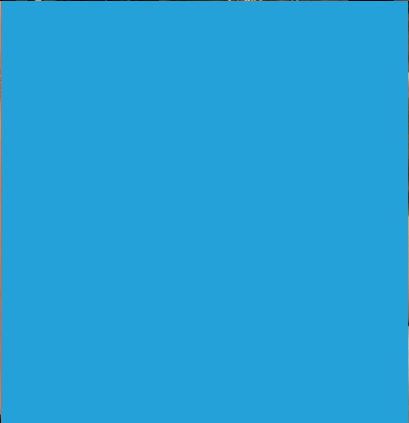
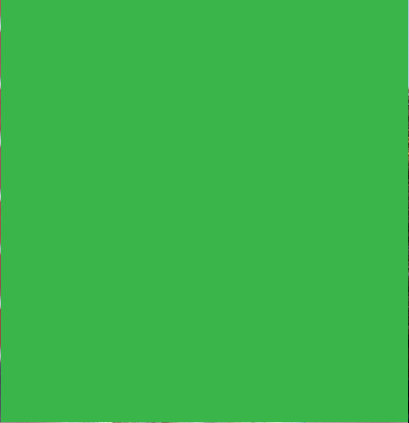


GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FOR QUALITY OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS



How these Quality Guiding Principles were Created

Montana Afterschool Alliance (MTAA) was supported in the creation of these principles by a statewide quality workgroup that was convened to represent the interests of OST programs from across the state. Care was taken to include practitioners and programs serving youth from Pre-K through high school, in rural and more densely populated communities distributed throughout the state, and in a variety of community and school-based settings.

Additional support and guidance for these principles were provided by Montana's Office of Public Instruction, Health Enhancement & Safety Division and Department of Health and Human Services, Early Childhood Services Bureau.

The workgroup conducted their work from October of 2018 through July 2019. While MTAA completed extensive research that informed the project, the process would not have been possible without the program support of Education Northwest through a REL Northwest program grant. Their work in co-designing the process each step of the way and supporting the facilitation of the workgroup's in-person and on-line meetings helped to accomplish a lot of work in a short period of time.

The quality workgroup grounded their work in a study of current research on OST program quality and reviewed the work of the many states that have preceded Montana in the development of statewide quality principles and standards for the OST sector. A draft was circulated for statewide input and review and recommended changes were considered and incorporated before finalizing.

Thanks go to the states and afterschool networks of Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Wyoming and Washington whose quality publications provided various aspects of influence on the items included here.

Special recognition

Special gratitude and acknowledgment go to California's Department of Education and the California Afterschool Network (CAN). The 2014 'Quality Standards for Expanded Learning in California' provided specific inspiration for the structure of the principles and the foundation for much of the text used throughout. CAN staff also provided input on lessons learned that will inform future professional development and technical assistance around the utilization of these principles in the field.

Using These Guiding Principles

as·pire

/ə' spī(ə)r/

verb

direct one's hopes or ambitions toward achieving something.

Nearly every day, all over the state of Montana, school-based programs and community organizations are providing extended learning and engagement for our state's youth before school, after school and on days that school isn't in session at all. While they may be working with different age groups and focusing on different topics, the providers of all these opportunities have shared goals for assuring kids are safe and supported to be and become their best selves.

Just as we support our youth in their aspirations, providing them with the guidance to vision what they are aiming for and the tools to best work towards it, so too does the community of out-of-school time (OST) providers deserve the guidance and tools to define and achieve their own goals. It is this spirit of aspiration that forms the foundation for these guiding principles.

Meeting needs for programs and stakeholders

These principles are intended to describe the high levels of program quality from the management, staff and youth perspective. These principles are not intended to be used as a compliance tool, but rather as the following:

- **A framework** of clear expectations for all stakeholders.
- **A guide** to inform Montana Afterschool Alliance and other stakeholders in their offerings of professional development and technical assistance to the statewide OST sector.
- **A guide** for programs to engage in their own process of continuous quality improvement.
- **A guide** for parents and youth to identify quality programming.
- **A guide** for school administrators to reinforce and advance key priorities.
- **A complement** to other guides and standards developed for national and state-level programs, e.g., 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Montana STARS to Quality, 4-H Standards of Excellence, Center for Youth Program Quality.

