

# PURSUING THE PROMISE

## Addressing Equity, Access, and Diversity in After School and Youth Programs

A Report of Findings and Recommendations

from

California Tomorrow

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# INTRODUCTION

**T**he past ten years have seen tremendous growth in the arena of after school and youth services. From one end of the United States to the other — before school, after school, evenings and weekends — young people are flocking to out-of-school programs in greater numbers than ever before. They come for sports, for safety, to learn new skills, to play, to get help with schoolwork and to connect with adults who care. Some programs are designed primarily for academic support or enrichment; others focus on the arts, recreation, childcare, or leadership. Some serve multiple purposes and needs — there is an exciting variety. Thanks to a surge of public investment and private sector funding, public awareness of the importance of after school programs exploded, and the field has gone to significant scale in just the last few years. New after school opportunities now exist in a wide range of cities, suburbs, on reservations, and in rural areas.

Out-of-school activities provide enrichment as well as creative and recreational outlets. But this recent drive for after school programs also stems from a desire to address a variety of social concerns, such as crime prevention, school reform, welfare reform, support for working parents, drug abuse prevention, and teen pregnancy prevention. Each of these social concerns disproportionately affects low-income children, immigrants, youth of color, and other marginalized groups.

All young people need safety, educational opportunities, creative expression, physical fitness, and the chance to become critical thinkers and responsible contributors to their communities. But far

too many do not have the support in their schools or communities to realize these fundamental goals. The United States currently has over 28 million students whose parents work outside the home, and an estimated 5 to 7 million “latchkey kids” who care for themselves and each other before and after school. These children and youth benefit especially strongly from out-of-school programs.

After school and youth programs have the power to have a huge positive impact on the healthy development of individual young people. When designed with an eye toward equity, they can also lessen the effect of social disparities, increase the quality of life in communities, and guide the future of our nation overall. That is why the programs are so important, particularly for children and youth who come from socially marginalized communities.

### INCREASING DIVERSITY AND PERSISTENT INEQUITY

The current expansion of after school and youth opportunities is occurring in the context of increasing cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity in the United States. Consider the following:

- At present, 38% of our nation’s school-aged children are children of color – 17% African American, 16% Latino/Hispanic, 4% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% Native American. It is estimated that around the year 2040, there will be no single ethnic majority in the country. (National Center for Education Statistics)
- Almost one in four school-aged children in the U.S. have at least one immigrant parent, three times the figure from 25 years ago. (U.S. Census Bureau)
- In 1995, 13% of students aged 5 – 17 spoke a language other than English at home; 5% were classified as “Limited English Proficient” or “English Language Learners.” (U.S. Census Bureau)

This diversity presents both opportunities and challenges. The opportunities are for connecting with young people in meaningful ways that support their backgrounds and identities, build strong educational and social skills, and nurture cross-cultural understanding. The challenges relate to persistent inequities between groups in access to quality schooling, civic participation, political representation, and economic opportunity.

Youth of color, low-income youth, language minority youth, immigrants, and other marginalized populations face barriers to access and inclusion in a variety of social institutions. They are often exposed to negative messages from the media and from peers and society about their backgrounds and identities. Many attend schools in which their experiences and communities are not part of the curriculum. And they are more likely than young people from other groups to live in communities with weak infrastructures, overcrowded and dilapidated schools, high levels of underqualified teachers, and little access to services and support. It is not surprising that these youth are more likely to face high drop-out rates, low school achievement, poor health, mental health stresses, and risky behaviors.

In the year 2000, for example, 31% of Native Americans lived below the poverty level, along with 22% of African Americans, 21% of Latinos/Hispanics, and 11% of Asians/Pacific Islanders. By comparison, the poverty rate for whites was 7.5%. (U.S. Census Bureau)

- In the last ten years, the academic gaps between children of color and white children and between English Learners and other students have increased. By the end of fourth grade, African American, Latino, and low-income students of all races are already about two years behind other students. By the time they reach eighth grade, they are about three years behind. (Education Trust)
- The high school dropout rate for Latino/Hispanic 16 – 24 year olds is 28%, double the rate for African Americans (13%) and four times the rate for whites (7%). Although Asian/Pacific Islander students overall have the lowest dropout rate of any group in the country (4%), 50% of Southeast Asian refugees leave school in some communities. (National Center for Education Statistics; Asian Nation)
- Bachelor's degrees are held by 29% of Asians/Pacific Islanders and 23% of whites but only 14% of African Americans and 9% of Latinos/Hispanics and Native Americans. Within the Asian/Pacific Islander community, only 6% of Tongans, Cambodians, Laotians and Hmongs have completed college. (U.S. Census Bureau; Asian Pacific American Medical Association)
- According to the American Association of University Women, girls of all backgrounds in our nation's schools consistently consider and pursue a narrower set of academic and career opportunities than do boys. They are less likely to be educated in computer and other technical skills, and once in the labor force, they tend to cluster in only 20 of the more than 400 most common job categories. Two out of three minimum wage earners are women.
- One in five girls says she has been abused sexually or physically. One in four shows signs of depression, and one in four does not get health care when she needs it. (American Association of University Women)
- In 1992, the Hetrick-Martin Institute reported that 80% of gay and lesbian teens experience feelings of severe emotional and social isolation. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found lesbian and gay youth are two to six times more likely to attempt suicide than other youth and account for up to 30% of all completed suicides.

## THE URGENCY AND IMPORTANCE OF AFTER SCHOOL AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

With the recent expansion of out-of-school efforts, we have a historic opportunity to address some longstanding disparities in this country, and to provide all young people with the support, skills, and experiences to thrive and take leadership in the diverse 21<sup>st</sup> century world. This will require continued public investment, broad commitment at the policy and community levels, and the building of an expanded after school infrastructure. It also calls us to place equity squarely on the agenda when planning out-of-school services at the program, initiative, and government levels, so that we do not unwittingly increase the difficulties facing certain groups. As the after school field matures,

providers need to find ways to design and run programs that are inclusive, accessible and supportive of youth from many different backgrounds. Without addressing the specific needs of young people from all communities, we will miss the opportunity to build both a new generation of strong, successful learners and a more caring, connected society.

Recognizing the opportunity and feeling tremendous urgency to see the after school arena address equity and access, in 1998 the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation entered into an unprecedented partnership with the Department of Education. At the time, the department was shaping and beginning to administer the largest federal investment in after school services to date through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Initiative. The goal of the initiative was to provide quality after school programming for low-income rural and urban youth in schools across the country. It was structured specifically to address access and equity by targeting funds to those communities that have not had access to after school programs or resources. While the federal funds were used to support programs, the Mott Foundation dedicated its resources toward supporting capacity-building in the field, including support for training, technical assistance, research, evaluation, policy development, the development of public will, and strategies to enhance the ability of low-income communities to apply for and implement the programs. The results of these activities have been the generation of a national dialogue and learning community, creation of training and technical assistance infrastructures, and the development of new knowledge about the impacts of after school programs. One aspect of the foundation's research agenda in this far-ranging and visionary effort was to support California Tomorrow in conducting a multi-year national research project to provide information and stimulate dialogue regarding access and equity in the after school arena.

### ABOUT CALIFORNIA TOMORROW'S EQUITY, ACCESS, AND DIVERSITY IN AFTER SCHOOL AND YOUTH PROGRAMS PROJECT

California Tomorrow's "Equity, Access, and Diversity in After School and Youth Programs" project was established in 1999 with support from the Mott Foundation. The intent of the project was to develop and promote a vision for how after school programs could best support youth from all communities, with a particular focus on youth of color, immigrants, low-income youth, and those from other frequently underserved groups. For three years, we studied multiple levels within the after school and youth development fields: policy and initiative design; program design and content; implementation; advocacy; evaluation and accountability; and technical assistance and training. The research was designed to highlight the access, equity, and diversity challenges facing out-of-school programs, to identify directions for expanding the capacity of programs and policies to address these challenges, and to document promising strategies for serving diverse youth in the after school hours.

## THIS PAPER

This report presents the results of our study. Section I describes the analytical framework that underlies the research, the guiding questions, and California Tomorrow’s approach. Section II presents the findings of our study. Woven throughout this discussion are stories from the programs we visited, and descriptions of the ways these programs are seeking to address the diversity, equity and access challenges facing their communities. In addition to informing our general analysis, each site’s work is also explicitly featured in relation to one finding, where it offers inspiration or insight about a specific dilemma or possibility. We end, in Section III, with our recommendations to policymakers, training and technical assistance providers, program directors and staff, and the research community.

