

Guide
Book

Strategies for Program Sustainability





Table of Contents

1

Funding & Budget
pg 5

2

Staffing & Volunteers
pg 9

3

Partnership, Collaboration
& Family Engagement
pg 11

4

Marketing & Outreach
pg 15

5

Evaluation & Continuous
Improvement pg 19

6

Policies, Spaces &
Operational Resources
pg 23



Thank you to our
Contributors
pg 25

Sustainability in youth development refers to creating and maintaining programs, initiatives, and outcomes that can endure and continue benefiting young people over time. It encompasses the following key dimensions: Funding and budget; staffing and volunteers; partnership, collaboration, and family engagement; marketing and outreach; evaluation and continuous improvement; policies and procedures and facilities and resources.

How to Use the E-book

This resource is designed with flexibility in mind. Use it as a staff training template and work through each topic in order or pick and choose topics and content that are most relevant to you and your staff.

Guidebook Legend



Webinar that provides an overview of the topic



Video that shares examples related to the topic



Podcast with staff to expand on topic knowledge



Article that dives deep into the topics



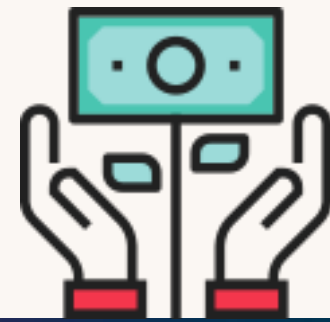
Resources that you and your staff can use



Grant Requirement vital information needed for the grant



1 Fueling the Future – Funding and Budget



Webinar

[Securing Funding & Long-Term Sustainability](#)

This webinar looks at what you need to know to secure funds and advocate for long-term program sustainability. Looks at where programs can source funds and what they need to do to make sure afterschool remains in local, state and federal budgets now and going forward. Hear stories from the field as local programs describe how they've kept the lights on afterschool for kids in their communities.



Article

[Funding Out-of-School-Time Programs Now and in the Future](#)

This article provides a comprehensive overview of various funding sources available for out-of-school time (OST) programs. It emphasizes the importance of sustainable, long-term approach to securing federal, state, and local funding. The article outlines potential funding opportunities, including grants, partnerships, and community support, and offers strategies for effectively leveraging these resources to ensure the continuity and success of OST programs.



Resources

[Budgeting Information](#)

This resource from the Iowa Afterschool Alliance emphasizes the importance of sustainable funding for OST programs. It outlines various strategies for securing long-term financial support, including leveraging federal, state and local funding sources forming partnerships, and engaging community stakeholders. A sample budget is included to help programs identify budget categories, as well as talking points for talking to stakeholders

[Allowable Costs Associated with the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant.](#)

This resource provides valuable insights into understanding and identifying allowable costs that can be included in program budgets, ensuing effective financial planning and management.



Podcasts

[Activating Your Champions for Reliable Funding Sources](#)

In this episode, we explore how OST leaders can strengthen their funding strategies by engaging community champions, building strong funder relationships, and diversifying support. Learn practical tips to position your program for long-term success and sustainability.

[Thriving for the Long Haul: Sustainability Strategies for Programs.](#)

What does it take to build out-of-school time programs that last? In this episode, we explore the core elements of sustainability—from funding and partnerships to innovation and adaptability. With a focus on the future of 21st Century Community Learning Centers, our guest shares practical strategies and inspiring examples to help OST leaders create programs that thrive for years to come.



Powering Programs – Building Strong Teams & Volunteer Networks

2



Webinar

[Preparing your Staff for Success](#)

This webinar helps directors effectively prepare staff for success. It covers key strategies for onboarding, training, and continuous development to ensure staff is well equipped to meet organizational goals.



Resources

[Staffing and Volunteer Considerations](#)

This resource by the Iowa Afterschool Alliance provides programs with valuable tips and strategies for effectively finding, hiring, training, supporting and retaining passionate individuals dedicated to working with youth.

