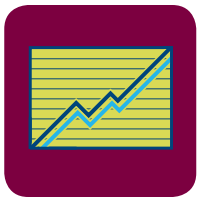
'X' Marks the Spot: USING DATA TO MAP NEEDS AND SUPPLY



Ever wonder why that fast-food chain built another outlet only a couple miles from an existing one?

The map led it there. Almost every big business uses mapping software to crunch data geographically and identify the best places to reach consumers. Mapping can have the same impact on out-of-school time (OST) systems as they look to expand youngsters' access to and participation in high quality programs. It can help determine where services are needed most in a community and identify gaps in programming. It can help refine market research and support advocacy work. Here are some points to consider when mapping needs and supply.

The Wallace Foundation

This is one of **six tip sheets** on using data to improve access to high-quality after-school and summer programs. The tip sheets are meant for staff members of city agencies, mayors' offices, "intermediary" groups, program providers and youth advocates.

Tip #1: Make your project ambitious but feasible.

Narrow your focus so the map is doable, but still produces meaningful results that can affect decision-making. The New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN) worked with the three public agencies funding OST to map the locations[1] of all publicly funded after-school programs in the state. It was the first time that the three agencies collaborated on such a project, which took eight months to complete and mapped 1,500 sites receiving $300 million in annual investments. Because of the map, the agencies could for the first time identify sites that receive funds from more than one entity as well as areas receiving little or no money. "It provided the springboard for the agencies to have a conversation about how money is allocated," says NYSAN's executive director Sanjiv Rao. The project, for instance, prompted New York State's Office of Children and Family Services to rethink the data it uses to target resources and consult with New York City's Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) about the indicators it uses to pinpoint ZIP codes of highest need.

Tip #2: Decide which indicators matter most.

Think about the data that will shed the most light on your target group. If you want to reach at-risk high-schoolers, for instance, you could identify neighborhoods with the highest need by mapping the home addresses of dropout students. This would require cooperation from the school district. (See the tip sheet on data sharing.)[2] To target its most recent round of funding, New York City's DYCD used a need index focused on three groups – youth in poverty, English language learners and youth in state subsidized childcare – to identify 96 ZIP codes[3] with the highest need for OST services. Seventy percent of all funding for elementary and middle-school OST goes to these ZIP codes.[4]

Tip #3: Take inventory.

Survey OST providers to document what's currently available and how equitably it's distributed and to identify sites that are having a significant impact. Workbook C of The Wallace Foundation's Getting Started with Market Research[5] report explains how to conduct utilization research with providers. SurveyMonkey[6] is an inexpensive way to field an online survey. The Forum for Youth Investment's Ready by

21[7] initiative also has a sample program landscape mapping survey that can be customized to meet your needs. Once you understand the geographic distribution of OST programs, you can overlay that information with other data to see how program locations interact with indicators, such as juvenile crime rates.

One big task is ensuring that you collect the same data from all providers, so results can be compared systemwide. Big Thought, a Dallas-based nonprofit that promotes arts education for young people in and out of school, tackled this when taking a census of arts learning opportunities among a range of providers, including libraries and the city's parks and recreation department. Data collected by the city's Office for Cultural Affairs about events at arts and cultural institutions did not easily line up with data from other sources. Big Thought spent two years working with the agency to develop a new tracking system that collects data on arts disciplines, location, audience, duration and cost.

In 2011, Chicago's out-of-school time project created maps to help persuade the Chicago Public Schools to fund a district-wide summer initiative for the first time. It made two maps of a Chicago neighborhood, one showing the supply of after-school programs and the other showing the supply of summer programs. The map of school-year programs looked like a Christmas tree with many multi-colored dots, says Jim Chesire, executive director of Chicago Allies for Youth Success, the partnership that coordinates the OST project. The map of summer programs, meanwhile, had mainly green dots, indicating programs run by the Chicago Parks District, and a few others. Digging further, the OST project discovered that participation in those summer programs was off the charts. Teens attended one community-based program a full 25 hours a week. "Kids were choosing to show up when they had totally unstructured time," Chesire says. "Clearly, there was demand and a major gap in supply." To support their argument that summer programs could counter learning loss – a key objective for the schools – the OST project also presented data that showed after-school participants

Tip #4: Combine mapping information with other data to present a compelling argument.

did better in school than non-participants. School officials agreed to use unspent federal stimulus funds on a new summer initiative, called UpGrade, which offered a range of programs that collectively served 75,000 students K-12. For Chesire, the real coup wasn't the additional slots, but that the school system adopted YPQA, a quality-assessment tool used by the city's other OST partners, to evaluate the quality of its summer programs and connect that to school-day outcomes. It was the first time the Chicago Public Schools used the tool, and Chesire hopes the momentum continues. (See the tip sheet on using data to evaluate quality.[8])

Tip #5: Use maps to guide market research.

Mapping needs and supply can raise as many questions as it answers. When the city of Providence, R.I., mapped OST services in 2003, it discovered many programs, but huge disparities between neighborhoods in availability and affordability. Further scans of the data found that few programs targeted middle-school students. The findings triggered a survey of middle-schoolers and their parents, which revealed that many would be interested in safe, high-quality after-school programs if they were available. The combination of data on supply, need and consumer preferences laid the foundation for AfterZone, a citywide OST initiative that now serves 49 percent of middle-schoolers in the city.

