

# **Transcript of The Finance Project's Financing and Sustaining Youth and Afterschool Programs in Rural Communities Audio Conference August 21, 2008**

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## **Speakers**

Soumya Bhat – The Finance Project – Program Associate  
Erica Argersinger – Afterschool Alliance – Policy Director  
Debbie Moellendorf - 4-H Youth Development & University of Wisconsin-Extension - Agent/Department Head  
Shanna Francisco-King - Martinsville-Henry County (MHC) After 3 - Program Coordinator

## **Presentation**

### **Operator**

Greetings and welcome to the Finance Project's Financing and Sustaining Youth and Afterschool Programs in Rural Communities. At this time, all participants are in a "listen-only" mode. A question and answer session will begin at 45 minutes past the hour, but participants may submit their questions during the audio conference by e-mailing [sbhat@financeproject.org](mailto:sbhat@financeproject.org). As a reminder, this conference is being recorded. It is now my pleasure to introduce your host Ms. Soumya Bhat, Program Associate with the Finance Project. Thank you Ms. Bhat, you may begin.

### **Soumya Bhat – Finance Project – Program Associate**

Thank you. First of all, I want to extend a big welcome to the panelists and participants of today's audio conference on "Financing and Sustaining Youth and Afterschool Programs in Rural Communities". I am Soumya Bhat, a Program Associate with the Finance Project. For those of you who may not be familiar with our work we are a nonprofit organization in Washington DC that provides research consulting, technical assistance and training for public and private sector leaders across the country. This event is part of a series of audio conferences organized through our Youth Programs Resource Center, which offers research, tools, and publications all focused on financing and sustaining youth programs. One of these publications is being featured in today's event, entitled *Financing and Sustaining Out-Of-School Time Programs in Rural Communities*, which was also made available to participants as part of the background materials for this call. In addition to transcript and recordings from this and past audio conference events, you can also visit our website to browse the Youth Programs and Policies Clearinghouse, which we are continually expanding by identifying and adding new relevant resources from our partners in the field.

All programs are experiencing financing challenges, and I think everyone on this panel and the folks listening in as audience participants are well aware of the additional challenges that rural youth and after school programs are facing to financing and sustaining their work. These include fewer private partners, staffing challenges, transportation costs, and so on. So, we want to focus today's conversation on what works for programs - what they are doing well, and how they are doing it well.

So, before I introduce our speakers, I want to first offer a little context about financing and sustainability drawing mainly from the Finance Project's brief on out-of-school time programs in rural communities. In our research across the country, we've identified promising practices in terms of what rural program leaders are doing to keep offering quality services for the children and youth in their communities even when the unexpected occurs. So, when funding is cut or staff turnover is unusually high, they have other ways to support their program over the long-term. And while we could spend a long time listings to specific funding streams for your program, instead we want to focus on going beyond simply finding funding to talk more about these financing strategies. And these are essentially strategic approaches to financing and sustaining youth and after school program. For example, creating a diverse funding base, which includes a blend of different types of funds or seeking out a variety of partners to improve or expand your services or even utilizing existing national, regional or state networks for additional program support training or peer learning opportunities. All these are covered in the brief that I mentioned earlier.

So, today our speakers will be covering both the national policy perspective as well as specific examples from the local program level about how they are employing these strategies and overcoming challenges in rural settings.

Again, please keep in mind that we will be opening the phone lines for the last 15 to 20 minutes for questions from the audience, but you can also submit questions via e-mail by sending them to [sbhat@financeproject.org](mailto:sbhat@financeproject.org) anytime during this call.

Without further ado, I would like to introduce our first speaker, Erica Argersinger, who is the Policy Director for the Afterschool Alliance. She works to communicate the impact of policy on afterschool program providers, children and family, and also makes recommendations for future policy decisions. She will be sharing her insights on national funding and legislative trends for afterschool programs. Erica?

**Erica Argersinger – Afterschool Alliance – Policy Director**

Thanks Soumya. This is Erica and I am happy for the opportunity to be speaking with all of you today. And just for those who might not be familiar with the Afterschool Alliance, we are a national organization that advocates to increase investments in afterschool and it's really what the mission of growing the after school field so that there is quality and affordable programs available to all kids who need them.

So, in that context, I am going to talk a little bit as opposed to some of the specific type of strategies that you will hear from the other two speakers, I am going to talk a little bit at the sort of macro level about policy going on at the federal level that will hopefully eventually lead to increase resources for rural after school program. And

the Afterschool Alliance's work on this issue really started a couple of years ago with an issue brief...excuse me...with an issue brief that we did that...I am not going to go into now although you can find it on our website, but initially that we did after hearing from more and more in the after school field about the need for more resources for programs in rural areas. And so, we put together first this issue brief, and then at the federal level, we decided that this was really an opportunity to educate some federal policymakers about these needs. And so, hosted a briefing on Capitol Hill at the beginning of this year for members and their staff to really educate them about, you know, the critical role that after school programs are playing in rural communities, and then, about some of the particular challenges that the programs face. And so, obviously you all are more than familiar with what those challenges are, but I will tell you that many policymakers were not. And we were really amazed, you know, we do a number of briefings on Capitol Hill each year, and I have to say that, when we did this briefing on rural after school programs, we had a packed house. We did it for both House and Senate staff together, and not only was the room packed, but folks stayed through the entire briefing, asked a lot of questions, there was just clearly a lot of interest in this issue. And we actually had a number of member's offices reach out to us afterwards saying that they were really interested in maybe doing something on this issue.

