

NEWS NEWS



Department of Human Services

One Parkway Building

Anne Marie Ambrose,
Commissioner

1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Phone: 215. 683-6012
Internet: www.phila.gov

February 1, 2012

Contact: Alicia Taylor 215-683-6012

Philadelphia Awarded \$765,000 to Strengthen Out-of-School-Time Programs

PHILADELPHIA--The City of Philadelphia is the recipient of a four-year \$765,000 Wallace Foundation grant to strengthen its efforts to provide children and youth with high-quality Out-of-School Time (OST) programs. The funds will help improve the quality of after-school programs available to children and teens by formalizing collaboration between the municipal agencies, schools, nonprofit youth programs and other institutions vital to providing these services.

Philadelphia is one of nine cities selected by Wallace for this four-year initiative. The others are: Baltimore, Denver, Fort Worth, Grand Rapids, Jacksonville, Louisville, Nashville, and St. Paul – all cities where at least half of public school students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. Wallace selected these cities because they are well-positioned to build on work they already have begun. Philadelphia spent \$38 million on OST programs in the last fiscal year.

“Afterschool programs are an essential component in Philadelphia’s strategy to improve the life chances and outcomes for youth.” Mayor Michael A. Nutter said . “This funding will help to improve afterschool experiences for children as well as improve the high-quality programs available throughout the city.”

The grant will support efforts in two key areas: creating a structure to coordinate the city’s diverse afterschool programs and obtaining reliable information about them with the goal of improving, planning, policy development and evaluation.

“Reliable information is an essential building block for the city’s OST infrastructure,” says Donald Schwarz, Deputy Mayor for Health and Opportunity. “Systematic and comprehensive data should inform the decision-making process regarding the allocation of limited resources to services, professional development of staff, technical assistance to providers and other supports.”

The coordinating structure will facilitate and formalize collaboration between city departments, education systems, the non-profit and private sectors and the philanthropic community. “Among the goals of this structure will be the adoption of community-wide, program outcome templates that are measurable, practical and consistent with youth development principles,” says Michael DiBerardinis, Deputy Mayor for Environmental and Community Resources.

According to Anne Marie Ambrose, Department of Human Services Commissioner, “Well-structured afterschool programs effectively expand learning time for children and youth, and provide a range of opportunities for positive youth development. While Philadelphia has always recognized the value in these programs, this funding will help us to better monitor and ensure the quality of programs offered.”

Initial partners in the program include representatives from: the Department of Human Services, the Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Health & Opportunity, The Mayor’s Office, School District of Philadelphia, Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Public Health Management Corporation and several other City Departments.

In addition to the Wallace Foundation funding, The United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania has committed \$75,000 toward the project.

“We encourage cities to adopt this system-building approach,” said Nancy Devine, Director of Communities at Wallace Foundation. “Research tells us that children and teens have greater access to high-quality after-school experiences when communities coordinate the work of the many different groups involved.”

The nine new grants are the second phase of an initiative Wallace began in 2003 in five cities – Boston, Chicago, New York, Providence and Washington DC – to help cities better coordinate after-school programs to improve opportunities for poor children and teens. That first phase revealed six building blocks essential to strong after-school systems: mayoral leadership and commitment to after school; multi-year planning; a coordinating entity to lead the work; access to reliable data; efforts to improve the quality of programs; and efforts to increase participation of youngsters in them. An analysis of the first phase of the initiative can be found in a recent report from RAND Corporation called [*Hours of Opportunity: Lessons from Five Cities on Building Systems to Improve After-School, Summer, and Other Out-of-School-Time Programs*](#). It found that while after-school program quality is typically variable within cities, the five cities demonstrated that “organizations across cities could work together toward increasing access, quality, data-based decision making and sustainability.”

#####

The Philadelphia Department of Human Services is charged with protecting children from abuse, neglect, and delinquency; ensuring their safety and permanency in nurturing home environments; and strengthening and preserving families by enhancing community-based prevention services. In partnership with community organizations, DHS provides services to strengthen the overall well being of Philadelphia children, youth, and families using a customer focused approach that is responsive to evolving community needs.

[The Wallace Foundation](http://www.wallacefoundation.org) is an independent, national foundation dedicated to supporting and sharing effective ideas and practices that expand learning and enrichment opportunities for children. The Foundation maintains an online library of lessons at www.wallacefoundation.org about what it has learned, including knowledge from its current efforts aimed at: strengthening educational leadership to improve student achievement; helping disadvantaged students gain more time for learning through summer learning and an extended school day and year; enhancing out-of-school time opportunities; and building appreciation and demand for the arts.