Why Focus on Quality in Out-of-School Time (OST)

Access alone is not enough

School-aged children spend 80% of their waking hours outside of the school day. So, their time spent in the afterschool and summer hours plays a critical role in their healthy development. There is now a large body of evidence that shows that quality OST programs increase positive outcomes for youth.

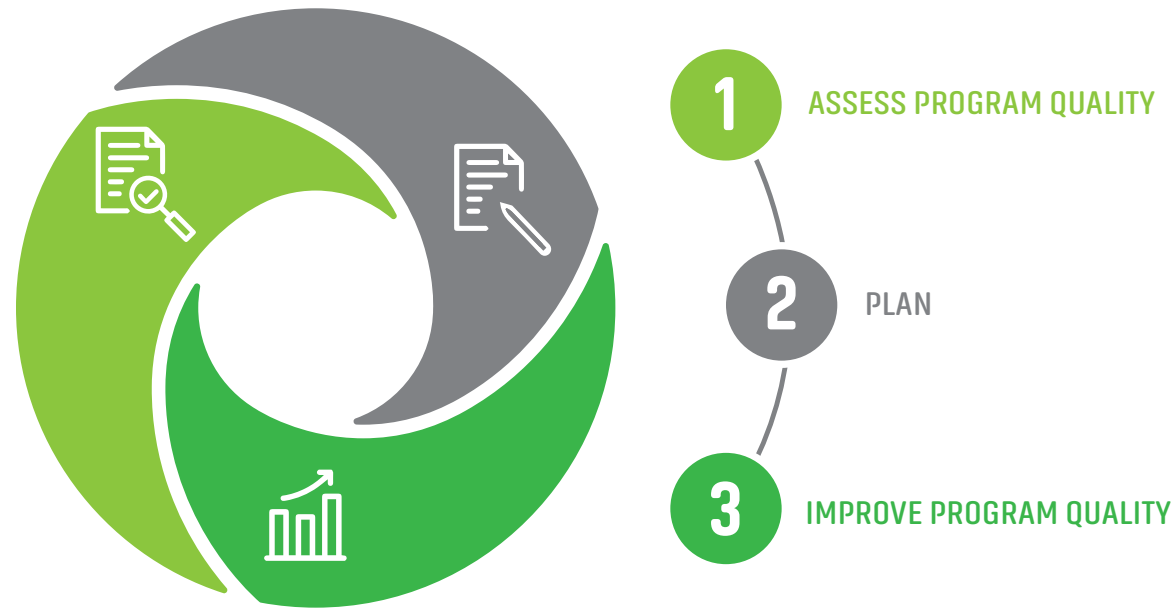
While advocating for youth across Montana to have access to OST programs, we recognize that access alone is not enough. It is consistent, high-quality programs that benefit youth socially, emotionally and academically.

Many states have found that providing guidance on quality is an important first step towards ensuring evidence-based methods are utilized to drive positive outcomes for youth. As stakeholders strive to both develop and direct resources to the OST sector, defining what quality looks like creates the foundation for expanding and supporting programs statewide.



Utilizing these Principles for Continuous Improvement

Strengthening the continuous improvement process is a critical strategy for improving quality for programs at every stage of organizational development. Regardless of the tools and strategies a program used to execute the basic aspects of assessment, planning and implementation, the guiding principles can be a relevant resource for each step in the cycle.



Continuous Quality Improvement Cycle

Assess Program Quality: Collect data on the program using multiple strategies. Data comes from sources including self-assessments, review of program policies and manuals, interviews and surveys conducted with staff, youth, and other stakeholders, and observation of program activities.

Plan: Reflect on program data and use data to generate and implement an action plan for program improvement. Action plans can be used to revise and refine organizational strategies and goals, to direct organizational resources towards areas that need improvement, and to guide professional development for staff.