So from that we started to kind of putting together the idea of, you know, somehow to get new federal funding that would be specifically targeted at after school programs in rural areas. Since then, we've come a little ways, little long ways depending on your perspective, but we've come some way with working with right now Senator Lincoln from Arkansas, who decided that he was really interested in possibly introducing legislation. So, we've been working with her office on drafting some legislation that would essentially create a new after school funding stream that would come out of the Department of Agriculture, and like I said, it would be targeted specifically to programs in rural areas and it could be for new to establish new programs or for existing programs, and it would be kind of a flexible part of money that could be use for any of a number of things. So, it could be used like I said to set up a new program or could be use for an existing program that's trying to cover, you know, increased transportation cost or trying to, you know, get some new supplies for a program or you know, do some additional training or recruiting of staff. So, it could be used for a number of different things. I think one of the things that we really tried to do in thinking with Senator Lincoln about this legislation was to make sure that the way defined rural was, you know, sort of comprehensive enough to really get at not just some of the large rural areas sort of out west, but also some of the pockets of smaller rural areas along the east coast and you know, I think hopefully we managed to do that.

So, we are unfortunately still really at the very early stages. So, in terms of finance strategy this would be considered a very long term strategy, but it's something it's a piece of legislation that we hope will be introduced this fall, and once it is, we will obviously be able to share more details and keep folks updated about it. But I would definitely encourage folks if you are interested in sort of helping...helping with this process to contact me and I can make sure that Soumya has my e-mail address that can go out afterwards, but to get involved, because we really...it helps for the

members to be hearing some folks in their homes, states and districts about this issue, and so, it, you know, it's going to something even once introduced will need some additional work in terms of growing support forward and eventually getting it past. So but that's just a little bit of what's happening at the federal level in terms of rural after school.

**Soumya Bhat – Finance Project – Program Associate**

Thank you, Erica. I was also wondering....we talk a lot at The Finance Project about results orientation and how to keep track of your data and outcome so you can actually show folks what the value of your program is. Could you share any insights about what kinds of questions policymakers are asking, specifically about rural afterschool, like what specific data or stories do program leaders need to be able to answer those questions?

**Erica Argersinger – Afterschool Alliance – Policy Director**

Sure. I mean, I think, you know, first and foremost they are always, you know, wanting to make sure that any federal money is being sort of wisely invested so they are always looking for information on effectiveness of programs, any kind of outcomes data that you might be collecting is always incredibly useful to be able to point to also things like waiting list to show, you know, in terms of showing the need that can be very helpful. We also in particular was trying to, you know, get some momentum going on this new federal funding initiative around rural after school. We have been getting some questions from policymakers about sort of, you know, existing funding sources for after school like the 21st century program and kind of, you know, why is that not enough type thing. I mean...and so obviously first and foremost is the fact that that program has always been under funded. But also, you know, getting specific stories about sort of why, you know, if folks haven't been able to access the 21st century dollars, you know, why is that? I mean, we have heard some, you know, anecdotes about, you know, it can be hard to compete with the largest school districts who have more administrative staff to do the grant writing and that kind of thing or it can be hard to compete with the larger areas that have higher population density, because they can show sort of higher numbers in terms of need and, you know, so we have heard some of that, but getting more information along those lines is really helpful as well as I could say the other thing we have heard is about some states really using their 21st century money only a feed money and so, you know, while a program,...a rural program might get a 21st century grant, you know, once it runs out if there are no resource partners in the area to help fill in some of that funding once it's gone, you know, that can be a challenge too. So, but...so that's some of the information we have heard, but I would love for if folks have other information along this lines and it's not just 21st century, you know, any sort of the other existing funds instead of why is that not enough kind of question if folks have information along those lines I would really love to hear from you.

**Soumya Bhat – Finance Project – Program Associate**

Thank you, Erica. Our next speaker is Debbie Moellendorf who is both the Department Head and 4-H Youth Development Agent at the University of Wisconsin Extension in Lincoln County, Wisconsin. She will be sharing information about the

After the Bell Program, which was also profiled in The Finance Project publication on rural programs. Debbie?

