioned to create the framework for community-wide collaboration upon which genuine and lasting progress depends.

Promoting Partnerships

An effective afterschool system depends upon a strong set of community partnerships. They encourage and enable schools and youth-serving agencies to work together in meeting the needs of children and families. These partnerships also provide a framework for engaging other key stakeholders – including police chiefs, business and religious leaders, park and recreation officials, and representatives of major cultural institutions – in collaborative efforts.

In most cities and towns, municipal leaders are the only individuals who can convene these diverse segments of the community and focus their attention on the challenge of expanding afterschool opportunities. While there will always be differences of opinion and conflicting interests, mayors can create a climate for progress by clearly articulating their hopes and expectations for cooperation among key agencies and organizations.

Community partnerships can be forged through high-profile afterschool summits (a strategy employed in Omaha) as well as through individual meetings and quiet, behind-the-scenes discussions. An afterschool coordinator reporting directly to the mayor (a model being used in Indianapolis) or placed in an appropriate city agency can also play a key role in pulling diverse segments of the community together. The following tips offer further advice on strategies to promote partnerships:

Reach out to school officials.

The direct engagement of school superintendents and other senior school district staff can provide an enormous boost to local afterschool initiatives. In some communities, the school system itself finances or administers afterschool programs or works in partner-

ship with community groups to keep school buildings open to children and families throughout the day. Other school districts provide vital support, in areas ranging from transportation to curriculum development, to neighborhood-based programs. Because the use of school facilities and coordination with school programs are likely to be central issues in every community, no city can hope to forge a truly comprehensive afterschool system without getting school officials to the table.

Promote collaborations between schools and youth-serving groups.

By bringing the strengths of community groups and the school system together, these partnerships can yield great dividends. Municipal leaders can promote such collaborations by making regular efforts to convene stakeholders and supporting joint ventures between individual schools and the agencies that serve surrounding neighborhoods. For example, the City of Fort Worth, Texas, solicited applications from youth-serving agencies interested in providing afterschool services and then worked with the school district to match them up with individual schools.

Keep key stakeholders informed.

Once a diverse group of agencies and institutions has begun to collaborate, city officials can help them stay connected and part of a community-wide effort. In Fresno, California, the Mayor's Office of Education produces a quarterly electronic newsletter to update partners on recent developments and trumpet new successes. This focus on regular communication helps to maintain a crucial sense of momentum and common purpose across the city.

Building Public Will

Municipal leaders who want to strengthen afterschool programs can make a major contribution by using their “bully pulpit” to educate local citizens and build public will. Such efforts can publicize the importance of structured activities for children during non-school hours, increase community and business involvement in afterschool programs, promote partnerships with the public schools, and bolster public support for new initiatives.

As the most prominent individuals in their cities and towns, local elected officials have a unique ability to focus attention on, and mobilize support for, expanded afterschool opportunities for children and their families. The following principles provide a helpful framework that can boost the effectiveness of these efforts.

Be clear about the message.

In efforts to sway public opinion, nothing is more effective than a simple but persuasive message that connects in powerful ways to the realities facing local residents. Mayors and city councilmembers can build upon their understanding of families' concerns by hosting organized discussion forums in the community. When feasible, focus groups and opinion surveys can shed additional light on the public's priorities and help city officials tailor messages to specific groups.

Mayor Don Plusquellic of Akron, Ohio used his 2001 state-of-the-city address to ask the school district to work with city government in expanding opportunities for community use of public schools buildings. The mayor then joined with the school board, teachers, and school administrators to resolve thorny contract issues involving the local custodians union. As a result of a final contract agreement between the union and the school district, the city is now able to operate afterschool recreation and learning programs in a greater number of public school buildings throughout the community.

Develop a communications strategy.

A carefully crafted plan that identifies major audiences, objectives, strategies, and messages should serve as the centerpiece for a public education campaign. Key audiences may include business, civic, and religious leaders, parents, students, educators, neighborhood groups, and members of the state and local press. Municipal leaders can be particularly effective by personally briefing local opinion leaders – including other elected officials as well as media representatives – about afterschool issues and opportunities.

Utilize diverse forums and media outlets.

