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Show Me the Money!

Mitchel Herian

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, mherian2@unl.edu

Nancy C. Shank

Nebraska Public Policy Center, nshank@nebraska.edu

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Show Me the Money!

What Are Expanded Learning Opportunities?

“Educators, policymakers and families increasingly agree: schools cannot do it alone.

Children need multiple opportunities to learn and grow - at home, in school, and in the community.

A systematic, complementary learning approach - which intentionally integrates both school and nonschool supports - can better ensure that all children have the skills they need to succeed.”

*Dr. Heather Weiss
Director, Harvard Family Research Project
Keynote Speaker at the Governor’s Summit
on Expanded Learning Opportunities*

Identifying resources available to support expanded learning opportunity programs in Nebraska

In January 2008, Governor Dave Heineman hosted the Governor’s Summit for Expanded Learning Opportunities. The Summit, supported by the National Governors Association, explored collaborative efforts of schools and community leaders to create expanded learning opportunities for Nebraska’s children and youth.

Following the event, Governor Heineman asked the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation and the Nebraska Community Learning Centers Network to review resources available to expanded learning opportunities in Nebraska. The Network contracted with the University of Nebraska’s Public Policy Center to conduct initial research into these funding sources and to prepare a summary fund map highlighting initial findings.

For the purposes of this fund map, the term **expanded learning opportunities (ELO)** is used to collectively refer to **early childhood programs** for children from birth to five, **afterschool programs** for school-age children, and **parental involvement programs**.

The long term goal of this fund mapping work, which we anticipate will evolve over the next several years, is to promote increased coordination between programs and funding sources that support activities in these areas, to advocate for more efficient use of existing funds, and enhance the ability to build a broad constituency for additional, stable cross-sector funding for these important extended learning opportunities.



Some Key Findings of the Fund Mapping Project



A variety of government-administered funding streams at both the federal and state levels exist

- While the majority of federal support for extended learning opportunity programs serving school-aged youth comes from Health and Human Services and the Department of Education, other federal agencies also provide millions of dollars in dedicated funding streams supporting extended learning opportunity programs
- Funding between these categories is unequal - early childhood and afterschool programs receive much more dedicated support than initiatives targeting parental involvement
- State administrators of federal funds feel that their funding is firm/reliable



Additional federal funding for these programs appears to be available

- Various Department of Education programs such as Striving Readers, Gear Up and Improving School Literacy Through School Libraries appear to provide sources of funding for ELO programs that are not currently being utilized in Nebraska
- Other Federal Agencies such as the Departments of Justice, Labor and Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and the Commission for National and Community Service appear to provide sources of funding for ELO programs that are not currently being utilized in Nebraska
- Initial review of existing funding streams showed no evidence of coordination efforts for these funding opportunities at the federal agency level



Successful programs cobble together funding from a variety of sources

- Numerous successful programs appear to have been initiated by a single grant and then diversified their funding base to include multiple funding streams
- Many afterschool programs identified community school district support, student fees and reimbursement payments as key parts of long term stability
- Despite the relative confidence of administrators who oversee federal/state funding programs, administrators of local programs did not have confidence in their programs' stability



Better coordination and planning could both help to utilize existing dollars more efficiently as well as identify and secure more funding

- Community Level Coordination: Develop community-wide partnerships to help position communities to maximize existing and potential funding streams
- State Level Coordination: Create interagency working group to explore opportunities for greater collaboration between agencies

About the report

This report was produced for the Nebraska Community Learning Center Network by the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center. Research Specialist Mitch Herian, PhD., and the Center's Associate Director Nancy Shank oversaw the collection and compilation of this material. They were assisted by a working group of N CLC N stakeholders, which included Barbara Bartle, Jeff Cole, Betty Medinger, Julie Sigmon, Lisa St. Clair and Marj Willeke. Funding for this project was made available through a grant from the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices.

