



**NJSACC, the Network for New Jersey's
Afterschool Communities**

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American Reinvestment and Recovery Act How to put your afterschool program on the agenda

The American Reinvestment and Recover Act includes new funding for Title 1 programs in New Jersey. School districts can choose to use some of this funding to create or strengthen afterschool programs that improve educational outcomes for underserved populations.

Here are some steps you can take to position your program to be part of this funding.

1. Understand the legislation

- a. What are the goals?
- b. What is covered and what isn't?
- c. How are the decisions made?
- d. What is the timing and application process in NJ?

2. Learn how Title 1 dollars are currently being spent in your community.

To find out, go to <http://homeroom.state.nj.us/> Click on EWEG on the left-hand side. Click on 'Public Access'. Click on NCLB under Formula Grant. Enter your district name.

3. Identify appropriate short-term funding possibilities.

Projects that are one-time costs might include piloting new models, building capacity to deliver services, covering start-up costs for new systems, or building infrastructure to support your work.

4. Understand your districts priorities.

What are the district goals and priorities? How can you help achieve those goals

5. Figure out how you can help your district/school achieve the goals of the legislation by improving educational outcomes for low income students

What are the challenges your school/district faces? Use the NJ school report card to look at test results for schools in your districts. At <http://education.state.nj.us/rc/rc08/index.html> you can find detailed information about each school in your district. Schools with low math scores might be interested in a math-linked program. Schools with low literacy scores might be interested in a program that includes reading and writing..

How is your program helpful in meeting these challenges? If you have evaluation data that demonstrates that your program helps increase test scores, improve attendance or improve attitudes towards school, use it to make your case. You can also use anecdotes about students who are thriving academically thanks to your program.

While data about your own program and community is the most valuable, you can also use national research to show the impact of high quality afterschool.

6 Figure out how you could use the funding to expand or improve your program

Come up with concrete ideas that are sustainable and are one-time costs. Consider professional development, piloting new models, or building infrastructure to support your program.

Think about the partnerships you have in place that can help make the initiative a success. Do you already have a strong relationship with a local school? If so, you might explore ways to connect your afterschool curriculum with the school day curriculum. Do you have strong relationships with local environmental organizations? You might be able to develop a hands-on science program.

How will you track the results? You may want to monitor grades, test scores, detention rates to judge your impact. You could also get feedback from families and from classroom teachers.

Why are you uniquely qualified to do this? For any proposal, it is important to describe your unique strengths and abilities that make you especially suited to the task.

7. Think through the details.

As with any proposal, you need to show

- a. What the program is
- b. Who it helps
- c. Where it is located
- d. When it will take place
- e. Why it is important

8. Find out if other afterschool providers in your community are applying for funding as well.

Consider partnering with them rather than competing with them. Partnerships need to be planned and managed carefully. Look for projects that make sense to do with outside partners. Professional development is one example.

9. Contact your local superintendent, principal or Title 1 coordinator

Start with relationships you already have in place. This will make it easier to get through the door. If your first efforts are rebuffed, keep trying. If you can't have a meeting, ask for a phone call. If the principal at one school isn't interested, maybe another one is. Find your champion.

If you don't have relationships in place, find a contact in your community who can help you open the door. This might be a parent who is active in the PTO, or a school board member who is familiar with your organization, or another community organization.

10. Your goal is to convince schools/districts that afterschool should be included in their funding request.

- a. Use national data to show how afterschool can extend student learning time and improve educational outcomes.
- b. Use state data to highlight the need for more afterschool programs and to show that NJ voters support high quality afterschool.
- c. Use local data in the NJ School Report Card to support your proposal.

Visit www.njsacc.org and click on Advocate for Afterschool to find useful state and national data. More data is available on the Afterschool Alliance research and policy page at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/research.cfm>. This report from the American Youth Policy Forum documents the benefits of extended learning:

[Http://www.aypf.org/documents/LearningAroundtheClockBenefitsofExpandedLearningOpportunitiesforOlderYouth.htm](http://www.aypf.org/documents/LearningAroundtheClockBenefitsofExpandedLearningOpportunitiesforOlderYouth.htm)

This document from the Finance Project provides more information on how afterschool organizations can take advantage of stimulus funding:

<http://www.financeproject.org/publications/EconomicStimulus.pdfopportunities>

11. Listen carefully.

The plan you came with may not be the plan you leave with. Be ready to rethink your proposal in response to your school/district priorities. By working together you can refine your plan to better meet the needs of your students and school.

12. Show community support.

You may need to follow up to help your school or district understand the value of afterschool. Invite the decision makers to see your program in action. If they don't have the time to visit, find a way to 'bring the program to them' through a short video, photographs or stories.

Ask for others to speak on your behalf. Bring parents to a school board meeting to show support. Ask local policymakers to make calls for you.

This tool is the beginning of the process not the end. Feel free to call/email us any time to ask questions, share your experiences or discuss your specific situation. We'll keep you updated as we learn more about opportunities for new funding for afterschool.