Receiving the same message through multiple channels helps to reinforce it in people's minds. Public speeches, town hall meetings, council meetings and hearings, newspaper editorials, news conferences, press interviews, business roundtables, and programs on local cable channels all offer good opportunities to get the word out. Local elected officials can also host community events that give reporters, columnists, talk show hosts, and television news producers a chance to showcase exemplary afterschool initiatives.

Work in tandem with community coalitions.

Mayors and other city officials have an even greater impact on public opinion when they join forces with community supporters of afterschool programs. Broad-based coalitions can heighten public awareness by selecting easily recognizable names, slogans, and logos that reinforce campaign messages. These coalitions also underscore the depth of community support for afterschool initiatives (making it less likely that the overall agenda will be dismissed as politically motivated) and help keep citizens updated and involved in citywide efforts.

Assessing Local Resources and Needs

For municipal leaders interested in building a stronger afterschool system in their communities, taking stock of opportunities already available to children and youth during non-school hours is a necessary first step. By “mapping” existing afterschool programs, cities can determine what services are in place and where they are likely to be inadequate.

Afterschool programs come in many shapes and sizes. Some are targeted to at-risk students while others are open to all children. Some are designed primarily as recreational safe havens while others have strong academic components. Some serve students for only a few hours after school ends while others extend the school day from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. or beyond.

The goal of mapping afterschool resources is to help communities understand and tell the story of their unique blend of activities and opportunities for children and youth during out-of-school time – to paint the “big picture” so that stakeholders can work from a common base of knowledge. This assessment of local resources and needs provides the foundation for development of a common vision and an action plan for the city.

The City of Baltimore uses a mapping process to assess the impact of afterschool programs on a variety of key community indicators, including school enrollment, academic achievement, juvenile crime and victimization, and teenage pregnancy. The city's school district, police department, and child care and human service agencies all channel data to the Family League of Baltimore City, a local nonprofit agency. Family League staff then analyze the data and help the city evaluate whether its afterschool programs are meeting their goals by preventing risky behaviors, developing competencies, and generating feelings of optimism for the future among Baltimore's children and youth.

To collect more information about programs already in place in their community, mayors and city councilmembers can employ several useful approaches:

Conduct a survey of local providers

Communities can begin to develop a picture of afterschool opportunities by checking with the local United Way and other community groups about information they have collected in the course of their recent work. When these data are insufficient, the city can administer its own survey of local youth-serving agencies. Survey responses will generate baseline information about the number of public and nonprofit programs in specific neighborhoods, the services they provide, the hours and days during which they operate, and the number of children they serve. These surveys can also be used to identify community-based initiatives not previously known to city officials.

Use YouthMapping to fill in the picture

A number of cities have used interviews and observations by young people to compile additional information on places where children and youth go during non-school hours. Developed by the Academy for Educational Development's Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, Community YouthMapping provides a well-organized framework that enables youth to canvass and map the neighborhoods in which they live.

Analyze the data to identify opportunities and needs

Simply locating current programs on a city map and then reviewing their distribution across neighborhoods can reveal a great deal about unmet needs and possible duplication of efforts. Comparing this information to neighborhood data on academic achievement and juvenile crime can also guide future decisions about where to target new energies and investments for maximum impact.

Improving Quality

Afterschool programs throughout a community often face similar challenges. Low salaries and limited hours contribute to staff turnover rates as high as 40 percent and prolonged staffing vacancies. Inadequate training opportunities for providers and lack of clear program standards also pose threats to program quality.

An effective afterschool system recognizes that these problems are too large and pervasive for individual programs to solve on their own. Many cities already have a diverse array of afterschool offerings in place, including extended day services at schools and community-based organizations, tutoring and mentoring programs, sports leagues, drop-in programs, cultural and arts activities, and other clubs and instructional activities. What cities frequently need is a support structure for programs that strengthens their capacity to deliver high-quality services to children during non-school hours.

Through leadership and well-focused investments of community resources, municipal officials can create this infrastructure and steadily enhance program quality over time. Steps to consider include:

Build networks that promote collaboration.

