



**THE STATE OF THE FIELD OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMMING
IN NEW YORK CITY**

Partnership for After School Education
July 2001

The State of the Field of Afterschool Programs in New York City

Executive Summary

PASE identified over 1,700 afterschool programs across the five boroughs of New York City, and surveyed approximately 1,560 of them. We found that programs are most likely to identify themselves as multi-service providers, have served their community for longer than 12 years, and operate with a total budget of less than \$1 million that is primarily devoted to its youth programs. Afterschool programs are likely to operate out of more than one site, with about half in a community setting and slightly fewer in a school building. Three of the five most frequently offered activities are closely associated with strengthening academic skills.

PASE also analyzed the distribution of afterschool programs across the city to determine whether access varies according to communities, and the answer is “yes”. We found that the ratio of youth to afterschool programs is lowest in Manhattan and highest in Queens. Furthermore, we attempted to estimate the demand for afterschool programs and found that most communities are underserved. As we move ahead in our public policy and advocacy initiative, PASE will continue to add depth to our portrait of the field. We also seek to use the information contained in this report to improve the state of our field.

Introduction

New York has often been described as the city of neighborhoods, and part of their vitality is drawn from the many community organizations that have sprung up throughout our history. In recent years, the important role that these organizations play in supporting positive youth development has gained broad recognition. These organizations and the afterschool programs they sponsor, contribute to the essential “vitamins” that all youth need to grow into competent and productive adults. Along with family, faith, and school, afterschool programs help to shape our young people into complex thinkers, skilled communicators, responsible citizens, and self-directed adults.

Afterschool programs provide opportunities for youth to participate in activities during non-school hours. This may include before or after school, weekends and summer programs. In addition to providing young people with a safe place to meet, afterschool programs provide developmentally appropriate activities that help young people learn how to set and reach goals, while learning how to develop communication, conflict resolution, decision-making and problem-solving skills. Many programs may offer activities that support academic enrichment such as literacy and math programs as well as homework help and tutoring. Additionally, afterschool programs offer cultural enrichment and recreational activities. Afterschool programs that primarily serve teens generally offer a variety of youth leadership activities such as community service/service learning and peer education. Essentially, these afterschool programs "often offer activities in which children would not otherwise be involved during the school day or at home." (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

The demand for afterschool programs has surged, partially as a result of workforce trends—there are more working parents who spend more time at work than ever before (The After School Corporation, 1999). The widespread need to find safe, affordable arrangements for their children is reflected in a recent C.S. Mott Foundation/J.C. Penney national poll in which the vast majority of respondents (86%) believe afterschool programs are a necessity. Certainly the number of afterschool programs across the country has been expanding in recent years (Policy Studies Associates, 1998). Examples of new public and private initiatives include the U.S. Department of Education’s 21st Century Community Learning Center initiative (21CCLC), New York State’s Advantage Afterschool Program, The After School Corporation (TASC), the Beacons and Virtual Y’s, and the rapid growth of afterschool professional networks such as the Partnership for After School Education (PASE).

With the growth in the number of programs that serve increasing numbers of children and youth, greater attention has been paid to the benefits of afterschool (see a concise summary of research by TASC, 1999). The impact of afterschool programs has been well documented by researchers who have found that academic performance, in-school behavior and attendance, and high school graduation rates all improve as a result of participating in afterschool programs. Beyond school outcomes, research reports that children who participate in afterschool programs have fewer behavior problems in the home, and during adolescence are less likely to use drugs and alcohol, and are less likely .programs are increasingly seen as relevant to two broad policy agendas: (1) preventing crime, substance abuse, and teen pregnancy, and (2) promoting school achievement.” (The Future of Children, 1999).

As schools have come under increased pressure to achieve minimum standards of accountability in educating our children, because of their documented benefits, afterschool programs have been viewed as important allies. Policy makers and funders, for example, have been calling upon schools and community youth serving agencies to collaborate. Each of the high profile initiatives cited above are, in fact, designed to encourage such collaborations by housing programs in school buildings.

The drive to scale up afterschool programming and the desire to increase collaborations between schools and youth programs are positive developments for the hundreds of agencies that have been working in neighborhoods for years. However, surprisingly little is known about the number, distribution, services, and capacity of the afterschool programs they run. Towards this end, over the past year PASE has expanded its efforts to map the field of afterschool programs in New York City. This document reports on the results.

Data Gathering Methods and Process

New York City hosts a rich source of afterschool program activities for youth. Emerging community-based organizations—including faith-based programs—around the city may serve less than 100 neighborhood youth each, while many of the larger, established

organizations with more space and staff, or those that run multiple sites or offer city-wide services will serve hundreds of youth (i.e. settlement houses, local development corporations). Along with these locally-known programs, nationally-recognized organizations such as the YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs also offer afterschool services to New York City youth. In addition to community-based programs, New York City is home to many school-based afterschool programs, including those mentioned earlier: the Beacons, TASC, Virtual Y's, etc.

Over the past ten years, PASE has developed an extensive database of approximately 1,000 New York City organizations active in the field of afterschool education. To enrich this data, we reached out to other organizations and providers who have extensive contacts in the field, including TASC, the YMCA, the NYC Department of Health, and the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). In the end, we identified 1,713 youth programs spread throughout the five boroughs and 59 community districts.

To qualify as an afterschool program, each had to offer programming to school age youth before or after school, on weekends, or over the summer. To more fully describe these programs, we sent out a survey to each (see Appendix 1), requesting basic contact and descriptive information. Programs either responded to each question over the telephone, or faxed or mailed surveys back to us. While these efforts are still in progress, and will remain so, we have thus far gathered at least partial data on slightly more than 1,000 programs, and these results form the bulk of this report.

Prior to these last 12 months, PASE had conducted periodic surveys as part of our ongoing Mapping Project. The survey we used this year differs somewhat from those we used in the past, mostly in terms of a reduced and simplified number of questions. While earlier surveys were limited to one to two hundred programs, we have augmented this year's findings with earlier data when appropriate.

Limitations of Data: We have not been able to identify any individual or group in New York City who has created a database of all afterschool youth programs. The most complete source of information, other than PASE, we believe is DYCD. Since the City distributes funding to over 1,000 different agencies all across the five boroughs, this is a rich source of information. In March of this year, we exchanged databases with DYCD, and found that we were each missing many groups that the other had.

Despite the size of the database we assembled, we are confident that there are many more afterschool programs that we have yet to identify. First, we have learned through our surveys that most agencies operate programs out of multiple sites. While we gathered information on many of these sites, we know from informal conversations with colleagues that there are many more sites to be documented. Secondly, in merging our database with DYCD, we learned that many small neighborhood groups receive tiny grants from the City—to enable little league teams to pay for baseball uniforms, for example. In general, the smaller the organization, the less likely it is that we have “discovered” them for inclusion in the database. Lastly, we know that many afterschool

programs operate out of churches and other places of faith. While we have made a concerted effort to reach out to this community, from the results we know that they are underrepresented.

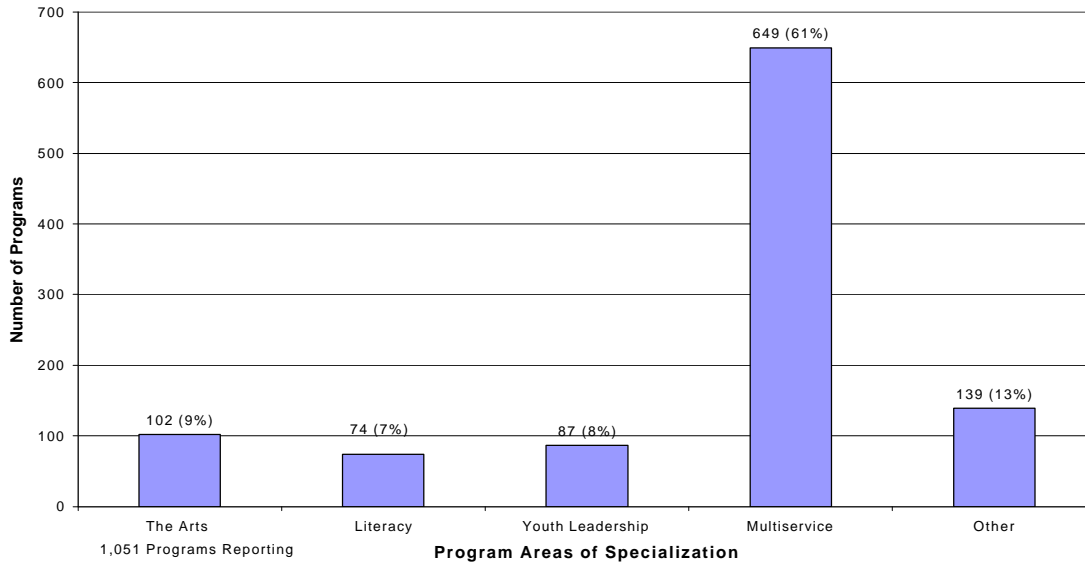
Findings

To better characterize the providers of afterschool education programs across the city, we wanted to describe their organizations and programs in terms of who they are, what they offer, and whom they serve. We have created a series of charts to report on our findings, and have divided our findings section into three parts: 1) a basic description of afterschool programs across the city; 2) the distribution of programs across the five boroughs and 59 community districts; and 3) the capacity of afterschool programs to absorb the demand for their services.

