OFFICE OF EXTENDED LEARNING WEBINAR

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MARKETING+ SALES= INCREASED ATTENDANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

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Common Ideas

- When we think of sustainability for an afterschool program the focus understandably is finding dollars.
- As we know with the current economy that is easier said than done.
- In this webinar I hope to demonstrate that working towards sustainability can be accomplished by leveraging the assets you already have.

How Do You Sustain Your Program?

Common Sustainability practices:

- Write more grants;
- Charge fees;
- Receive money from district/businesses;
- Utilize volunteers;
- Private donations, etc.

While these are just a few of the numerous ideas to sustain an afterschool program they all require one thing: Time

Time

- Coordinating and directing an afterschool program is a full time job as it is.
- Before you can blink you are near the end of your grant cycle and behind in your sustainability planning.
- With the economy in its current state waiting until the end of your grant cycle to think about sustainability puts your program and kids at risk.

Grant Deliverables = Sustainability?

Think of the deliverables of your grant award:

- Mid-Year reports;
- End of Year reports (SAC);
- Kids Care Entry;
- APR/PPICS (21st CCLC)

These are just a few but what do these deliverables have in common?

The answer is: DATA

What does Data have to do with Sustainability?

With data we can prove that:

- Kids are attending your program;
- Grades , attendance , MAP scores, and behavior is improving.

What the data doesn't directly reflect (but your program is doing):

- Keeping kids safe between the hours of 3-6 p.m.;
- Helping working parents by: keeping their kids safe, assisting in their academics, and offering enrichment activities they would not receive otherwise;
- While in your program kids are not getting into trouble with law enforcement.

To Briefly Summarize

A 21st CCLC and SAC grant can:

- Provide a valuable service to a school district or community based organization at a no-cost reimbursement basis;
- Provide a low or no- cost service to working parents;
- Keep kids safe, improve academics, and behavior.

All of the aforementioned things greatly benefit the school district and the community. The best part is you actually have the proof to back it up.

Your Most Valuable Resource

The most valuable asset to your sustainability you see and interact with every day:

Your Kids

Your Kids

Obviously your kids are your clients and in order to sell your program to them you have to find innovative ways to keep them engaged.

What other clients does your afterschool program have?:

- Parents/guardians;
- School administrators;
- School Boards;
- The community (businesses and organizations within).

Phase 1: Marketing to Parents

As a parent if you told me my child would receive affordable homework help, in a safe environment, which is convenient for my work schedule. Not only would I want to know where to sign but I would also be your biggest advocate!

So we have a program offering a great service to both kids and parents so what is the problem?

Parents Problem and Solution

- As you know your 21st CCLC or SAC funding is limited to either three or five years.
- Do the parents of your kids know this?
- If not, they need to. And I know that sending information home with the kids usually results in their parents not receiving it.
- How then can we get the important message across to the parents of your kids?

Marketing to Parents

Ideas for communicating to parents:

- Lights On Afterschool- perfect opportunity as you have the audience at a time that you are showing off your program;
- Family nights- another time where your audience is brought together for a fun learning experience

These experiences bring your target audience together, allowing them to see all of the positives of your program which allows you to market your program.

Taking it a Step Further

While you have your captive audience you could:

- Use your Kids Care Center Data to show data which proves kids in your program are improving their grades, attendance, and behavior.
- Point out that your wonderful and affordable 21st CCLC/SAC program's funding is limited and in order to continue programming they (parents) should let the administration/school board know of the **value** of your program on their kids.
- By following these two easy steps your program is generating buy-in and gaining advocates in the form of parents whose united voice will have an impact on district decisions.

Phase II: School District Buy-In

- We have established the economy is in bad shape and we all know that school districts are on a tighter budget than ever, meaning that every line-item in the budget will be heavily scrutinized.
- In many cases administrators are aware of the afterschool program but are unaware of the great things the program does.
- So for an afterschool program working towards sustainability we have to show them that the program is worth a **long term investment**.