## OUR HOPE

Our study describes an emerging field in the beginning stages of grappling with the challenges of increasing diversity and persistent inequity. It tells the story of hardworking, caring and dedicated people delivering programs and services in the out-of-school hours to young people and their families in many different areas and communities in this country. Our findings are a testament to the important role these programs can play in the lives of individual young people and their communities. We heard from many youth that the after school programs they attended and the bonds they formed with program staff could have life-saving impacts. We saw places in which tensions between community groups were mediated through building relationships among diverse peers in program activities. We met young people who felt new pride and connection to their families and their heritage after engaging in culturally sensitive after school projects. And we witnessed children and youth of all ages enthusiastically showcasing new skills they learned as part of educational and enrichment programs in their schools and neighborhoods. From these strong examples, a foundation can be built for a system of out-of-school services throughout the United States that is equitable, accessible and enriching for our diverse society.

To build such a system requires addressing the challenges facing programs, policies, and after school infrastructures. Many such challenges are also described in this report. Our study found that, while important efforts are being made and there is definite progress, like many other fields the after school arena as a whole is still working to develop a comprehensive vision for inclusive access and equitable services for all children and youth. Research has not yet provided a full accounting of “what works” in after school programming, and offers even less information on equity and access issues. The basic infrastructures to support program development are just now being built. Within the programs and communities we studied, we saw this manifested in limited overall leadership and understanding, inadequate training, insufficient data and accountability, and few tools and supports for inclusive program assessment. We documented many struggles related to the lack of sustainable funding, difficulties in start-up, and reliance on low-wage and part-time workers that plague the field – and the ways in which these underlying conditions make it especially difficult for programs to address equity, access, and diversity. We witnessed persistent barriers to

participation, and concluded that there is still farther to go if our nation is to deliver on the deepest promises offered by the exciting investment and growth in our after school services. It is our hope that researchers, funders, policymakers, technical assistance providers, and practitioners will find this report helpful in continuing to move toward a deeper understanding of equity issues and toward a greater awareness and sense of urgency about using after school programming to enhance the lives of all youth, families, and communities – and, ultimately, to improve the quality and inclusiveness of our society.

EXCERPT

# FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH DESIGN

## THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK UNDERLYING THE RESEARCH

This research is based on the expertise of California Tomorrow, a non-profit organization with nearly two decades of experience in the field of equity and access in education, youth development, early childhood education, and community initiatives. The literature review on after school and youth services, with which we began our work, found that while there is much interest in providing sensitive and accessible programs, the after school arena is still in the beginning stages of developing a comprehensive body of information speaking to equity-related goals, practices, and theory. Given how young the field is, we were not surprised to find that there is no shared or integrated ideal in the literature of what it means to create access and equity in after school activities or of what it means to fully deal with the increasing diversity in our nation's programs, schools, and neighborhoods. In conjunction with a key group of project advisors and other leaders in the fields of after school, youth development, and education reform, California Tomorrow developed an analytical framework about what diverse young people need from out-of-school programs and how providers, policymakers, technical assistance providers, and researchers can respond.

## Three Understandings

Our framework rests on three understandings about the role of culture, language and community in the lives of children and youth; about the power and impact of societal inequities on young people's development; and about the reality of diversity in the lives and futures of young people.

Understanding #1: A young person's culture, language, class, community, and experience are core to his or her identity.

*If you don't know where you've come from, you don't know where you're going.*

Chicano Program Director, Oakland, CA

As young people grow up, who they are and how they come to relate to the world is deeply shaped by the customs, traditions, and experiences of their families and communities. Their economic situations, their cultures, the languages they use to understand the world, the disabilities they may struggle with, and the ways they experience gender and sexuality strongly impact their communication and vision, as well as their hopes, skills, and aspirations. For example, growing up female brings different challenges and gifts than growing up male – even within the same family, community, and culture. The circumstances facing youth in low-income families and communities are not the same as those facing youth in middle class or wealthy families. Growing up as a Latino immigrant in a border community in Texas offers different resources and requires different wisdom than growing up as a working class African American in urban Baltimore or as a fourth generation Japanese American in a suburb of Chicago. The support that young people need and seek is connected to these realities.

A child's family and community are often the source of great sustenance, knowledge, cultural wisdom, and guidance about what it means to be human and what it takes to function effectively in the world. At the same time, the understandings and codes of behavior in young people's home communities are not always sufficient preparation for the worlds and relationships they encounter. As young people interact more and more with people and communities beyond their own families, they come to realize that "how we do things" is not necessarily the same as how things are done by others. The degree to which their family "ways of being" match what is considered valuable, normal, and appropriate in school and in the world often shapes how they feel about themselves and how easily they meet expectations for success in the context of the broader, dominant culture. It also often shapes how conscious they are of the nuances of culture in general, and how deeply they understand the specifics of their own and others' backgrounds.

What the young people of one community need, then, is different from what young people in other communities need because of their different assets and resources, the unique ways they have of moving through and understanding the world, and the types of experiences they encounter. Knowing the powerful impacts of culture, race, language, community context, gender, and other aspects of identity in young people's development, and creating programs responsive to a variety of specific

populations are two of the central diversity and equity challenges facing after school and youth programs.

Understanding #2: The cultures, communities, and identities of many youth are marginalized in this society. Experiencing discrimination and grappling with the dynamics of marginalization has a major impact on youth development.

*I remember getting that when I was a little kid, that there was something different and wrong about me. My skin was too dark, and people didn't like that. And I got it way back then that the world wasn't gonna be very kind to people like us. So I just grew up with that, knowing that and trying to live with that most every minute of my life.*

African American youth, Los Angeles, CA

Many children and youth grow up around prejudice, exclusion, and discrimination. For those young people who are minorities in any sense (for example, racially, culturally, linguistically, or by gender, sexual orientation, physical or other disability, etc.), diversity is not just about differences; it is also frequently about being marginalized and stigmatized. Because of their differences, these children and youth become targets of exclusion, discrimination, and stereotyping. As a result, they may experience physical, cognitive, and emotional stress or harm. Many carry scars and wounds as a result of living in a society that devalues them.

As young people deal with such devaluation, it becomes both more important and more difficult for them to develop self-respect; confidence; and a strong, prideful sense of connection to their families, communities, and identities. In addition to skill-building and support, healing is often required.

Understanding #3: Diversity is a “given” for youth in today’s world.

*If you only hang out with Filipinos, you don't learn much, but if you have friends that are African, Spanish, Mexican — you get to know their culture and get to know them better.*

Hawai'ian youth, Ewa Beach, HI

*The world has a lot of ethnic and language barriers and wars, but if we know how to communicate with other nations, we can break that. There is still hope to settle peace in the world.*

Latino youth, El Paso, TX

Youth are increasingly attending schools where many languages are spoken and where interacting across ethnic, language, and other differences is an everyday reality. They walk down streets and shop in malls where the foods and goods from many different cultures are readily available. The Internet connects them instantly to every corner of the globe, and the media brings news and popular images into even the most isolated, segregated corners of this country. Either by watching television or by walking through the streets of their communities, young people know of poverty and privilege. They face the realities of gender, sexual, and racial diversity. If they do not struggle with

disabilities themselves, most encounter people who do in their school classrooms or in their neighborhoods. As a result, all children need to understand and feel comfortable with differences; learning to respectfully bridge national and personal divides is becoming an issue of basic functioning and a matter of survival.

## **The Implications Of These Three Understandings**

Over the past 20 years, the emerging youth development field has sought to define the needs of young people as they grow into adulthood. Organizations such as the Academy for Educational Development, the Carnegie Corporation, the Community Network for Youth Development, the Forum for Youth Investment, the Fund for the City of New York, and the Search Institute have led the way in suggesting key areas of support in order for young people to achieve academic and social success, economic self-sufficiency, a strong sense of self, and active participation in their communities and society. Our analytical framework builds on the strength of their thinking and incorporates an understanding of how diversity and the dynamics of race, culture, income, language, gender, and other factors impact the developmental needs of youth. These needs include the following:

### ***Every child needs a sense of physical and emotional safety***

The issue of safety is usually framed in policy language as a matter of physical safety and the prevention of dangerous behaviors. Families, programs, and schools should therefore provide places where young people are off the streets and have adult supervision, and offer support and information to help young people avoid drug abuse, violent behavior, pregnancy, and crime. In our understanding, safety also means protection from the harms of marginalization and exclusion. A safe place means a place free of harassment and prejudice, where adults and peers are respectful of youth and encourage them to develop their full potential. Emotional safety requires that adults help young people to develop resilience and to heal the emotional and psychological wounds resulting from discrimination and prejudice.

