

The After-School INSTITUTE

Research Highlight

**Public/Private Ventures and The Finance Project, commissioned by The Wallace
Foundation**

“The Cost of Quality Out-of-School Time Programs”

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- These highlights are very abbreviated. If you are interested in learning more about where these numbers came from, please read the full report. It can be found at: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/KnowledgeCenter/KnowledgeTopics/AreasOfContinuingInterest/PhilanthropicIssues/Documents/The-Cost-of-Quality-OST-Programs.pdf>
- There is also an online cost calculator to help programs determine their individual costs. It can be found at: www.wallacefoundation.org/cost-of-quality

History: In an effort to better understand funding for out-of-school time (OST) programs, the Wallace Foundation commissioned Public/Private Ventures and The Finance Project to do a study of high quality OST programs and their costs.

Sample: The sample used for this study was screened for quality – factors such as attendance, years in operation, staff/youth ratios, staff qualifications, and leadership opportunities for older youth. Therefore, the sample used is *not* representative of all OST programs, but only of high quality ones.

Findings: The study reports average hourly, daily, and total costs for OST programs, for elementary/middle school programs and teen programs. The programs were in several different cities, so costs have been converted into “average city” costs. The average hourly costs of a slot in a program are:

- \$7 an hour for a slot in a program for elementary/middle school students during the year
- \$4 an hour for a slot in a program for elementary/middle school students during the summer
- \$10 an hour for a slot in a teen program during the year
- \$8 an hour for a slot in a teen program during the summer
- The average annual cost per slot is \$3,620

Some other key points:

- Staff salaries and benefits make up about two-thirds of a program’s budget
- In-kind donations (such as rent-free space) are about one-fifth of a program’s budget
- More staff are needed for younger youth, but staff with more specialized skills and training are needed for older youth; therefore, staff costs are greater in programs for older youth
- Costs vary based on ages-served, focuses (multi-focus programs are less expensive), location, etc.
- School-based/school-run programs are the least expensive, followed by school-based/CBO-run, and finally by CBO-based/CBO-run
- Programs that serve more youth are generally less expensive, because overhead and administrative costs are spread out among more youth; however, all programs have a

threshold at which it becomes more expensive to serve more youth – for example if another staff member needs to be hired