Through their relationships with afterschool networks and individual providers, cities can draw attention to recognized standards of program quality. Standards of quality can be used to assess the current state of afterschool programs, set goals for program improvement, and improve program design. Components of afterschool programs commonly associated with high-quality services include: (1) positive and stable relationships with caring adults; (2) program content that is tailored to the interests of children, youth, parents, and other stakeholders; and (3) appropriate environments that are safe and support the programs activities.

Promote the use of quality standards.

One key to reducing high levels of staff turnover is to create a more substantial career ladder for employees at afterschool sites. Several cities have used professional credentials or degrees as the basis for moving staff from entry-level to master-level roles and responsibilities, enhancing staff compensation at each step along the way. Municipal officials have also worked with local community colleges, universities, and local funders to develop

training programs that eventually lead to an afterschool credential or bachelor's degree in the field of school-age care.

Develop career ladders for afterschool staff.

A major barrier to improvements in quality lies in the relative isolation of afterschool providers. City leaders can be a catalyst for the development of networks that bring programs together through periodic meetings and electronic newsletters. In addition, mayors and city councilmembers can encourage school officials to meet regularly and communicate more effectively with afterschool programs about academic goals and curriculum at each grade level, thereby making the most of expanded learning opportunities during non-school hours.

Connect afterschool programs to volunteer help.

Afterschool programs often supplement their paid staff with volunteers drawn from diverse sources, including local mentoring programs, college service learning projects, the America Reads literacy initiative, and religious congregations and faith-based organizations. Older youth can provide valuable support to paid staff when paired with younger children in cross-age tutoring projects. Some cities encourage municipal employees to volunteer by authorizing limited leave time for this purpose, while also encouraging local businesses to adopt similar policies. Other cities have linked afterschool programs and area senior citizens by providing free shuttle or bus service to and from program sites.

In Columbus, Ohio, the Cap City Kids program launched by Mayor Michael Coleman places great emphasis on the quality of the afterschool opportunities it provides. Using program standards developed by the Mayor's Office of Education in collaboration with education and community leaders, the city initially supported five pilot sites and examined whether its standards yielded the intended outcomes. After parent and student report cards demonstrated improvement in homework completion, social skills, and enhanced connections with adults and caregivers, the city subsequently expanded the program to operate in a total of 20 sites. The Mayor's Office of Education is also working with youth-serving agencies such as the YMCA to encourage the broader use of these standards throughout the community.

Broadening Access

A key goal of any citywide afterschool system should be to ensure that all children have access to appropriate programs during non-school hours. If parents cannot afford program fees, or if there simply are too few opportunities in their neighborhood, large numbers of children may be left out. When that happens, families and cities both lose.

Efforts to broaden access to afterschool programs do not presume that all children will or should participate. Some parents are able to be at home with their children when the school day ends. Others may prefer to have family members or neighbors care for their children during these hours. What is important is that parents have options so that the needs of their children – for supervision, recreation, and continued learning – are met.

By seeking to address major issues of affordability, supply, and transportation, municipal leaders can play key roles in broadening access to afterschool programs. Steps that mayors and other city officials can take include:

Create a resource directory for parents.

Good information about what is available in the community plays an important role in expanding access to afterschool programs. Using data compiled through city mapping efforts or by local child care resource and referral agencies, a directory organized by neighborhood and type of activity can guide parents toward age-appropriate opportunities for their children. Printed copies of the directory (in several languages, when necessary) can be distributed through a wide range of public and non-profit agencies. Making this information available through interactive kiosks in neighborhoods, telephone referral “hotlines,” and city web sites will ensure even greater reach and impact.

Target resources to reach low-income families.

Program fees generate the bulk of revenues for many afterschool programs, and yet these same fees can block access for children from low-income families. City officials can work with afterschool partners and private sector leaders to establish sliding fee scales that target help to families with the greatest needs and keep program fees in line with parents’ ability to pay.

Expand afterschool opportunities in low-income neighborhoods.

Municipal leaders also can increase low-income families’ access to afterschool programs by identifying underserved parts of the community and then developing supply-building strategies in these areas. Targeted grants financed through city partnerships

with community foundations or local businesses can have a major impact. Parks and recreation departments and other city agencies can open their facilities to community groups offering afterschool services. Finally, local police departments, libraries, and museums can be asked to review their offerings during non-school hours in an effort to serve more children in low-income neighborhoods.

