

Evaluating Afterschool Program and Quality Sustainability

Doing some evaluation of the afterschool programming is going to be key for you. You should talk carefully with the people running the afterschool program.

Four Qualities of Sustainable Afterschool Meals Programs

Sustainable Afterschool Meals Programs rely on a combination of four main qualities:

- Higher numbers of participants
- Quality programming
- Good planning at all levels
- Strong partnerships in the programming

Evaluation Questions For the Afterschool Program Representatives

- How many children do you predict you will serve each day?
- How many locations do you have?
- Have you ever run an afterschool program before?
- How many people are involved in the day to day running of your program?
- Do you have at least 1 community partner involved in your program?
- Do you have a strong volunteer base or are you partnered with other organizations that do?
- What community networks are you associated with and who are some of the members?
- How are you looking in terms of future funding?
- Do they have a good funding plan for the next 2-5 years and they are able to articulate it to you?
- How structured is your afterschool programming and what do you offer?
- Where do hope to see your programming in 3 years?

Evaluation Scenarios With Recommendations

The following are some scenarios you may encounter based on the above questions with some recommendations on how to proceed. The recommendations will be somewhat different based on whether you're just considering AMP or you've already been running AMP and are looking to take on another site.

Scenario 1

A new program approaches you to provide meals. It has two sites with 15 or fewer children. They operate 2 days a week and is run by staff from a local church within a school boundary that's at 50% FRP. They've only operated for about 6 months at a local elementary school, and don't have any community partners.

They have a good volunteer base, but the people running the program don't have much experience. They can't articulate what their plan is in terms of how they'll be funded over the next three years.

Recommendation: Tread carefully

For School Districts thinking about running a Afterschool Meals Program

This is probably not the ideal program to begin sponsoring AMP. Unfortunately, the low number of children, the limited number of days, the administrative costs of running a separate program, and the inexperience of those running the program make it a bit of a gamble in either case.

We suggest you make it very clear that you have to maintain your bottom line, and they have to work with you to ensure that. Having that understanding may move them towards creating a more formalized plan for their program.

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For School Districts already running AMP

For you, taking on a new organization or program might not have a big impact. If they're located near your other sites, where the number of attendees is high, then it might be worth the effort. It could increase your overall reimbursement, but you shouldn't rely on this program to greatly enhance your overall meal count.

Scenario 2

A new program approaches you. They've been consistently serving 30- 50 kids 3 and 4 days a week at multiple locations for 3 years. The FRP for the area has been fluctuating at 65% for a decade. They've been spending \$25,000 a year providing snacks and have experience distributing food at their programs. Several program staff are members of the school districts afterschool task force.

Recommendation:Great opportunity!

For School Districts thinking about running a Afterschool Meals Program

In terms of starting a Afterschool Meals Program, it doesn't get much better than this. The number of kids is high but not so high that it creates logistical challenges. They have a knowledgeable staff with connections within the community.

They've been around a few years and shown some staying power. After a little research on your own you find out the general impression in the community is positive. We recommend you call DOH and sign up for training.

For School Districts already running AMP

If you're already running AMP, this scenario is ideal. It would probably be to your advantage. They have everything you'd be looking for in a sustainable program and would probably be great partner to work with.

Scenario 3

A program approaches you to sponsor an Afterschool Meals Program. Located at a nearby community center, they have served a hot meal to 150 kids 2 days a week for over 15 years. Despite this, they're not in a good position to become their own meal sponsor.

Diminishing contributions, lower volunteer numbers, a decaying infrastructure, a less than ideal kitchen have made it difficult to keep their internal meal efforts going. Their FRP has been 60% or above for the last 5 years. They are moderately connected in the community but are often viewed by others as being somewhat insular.

Recommendation:It's a pretty good situation

For School Districts thinking about running a Afterschool Meals Program

In terms of starting a Afterschool Meals Program, this is a tougher one to call. The number of kids is pretty high from the beginning so it could be tough logistically. However, they do have extensive experience in distributing meals.

In this case they don't have everything you'd want to see, but we suggest they have enough to get AMP started. With the number of children involved and their experience you'll probably form a fantastic working relationship that benefits both organizations.

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For School Districts already running AMP

If you're already running AMP, this scenario is pretty good. They have a high number of children and experience providing meals. However, the decreasing infrastructure and tendency to be somewhat isolated organizationally means they may not have much experience working with community partners.

It's something to consider. The fact that they are reaching out is encouraging. For the most part they have almost everything you'd be looking for in a sustainable program, and would most likely be great partner to work with.

Scenario 4

An afterschool program, offered at a low-income apartment complex approaches you to provide meals at their afterschool site. The Housing Authority manages the apartments. They have staff as well as apartment volunteers that help with programming.

While the afterschool programming is not as sophisticated or developed as one would hope, it does qualify under AMP guidelines. They've been running the program 3 days a week consistently for 5 years.

The program is partnered with the Housing Authority and a County Youth Gang Prevention organization, which also provides activities and volunteers. The average daily participation is anywhere from 25-50 kids per day. The qualifying school district boundary has been over 75% for the last 4 years. They have very high need.

Recommendation: Absolutely!

For School Districts thinking about running a Afterschool Meals Program

In terms of starting a Afterschool Meals Program, this is a great match. The partnerships are ideal. They've been around several years and demonstrated some staying power. This is a perfect scenario to begin your Afterschool Meals Program.

For School Districts already running AMP

If you're already running AMP, this scenario is perfect. While the afterschool program is not ideal, the partnerships are strong and the longevity and number of children make it very predictable in terms of sustainability.