I. Description of Afterschool Programs Across the City

Of the more than 1,000 programs we surveyed, the vast majority of programs (61%) self-identify themselves as multi-service providers (Table 1).

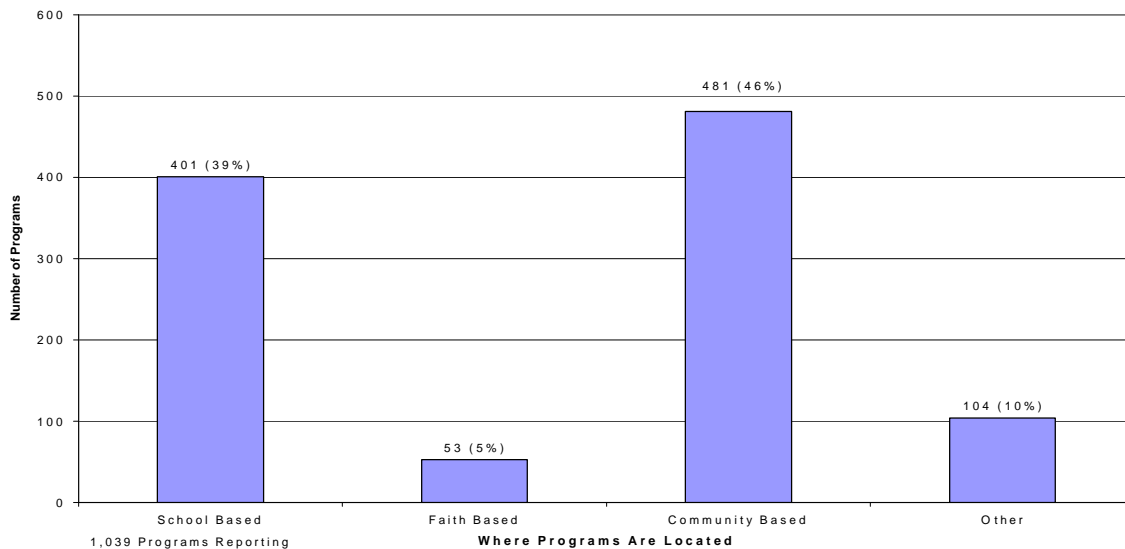
Table 1: Total Number of Programs By Areas of Specialization



It should be noted that the number of faith based afterschool programs is too small, and this certainly reflects our lack of success in identifying these programs—a challenge that will need to be addressed as we move forward.

While there are more programs that are based in community settings (46%), almost as many (39%) are based in schools (Table 2).

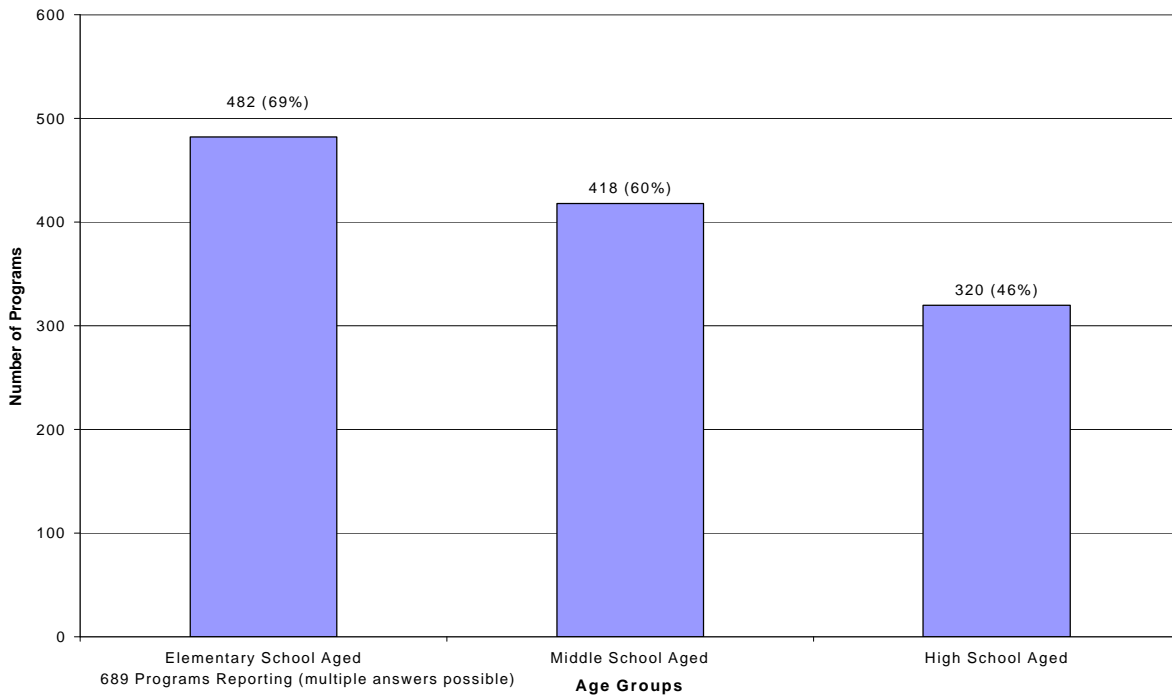
Table 2: City Wide Number (%) of Where Programs Are Located



In fact, we looked at these same data at the borough level, and discovered that in Queens more than half the programs were located in schools, and in Brooklyn and the Bronx, the two are equally represented. This reflects the large number of school based afterschool programs that receive funding through TASC, the Beacons, Virtual Y's, 21CCLC, and Advantage Afterschool Programs.

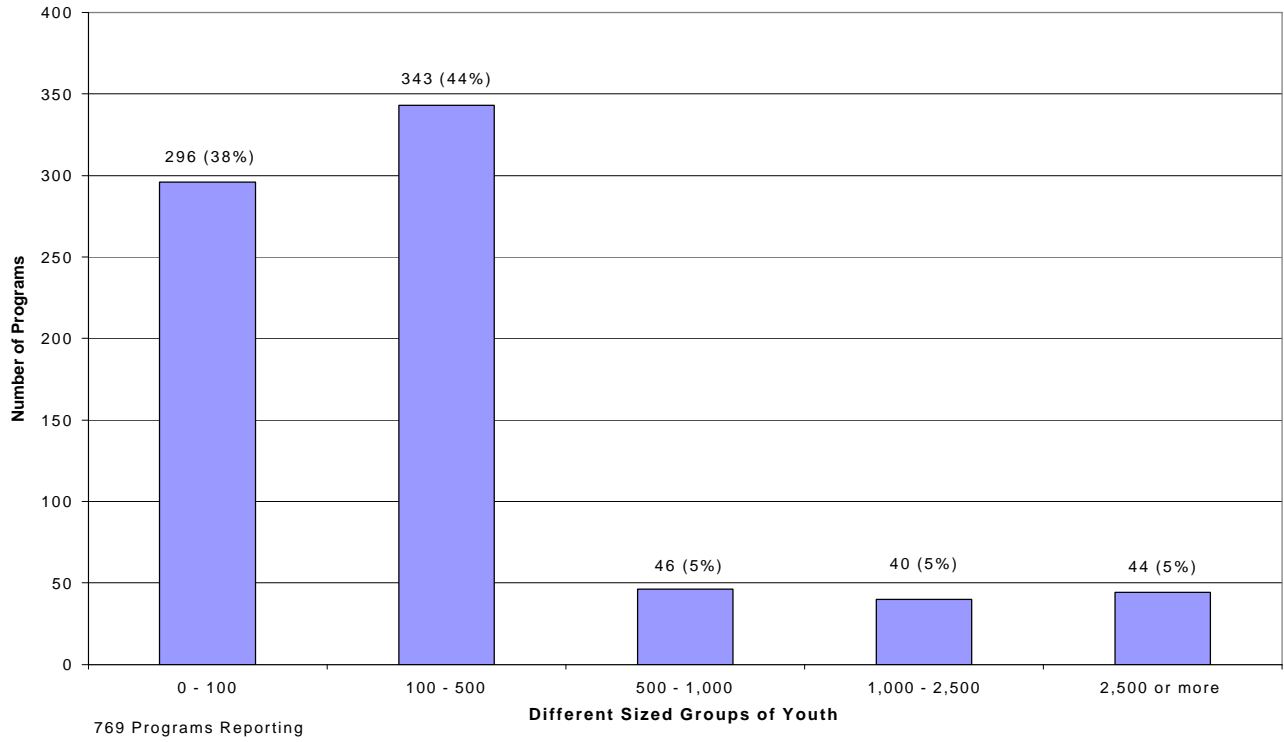
As is commonly perceived, more programs serve elementary school aged children than middle or high school youth (Table 3).