Improve Program Quality: Implement the action plan, taking time to reflect on progress along the way. Once key goals are met, re-assess and update the action plan accordingly.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR QUALITY OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS



- 1 Safe & Supportive Environment**
Provides a safe and nurturing environment that supports the developmental, social-emotional and physical needs of all youth
- 2 Active & Engaged Learning**
Program design and activities reflect active, meaningful and engaging learning opportunities that promote collaboration and expand youth horizons
- 3 Skill Building**
Maintains high expectations for all youth, intentionally links program goals and curricula to activities to help students achieve mastery
- 4 Positive & Empowering Relationships**
Purposefully creates a welcoming environment that develops and nurtures positive reciprocal relationships and interactions among all individuals (including staff and youth)
- 5 Youth Voice & Leadership**
Provides and supports intentional opportunities for youth to play a meaningful role in program design and implementation, and provides ongoing access to authentic leadership roles
- 6 Healthy Choices & Behaviors**
Promotes youth well-being through opportunities to learn about and practice balanced nutrition, physical activity, emotional and relational health and other healthy choices in an environment that supports a healthy lifestyle
- 7 Inclusion & Access**
Creates an environment in which youth experience values that embrace inclusion and access regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, income level, national origin, physical ability, sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression
- 8 Cultural Responsiveness**
Respects and is responsive to the diversity of program participants, their families, and community
- 9 Quality Staff**
Recruits and retains high-quality staff and volunteers who are focused on creating a positive learning environment, and provides ongoing professional development based on assessed staff needs
- 10 Clear Vision, Mission & Purpose**
Has a clearly defined vision, mission, goals, and measurable outcomes that reflect broad stakeholder input and drive program design, implementation and improvement
- 11 Collaborative Partnerships**
Intentionally builds and supports collaborative relationships among internal and external stakeholders, including families, schools and community, to achieve program goals
- 12 Continuous Quality Improvement**
Uses data from multiple sources to assess its strengths and weaknesses in order to continuously improve program design, outcomes and impact
- 13 Program Management**
Has sound fiscal and administrative practices supported by well-defined and documented policies and procedures that meet applicable requirements
- 14 Sustainability**
The program builds enduring partnerships with the community and secures commitments for in-kind and monetary contributions



1

Safe and Supportive Environment

The program provides a safe and nurturing environment that supports the developmental, social-emotional and physical needs of all youth.

What this looks like for Management:

- Program directors work closely with community leaders to identify potential risks and create health and safety procedures for the out of school time, both in day to day operations and emergency response protocol.
- The program develops policies and procedures to:
 - Clearly communicate health, safety, and behavior procedures with staff, participants, and families.
 - Clearly identify the health and medical needs of participants.
 - Hire safe, qualified staff by using background checks and other assessment tools.
 - Ensure that staff are easily identifiable to participants, families, and other stakeholders (e.g., staff shirts, vests, badges, etc.).
 - Ensure that staff, families, and other involved partners understand where participants are located throughout the duration of the program.
 - Ensure that staff are trained in safety and first aid, mandatory reporting, and the identification and prevention of suicidality, child abuse, sexual abuse and sex trafficking.
 - Clearly document and communicate incidents (i.e. written reports and phone records).
 - Maintain an easily accessible list of all participants with current emergency contacts for program activities and field trips.
 - When appropriate, the program connects participants and families to services, organizations and other resources that provide support beyond out of school and summer programming (e.g., food security, health and mental health services, parent education and other identified needs).

What this looks like for Staff:

- Staff respectfully welcome and release participants from the program.
- Staff intentionally build and maintain trusting, nurturing, and supportive relationships with participants. They monitor interactions to identify issues that might impact participant safety.
- Staff intentionally identify participant strengths, interests, and learning styles, and encourage participants to develop skills related to their strengths and interests.
- Staff hold participants to high expectations for behavior by:
 - Actively acknowledging positive behavior and participant accomplishments.
 - Intervening in a trauma-responsive and developmentally appropriate manner when youth or adults are engaged in physically and/or emotionally unsafe behavior.
 - Respond to situations utilizing restorative principles, with an emphasis on repair.
- Staff participate in on-going health and safety procedures, trainings, and practice drills with participants.

What this looks like for Participants:

- Participants and staff share responsibility in building a sense of community and belonging.
- Participants, when developmentally appropriate, actively co-create behavioral agreements in collaboration with program staff.

Active and Engaged Learning

Program design and activities reflect active, meaningful and engaging learning opportunities that promote collaboration and expand youth horizons.

