

Transcript of the Afterschool Investments Audio Conference

Professional Development: Creating a Credential for a School-Age Workforce

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Speakers

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Andrew Williams - Policy Director, Child Care Bureau
Vilma Williams - Director of Training Services, Council for Professional Recognition
Carole Weisberg - Coordinator of Early Childhood and Youth Programs, Charter Oak State College
Harry Kujath – Director, Missouri State Network

Presentation

Operator

Welcome to today's conference call titled Professional Development: Creating a Credential for a School-Age Workforce. At this time all participants are in a listen-only mode. Later we will conduct a question-and answer session. I would now like to turn the call over to Bob LaVallee of the Afterschool Investments Project. Mr. LaVallee you may begin.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

Thank you Doug. Good afternoon everyone. My name is Bob LaVallee. I am the Deputy Project Director of the Afterschool Investments Project and I want to thank you for joining us for our audio conference entitled Professional Development: Creating a Credential for a School-Age Workforce. I would like to now introduce Andrew Williams, the Policy Director of the Child Care Bureau for a few words of welcome.

Andrew Williams - Child Care Bureau - Policy Director

Thanks Bob. On behalf of the Child Care Bureau I would like to welcome everyone to today's audio conference. Participants invited to call in today were State Child Care Administrators, other state staffs who work on school age care issues, key partners including representatives of statewide afterschool networks and administration of the children and family federal regional office child care managers and staff, as well as other child care technical assistance partners.

The Afterschool Investments Project, which is organizing and facilitating today's call, is part of the Child Care Bureau technical assistance network. The project helps state child care officials and their partners address the unique needs of school-aged children in program, and for the last five years the project has developed a variety of written materials, created state profiles and provided state specific TA in response to request. This technical assistance has helped states in a range of areas including the development of professional development systems for afterschool providers and staff. And as one component of their professional development system, a number of states have developed a credential for school-age workers.

On today's call we'll learn more about these credentials including how they were developed and are being implemented. I would like to thank all of today's presenters for sharing their experiences with us and I would like to now turn the call back over to Bob.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

Thank you Andrew, and while I'm giving thanks I would like to thank Soumya Bhat of the Afterschool Investments Project whose skills and efforts make these audio conferences possible. I would like to briefly introduce our guest speakers who you will be hearing from shortly. We have with us Vilma Williams who is the director of training services at the Council for Professional Recognition in Washington DC. Carole Weisberg who is the Coordinator of Early Childhood and Youth Programs at Charter Oak State College in Connecticut and Harry Kujath who is the director of the Missouri Afterschool Network. I also want to extend an invitation for you to visit our project Web site, the URL is listed on your invitation materials. We'll be posting the transcript of today's presentation as well as materials from the event also will be...and there will be an evaluation form, which we'll hope you'll fill out. Your feedback is very important to us.

I would like to take a few moments to set the context, talking about professional development and credentialing and then we are going to turn it over to our speakers. So I'll try to keep it brief. I think most people would agree that Afterschool quality is driven largely by the quality of staff and when we think about developing staff we are really talking about professional development. And, as a side note here, when I'm talking about school age I'm referring to ages five through thirteen, and although I understand people often use Afterschool in a broader context up to older youth, but this is directed towards the 5 to 13 age group.

Our research Afterschool Investments have shown that ideally professional development systems, I'm talking about systems here, not just professional development, the systems have several qualities. The efforts should follow a sequence. The efforts count towards a requirement or a credential or a degree and it's not necessarily just college credits, but one of those things. And ultimately that it works towards professionalizing the field and helping afterschool workers get the recognition they so badly deserve.

But there are challenges in building professional development systems for afterschool that are unique to afterschool itself. The nature of afterschool, the afterschool workforce the job is that as we know it's often part time employment with low wages and high turnover. There is a lack of identity in afterschool of...of afterschool work as profession. I think many of the participants, many of the workers see their work in afterschool programs as temporary or supplemental work in addition to some other work they are doing as opposed to their career. I think there is also a lack of identity of afterschool as a field.

Afterschool is a very, you know, the expression that I mentioned before afterschool is a very big tent, it can involve anything from strict academics to athletics and physical fitness to cultural enrichment. All these things qualify as afterschool but they...the variety makes it difficult to put your arms around it as one thing.

And also people who work in afterschool have a wide variety of prior experience in educational backgrounds and you'll see in the same program folks who are at entry level, who are afterschool workers to long-term professionals. In addition they may have an educational background as arts educators or child development specialists or youth advocates or social workers all which are valid routes to running, working at afterschool programs, but again variety.