### ***Every child needs learning, skill-building, and intellectual growth***

For the most part, providers across the United States address the educational needs of youth by focusing on improving school achievement, providing academic enrichment, and offering job training. The content of young people's learning is usually basic literacy and math skills, as well as specific job skills. But after school participants need something else as well — they need to develop understanding, appreciation and exposure to other people and places. The list of necessary life skills includes cross-cultural awareness and the language capabilities to participate fully in our increasingly diverse and globally interconnected society. In the case of youth from marginalized communities and/or underresourced schools, surviving the often debilitating impacts of low expectations, prejudice, and inadequately trained teachers also requires additional learning opportunities. Their intellectual growth depends on being in an explicit context of respectful educational challenge, as well as on the development of critical thinking and analytical skills to understand and transform the inequities they may face. The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine

(2002) has recently released a report underscoring these needs, listing the following under personal and social assets that facilitate positive youth development: in-depth knowledge of more than one culture, knowledge of skills to navigate through multiple cultural contexts, and prosocial and culturally sensitive values.

***Every child needs self-esteem, identity, and a sense of belonging***

It is difficult to feel a sense of belonging when an environment of discrimination and prejudice conveys a clear message that those who are “different” are not fully welcome. It is hard to have self-esteem in a society that devalues and marginalizes one’s family, community, culture, and/or language. In order for minority youth to develop self-esteem, positive identities, and a sense of belonging, they need knowledge of and pride in their cultural, ethnic, racial, gender, and other identities. They need support to develop strong ties to their histories, experiences, and communities, and they need to develop the skills to recognize and challenge stereotypes and prejudice.

***Every child needs leadership, empowerment, and civic participation***

Another key need that young people have is for a sense of power and a path to full economic, social, and political participation. Providers are therefore called upon to take children and youth seriously, to give them input into program design and implementation, and to offer them the chance to make meaningful contributions to peer groups and the wider society. For young people from ethnic, language, or other minority communities, civic engagement requires being able to both relate to the dominant culture and preserve their own identities and esteem. At the same time, *all* youth need the leadership and empowerment skills to address the broader social conditions that produce and maintain social disparities.

***Every child needs meaningful, respectful relationships with peers and adults***

Perhaps more than any other priority, the after school and youth development arenas recognize the need for young people to have meaningful relationships with caring adults who can support their personal and educational development, and for program participants to get along with each other as they engage in after school activities. In a society of divisions and inequities, this means that both youth and adults need to attend to their own prejudices in order to maintain respectful relationships; they also need to understand and value the cultures and experiences of others and to develop the skills to interact comfortably with others, resolve conflicts, and be compassionate.

If these five areas are crucial for positive youth outcomes, and if we understand young people’s needs in a diversity and equity context, we can then envision an after school and youth service arena with the following characteristics:

***A comprehensive vision of equity for diverse youth is held and shared***

At the most basic level, ensuring equity in after school programs requires embracing a broad, equity-based vision. After school initiatives and programs should be based upon a clear vision of hu-

man development that encompasses the cultures, racial and ethnic experiences, languages, and community connections of children and youth.

***After school initiatives are seen and considered in relation to other equity agendas***

Initiatives and programs should consider their work in the context of other equity and access agendas, and seek to connect, complement, and support equity efforts in other institutions and arenas that impact the lives of youth.

***Resources are targeted to areas of greatest need***

Resources should be targeted to communities where programs are most scarce and to youth in areas with the poorest outcomes. To support program sustainability, funding should be coupled with efforts to identify and build community resources, capacity, and infrastructure.

***Equitable access is ensured***

To be most accessible, policies and practices should pay particular attention to the specific kinds of barriers faced by historically excluded groups, whether these barriers are due to language, income, ethnicity, skin color, immigrant status, gender, sexual orientation, or physical disability. No community should be excluded from providing or accessing after school services.

***Program content is culturally sensitive and builds positive identities***

Programs should foster a positive sense of identity, build upon the cultures of families, and offer a curriculum that values and responds to the strengths, challenges, and needs of all the different youth in the community.

***Youth services work to improve academic and social outcomes and close gaps***

After school programs and policies should result in improved social and academic outcomes for youth, as well as close gaps and play a role in countering, not reproducing or exacerbating, forms of social inequity and institutional exclusion that create disparities. They should contribute to reducing access barriers and to increasing support for underserved youth and communities.

***Young people receive the education, preparation, and support needed for living and participating in a diverse society and globally interconnected world***

After school programs should help young people be aware of, respect, and value cultural and ethnic similarities and differences. This requires helping them develop the ability to interact comfortably with others, resolve conflicts, think critically, and be compassionate.

***Youth are actively helped to identify and counter stereotypes and prejudice against themselves and others***

Program activities and informal staff interactions should help youth recognize, challenge, and have

resiliency against negative stereotypes, bias, and discrimination. Derogatory remarks or images should not be tolerated.

***Young people are empowered to participate in and contribute to their families and society***

After school programs should strengthen the capacity of young people of all backgrounds to be active and contributing members of their families, communities, and society. Youth empowerment and capacity-building should complement family strengthening and community empowerment. Leadership development should position young people to be able to identify and work to address challenges in their communities.

***Community, parent, and youth decision-making are supported***

Policies and practices should support communities, parents, and youth in being able to shape programs and determine which organizations should provide after school services and how they should be provided.

***There is a strong infrastructure for professional development, technical assistance, and training to support equity and diversity objectives***

Programs need systems of professional development and technical support to reach their equity and diversity goals. Steps must be taken by policymakers and funders to develop such an infrastructure and to establish links to program staff. Likewise, programs should seek out and advocate for strong equity and diversity support systems.

***The after school arena is held accountable for addressing equity, access, and diversity***

Through equity-based evaluation, funding and policy practices, the after school arena should be held accountable for providing accessible and equitable services that address the different needs of youth in our diverse society.

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

Based upon this analytical framework and vision, California Tomorrow set out to learn how the after school arena understands issues of access, equity, and diversity – whether and how programs are grappling with these issues, what barriers they face, and what it looks like to address after school equity and diversity concerns in different parts of the country, different communities, and different demographic contexts. A three-year national research project was designed to answer the following questions:

- What access, equity, and diversity patterns are shaping the practices and outcomes of the after school arena?
- What are the access, equity, and diversity challenges faced by after school and youth programs in terms of policies, funding, technical assistance, and so on?
- What are some promising practices in the field for addressing these challenges?

- How do access, equity, and diversity dynamics vary for programs in different parts of the country and different community or demographic contexts?

The issue of promising practices was explored with reference to each of the 12 characteristics included in our vision of an equitable, accessible and diverse field. The following research and data collection approaches were used to examine all research questions. For a more detailed description of these components, please see Appendix A.

**A literature review.** We conducted a review of over 50 selections from the literature and research base for after school and youth programming, focusing on concerns about access, equity, and diversity.

**A national survey.** The primary quantitative strategy was a national survey sent to a randomly selected group of 3300 after school site or program directors. We received 273 valid responses representing programs for many different ethnic, language, income, age, and other demographic groups. The survey collected information on populations enrolled in programs, program goals and components, staffing issues, access concerns and barriers, the need for technical assistance and training related to diversity and equity, and how programs evaluate their efforts in terms of equity and access. We coupled the survey with our qualitative studies to assess the national validity of trends we saw in our site visits, and to provide a larger sample context for the findings from the program and community case studies.

**Community study.** During the spring and summer of 2001, the project conducted a qualitative community study in Oakland, California to explore how after school equity, access, and diversity issues play out in the politics, neighborhoods, schools, programs, and families in one multifaceted metropolitan area. We looked at the impact of local policy and the social context to see how after school programs fit into community life and how they are influenced by community dynamics. The study included nine program visits, as well as interviews with neighborhood and city leaders, and a scan of city services and policies.