What this looks like for Management:

- The program provides a variety of developmentally appropriate activities for multiple learning styles that engage youth in the process of hands-on, project-based learning.
- The program uses participant feedback and assessments to guide the development of training, curricula, and projects that fully meet participants' needs and interests.
- The program makes connections to school-day learning and is aligned with relevant standards to promote academic and social-emotional learning.¹

What this looks like for Staff:

- Staff provide participants with experiences in multiple methods of learning.
- Staff provide opportunities for meaningful group work.
- Staff provide activities that raise awareness, create thought-provoking discussions, and support collaborative interaction with others in the larger community, other cultures, and even globally.
- Staff engage youth to think critically, develop leadership skills, and promote self-expression on issues relevant to them.

What this looks like for Participants:

- Participants engage in fun out of school time experiences.
- Participants use modern technology to support their learning.
- All participants in group work are engaged, cooperate in the group's accomplishments, and are accountable to one another.

2



¹ From Illinois page 20, quality indicator 24.1

3

Skill Building

The program maintains high expectations for all youth, intentionally links program goals and curricula to activities to help students achieve mastery.

What this looks like for Management:

- The program supports projects and activities in which participants demonstrate mastery by working toward a final project or outcome.
- The program supports activities in which participants develop and demonstrate life skills, literacy skills, and learning skills.

What this looks like for Staff:

- Staff select or create projects/outcomes that relate to young people's lives.
- Staff develop learning goals for each activity and communicate these goals to youth.
- Staff facilitate activities and conversations that increase participants' sense of personal and social responsibility and understanding of life and career options.
- Staff use practices that support mastery such as:
 - Providing youth with opportunities to practice skills.
 - Sequencing activities to allow participants to build on previously learned skills.
 - Facilitating youth reflections and offering constructive feedback to help youth learn from their experiences of successes, mistakes, and failures.
 - Helping youth make links between the activity and the world outside of the program.

What this looks like for Participants:

- Participants work in groups where they practice skills such as team-building, collaboration, and the use of effective communication.
- Participants engage in leadership opportunities that require them to be flexible, take initiative and learn social skills.
- Participants are involved in projects, activities, and events that increase their understanding and use of creativity, critical thinking, information, and communications technology, and career awareness.



4

Positive and Empowering Relationships

The program purposefully creates a welcoming environment that develops and nurtures positive reciprocal relationships and interactions among all individuals (including staff and youth).

What this looks like for Management:

- The program is structured so youth and adults have the opportunity to interact and learn about one another and build trusting, appropriate relationships.
- The program fosters a sense of community.
- The program offers emotional support that involves the warmth, care, and encouragement from adults that give youth the security to take on new challenges and grow.
- The program has policies and training to adequately address conflict and bullying in ways that support all participants.

What this looks like for Staff:

- Staff create an emotionally safe place that young people want to come back to again and again.
- Staff engage with youth as individuals to help them learn and develop.
- Staff use positive guidance to direct youth behavior and model positive behaviors to youth and with each other.
- Staff treat youth with respect and listen to what they have to say.
- Staff encourage the participation of all youth and engage any students who appear to be isolated in order to create an equitable and inclusive environment.
- Staff provide structures and activities to help youth connect with one another with respect.

What this looks like for Participants:

- Participants indicate they feel a sense of security, belonging and ownership in the program.
- Participants can identify at least one staff person they can go to for help, who serves as his or her mentor/emotional support.
- Participants experience positive friendships with peers.



5

Youth Voice and Leadership

The program provides and supports intentional opportunities for youth to play a meaningful role in program design and implementation, and provides ongoing access to authentic leadership roles.

What this looks like for Management:

- The program provides participants with opportunities and space to share their viewpoints, concerns, or interests in order to impact program practices or policies. This includes opportunities that are led by youth.
- The program provides opportunities for participants to actively exercise their leadership skills and address real-world problems that they identify in their communities. These are activities that require critical thinking, dialogue, and action planning.

What this looks like for Staff:

- Staff encourage and engage participants on a regular basis to share their perspectives regarding program design, what they want to learn and the quality of their experience in the program.
- Staff work to recognize the leadership potential in all young people, regardless of their age, and provide opportunities for them to develop their leadership skills by providing authentic leadership roles within their out of school time program.
- The program trains staff to facilitate youth voice and leadership in ways that promote positive relationships within the program and empower participants to have a positive impact on other individuals and their community.