And you'll see afterschool workers have very different professional development goals. Some will want a single training. Some will want to work towards a degree. This shows that there is a need for a variety of approaches to professional development. Now, the early care in education field has their child development associates, the CDA credential. Afterschool doesn't have national credential although there are 11 states that have a school age care or youth worker credential or a certificate or associate degree. What we find though is, you know, when we are talking about a credentialing program we are talking about something that builds off of core competencies, there is an agreement on what core competencies are, and then it outlines the types of training, the number of hours or whatever demonstrations of abilities are required for certification.

Credentialing is really important but it needs to be supported by other aspects of full professional development System. So, things like the actual training themselves, access to those training, outreach to where they are happening, you know, a governance system that monitors and set standards for all of these things. So, all these things have to come together to create a proper professional development system.

But in light of all this we have invited three speakers who have been working on creating school age youth for credentials to share their experiences. I'm really delighted to bring them. Did Vilma have an opportunity to join us yet?

Vilma M. Williams - Council for Professional Recognition - Director of Training Services

Yes I'm here.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

Hi Vilma how are you?

Vilma M. Williams - Council for Professional Recognition - Director of Training Services

I'm fine, thank you very much.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

Okay. Well, I also wanted to introduce Vilma Williams. In her current position she is the Director of Training at the Council for Professional Recognition. Ms. Williams has been involved with development and implementation of Military School-Age Credential and conducts training for Military School-Age representatives in the United States and overseas. Vilma I'm turning it over to you.

Vilma M. Williams - Council for Professional Recognition - Director of Training Services

Thank you very much. Good afternoon everyone. I'm very happy to be able to share information about the Military School-Age Credentialing program. The Military School-Age Credentialing program is an effort of the military. Originally it started with United States Army and their need to implement assistance that could assess the performance of staff working with children of a school age in the military. So, this credential began as an effort to make sure that the candidates that apply for this credential has all of the qualities and need all the requirements to be able to obtain these credentials.

At the present time the credential is awarded in all of the military bases in the United States and overseas including Europe and Korea and Japan also. The military School-Age consist of an evaluation system that includes the candidate who is the person who is signing for this credential and also a team and the team consist of a parent-community representative and advisor who will

represent this school-age feel and representatives of the military who will complete the team and this representative will meet with all of them, each of these persons including the candidate, the parent-community representative and the advisor collect information that becomes evidence and they will meet in a local assessment team meeting to discuss the performance of the candidates in 13 functional areas.

This Military School-Age Credential took some of the model of the CDA credential and they all, you know, what we had before the local assessment team and they new credential as everyone knows it now, and combine the best of both models to create this credential.

In the development of the search in functional areas, the standards, so that the candidates can be evaluated in the standard, there were many people that were involved in one of the biggest involvement with _____ in writing the standard.

The consult for professional recognition administers this military college credential and that includes the selection and the preparation of the professional, whole intern will be complete in the assessment of this candidate. The military has pledged a person that has this position as a representative is the person that is trained and selected in...whose work is monitored by the council and who completes this team.

In the team, in the latest file of this assessment the team meets and they discuss the performance of the candidate, the certain functional area they vote, they have equal votes and at the end they will consider voting that the candidate is reserved to have this credential or the candidate needs more training. At this time we...the military has awarded about 2400 college credential in the military and we have...their activity is increasing, if...at some point if, you know, there is more activity and at some point some of the year it's less activity, we have trained lots of representative throughout the past three years and we plan on doing a training pretty soon in Korea, to train more military college representative.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

Thank you Vilma. Vilma I have a question.

Vilma M. Williams - Council for Professional Recognition - Director of Training Services

Sure.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

Are there particular subject areas that the people who are trying to get credentialed find most challenging to master in order to get the credential?

Vilma M. Williams - Council for Professional Recognition - Director of Training Services

Well, the candidate need to be trained, need to have education on all 13 functional areas which include safe, healthy out of the school environment, physical communication. However, you know, and all of this functional areas on and on, however because it's a military college credential they have developed their own modules to train them. So their training is very comprehensive and it covers all of this area, but the credential has a specific area like the out of the school environment where the candidate has to learn how to use the space and relationship materials and routine center of resources so that they can construct an environment that is secure and enjoyable for the children of the school age. Everything that they have to do have to be geared towards that age, and, you know, they also have to learn to be good managers over their program and use their resources for an effective operation. So there are some specific things that you

actually don't get in a school per se that they have to be provided by special training. Now, the military happens to have that special training for them. And so, when I think about other safe-creating credentials it's not just a credential but a training that goes along with a credential that also needs to be structured to meet the needs of the candidate who wants to obtain the knowledge.

The key for this is that it's not just the knowledge that the candidate must have but also the...how this knowledge is connected into the practice and I believe that when the candidates understand and have internalized that, have managed that, you know, that is when they are ready for a credential.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

Is this the same credential across all four branches of the military or is it for one specific branch?