**National case studies and promising practices studies.** In addition to the program visits in the community study, a series of national program case studies were designed to allow for an exploration of access, equity, and diversity issues in the history, curriculum, staffing, policies, facilities and “daily life” of a wide array of programs, initiatives, and contexts. A total of 26 case studies were completed, involving extensive interviews and observation. The case studies were selected to provide a cross-section of program types in different regions with different youth populations, and their work reflected a range of stages in addressing equity and diversity concerns. We chose eight programs specifically to learn from their promising practices around these issues; along with these, we found additional promising practices at several of the other sites.

Overall, the qualitative and quantitative sample provides representation from many different types of communities and regions across the nation (see table on page 19). Our multiple data collection approaches, combined with the literature review and input from our project advisors, led to the findings described in the next section.

SUMMARY OF STUDY SAMPLE	qualitative sample	quantitative sample
	% of Community Case Studies (N = 9), plus National Case Studies and Promising Practices Programs (N = 17) <sup>1</sup>	% of National Surveys (N = 273) <sup>1</sup>
Type of Program (some programs fit several categories)		
Faith-based or religious	8%	15%
Local/community non-profit	6%	35%
Affiliated with national non-profit	15%	12%
School-based	54%	40%
City or local park and recreation	19%	5%
For-profit or commercial organizations	0%	13%
Primary funding sources (some programs draw on several sources)		
Family fees and tuition	23%	56%
Public funding	58%	37%
21 <sup>st</sup> Century specifically	15%	17%
Private foundation funding	58%	12%
Business	0%	7%
Faith-based organizations	8%	3%
Size of program enrollment	(at sites we visited)	
Less than 40 participants	27%	25%
Over 40	73%	75%
Over 175	35%	25%
Age served (some serve several)		
Preschool	4%	36%
Elementary	65%	72%
Middle	46%	33%
High School	46%	10%
Type of Community (some serve several)		
Urban	54%	31%
Rural	23%	20%
Suburban	8%	21%
Reservation	4%	0.5%
Small town	0%	14%
Mixture of communities	12%	13%
Region of Nation		
Appalachia	0%	6%
Central	0%	8%
Mid-Atlantic	8%	10%
Midwest	8%	21%
Northeast	15%	12%
Northwest	0%	8%
Southeast <sup>2</sup>	4%	12%
Southwest	12%	4%
West	54%	20%

<sup>1</sup> Some groups of percentages do not total 100%. This is partly a result of data rounding. It is also due to the fact that, on several descriptive dimensions, some programs fit – and were therefore counted in – multiple categories.

<sup>2</sup> This site in this category, while in the Southeastern region, was located in the foothills of the southern Appalachian mountains, and also gave us insight into the Appalachian experience.

# RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings are presented in three sections corresponding to different aspects of our analysis. The first describes the context of diversity and equity in which after school programs are operating and who is enrolled in the after school programs of this country. The second looks at program goals, strategies and challenges with regard to access, content, and responsiveness to diverse populations. The third explores community, policy and infrastructure issues.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

*This list summarizes the main findings from the Pursuing the Promise report. Full details on these findings, including conceptual explanations, supporting data, and illustrative program stories, can be found in the complete version of the publication, which can be ordered from California Tomorrow.*

### *After School & Youth Programs in the Context of Diversity*

1. Cultural, linguistic and other forms of diversity have become the norm in after school program enrollment. The vast majority of programs serve more than one racial/ethnic group. Half serve two or more language groups. The majority enroll disabled youth.
2. Programs in different demographic and social community contexts face different equity and diversity challenges that impact program design, resource allocation, and decision-making structures.

### *Program-level Understandings, Strategies and Challenges*

3. There is widespread attention among programs to issues of safety, childcare, academic support and enrichment. Relatively fewer programs seek to address explicit equity issues such as closing gaps, cross-cultural awareness, or identity development.
4. While many after school programs provide valuable academic interventions, a significant number do not yet have the level of knowledge or capacity to be effective with groups frequently targeted for support—namely low income youth, youth of color, immigrant youth, and English Language Learners.
5. Programs with the greatest attention to equity and/or diversity utilize a similar set of promising understandings, strategies, and models. These include:
  - The use of culturally embedded programming;
  - Identity support and development;
  - Cross-cultural and/or anti-bias learning that teaches explicit principles of respect, inclusion, understanding, cooperation and conflict resolution;
  - Youth leadership and empowerment that support young people to challenge and change injustices in communities and society; and
  - The hiring of staff who share and/or deeply understand young people's backgrounds and experiences.

6. Despite the existence of wonderful models, most programs are still struggling to understand the depth and complexity of equity and diversity dynamics and are therefore still struggling to respond comprehensively to the challenges that these dynamics present.
7. Many programs are not aware that there are populations within their enrollment or service area that they are not serving or may not be serving well.
8. Program cost, transportation, limited enrollment space and concerns over content all create additional barriers to access or full participation.
9. Within a larger context of unmet needs, programs are particularly unaware of equity and diversity issues for: English Language Learners; young people with physical, emotional and/or learning disabilities; and gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth.

*Policy- and Infrastructure-level Understandings, Strategies, and Challenges*

10. Current policy often directs after school resources to programs in impoverished communities. This makes an important difference in providing needed services to these populations, but disparities between communities persist.
11. Many programs in low-income urban and rural areas face intense sustainability challenges.
12. Local community organizations and other institutions play important roles in providing services and funding, and ensuring programs reflect community diversity and equity concerns.
13. National organizations and initiatives often bring valuable resources to struggling communities, and are most effective when they have strong community ties.
14. There is a considerable gap between the desire of program staff for training on issues of equity, access and diversity, and the degree of training that staff actually receive.
15. Policies that encourage programs to collect disaggregated data help in identifying who benefits from these programs and who does not.

# PURSuing THE PROMISE OF EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

## CONCLUSIONS

Three years ago, California Tomorrow set out to learn about the equity, access, and diversity challenges facing after school programs across the nation. Wanting to discover how programs are addressing these issues, we visited sites throughout the country and conducted a national survey and a literature review. Below is a summary of our findings on current practices, initiatives and policies, and the challenges that after school providers still face today.

### The Strengths

**High Interest and Concern.** Policymakers, researchers and professionals all have a concern about equity in after school programs. Our research also found considerable interest in equity and diversity issues among practitioners, parents, and communities. We saw a great deal of energy directed toward creating the kinds of programs that can successfully serve youth and produce positive outcomes, especially for those in underserved communities.

**Emerging Models and Desire for Training.** Program directors are open to ideas and materials that might address diversity challenges, and they desire technical assistance and training for this purpose. We found an exciting convergence in thinking and the beginnings of a knowledge base on the best ways to address the challenges of equity, access, and diversity. Those programs with the greatest attention to these factors had a remarkably similar set of understandings and strategies.

In particular, we saw programs that emphasized on providing services to low-income communities, concern and attention to issues of safety and prevention, dedicated efforts to serve childcare needs, and providing extended learning opportunities and academic support. Most programs are also staffed with people who generally reflect the diverse youth enrollment.

**Community and National Support.** At the local level, community organizations play important roles in providing services, securing funding, and ensuring that programs are responsive to their communities. National organizations and initiatives provide valuable resources, connections, materials, facilitation support, and leadership in their partnerships with local programs.

## The Challenges

**Limited focus and need for more deeply inclusive academic interventions.** Many programs focus on the academic needs of students but do not always address broader youth development areas. Moreover, the academic interventions that are in use by many after school providers are not necessarily as well suited as they could be for the groups that are frequently targeted for support — low-income youth, youth of color, immigrant youth, and English Learners. This is largely due to the fact that such programs may not have access to the substantial research base on successful instructional strategies and learning conditions for these groups, and/or to the fact that they may lack the capacity to implement effective diversity- and equity-based approaches.

**Lack of comprehensiveness.** There is little focus at the policy level or in program initiatives on diversity dimensions, equity issues, and access concerns other than those related to income and poverty. This represents a missed opportunity to address major barriers around language, sexual orientation, gender, race/ethnicity, and disability differences. There is a particularly widespread lack of awareness and response to equity and diversity issues in the lives of English Language Learners, young people with physical, emotional and/or learning disabilities; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth.

**Access barriers still exist.** Many programs are not aware that there are populations within their enrollment or service area that are not being served well, or at all. Few have the data that would alert them to such patterns. Program cost, transportation, limited enrollment space, and concerns over content are all barriers that limit full participation.