Tip #6: Share your findings.

Many people find it easier to process data by looking at something bold and colorful than at rows on an Excel spreadsheet. Pick one or two maps that tell the most compelling story, and use them when advocating with key groups, such as policymakers, funders and the public. Louisville's city government, school district and United Way included maps in their 2010 YouthPrint[9] report, which outlines their OST system-building efforts and future plans. The report was given to all of Louisville's city council members to advocate for more funding. (See the tip sheet on using data in advocacy efforts.[10])

Tip #7: Commit to an ongoing needs assessment.

Neighborhood demographics shift. Families' priorities change. Young people develop new interests. Take the pulse of your community regularly to ensure that OST programs are still meeting its needs. San Francisco's Department for Children, Youth & Their Families is required to conduct a citywide needs assessment for children's services every three years and produce a funding strategy based on the results. Sources of information for the 2011 assessment[11] included census and population data, city databases, surveys with providers, focus groups with parents and interviews with city leaders.

Further Reading

Assessing Local Afterschool Resources and Needs, National League of Cities, 2003
http://www.nlc.org/find-city-solutions/iyef/afterschool/afterschool-tools--resources

Building a System of Opportunities for Creative Learning, Big Thought, 2009
http://www.bigthought.org/portals/bt/2yearreport.pdf

Collecting and Using Information to Strengthen Citywide Out-of-School Time Systems, National League of Cities, 2011
http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/collecting-and-using-data/Documents/collecting-and-using-information-to-strengthen-citywide-ost-systems.pdf

Equity of Opportunity: Creative Learning Census, Big Thought, 2009
http://www.bigthought.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=FXWfQ7oDVyA=&tabid=267

Getting Started with Market Research for Out-of-School Time Planning: A Resource Guide for Communities, The Wallace Foundation, 2007
http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/collecting-and-using-data/Pages/Market-Research-for-Out-of-School-Time-Planning-Resource-Guide.aspx

Municipal Leadership for Afterschool: Citywide Approaches Spreading Across the Country, National League of Cities, 2011
http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/coordinating-after-school-resources/Documents/Municipal-Leadership-for-Afterschool.pdf

Ready by 21 Guide to Program Landscape Mapping, The Forum for Youth Investment, 2008
http://forumfyi.org/files/Ready%20by%2021%20Guide%20to%20Program%20Landscape%20Mapping.pdf

Endnotes

[1] http://batchgeo.com/map/7864a679cc4a85b36f38168380bbe59f

[2] http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/collecting-and-using-data/Documents/Fair-Share-Data-Sharing-Strategies-that-Work.pdf

[3] http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/collecting-and-using-data/Documents/Supply-Needs-96-Zip-Codes-Map.pdf

[4] http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/collecting-and-using-data/Documents/Supply-Needs-Program-Locations-Map.pdf

[5] http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/collecting-and-using-data/Documents/Workbook-C-Conducting-Utilization-Research.pdf

[6] www.surveymonkey.com

[7] http://www.readyby21.org/resources/program-landscape-mapping-packet

[8] http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/collecting-and-using-data/Documents/From-Good-to-Great-Using-Data-to-Assess-and-improve-quality.pdf

[9] http://www.louisvilleky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/8F9668AC-FB05-40B5-8E68-F0ADF5915AD0/0/YouthPrintreportfinal.pdf

[10] http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/collecting-and-using-data/Documents/All-in-Favor-Using-Data-in-Advocacy-Work.pdf

[11] http://www.dcyf.org/Content.aspx?id=4990

Other Tip Sheets in the Series:

Introduction • All in Favor: Using Data in Advocacy Work • From Good to Great: Using Data to Assess and Improve Quality • Made to Measure: Using Data to Improve Accountability • Fair Share: Data-Sharing Strategies That Work

For further reading, please visit: www.wallacefoundation.org

The Wallace Foundation is a national philanthropy that seeks to improve education and enrichment for disadvantaged children. The foundation has an unusual approach: funding projects to test innovative ideas for solving important social problems, conducting research to find out what works and what doesn't and to fill key knowledge gaps – and then communicating the results to help others.

Wallace has five major initiatives under way:

- School leadership: Strengthening education leadership to improve student achievement.
- After-school: Helping selected cities make good out-of-school time programs available to many more children.
- Audience development for the arts: Making the arts a part of many more people's lives by working with arts organizations to broaden, deepen and diversify audiences.
- Arts education: Expanding arts learning opportunities for children and teens.
- Summer and expanded learning time: Giving children more hours to devote to learning.

Wallace's work in after-school programming

Typically in the world of after-school programming, the many varied programs for youngsters and the government agencies and private organizations that fund them operate in isolation from one another. In 2003, Wallace began working in five cities to help coordinate the after-school workings of these institutions, in the hope this would lead to systems supporting better programs and increased access to them citywide. A 2010 RAND Corporation report that studied the initiative found the cities' efforts had provided "a proof of principle" that after-school systems hold promise. Wallace today is funding after-school system efforts in nine additional cities, and in a separate Chicago initiative, Wallace is trying to help after-school providers and funders overcome a little-recognized barrier to offering more and better services – weak financial management.

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