Vilma M. Williams - Council for Professional Recognition - Director of Training Services

Well, it is...it begun with the army but the army, especially overseas, the army embraces the other branches of the military, so they decided...four years ago they decided to change the name, it used to be the army's college credential, they decided to change it to the military's college credential because of that, because it is not any long its not just the army credential any more, it is for all the branches.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

I see where there any issues in getting the other branches to also embrace or accept this standard the reason I am asking is I am thinking about the issues about getting localities to share some more standards a parallel to the state's experience.

Vilma M. Williams - Council for Professional Recognition - Director of Training Services

The only challenge is probably that they had have to do with time and of course money you know, money yeah they have to do with that and specifically they have to do with the council representative, the military school age representative excuse me that person that has to complete the meeting because this is why the facilitators have to bring everyone together on this personal experience to combat this final assessment so and when I think about money it was because the law for the army say that the receiving installation is the one that would pay for all the expenses of this school age representative. So they have to work arrangements among the branches to be able to have and have added enough money or to foresee how much they were going to need to be able to cover the expenses of that representative. Now in some places it was much more challenge than in other places because we are talking about basis in...in Korea, in Japan you know, with the representatives are not that many in numbers and when we have representatives they actually cannot do this assessment because represent the conflict of interest because they cannot do the same people that they train.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

I see right.

Vilma M. Williams - Council for Professional Recognition - Director of Training Services

They have to keep some you know, some objectivity so that is that... that was the challenge really, but as far as the standard, no the standards were pretty much...actually we found that the standards brought a lot of uniformity in their program because a lot of the program should even meet the standards that would require you know, it seems that the candidate needs to collect for a sample. The documentation that they need to collect and things like that if they didn't have it,

they needed to be well up then so that created a standard within the programs in the different branches that brought some uniformity for them.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

Thank you very much Vilma, that's really helpful. I'd like to now turn to introduce Carole Weisberg, Carole Weisberg is the Coordinator of Early Childhood and Youth Program at Charter Oak State College in Connecticut and she has worked closely with Charter Oak State College to develop course work for their credential in after school education. Welcome Carole.

Carole Weisberg - Charter Oak State College- Coordinator of Early Childhood and Youth Program

Thank you Robert and thank you for having me on today's conference call. I am really happy to hear about the military credential and that how strong it's still going because I believe it was the basis for a lot of the state credentials that we have now. And certainly was the case in New York when I was living there and part of the New York State Credential Development and then now here in Connecticut. And it plays a part in the history of how the Charter Oak State College Credential in After School education came about. In 2000, Connecticut was part of a pilot working with the council for professional recognition to implement a similar model of the credential for school age care providers here and they actually had 11 people go through that pilot, and obtain a Connecticut school age care credential. But, for one reason or another, funding went away, things changed and that particular model of school age credential here in Connecticut did not continue. So when I became part of the picture here along with others, I was working at the Connecticut after school network on professional development and part of our mandate was to create professional development opportunities including college courses for school age care providers for professionalizing the field here in Connecticut and out of the woodwork came, these folks who had school age care credentials but no place to renew it and keep that current. So that got us talking about creating another credential for after school providers here in Connecticut. And we partnered with Connecticut Charters-A-Course. So I was...my ears were perking up when you talked about being part of those systems of professional development and how that works out and plays out here in Connecticut. Because we have lots of support for the CDA and for early childhood education, the folks who work in after school programs didn't have the same kinds of opportunities for course work or specific training that you could find for early childhood and Connecticut Charters-A-Course was eager to partner with us to help that continuity of professional development for all folks who work with children and child care. So they put us together with Charter Oak state college and that's how the credential began and we made a conscious decision to create a credential that was entirely credit based and so that it would become part of a career path. The other challenge here in Connecticut was on the licensing of programs and people, the directors were finding it very difficult to have the course work that their head teachers had count towards head teacher certification in Connecticut. In Connecticut, you need at the minimum a CDA and 12 credits in your field either early childhood education or school age care and school age care was hard to find because I think one community college had a class that was introduction to school age care. There was not much coursework available in school age care. So, that's how we came to offer this credential through college credit bearing courses. We looked at the competency based areas based on the CDA competency areas and school age credential, and on best practices in school age care. What were quality indicators for the staff of those school age programs and that's where we started so we created a series of four courses and a practicum for this credential is a combination of experience and education. The practicum encompasses the experience piece. So our courses are an introduction to after school care and education and that covers best practices NAA quality standards as well as breadth of competency areas for working with children, including health and safety and child, development is