**Debbie Moellendorf - 4-H Youth Development & University of Wisconsin-Extension - Agent/Department Head**

Thank you, Soumya. Again, I'm also very pleased to be here in today and share with you a little bit about our After the Bell Program and how we have funded that program in a small rural community and county. First I thought I would give you a sense of what Lincoln County is like. We are a rural county of about 30,000 people. We are located along major north south quarter of Wisconsin I-3951. We have two cities in our county, Merrill is the county seat, which is just over 10,000 people and Tomahawk with around 35,00 people. A fairly large number of people who live in Merrill also work in Wausau, which is to the south of us, and that's a larger community and that's about 20 to 30 minute drive. So, many people who are working in Wausau community, but living in Merrill do not get home from their job since it will be probably about 04:30, 5 o'clock, 05:30 somewhere in there. There are no YMCAs or boys and girls clubs in our county, no youth centers, we just don't have those resources here. So, having an after school program it can be a real challenge.

Second, I thought I would talk a little bit about background about how I got involved in actually doing after school programs here in Lincoln County, and it really was our local library staff who contacted me here in Merrill and said we have this lot of middle school students that show up on our doorstep as soon as let's out middle school in Tomahawk and the library located on kitty-corner from each others. So, parents were telling their students to go to the library and wait for them until they could get there. The library loves to have students there, but they just have to equip to have a 100 students there right after school. So, that became a real challenge for them, stacking lives and also there were some issues that were creating for other library users as well. If the students also were able to say at the school grounds unless they were in an organized activity. So again, if they didn't have something going on they could have gym school grounds they needed to be off of the school grounds within 10 minutes of the school day ending. So there were some real challenges there for where do the students go, what...how can we provide a safe program for them. So, after I received the call, what was this one of the first things that we did was do kind of a survey with the students that we are showing up at the library to find out, you know, what kinds of programs might they be interested in participating in, how many days of the week do they need this type of program, how long to this type of program needed to be available, and it was amazing, within 15 to 20 minutes of being there just a couple of days we had a 171 students fill on our survey and for me as an extension agent, I went, wow, this is sort of an issue, but I also really thought it's an opportunity. We have a group of middle school students who are eager and looking for something positive to do. So, that's kind of how I approached it. And pulled together all kinds of different resources within our community informed what we have call our after developed steering committee and we have representatives from our library, we have representatives from the middle school administration and staff, we have teachers and guidance counselors and the principals on our steering committee. We also invited our park and rec director and our park and rec program is a smaller program and they primarily again are focused on sports and serving younger students. So programs

really end if could get to middle school. We also have the childcare connection service here and that's really about finding safe child cares, but again primarily focused at younger. So, then but we also felt that they were, it could be a good partner in LA as we move forward. We have broadened and move forward together helping community initiative which is a local community coalition focused around building developmental assets again people and so we again we have thought that would be a potential partner. We brought in a local church for each organization partners with us, we brought in services in our Merrill Police Department. So as you can see we tried to look at what are the resources and who are the potential partners as we move forward.

We have focused...I organized a couple of meetings again working on a project, oh, one group that I have forgot to mention, on our initial survey we also asked the young people if they would be interested in being a part of the group to organize a program. And we had about 40 young people to filled up the survey that we are interested in being in our committee. And so they were also invited to join our efforts, and that was a real asset I think as we move forward in developing that program. They actually were the ones who create a name for the program I mean the adults on the community were struggling with, okay, what do we call this, for attracting people to the program and they with the young people themselves that came up with that name. We are moving on our projects and one of the things that we struggled with was, okay, how are we are going to fund this and get this program off the ground. And by having social services be a part of our initial committee we have what's called the...usually call the Family Preservation and supports grants and that now it's called the Safe and Stable Family, and they were willing to give us some start up funds, to start the program and piloted the very first year. Our first year during the programs we did have some grant dollars to fund it, but the idea was that after that initial year the programs was going to continue we would have to come up with another way to fund the program. We are one of those communities that struggled. We do not meet the requirements for a 21st century grant, we do not have the number of students that we need for the frame we just want qualification that applies to the grant. So, we are not eligible for that grant at the middle school level. And that becomes a struggle for our community here as we just don't need requirements for lot of those funding so Erica as the prior speaker I guess I would pass that onto you.

**Erica Argersinger – Afterschool Alliance – Policy Director**

Thank you.

**Debbie Moellendorf - 4-H Youth Development & University of Wisconsin-Extension - Agent/Department Head**

So what we did with is, okay, how much money do we need to fund this program? How can we look at what resources we have in the community and we have started contacting local service organizations. We have very active (inaudible) for optimistic groups, rotary groups, the teachers association anyone and everyone that we could think. We contacted with a letter and a proposal saying that we need about \$10 to \$12,000 per year to operate a program is what we estimated and that's then an average for the last five years that we needed for staffing and supplies and through various generous donations from those service organizations and many businesses

we have been able to fund the program for four years and as they were going in for the fifth year and they we are right now in the process of raising the fund. Sometimes if you are going to start the program I may not have all the money right now on this type of program so I have to keep the pace I have to keep everyone else kind of focused on okay let's keep going we have to keep looking for those funds.

