

# Support Our Students (SOS)

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## OVERVIEW

### *What is it?*

Support Our Students (SOS) is a public-private partnership that provides after-school activities to middle school children.

### *Who is it for?*

Middle school children, 9-14 years old, who are at-risk for dropping out of school, getting into trouble with the law, or who are unsupervised in the afternoon.

### *Where are applications taken?*

The application process varies for each initiative. Interested families should contact the local project directly.

## INTRODUCTION

SOS is a public-private partnership to help prevent juvenile crime by providing after school activities to middle school children. Passed by the General Assembly in 1994 as part of the Special Session on Crime, it relies heavily on community involvement and contributions. SOS has five main goals: to reduce juvenile crime, reduce the number of "latchkey" children, improve academic performance, recruit community volunteers, and improve collaboration with existing community resources.

## BENEFITS/ SERVICES

While services vary by community, initiatives are designed to provide students with the opportunity to participate in educational, constructive and interesting activities during after-school hours. Examples of SOS project activities include: enrichment tutoring and homework help, community service, chess, violence prevention, substance abuse prevention, sports, arts and crafts.

## APPLICATIONS

Applications are taken by the local agency. Currently there are 76 county programs, each with a different application process. Individuals interested in participating in the program can call the local agency directly for application information, or the SOS Support Office in Raleigh (919-733-3011) for the number of the closest program.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **General Eligibility Requirements**

To participate in the SOS program, children must be between the ages of 9-14, enrolled in middle school, and be at risk of dropping out of school, getting into trouble with the law, or be unsupervised after school. Children are typically referred to SOS programs by school administrators, courts, parents and/or the children themselves.

**Need**

There are no additional need requirements for participation in the program.

**Income Eligibility**

There are no income eligibility requirements.

**Resource Eligibility**

There are no resource eligibility or assets tests required.

**Fees**

Most programs do not charge fees. For the small number of programs that charge a nominal fee, scholarships are available to ensure access for children who are unable to pay.

**NUMBERS  
SERVED**

Support Our Students funds non-profit agencies in 76 counties, serving 13,000 students at 200 sites.

**PRIORITIZATION  
SYSTEM**

Prioritization of students are handled at the local level based on the needs of the specific county. At the state level, SOS grant funds are distributed to non-profit organizations through a competitive request for proposal process.

**APPEAL RIGHTS**

Not applicable.

**FINANCING**

SOS is financed through state funds and local contributions. Local schools, businesses, religious organizations, civic and community groups, individuals and youth-oriented agencies donate a significant amount of resources to the operations of SOS initiatives through volunteer, in-kind and cash contributions.

**ADMINISTRATION**

SOS is administered at the state level by the Division of Youth Services within the NC Department of Health and Human Services, and at the local level, by non-profit agencies who design and run their own program.

**SOURCES OF LAW**

State statute: GS 143B-152.1-152.7

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION**

Support Our Students  
NC Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Youth Services  
705 Palmer Drive  
PO Box 29527  
Raleigh, NC 27626-0527  
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