Table 3: Number (%) of Programs Serving Different Aged Youth



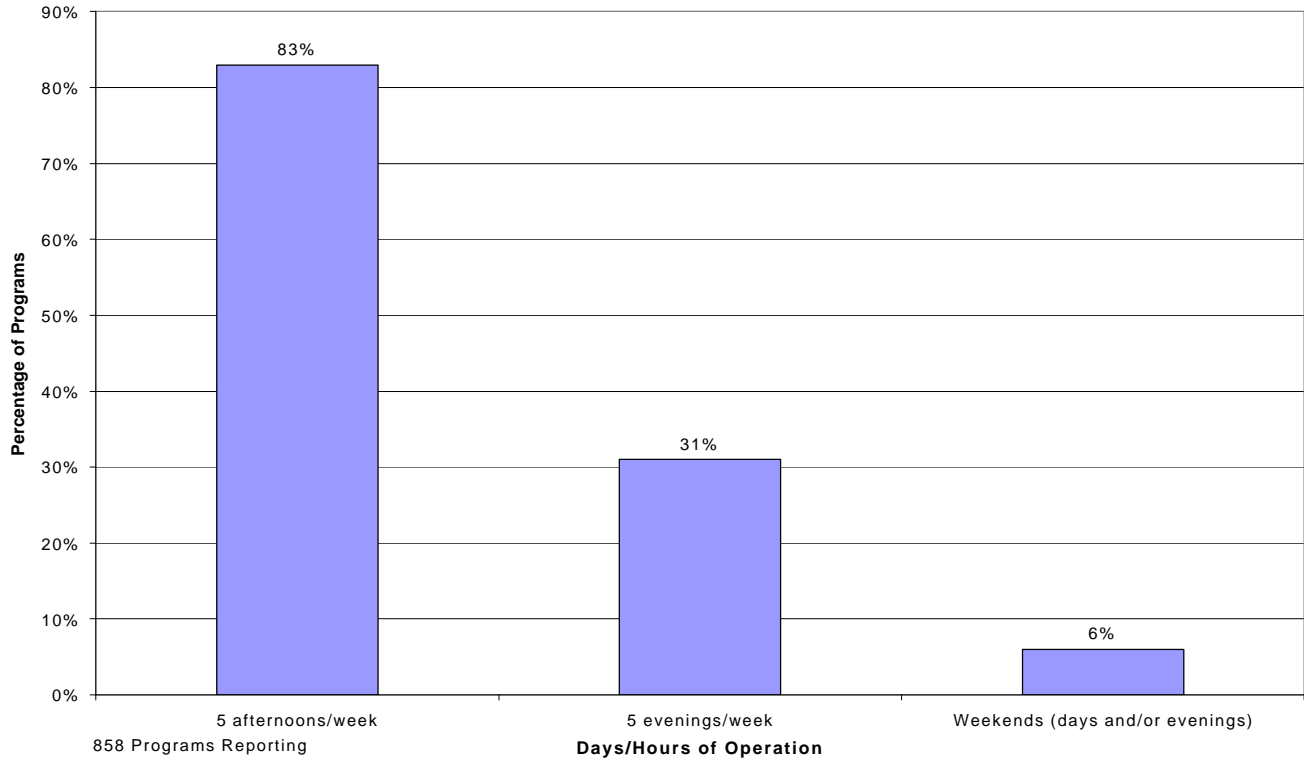
On an average day, the vast majority of programs serve under 500 youth, with 38% serving fewer than 100 young people (Table 4).

Table 4: Number (%) of Programs Serving Different Sized Groups of Youth (Daily Average)



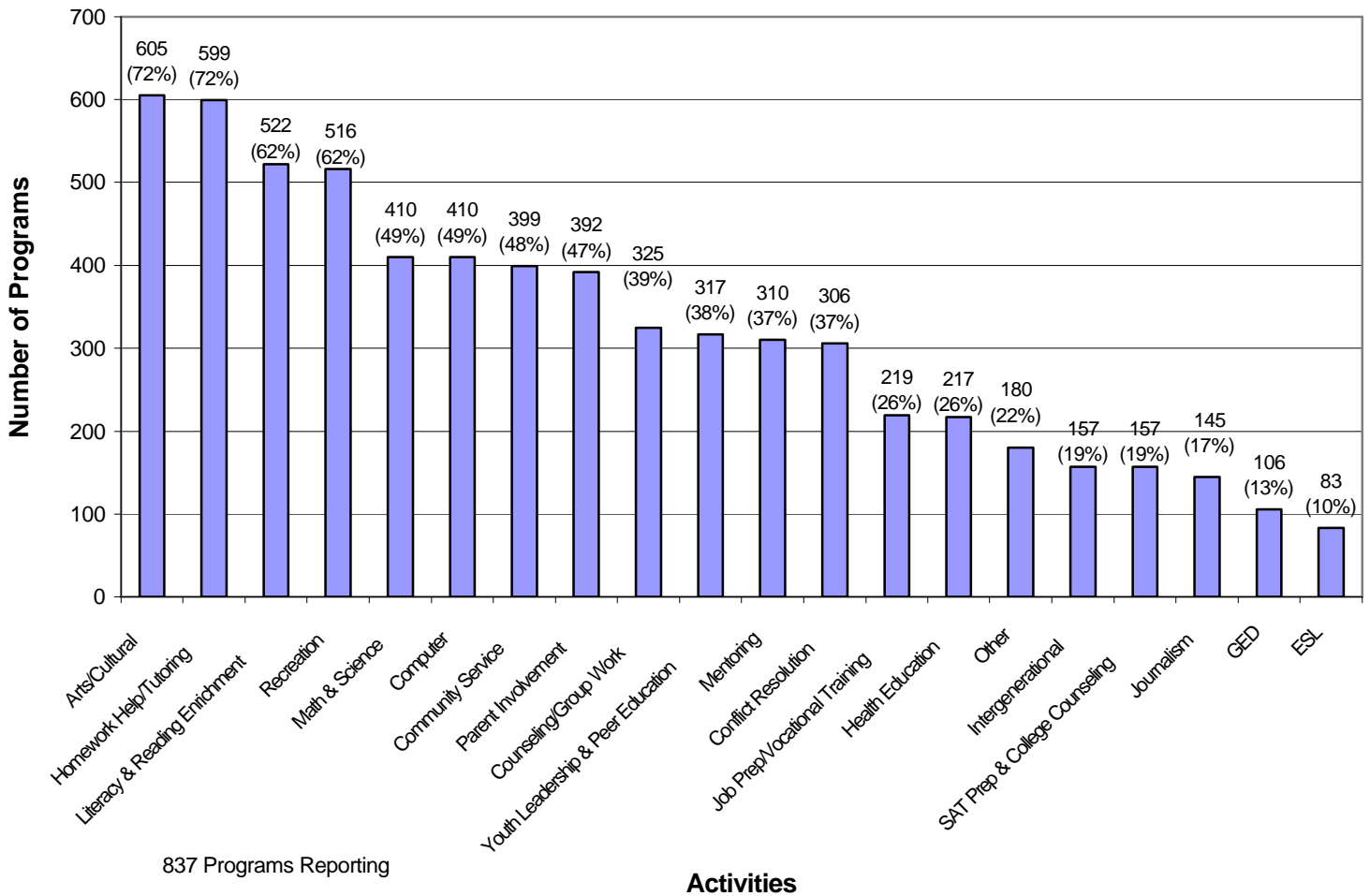
During the school year, the vast majority of programs are open five afternoons a week, but there is a dramatic drop off in the number of programs open during weekday evenings and over the weekend (Table 5).

Table 5: Percentage of Programs Open Different Hours During School Year



We asked programs to tell us the menu of activities that they offer on a regular basis, and the results are reported in Table 6. Three of the top five are closely associated with strengthening academic skills (homework help/tutoring, literacy/reading enrichment, and math/science/computers).