What this looks like for Participants:

- Participants engage in authentic and meaningful leadership roles that are supported by staff and celebrated by the program.
- Participants share ownership in the design of program activities.
- Participants take responsibility for completing projects.
- Participants express their opinions and feedback in surveys or group discussions regarding what they want to learn about, what they want to be able to do, and the development of program offerings that respond to their interests.
- Participants reflect on learning experiences (formal and informal) and give their opinion about future learning opportunities.
- Participants receive guidance to use positive communication and conflict resolution skills.



Healthy Choices and Behaviors

The program promotes youth well-being through opportunities to learn about and practice balanced nutrition, physical activity, emotional and relational health and other healthy choices in an environment that supports a healthy lifestyle.

What this looks like for Management:

- The program creates and maintains a healthy culture and environment that is positively influenced by a collaborative and coordinated effort of families, school, and community.
- The program helps staff promote healthy lifestyles by providing professional development and access to age-appropriate curricula and resources.
- The program incorporates nutrition and physical activity into all facets of program design and operating procedures.
- The program uses trauma-informed practices to address the emotional and relational health of participants and staff.

What this looks like for Staff:

- Staff provide daily opportunities for participants to engage in developmentally appropriate, research-based activities that support a healthy lifestyle.
- Staff understand how knowledge, skills, and behaviors around health contribute to participant wellness.
- Staff model healthy choices and behaviors.

What this looks like for Participants:

- Participants have a voice and choice in creating and maintaining a healthy culture and environment within their program.
- Participants apply their knowledge and experience of nutrition, healthy lifestyles, and physical activity by making healthy choices.
- Participants feel empowered to influence their families, peers, program, and community to make healthy choices.



6

Inclusion and Access

The program creates an environment in which students experience values that embrace all youth regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, income level, national origin, physical ability, sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression.

What this looks like for Management:

- The program provides an inclusive, welcoming, and respectful environment for all youth and families.²
- The program states its commitment to inclusion and access in its outreach materials and policies.
- The program is aware of and seeks information and strategies to support all participant needs.
- The program creates a welcoming environment by representing the diversity of the participants through program materials, displays, etc.
- The program addresses economic barriers for youth participation with scholarships, sliding-scale fees, and transportation, when possible.
- The program makes an authentic effort to collaborate with marginalized populations to address concerns and priorities such as cultural identity, language revitalization, and cultural values.
- The program respects and honors diversity, such as participants' race, ethnicity, religion, sex, income level, national origin, physical ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
- The program fosters an inclusive environment.

What this looks like for Staff:

- Staff participate in ongoing diversity and inclusivity training.
- Staff adapt activities to accommodate the physical and developmental abilities of all participants, and actively encourage their participation in the program.

What this looks like for Participants:

- Participants and staff are comfortable sharing and are given opportunities to share, from their diverse experiences and backgrounds.
- Participants are encouraged to develop an inclusive mindset and embrace peers with empathy.



² From Washington State Cultural Competency Standard.

Cultural Responsiveness

The program respects and is responsive to the diversity of program participants, their families, and their community.

What this looks like for Management:

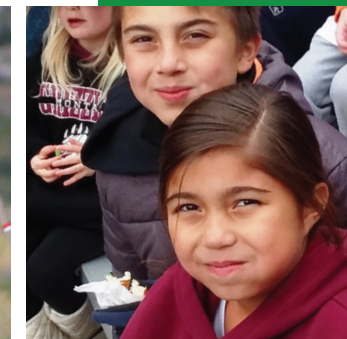
- The program creates policies to ensure a safe atmosphere for children and youth to explore their own identity, including cultural beliefs and practices.
- The program provides all staff with ongoing practical tools and training for cultural competency and promoting professional self-awareness about power, privilege, and the issues that impact youth.
- Management recruits, hires and develops qualified staff who reflect the diversity and culture(s) of the community served.
- The program makes all communication available in the languages and communication styles families prefer.

What this looks like for Staff:

- Staff seek to know and understand the cultures of participating youth in their programs and are responsive to individual youth needs, recognizing their special interests, feelings, abilities, and cultures.
- Staff avoid the use of language that is discriminatory, teases or makes fun of a particular group, or further stereotypes.
- Positively counter practices degrading to particular groups, biases, stereotypes, and discrimination.
- Teach participants about the history, traditions, and beliefs of multiple cultures, including mainstream American culture, in order to enhance cultural knowledge.
- Provide opportunities to connect programmatic content to their daily lives in a culturally meaningful way, and utilize teaching methods and group structures in ways participants are accustomed to.