Address transportation barriers.

Getting children to and from program sites can be an afterschool initiative’s most formidable challenge – one that affects enrollment, hours of operation, and program cost. Because union rules often prevent school buses from running late enough to meet the needs of students returning home from afterschool programs, cities such as Boston and Sweetwater, Wyoming, provide free or reduced-fare travel on city buses that are re-routed near children’s homes. Municipal officials in other communities have helped to identify central locations for afterschool programs so that parents or guardians can more easily pick up their children at the end of the day.

Develop programs that respond to cultural diversity.

The needs of children from diverse cultural, ethnic, and language backgrounds are unlikely to be met by a “one-size-fits-all” approach to program development. Broadening access for these populations requires the development of programs that are rooted in their cultural traditions, including the selection of staff and curricula that are appropriate for children whose first language is not English. Early involvement of leaders from affected communities is an important key to long-term success.

The City of Fort Myers, Florida, is using its Success Through Academic Recreation Support (STARS) program to offer afterschool learning and cultural enrichment opportunities in neighborhoods where children have the greatest needs. STARS operates out of a recreation complex located in the heart of the city’s minority community, and it supports academic tutoring as well as classes ranging from modern and African folkdance to vocal arts, creative writing and cultural and heritage arts. With a strong parent involvement component and links to local schools, STARS is cited by the city’s police department as a major factor behind a 28 percent drop in juvenile arrests citywide.

Financing a Citywide System

A long-term financing plan is essential to the success and sustainability of a citywide afterschool system. Cities and their partners within county governments, school districts, community foundations, and local businesses can and should work together to ensure that afterschool programs are adequately funded over time. In the absence of proactive steps toward this goal, municipal leaders run a greater risk of watching this year's hard-earned gains disappear amidst next year's budget crunch.

While most afterschool programs rely heavily upon some combination of parental fees and state or federal funding, cities that have made the most progress toward sustainability understand that developing mechanisms to finance a citywide system is primarily a local responsibility.

Municipal leaders certainly do not have to pay all the bills, but they do have to look ahead and put all the funding pieces together in a way that works for their communities. Here are some suggestions on how to get started:

Assemble a clear picture of long-term costs

Understanding the costs of a citywide afterschool effort, at both the program and system levels, is a key step in the development of a long-term financing plan. The cost of providing direct services to children in afterschool programs can vary greatly, depending on the types of services offered, hours of program operation, the neighborhood or community where the program is located, and the needs of families served. Beyond these direct service costs, ongoing investments in the infrastructure that supports high-quality programs – including networks of providers, promotion of standards, transportation services, training and career ladders for staff, and recruitment of volunteers – need to be considered.

Create a framework for shared responsibility

Cities that secure state and/or federal funds and build a solid local funding base for afterschool programs are well positioned for long-term success. Recognizing that municipal government cannot do the job alone, a number of cities have sought to build a community-wide framework for shared responsibility. Key elements of such an approach include an ongoing funding commitment from local stakeholders, pooling of financial resources, and in-kind contributions that seek to strengthen program quality. The local contributions generated through these community partnerships demonstrate broad support for afterschool initiatives and frequently leverage additional support from federal, state, or private sources.

In Sacramento, California, each key local stakeholder (i.e., the city, county, community foundation, afterschool providers, and area businesses) has agreed to pay part of the local share of after-

school program costs (those not covered by state or federal sources). This strategy has helped to create a stable, equitable, and affordable mechanism for ensuring that the community can meet afterschool needs. Equally important, it provides a solid foundation for future growth and has sparked a new way of thinking about community partnerships to support afterschool opportunities for all children and youth.

Advocate for state and federal funding

The federal government's support for afterschool programs has grown substantially, including \$846 million in grants for 21st Century Community Learning Centers during the past year. State policymakers also understand the value of afterschool programs: a total of 42 states currently commit some of their own revenues to support state or local afterschool initiatives. Municipal leaders can be strong advocates for increased afterschool funding at both state and federal levels and work to ensure that their communities get a fair share of state and/or federal dollars. Mayors and city councilmembers also can push for the opportunity to administer these funds locally, since city officials are in the best position to work with schools and community-based organizations to build citywide afterschool systems.