But the one thing that our committee has learned is that we have a very generous community and those \$50 donations, \$100 donations, \$500 donations, \$1000 donations all add up as everyone contributes to the program and the community really sees it as their program. They have a lot of ownership in it. And so that's been really positive. The other thing that we did is we looked at are there something's that groups could give us that would be in time donation. So they actually wouldn't have to be donating money for say but perhaps applies for the program. And we have a local grocery store here who has been just wonderful as donating our supplies for snacks. I would say probably two thirds of our snacks supplies are donated from this local grocery store. And it's really things that they are needy to pull off the shop because the date of expiration is coming close and they have to pull them off the shop, but they haven't expired and they are perfectly usable like yogurt or oysters or whatever it might be we try to keep things healthy and they are more than willing to donate that to us. And so, they are help us by donating, it's really not costing them anything to do that. And again, they have done that every year that we have ran the program.

We also put several times a year articles in the local newspapers asking for donations for example of board games or craft supplies those types of things that members of the community and I get calls all the time from community members saying that I found this box of board games that my family hasn't used for years, I love to donate it to the program. And so, again, another way for the community not necessarily have to donate money, but to donate supplies that help us keep the expensive as low as we can. The other thing that community members do and they are very generous with their time and donation is experts coming in and then teaching program. We really, really try to involve the community in helping share and teach the middle school students some healthy hobbies. For example, we have had people coming in and teach basket weaving, come in and teach many. We have had someone come in and do a chess club, come in and do yoga, nature watch, you know, we encourage community members whatever kind of specialty or hobby or interest to come in and share that with the middle school students during this program with our enrichment program.

So, that's been then again very positive and in other way that the community has donated. Another big piece with the school district is a strong partner and really sees this program being their program as well and so they donate their facility and the janitorial services for us using the program and when we started the program we had a principal who was very good at working the way through the system with the janitors and some of the struggles and concerns that they had in and that's been very positive and the Janitors are very supportive of this program as well. Initially, they work for sure McDonald's school janitors, they are kind of...kind of protective of the schools that they are taking care of and there were some concerns there, but the principal

really helped us and supported us and I don't think we would have had that opportunity if she wouldn't have done that.

Also members of the steering committee donate their time and donate lots of hours going out and talking to various groups and securing the funding or raising donations, in time donations. I guess some tips and things to know that I want to pass along is that it is possible to conduct a quality after school program on a very limited budget as I said we do this program and, you know, between \$10,000 and \$13,000 a year and we operate the entire school year. It's just a matter of kind of been creative and looking for ways that businesses and organizations and individuals can support you and again making that part of the community program. And one of the things that we also do with, we always are very sure that we do some "thank you" to people who support the program, no matter what the amount is, we think it's really important to say thank you and we do that throughout the year. When they do make a donation we do take a photo of them we preferable try to have some of the younger program be a part of that photos so that they are getting a chance to meet them and also the young people love to have their picture in the paper and that donors love to be picture and to meet the youth in here what they are learning in the program. We publish that in our local newspapers and our two local newspapers are wonderful and very supportive in publishing those photos.

I also send a formal thank you letter to them, the youth involves in the program during the year, make them some type of thank you, and that comes from the youth in the program they have done things like we have the basket they would put a pot of plants and give that, that the business could set on their counter with a thank you, a great big thank you from the active adult youth. They did plaques to you that they need for the businesses to hang. So it varies from year-to-year and for various donors what they do. And again all of this is done to recognize the support, but it also reminds the communities about the program and the need for donations and many times when a picture appears in the local paper there is usually another donation that follows shortly after from someone who saw the picture and said, you know, I want to support that program here is my donation. I guess I will stop there and see if there are any questions?

**Soumya Bhat – Finance Project – Program Associate**

Great. Thank you, Debbie. I think that's a great example of a diverse funding base where you are not just using one form of support, you have a variety of in-kind resources including volunteers. You have also built several key partnerships within your community from local organizations...you can't always have a boys and girls club in your community and you are able to bring other stakeholders to the table and really build partnerships. If you have any tips and specifically about raising awareness and building those partnerships if someone was trying to work in their community and build more support in the same way when they don't have these larger organizations...is there a way an extension office might be helpful for them or are there any other tips that you want to share regarding community outreach?

**Debbie Moellendorf - 4-H Youth Development & University of Wisconsin-Extension - Agent/Department Head**

Sure. I think extension offices can play a big role in organizing after school efforts, particularly I think in rural communities a lot of times extension agents tend to know people in the community and have had contacts. So, they may be able to help create that coalition or bring people together around the table like a lot of friends look at that's kind of my role in Lincoln County no matter what issue or community I am working in is to bring people together to say okay how can we meet this need, how can we address this need and to bring the resources of the university through the county communities to do that. So, a lot of times, what I see role being and I think other extension educators and agents would be doing the same. I also think that extension agents we have resources to help trained after school staff. I know when a lot of...I work with two other after school programs one of them is the 21st century funded program and I do some training for their staff. So, I play a different role with that particular after school program. So, that's another place. And the other thing that we can do is we can also provide some after school programs added that existing that existing after school program. We also does the free after school program, here we have 4-H after school club. And we bring our older use for each members to teach for each projects during the after school program. So, I think just the extension educators and agents can play a variety of roles and I think it's really a matter of just having that conversation with them

**Soumya Bhat – Finance Project – Program Associate**

Great. I am sure there will be follow-up questions based on your presentation as well. To move on to our final speaker, we have Shanna Francisco-King she is the Coordinator of Martinsville-Henry County (MHC) After 3, which is the regional after school system in rural Virginia. She will be talking more about how and why this is system was built. Shanna?

