



Resources for Youth Programming and Policy

DESCRIPTION

- Program provides academic and recreational activities to 7,200 school-age children
- A key source of support is a dedicated local tax developed to support crime prevention
- Leaders combined two programs under FWAS umbrella for greater operational efficiency

Fort Worth Afterschool Program – Fort Worth, TX

Dedicated Local Tax Developed to Support Crime Prevention

Overview

The Fort Worth Afterschool (FWAS) Program, a collaboration between the city of Fort Worth and the Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD), provides afterschool programming for approximately 7,200 school-age children in Fort Worth, Texas. FWAS programming aims both to reduce juvenile crime in Fort Worth and to provide additional academic support to at-risk children. Programs offer a wide range of activities for children primarily in grades 3 to 12, including academic support, arts activities, physical fitness, life skills, and community service. While receiving funding from multiple sources with varied program goals, FWAS has developed a comprehensive system of afterschool supports that meet the needs of the Fort Worth community. The program's leaders are also taking steps to establish community support and track program outcomes in their efforts to plan for future sustainability.

History and Development

FWAS was initiated in 1999, when increased gang activity prompted the Fort Worth Police Department to approach city officials about setting aside dedicated tax dollars to support crime prevention efforts. As timing would have it, the deputy superintendent of FWISD had also recently introduced the idea of creating a program to focus on preventing juvenile crime in the afterschool hours. The plans for the FWAS program were officially in motion when an Afterschool Task Force was established, consisting of 23 representatives from a variety of

local organizations, including the police department, parks and recreation, school athletics and fine arts, and Tarrant County Juvenile Services. After careful research on the benefits of out-of-school time programs and studies of success stories in other cities, the task force made the case to the City Council highlighting the potential positive impacts of afterschool programming both for school improvement and crime prevention. In response, the public approved a dedicated source of revenue for crime prevention that supports afterschool programs.

In 2000, FWISD won its first 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC) grant, for \$875,000 for each of five years to support afterschool programs in five Fort Worth school sites. While these 21CCLC programs originally operated separately from FWAS, they were combined into one large structure in 2005, allowing for greater coordination between the key players supporting each program.

Financing

Making better use of existing resources

For five years, the Fort Worth Afterschool program and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers operated concurrently as two separately run programs. During this time, the programs felt an underlying tension due to differences in operating style and expectations due to the varied funding sources. For example, the programs run with 21CCLC funds placed greater emphasis on academic enrichment while the sites supported by the City were able to engage in more

**Fort Worth Afterschool Program
FY 2006 Budget**

State 21CCLC grant	\$4,650,000
City of Fort Worth (sales tax revenue)	\$1,400,000
Fort Worth Independent School District	\$1,100,000
Total Funding for 74 Sites	\$7,150,000

Financing Strategies

- Making Better Use of Existing Resources
- Maximizing Federal, State, and Local Revenue
- Creating More Flexibility in Existing Streams
- Building Public/Private Partnerships
- Generating New Dedicated Revenue

creative activities including field trips for the participants. Moreover, this system required the additional administrative burden of maintaining two separate sets of program leaders. Officials took a step toward greater efficiency when they combined the two programs under the FWAS umbrella in 2005. Under the newly combined structure, the program continues to be supported by a blend of federal and local funding, with 29 of its 74 sites supported by both 21CCLC funds as well as general funds. Now, the 21CCLC programs are able to access additional services and benefit from the flexibility of resources while generating additional interest from young participants. For example, coordinators are able to recruit more participants by offering field trips, and coordinate their programming by securing reduced prices at local businesses, and make use of the streamlined online procedures that were previously only accessible by non-21CCLC sites. Ultimately, program leaders can more efficiently use administrative dollars from both funding sources and focus critical funds on programming.

Building Partnerships

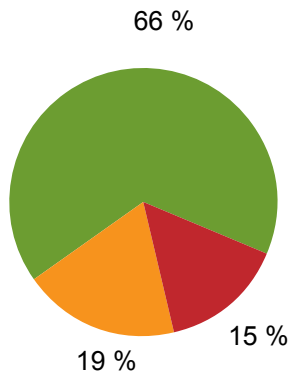
Public-private partnerships have helped FWAS leverage additional funding sources and gain exposure among community leaders. In an effort to provide oversight and direction for

the FWAS program, the Fort Worth City Council and School Board launched a coordinating board with 13 representatives from a number of public and non-profit agencies. Within this group, three of the five community positions are at-large community members drawn from a range of professions, including legal, financial, health, media, and foundations to provide expertise in several key areas. The board offers various forms of support for the FWAS staff such as approving site selection, evaluating funding needs, and providing future program recommendations. The coordinating board serves as a vital resource in the program’s strategic planning for the future.

Generating new revenue

In addition to 21CCLC funding and support from the school district, FWAS utilizes another key source of funding for afterschool programming in Fort Worth -- a dedicated local tax that supports crime prevention initiatives. In 1999, following the report of the Afterschool Task Force and support of school district and city leaders, the public overwhelmingly approved a half-cent sales tax and developed a Crime Control Prevention District (CCPD). The annual revenue from this tax, amounting to \$48 million, is used to provide more weapons, tools, cars, training, and resources for law enforcement, with \$1.4 million allocated toward afterschool programming for 74 sites in Fort Worth and three surrounding school districts. These funds have been a stable source of support for the FWAS program since 1999. The steady decrease in crime since the CCPD was passed helped convince voters in 2005 to re-approve this tax through 2010.

Funding Sources for the Fort Worth Afterschool Program



Total Budget: \$7,150,000

- Fort Worth Independent School District
- City of Fort Worth
- State 21CCLC grant

Next Steps and Future Challenges

The leaders of the FWAS program are mindful of a number of key challenges it faces - the nature of dual funding streams, the difficulties of combining two programs, and the ongoing struggle to bring in additional funds. Community leaders and advocates of FWAS are committed to sustain funds for the program via private foundations, Medicaid fees, and additional funding from the CCPD.

The FWISD is also working with an independent organization to conduct a formal data collection process to be used for future evaluation purposes. Since 2000, preliminary data has been gathered for a longitudinal study that can track the academic performance of 4,000 kids over the span of 6 years along with statistics showing a decreased number of criminal incidences around schools. These results will be used as valuable evidence of program effectiveness in efforts to obtain additional funding in the future.

Keys to Success

- Coordination of efforts**
By combining the 21CCLC programs and city-run afterschool sites under one umbrella organization, FWAS was able to improve programming and cut costs by eliminating duplicated administrative efforts. The coordinating committee that oversees the combined program operation has also helped engage community leaders in afterschool issues.
- Be results-oriented**
Using data on crime statistics since Fort Worth has invested in afterschool and other crime prevention efforts supported the case for continued local tax support. Further evidence of program impacts through planned evaluation work will be used to maintain and expand funding.



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