

**PRESS RELEASE
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***Advantage After School Awards Reveal Need for More Afterschool Funding
NYSAN Congratulates Awardees But Raises Concerns About Programs Closing for Lack
of Funds***

New York City – Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that the Office of Children and Family Services has awarded \$10.9 million in grants for afterschool programs across New York. Only 68 of 281 applicants received grants—less than a quarter of the applicants. Several programs that had been receiving funds were cut, which will leave them struggling to still serve students.

“While we are very excited for the children who will have access to enrichment activities, mentoring, and academic support through these newly awarded programs, we are concerned about the tens of thousands of children who will lose programs or never have one offered to them because the funding available is insufficient to address more than a small fraction of the need,” said Nora Niedzielski-Eichner, Executive Director of the New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN). “New York needs to increase its investment in afterschool so that more of the 1.1 million children who would attend a program if they could can have that opportunity.”

The FY2014-15 state budget included \$17.7 million for Advantage. Prior to the recession, funding had been \$28 million annually, and the 37% cut cost almost 8,000 students the opportunity to participate in programs. Overall, funding for New York’s three major afterschool funding streams remains 40% below pre-recession levels.

The Advantage After School Program is based on research that has found that students who participate in afterschool programs have better attendance, better academic outcomes, better peer relationships, and fewer behavior problems. Offered for three hours afterschool, Advantage programs focus on providing youth with opportunities to make positive choices and develop individual interests and new skills. Advantage programs involve parents and their local schools, bringing together multiple parts of the community to support the youth in the program.

Governor Cuomo proposed \$160 million in new afterschool funding in the FY2014-15 executive budget, which would have created opportunities for more than 100,000 students. That funding was not included in the final budget, a huge missed opportunity to

provide new options for some of the 1.1 million students in need of a safe, educational place to go after the school day ends—and for their families, too many of whom face painful choices when they cannot afford safe afterschool options.

Awarded Advantage programs will offer students a range of enrichment activities, including hands-on science, creative writing, career exploration, art, sports, music, and community service, as well as academic supports and social-emotional skills building. Advantage awardees seek to improve students' social, emotional, vocational, and academic skills and reduce negative behaviors such as substance abuse and bullying. Programs set targets each year for parental involvement, student engagement, and student growth.

For example, Quad A for Kids, whose participants achieve better school attendance and stronger ELA and math results than non-participants, includes fun hands-on learning activities such as competition in the Greater Rochester Soap Box Derby. Another program, run by Good Shepherd Services at Boys and Girls High School in Brooklyn, will build on the school's recently awarded Community Schools Grant to implement the Men in Progress and Women on the Move programs, which help students develop leadership skills, build resiliency, and improve their decision-making through thought provoking conversations, trips, and one-on-one and group activities.

About NYSAN

The New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN) is a public-private partnership dedicated to promoting young people's safety, learning, and healthy development by increasing the quality and availability of programs available outside the traditional classroom.

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