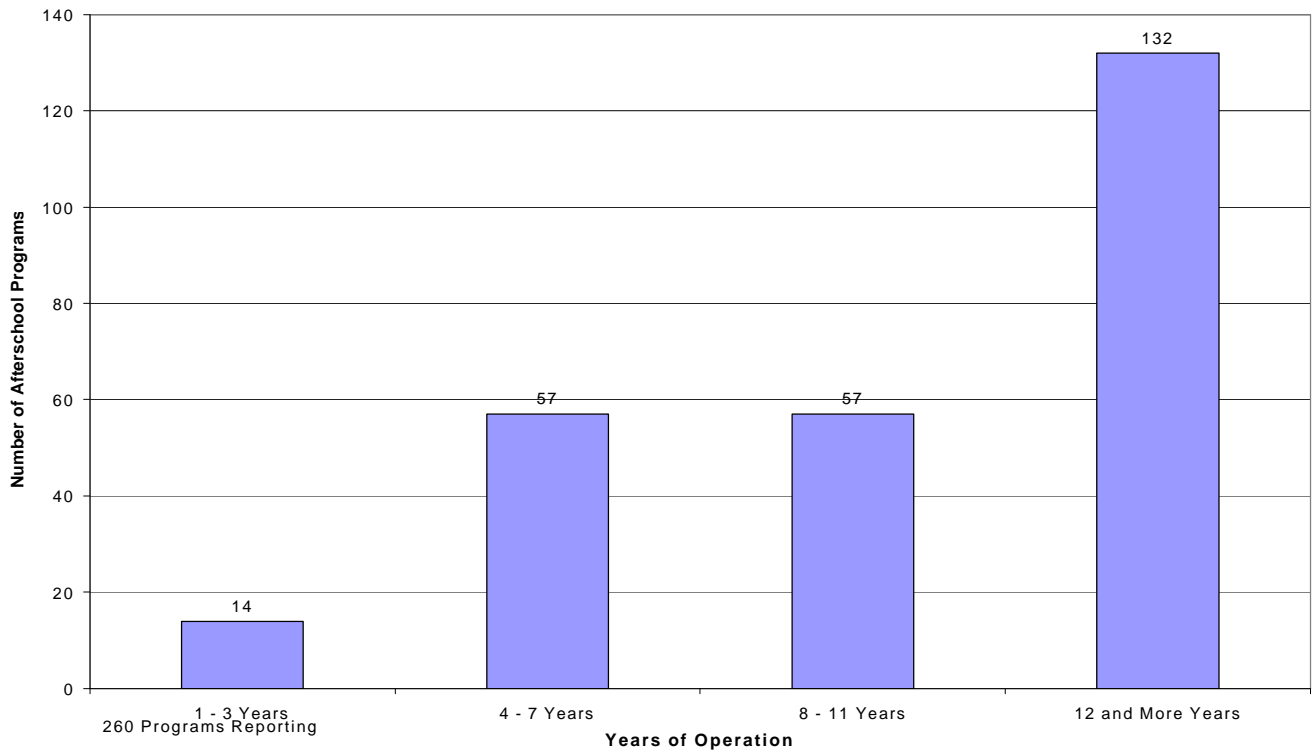
Table 6: Number (%) of Programs Offering Different Activities



Programs often report difficulty recruiting and retaining middle and high school students. Many of the activities routinely offered appear to be quite relevant to this age group. For example, as reported in Table 6, between 145 and 399 programs indicate they offer one or more of the following: community service, SAT prep and college counseling, journalism, job preparation/career training, youth leadership, and health education. The large number of programs represented make this fertile ground for documenting innovative approaches to working with this age group and sharing the results with practitioners.

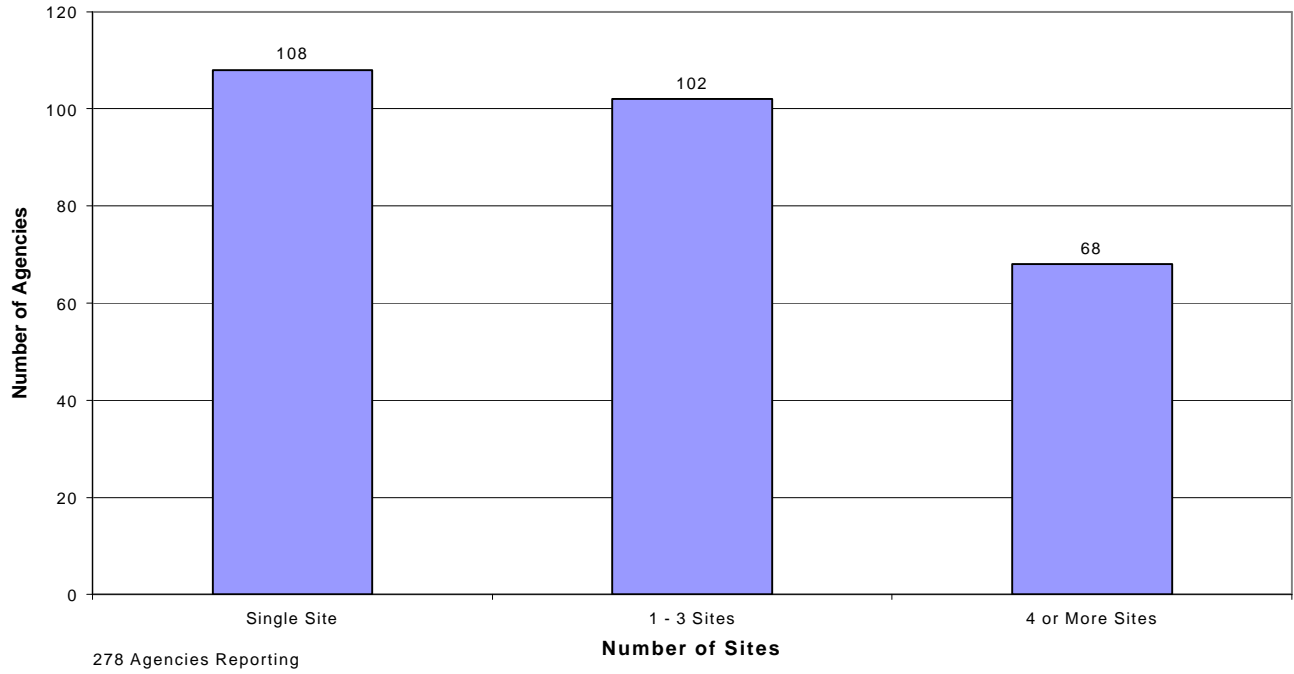
To further describe the characteristics of youth programs around the city, we now refer to a smaller PASE survey that was completed in 1999 on a relatively small sample. At that time, most programs (50%) reported that their afterschool programs had been operational for more than 12 years, although 27% were less than seven years old (Table 7). If age represents maturity, clearly there are programs that have accumulated much experience. At the same time, there were a relatively large number of new afterschool programs—27% less than seven years old--perhaps born out of recent high profile initiatives such as the Beacons, TASC, Virtual Y's, and 21CCLC.

