



**THRIVING OST
WORKFORCE INITIATIVE**
NATIONAL AFTERSCHOOL ASSOCIATION



OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

**JOB QUALITY
STANDARDS, USAGE
GUIDE & ASSESSMENT**

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INTRODUCTION

In the last 25 years, the Out-of-School Time (OST) profession has made great strides in research, practice, and policies, leading to funding and supporting quality OST programs. Current research shows that skilled and knowledgeable program staff are the backbone of program quality and are key to desired positive youth outcomes. However, the OST workforce has historically been expected to provide quality services in environments characterized by unclear professional pathways, persistent part-time hours, low wages, and minimal benefits.

As the professional membership organization for people who work with and for youth during out-of-school time, the National AfterSchool Association (NAA) invests in the growth and development of and advocates for OST professionals. In this role, NAA maintains a continual eye toward the needs of the field and works to identify ways to better support its membership. In 2022, the NAA team began working earnestly to gather input from the field and develop guidelines, resources, and examples to help create a thriving OST workforce.

**MORE THAN EVER, THIS WORK IS CRUCIAL AS THE FIELD
FACES AN UNPRECEDENTED WORKFORCE CRISIS.**

IMPROVING RECRUITMENT & RETENTION THROUGH JOB QUALITY

We acknowledge that multiple challenges exist related to staffing, including recruitment, retention, development, career advancement, and more. In many cases, the OST workforce is marked by part-time hours, low wages, limited benefits, and limited room for growth, resulting in positions that cannot attract skilled and committed individuals for the long term. While OST staff report that they are happy with their jobs and find the work fulfilling, many afterschool staff work part-time and hold multiple jobs. 27% percent of full-time and 53% of part-time staff have a second job. Many see a job in afterschool as supplemental or temporary, and yearly turnover may be as high as 40 percent. Pay is the primary factor that causes afterschool staff to leave the field.¹ The National AfterSchool Association (NAA) recognizes that we must answer these long-standing and now exacerbated challenges with a focus on job quality.

As stated in a [2021 report from the Urban Institute](#), “Job quality is a multidimensional concept that affects outcomes at the worker, organizational, and systematic levels. It is inextricably tied to worker outcomes such as job retention, income stability, and physical and mental well-being. Jobs can be made up of multiple elements, including wages, benefits, job design, and career advancement.” These elements are all key to measuring job quality. Based on feedback from our constituencies and the lived experience of our workforce, we know OST positions generally fall lower on the quality spectrum than many other jobs.

When addressing recruitment and retention challenges, the focus tends to be on pay. While higher wages will help solve the recruitment and retention issue (as OST workers deserve thriving salaries and good benefits), job quality is much more than that. In short, investments in job quality can stabilize the workforce.

THE IMPACT OF WORKFORCE INSTABILITY

The gap between poor job quality for OST professionals and the need for high-quality OST programs is a significant concern for NAA, our State Affiliates, and our members. Recruitment and retention challenges and workforce instability exacerbate this gap, impacting:

- **Program Access:** While investments in OST continue to grow, access to programs remains an issue. Staff recruitment and retention challenges increase program waiting lists and leave young people without program access. With workforce stability, programs can provide youth with the unique experiences and support they need and deserve beyond the school day.
- **Program Quality:** According to NAA members who participated in a recent NAA webinar, “Designing Jobs that Support Program Quality,” challenges of recruitment, retention, and career advancement of staff negatively impact program quality and relationships with school personnel, families and young people. One NAA State Affiliate Leader indicated, “The impact of these challenges is huge. It impacts access as organizations turn down opportunities they can’t staff.” In addition, “understaffing causes staff to become burned out more quickly because they and kids don’t have the social, emotional, and organizational support they need. High turnover makes it hard for kids to feel safe, secure and cared for. It is challenging to build rapport.”

Job quality for OST professionals is the foundation of program quality. If we can attract qualified people to the profession and keep them, we will be better equipped to provide the quality services that young people, families, and communities need.