**Shanna Francisco-King - Martinsville-Henry County (MHC) After 3 - Program Coordinator**

Hi, thank you Soumya for inviting me to participate in this. As she said, I am Shanna Francisco King with MHC After 3 initiative. And I enjoy the opportunity to talk to you briefly about our experiences with building a system, and using that as an avenue to build capacity for after school programs and for building sustainability for our entire system. We are a regional after school system in Virginia consisting of 13 after school partners and service providers who share a common mission to provide universal access to high quality professional mentored after school programs to our community's youth. Our partners offer a really wide array of expertise in areas like youth development or finer performing art, higher education, secondary education, public health and different arms of the human surfaces field. And as a system, we are able to tap into all of their resources and pull the best of what they have out and give it back to the youth in our community. Just a little background about MHC After 3. Every child one...of our missions is to provide every...every child in Martinsville-Henry County with the opportunities to develop healthy and positive relationships with adult mentors we know that those relationships have such an incredible impact on them as everyone on this call understands. And so we want to increase those connections and through systems building we have been able to do that.

The partners of MHC After 3 works together under a shared memorandum of understanding. We renew that each year and that understanding establishes our goals and objectives from year to year at details each organization's responsibilities and their commitment to the partnership. The partners of MHC those 13 organizations and individuals representing those organizations do serve as the governing body for MHC After 3 and they share their experience their expertise and the guiding and planning and implementation of our after school system. Currently we work with middle school students primarily we are incorporating a new high school program with the school years so keep you posted let you know...but our partners recognize the benefits of sharing all of our resources of our human financial intellectual capital resources with the youth in our community and with each others different organizations and being in a rural area we are kind of on the opposite end and from Debbie was talking about we ... we have really felt the crunch from NAFTA and also trade agreements overseas as we have lost close to 15,000 jobs in the last may be 10 or 12 years and we have had unbelievable unemployment. But our community continues to...to build and have hope and to give it's resources to building the next generation so with that being said our partners understand working in concert they are able to maximize and conserve their resources and working in concert also provides them the opportunity to leverage additional resources and enhance the quality of our programming and be able to serve the serve the greatest number of youth in our community we do have we have enrolled club MIMCI in our area they are both partners of MHC after 3.

We also work with our local community centers. We have Bassett Community Center, Fieldale Community Center, and Spencer Penn Center, are all located in different little burrows of our area which makes I guess transportation cost a little lesser. Our buses transport students to those community centers and then they are easily accessible to parents. Some of our schools may be 45 minutes from where a child actually lives and with gas prices being what they are and economic times being what they are it may be difficult for students to have access and so working in the community centers instead of working in...in the schools themselves to offer after school programming has worked well for us and we each of those centers provides programming to student five days a week and they hire their staff to provide their staff and they maintain records and evaluations and different tracking mechanisms that we kind of all shared a common system but they track those things for their individual site and they provide supervision to that site and then also direction and supervision to the steering committee while our service providers or service partners I believe with regional library which is a systems library in our area they have several different branches operating that provide us with materials based for special events and programming such as we have a poetry (inaudible) coffee house for the middle school students where they can come together and read poetry that they have written as part of their English enrichment. We have we also have a healthy community initiative at Martinsville-Henry County coalition for health and wellness that provides nutrition education sports activities and different kinds of health and wellness activities to our students including step GA fitness etc. we have new college institute in Patrick Henry community college which are higher education vendors that provide all different kinds of things college readiness programming also academic awareness and Patrick Henry community college services are physical agents. We have a craft and design school

team on our association that is our regional arts museum and the Virginia Museum of natural history.

All of those partners provide professionally mentored programming to our... our students and all of our sites at low or no cost to the partners which allows us to be able to provide incredible programming our students have really great experiences with all of them and... and... and they are dedicated to do to doing all of those programming experiences in social emotional or kinesthetic learning styles so that our kids can absorb those skills and take them back into the academic classroom. The MHC after school system allows us to broker relationships with key funders and stake holders as an organization or a collaboration of all of these different organizations that really gives us the stronger toe hold to be able to negotiate a better price. Quite honestly for any kind of bulk purchasing it also gives us some momentum with our local leaders and state national leaders as far as our dedication our community's dedication to our youth. It helps us to find in many ways to share resources and expertise we are able if for instance if...if one of our partners whether it be in after school partner or is service providing partner finds a need for an auditorium or a stage or one of our other partners has that resource and is able to contribute positively and we are able to increase our program quality and...and in our access...our student's access through to shared resource management and our accountability mechanisms we can research and evaluate our program and our progress more efficiently to ensure our sustainability and future development and finally and may be most importantly for some of the folks here is that being a system helps promote sustainability and we can do that because we share policies and we share our systems we share our study stream of resources equally amongst all of our partners so that say for instance a YMCA may have on their own as an individual organization might have greater access to funding dollars then save asset community center because they are a nationally recognized name. But MHC after 3 this system is a collaborative we are able to make sure that those funds are distributed evenly and equally through out the community in the best interest of our kids. Just kind of to give some more concrete examples of the benefits that I mentioned and how those translate directly.