What this looks like for Participants:

- Participants are encouraged to express their own cultural identities in the program.
- Youth have intentional opportunities to explore, share, and celebrate each other's heritage and culture in their program.
- Co-construct rules and decision-making processes, as appropriate.



Quality Staff

The program recruits and retains high-quality staff and volunteers who are focused on creating a positive learning environment and provides ongoing professional development based on assessed staff needs.

What this looks like for Management:

- The program engages in a thoughtful recruitment and hiring process that carefully considers experience, knowledge, interest, ability to create a safe environment, diversity, and capacity for engaging children in age-appropriate and meaningful learning.
- The program provides staff and volunteers with:
 - Clear titles and job descriptions
 - Continuous training and professional development
 - Resources and materials to deliver activities
 - On-the-job coaching
- The program provides new staff with a comprehensive orientation to the program philosophy, routines, and practices.³
- The program supports staff with information regarding grant requirements, budgets, and any information that affects the day-to-day operations of the program where appropriate.
- The program supports staff with competitive pay.
- The program creates opportunities for participants and other stakeholders to provide feedback on staff and volunteer quality.
- The program uses screening policies and procedures to ensure staff are a good fit to work with children.

What this looks like for Staff:

- Staff demonstrate the ability to:
 - Deliver a program that meets grant requirements where applicable
 - Respond appropriately to diverse behavioral issues and to be aware of exceptional needs and adverse experiences
 - Facilitate and incorporate program curricula, research-based youth development principles and best practices in program planning and activities
 - Facilitate activities that engage youth in active and meaningful experiences that build mastery and expand horizons
 - Welcome and engage volunteers in roles that meaningfully and effectively support youth learning
- Staff exhibit:
 - Integrity, professionalism, caring, and competency as a positive role model
 - Commitment to building positive relationships with a culturally, linguistically, and socio-economically diverse community of youth, staff, volunteers, and families primarily for the benefit of the youth
 - Self-reflection and consideration for how they can support the development of young people in their care

What this looks like for Participants:

- Participants are involved in the staff selection process when appropriate.
- Participants provide feedback on staff.
- Participants have trusting and positive relationships with staff.

³ Washington State Standards (page 23)

Clear Vision, Mission and Purpose

The program has a clearly defined vision, mission, goals, and measurable outcomes that reflect broad stakeholder input and drive program design, implementation and improvement.

What this looks like for Management:

- When the program creates its mission, vision, goals, and outcomes, it makes sure all stakeholders participate, including:
 - Youth
 - Families
 - Program staff
 - School site partners
 - Community partners
- The program ensures that its vision and mission complement each other and are reflected in program goals and outcomes.
- The program monitors progress toward its goals and outcomes.
- Based on its vision and mission, the program intentionally aligns goals and outcomes with:
 - Policies and procedures
 - Program plan
 - Budget
 - Staff development
 - Communications and marketing material
- The program informs participants, families, staff, and partners about their roles and responsibilities in advancing the mission, vision, and goals of the program.
- The program regularly communicates, reviews, and makes appropriate changes to goals and outcomes in collaboration with all stakeholders.

What this looks like for Staff:

- Staff share the program's mission, vision, goals, outcomes, and planned activities with families through a variety of strategies (e.g., new family orientations, parent nights, etc.).
- Staff design activities to make progress toward the program's goals and outcomes.

What this looks like for Participants:

- Participants know the mission, vision, goals, and outcomes of the program.
- Participants provide input that is used to impact the program's vision, mission, goals, and outcomes.



11

Collaborative Partnerships

The program intentionally builds and supports collaborative relationships among internal and external stakeholders, including families, schools and communities, to achieve program goals.