¹ Yohalem, N., Pittman, K., & Edwards, S. L. (2010). Strengthening the Youth Development/Afterschool Workforce: Lessons Learned and Implications for Funders. Retrieved from https://youtheconomicopportunities.org/sites/default/files/uploads/resource/Strengthening_the_YD-AS_Workforce.pdf

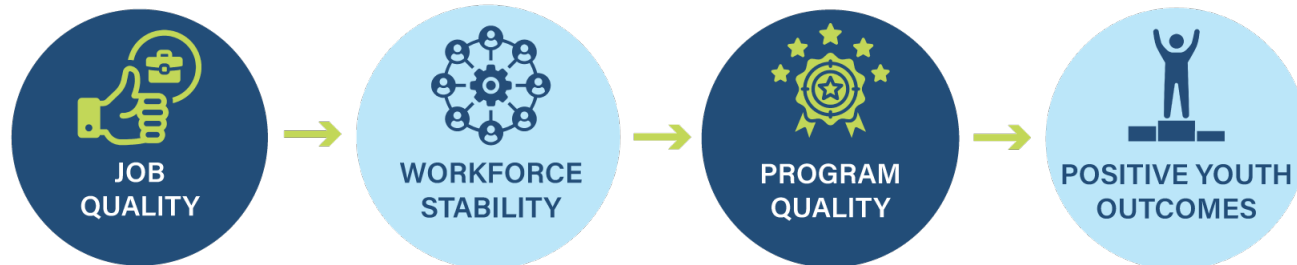
THRIVING OST WORKFORCE INITIATIVE

Despite progress in OST research and practice, the chronic underinvestment in workforce quality hinders desired youth outcomes and stifles program expansion. This problem necessitates bold action to support better wages, benefits, professional development, career advancement, and more for OST professionals.

Based on the valuable work of the NAA State Affiliates, members, organizational and program leaders from across the nation, NAA is promoting workforce advocacy through **our Thriving OST Workforce Initiative, which raises awareness, builds strategic partnerships, and secures funding to improve public narrative, policies, and practices that will enhance job quality and reduce OST recruitment and retention issues.**

THE OST QUALITY CONNECTION THEORY OF CHANGE

A thriving OST workforce prioritizes job quality, which leads to workforce stability and enables OST professionals to deliver high-quality programs that lead to positive youth outcomes.



OST JOB DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Using the elements in the OST Job Design Framework below can enhance the quality of jobs in the OST field. When offered together, the elements of the Framework result in respectful, equitable, and inclusive workplace cultures and quality jobs that provide what professionals need and deserve.



This framework was developed based on the work of Steven Dawson, a senior advisor to the National Fund for Workforce Solutions.

OST JOB QUALITY STANDARDS OVERVIEW

The OST Job Quality Standards provide a standard structure for defining and discussing “good jobs.” The Standards ground the conversation in the available empirical evidence demonstrating how job quality relates to worker outcomes and outline effective practices that support workforce development—including recruitment and retention — and workforce stability by promoting high-quality, equitable jobs.

The Standards are based on the Framework and include:

4 Pillars:

Overarching categories representing key job quality areas

16 Elements:

Critical pieces of each pillar

67 Indicators:

Observable practices that support each job quality element

An annotated bibliography of supporting evidence

EQUITY & INCLUSION

Job quality is fundamental to fostering equity and inclusion in the OST profession. The OST workforce primarily comprises women, particularly women of color, who live in the communities programs serve. Issues of job quality — including low pay, lack of clear career paths, and substandard benefits — when ignored will perpetuate many of the inequitable systems that sustain poverty, health issues, and other critical disparities in the communities OST programs serve. The Standards incorporate best practices specific to diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism focused on creating inclusive workplaces, applying antiracist principles, and designing jobs that center and value all identities, furthering efforts toward equity.

ASPIRATIONS, ALIGNMENT & LIMITATIONS

While aspirational, the OST Job Quality Standards integrate foundational principles that all workers deserve in addition to good pay and benefits — the flexibility, autonomy, stability, and advancement opportunities essential for OST professionals. For over two decades, job quality has been top of mind with early childhood education (ECE) providers and advocates. In 1999, ECE providers created [Model Work Standards for Teaching Staff in Center-Based Child Care](#),² built on the premise that Good Child Care Jobs = Good Care for Children. The standards were updated in 2019 to reflect a 21st-century context in which “quality improvement” efforts have consistently missed the mark when it comes to addressing the needs of the adults providing early care and education.