incorporated throughout every course. Indoor and outdoor environments, social emotional development, cognitive development is also covered. And then the second course is Child and Adolescent Development and it's, you know, it is a course in adolescent development. This course has actually been approved by the state for teacher certification at the bachelor's level. So we were quite happy about that. There is a program environment and curriculum development course as well as a fourth course on supervision and leadership in after school education. The practicum is kind of the capstone of the Credential. Throughout each course, students prepare a professional development resource file and those are separate assignments and observations and research that they select throughout every course and in the practicum, they put all of these professional resource materials together to be evaluated. There is one on one with an instructor and they also have an on the job evaluation from the supervisor. We don't actually go out and observe the candidate but the candidate must have an observation based on the competencies and we provide a detailed form for that. Also when we created this credential we were aware of how close we were to other states and if this is a college credit based credential how would we incorporate other state's school age care credentials? We felt that someone who came from another state with school age credential would meet at least two of the courses that we would acknowledge that they have had the training. That would be

introduction to school care and education and program environment and curriculum development. So they would only need six additional credits if they were coming from another state for the school age credential and could fold into this credential by taking the other two courses and the practicum. If someone wanted to get this credential and had no experience and wanted to go into school age care, then we would have a three-credit practicum at the end so they would gain the experience and have a mentor working with them.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

I was going to remind folks that the course description that Carole was talking about are available on our Web site and I believe in the course descriptions is a link to download the syllabus. So that might be very helpful information. But I want to ask you a question Carole.

Carole Weisberg - Charter Oak State College- Coordinator of Early Childhood and Youth Program

Sure.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

You had the benefit of friendly relationship with Connecticut Charter of course. What advice would you give to people who want to join in the existing system but don't yet have that kind of relationship?

Carole Weisberg - Charter Oak State College- Coordinator of Early Childhood and Youth Program

I must say, you know, relationship building is extremely important. We not only worked together with Connecticut Charts-A-Course, and had their support and valuable input on the development of the credential. But we also had invited to the table the State Department of Education and they were included in all the minutes of the meetings and the discussions on the competencies and the experience requirement. Included, as well, was the Connecticut Department of Public Health. You know, we welcomed their inclusion because they are the folks that license childcare in

Connecticut and I think that's critical to involve not only the practitioners, very important, they were at the table and as well as to involve the folks who are going to be looking over your shoulder and putting their stamp of approval on this down the way because our big fear was the Department of Public Health was not going to accept the courses. But someone would have to submit them once they took the course and so however they were at the table through the whole development of the credential, each of the courses and knew what it was going to look like so that they were very comfortable that yes this did meet state requirements, that these courses are applicable really for someone working in an after school program. So I would say take the time to build the relationships, take the time.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

So it's important to get the stakeholders, all stakeholders involved early?

Carole Weisberg - Charter Oak State College - Coordinator of Early Childhood and Youth Program

Yes and I wanted to expand that it's not just the one body, but all folks that may want to have the say on how your credential is going to play out if you can.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

Okay. Thanks very much Carole, that's very interesting.

Carole Weisberg - Charter Oak State College - Coordinator of Early Childhood and Youth Program

I have one last thing to say.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

Oh absolutely.

Carole Weisberg - Charter Oak State College - Coordinator of Early Childhood and Youth Program

Out of the credential we have taken these four courses and they are now the basis of a concentration for after school providers and youth care specialist to be able to get a bachelors degree with concentration in child and youth development.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

Have you seen a number of people taking --?

Carole Weisberg - Charter Oak State College - Coordinator of Early Childhood and Youth Program

I have seen people with interest. We are getting lot of phone calls.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

It's great. That was great. Very well, I would like to now welcome Harry Kujath, my friend Harry Kujath who is the Director of Missouri Afterschool Network. His 30 years of service to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and part of his work there was developing and administering training to Afterschool programs in public schools state wide. Welcome Harry.