**Overall sustainability challenges.** Programs that desire to address equity, access, and diversity challenges (especially those in low-income, urban, and rural areas) face intense sustainability and operating problems that make it difficult to create and deliver the kind of program they want. Unless after school programs get the resources and training they need, they may even end up reproducing or exacerbating existing societal inequities.

**Need for training and technical assistance.** There is a considerable gap between the desire for training on issues of equity and diversity, and the degree of training that after school program staff

actually receives on these topics. Training availability varies considerably by region, but on the whole there are not enough technical assistance or training providers who can assist after school providers in developing the competencies and practices they need.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We found significant progress in creating more accessible and supportive services. There is also tremendous promise for the creation of after school initiatives and programs that can address chronic problems of inequity and differential access in this country.

But we need to do even more to fully deliver on the promises of after school programs. There is work to be done on the policy level and among leaders in the field, in the research arena, within programs, and in support services for providers. Based on our findings and research from the field research, we offer the following set of recommendations for what can be done at these levels to enact a powerful equity and access agenda.

### **Policy, Funding, and Leadership**

Private foundations and policymakers at all levels have played a major role in expanding access to after school programs across the nation. This commitment must continue. In the process, policymakers and funders need to make equity, diversity, and access central issues, and design policies and initiatives that make it both possible and likely that programs will respond to the concrete needs of specific groups.

Policymakers, leaders in the field, and funders have the power to define what constitutes “quality” in programs, to call for evaluations based on specified indicators, to set expectations and guidelines, and to disseminate information on what works. They also have a tremendous ability to communicate priorities. Therefore, the leaders in the after school arena should:

***Put equity, access, and diversity on the table.*** Provide leadership by including equity, access and diversity issues in dialogues about policy and planning. Use the position of leadership to make it clear that these issues matter.

***Continue a commitment to after school programs, and target resources toward underserved communities.*** Keep or expand the current levels of funding for after school programs. Make sure poor neighborhoods, specific low-performing groups, and marginalized and minority communities are specifically targeted for resources. This is not simply a matter of ensuring access. Programs need resources in order to construct high quality programs that are responsive to the cultures, languages, class levels, and community experiences of these groups. Provide grants and reimbursements at higher rates for low-income communities. Follow the lead of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grants program in conducting explicit outreach and holding bidder conferences in underserved communities.

**Support local design that is responsive to diversity concerns.** Initiatives should be designed with the flexibility and mandates that allow programs to adapt their goals to local needs. Funding applications should require demonstration of knowledge about the diversity of the community, and plans for how the program will address the cultural, linguistic, and other needs of youth in that community.

**Evaluate programs with a youth development and equity/diversity perspective.** Community, identity, and experience are core to youth development, and programs should be evaluated by how well they incorporate these elements. Quality indicators used for evaluation should build on the knowledge base about what works for youth of various backgrounds, and should offer benchmarks toward improved outcomes and reduced disparities.

**Build a trained and prepared workforce.** A much greater devotion of resources to training and technical assistance is needed. Funding and directives should ensure that program staff can access training and that support providers can offer training. Technical assistance should be targeted to programs that serve highly diverse youth populations in need.

**Support the development of models.** Provide funding to create models of the most promising practices in the after school arena, especially practices that help to reach diversity and equity goals.

**Monitor and hold programs accountable for equity.** Initiatives should require programs to collect disaggregated data in order to monitor the comparative impacts of the program on different youth groups.

## Training and Technical Assistance

Strong trainers are needed to create an after school workforce that is capable of addressing the needs of a diverse youth population. More equity – and diversity – related content should be integrated into the existing training and technical assistance provided to after school programs. We make the following recommendations to trainers and providers of technical assistance:

**Promote a comprehensive vision.** Integrate promising practices on diversity and equity issues into all training. Provide other ways for practitioners to see effective strategies, materials and structures that were designed to address these needs. Provide forums at which providers of different types of programs can come together as a learning network, and where there is an opportunity to share strategies for addressing issues of equity and access, culture, identity, community, healing, and discrimination.

**Extend outreach and provide access to training opportunities and technical assistance services.** Program staff in all regions should be able to access the training required to be successful with a diverse population. Maintain, expand, or create resources and provide training and technical assistance to programs everywhere. For example, site-based training and transportation stipends can enable a part-time workforce to participate in training.

***Increase the capacity of programs to deliver powerful, responsive program content and curriculum.***

Training should include the following topics:

- Conflict resolution;
- Addressing behavioral/mental health needs;
- Understanding the needs of and effective supports for particular ethnic, language, gender and ability groups;
- Culturally sensitive discipline approaches;
- Working with youth with disabilities
- Working with low-income youth and families;
- Cross-cultural understanding;
- Using anti-racist or anti-bias materials and approaches;
- Addressing gender equity;
- Working with youth and families who are not fluent in English; and
- Working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth and families.

***Prepare and support program directors to be accountable for access and equity and respond to diversity issues.*** Urge program directors to assess their practices based on the best knowledge about working with youth of various backgrounds and communities. Provide training in collecting and using disaggregated data and community-based evaluation to assess impact on all groups of young people.

## **Programs**

Directors and staff at the program level have tremendous power to build relationships and create environments that support young people in developing the healthy identities, skills, and understandings they need in a diverse world. While policy, funding, and external support play major roles in providing access and assuring equity, individual programs are responsible for the content, impact and reach of their services. Therefore, we make the following recommendations to program directors:

***Articulate a comprehensive vision of diversity and commitment to equity.*** Adopt a mission or goals statement that speaks to a comprehensive vision of equity and diversity, articulates policies of inclusion, and speaks to a commitment to full access.

***Design mechanisms to ensure equitable access.*** Publish outreach and informational materials in the languages spoken in the enrollment area, and distribute them through networks of specific groups in the community. Provide transportation, safety patrols, or other supports whenever possible to help young people attend the program and get to and from the program safely.

***Develop a staff that is responsive to diversity.*** Hire staff members who are sensitive to the cultures of participants. Staff composition should include people who can speak the various languages of participants and families, who share backgrounds with the students who are enrolled, and who

have the ability to establish a rapport with youth from various backgrounds. Encourage all staff to participate in trainings about the roles of culture, language, gender, ability, class, and sexual orientation in the lives of young people. Provide release time to enable staff to participate in training. Create a “learning community” which includes ongoing dialogues about responses to diversity. Bring in research on effective practices with diverse groups.

***Design and deliver a program that speaks to issues of diversity and equity.*** Ensure that the content of the program recognizes and respects the heritage and life experiences of the young people enrolled in the program. Cultural customs, holidays, and traditions should be appropriately and authentically incorporated. Materials should reflect participants’ cultures, languages, and experiences. The curriculum should also include information about cultures, communities, nations, and languages *other* than those represented in the program enrollment. Staff should consciously put forth issues that young people may feel nervous about raising. This is particularly important with regard to issues of sexual orientation.

***Ensure emotional safety and an environment free from harassment.*** Programs should have policies that make it absolutely clear that harassment and discriminatory practices will not be tolerated. Staff should challenge ethnic, sexual, gender and other stereotypes, and counter these assumptions wherever they arise. Young people should receive accurate information to displace myths, misinformation, and invisibility around different people’s experiences. Differences should be openly and positively acknowledged, and young people should be provided with support and skills to deal constructively with challenging dynamics that can occur around differences.

***Actively work to build positive inter-group relations.*** Encourage young people to play and work with peers of different backgrounds, and teach conflict resolution skills with a focus on intercultural communication.

***Work to overcome language barriers and create a program inclusive of all languages.*** Young people should be encouraged to freely speak their home languages as well as English. Help to make the curriculum comprehensible for students who speak limited English, and include materials in home languages whenever possible.

***Build youth leadership.*** Incorporate components that build youth leadership skills and engage young people in addressing the issues of their communities. Create governance, advisory, or other mechanisms that ensure youth participation in program decision-making.

***Look for evidence of differential impacts and participation.*** Collect disaggregated data on participants that will show any inequities, differential impacts, and participation patterns of different groups of young people. Institute regular cycles of evaluation and inquiry that poll youth, parents and staff about equity, access and diversity issues in the program.

## Research Community

The research community can play a powerful role in helping program staff and communities to see and understand issues of equity, access, and diversity. Research is essential in informing policy and framing the national dialogue about the effectiveness of after school programs. It also helps to identify areas where more support is needed. We make the following recommendations to researchers and evaluators:

***Provide access to research.*** Ensure that program staff have access to research on effective practices on diversity issues in the youth development and after school fields. Write research results in an accessible format and use dissemination strategies that reach practitioners.