Given their level of detail, the provider-created ECE Model Work Standards can help center directors with school-age programs operationalize some of the similar concepts the OST Job Quality Standards outline. In addition, both sets of Standards can be powerful tools as we all work to strengthen workforce systems. Consistency in job quality advocacy across the ECE and OST sectors will strengthen the message in each sector, especially

for school-age care providers who straddle the ECE and OST worlds.

Like many frameworks and standards, the Job Quality Standards have limits to what they can achieve. These standards are the starting point for change, and it will take more to fix the systemic challenges within the OST profession. However, the Standards are an integral starting point for NAA and other interested parties to first guide advocacy for policy changes and then organizational practices prioritizing high-quality, equitable jobs that value professionals’ contributions and impact.

Note: organizational and program-level practices will be hard-pressed to change without broader systematic and mindset changes. NAA and the field members who contributed to the development of the Job Quality Standards acknowledge that many of the indicators are aspirational and challenging to meet with current funding models and budgets.

AUDIENCES & POSSIBLE USES

Given these systemic challenges, successful OST workforce development efforts require concerted efforts by various people and groups. The Standards have broad application for policy advocates and makers, government agencies, philanthropic organizations, OST intermediaries, and others. In addition, the fundamental elements of the Standards should be integrated into workplaces by organizations and programs that employ OST professionals, their leaders, and human resources professionals to the extent possible under current conditions.

Standards can serve as a starting point for identifying action to reduce OST workforce challenges and improve job quality. For example, state and federal governments can enhance job quality at the highest level through legislation and regulations. Individual organizations and programs, as well as staff and boards (whether small and local or large and national) that directly employ OST professionals, can also empower and support workers. The audience uses are summarized below and detailed in the **OST Job Quality Standards Usage Guide**.

²Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW). (1999). Model Work Standards for Teaching Staff in Center-Based Child Care. [cscce.berkeley.edu](https://cscce.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/publications/The-Model-Work-Standards-Center-Based_FINAL.pdf). https://cscce.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/publications/The-Model-Work-Standards-Center-Based_FINAL.pdf



JOB QUALITY STANDARDS & ASSESSMENT

Organizational growth requires reflection on practices to identify strengths and recognize growth areas. Reflection heightens awareness and can lead to change and growth.

The OST Job Quality Standards Self-Assessment Tool empowers organizational boards and leaders to assess their practices based on the indicators outlined in the OST Job Quality Standards. The Self-Assessment Tool is organized by Job Quality Framework, pillars, and elements, allowing

groups to reflect on practice, create action plans for change, and build job quality within their organizations.

Use this workbook to assess areas of strength and opportunity and determine action plans for change. The Assess, Reflect, Plan & Grow process helps determine what supports continued job quality growth within organizations. Work through one pillar at a time (e.g.,) or focus on just a few specific elements or indicators.

ASSESS

Carefully read through the indicators and use the assessment tool to indicate one of the following for each:

- 1 = Not yet**
- 2 = We've tried but struggle with this and need additional support or practice**
- 3 = Most of the time, but inconsistent and could improve**
- 4 = This is a strength, no growth needed**

If you need clarification on what a particular indicator means, score it as a 1. Even after many years, youth development organizations still have more to learn. As you work through the assessment, make notes with examples as evidence and rate the indicator according to the rubric above.

Use the Assessment Summary page at the end of the document to calculate the results.

REFLECT

Use the questions beginning at the end of each element section to guide your reflection. Consider the results as you think about areas of strength

and areas of opportunity. Reflect on organizational practices and the assessment ratings as you think through your answers to the questions and set goals.

PLAN & GROW

Use the Action Plan at the back of the guide to articulate goals, plan for needed resources or growth, and establish a deadline for meeting the goals. Once the plan is complete, follow it to build job quality in your organization.