How we show our value:

- We already know afterschool programs provide an invaluable service and there is more than enough national statistics to back that up.
- We also know that administrators and school boards are primarily concerned with the bottom line financially. Which is why it makes perfect sense to have 21st CCLC and SAC funding as all costs are reimbursable so the district is not out money.
- In order to get the attention of school boards and administrators we have to **personalize** the programs success.

How do we show are value? (cont.)

- Whether you are a 21st CCLC or SAC grant you had to complete a needs assessment survey, in which you surveyed and compiled the needs of kids of your community.
- Most applicants pull this data from teachers, parents, community leaders, and administrators, etc.
- Using this survey we now have proof in hand that all of those surveyed felt there was a need for afterschool programming .

Needs Assessment (cont.)

When preparing your needs assessment survey make sure you get input from the key stakeholders who have a part in your programs future sustainability.

These people include:

- Administrators;
- School Board Members;
- Community Leaders/businesses; and;
- Legislators

How do we get personal?

- First both 21st CCLC and SAC programs require data collection in the Kids Care Center.
- This data if regularly and accurately imputed is the proof that your program is successfully impacting your kids academically, socially, and recreationally.
- For the sake of argument I will take three categories of reporting: grades, MAP scores, and attendance.

How do we get personal? (cont.)

- Grades- if your kids grades are improving this reflects positively on teachers, administrators, the state, and most importantly your kid's futures.
- MAP Scores- see grades above, additionally improvement that can be tracked and verified.
- Attendance- I don't think we need statistics to prove that kids that regularly attend school and the afterschool program 30+ days will show improvement in the first two categories.

How do we get personal? (cont.)

- By using just those three measurable areas: grades, MAP scores, and attendance we can demonstrate to the district how the kids in the afterschool program are improving.
- This "hard data" will show the district indisputable evidence that your afterschool program is having a positive impact on the students served.

Show Off your Evaluation

- For 21st CCLC programs , your programs evaluation is a great marketing tool.
- Since your evaluator comes from outside your district or organization you have an objective non-biased marketing tool.
- Your evaluation is much more than a required grant deliverable. When used to its fullest potential it can be **free advertising**.

But what about the soft data?

We all know the soft data statistics . They are the numbers that can't be quantified such as:

- Keeping kids safe between the hours of 3 and 6 pm and are not being referred to the juvenile court during program hours.

How can we turn soft data into hard data that can be used as sustainable leverage?

Turning Soft Data into Leverage

Things we know:

When kids are attending your program they are in a safe, academically enriching environment so for example if your program serves 100 kids 30+days we can prove that those 100 kids are:

- In a safe place on the days they attend the program and;
- Are not being referred to juvenile court on the days they attend the program .

Now combine this "soft data" with our previously mentioned hard data and what do we get?

The Equation and the Outcome

Kids attending program+ Kids Care Center Data+ Soft Data+ Convenience to Working Parent Advocates=

A Program the District should invest in!

Other Ways to Generate Interest

- Invite stakeholders: administrators, school board members, legislators, and community leaders to Lights On Afterschool/family nights your program hosts.
- Now before you say "I already do, they never come." I will counter with the one thing that always attracts a crowd…free food!
- It does fall within the allowable cost to host family nights with food provided (within reason).

So with this invite:

As an administrator, school board member, legislator, parent; or member of the community I will see (at a Lights On Afterschool or family night):

- A personalized quantifiable statistics which address kids specific to the program and district showing academic, attendance, and behavioral gains;
- National and local statistics showing that kids attend the program are in a safe, and affordable program from 3-6 pm;
- I will interact with teachers and kids in the program seeing how excited they are; and as a bonus;
- I will eat for free.

Doing your Due Diligence

- Now remember if you are currently a grantee you have already submitted a sustainability plan that was competitively scored.
- This information that I have provided for you today does not replace that plan but may be used to enhance your original plan for sustainability.
- You should always be on the lookout for additional funds, resources, volunteers, etc.