***Incorporate issues of equity, diversity, and access into research and evaluation designs.*** Researchers should study ways to respond to the challenges in designing programs that are responsive to the cultures, languages, genders, sexual diversity, physical abilities, and class backgrounds of the communities being served. Researchers should ensure that program evaluations incorporate the perspectives, voices, and concerns of marginalized communities. Youth, parents, and the community should be engaged in assessing the quality and impact of programs. Researchers should deliberately seek the perspectives of potentially excluded groups to determine the barriers that may hinder their participation in programs.

***Research on outcomes should compare disaggregated data on outcomes for different groups to assess the size of gaps between these groups.*** Gaps should be measured both within and across programs. In promising practice research, equity and access issues should be included in the indicators used to define promising practices, and document how programs address the needs of specific groups.

***Engage programs and communities in conducting research on issues of equity, access, and diversity.*** Quality programs depend upon knowledge of the young people and communities they serve, and an understanding of the practices that are most appropriate and effective for that community. Because many after school and youth program staff are now working with youth who do not share their backgrounds or identities, research is imperative. Staff members need the skills and practices to structure their own inquiries and to seek out ever better understandings of the young people and communities they serve. This includes information on data collection and interpretation. Training, technical assistance, and other support to programs should be provided in order for staff to conduct their own research and inquiries.

***Create and provide tools and templates that practitioners can use to conduct their own program assessments on patterns of equity, access, and diversity in their programs.*** There is tremendous potential in the after school arena for providing young people of all backgrounds and experiences with deeply meaningful support that strengthens who they are, expands their access to new learn-

ing and new opportunities, and prepares them to take leadership in our changing world. As researchers, funders, policymakers, technical assistance providers, and practitioners each continue to broaden the diversity and equity work in their respective spheres of influence, we will find our nation benefiting ever more fully from our growing investment in after school and youth services.

EXCERPT

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## ORGANIZATIONS AND ONLINE RESOURCES

### **American Association of University Women**

Washington, DC

[www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org)

(800) 326-2289

The American Association of University Women promotes lifelong education and equity for all women and girls, and works toward positive societal change. They have produced many factsheets, position papers, and research publications on gender equity in education and other youth-related fields, many of which can be found online.

### **Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL)**

New York, NY

[www.adl.org/main\\_education.asp](http://www.adl.org/main_education.asp)

(212) 490-2525

The ADL offers books for parents and teachers on how to fight prejudice and bias. Its Washington, DC office has set up the "A World of Difference" Institute, an education and diversity training program intended to educate both children and adults on how to combat bigotry.

### **The ASPIRA Association**

Washington, DC

[www.aspira.org](http://www.aspira.org)

(202) 835-3600

The ASPIRA Association's mission is to empower the Puerto Rican and Latino community through advocacy and the education and leadership development of its youth. Their website provides many resources for parents, youth, teachers, and after school and community organization staff.

### **Assets for Colorado Youth**

Denver, CO

[www.buildassets.org](http://www.buildassets.org)

(888) KID-7871

(303) 832-1587

Assets for Colorado Youth is taking a lead role in putting youth at the top of every community's agenda in Colorado, and in promoting a strength-based approach to youth development that addresses the languages and cultures of young people as key elements in youth development.

### **The Center for Applied Cultural Studies and Educational Achievement (CACSEA) at San Francisco State University**

San Francisco, CA

(415) 338-6236

CACSEA is an educational research and professional development organization that designs culturally consistent pedagogy, practical applications, materials, procedures, and programs to meet the needs of African American children, including a focus on the role of language as a centerpiece of culturally appropriate education.

### **Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL)**

#### **Heritage Languages Initiative**

Washington, DC

[www.cal.org/heritage](http://www.cal.org/heritage)

(202) 362-0700

CAL provides a variety of language-related services including curriculum development, and conducts research and projects to support immigrant, refugee and language minority communities. Their website offers education and policy links by topic area. Along with the National Foreign Language Center, CAL's Heritage Languages Initiative seeks to help the U.S. educational system recognize, develop, and value the non-English languages spoken in this country.

**Center for the Study of White American Culture (A Multiracial Organization)**

Roselle, NJ

[www.euroamerican.org](http://www.euroamerican.org)

(908) 241-5439

A multiracial center that examines European American culture with a special focus on how the prejudice of white Americans towards other ethnic and cultural groups can be confronted through anti-racist dialogue, becoming aware of assumptions, and taking action.

**Center for Youth Development and Policy Research****Academy for Educational Development**

Washington, DC

[www.cyd.aed.org](http://www.cyd.aed.org)

(202) 884-8267

The Center for Youth Development has been a leader on youth development research, advocacy, policy, and community support since its founding in 1990. Through a variety of projects and initiatives, the Center seeks to improve youth programming, increase access, support the building of comprehensive youth development infrastructures, and increase public will to support positive opportunities and empowerment for all youth. Many resources are available on their website.

**Coalition for Community Schools**

Washington, DC

[www.communityschools.org](http://www.communityschools.org)

(202) 822-8405

The Coalition for Community Schools works toward improving education and helping students learn and grow while supporting and strengthening their families and communities. Community schools bring together many partners to offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, youth, families, and communities — before, during and after school, seven days a week.

**Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD)**

San Francisco, CA

[www.cnyd.org](http://www.cnyd.org)

(415) 495-0622

CNYD is a non-profit intermediary organization that seeks to strengthen the youth development field and to promote a comprehensive youth development vision that includes, among other elements, safety and skill-building for young people of all backgrounds, cultural relevance, youth participation, and community involvement. CNYD operates at the community level, providing youth-serving agencies with technical assistance, training and resources to strengthen programming and practice; and at the systems level, working with funders and policymakers to align resources for more effective support of community-based youth development efforts.

**Educational Equity Concepts, Inc.**

New York, NY

[www.edequity.org](http://www.edequity.org)

(212) 243-1110

Educational Equity Concepts, Inc. is a national non-profit organization that promotes bias-free learning through innovative programs and materials, with the goal of decreasing discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, disability, and level of family income. The organization has developed many practical hands-on materials and programs for early childhood and elementary classrooms and after school settings. It also conducts equity-related research; provides training for educators, school administrators, and parents; and publishes resources for women and girls with disabilities.

**The Forum for Youth Investment**

Washington, DC

[www.forumforyouthinvestment.org](http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org)

(202) 207-3333

The Forum for Youth Investment is dedicated to increasing the quality and quantity of youth investment and youth involvement by promoting a "big picture" approach to planning, research, advocacy and policy development among the broad range of organizations that help constituents and communities invest in children, youth, and families. The Forum builds connections among individuals and organizations, provides tools and training to strengthen organizational practices, and facilitates dialogue and field building in the larger youth development arena. Their website offers a variety of resources, many of which can be downloaded.

### **Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)**

New York, NY  
www.glsen.org  
(212) 727-0135

GLSEN strives to assure that each member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. The organization offers curriculum and teacher training materials, promotes educator dialogues, supports youth and community organizing, and engages in policy work in on gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender issues. Many study guides, training materials, and tools are available online.

### **Index of Native American Resources on the Internet**

[hanksville.org/NAresources](http://hanksville.org/NAresources)

The index offers a compendium of internet links for artistic, cultural, musical, linguistic, educational and historical video resources, as well as other useful information for the Native American and education communities.

### **Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development**

Chevy Chase, MD  
www.theinnovationcenter.org  
(301) 961-2837

The Innovation Center seeks to bring together youth, adults, organizations and communities to engage in creating a more just and equitable society. The group supports dialogue, community building, evaluation, and organizational improvement in the areas of youth and community development, youth governance, civic activism, and youth involvement. Many tools and publications are available on their website, and the organization runs seven online discussion groups.

### **LD Online**

[www.ldonline.org](http://www.ldonline.org)

LD Online offers an interactive guide to learning disabilities, with resources for parents, teachers, and children.

### **National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)**

Washington, DC  
www.nabe.org  
(202) 898-1829

NABE is the national advocacy and professional development organization for bilingual educators. Its membership includes educators, parents, community members, and government and business people. Their website features legislative and policy links, as well as articles on bilingual education and tools for after school programs.