Table 7: Number of Afterschool Programs By Years of Operation



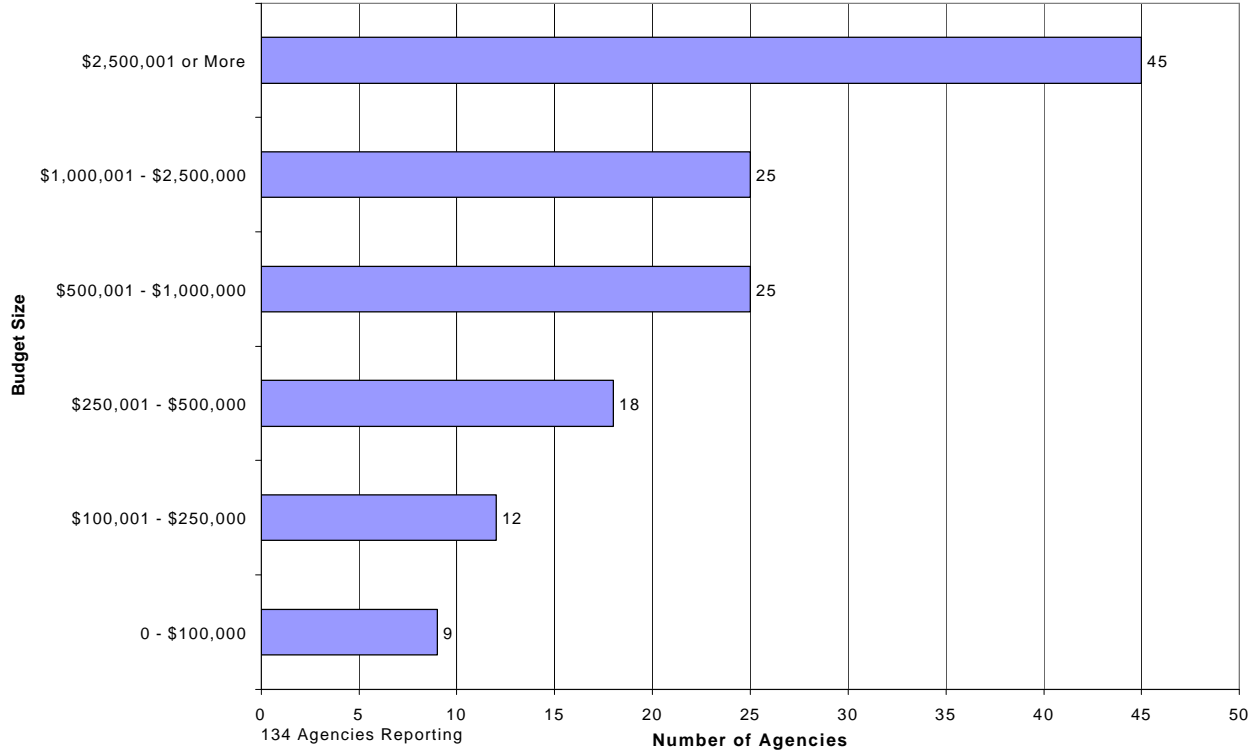
The majority of agencies (61%) report that they operate programs out of more than one site (Table 8), with almost 25% operating four or more sites. This entails a fairly sophisticated organizational structure and set of supervisory relationships.

Table 8: Number of Sites Operated By Youth Agencies



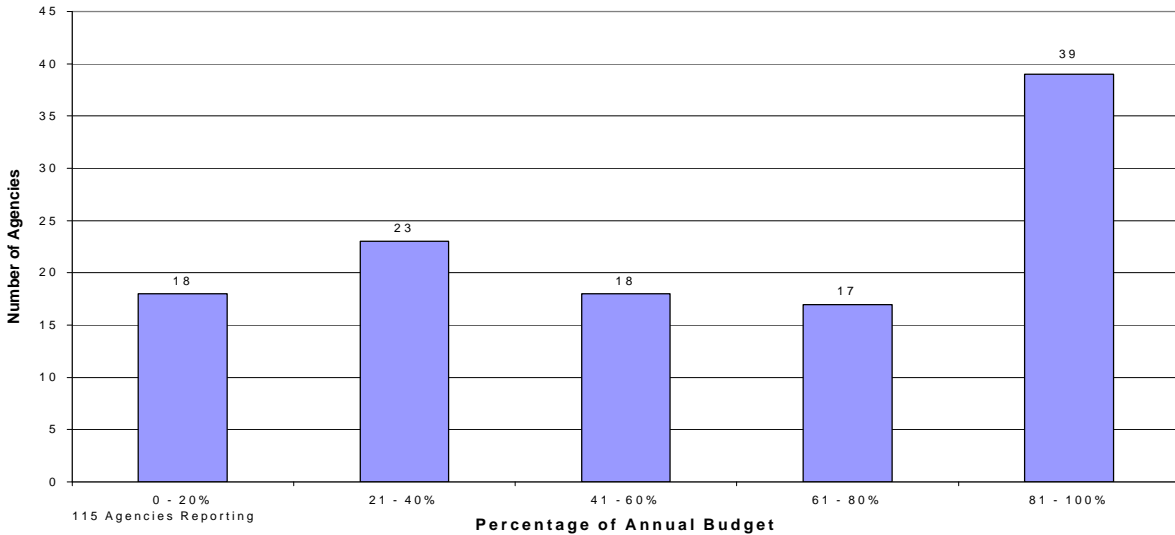
Of these agencies, 29% have budgets that are less than \$500,000 per year, and 47% have annual budgets that are less than \$1 million (Table 9).

Table 9: Number of Agencies With Different Sized Budgets



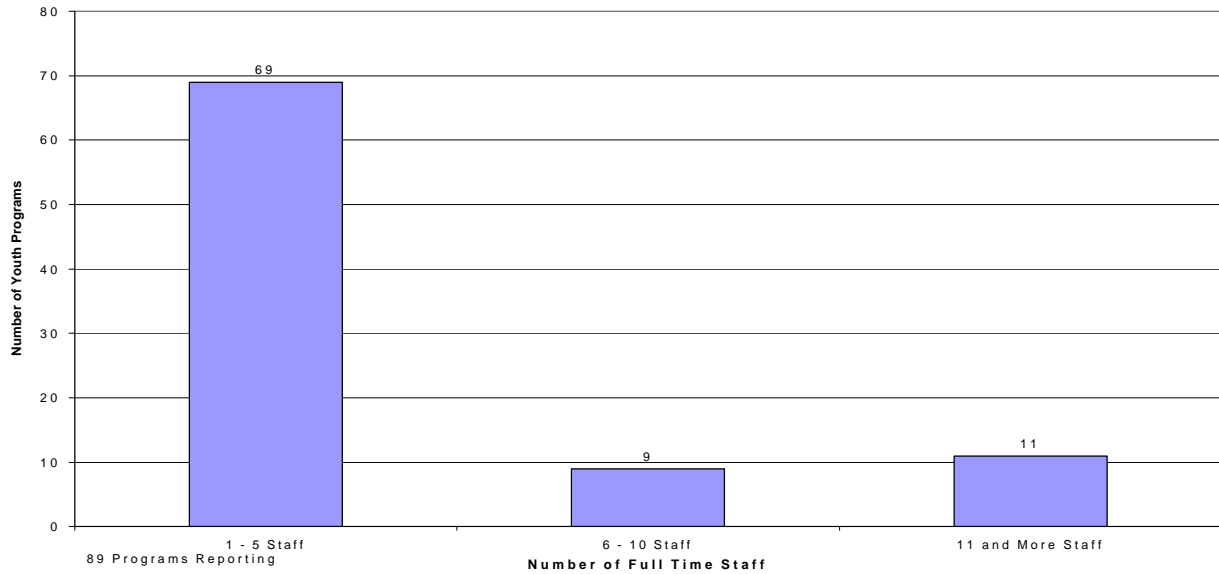
Almost half the agencies report that more than 60% of their annual budget went to their youth programs (Table 10).

Table 10: Percentage of Agency Budget Devoted to Youth Programs



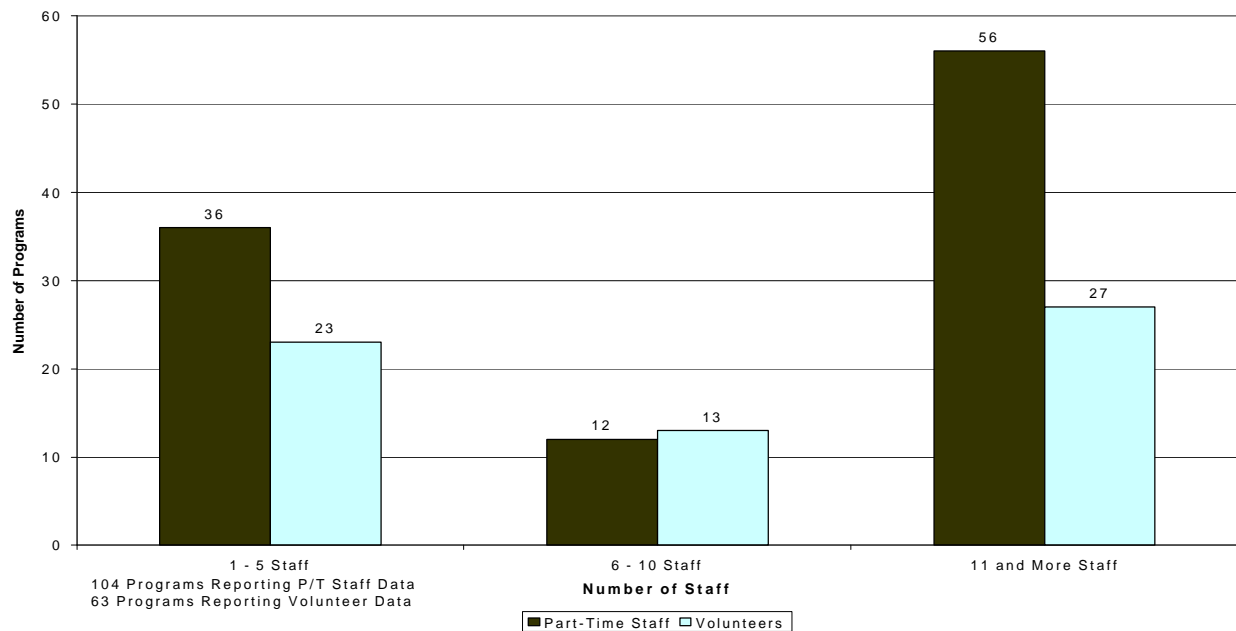
They typically employ one to five full time staff (Table 11).

