



WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON

**children
& families**

Raising Voices to Make Every Kid Count

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For Immediate Release
May 1st, 2007

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Need for State Support for After-school Programs Demonstrated

Madison – Requests from communities around the state for after-school funding far exceeded the amount of federal dollars the state was able to award in a recent grant process, pointing to the need for dedicated state funds for after school programs. The Department of Public Instruction recently announced the allocation of federal community learning center grants to 45 new sites. To fully fund the remaining 132 sites from communities that requested funding, it would take an additional \$7 million.

As a member of the Wisconsin After School Network, the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF) is calling for a \$5 million annual appropriation in the state budget to create a state funded grant program to support after-school programs.

“Communities all over Wisconsin are working to improve outcomes for students through after-school programs. Funding for after-school in Wisconsin currently comes primarily from the federal government. State funding is needed to support programs where children can have safe learning environments when school is out before their parents are home,” said Charity Eleson, executive director of Wisconsin Council on Children and Families.

Wisconsin’s relatively high rate of workforce participation by parents of school age children—71 percent in contrast to the national average of 61 percent—means that quality after school activities are in demand throughout the state.

A report released in March 2007, was based on the Promising Programs study, which was conducted by researchers at the University of California at Irvine, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and Policy Studies Associates, Inc. It finds that high quality after-school programs that engage elementary and middle school age children (particularly for disadvantaged youth) result in improved grades, work habits, school attendance, social skills and interpersonal behavior as well as reduced risky behavior.

“The difference between the school week and a parent’s work week can be as much as 25 hours – how that time is filled by children is significant,” said Eleson. “Research clearly demonstrates that children who participate in quality after-school programs gain lifelong benefits. For children from low income families and children of color, utilizing out-of-school time effectively can help close the opportunity and achievement gap.”

“Clearly times have changed and after-school opportunities need to keep up with the reality of Wisconsin’s workforce and the supervised, safe environments and strong learning opportunities we want for our children,” said Eleson.

For more information on after-school in Wisconsin visit: www.wccf.org

View The Promising Programs study at:

<http://www.policystudies.com/studies/youth/Promising%20Programs%20policy%20paper.pdf>

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