### **National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME)**

Washington, DC  
www.nameorg.org  
(202) 628-6263

NAME serves as a clearinghouse for professional development resources and publications on multicult-

tural education. The association works to promote the development of culturally responsive and responsible curricula, with the goals of achieving social, political, economic and educational equity and social justice.

### **National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET)**

Minneapolis, MN

[www.ncset.org](http://www.ncset.org)

(612) 624-2097

The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition coordinates national resources, offers technical assistance, and disseminates information related to secondary education and transition for youth with disabilities in order to create opportunities for youth to achieve successful futures. The organization's website has a section on youth development and leadership that includes research information, promising models, answers to frequently asked questions, and a list of resources.

### **National Council of La Raza (NCLR)**

Washington, DC

[www.nclr.org](http://www.nclr.org)

(202) 785-1670

NCLR offers technical assistance to Hispanic/Latino community-based organizations, while also carrying out applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy – all aimed at providing a Hispanic/Latino perspective on issues such as education, immigration, housing, health, and employment. Regional affiliates have developed charter schools and after school programs.

### **National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC)**

Washington, DC

[www.nyacyouth.org](http://www.nyacyouth.org)

(800) 541-6922

The National Youth Advocacy Coalition is a social justice organization that advocates for and with young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) in an effort to end discrimination against these youth and to ensure their physical and emotional well-being. NYAC maintains the nation's largest resource clearinghouse on information about the lives of LGBTQ youth, which can be accessed online.

### **North Carolina 4-H School-Age Care Project**

Resources for Inclusion

Raleigh, NC

[www.nc4h.org/sacc](http://www.nc4h.org/sacc)

Click on “inclusion” in the Resources and Training Opportunities box of this website for links to many online resources related to the inclusion of young people with disabilities in after school and recreation programs.

### **Parents United for Child Care (PUCC)**

Boston, MA

[www.pucc.com](http://www.pucc.com)

(617) 426-8288

PUCC works in partnership with low- and moderate-income parents, child care providers, and other community residents to strengthen child care resources in Massachusetts, and works for systemic change that addresses issues facing working families. The website's “Resources” page lists useful publications for those running after school programs, including many that deal with issues related to equity and diversity.

### **Rethinking Schools Online: An Urban Educational Journal**

Milwaukee, WI

www.rethinkingschools.org  
(800) 669-4192  
(414) 964-9646

Rethinking Schools, a non-profit educational organization, advocates for reforming elementary and secondary education, with a strong emphasis on equity and social justice. The website offers an online journal with articles by activist teachers, as well as links to many educational and politically progressive websites, plus information about the organization's publications, most of which are appropriate for after school programs.

### **Search Institute**

Minneapolis, MN  
www.search-institute.org  
(800) 888-7828

The Search Institute's "40 developmental assets" offer a framework for understanding the variety of positive experiences, relationships, opportunities, and personal qualities that young people need to grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. Building upon this widely used framework, the organization supports and conducts research, training, outreach, community support, and networking.

### **Teaching for Change**

Washington, DC  
www.teachingforchange.org  
(800) 763-9131  
(202) 429-0137

Teaching for Change (formerly the Network of Educators on the Americas, NECA) is a non-profit organization that promotes social and economic justice through public education. Their online catalog includes hundreds of books, videos, and posters that support teaching from a social justice perspective. Their website also provides links to other resources for socially relevant news, curricula, and school reform.

## RELATED MATERIALS FROM CALIFORNIA TOMORROW

### *And Still We Speak: Stories of Communities Sustaining and Reclaiming Language and Culture*

Highlighting stories of schools, dual-language programs, out of school programs, and community efforts, this inspiring book illustrates what schools must be in order to embrace every child and prepare all young people for the diverse and challenging interdependent global world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### *A Place to Begin: Working With Parents on Issues of Diversity*

This resource on diversity in early childhood settings contains information, anecdotes, exercises, and tools, with handouts for parents and staff. It is geared toward early childcare and preschool providers, health professionals, community workers, social workers, people in the parent support movement, and anyone looking for effective tools for staff development. Many of the concepts and activities are also useful for after school providers.

### *Moving Toward Equity and Access in After School Programs: A Review of the Literature*

This working paper uses equity and access as a lens to review literature on after school programs. It explores current issues and challenges that exist both in research and practice with regard to equity and access.

### *No More Lies, No More Shame (A Curriculum)*

The *No More Lies, No More Shame* curriculum explores the topics of culture, language and personal history to support youth and young adults in the development of strong and proud language and cultural identities. The curriculum is designed to be used with high school age youth in youth programs and in youth organizing drives.

### *Our Roots, Our Future: Affirming Culture and Language in After School and Youth Programs*

An easy to use resource on culture and language for after school practitioners, *Our Roots, Our Future*

contains stories of promising practices along with a set of practical tools and activities to support program reflection and development. The publication offers strategies for working with English Language Learners and ways to expand capacity to support immigrants, youth of color, and young people of all cultures.

*So They May Speak (video)*

This video focuses in depth on three educational programs striving to produce biliteracy and to reclaim and sustain cultures and heritage languages for children. The statewide French Immersion program in Louisiana, the districtwide Spanish dual immersion program in Ysleta, Texas, and a small community-based Cambodian after school program in Fresno, California, illustrate different models of how a community can educate their immigrant, language minority, and cultural minority youth.

*We Speak America (video: in English, and English with Spanish subtitles)*

*We Speak America* explores why parents, teachers, and young adults feel it is crucial for children to be bilingual and connected to their heritage. Through personal stories and anecdotes, *We Speak America* captures the significance of culture and language in the lives of youth from many backgrounds, and has been designed as the cornerstone for school and community dialogue.

## PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

California Tomorrow would like to acknowledge and thank the following programs and sponsoring organizations that generously opened their doors, offered resources, or coordinated visits by researchers from the Equity, Access, and Diversity in After Schools and Youth Programs Project. Each program has inspired and contributed to the development of *Pursuing The Promise*.

Adventure Time  
Berkeley, CA  
(510) 658-7412  
[www.adventure-time.com](http://www.adventure-time.com)

Ark of St. Sabina  
Chicago, IL  
(773) 783-3760  
[www.saintsabina.org](http://www.saintsabina.org)

Asians and Pacific Islanders  
for Reproductive Health (APIRH)  
Oakland, CA  
(510) 434-7900  
[www.apirh.org](http://www.apirh.org)

Boys and Girls Club of Hawaii  
Ewa Beach Clubhouse  
Ewa Beach, HI  
(808) 689-4182  
[www.boysandgirlsclubofhawaii.com](http://www.boysandgirlsclubofhawaii.com)

California Living Histories  
Pasadena, CA  
(626) 826-7445  
[www.californialivinghistories.com](http://www.californialivinghistories.com)

Church Avenue Merchants Block Association  
(CAMBA) at P.S. 109  
Brooklyn, NY  
(718) 287-2600  
[www.camba.org](http://www.camba.org)

Community Health Academy  
Oakland, CA  
(510) 532-6802

District 202  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 871-5559  
[www.dist202.org](http://www.dist202.org)

East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC)  
Oakland, CA  
(510) 533-1092  
[www.ebayc.org](http://www.ebayc.org)

East Oakland Youth Development Center (EOYDC)  
Oakland, CA  
(510) 569-8088  
[www.eoydc.org](http://www.eoydc.org)

Girls Incorporated of Lynn  
Lynn, MA  
(781) 592-9744  
[www.girlsinclynn.org](http://www.girlsinclynn.org)

Haddonfield Child Care  
Haddonfield, NJ  
(856) 429-1603

Hands Across Cultures  
Española, NM  
(505) 747-1889  
[www.hacc95.org](http://www.hacc95.org)

Lockwood Village Collaborative  
Lockwood Elementary School  
Oakland, CA  
(510) 434-7579

Maspeth Town Hall at P.S. 229  
Woodside, NY  
(718) 335-6049  
[www.maspethtownhall.org](http://www.maspethtownhall.org)

Montclair Recreation Center  
Oakland, CA  
(510) 482-7812  
[www.oaklandnet.com/parks/facilities/centers\\_montclair.asp](http://www.oaklandnet.com/parks/facilities/centers_montclair.asp)

Police Activities League (PAL), Carroll Park  
Baltimore, MD  
(410) 396-1555  
[www.baltimorepal.org](http://www.baltimorepal.org)