REASSESS, CELEBRATE, AND CONTINUE TO GROW

When the items on the action plan are complete, use the self-assessment to reassess and determine progress. Celebrate your successes and then make additional plans for growth in the same pillar or element or select a different one.

Note: When using the self-assessment, have several team members conduct the assessment and compare reflections. Together, discuss the results of each team member's assessment, remaining open to all perspectives and supporting evidence when scores do not align. Use the results to select goals and to plan for growth together.



JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND POSTINGS, INTERVIEWING, ONBOARDING

Rating

1. Job Descriptions and Postings:

1.1 Have assigned salary ranges, anticipated schedule, and hours, and describe benefits offered.

1.2 Emphasize skills and knowledge required for the job over unnecessary education, credential, and experience requirements. Specify education requirements only when necessary to perform the job rather than serving as a proxy for skills and knowledge. Incorporate broad definitions of prior experience and value life experience.

1.3 Are aligned to professional competencies, providing clarity on what success looks like and describing the competencies needed to enter the job and the competencies one might expect to develop through being in the role.

1.4 They are inclusive and meet all legal requirements, for example, requiring access to reliable transportation instead of car ownership and requiring experience working with children rather than experience working in a childcare center.

1.5 Include physical requirements and available accommodations.

1.6 Are shared internally and widely externally through affinity groups, community organizations, alum groups, and other networks to attract a diverse candidate pool.

2. Interviewing:

2.1 Resume screeners and interviewers complete implicit bias training.

2.2 Names and addresses are removed from resumes before screening.

2.3 A description-based rubric with relevant skills-based requirements is used for resume screening and interview.

2.4 If possible, interviews are conducted by teams of two or more.

2.5 Interview questions are created based on position and are the same for each candidate interviewing for that position.

Rating

3. Onboarding:☐

3.1 An employee handbook is used as a central document outlining general expectations, policies, and guidelines.

☐

3.2 The employee handbook uses inclusive policies and language (e.g., avoiding binary gender pronouns) and equitable policies for all workers (e.g., floating holidays and gender-neutral bathrooms).

☐

3.3 A formal new hire orientation process includes onboarding to organizational and team culture and norms and clarifies expectations for all new staff.

PAY, HOURS AND SCHEDULING, BENEFITS & EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE**4. Sustainable Pay:**☐

4.1 Workers are paid equitable, stable, and predictable living wages.

☐

4.2 Workers are correctly classified as either exempt or non-exempt under federal and state wage and hour laws.

☐

4.3 Salary scales for all positions are available to every employee in a written format, either online or in a printed program policy document.

☐

4.4 Workers are paid for their work and are only expected to participate in employer-sponsored, work-related activities if they are paid. Workers on the payroll are not expected or asked to volunteer.

☐

4.5 At least annually, wages are adjusted to account for increased cost of living. In addition, wages and titles are increased with the acquisition of new skills, experience, and responsibilities.

☐

4.6 All practices that impact compensation, including bonuses, premium pay, overtime, and scheduling, are reviewed regularly to ensure practices are equitable, transparent, and used accordingly.

5. Stable Hours & Scheduling:☐

5.1 Scheduled hours include enough time to complete all job requirements.

☐

5.2 Hours and schedules are assessed regularly and, when possible, adjusted to meet workers' needs.

☐

5.3 Most workers are scheduled for 15 or more hours per week.

Rating

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| <input type="text"/> | 5.4 Positions are filled with full-time workers when possible rather than multiple part-time workers. Part-time and contingent work, which can cause job insecurity and deprive workers of important benefits and protections, is minimized. |
| <input type="text"/> | 5.5 Schedules have consistent start and end times. |
| <input type="text"/> | 5.6 Schedules are consistent from week to week. |
| <input type="text"/> | 5.7 Deviation from planned schedules and last-minute management-driven changes are rare. |