Harry Kujath - Missouri Afterschool State Network - Director

Welcome, glad to be here. I am going to start it very simply because I need kind of a basic approach about coming up with a credential. Ever since school started there has always been changes involved in education and in the process of youth development and activities and in the last few centuries, we began to take a look at things that go on beyond school and then you get to the point then to in the more recent time you know, that afterschool is a term that is used by a lot of individuals, by a lot of stakeholders, about how important that time is out of school and so afterschool is a big issue here in Missouri and it really encompasses both before and afterschool activities. But we try to use the one term afterschool to include all of the activities that take place outside of the classroom setting, and the big thing, once those things become very prominent and brought out to the attention of everybody it's important for parents to realize that they are going to be providing their children time that these entities to be there for certain number of hours when they are not in the school and the parents are not available for taking care of them. So they want to be sure that they are going to be in a structured environment one that is safe, one that is going to promote youth development activities and one that is going to be administered and run by individuals who have some understanding and some experience and some knowledge in the areas of youth development and activities for kids both young and old. When we talk about afterschool it's K to 12. So we have the kindergarten students and we go all way up to the high school age. So we have a lot of age variances in our afterschool program. So the credential is one way for individuals who are in the field working in the area of afterschool and who have some experiences, but then need to have a little bit more in-depth training and a more in-depth learning experiences to really broaden their scope and to make them more expertise in the areas of the specific things that are involved with the youth and the ages of the youth that they are working with. So it's rather an important idea that...and this came about. One of the things here in Missouri is that we have a lot of statewide organizations. We have the Missouri Afterschool Network, which I am involved with. We have the Missouri School Age Community Coalition, which has been around for many years and provides a lot of personalized professional development activities for afterschool programs. I also was the president of that organization in the last couple of years. So I was involved in this whole process of the credential with not only with the network, but also with the most active Missouri School Age Community Coalition Organization. So as most Afterschool idea basically come up with a credential and they got a grant from AT&T which they were involved in doing training and professional development across the state and AT&T got them involved in doing some specific training for individuals who worked in the AT&T entities around our state. And through that grant they also received money on the way of developing a credential that could be used on all or for all afterschool programs. So it was through the MOSAC and they worked with AT&T that provided the funds and then began the work on this credential and it's really a commitment by those in the field, individuals who want to vote through the credential process and Missouri had that for at least 480 hours of that school activities in the youth and working with youth before they could even be accepted. We have an interviewing process where as individuals who go out in and not only assess the qualities and standards, their capabilities of where they are and look at their programs interactivities, but also get a commitment from those people that they really and truly want to follow through with all of this network that's going to be necessary for the Missouri youth decrease credential. And once that has been established and so on then the work actually begins in the areas that they are credentialing and it's one that takes around a lot of activities. So the one thing that every individual must go through is maintaining our professional portfolio, and within this professional portfolio is experiences that they have gone to all the classes, they obtained this specific training and times that they have said, the number of hours that they have been working in afterschool, but it goes little bit even beyond that. It has questionnaires that go out to parents of the children that they serve, and it goes across surveys and questionnaires to the administrators of their programs. So it's a more in-depth study of an individual and not just pointblank classroom or

course work, it involves the actual hands on where the rubber meets the road activities for these individuals and afterschool to be involved the credentialing experience and it's a much broad base and that it covers a lot of different activities and a lot of different things that goes on in a person who is trying to develop and receive a credential. So it was really more down to the fact that we knew that there was a need to demonstrate the professional status of afterschool staff, people who work with youth and the children and youth needed to have some recognition for what they did and how they did it. For a long time afterschool activities were just called baby-sitting and sitting in for parents until they get off from work those types of things. But now research has proved that the importance of afterschool goes far beyond that and benefits are lifelong lasting things that can happen for youth if they are in a good quality structured environment that allows the youth develop on their own status and their own nature as you have learned and developed in many different ways. So it's important that credential, you know, was developed and is in place. You got to implement it basically in St. Louis in Kansas City because that's where the AT&T entities were and that helped us to start it in the base of the two community college systems, one in St. Louis, one in Kansas City. And also the for instance Child Development Center in Kansas City was a huge provider and implementer for credential so we have this in place now where it works and the idea was that once it was developed, it was developed in such a way that it can be duplicated and it can be done by other entities so when we have the credential development in St. Louis and Kansas City, we pretty well had already developed a model that can be duplicated in other parts of the state if they so choose and can follow our standards and follow our credential requirements. So it's a system that allows energies from across the state to be involved in this activity and not just those who are in our two major or large urban areas. So the credential itself is really as they say a status for youth development practitioners. It's a way of highlighting the training they have already gone through. It highlights the experiences that they have gone through a highlights the college and the course work that they have gone through and other additional trainings that they have gone through but it really brings out the fact that the after school professionals or individuals who are really worthy of that term professional based upon the activities and the things that they have gone through. Such very, you know, structured and in such way that builds on what people know and where they need to go to be a really a professional and a quality provider in the State of Missouri.

From the credential, basically we are doing a lot of other activities like I said there is no one energy, there is everything. We had core competencies for youth development people brought that was put together by three agencies. One was the after school network, another was the Kansas after school network and the others were the opportunities in a professional education network which is an initiative here in Missouri. We are able to get together and really work diligently on coming up with core competencies or by state core competencies was for youth development people and this is really the basis for the professionalism of youth development individuals and it certainly ties right into the credential activities and so on. They go hand in hand and was very instrumental in the development of that so that the convention and the aspects could even be highlighted more and provide services to those individuals who are not yet ready for convention but provides them all the necessary competency and skills that they would need to have in order to be ready to go into credential aspect. So it was really a joint effort between Missouri and Kansas City if that's done. And then from there, the network has developed for all these standards, for all afterschool programs. We don't mandate these, we usually do not maintain the interstate agency. There are quality standards that are based upon after school programs that can be reached at any level whether it be rural or suburban or urban whether it be a large or big, whether they have one staff or, you know, 50 staff. It's a standard that all after school programs can take a look at and once again it plays very well into the core competencies in a credential aspect and then from that we developed a self assessment tool which is really the

