



UNITED WAY OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY AND MERRIMACK VALLEY APAS PILOT

The United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley funded a National Institute of Out-of-School Time (NIOST) Afterschool Program Assessment System (APAS) pilot project which began in October 2007.



The purpose of the pilot was to find a quantifiable way to define outcome measurement and refine program quality. The results will be used to strengthen organizational capacity for engaging in quality improvement, as well as establishing a continuous process of data collection, analysis, reflection, and action.

Judy Caplan, an independent consultant who served as the coach for the eight pilot sites, provided assistance in using the APAS tools. She also helped the sites record their data using KidTrax® (a comprehensive web-based youth and membership tracking system) and devise plans for program improvement. “Several of the sites were able to use the tools and resulting data to show effort and improvement, and to identify areas that were positive in order to pursue additional funding,” says Caplan. “At higher levels, some of the agencies were using the data in a comprehensive approach by looking at youth outcomes to generate discussion and decision making that would address youth issues. Other agencies were using the data for specific analysis as it related to different demographics.”

KidTrax reporting capabilities were highly important to the agencies notes Caplan. “Information collected was useful in reporting to funders on lessons learned and outcomes achieved,” says Caplan. “Many of them commented how convenient and efficient it was that the reports were built into KidTrax. They appreciated the easy accessibility.”

Lisa Silverman Pickard, Assistant Vice President, Community Impact with United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley, agrees that the reports were important to the agencies. “Agencies using APAS and KidTrax were particularly pleased with the way reports were generated in a timely manner,” says Silverman Pickert. “Information from the reports confirmed areas that staff were proud of and uncovered some areas they could improve on. It provided them with some direction which is important.”