MHC After 3 shares common funds we have a common budget and in that as I said we are able to tap larger funding streams because we can compete with larger metropolitan areas we have the numbers now where our individual sites may have 30 or 40 children together we have hundreds each of our partners presents a budget each semester...well, actually prior to each semester and about the cost that that it would take to facilitate their site or their program and that would, you know, include first snack and site level staff and any special trips or events. And then they bring them, all of our partners bring those together and it's a peer review process and we are able to negotiate with each other and come out with a budget for each site that's fair and equitable so that all of our students have equal access to programming and the opportunities and all of our partners in our after school site also have access to the funding that we have been able to secure as a collaboration. And we share professional development opportunities for staff, we host child abuse prevention and reporting training for same CPR best practices and standard training for our programs

and no cost to the organizations involved because so many licensed individuals from our partner agencies can conduct the trainings.

We also pursue both purchasing opportunities for resources like paper or computers and program models for instance, we purchase adventures like those engineering systems and robotics, and we have those perhaps...and they travel between sites depending on which site is currently working with those programs and we do both purchasing for snack as well, and we do healthy snacks too just as part of our programming is help us in development of the child. So our partners work together to ensure that we are able to continue growing this way. Patrick Henry Community College, one of our partners serves as our fiscal agent for MHC After 3 funds for all of our shared funds and they provide leadership and supervision to our staff and they provide a ton of end kind resources and they can absorb such as office space and IT support, phone, systems, e-mail, web server, public relations, resources, copying all the different mailing, all different kinds of things that they can provide to us in time.

MHC After 3 also shares a program coordinator, myself and I manage all aspects of MHC After 3 program delivery and manage our partnering needs and request, site level staff and shared staff, fund development and management and planning and evaluation. I also serve as the public relations kind of the key contact point for MHC After 3, I work on our marketing and recruitment materials and efforts and service the first point of contact for our potential funders, partners, parents, stakeholders etcetera. We also share an educational specialist to investigate and propose our best practices for our academics and athletic models. And she coordinates our professional development opportunities and schedules and coordinates all of our approved enrichment programming, she coordinates transportation for all of our programs and serves as a mentor for our site level staff.

We also have administered sharing a fund development professional who works to help those community relationships and helps work with our MHC After 3 champions and helps us build our sustainability for MHC After 3. We also share strategic planning and evaluation services at the Afterschool Institute. And these are just some other things that we do but the structure allows us to function more efficiently, allows each of these organizations and their directors who in the past worn so many different hats, we are able to share those things and we are more efficient because we have a shared fiscal agent because we share our program coordinator and a fund developer etcetera. And that basically translates into been able to pull more moneys back into direct programming to serve more families and more students.

**Soumya Bhat – Finance Project – Program Associate**

Great, Shanna, that's wonderful. That's a great example of how you really been able to capitalize on both dynamic leadership and the community support and it's a tremendous model. I am going to go ahead and ask operator to please open up the line and give participants on the call a chance to ask questions of our panelists.

**Operator**

Thank you ladies and gentleman we will now be conducting a question and answer session. If you would like to ask a question please press "\*" "1" on your telephone

keypad. Please follow the instructions that you hear at that time. The confirmation tone will indicate your lines in the question queue. You may press "\*" "2" if you would like to remove your question from the queue. All participants using speaker equipment and even necessary to pick up your handset before you are pressing the "\*" keys. Once again if you would like to ask a question please press "\*" "1" on your telephone keypads and follow the instructions you hear at that time. One moment please, while we pull up your questions.

**Soumya Bhat – Finance Project – Program Associate**

And Shanna I have a quick question for you before we move on. You mentioned some accountability mechanisms and ways to track outcomes. Could you briefly just tell us, for all the different initiatives involved in the system, how do you track your outcomes and evaluate?

**Shanna Francisco-King - Martinsville-Henry County (MHC) After 3 - Program Coordinator**

We are working with the Afterschool Institutes do an outside evaluation for our program. We are employing the APAS system to go in and been basically were evaluating our program, our services, our staff, were looking at our standards whether or not each of our sites meets those standards, our staff meet those standards, so it's kind of a constant process. We also look at our student's performance, their attendance, it is a larger cross section of different kinds of materials. That's a good tool, there are lots of tools out there for Afterschool Systems, and I don't think it's necessary that we recreate the wheel but I realize that it's very important to our funders and also in terms of our been able to continue to offer high quality programs and to make sure that we are meeting the objectives that we set forth each year.