Use local data to guide future investments

A number of cities, both large and small, have developed a "children's budget" to trace the path of every dollar invested by municipal agencies in afterschool programs and a wide range of other services for children and youth. This analysis of city expenditures then can be compared with available data on community needs to identify ways that scarce funds might be spent more effectively. By using a "children's budget" as a planning and resource allocation tool, municipal leaders can make more informed decisions about city priorities and proposed funding shifts.

Collaboration has been the key to generating a stable funding base for the Lighted Schools Program in Waco, Texas. Leaders of this broad-based afterschool initiative have successfully sought federal grants as well as support from community and national foundations to supplement available local resources. City officials also reassigned parks and recreation department staff to provide more direct support for the Lighted Schools Program. The most recent funding effort encourages local businesses to participate in a new state tax incentive program that provides tax credits to companies supporting afterschool programs. Since 1994, the Lighted Schools Program has grown substantially and currently operates in six middle schools, four elementary schools, and one alternative high school.

City Examples

Beloit, Wisconsin: “Building on the Building Blocks of Beloit’s Youth” (BOBBY) (Pop. 35,573)

The B.O.B.B.Y. Initiative, housed by the Beloit Health Department, offers integrated health and social services in a one-stop-shopping arrangement for elementary school students. Programs are recreational, educational (including tutoring by students from University of Wisconsin-Whitewater), artistic, and musical in nature. The tutoring and enrichment activities offered at the centers create a strong linkage between school instruction and after-school tutoring. The project is a collaborative between the City of Beloit and the Greater Beloit Community Foundation.

Birmingham, Alabama: Community Education (Pop. 265,968)

Since the early 1970s, the City of Birmingham has used a funding formula for community education wherein the Mayor and City Council provide two-thirds of the program cost through the city's general fund budget and the Birmingham Board of Education provides one-third. The program has several related goals: to provide community residents with lifelong learning opportunities; to cooperate with other community agencies to provide health, education, cultural, and recreational opportunities at accessible central locations; and to involve the community in the education process. Cooperative arrangements with city agencies help centers provide a wide array of services on site and address issues such as illiteracy, unemployment, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and homelessness. Advisory Councils at each of the city's 18 sites feed into a citywide council that helps the school district set policy and direction for the initiative.

Boston, Massachusetts: “2:00-to-6:00 After-School Initiative” (Pop. 574,283)

In 1998, Mayor Thomas M. Menino created the Boston 2:00-to-6:00 After-School Initiative to help expand afterschool programs in every neighborhood in the city. This initiative invests more than \$11.5 million each year in afterschool programming and has also helped to leverage an additional \$17 million from public and private sources to expand the number of children served. Further, the city has published “Financing Our Children’s Future,” a guide to resources from the federal, state, and local governments as well as foundations and corporations that are available for afterschool programming. The Mayor’s Task Force on Afterschool Time developed recommendations and provided public support for expanding high-quality afterschool programming in Boston.

Bridgeport, Connecticut: “Lighthouses in the Community” (Pop. 123,529)

The City of Bridgeport, Connecticut, in partnership with the school district and several community nonprofit agencies, devised a strategy to open the doors of schools in the afterschool hours. A combination of municipal, state, and federal funds keeps the programs running. Funds supporting the program are allocated to local institutions of higher education, religious groups, community service centers, ethnic organizations, education service and special needs agencies, regional museums, and innovative nonprofit and educational entrepreneurs. School administrators partner with city officials to plan, implement, and evaluate programs.

Claremont, California: “TRACKS” (Pop. 33,998)

The City of Claremont, in cooperation with the Claremont Unified School District and a variety of community agencies, has designed an afterschool membership program for 7th and 8th grade Claremont students. TRACKS links a variety of recreational, enrichment, and youth development activities under one umbrella. The program's director is employed by TRACKS on a part-time basis and also works part-time as a campus monitor for the school district. This unique partnership allows the director to be on the campus for a portion of the day and allows students as well as parents to become more familiar with the afterschool program.

