



Afterschool Alliance

AFTERSCHOOL FOR ALL

December 17, 2008

TO: Dana Singiser, Jason Furman, Michael Strautmanis and Austan Goolsbee

FR: Jodi Grant, The Afterschool Alliance

RE: Supporting Children and Families in the Economic Recovery Package

Afterschool programs are an essential resource - they keep children safe, inspire them to learn, and support working families - and children and families are relying on them now more than ever as they struggle with the current economic downturn. The financial crisis, coupled with fast-rising energy costs, are forcing school districts, community organizations and both public and private funders to make changes that, in many cases, are affecting afterschool programs and those who rely on them.

Gas prices and budget constraints are leading to radical policy changes, such as four-day school or work weeks; the elimination of school bus routes and new fees for support services, including afterschool programs. Families may no longer be able to afford afterschool programs, or the cost to transport kids to programs. Afterschool programs face their own budget challenges just when families need their support most - programs are being forced to reduce services, increase fees or even shut their doors. Afterschool programs are a stabilizing force for many communities and families. When work or school schedules change, the organizations that run afterschool programs are often in a position to respond quickly to changing needs. Programs serving low-income children in particular not only provide academic enrichment, but they also provide breakfast, snacks and even a hot supper. It is imperative to ensure that these supports, relied on by so many, not only continue functioning, but are also able to respond to growing demands.

As such, we encourage you to consider including measures in a stimulus package that would provide support to afterschool programs and to the families that depend on them. This includes:

- **Provide an additional \$500 million for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers** (the only federal program exclusively dedicated to funding afterschool programs). This would provide an additional 500,000 children with access to high quality programs and provide up to 25,000 new jobs. This investment would take advantage of existing infrastructure to distribute the money quickly. Currently, states are only able to fund 26% of organizations that apply for 21st CCLC grants, so states could fund high quality applicants that weren't previously funded, without having to run a new competition;
- **Provide \$3 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant**(1/3 of this funding stream supports afterschool programs). This would allow states to provide assistance for approximately 480,000 children in low-income working



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families who have been hit hard by the economic crisis, and create paid work for an estimated 190,000 caregivers;

- **Provide \$50 million for the Summer Term Education Programs for Upward Performance Act.** This would expand children's access to high quality summer learning programs;
- **Provide \$225 million for Full Service Community Schools demonstration project.** This would fund an additional 140 grantees for three years, with technical assistance, professional development, evaluation of local programs and research on how Full Service Community Schools are leveraging local resources to fuel a scale-up strategy. More than 400 applications were received for this program but funds were only available to fund ten grants. The remaining applications are already in rank order, on file at the Office of Innovation and Improvement and many schools and communities are ready to implement their program when funding becomes available;
- **Ensure that infrastructure funding for schools gives priority or preference to those that include space(s) for afterschool and community learning programs.** Improving schools' and communities' facilities in this way would strengthen afterschool programs' abilities to respond to growing demands and changing needs; and
- **Increase investments in nutrition programs, including the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Program and the National School Lunch Program.** This would help afterschool programs continue to provide children with meals and snacks before school and after school. As families struggle to feed their children this role is particularly critical.