

STATE BUDGET CASE STUDY: KANSAS

ACCOMPLISHMENT

A new appropriation called The Kansas Afterschool Enrichment Act was included in the 2006 Omnibus Budget Bill. \$375,000 was made available for a competition for afterschool programs. Half of the funds were to be allocated to non-school based programs. The other half of funds were to be used to support existing 21st Century CLC grantees transition to ongoing sustainability. The Kansas State Department of Education is the managing entity.

BACKGROUND

Kansas Enrichment Network has worked to engage a broad range of stakeholders. Two strong stakeholders are Kansas Action for Children and the Kansas Recreation and Parks Association. Senator Laura Kelly (D) from Topeka, formerly the executive director of the Kansas Recreation and Parks Organization, introduced program language and a funding amount into the final version of the legislature's budget. Her proposal was then championed by the three Senate Omnibus Budget Conferees, Senators Dwayne Umbarger (R), Jay Emler (R) and Jim Barone (R).

NETWORK INVOLVEMENT AND ACTIVITIES

It happened fast, the result of a last minute "window of opportunity" during Omnibus negotiations and behind the scenes advocacy by a limited number of players. Kansas Action for Children was a key partner. Gary Brunk, Kansas Action for Children's Executive Director, is chair of the KEN executive committee. KAC's legislative team member, Nancy Lindberg, worked with the State Senator who introduced the budget item and program language.

Policy actions that took place after the budget passed were primarily among the Department of Education, Kansas Action for Children and the legislative sponsor. Issues like grant size, peer review and details of work were determined in this post-legislative session environment.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE:

This is a one-year budget and prospects for future funding are encouraging. Criteria for funding was only partially determined in enabling language. Many criteria were left for post legislative discussions. Outcomes and grant activities are not entirely compatible with those in other grants and the broader data collection and research being conducted on behalf of afterschool programs. Program may have questionable use in determining effectiveness and/or research into what is working best for academic achievement.

LESSONS LEARNED

KEN director Nan Harper mentioned many lessons learned:

1. *You never know when or from whom the opportunity to win some funding will present itself.* A lesson learned is to have a policy proposal ready to go that is thoroughly discussed and agreed upon by network members.

2. *Time spent in advance negotiating details on grant criteria and competition rules is time well spent, and may take more time than the actual advocacy effort.*
3. *Since one will not always have time to advance each policy idea, always do policy work.* Developing greater understanding of the need for support by policy makers and the need for afterschool for children and parents is a constant job. A Governor's summit, press conferences, reports and other engagement and communications efforts promoted the network and the network's vision and goals. These activities take time and would not have been possible to achieve in the 'heat of the final moments of the legislature,' if they had not already been done. So, a big lesson learned is to do the ground work and support base building in advance.
4. *Too many cooks can spoil the broth.* This is true often, but especially in the crunch of the final days of a legislative session. Take the time, in advance of the budget passing, to get agreement on how the grants will work, who will be eligible and for what kinds of afterschool activities, etc.
5. *Expect to be involved in implementation.* This victory was a product of an opportunity by a key champion, a key partner with legislative connections and a supportive Governor and a respected network. Even so, there were implementation issues that were thorny. It would have been better if this budget increase had actually grown out of an initiative, as part of an overall plan that the partners had worked on in advance and come to an agreement on how it would work. Without that, the rule making and competition design fall prey to many groups doing their own lobbying for criteria, grant eligibility, and review process procedures
6. *Good partner relationships are essential.* KAC really moved this issue/budget item. KEN will probably enter a contractual relationship to secure this key role in support of network goals and policy priorities.

NETWORK DETAILS

State Network: Kansas Enrichment Network

Lead group: Kansas Action for Children. Fiscal agent: University of Kansas, Center for Research.

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Partner groups involved in effort: 60 partners; 3 key partners for this advocacy project; Kansas State Department of Education and more partners were involved in the policy development and determining the details of implementation.