What this looks like for Management:

- The program develops collaborative partnerships that are formalized and clearly articulated through written agreements when appropriate, and are maintained through on-going meetings and other systems of communication.
- The program actively engages and aligns potential partners (public and private) in order to enrich and/or sustain program services.
- The program uses culturally and linguistically appropriate strategies to engage families in their children's education and healthy development.
- The program trains staff to work collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders in order to achieve program goals.
- The program seeks to collaborate with the appropriate school, tribal, community, regional, statewide, and national stakeholders in order to leverage resources.
- Stakeholders contribute to the continuous improvement process. Stakeholders may include:
 - Parents
 - Community partners
 - City, County, and District Offices of Education
 - Higher education institutions
 - Tribal entities
 - Non-profit organizations and foundations
 - Public officials
 - Local businesses
 - Youth

What this looks like for Staff:

- Staff engage, communicate, and connect parents to information and services available within their community and school.
- Staff meet regularly, both formally and informally, with partners to discuss data and agree upon program design and outcomes.
- Staff hold collaborative meetings with both internal and external partners to discuss impact, highlights, and areas of growth.

What this looks like for Participants:

- The program engages families appropriately in program planning, implementation, management, evaluation, and improvement.⁴
- Program policies and procedures, including those regarding fees, hours of operation, and location are responsive to the needs of the youth and families served, including affordability, hours of operation, location, and transportation.

⁴ From Washington State Community Connections

12

Continuous Quality Improvement

The program uses data from multiple sources to assess its strengths and weaknesses in order to continuously improve program design, outcomes and impact.

What this looks like for Management:

- The program establishes a clearly defined continuous quality improvement process that:
 - Guides questions that are related to the program design, desired program outcomes, and impact
 - Outlines improvement goals and action steps
 - Includes a timeline with dates for action steps and quality improvement discussions
 - Shares lessons learned and key outcomes from the quality improvement process with staff, youth, parents, and partners
 - Describes the information or data needed to assess quality
 - Clearly describes the responsibilities and roles for each person on the improvement team
- The program establishes a clear procedure for getting consent to collect information from stakeholders that addresses the purpose of the information and how it will be used.
- The program records and keeps track of the information it collects in a manner that protects the confidentiality of stakeholders.
- The program shares lessons learned and key outcomes from the quality improvement process with stakeholders and requests their feedback.

What this looks like for Staff:

- Staff demonstrate their commitment to continuous improvement on a daily basis through regular self-assessment of individual performance as well as attending professional development and training opportunities that expand their capacity.
- Staff help collect data and are supported in using this data to understand strengths and weaknesses in programming.
- Staff engage participants in the continuous quality improvement process by regularly soliciting their feedback about program activities.
- Staff share data about the program strengths and challenges with participants, families, and community partners, and involve them in program planning and goal setting sessions.
- Staff use outcomes to prioritize future work around program design, professional development, and program practices.

What this looks like for Participants:

- As age-appropriate, participants are actively engaged in assessing strengths and weaknesses and provide input for improvement based on quality standards.



Program Management

The program has sound fiscal and administrative practices supported by well-defined and documented policies and procedures that meet applicable requirements.

What this looks like for Management:

- The program creates and annually updates manuals that:
 - Address fiscal management, personnel policies, and program operation
 - Include clearly defined policies, procedures, practices, and staff/partner roles
 - Adhere to federal, state, and local requirements
- The program creates and distributes user-friendly parent handbooks that describe policies and procedures, and that are available in languages spoken by parents.
- The program has a clear organizational structure, which allows staff to focus on the needs of participants.
- The program has a strong fiscal management system that includes a well-documented budget, that supports program goals, with line-item expenses and the duration and amount of each revenue source.
- The program has the appropriate insurance to protect staff, administrators, volunteers, participants.
- The program maintains written agreements that define the roles and responsibilities of all partners.

What this looks like for Staff:

- Staff at the program and site level use various well-defined channels of communication, including regular meetings, with all stakeholders.
- Staff at the program and site level keep up-to-date and accessible records on all participants and employees.
- Program staff have input during the budgeting process.
- Managers at all levels take advantage of opportunities to develop management and leadership skills and stay informed about new research, best practices, and innovations in out-of-school time programs.

What this looks like for Participants:

- Where appropriate, participants provide feedback.



Sustainability

The program builds enduring partnerships with the community and secures commitments for in-kind and monetary contributions.