[Afterschool Staff Recruitment Toolkit](#)

The Staff Recruitment Toolkit is a comprehensive resource tailored for Afterschool Directors to streamline the recruitment process. It offers practical tips and resources, effective messaging strategies, innovative funding ideas to boost staff compensation, and ready-to-use sample emails and social media graphics.



3

Stronger Together – Partnerships, Collaboration & Family Engagement



Webinar

Developing and Sustaining Partnerships

This webinar focuses on strategies and best practices for building and maintaining effective partnerships. It covers key elements such as communication, trust, and mutual goals, providing insights into how to create and nurture successful collaborations.



Podcasts

Advocating for Program Resources and Making Connections

This episode explores the importance of advocating for resources and building connections to support youth programs. Experts share strategies for securing funding, forming partnerships, and enhancing program effectiveness. Learn how to navigate challenges and leverage community assets to create impactful youth services.

From Partners to Champions: Building Powerful Alliances with Community Stakeholders

In this episode, we discuss the art of building meaningful, lasting partnerships. Whether it's collaborating with local businesses, cultural institutions, or non-traditional allies like senior centers and faith communities. We'll explore how OST leaders can identify the right partners, craft compelling value propositions, and transform one-time collaborations into enduring alliances that benefit youth and communities alike.

Bridging the School Community: Turning Stakeholders into Champions

In this episode, we explore how OST leaders can build strong, collaborative relationships with school administrators, teachers, and parent-teacher groups. From aligning with academic goals to earning trust and demonstrating value, we'll uncover strategies to turn stakeholders into passionate champions for your program's success and sustainability.

Together We Thrive: Family Engagement Strategies

Discover practical strategies for fostering family-school partnerships, effective communication methods, and overcoming challenges to ensure families are actively involved in their children's education. Learn how family engagement can significantly impact student outcomes and enhance the quality of out-of-school care.



Articles

The Value of Partnerships in Afterschool and Summer Learning: A National Case Study of 21st Century Community Learning Centers

This article underscores the value of community partnerships in improving afterschool and summer programs. Supported by the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative, these partnerships offer academic enrichment for children in high-poverty, low-performing schools. Collaboration with diverse partners like universities, libraries, and youth organizations enhances the quality and impact of these programs.

Engaging Families in Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs

This article explores the importance of family engagement in afterschool and summer learning programs. It highlights how involving families can significantly improve student outcomes, such as attendance, behavior, and academic achievement. The article defines family engagement, discusses its benefits, and provides research-based strategies for effectively involving families in these programs.



Resource

The Afterschool Alliance Cultivating Partnerships

This webpage provides guidance on building and maintaining partnerships with community organizations to support afterschool programs. It highlights the benefits of collaboration, such as securing funding and logistical support, and offers strategies for creating a shared vision among potential partners. It also features examples of successful partnerships between housing authorities and afterschool programs, showcasing how these collaborations can provide valuable resources and opportunities for children and families.

Beyond the Bulletin – Marketing, Outreach & Storytelling That Connects

4



Webinars

[Unlocking Potential: Skills for Impactful Outreach](#)

This webinar covers the fundamentals of out-of-school time outreach. Learn to build strong relationships with staff, local schools, engage parents and participants and craft effective messages. Gain insights into securing long-term funding and ensuring sustainability for your OST program. Leave with essential knowledge and tools to make your OST programs successful.

[The Powerful New Evidence Base for Afterschool and Summer Opportunities](#)

An insightful webinar exploring the latest research and evidence supporting the impact of afterschool and summer programs. This webinar highlights key findings on how these programs contribute to students' academic, social and emotional development. Experts will discuss effective strategies and best practices for implementing high-quality programs that address the needs of diverse student populations.



Article

[Engaging Families in Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs:](#)

This article provides strategies for effectively involving families in afterschool programs. It outlines six research-based approaches to enhance family engagement, emphasizing the positive impact on student outcomes such as attendance, behavior, and academic achievement. Additionally, the article includes practical resources and examples from successful programs to help educators and program managers implement these strategies.





