



February 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: Partner to Access Funding to Address Transportation Issues in Rural Areas

Many rural out-of-school time program leaders struggle to secure the necessary resources to provide transportation for their programs. Developing a suitable transportation system for rural areas is more complex and expensive than developing one for urban areas. Much of a rural program's budget can be devoted to transportation costs, and some programs find these costs prohibitive. Program leaders are often expected to choose between expanding components of a program or investing in transportation so participants can attend the program.

To overcome these obstacles, program leaders can work to **form partnerships** with traditional and non-traditional partners within the community. Possible partners include:

- **School Districts** – School districts are valuable partners in providing transportation for both school-based and community-based out-of-school time programs. For school based programs, school districts can help transport youth home after their program by adding a route or coordinating programming with a scheduled late bus. School districts can also alter their schedule to transport students to their community-based programs. Alternatively, out-of-school time programs can purchase buses or vans from school districts or other partners, such as boys and girls clubs.
- **Community-Based Organizations** – Community-based organizations often need transportation services for only one or two specific periods during the day. Program leaders can identify other providers with complementary schedules and share a van or bus to provide transportation services. For example, an agency serving the elderly may only need a van to transport the elderly to appointments in the morning and a faith-based organization may need a bus only on the weekend. Community leaders can partner with other providers in the community to share costs and create a suitable transportation plan.
- **Other Out-of-School Time Programs** – Partnering with other programs can also enable out-of-school time programs to access funding for which they would otherwise not be eligible. For example, Arkansas provides state funding so organizations working with the elderly can purchase vehicles. An out-of-school time program could work with an eligible organization in its community to access these funds through a joint application.

For more information on this financing strategy and the role of intermediaries and policymakers in helping youth and after-school programs support their work, 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.