

California's After School Programs: Proposition 49

What is Prop. 49?

In 2002, California voters passed a ballot initiative called Proposition 49, which was sponsored by now-Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to increase the state's investment in after school programming. Unlike California's current after school program, which only funds a portion of the programs that apply, As it was written, Prop. 49 provides funding to allow *every* public elementary and middle school in California to access state funds for after school programs.

When implemented, Prop. 49 will more than triple state funding for after school programs, from its current \$121 million to \$550 million. The new funds will be available to more than 5,000 elementary and middle schools that do not currently receive state after school dollars.

When will Prop. 49 take effect?

Although voters approved it in 2002, Prop. 49 will not be triggered until state general fund spending increases to a certain point.¹ According to the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), Prop. 49 could be triggered some time between 2006-07 and 2007-08, although there is currently some debate on how to interpret the trigger language, which could impact when the dollars are released.

What will be the requirements for using Prop. 49 funds?

Prop. 49 funds will expand the state's existing After School Education and Safety (ASES) program. In order to tap into Prop. 49 funds, schools will need to follow the ASES funding and program requirements.

Key program requirements:

- All students are eligible to participate in a program and all programs are voluntary.
- Programs must operate for at least 15 hours per week, and can stay open either 3 hours a day or until 6 p.m.

- Elementary school programs are encouraged to enroll students 5 days a week, while programs that serve students in middle school or junior high school are asked to enroll students for a minimum of 9 hours a week and 3 days a week.
- Programs can operate during vacation periods, intersessions and summer breaks.
- Staff who supervise students directly are required to meet the school districts' minimum qualifications for an instructional aide.
- The student-to-staff ratio must not exceed 20-to-1.
- Programs are not required to, but can, charge family fees.

Key funding requirements:

- Programs must secure 50% of their grant amount in cash or in in-kind matching funds.
- Programs are reimbursed \$5 per child per day for after school and \$3.33 per child per day for before school programming.
- The universal grant amounts every school is entitled to under Prop. 49 are lower than the maximum grant amounts currently available under the ASES program, as indicated in the table below. Existing ASES programs with grant amounts larger than the new Prop. 49 grant maximums will be "grandfathered" into the program, which means that their existing grant levels will be guaranteed once Prop. 49 is triggered.

	Existing ASES Grant Caps per Site *	Prop. 49's Universal Grant per Site
Elementary School	\$75,000	\$50,000
Middle School	\$100,000	\$75,000

*Note: Large schools are eligible for higher grant amounts.

Who will be eligible for Prop. 49 funds?

School districts, county offices of education, and cities or counties partnering with a school district or county office of education will be eligible for Prop. 49 funds. Nonprofit organizations may apply in partnership with a school district or county office of education, but cannot serve as the fiscal agent. Programs can be located at schools or approved alternate locations that are as accessible as the schools the program participants attend.

How will Prop. 49 funds be awarded?

Applicants must apply to the California Department of Education (CDE) for Prop. 49 funds. CDE will review applications and award grants through the following priority structure:

- *Priority 1:* Current ASES grantees will maintain their current status and the funding level they received in FY2003-04.
- *Priority 2:* "Universal" grants of up to \$50,000 for all elementary schools and up to \$75,000 for all middle schools in the state.
- *Priority 3:* Additional discretionary funding to serve more children for new grantees in which more than 50% of the students participate in the free and reduced-price meal program. This additional funding could be used to increase the grant to its maximum amount, to make a large school adjustment, or to offer a before school or supplemental component.

- *Priority 4:* Once all qualified applicants have received funds, the fourth priority will be for additional funding for all other schools for similar purposes, as outlined in Priority 3.

The goal of Prop. 49 is to use this increased funding to provide after school funds to every elementary and middle school across the state. In the event Prop. 49 does not provide enough funds to award grants to every school, schools that serve students from predominantly low-income communities will have priority.

How will Prop. 49 affect existing ASES grantees?

As stated above, existing ASES grantees will be the first priority in receiving Prop. 49 funds, and those grantees will maintain their funding level, even if the award amounts are higher than the new "universal" grant maximums.

Endnotes

¹ Proposition 49 will be triggered when state general fund spending (not including spending guaranteed for education under Proposition 98) is at least \$1.5 billion more than the highest level of non-Proposition 98-guaranteed state general fund spending between 2000-01 and 2003-04.

Children Now's Perspective:

Prop. 49, when implemented, will more than triple state funding for after school programs, from its current \$121 million to \$550 million. As one of California voters' largest commitment of funding to children, Proposition 49 is an important bellwether. If Prop. 49 fails to roll out successfully due to limited demand for dollars or through an inability to show positive student outcomes, it will be a setback not only for after school in California, but for the entire children's policy agenda.

With the implementation of Prop 49 approaching, Children Now aims to identify and address inequities and inefficiencies in the state's current after school program before the new funds enter the system. Some of the issues we have identified include:

- To the extent that the existing ASES program structure may already disadvantage certain schools or communities, the additional Prop. 49 funds have the potential to exacerbate inequities in after school funding across the state.
- The small size of Prop 49's universal grants, compared to existing grant maximums, may deter some communities from applying for grants and may impinge on the quality of services new grantees can deliver.
- Because Prop. 49 aims to increase funds so every school can receive a grant, obstacles that some existing programs already face may intensify, such as securing adequate matching resources; recruiting and retaining an appropriate and prepared workforce; and financing large operational costs on the state's attendance-based, quarterly payment system.

For more details on the current distribution of ASES grants and some of the challenges ASES grantees face, please see our report *The Financing of California's After School Programs: Preparing for Implementation of Proposition 49* on our website at www.childrennow.org.