Fort Worth, Texas: “Fort Worth Afterschool” (Pop. 534,694)

After a special joint meeting was held between the Fort Worth City Council and the Board of Education of the Fort Worth Independent School District, staff members of the two entities were directed to prepare an in-depth proposal on a collaborative effort to provide afterschool programming for the children of Fort Worth. The result was a \$2.2 million initiative to fund afterschool programs in 52 schools across the city. At the end of the initial year of implementation, evaluators from Texas A&M created a “report card” for the citywide program and rated its performance in a variety of categories to help the community assess how well the program was meeting its intended objectives.

Longview, Washington: “Youth After Hours Program” (Pop. 31,499)

Started in 1993, the Youth After Hours program offers elementary students from schools in high-risk neighborhoods a secure and stable environment to establish relationships with peers and adults; a safe place to relax; and an opportunity to develop life skills and goals, receive recognition, and enjoy a sense of purpose and belonging. Local youth serving agencies and groups submit proposals to run different activities in the program. The program



is coordinated by the county's substance abuse coalition but partners include the parks and recreation department, camp fire boys and girls, boy scouts and girl scouts, the YMCA, and the Washington State university Cooperative Extension/4-H.

Salt Lake City, Utah: "YouthCity" (Pop.181,743)

The Salt Lake City Mayor's Office in partnership with the Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation Department began offering after-school programs for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders starting in January 2001. YouthCity activities are designed to enrich students through access to artistic, recreational, and technological resources. In addition to workshop space, there is also room for students to study or socialize. At the 2001 Lights On Afterschool Day, Mayor Anderson outlined a two-year plan for expansion of YouthCity. He also highlighted the importance of building partnerships between business leaders, nonprofit organizations, and local government to provide funding and tax-supported facilities for these programs.

San Diego, California: "6 to 6 Initiative" (Pop.1,277,688)

The City of San Diego, in cooperation with San Diego Unified School District, developed a vision of universal before-school and afterschool programs in every public elementary and middle school within its jurisdiction. Leaders of the "6 to 6 Initiative" are fulfilling their vision by channeling funds through the mayor's office. This approach allows funding earmarked for individual components of the initiative to be pooled together and then distributed to the program sites to support the entire program. The coordinated funding structure also protects individual programs from changes in the flow of funds from any one funding source.

Seat Pleasant, Maryland: Afterschool Study and Recreation Center (Pop. 5,217)

Started by Seat Pleasant's City Education Committee and expanded by the Parks and Recreation Department, the Afterschool Study and Recreation Center provides constructive activities for children who would otherwise be unsupervised until their parents return from work. The primary focus is on homework and tutorial time, accompanied by specialized recreation activities. Students also have access to computers and the Internet as well as study cubicles. The city became involved after concluding that "a school-based program is impractical because children in our area are bussed to many different elementary and middle schools." The city supports the program by providing minibus transportation to and from program sites.

Seattle, Washington: "Project Lift-Off" (Pop.563,374)

Seattle has had a long history of developing cutting edge strategies to support afterschool programs. Project Lift-Off seeks to create effective and affordable early learning and out-of-school time opportunities for Seattle's kids, ages birth to 18. Under Project Lift-Off, the city has worked to leverage its investments through the development of an innovative "Opportunity Fund" with an association of philanthropies in the Northwest. They challenged these grantmakers to work together – and with the city – to provide coordinated funding for key child care priorities. Through the Opportunity Fund, the city invests \$1 for every \$2 invested by philanthropies in a funding pool. The participating grantmakers can then choose to invest the pooled funding in any project that matches the Project Lift-Off "Blueprint for Change" strategies.

Statesboro, Georgia: Afterschool Enrichment (Pop.22,698)

Eleven of Bullock County's fourteen schools provide enrichment activities for students outside of regular school hours. Elementary school students get help with their homework from college students, and participate in games and activities. The program for middle school students focuses on academics, community service, recreation, and conflict resolution. Afterschool care has been so successful that the county's School Board and Parks and Recreation Department share the salary costs for a teacher to help run the program at each school.

