

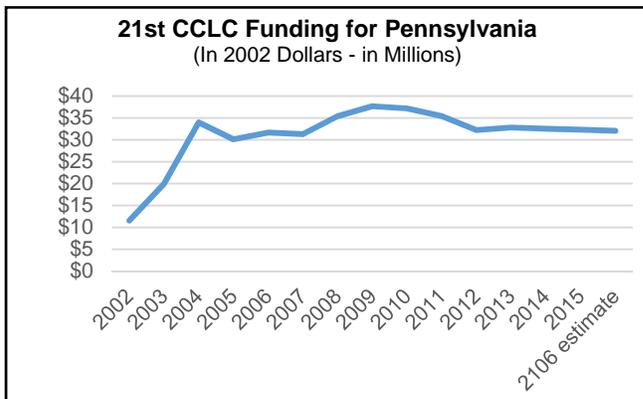
Report Highlights

Afterschool Programs in Pennsylvania

In December 2015, the LB&FC directed its staff to conduct an update of a report we released in May 2009 on the availability and affordability of afterschool/out-of-school time (OST) programs in the Commonwealth.

Findings:

- **Since our 2009 report, new legislation has passed, both nationally and in various states, to expand the concept of afterschool/OST programming.** New emphasis on continuous quality improvement, expanded learning time, and STEM and enrichment programs are some of the key developments. For example, over 2/3rds of the programs we surveyed offered some type of STEM program.
- **Most public funding for afterschool programs is targeted to young children (ages 6-12) from low-income families.** Although over 120 federal programs can provide at least some level of funding for afterschool/summer programs, Title 1, subsidized child care and 21st Century Community of Learning Center funds comprise the bulk of federal/state funding.
- **21st CCLC funding, the only dedicated source of federal funds for afterschool programs, has been stagnant for years.**



- **Most afterschool programs depend on parent fees to provide 50% or more of their funding.** Federal and state funds were also a major source of funding, with about 30% of providers who responded to our survey indicating they received 50% or more of their funding from federal sources.
- **Workforce Development Boards are now very limited in their ability to fund afterschool programs.** The new federal act is more restrictive in how much money WDBs can spend on supporting afterschool programs.
- **Approximately 6,700 children are on the waiting list for subsidized child care.** Because the demand for subsidized child care

is greater than the funding available, there is a waiting list. In Feb. 2016, DHS estimated the waiting list was two to four months.

- **The Afterschool Alliance estimates about 190,000 Pennsylvania children participate in afterschool programs.** It also estimates an additional 600,000 children would participate in afterschool programs if an affordable one were available to them.
- **Aftercare providers cite staff recruitment and retention, sustainable funding, and parent engagement as their top challenges.** 72% of afterschool providers cited staff recruitment and retention as their top challenge, citing low wages and the part-time nature of many of the jobs. Sustainable funding was the second most common challenge cited.
- **Capacity issues appear to be more prevalent in urban areas of the state.** 58% of afterschool providers in urban areas reported their programs were at full capacity, versus 45% in suburban areas and 43% in rural areas. Staffing limitations, due to funding restraints and/or the inability to attract and retain staff, was the most common reason as to why they cannot accept more students.
- **Over one-third of the 93 school districts responding to our questionnaire reported that more afterschool programs are needed.** This varied somewhat by the age of the student, with the greatest need being cited for middle school (grades 6-8) students.
- **Many states dedicate state funding toward afterschool programs or have undertaken other steps to help support these programs.** About 20 states (PA is not among them) have budgeted at least some state funding for afterschool programs.

Recommendation:

We recommend an informal “working group” be created to be comprised of representatives from key Departments and offices (e.g., Education, Human Services, Labor and Industry) and key stakeholders from the afterschool advocate and provider community as well as interested members of the General Assembly.