Table 11: Number of Youth Programs With Different Numbers of Full Time Staff



Most programs employ 11 or more part-time staff, and recruit relatively large numbers of volunteers (Table 12).

Table 12: Number of Programs With Different Numbers of Part-Time and Volunteer Staff



Summary of City-Wide Description of Afterschool Programs

PASE identified slightly more than 1,700 afterschool programs across the five boroughs of New York City, and successfully surveyed approximately 1,000 of them. These data present a composite portrait, with the following salient characteristics:

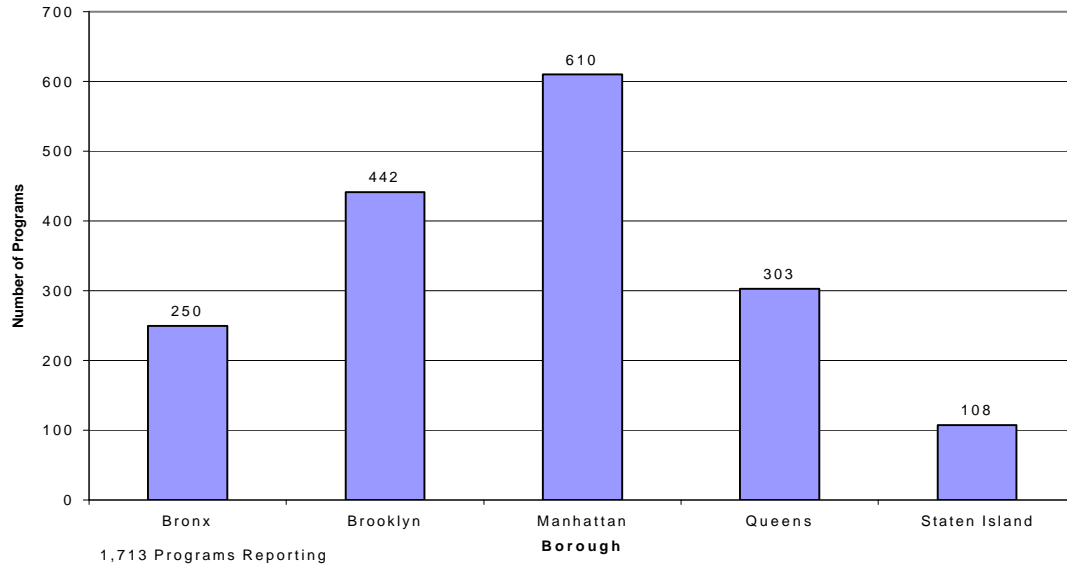
- The agency is most likely to be more than 12 years old, identify itself as a multi-service provider, with a total budget of less than \$1 million that is primarily devoted to its youth programs;
- The afterschool programs are likely to operate out of more than one site, with about half in a community setting and slightly fewer in a school building;
- Each program is most likely to have up to 5 full time staff, and twice as many part-timers;
- 7 out of 10 programs serve elementary school students, while 6 out of 10 serve middle schoolers and a little less than 5 out of 10 serve high schoolers;
- Most programs are intimate environments, and 4 out of every 10 serve under 100 children per day;
- 8 out of every 10 programs is open at least 5 afternoons a week, but 3 in 10 remain open in the evening, and only a handful are open over the weekend; and
- Three of the five most frequently offered activities are closely associated with strengthening academic skills (homework help/tutoring, literacy/reading enrichment, and math/science/computers).

In the next section, we look at the distribution of afterschool programs across the city to determine whether access varies according to where a family lives.

II. The Distribution of Programs Across the Five Boroughs

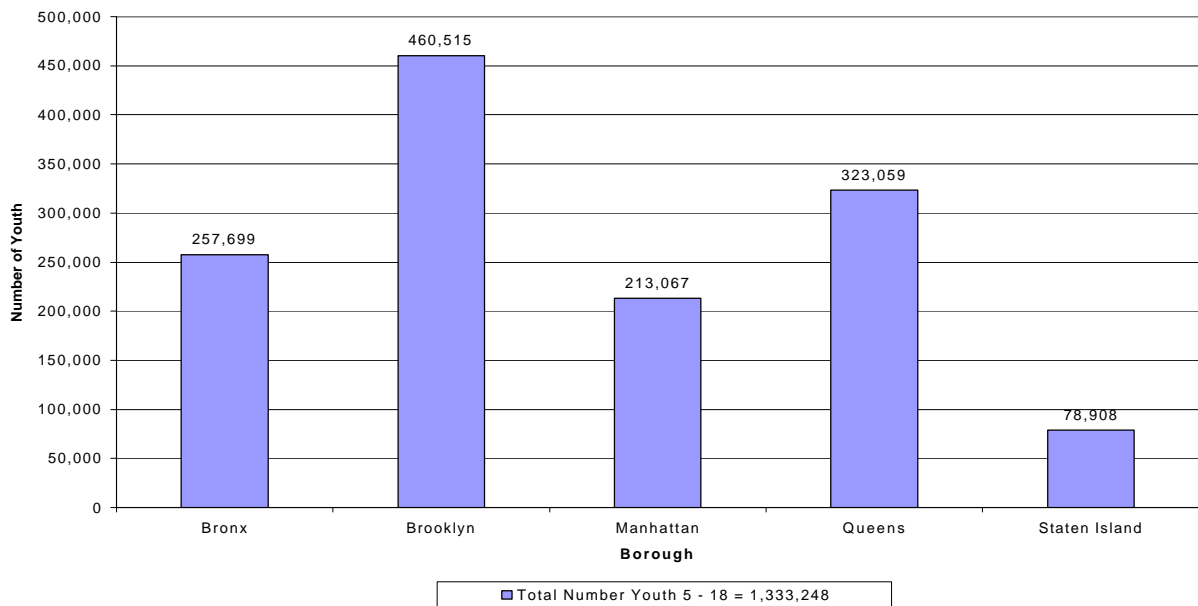
Of the 1,713 afterschool youth programs that we identified, 610 (35%) are located in Manhattan (Table 13).

Table 13: Number of Afterschool Youth Programs in Each Borough



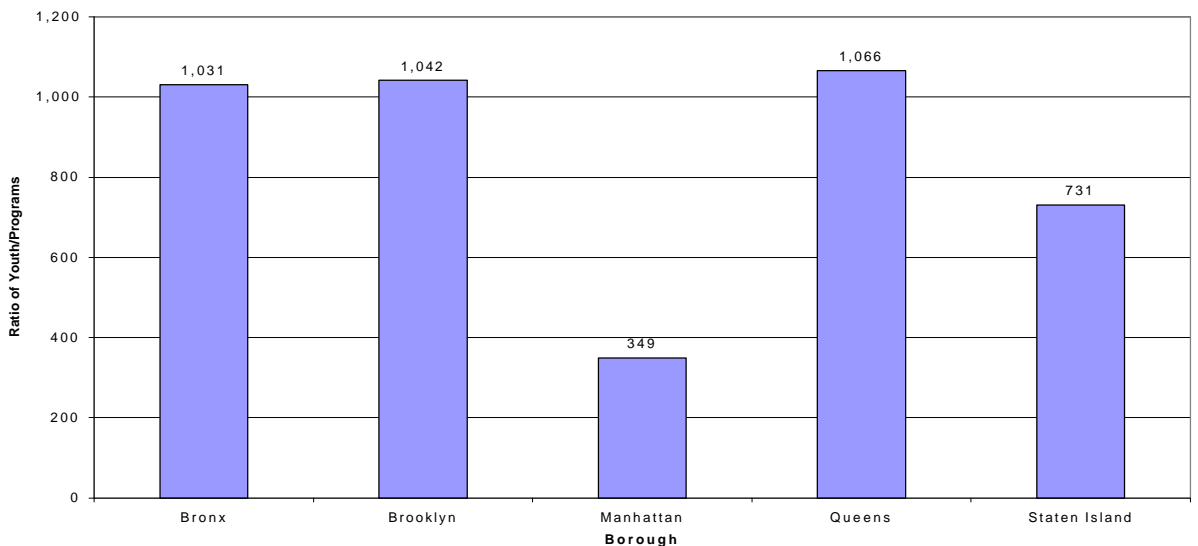
While Manhattan has the most documented afterschool programs, as captured in Table 14, of the five boroughs it ranks fourth in terms of the total population of young people who are between the ages of 5 and 18 years old (Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, 2000).