What this looks like for Management:

- The program plans for sustainability in its initial design and evolves its strategies over time.
- The program monitors trends and makes changes in order to adapt to emerging threats, opportunities, and conditions.
- The program communicates its vision and role and celebrates its impact clearly and regularly across the community and to key stakeholders.
- The program explores and secures new resources to maintain a diverse portfolio of sources.
- The program provides staff with an annual overview of the budget and sustainability plan.
- The program meets regularly with a range of public and private partners in order to ensure on-going communication and sharing of resources, as well as a common mission, vision, and goals.
- The program has strong internal documentation to support continuous, high-quality operation after staff transitions.

What this looks like for Staff:

- Staff plan strategically to use current funding efficiently.
- Staff build broad-based community support by providing high-quality programming that is valued by children, families, school, and community.
- Staff cultivate active supporters and honor key champions.

What this looks like for Participants:

- Participants are eager and prepared to share their experiences and success with potential supporters and champions.
- Participants communicate impact to community leaders.



Glossary of Terms

Accommodate: (#7 - Inclusion & Access) To take action with the intent of reasonably meeting the needs of the learner. The term recognizes that all students learn at different rates and in different modalities and that students identified with learning disabilities need additional and intensified, often more frequent supports.

Active: Activities that involve youth doing something through different exposures (i.e. seeing, hearing, touching and doing) allowing them to be physically active and/or stimulating their innate curiosity. Being active means youth are physically, emotionally, and intellectually engaged through activities that stimulate their curiosity and internal motivation.

Activities: The things that students engage in that are designed to foster their learning around a particular topic, content area, and/or theme.

Collaboration: The act of working together with others in order to achieve or do something. Collaboration can enhance the quality and sustainability of a program by maximizing financial resources and blending multiple sources of support. For youth, collaboration activities in a program help build team skills and allow for youth to be accountable to each other.

Community Partners: Non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, city or county agencies, individuals, volunteer groups, and businesses that demonstrate a commitment to the same or similar mission of the out-of-school time program.

Diversity: When something is diverse, it consists of different forms and types. Diversity in the OST world often refers to the varied characteristics of people involved in a program, including, for example, variations around race, color, religion, sex, age, income level, national origin, physical ability, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity and expression.

Engaging: Learning experiences that tap into a youth's natural curiosity and interest in discovery while at the same time motivating, rather than discouraging their eagerness to try new activities.

Equity: In education, the term equity refers to the principle of fairness. While it is often used interchangeably with the related principle of equality, equity encompasses a wide variety of educational models, programs, and strategies that may be considered fair, but not necessarily equal. It has been said that "equity is the process; equality is the outcome," given that equity—what is fair and just—may not, in the process of educating students, reflect strict equality—what is applied, allocated, or distributed equally.

Out-of-School Time (OST): OST refers to structured, supervised programs that school-age youth attend when school is not in session before and/or after the school day or on non-school days. OST programs can engage youth in a variety of activities and happen in school or community-based settings.

Outcomes: A description of progress made toward a program's stated goals at a given point in time.

GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY

Glossary of Terms

Participant: Includes youth, parent, and community member participants.

Project-Based: Activities where youth explore real-world problems and challenges. With this type of active and engaged learning, students are inspired to obtain a deeper knowledge of the subjects they are studying.

Relational Health: The ability to form relationships with others and to adapt to different environments.

Service-Learning: A teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Through service-learning, young people—from kindergarteners to college students use what they learn in the classroom to solve real-life problems. They not only learn the practical applications of their studies, they become actively contributing citizens and community members through the service they perform.

Shared Accountability: A shared obligation or willingness to accept responsibility for outcomes and consequences (and account for one's actions).

Social-Emotional Learning: The process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others and maintain positive relationships. (CASEL)

Stakeholders: Those who hold a vested interest in the program. They include anyone who is interested in or will benefit from knowing about the program's progress, such as board members, funders, collaborators, program participants, families, school staff (e.g., teachers, principals, and superintendents), college or university partners, external evaluators, someone from the next school level (e.g., middle school staff for an elementary school-age program), and community partners.

Strategies: Methods used to make progress toward goals, inclusive of activities.

Sustainability: Long term viability of an organization or program that accounts for such elements as governance, leadership, funding and staffing capacity.

Trauma-Informed: A strengths-based approach that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impacts of trauma.

Trauma-Responsive: Interventions and approaches that seek to alleviate trauma symptoms.

Vision: The overarching purpose of the organization, program, or project.



**MONTANA
AFTERSCHOOL
ALLIANCE**

mtafterschoolalliance.org