White Plains, New York: Youth Bureau (Pop.53,007)

The White Plains Youth Bureau provides children and youth safe, structured afterschool activities that engage student interest, develop skills, and present opportunities for community service under the supervision of positive role models. In order to maintain the affordability and the quality of the program, the Youth Bureau forms creative partnerships with the community and other city agencies. One example of this creative partnership is the program's connection to the Senior Center. Through the Foster Granny program, senior citizens provide homework assistance and play games with the youth. Building on the success of this program, the afterschool students now volunteer at the Senior Center where they can interact with far more senior citizens. Recently, the Youth Bureau received a grant to have middle school youth work with the senior citizens to develop a book and video chronicling the life of these seniors.

Families Need Supervision for Children and Youth

Approximately eight million children ages five to 14 spend time without adult supervision on a regular basis. This number includes four million children between the ages 12 and younger and another four million children ages 13 and 14.

Children are at greater risk of being victims of violent crime in the four hours (roughly from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.) after the school day ends and before their parents typically return home from work.

Researchers estimate that, in the year 2002, the current number of afterschool programs for school-age children will meet as little as 25 percent of the demand in some urban areas.

Children spend only 20 percent of their waking time – six hours per day for 180 days per year – in school. Large blocks of their remaining time are free and often unstructured, a time of both risk and opportunity.

The time differential between when the school bell rings and when parents get home from work can amount to 20-25 hours per week.

Children spend an average of almost three hours per day watching television. Seventeen percent of children regularly watch more than five hours of television per day.

Children's television viewing has been associated with lower reading achievement, behavior problems, and increased aggression. When children watch more than three hours a day of television or watch violent programs, these behavioral and learning risks increase.

Public Support for Afterschool Programs is Growing

Sixty-seven percent of Americans are ready to forego a tax cut to provide children with good early childhood development programs and quality afterschool programs.

More than one-third of voters believe that the biggest problem facing children today is that they are alone and unsupervised.

In a survey of police chiefs, 86 percent said expanding afterschool and educational childcare programs would greatly reduce youth crime and violence. Ninety-one percent of police chiefs said America will pay later in crime, welfare, and other costs, if greater investments in afterschool and educational child care aren't made now.

Three out of five voters (62 percent) are willing to pay \$100 more per year in taxes to pay for afterschool programs.

Afterschool Programs Increase School Success

Students who actively participated in afterschool programs moved out of the lowest performing quartile on the SAT-9 reading test at almost three times the rate of the general student population and moved out of the bottom quartile on the SAT-9 math test at almost twice the rate of the general student population.

Afterschool programs in 12 high-risk California communities found that the number of afterschool participants who received failing grades on report cards decreased by one-third after just one year of the program.

Children Benefit from Afterschool Programs

Children who attend high quality programs have better peer relations, emotional adjustment, conflict resolution skills, grades, and conduct in school compared to their peers who are not in afterschool programs.

Children who attend an afterschool program miss fewer days of school, exhibit improved behavior in school, complete their homework more regularly, and earn higher test scores. Parents report that they are able to work more hours and maintain more flexible schedules.

Students who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities are 49 percent less likely to use drugs and 37 percent less likely to become teen parents than students who do not participate in extracurricular activities.

Every dollar spent on the Quantum Opportunities Program, a rigorously evaluated afterschool program operating in Philadelphia, returned \$3.04 in benefits to participants and the public, without even accounting for a six-fold drop in crime by participating boys. Boys and girls left out of the program were 50 percent more likely to have children during high school years and twice as likely to drop out of high school. Those who participated in the programs were two and a half times more likely to go on to further education after high school.

Sources: *Afterschool Alliance; American Youth Policy Forum; Fight Crime: Invest in Kids; Kaiser Family Foundation; National Institute on Out-of-School Time; Ohio Hunger Task Force; U.S. Government Accounting Office; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; California Department of Education; University of Wisconsin; and Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America.*



NLC's Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute) assists municipal leaders in designing their own citywide afterschool programs. Contact: Mark Ouellette at 202-626-3052 or ouellette@nlc.org.