Table 14: Total Number of 5 - 18 Year Old Youth In Each Borough



Put slightly differently, as shown in Table 15, the ratio of youth to afterschool programs is lowest in Manhattan (1 program for every 349 young people), and highest in Queens (1 program for every 1,066 young people).

Table 15: Ratio of Total Youth to Total Number of Programs In Each Borough



However, the number of youth programs varies greatly, depending on the community district one lives in (see Table 16 on next page), from a low of six in Brooklyn's Community District 18 (Canarsie) to a high of 90 in Manhattan's Community District 5 (Midtown Business District).

Since the number of programs in any community needs to be considered in relation to the total youth population, we looked at this ratio more closely. Table 17 reports the ten community districts with the most young people per program. Canarsie has the highest and worst ratio in New York City, with over 4,500 youth per program.

Table 17: 10 Community Districts With Highest Youth Per Afterschool Program Ratio

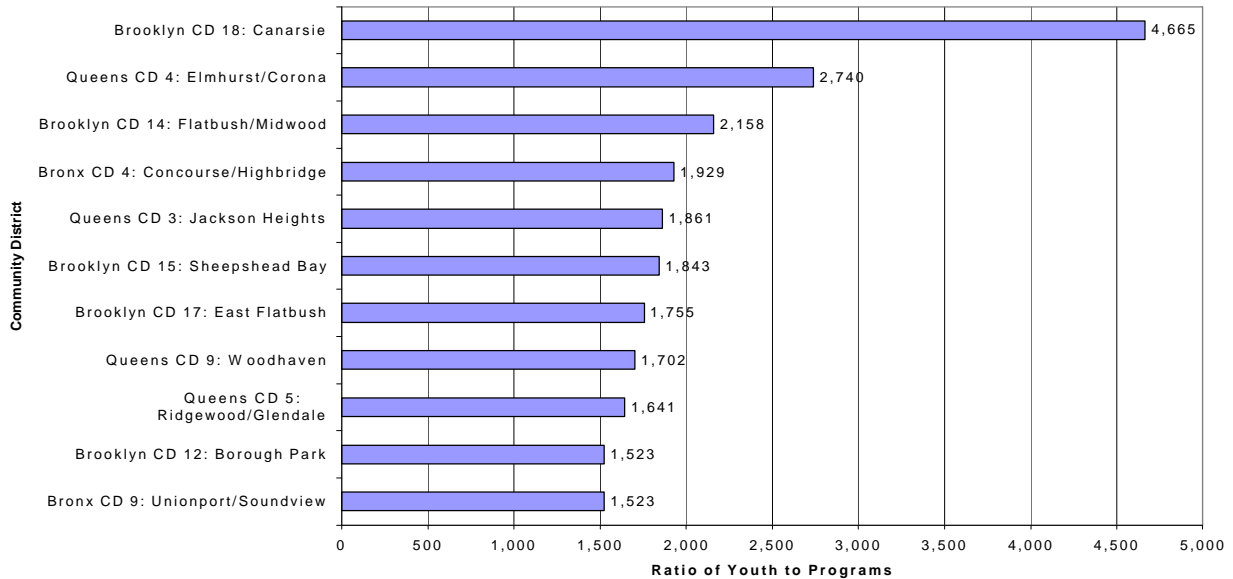
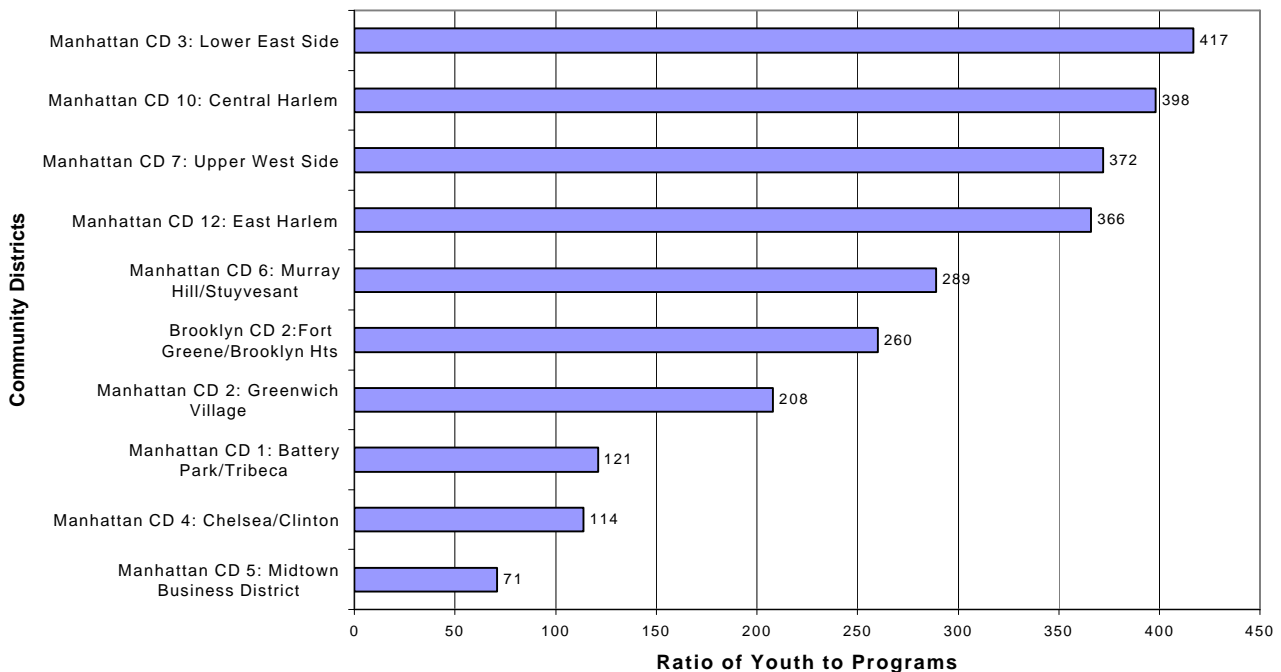


Table 18 reports on the ten districts with the best and lowest youth to program ratio. Nine of the ten communities are in Manhattan.

Table 18: Community Districts With Lowest Program to Youth Population Ratio



III. The Capacity of Afterschool Programs To Absorb the Demand For Their Services

In addition to the distribution of programs around the city, a key question is whether there are enough programs for the number of youth who would like to be enrolled. We used two strategies to answer this question. First, we asked programs if they are under, at, or over capacity in terms of the numbers of youth they serve on an average day. Second, using estimates of the demand for afterschool programs, we compared demand to the estimated number of slots there are in each community district. We report on these data next.

Gathering data on program capacity, we found, is extremely difficult. We went through several different phrasings of survey questions because program staff had difficulty understanding specifically what it was we were asking. The difference between how many children a program can register is distinct, for example, from how many attend on an average day (which is what we were asking). Secondly, not every staff knows the precise answer, and we found that this question was often left blank as a result. We therefore suffered from two problems: a low response rate and messy data. However, we sifted carefully through each survey, selecting only those responses that appeared to understand the question, and these data are reported in Table 19.

Table 19: Number of Programs At, Over, or Under Capacity

Total Number of Programs Reporting Data	312
% With Free Capacity	48.4%
% At Capacity	46.2%
% Over Capacity	5.4%

Of the 312 programs reporting capacity data, about half reported some capacity to absorb more youth. We also asked programs to tell us how many more children they could serve, if they had free space. Looking only at the programs that reported having free capacity, we calculated that, on average, 30% of their total capacity was free on a typical day.

We are not sure why these programs report space available. For example, these data may reflect the usual gap between the total number of registered participants and those that actually attend each day. On the other hand, these programs may in fact be underutilized, and if this is true, speaks to marketing and recruitment challenges that need to be addressed. We reiterate, accurate data is extremely difficult to obtain, and we treat this finding with great wariness. Clearly this is an area that needs follow up.

We should point out that past research has examined utilization rates, and discovered that programs are typically operating under their capacity. For example, as reviewed by Allen and Funkhouser of Policy Studies Associates (1998), in a paper commissioned by TASC, they report a national utilization rate of licensed programs of 59%. Some of the reasons for underutilization that they uncovered include the need to limit enrollment to maintain program quality, and the desire to avoid serving more children because of increased costs (especially staff costs).