Portola Healthy Start Resource Center  
Portola, CA  
(530) 832-1827

Prescott Clown Troupe  
Oakland, CA  
(510) 482-1674

Raul Yzaguirre School for Success  
21<sup>st</sup> Century After School Program  
Houston, TX  
(713) 649-6201  
[www.tccc-ryss.org/ryss.htm](http://www.tccc-ryss.org/ryss.htm)

Roosevelt Village Collaborative  
Roosevelt Middle School  
Oakland, CA  
(510) 533-1092 x35

Roundhouse Council, Inc.  
Greenville, CA  
(530) 284-6866

Save the Children  
Westport, CT  
(800) 728-3843  
[www.savethechildren.org](http://www.savethechildren.org)

St. Charles Apache Mission School  
San Carlos, AZ  
(520) 475-2449

South Asian Youth Action! (SAYA!)  
Elmhurst, NY  
(718) 651-3484  
[www.saya.org](http://www.saya.org)

Sports 4 Kids  
Oakland, CA  
(510) 893-4180  
[www.sports4kids.org](http://www.sports4kids.org)

St. John's Educational Thresholds Center  
San Francisco, CA  
(415) 864-5205  
[www.sjetc.org](http://www.sjetc.org)

The After-School Corporation (TASC)  
New York, NY  
(212) 547-6950  
[www.tascorp.org](http://www.tascorp.org)

Woody Gap School  
Local Studies Program  
Suches, GA  
(706) 747-1419  
[www.union.k12.ga.us/woodygap/wgapschool1.html](http://www.union.k12.ga.us/woodygap/wgapschool1.html)

Youth in Focus  
Oakland, CA  
(510) 251-9800  
[www.youthinfocus.net](http://www.youthinfocus.net)

Youth Together  
Oakland, CA  
(510) 645-9209  
<http://www.youthtogether.net>

# APPENDIX A: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In 1999, California Tomorrow began a three-year national study designed to answer the following four research questions:

- What access, equity, and diversity patterns are shaping the practices and outcomes of the after school arena?
- What are the access, equity, and diversity challenges faced by after school and youth programs in terms of policies, funding, technical assistance, and so on?
- What are some promising practices in the field for addressing these challenges?
- How do access, equity, and diversity dynamics vary for programs in different parts of the country and different community or demographic contexts?

Our research was conducted by a multiracial, multilingual and cross-disciplinary project team. It included program practitioners, and people with backgrounds in anthropology, public policy, political science, social and cultural studies, social work, and education. The methodology incorporated both qualitative and quantitative approaches, including a national survey, a community study, a set of program case studies from around the country, and documentation of a series of promising practices. We were guided by an active national advisory group of researchers, practitioners, and leaders in youth development who were convened at pivotal points in the research, and who com-

mented on drafts of the analysis and findings. A list of these advisors can be found on the inside front cover of the publication. We worked within a framework of equity, access, and diversity principles that was built on California Tomorrow's 19 years of experience working on equity and diversity issues in youth-related fields. These principles, which are detailed on pages 16-17, became the framework for many of our interview and survey questions; they were also used to help shape the selection of our promising practices sites, and to inform our analysis. During a planning phase for the project, we piloted data collection approaches through five program case studies and conducted a review of literature from the after school and youth development fields, focusing on equity and access issues. Information on how to order the literature review and other related California Tomorrow products can be found in the resource section.

- National Survey

The primary quantitative strategy for our work was a national 38-question survey of program site directors and coordinators. The survey was developed by California Tomorrow in partnership with the University of California at Irvine School of Education. A collaboration with the Academy for Educational Development's project on Promising Practices in After School enabled us to capitalize on an extensive national list of programs they had developed. Two national databases were combined for a total of approximately 48,000 records, representing most school-based and non school-based programs in the country. California Tomorrow sent 3,300 surveys to a stratified random sample of programs from this database, and posted the survey on four national listserves. We received 273 valid responses (an 8% return) with representation from all regions of the country. Responding programs reflected a wide range of program types, sizes, purposes, demographic populations, funding sources, and sponsoring organizations. Technical support for design of the national survey was provided by Peter Jones and Dr. Pilar O'Cadiz of the U.C. Irvine School of Education, with the support of Dr. Joan Bissell. Collection and analysis of survey data was managed by Peter Jones. For more detail on the survey sample, please see the chart on page 19.

The survey collected information on: populations served by programs; goals and components of the programs; staffing issues; access concerns and barriers; needs for technical assistance and training related to diversity and equity; and how programs evaluate their efforts in terms of equity and access. The objectives were: to assess which types of programs across the nation are providing what types of services to what groups of children and youth; to determine program site directors' perceptions of challenges and needs regarding access and equity and regarding the provision of educational and social supports for diverse groups of youth; to assess the extent to which equity and cultural responsiveness are explicit foci/goals of programs, to determine the kinds of supports programs are receiving to help them attract and serve diverse groups of young people; and to assess the degree to which programs are addressing equity and access as defined by California Tomorrow's after school principles. Used in conjunction with our qualitative studies, the survey enabled us to assess the national validity of trends and provide a larger sample context for the findings from the program and community case studies. A copy of the national survey can be found in Appendix B.

- National Program Studies

We conducted two types of national program studies: 1) national case studies of programs in a variety of regions and contexts designed to probe equity and access challenges and responses, and 2) studies of programs with promising practices in key areas of equity and diversity. In each program study, a multiethnic project team visited the site for several days. Data collection approaches included: interviews with program director and staff; interviews and focus groups with parents of youth enrolled in the program; interviews and focus groups with young participants; observations of the program and its components; review of the facilities; collection of existing data on participation, enrollment, and evaluations of impact; interviews with key partners and funders to illuminate the policies; and political and social context of the community in which the program exists. Sites were selected for regional variation, range in community demographics and context, and diversity of program types. The chart on page 19 offers additional information about our case study sample.

*National case studies:* Our national program case studies were designed to allow for an exploration of access and equity issues as they occur in the history, curriculum, staffing, policies, facilities, and “daily life” of a wide array of programs. A total of seven case studies were completed, involving extensive interviews and observations. Case study sites were chosen to provide a cross-section of program types and sponsoring organizations in different regions with different youth populations and policy contexts. In addition to the program visits, many of the case studies included interviews with local stakeholders outside of the program (policymakers, community leaders, intermediary organizations). Along with the seven programs, our national case studies allowed us to look at four supporting initiatives and two other collaborative partnerships.

*Promising practices case studies:* Eight promising practice case studies, involving ten program sites, two community initiatives and three intermediaries, were conducted to highlight existing promising practices around equity and diversity needs. They were selected by soliciting and reviewing recommendations from project advisors and other colleagues in the field. Most were selected because they provided strong examples of elements from California Tomorrow’s equity, access, and diversity principles. Taken together, the promising practice sites highlight a variety of program models, equity and diversity approaches, and community connections. Like the other national case studies, they cover a diversity of program goals, enrollment populations, and geographic regions.

- Community Study

Lastly, during the spring and summer of 2001, the project conducted a qualitative community study in Oakland, California. The focus of the study was to explore how after school equity, access and diversity issues play out in the politics, neighborhoods, schools, programs and families in one multifaceted metropolitan area. It looked at the impact of the local policy and social context to see how after school programs fit into and are influenced by the life and dynamics of a community. The primary components included: extensive interviews to map the social, policy and organizational landscape related to after school programs; focus groups with students; case studies of nine programs; a program inventory; and interviews with youth, parents, teachers, merchants, and community leaders in three target neighborhoods with different economic and ethnic populations.

## About California Tomorrow

California Tomorrow is a non-profit research, technical assistance and advocacy organization working to help build a strong and fair multicultural, multilingual, multiracial society that is equitable for everyone. We believe that creating such a society involves promoting equal opportunity and participation — social, economic, and educational — and embracing diversity as a great strength.

Since 1984, California Tomorrow has built a strong body of research and a national reputation for facilitating institutional change processes and dialogue about intergroup relations, equity, diversity and access. California Tomorrow works with schools, family serving institutions, early childhood programs, after school programs, and community initiatives — identifying and designing new models of practice and facilitating the work required to implement those models.

California Tomorrow's primary focus is on people, organizations, and communities in California. Since our work is connected to national trends, we share lessons learned from the California experience, conduct selected national research studies, draw upon the knowledge of others working on similar issues across the United States, and join with others to influence national policies or practices that impact our respective work.

### Chief Executive Officer

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