6. Benefits and Employee Assistance:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| <input type="text"/> | 6.1 Available primary benefits include health, dental, vision, life, and disability insurance, retirement plans, paid time off for holidays, vacation and sickness, and paid training starting within the first 30 days of employment. |
| <input type="text"/> | 6.2 Secondary benefits include employee assistance programs (EAPs), mental health and well-being resources, financial or other assistance that removes barriers to employee participation in professional development, and training. |
| <input type="text"/> | 6.3 Additional benefits include subsidized child care, transportation, and housing assistance, paid tuition or tuition reimbursement, and tax credits, if eligible. |
| <input type="text"/> | 6.4 Most benefits are available to workers who work at least 15 hours per week. |
| <input type="text"/> | 6.5 Employees' needs are regularly assessed, and efforts are made to match services, benefits, and policies to those needs. |
| <input type="text"/> | 6.6 All workers are automatically enrolled in comprehensive benefits plans within 30 days of employment and are provided with any needed navigation support. |
| <input type="text"/> | 6.7 Workers are consistently reminded of available benefits and encouraged to use them. |

WORKPLACE INCLUSION & SAFETY

Rating

7. Workplace Inclusion:

7.1 Diversity, equity, and inclusion are written core values and practiced norms. When identified, action is taken to remove barriers to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

7.2 Systems exist to ensure all workers feel respected and empowered in the workplace.

7.3 There are organization-wide and individual opportunities for diversity, equity, inclusion, & accessibility training.

7.4 Reasonable accommodations are provided for all workers with disabilities under federal law, and practices support workers with health conditions and disabilities.

8. Safety:

8.1 All state and federal workplace health and safety laws are followed, including anti-discrimination, profiling, and harassment policies.

8.2 Measures are in place to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses.

8.3 Worker input is regularly sought to help create a safe, healthy, and accessible workplace.

8.4 Workers' rights and responsibilities are clear, and the environment ensures comfort when seeking help or support.

8.5 Communication with information about organizational or program decision-making processes, performance, and direction is transparent, consistent, and timely to keep workers updated and prepare workers for any changes that may affect them.



Review your self-assessment ratings. Record any relevant examples, notes, and evidence:



TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, ACKNOWLEDGMENT, PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

9. Training and Professional Development:

☐

9.1 Pre-service and on-the-job training for knowledge and skills needed to perform job duties and increase levels of competency is provided.

☐

9.2 Workers are provided with live and online access to training workshops, courses, job shadowing, and other learning that builds skill and competency.

☐

9.3 Workers are supported in attaining professional development and training opportunities that lead to credentials or certifications that hold local and/or national labor market value.

10. Acknowledgment:

☐

10.1 Processes are created to ensure that all workers are regularly recognized and appreciated for their contributions and achievements. There are formal and informal worker recognition and appreciation opportunities by supervisors, peers, and others.

☐

10.2 Written commendations, verbal praise, awards, or financial incentives that highlight an employee's accomplishments and value are frequent and consistent.

11. Performance Management:

☐

11.1 Supervisors are provided with ongoing training to develop and fine-tune skills such as delegation, accountability, coaching, and providing performance feedback, as well as implicit bias training.

☐

11.2 Informal and formal processes are in place to provide regular, timely, and actionable feedback.

☐

11.3 Supervisors work with each employee to set expectations and performance goals at the beginning of each year and meet at least bi-annually to discuss progress and areas for growth.

☐

11.4 A uniform performance template based on a standardized rubric is used for all workers.

☐

11.5 The performance appraisal template includes space for collaborative goal setting, periodic worker and employee reflection, and feedback on progress, accomplishments, and opportunities for growth. It is also used to support setting and achieving goals.



Review your self-assessment ratings. Record any relevant examples, notes, and evidence:



OPPORTUNITY

CAREER DEVELOPMENT, MENTORING, AND COACHING

12. Career Development:

☐

12.1 Clear and well-defined career pathways outline the skills, experience, and competencies required to advance within the organization or industry.

☐

12.2 Promotions and advancement opportunities are regularly communicated with transparency.

☐

12.3 Equitable opportunities for internal advancement are prioritized by filling job openings from within whenever possible.

☐

12.4 Skill-building activities that create a talent pipeline are used to prepare workers for additional responsibilities and career growth.

13. Mentoring and Coaching:

☐

13.1 Paid time and activities are provided to build formal or informal relationships that benefit personal and professional growth.