Resources

[Afterschool Alliance Marketing Afterschool.](#)

This page offers strategies for promoting afterschool programs through community events, media outreach, and policymaker engagement. It provides tips on branding, storytelling, and using social media to boost visibility and participation. The page also highlights the annual “Lights On Afterschool” event, which showcases program benefits and advocates for more support.

[WOSTA Program Spotlights](#)

The WOSTA Program Spotlights feature exemplary afterschool and summer programs in Wisconsin. These spotlights highlight innovative practices, successful partnerships, and impactful activities that enhance student learning and development. By showcasing these programs, WOSTA aims to inspire and inform other educators and program providers about effective strategies and community collaborations.

[Become a WOSTA Featured Program](#)

WOSTA is seeking outstanding afterschool and summer programs to spotlight in The WOSTA Advocate. This is a great opportunity to showcase your impact, share your story, and inspire others across Wisconsin.

[Wisconsin Afterschool Champions Guide](#)

The Wisconsin Afterschool Champions Guide is a comprehensive advocacy toolkit created by the Wisconsin Out of School Time Alliance to support individuals and organizations in promoting afterschool and summer learning across the state. This guide designed for program leaders, parents, youth ambassadors and community advocates aim to raise awareness and mobilize support for OST programs by equipping users with messaging tools and advocacy strategies. Tools included: General messaging, one-pagers, social media graphics and posts, and action steps.



5

Growing with Purpose – Evaluation & Continuous Improvement



Articles

[Looking at the Data: Afterschool Programs Using Data to Better Serve Students.](#)

This article looks at what programs can gain through data collection and evaluation, what to measure and how to use the data to improve programming.

[Improving Results and Expanding Learning: Using Research and Evaluation to Inform Practice in New Jersey 21st CCLC's.](#)

This article explains how the New Jersey Department of Education uses research and evaluation to improve its 21st CCLC programs. By aligning activities with state standards and using evidence-based practices, the initiative aims to boost academic achievement and enrich experiences for students in high-poverty, low-performing schools. It emphasizes continuous improvement and the role of state-level evaluations in shaping strategies.



Resources

[Evaluating Youth and Education Programs](#)

Resources on evaluation planning and outcomes, youth evaluation, focus groups, survey design, building evaluation capacity and reporting and data visualization.

[Creative Ways to Solicit Stakeholder Feedback](#)

This resource provides practical strategies for gathering input from various stakeholders in out-of-school time programs. It emphasizes the importance of engaging families, staff, and community members to improve program quality and effectiveness. The document includes innovative methods such as surveys, focus groups, and informal conversations, offering tips on how to make these approaches more accessible and meaningful for participants.



Podcast

Data with a Heartbeat: Where Education Meets Impact Through Meaningful Evaluation

In this episode, we dive into how 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) can turn performance data into powerful stories of student growth, family engagement, and community connection. Discover how to identify the most impactful data points, engage youth in authentic evaluation, and craft narratives that resonate with everyone—from parents to policymakers. Whether you're a program leader, educator, or advocate, this conversation will help you bring your data to life with heart and purpose.



The Framework that Lasts – Policies, Spaces & Operational Resources

6



Webinar

[Creating Policies and Procedures.](#)

Establishing clear policies and procedures is essential for the smooth operation of your afterschool program. This video provides guidance on developing effective policies and procedures that ensure consistency, compliance, and safety. Learn how to create a framework that supports your program's overall effectiveness.



Article

[Why Do Afterschool Systems Matter](#)

This article highlights the important of afterschool systems in providing equitable access to high-quality programs for young people with a crucial piece being strong leadership from mayors, school superintendents, and other key figures. Establishing systems for program attendance, data tracking, and reporting.



Resource

[Risk Management Planning tool](#)

The University of Minnesota Extension's 4-H Volunteer site helps program leaders manage risks in youth programs. It provides tools to assess hazards, create safety plans, and implement strategies for participant well-being. The site includes checklists and guidelines for comprehensive risk management, ensuring access to necessary equipment and technology, and exploring ways to optimize school facilities and resources.





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