**Soumya Bhat – Finance Project – Program Associate**

All right, thank you. Operator, do we have any questions?

**Operator**

Thank you. At this time we do have a question. This comes from the line of Sean Tyser (ph). Please proceed with your question.

**Sean Tyser**

Good afternoon, how is everyone?

**Soumya Bhat – Finance Project – Program Associate**

Very well. Good.

**Sean Kaiser**

I am an retired employee of USDA Rural Development and I currently serve as a Board President of the Statewide Childcare Resource and Referral Service and also Co-Chairs Statewide Rural Childcare Taskforce, and we are really trying to address several things you talked about but...and I have a personal interest to this funding when you say USDA I assume that you are talking about rural developments. The contact information for that speaker and I am driving so I was not able to write that down, well, that be available, if we want to volunteer somehow or follow up with

questions to individual speakers and that will be distributed, again, an overview of today's presentation.

**Soumya Bhat – Finance Project – Program Associate**

Sure. We can definitely post that on our Web site, but Erica, do you want to go ahead and give them your e-mail?

**Erica Argersinger – Afterschool Alliance – Policy Director**

Sure and I understand that I know you just said you are driving but it sounds like you will be able to get it at the end but for the benefit of others my e-mail address is eargersinger@afterschoolalliance.org, so let me just spell it out, it's not the most obvious last name so the e-mail is E-A-R-G-E-R-S-I-N-G-E-R, so, eargersinger@afterschoolalliance.org.

**Soumya Bhat – Finance Project – Program Associate**

And we will include that in the transcripts, which will be on the Web site.

**Erica Argersinger – Afterschool Alliance – Policy Director**

Great.

**Soumya Bhat – Finance Project – Program Associate**

Operator do we have any other questions?

**Operator**

Thank you, ladies and gentleman our next question comes from the line of Linda Barton, please proceed with your question.

**Linda Barton - Wyoming Afterschool Alliance - Director**

Hi, this is Linda Barton from the Wyoming Afterschool Alliance in Wyoming and my question actually is to Erica regarding the funding from the department of agriculture, just as I am interested in determining or finding out if you have talked of or in the negotiations if there is going to be a little bit more flexibility with the criteria on the use of that money and the reason I bring that up is because here in our state many communities are experiencing a boom right now in the oil field. And while the workers there are making really good wages, they are not necessarily in a position where they can...where their children still need a lot of childcare and they are not terribly educated workforce and so their needs are great, but they don't qualify under title one anymore. And so those communities are not...they can't get 21st Century money. So, I am wondering if in your discussions with Department of Agriculture, you might be able to discuss or would you be able to discuss the impacted communities are experiencing a huge need, but don't qualify under 21st century.

**Erica Argersinger – Afterschool Alliance – Policy Director**

We actually...we have gone back and forth a little bit in terms of crafting the rural legislation as to whether it would be targeted by poverty levels or if it would just simply be targeted at rural areas and sort of regardless of income. And we haven't really come down one way or the other. So, I think, you know, its kind of still being shaped.

So, I appreciate the comment and the input and that will definitely be, you know, sort of something I can bring to the table when we kind of, when we revisit that issue.

**Linda Barton - Wyoming Afterschool Alliance - Director**

Well, these people have...they are shift workers and so sometimes they go out, you know, for ten days of time or a ten days on and ten days off. And so even if there was a shared cost, where they would be able to take something that they still need the services and I...we are seeing that a lot in this state.

**Erica Argersinger – Afterschool Alliance – Policy Director**

It's...that's good to hear, I mean not good to hear that you are hearing it a lot, I mean it's good input for me to have as we are trying to shape this.

**Linda Barton - Wyoming Afterschool Alliance - Director**

Okay, great thanks.

**Erica Argersinger – Afterschool Alliance – Policy Director**

Thanks Linda.

**Soumya Bhat – Finance Project – Program Associate**

Operator, do we have any other questions in line?

**Operator**

Thank you. We do have a question coming from the line of Maureen, please proceed with your question?

**Maureen Toomey - University of Idaho - 4-H Youth Development**

Thank you. I am with the University of Idaho 4-H Youth development and have responsibility for a after school program statewide. I have two questions. I will present my questions and the speakers can respond. First for Erica at the Afterschool Alliance, who or what department at USDA is working with Afterschool Alliance and Senator Lincoln from Arkansas to develop this funding source, so that I could follow-up for my 4-H site and the second question is for Debbie in Wisconsin, do the youth who participate pay a fee to participate and I see from your impact statement that you have...well, 19 average a day, but what's your total enrollment number of youth for a year at your program, thank you.

**Erica Argersinger – Afterschool Alliance – Policy Director**

This is Erica. We have the...it's being written into...I should say the legislation is being written, so that the funding would be coming out of rural development, but I, you know, I sort of...I can't stress the method of beginning stages that we are in with this, so at this point legislation hasn't even been introduced let alone, you know, pass. So, we haven't really started working at all yet with the Department of Agriculture directly. We have really just been working with Senator Lincoln's office to help craft the legislation with the hope that it would be introduced in the fall, but it would go into the rural development fund at least that's how it's been written right now.

