



The **FINANCE PROJECT**

Helping leaders finance and sustain initiatives that lead to better futures for children, families, and communities

August Funding Tip

The Finance Project is pleased to announce the next installment in a series of [monthly funding tips](#) for youth programs. These tips cover different financing strategies to help programs finance and sustain their work.

Tip: Create a Diverse Funding Base

Out-of-school-time initiatives in rural communities should aim to develop a diverse funding portfolio to support their efforts. Political and economic factors make it difficult for programs relying on one or two large funding sources to successfully sustain themselves over long periods; a diverse funding base, on the other hand, better enables a program to continue to operate in the face of changing conditions. Many successful leaders of out-of-school time initiatives in rural communities lack a large, primary funding source. Instead, they weave together a wide range of resources to support their work. Program leaders can create a diverse funding base in several ways, either by maximizing federal state, and local revenue, developing new revenue, and taking advantage of in-kind support.

Example from the Field: Accessing Rural Enterprise Community Funds

Designated as a Round II Enterprise Community in 1998, the Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community (NNEC) works to build sustainability through its seed grants and unique partnerships. The NNEC includes three reservations covering a 500-square-mile area in rural northern Wisconsin. Through its community planning process, the NNEC is able to engage citizens and focus on education programs that enable area youth to gain exposure to careers and academic services, including school to work, tech prep, and job shadowing programming.

Rural EZ/ECs can encompass more than one tribe, resulting in a subzone system within the larger grant program. These subzones are able to approve one-time grants for benchmark projects through the budget process. Their subgrants are offered to help programs that improve students' educational performance and strengthen postsecondary and job training support services for area youth. Together, NiiJii initiatives have served more than 5,000 families, or approximately 75 percent of the NNEC population.

For more information, visit

http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/ezec/05_Exec_Summaries/northwoods.html

For more information on this financing strategy and the various strategies in accessing funding to support out-of-school time activities in rural communities, see the Finance Project's publication, [Financing and Sustaining Out-Of-School Time Programs in Rural Communities](#).

Within the [Youth Programs Resource Center](#) you will also find an [online clearinghouse](#), jointly developed by The Finance Project and The Forum for Youth Investment. The clearinghouse contains a wealth of information and resources for supporting and sustaining youth programs and initiatives. It is designed to help you learn about data, tools, policies, practices, financing strategies, coordination efforts and technical assistance resources developed by organizations in the field that aim to improve the lives of youth.