



DESCRIPTION

- Serves over 350 K-8 students in rural Wisconsin community
- Offers diverse programming at three school sites
- Community supports afterschool program and other community programs through additional local property tax
- Collects and uses data to improve programming and show effectiveness

Elements of Sustainable Programs

- Vision
- **Strategic Financing Orientation**
- **Broad-Based Community Support**
- **Key Champions**
- **Results Orientation**
- Adaptability to Changing Conditions
- Strong Internal Systems
- Sustainability Plan

A+ After School Programs- Wautoma, Wisconsin

Making Afterschool Work in a Rural Community

Overview

Wautoma Area Schools serve a rural area of central Wisconsin; none of the towns it serves have a population larger than 2,500. The community lacks a YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, or youth center and in 2000, many of the approximately 1,100 students who attended the two local elementary schools and middle school did not have a place to go after school. In response to this need, community members came together to design an afterschool program. Initial funding for the program came from a federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC) grant. Since the initial seed grant ended, a 5 year grant from the state 21CCLC program, support at the district and county level and the introduction of fees have allowed the program to continue and grow.

Getting Started

In 2000, an enthusiastic group of county officials, school administrators, parents and community members formed an advisory committee to develop a proposal for a 21CCLC program to serve their community. Though their initial proposal was not funded, the group continued to work on their vision for a program that drew on all the resources this small rural community had to provide activities for children and youth in the Wautoma area. The group reapplied for federal funds, proposing a program that focused on 3rd - 8th graders and contained three program components: tutoring/homework help sessions followed by recreation, enrichment classes, and

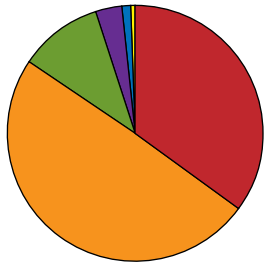
family outreach. Wautoma was notified that they would receive funding in 2001 and wasted little time hiring a director and beginning programming.

During that first year, programming occurred four afternoons a week, for two hours a day, at the middle school that serves students in grades 4-8. The program started out serving 30 students a day, and quickly grew to an average of 70 students a day. A large portion of the program's services remain at this site, with additional programming occurring at the two elementary schools, one serving grades K-3 and the other serving K-5 students. The backbone of the middle school program remains a drop-in program that offers homework help followed by recreation, as well as enrichment activities offered that students choose. Programming at the K-3 elementary school wraps around the school day, offering services 5-days a week between 6:00 and 8:00 AM before school and 3:00 to 6:00 PM after school. The K-5 elementary school only has 110 students, but almost 70% of them have taken advantage of the homework help and enrichment activities offered. The initial director remains with the program, overseeing the site coordinators' work at each of the schools. The program now serves over 350 children at the three sites, and has adopted the new name - "A+ After School Program".

✓ **Strategic Financing Orientation:** **Maximizing State, Federal and Local Revenue**

In 2001, Wautoma received the first year of federal funding from a three-year 21CCLC grant from the U.S. Department

Estimated Revenue Sources



- State 21CCLC Grant
- District Funds
- Tuition/Fees
- County Funds
- Donations
- Other Grants

of Education. This \$140,000 a year grant was their primary source of funding and provided services at their initial, middle school site. During the third and final year of the federal grant, Wautoma applied for and received a five year grant from the state 21CCLC program to augment their programming at the district's K-3 school. In order to continue the level of service at the middle and K-5 schools, the program turned to the district and county to provide supplemental funding. The district, acknowledging the void the program filled in the community and wanting it to continue, became a major financial supporter of the program. The county also saw value in the program and provided a \$10,000 grant. While this county contribution is a small amount of the overall A+ After School budget, it is a testament to the value the community places on the program.

Generating New Dedicated Revenue

In Wisconsin, school boards can create a Community Service Fund, often referred to as Fund 80, and introduce an additional local property tax to support programs that serve the community and are outside the regular school curriculum or extracurricular programs for students. Wautoma has taken advantage of this provision and collects local taxes under Fund 80 to support its afterschool programs and a few other community programs. The

Fund 80 resources and district support amount to almost half of the program's annual budget.

Additionally, program fees were introduced as the initial federal grant ended. For the older students, the fee was \$25 for the year. At the site serving younger children as part of wrap-around services, parents were charged \$2 an hour with financial aid available upon request and assistance in accessing the state child care subsidy if applicable. The A+ After School director worked closely with the statewide Childcare Resource and Referral program to understand how to navigate the reimbursement system. In the Wautoma area, it is administered through the county; A+ After School Program met with county caseworkers and cooperatively developed a process for accessing the subsidy. The fees from parents and subsidy reimbursements come to about \$30,000 a year.

Broad-Based Community Support

Before the A+ After School Program, the Wautoma area had limited options supporting children and youth in the hours after school. This was the impetus for the program's creation. The director of the program believes that the continued visibility of the program's activities throughout the community has bolstered the community's ongoing support. Individuals from the community are a major provider of enrichment programming, from activities led by a local naturalist to piano lessons to fly-fishing. The director makes a point to cultivate positive relationships in the community. Local partners include the County Extension, CAP (Community Action Programs) Services, and the Farm Bureau. Strong community

Estimated Revenue Sources:	
State 21CCLC Grant	\$100,000
District Funds	\$140,000
Tuition/Fees	\$ 30,000
County Funds	\$ 10,000
Donations	\$ 3,000
Other Grants	\$ 1,000
Total:	\$ 284,000

support is also crucial in maintaining the community's continued willingness to directly support the program through taxes via Fund 80.

✓ **Drawing on Support of Key Champions**

The principals at the schools have been invaluable resources on the operation side of the program and in communicating the work the afterschool program is doing to community partners. The principals assisted in removing territorial boundaries, facilitating the use of space and equipment at the sites, and in improving communication between the program and school staff. Their support of the program has given it a level of credibility within the schools and community.

Additionally, champions of the program at the county level led to the county Board of Supervisor's initial and ongoing grant support. The initial county grant supporting the A+ After School Program was largely a result of the support of an advisory committee member who was a county employee in the Department of Human Services. When the county board was making cuts due to budget deficits, the afterschool grant found itself on the chopping block until the advisory board member became its advocate pointing to the great impact the after school program has on youth and families as illustrated from the data the program gathered.

✓ **Result Orientation:**

A+ After School Program has collected and used data to improve the delivery of its services and highlight its results. They utilize parent and student surveys to design programming and gauge program satisfaction. They document grade and test scores to help illustrate impacts. In addition to work by an external evaluator, Wautoma took part in a state sponsored peer review process to help improve programming with 5 other 21CCLC programs. The hope is that A+ After School's documented successes and the value the community places on the program will continue to translate into financial support.

✓ **Next Steps and Key Challenges:**

The program director feels fortunate that the district has the resources to continue funding the A+ After School Program. Maintaining this funding may be a challenge, due to competing funding priorities in the community. The director notes the importance of maintaining credibility and continuing to show the value of the program to the district to ensure ongoing funding.



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