TASC programs have average daily attendance rates that vary according to age group, from a high of 70% for elementary school aged children to a low of 50% for high school

students. They attribute this to the fact that attending a program five days a week is not something that families or older youth require (personal communication). Certainly research bears them out—three quarters of grade-school-aged children, for example, have multiple after school care arrangements (U.S. Census, 2000).

The second key question is whether there are enough programs to meet the demand for afterschool programs. The difficulty in calculating an answer is that we could find no data on what the demand for afterschool programming is in New York City. In our review of the literature, we found several sources that report approximately 39% of all children utilize afterschool programs. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau issued a report entitled, “Who’s Minding the Kids? Child Care Arrangements,” based on data gathered in 1995. They report, “Nearly all grade-school-age children (93%) were in school [during the day] and a large proportion (39%) participated in enrichment activities such as sports, lessons, clubs, and before- or after-school programs.” (p. 16). A second source is Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York (Keeping Track of New York City’s Children, 2000). Using various sources of information, including ACD contracted day care, DYCD programs, TASC, and others, CCC found that 40% of the six to eighteen year old population are using some type of school age child care program. Lastly, Allen and Funkhouser (1998), cited earlier, used school age population estimates from the early 1990’s, and applied national afterschool utilization rates, and came up with an estimate that 30% of New York City’s children are in need of afterschool services.

There are a number of problems in using any of these estimates. First, in two of the three, the figures mentioned are the percentage of children who are in afterschool programs--which is different from an estimate of the demand for such services. After all, we would expect demand to be higher than usage since research indicates that families have difficulty locating afterschool programs. Second, applying national statistics to New York is problematic since cultural patterns play a prominent role in child care arrangements, and New York is the city that seemingly invented the term “melting pot.”

Despite these very real problems, we decided to generate an estimate of the number of programs that each community district would need if they were to absorb our estimate of demand. We used the 39% figure, cited by both the U.S. Census, and closely matched by the Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York, as the estimate of “demand.” We applied this percentage to the total population of five to eighteen year olds in each community district. In other words, for the purpose of this analysis, we calculated 39% of the youth population in each community district, and our assumption is that this is the total population of young people who would like to be in an afterschool program. Are there enough programs to handle this number?

To estimate the capacity of afterschool programs in each community, we used our finding that 82% of the surveyed afterschool programs serve up to 500 young people—deciding to split this, and estimate that the average program serves up to 250 children. We then calculated the number of programs, with the average size of 250 slots, it would take to absorb 39% of the youth population in each community district. We report our findings in Table 20 (see the chart on the next page).

According to these data, in order to have a sufficient number of programs to absorb the estimated number of young people, 30 of the 59 community districts need to increase the number of afterschool programs by at least 50%, 17 of which need to at least double the current capacity. We examined the “Statements of Community District Needs” prepared by all 59 of New York City’s community boards, and looked specifically at these under-capacity districts, to see if the state of programs for youth was addressed. We found that often districts pinpoint specific neighborhoods in which there is a lack of programs, call for programs that have a particular focus, or that focus on a specific population. Here are a few sample quotes:

- “There are about 50,000 youth out of 170,000 residents in the community. Kips Bay and Castle Hill Community Centers are overloaded and therefore need more funds. Many areas with virtually no youth serving agencies. Need funds to start more up, especially afterschool programs.” (Bronx Community Board 9: Soundview/Bronx River/Castle Hill).
- “Need for more afterschool centers for youth. There is only one right now and it closes at 9:00 p.m. Nothing is in Morris Park or Van Nest areas.” (Bronx Community Board 11: Bronxdale/Pelham Parkway/Morris Park).
- “32% of our population is under 18 years old; youth on youth violence is a serious problem that must be addressed. We need more programs such as conflict resolution to educate our youth about alternatives to violence....” (Brooklyn Community Board 5: Highland Park/East New York, New Lots, Starrett City).
- “There are long waiting lists at local after-school programs. Comprehensive youth services must be maintained and expanded, especially for the great influx of immigrant youth, in the areas of counseling, employment, recreation, ESL, tutoring, college and career counseling, afterschool youth development and literacy programs, and summer day camps.” (Queens Community Board 6: Rego Park/Forest Hills).

Lastly, we wanted to examine if New York City youth funding patterns are consistent with our analysis of where afterschool programs are needed. We gathered funding information from the City Project, which captured DYCD youth program funding for each city council district (which is different from community board districts). As reported in Table 21, what we discovered is that more funding flows to Manhattan groups than to any other borough, and the least amount of funding flows to Queens.

Table 21: Comparison of DYCD Youth Funding and Youth Population

	Total 5 - 18 Year Old Population Per Borough	DYCD Funding for Youth Programs (1999)	Ratio: DYCD Funding Per Young Person
Manhattan	213,067	\$24,333,819	\$114.21
Bronx	257,699	\$16,199,348	\$62.86
Queens	323,059	\$9,944,174	\$30.78
Brooklyn	460,515	26,596,480	\$57.75
Staten Island	78,908	4,521,206	\$57.30

As described earlier (in Table 15), while Manhattan as a borough has the greatest number of youth programs, it ranks fourth in terms of the size of its youth population. Queens, on the other hand, is the borough that has the fewest programs for the size of its youth population. This would seem to argue that DYCD should be investing differently than it is. However, before reaching this conclusion, we must better understand how these funding decisions relate to who applies for funding, their capacity, the needs of youth they propose to address, and a host of related issues. This work lays ahead.

Conclusion

Over the last decade, the availability of afterschool programs for youth in New York City has surged. Local community-based and faith-based organizations, as well as nationally-recognized agencies continually offer a place where youth can meet during non-school hours to build "the other 3 R's 'resourcefulness, responsibility and reliability.'" (p. 7, *The Future of Children*, 1999). Through the years, these programs continue to serve as a safe haven for children as they develop socially, emotionally and developmentally.

In order to provide legislators, funders and the afterschool field itself a picture of the state of the field of afterschool education in New York City, PASE examined information about organizations that operate before and after school programs as well as weekend and summer programs for youth between the ages of 5 and 18. This data collected outlines the types of programs that currently operate afterschool services, where they are located and the capacity of the afterschool field to meet the needs of the youth in New York City.

While studies have been conducted to determine the capacity and quality of afterschool programs on a national level, in New York City, where over 1.3 million children and youth between the ages of 5 and 18 years old reside, finding comprehensive information regarding the state of afterschool education has proven challenging. We hope to fill in some of the gaps through this report, and the following are some highlights:

- Afterschool youth programs are not distributed equally among New York City's neighborhoods. While our analysis relies on many assumptions, we found that a large number of community districts have fewer than 50% of the number of programs they need to enroll the number of young people that we estimated would like to participate. The districts that stood out the most are Concourse/Highbridge in the Bronx, Borough Park, Flatbush and Canarsie in Brooklyn, and Elmhurst/Corona in Queens.
- The programs typically offer a slate of activities that are connected to the types of skills and learning that schools promote, and do so by relying heavily on part-time staff and volunteers.
- Afterschool programs are typically located in community settings or school buildings, are more available for elementary school aged children, and a large proportion serve children in intimate environments of fewer than 100 participants.
- While a large percentage of programs are open five afternoons a week, much fewer are open in the evening and fewer still on the weekends.

These data should be treated cautiously for at least two reasons. First, while we identified over 1,700 afterschool youth programs, we believe there are many more yet to be identified. Specifically, the faith based community is underrepresented in our findings, and we believe the many sites that a single agency operates are not captured to the extent that we would like. The addition of new programs to the database, and the collection of survey information from them, will only enrich our understanding of the number and types of programs that are available to families. Secondly, a number of survey questions that attempted to document program capacity had a relatively low response rate, and many of the responses had to be thrown out because the question was not understood. In the future we may decide to focus on a smaller sample of programs to obtain the more difficult yet compelling data.

Lastly, these data do not address the issue of program quality, and maintaining or strengthening quality is as high a priority for the afterschool field as quantity. PASE believes that a key strategy for ensuring program quality is a substantial investment in training, and we refer the reader to our two policy briefs that explore this territory.

As we move forward, PASE intends to build on information gathered in this first State of the Field report. We will reach out to more agencies, especially faith-based organizations, and delve deeper into the range of issues facing afterschool programs and practitioners. More detailed information will be collected to profile the staff who work in afterschool programs, including their educational background, past experience, age, salary, and employment status (full time versus part time). PASE will gather more information about who is funding afterschool programs, and what percentage is typically public versus private monies.

Finally, PASE will link this State of the Field information to advocacy efforts. We may, for example, target specific communities that demonstrate great need to better understand what is working and what is not, and create opportunities for greater collaboration to strengthen local programs. Overall, PASE seeks to share information about our field with the host of stakeholders it will take to improve the state of afterschool programming in New York City.