key for after school programs in the State of Missouri and that they can take this tool and they read it, they assess themselves and then based upon where they see themselves is where they begin the work on the competencies, the skills necessary to become a quality provider to our youth in the State of Missouri. So we have a lot of entities that get involved in so many aspects but they all blend together very well. One is built upon the other and it's kind of hard to see where one ends and where the other one stops because there is such a tremendous effort to coordinate the activities of all of our organizations and now we are working with Kansas in the areas of core competencies and we also work with Kansas in the areas of developing over now. We are working on at the youth development directors credential which is taking individuals who have the youth development credential and either are working on or already in the administration levels of our after school programs, the youth development activities. So it takes them a step above where they would be with the youth development credential and get some more into the components whether in the administrator, what you have to be dealing with, so that's a little bit far and above some of the competencies and skills necessary for those that deal with the youth in hands on basis but it's also another energy that requires a little bit more additional work and commitment on the work of the youth development and professionals. So, we have all these activities that are going on, and they all kind of blend together but really the major start of this whole activity was to credentialing done by MOSAC, and that has been, one of the driving forces for trying to bring in the quality issues for professionals around our state, and this is only ended by saying, you can go to the two web sites, one is the from Missouri School Age Community Coalition web site which is simply MOSAC2.org, and then the other one is the networks website which is masn.org. Those two web sites will provide a lot of information for you and you can get questions answered in both of the web sites as well, but that's another good way of going to learn more about what's happening here in Missouri. And I leave this there.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

I want to ask you a question, Harry, when you were getting to the...when your coalition was trying to get to agreement on the elements of, the different pieces of the credential, how did you address the big issue, the idea those, so many different ideas of after school? Were there any particular sticking points?

Harry Kujath - Missouri Afterschool State Network - Director

Well, I mean the real sticking point is that what we all can, you know, agree upon and it's kind of difficult when you have, you know, all kinds of different terms that sort out around our state, our school time, extra running opportunities, and you know, numbers and numbers of different things. We as a network basically try to zero in on one term that kind of includes everything. We call that afterschool because it happens after the school hours and that's from the time to school in to the time the school begins so we include before school activities as well as after school activities. We include the evening sessions, we include weekend sessions and based up on that, it was a little easy for people to buy into and not worry so much about what they have been using or giving up. They can actually still use the same terms, are there running out of school time, that's fine, but in a much broader nature when we talk about after school, so that was a little bit of a concern for us, but one of the major things that we did at the very beginning was to see what other states were doing, you know, what was their definition, what were their credentialing aspects if they had any, what was their thoughts about credentialing if they have any. So, we really went out first and tried to seek what was going on in all the other states and then we were able to take all that information and really kind of convince or summarize it for our evaluations and services here.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

I see, so there was a good amount of listening in conversation first.

Harry Kujath - Missouri Afterschool State Network - Director

Oh, absolutely. Yes.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

Great, great. Well, thanks very much, Harry. And that's absolutely great. What I would like to do now is open up our question-and-answer period. Doug, can you help out with this?

Operator

Yes, I can. Ladies and gentleman, at this time we will be conducting a question-and-answer session. If you would like to ask a question you may press “*1” on your telephone keypad. A confirmation tone will indicate your line is in the question queue. You may press “*2”, if you would like to remove your question from the queue. For participants using speaker equipment it may be necessary to pick up your handsets before pressing the “*” keys.

Our first question comes from the line of Linda Barton, please go ahead with your question.

Linda Barton

Yes hi, I was wondering if either one of your programs offer any online courses or if you are anticipating doing that in the future?

Carole Weisberg - Charter Oak State College - Coordinator of Early Childhood and Youth Program

This is Carole from Charter Oak State College. All our courses are delivered online. All courses of the college are delivered online and especially the after school courses. The practicum is a combination, it's not online but it's over e-mail and telephone and not necessary to be in Connecticut. So, I actually have folks taking these classes from anywhere in the country. I had someone on the navy base that was running a youth program in Italy, complete the credential - one of our first credential recipients.

Linda Barton

So that also speaks to the question then this would be applicable from if a person wanted to take it from any state and it could be considered what's the work, you know, it would be accepted in any state, how some...

Carole Weisberg - Charter Oak State College - Coordinator of Early Childhood and Youth Program

Well, I know what you are saying. You know, Charter Oak is fully accredited for your college so the course work is course work and the credit is a credit, so it should be accepted anywhere.

Linda Barton

All right, thank you.