A number of other national organizations have also developed materials that might be of assistance to local elected officials:

Afterschool Alliance is a coalition of public, private, and nonprofit organizations dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of afterschool programs. The *Afterschool Action Kit* explains the importance of afterschool programs, what to look for in a program, how to develop an afterschool program in your community if one does not exist, and where to get additional resources. Contact: Afterschool Alliance, PO Box 65166, Washington, DC 20035; (202) 296-9378; www.afterschoolalliance.org.

Coalition for Community Schools (CCS) mobilizes the resources and capacities of multiple sectors and institutions to create a united movement for community schools. *Strengthening Partnerships: Community School Assessment Checklist* provides a series of checklists to assist school and community leaders in creating and/or strengthening community school partnerships. Contact: CCS, 1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 822-8405; www.communityschools.org.

Fight Crime Invest in Kids is a bipartisan, anti-crime organization led by more than 1,000 of America's best known police chiefs, sheriffs, district attorneys, and victims of violence. *America's Afterschool Choice: The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime or Youth Enrichment and Achievement* discusses the many benefits of afterschool programs, including their role in preventing juvenile crime and supporting the healthy development of young people. Contact: Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2000 P Street, NW, Suite 240, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 776-0027; www.fightcrime.org.

The Finance Project is a nonprofit policy research, technical assistance, and information organization created to help improve outcomes for children, families, and communities nationwide. *A Guide to Successful Public-Private Partnerships for Out-of-School Time and Community School Initiatives* is designed to provide policymakers, program leaders, system-building advocates, and others with practical information on creating and maintaining public-private partnerships. *Finding Funding: A Guide to Federal Sources for Out-of-School Time and Community School Initiatives* provides information on more than 100 federal programs that may provide funding or support through loans for community initiatives. Contact: Finance Project, 1000 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 628-4200; www.financeproject.org.

National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) provides national leadership to build quality child care systems. Local child care resource and referral agencies help parents find local child care providers. *ChildCareAware* provides advice to parents looking for quality child care programs. NACCRRA may also be able to help municipal leaders locate resource and referral agencies in their geographic area. Contact: NACCRRA, 1319 F Street, NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20004; (202) 393-5011; www.naccrra.net.

National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) seeks to ensure that all children, youth, and families have access to high quality programs, activities, and opportunities during non-school hours. Two publications – *Working Together for Children and Families: A Community's Guild to Making the Most of Out-of-School Time* and *Evaluation of the MOST (Making the Most of Out-of-School Time) Initiative: Final Report Summary of Findings* – chronicle and highlight the lessons learned from the seven-year MOST initiative in three cities. Contact: NIOST, Wellesley College, 106 Central Street, Wellesley, MA 02181; (781) 283-2547; www.niost.org.

National School Age Care Alliance (NSACA) is a national membership organization representing the entire array of public, private, and community-based providers of afterschool programs. The *NSACA Standards for Quality School-Age Care* provides the list of NSACA's 144 standards for program improvement and accreditation system. Contact: NSACA, 1137 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02124; (617) 298-5012; www.nsaca.org.

Public Education Network (PEN) is the nation's largest network of independent, community-based school reform organizations. *Community Counts: How Youth Organizations Matter for Youth Development* discusses what motivates youth to participate in community-based organizations. Contact: PEN, 601 13th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 628-7460; www.publiceducation.org.

U.S. Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program (21st CCLC) provides federal funding for expanded learning opportunities in a safe, drug-free supervised environment. *Working for Children and Families: Safe and Smart Afterschool Programs* presents positive research and examples illustrating the potential of quality afterschool activities to keep children safe, out of trouble, and learning. Contact: 21st CCLC, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC; (800) 872-5327; www.ed.gov/21stcclc/.

Mark Ouellette, senior program associate for afterschool initiatives at NLC's Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, authored this kit and conducted the research upon which it is based. Audrey M. Hutchinson, John E. Kyle, and Alicia Johnson provided helpful comments based on early drafts of the kit's inserts. Clifford Johnson, the Institute's executive director, provided overall editorial direction and Jan Hammett was responsible for the kit's design and layout.

Preparation and distribution of this action kit were made possible by a grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. The Annie E. Casey Foundation provides financial support for many aspects of the Institute's work, including the action kit series of which this publication is a part.