



NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES AND THE SOUTH CAROLINA AFTERSCHOOL ALLIANCE

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South Carolina Chosen to Host Statewide Mayoral After School Summit

South Carolina – **South Carolina Afterschool Alliance (SCAA)** was chosen as one of five statewide after school networks to host a Statewide Mayoral Summit on After School and Expanded Learning as part of technical and financial assistance from the National League of Cities' (NLC) Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute), with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

The summit, to be held in the spring of 2010, will offer municipal officials an opportunity to connect with state leaders in order to address critical after school challenges in communities, showcase promising practices, and jointly determine next steps for making after school a priority. In addition, mayors will be able to share information regarding their after school needs and priorities with state-level decision makers and explore ways that cities and towns can utilize federal resources made available through the states under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

"Families are relying even more on after school programs as they struggle to keep their jobs, take on more hours, or struggle to afford basic necessities for their children. As a state with one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation, after school programs are playing an even more important role in the everyday lives of South Carolinians. Many of these programs provide not only academic enrichment, but also health care services, breakfast, snacks and sometimes even a hot supper. The summit provides a forum for municipal leaders to build and expand partnerships in their cities and a venue to focus attention on the ways in which an after school program can address critical challenges in their communities," said Zelda Waymer, Executive Director of the South Carolina Afterschool Alliance.

Millions of children in cities and towns across America need a safe place with engaging activities during after school hours. Expanded learning opportunities expose children and youth to an array of enriching experiences which enhance learning and equip the next generation with the skills necessary for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. When youth have no access to after school programs, they are also more likely to engage in crime and other risky behaviors, presenting a significant challenge to local and state leaders.

All of the state networks selected to participate in this new initiative received commitments from their governor's offices and/or state legislative representatives, state education department officials, and key mayors to participate in and help plan the summit.

“Municipal leaders understand that after school programs support academic achievement, improve public safety and contribute to the overall vitality and quality of life in cities,” said Clifford M. Johnson, executive director of the YEF Institute. “By connecting with their state counterparts, municipal officials can address critical policy and funding issues and lay a stronger foundation for after school programming in communities throughout the state.”

The YEF Institute awarded a grant of \$5,000 to the SCAA, which can be used for summit expenses, including publications and meeting materials, outreach, meeting costs and travel time. Technical assistance provided by the YEF Institute will include support in refining summit goals and messages, developing an agenda and panelist questions, serving as a summit presenter or facilitator, and assisting with outreach to mayors and city leaders across the selected states. Additional topic-specific research and consultation or contacts with national experts may also be part of the technical assistance.

The other state networks selected to receive this technical and financial assistance include the Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence, Georgia Afterschool Investment Council, Iowa Afterschool Alliance, and Michigan After-School Partnership.

The five selected statewide afterschool networks are supported in part through grants from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. Nationally, a total of thirty-eight (38) statewide after school networks are funded to shape state policies, build partnerships and assist the development and sustainability of quality after school programs. To learn more about these statewide after school networks, visit <http://www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net/>

The YEF Institute and the Afterschool Alliance will also host the biennial National City Afterschool Summit on April 19-21, 2010, in Washington, DC. Mayors from the statewide mayoral summits will be featured at this national event, as well as other key mayors who are using their leadership positions to create citywide after school systems.

The SCAA is a statewide network of after school providers devoted to improving quality of services. The SCAA is a resource and advocate for approximately nine hundred and fifty-five (955) school, community, non-profit and faith-based after school programs representing approximately more than 190,000 South Carolinians.

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