**Maureen Toomey - University of Idaho -4-H Youth Development**

Thank you.

**Debbie Moellendorf - 4-H Youth Development & University of Wisconsin-Extension - Agent/Department Head**

This is Debbie and our average number of students that participate in our program is we usually have between a 100 and a 100 and different students participate during the year. And our daily attendance is lower in the warmer month of the school year and then when we get to December, January, February and March we have up to 35 to 40 students there a day. So, the average turns out to be between 19 and 25 and that to the average of 19. And students do not pay at this time to attend the program and again part of it is we are reaching a group of students who may not be able to afford to come to the program and so the community has tried to keep it at no cost for the students. Again I indicated earlier the middle school does not qualify for the free and reduced funds qualification for the 21st Century grant, but we also know that we have a number of families that do not sign up for that and are actually eligible.

**Maureen Toomey - University of Idaho -4-H Youth Development**

As a follow-up question, that's something we are...I see all the time is that parents who wants the children hit the middle school, they are not filling out that paperwork to qualify so is your thinking that there is actually more in your community who would still qualify for free and reduce once.

**Debbie Moellendorf - 4-H Youth Development & University of Wisconsin-Extension - Agent/Department Head**

Yeah, and that is the case the Washington Elementary School here in the community of Merrill does qualify for the 21st Century grant and has been awarded that grant for an after school program. So, we know that we have a large population of students coming from an elementary school that qualifies that when they get to the middle school, they either haven't filled it out or for whatever reasons/

**Maureen Toomey - University of Idaho -4-H Youth Development**

Okay. Thank you very much.

**Erica Argersinger – Afterschool Alliance – Policy Director**

This is Erica again, I wonder if I could just...one more time Maureen you talked about, you know, wanting to follow-up and I think, you know, at this point it might be a little too early to follow-up with the Department of Agriculture, but I would definitely encourage you and others that if this is something that you are interested in and would be willing to, you know, say call your policymaker about it or, you know, send me some information on specific anecdotes from your area. I would...you know, I would say you could either e-mail me directly or if you signup for our newsletter, which is about...it goes out about once a month, it would have...it has all the sort of policy updates and everything. So you could sort of keep of breathe of what happening with this initiative and especially once the legislation is introduced sort of what the next steps would be. So I definitely encourage folks you can go to the Afterschool Alliance website, which is simply afterschoolalliance.org and signup for either our newsletter or our policy updates.

**Debbie Moellendorf - 4-H Youth Development & University of Wisconsin-Extension - Agent/Department Head**

This is Debbie again, if could add one more thing to what I said earlier.

**Maureen Toomey- University of Idaho -4-H Youth Development**

Sure.

**Debbie Moellendorf - 4-H Youth Development & University of Wisconsin-Extension - Agent/Department Head**

We actually do kind of have documentation that the audience that's attending our after school program actually is doesn't meet the 50% requirement for the free and reduced lunch and we need to do that for our Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program that comes in and does programming there because that's one of their requirements for doing programming, but the overall school doesn't qualify and we did write a 21st century grant, you know, indicating that our program participants meet the requirement that the overall school didn't and so then, we were not awarded the funding. So, that became an issue. Even though we know we are serving that population, the entire school population does not meet the requirements. So, I really think Erica that something that is a challenge.

**Erica Argersinger – Afterschool Alliance – Policy Director**

Yeah, and that's actually on a separate initiative we are working on with around older youth that issue came up about trying to make sure that target the funds more to the students, so at least that the qualification based on the individual versus on the school building. So, I appreciate the information.

**Soumya Bhat – Finance Project – Program Associate**

Operator, I think they have time for one more question if there are any.

**Operator**

Thank you, but there are no further questions at this time.

**Soumya Bhat – Finance Project – Program Associate**

Okay. Great. Well, I think that means we are ending on time. I wanted to thank everyone, both the speakers and the participants who joined as today for this really great discussion. I know we will have lots of follow-up questions, you can feel free to e-mail me or we will be listing all the e-mails, definitely Erica and I will see if the other panelists would like their contact information on the website as well. We would also like to thank Philip Morris USA Youth Smoking Prevention for enabling us to host today's audio conference and you can visit our website at [www.financeproject.org](http://www.financeproject.org) for more information on the Youth Programs Resource Center and for future audio conferences. If any of your colleagues were not able to make to this event, we will be posting the transcript and recording of this audio conference on the Youth Programs Resource Center website in the next week or so. Finally, please also to help to do our job better by filling out the evaluation form, which will be e-mailed to you and can also be found on the webpage. Thank you to everyone and have a great day!

**Operator**



**Transcript:  
The Finance Project (TFP)  
Financing and Sustaining Youth and Afterschool Programs in Rural  
Communities  
August 21, 2008**

Ladies and gentleman, this concludes today's teleconference you may disconnect your line at this time. Thank you for your participation.