Carole Weisberg - Charter Oak State College - Coordinator of Early Childhood and Youth Program:

You are welcome.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

I'm going to ask a question on behalf of one of our listeners who e-mail this a question at earlier, and this is to the entire group. Do you guys have any lessons learned about piloting or in particular outreach and promotion of your credentials? Any advice about getting the word out?

Carole Weisberg - Charter Oak State College - Coordinator of Early Childhood and Youth Program

Harry, I don't know if you want it. Ours is very different, but we do, we talk about it at national conferences as well as local conferences and, right now I'm starting to work with the local foundation to bring a cohort of people through all four courses of the credential. The challenge for a college that is in state or out of state of course is the cost of the education. And we have some supports, some scholarship support through the Connecticut Afterschool Network and so, you know, I work very hard to get that kind of dollar support, so that folks can afford to take the course. What I would say the lesson learned however is, I would not fully scholarship folks. We try to cohort on full scholarship and it wasn't a successful as I had hoped that would be. I think that people take...this is our college level course, will take them more seriously and work harder when they have some investment of their own into the course work. I like the Kansas model about, you know, interviewing and meeting one on one with every single person that goes through or accepts to work ahead of time on their credential. We don't have that luxury, so I think folks need to invest themselves as well as some of their dollars into taking the course work.

Vilma M. Williams - Council for Professional Recognition - Director of Training Services

This is Vilma Williams. As far as the military is concerned because it's credential, it exclusively, you know, for the military, all candidates must work in the Department of the _____ College program and they have to be working as program leads. That...the timing of defense have been very generous, the military have been very generous to help anyone who has reached out to them to look for help in order to get information or documentation materials or anything so that they can start a program such as the one that they have. So, if anyone is interested in getting the information materials, the competency standards or all the instruments that are used, they are very, very willing to share them with anybody that we should just have them. If you do, if you wish to have them, you need to contact the accounts or you can call me. I don't know if you already got the information.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

It should be on the website.

Vilma M. Williams - Council for Professional Recognition - Director of Training Services

Yeah, on the website which is www.cdacouncil.org.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

We have any other questions.

Operator

Our next question comes from the line of Christa Galloway. Please go ahead with your question.

Christa Galloway

Hi, I was just wondering, I guess besides from the military program. Are there any compensations for people once they have received the degree? If there are any partnership with companies or the people who actually work with their requirements there?

Vilma M. Williams - Council for Professional Recognition - Director of Training Services

Well the requirements, you want another that comments in the compensation.

Christa Galloway

Well, I know the military has extra compensation for people once they receive the credentials but I was actually wondering from the others if there was, if there were any programs in place there.

Harry Kujath - Missouri Afterschool State Network - Director

Well, here in Missouri, we have a little bit different approach in trying to get the professional credentialing out to everybody. We have several organizations, as I mentioned the most of that in the network, you know, we provide training, we have...the network has seven individuals around our stage who provide face to face training and professional development individuals, most of training and conferences throughout the year. So, we have a good opportunity, we also work very closely with state agencies to get the word out about the credentialing aspect in the quality standards and those type of things and so what we are looking for as we try to complete this is, you know, vested benefits. You know, it's hard to sell for individuals that give up time and effort and in some cases actual money to pay for classes, one is not going to be any benefited in the road. So, we have been trying the approach we are working with these after school providers to see if there is not a way that they might be able to compensate in the visuals and - and we know it's not going to be a lot of, you know, it's not going to be much, but we are trying to get individuals to recognize the time, the effort and the outcome of the credentialing aspect for professionals in our state, so it's not there yet. I can tell you that much, but certainly we are trying to work and find ways to get that around and certainly we go about around the state and we visit with the legislators and with state agencies, you know, we really promote the credentialing aspect or the benefit of that four staff, that they normally pay for. They normally have some subsidy funding or something goes to and the need for that capital professional credentials.

Christa Galloway

Okay, thanks.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

Carole, are there any wage standards?

Carole Weisberg - Charter Oak State College - Coordinator of Early Childhood and Youth Program

Yeah, that's sort of something I have been advocating for. We are still fighting that battle here, we are working in Connecticut on a quality rating system, and I think built into that rating system will be hopefully some dollars and incentives for folks who are furthering their education and earning credentials. There is a big focus here on early childhood and workforce development and raising the bar, and the floor for our requirements for folks who work in early childhood education programs to be in line with the NAEYC accreditation standards and with head start standards, which are going to be requiring minimum, associates degree and bachelor degrees for teachers. So you know, we are getting...all getting swept up in that so I always...I'm, you know, reminding people that after school and youth development and professionalizing the field the need to compensate the field. So, I'm with you.

Vilma M. Williams - Council for Professional Recognition - Director of Training Services

Yeah, got it. I'm doing the same thing here in Washington, so -.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

Well, let's ask one more question from a listener who is written to us, in Missouri in Connecticut what is the actual organization that is doing the awarding of the credentials.

Carole Weisberg - Charter Oak State College - Coordinator of Early Childhood and Youth Program

In Connecticut it's Charter Oak State college, and at Charter Oak State college, we have a lot of credentials, we have the Connecticut directors credential which is an administrators credentials and we are embarking on Infant/Toddler care credential as well as a parenting educator credential, so Charter Oak State college here in Connecticut is the one who is administering this credential.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

Thanks. How about Missouri?

Harry Kujath - Missouri Afterschool State Network - Director

Is the Missouri School Age Community Coalition statewide organization? They basically provide all the services and do all the checking and making sure that everything is done and done correctly, and then they offer the award certificate based upon those individuals that do complete all the requirements, so it's through that agency alone that does that.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

Thanks, Harry. Are there any more questions on the line?

Operator

We do have a follow up question from the line of Linda Barton, please go ahead with your question.

Linda Barton

Yes, thank you. Actually it goes along the same discussion that the other listener alluded to or talked about and that is the incentive available or how do you mark it, I'm trying to...I have been working about a year and a half with our community college system here in Wyoming to encourage our credentialing and they are very open to that, and I'm concerned that once we go through that process and put that in place, what's the incentive for folks to take these courses, since we all know that afterschool programs work on grant funded money, and there really isn't a lot of room for promotions within these programs, unless somebody, like the director dies or goes away, but it's true in that, that the money...usually when people take courses in general, well they want to improve themselves here, also looking for financial benefits, so I think you have already addressed those questions but it really concerns me how do we market that if there is a way other than encouraging policy makers to give us more money.

Harry Kujath - Missouri Afterschool State Network - Director

This is Harry from Missouri. It goes along the same idea of accreditation or licensing, you can do those things, but you don't get anymore money, you can't collect anymore money or those kind of thing but it's a whole aspect of being in a profession and trying to better yourself and better your program and it's always, you know, the credentialing aspect. You know, we never really try to express upon an individual that once you get this, you are going to be highlighted and put on your _____, it's going to help you. It's going to provide you the expertise and the knowledge of your understanding to provide better services to your children, and that's how we approach the whole aspect is that it could...whether it be accreditation or whether it would be credentialing is

that it's a way for you as an individual in US or organization to develop quality aspects in your program to better serve your cliental and that in turn goes back out to the whole given community. So we try to do it from that aspect, and then we bring in other entities people who are unnecessary always involved in like the businesses, the privet sector. You know, it really has a huge part into promoting and highlighting the activities of after school particularly as they will have done in early childhood, you know, the early childhood that has always been on the front burner of a lot of programs, state agencies and private sector people, colleges and universities and community colleges and afterschool was really trying to push themselves into that area where they can be at the same level, same acceptance. So, it really is a hard sell, but it's one that you have to constantly and continuously work on.

Vilma M. Williams - Council for Professional Recognition - Director of Training Services

Well, it's a hard topic, because people really are, dedicating committing a lot of time to doing it, and well we are all somewhat ultraistic there is basically some bottom line.

Carole Weisberg - Charter Oak State College - Coordinator of Early Childhood and Youth Program

Yeah, I think there are intrinsic rewards that and the recognition everyone needs for the work that they are doing including the investment that they are making in their own education to impact the quality of the program. I think It's...it's an uphill battle for early childhood too because we are having that, you know, this discussion here in Connecticut about raising the education requirements as I said and I'm not quite sure that we are rising everybody's salary all along the way, so more work has been done with early childhood and afterschool but, you know, we might have to recognize that folks may be on their way to other work and other position, that while they are with us, we should be supporting their education, and improving the quality of their program.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

That is excellent note to end on, Carole. I want to thank our speakers today who were absolutely fantastic, Vilma Williams and Carole Weisberg and Harry Kujath. Thank you so much guys, you did...you were great.

Vilma M. Williams - Council for Professional Recognition - Director of Training Services

Thank you.

Robert LaVallee – Afterschool Investments Project - Deputy Project Director

I would also like to thanks Andrew Williams from the Child Care Bureau and Soumya Bhat from Afterschool Investments. I want to encourage you to check out the afterschool investments web site, the transcript and company materials, from today's audio conference will be on the web site, so welcome other resources related to afterschool, and also right on the website, please download and complete an evaluation. Your feedback is very important to us. We absolutely welcome follow up questions, comments, and definitely suggestions for future audio conferences like that. So, on behalf of Afterschool Investments and the Child Care Bureau, I would like to thank you and have a great day, thank you.

Harry Kujath - Missouri Afterschool State Network – Director

Thank you.

Vilma M. Williams - Council for Professional Recognition - Director of Training Services

Thank you.

Operator

Ladies and gentlemen, this does conclude today's teleconference. Thank you for your participation. You may disconnect your lines at this time.