☐

13.2 Tailored coaching opportunities are used to develop workers' skills and competencies for advancement.



OPPORTUNITY

Review your self-assessment ratings. Record any relevant examples, notes, and evidence:



PARTICIPATION, IMPROVEMENT, ENGAGEMENT

14. Participation:

☐

14.1 Workers have genuine, consistent opportunities to share their ideas, suggestions, and expertise through various channels and activities.

☐

14.2 Workers have opportunities to provide input into developing their roles and decisions that affect their experience.

☐

14.3 Worker autonomy is supported, and workers are encouraged to make decisions and take ownership of their work.

15. Improvement:

☐

15.1 Formal and informal processes for continuous improvement are in place to gather and implement worker input. The method includes informing workers about how their input will be or was used. For example, if choices must be made to make benefits affordable for the organization and workers are invited to engage in the decision process.

☐

15.2 As challenges arise, workers are encouraged to develop and share innovative solutions.

☐

15.3 There is a transparent process with safe channels for raising concerns beyond going to a direct supervisor without fear of retaliation or discrimination.

16. Engagement:

☐

16.1 Workers understand and can articulate how their role matters and aligns with the organization or program's goals and values.

☐

16.2 Worker satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and engagement are measured and addressed regularly through various formal and informal methods.



Review your self-assessment ratings. Record any relevant examples, notes, and evidence:



REFLECTION & ACTION PLAN

Consider your results as you think about your areas of strength and your areas of opportunity. Reflect on your daily work as you answer the following questions and set priorities.

STRENGTHS

On which elements did you score the highest? Why?

What opportunities do you have or could you create to demonstrate leadership or support others with developing these elements or showcasing them to current and potential employees?

OPPORTUNITIES

On which elements did you score the lowest? Why? What makes these challenging for you?

From your answer above, pick one indicator that could be most impactful in your work. List these competencies as goals.

Goal:

ACTION PLAN

Complete the following action plan to meet the identified goal.

Write your goal statement here:

Identify your **FIRST** action step for **your goal**:

Start Date:

Due Date:

Who (party, department, etc.) is responsible?

What resources (people, technology, etc.) are required?

What is the desired outcome of this action step?

Notes/Remarks:

Identify your **SECOND** action step for **your goal**:

Start Date:

Due Date:

Who (party, department, etc.) is responsible?

What resources (people, technology, etc.) are required?

What is the desired outcome of this action step?

Notes/Remarks:

Identify your **THIRD** action step for **your goal**:

Start Date:

Due Date:

Who (party, department, etc.) is responsible?

What resources (people, technology, etc.) are required?

What is the desired outcome of this action step?

Notes/Remarks:

A photograph of multiple hands of various skin tones stacked together in a circle, symbolizing teamwork and unity. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text 'USAGE GUIDE' is centered in a yellow, sans-serif font.

USAGE GUIDE

AUDIENCE & POSSIBLE USES CHART:

THOSE WHO WORK IN:

POSSIBLE USES:

SYSTEMIC IMPACT

**OST Intermediary
(National, State, Local)
Organizations**

Guidance and resources; professional development; technical assistance; advocacy and collaboration; quality improvement initiatives

**Philanthropy & Corporate
Social Responsibility**

Funding support; capacity building; collaboration and networking; research and evaluation; advocacy and policy initiatives

**Government
(Federal, State, Local)
& Policymaking**

Legislative support; funding allocations; partnership and collaboration; data collection and evaluation; advocacy and public awareness development; regulatory compliance; funding and resource allocation; training and technical assistance; collaboration and partnerships

Research

Study design; data collection; analyzing and evaluation; comparison benchmarking; policy and practice recommendations; longitudinal studies

Higher Education

Curriculum development; experiential learning opportunities; professional development and training; research and evaluation; partnerships and collaboration

**OST Organizational/
Senior Leadership**

Policy adoption; strategic planning; oversight and accountability; resource allocation; advocacy and partnerships
Job quality assessment and action plans for change

**OST Programs
Working Directly
with Young People**

Self-assessment; advocacy; professional development; collaboration and support; feedback and communication; personal well-being

PROGRAM-LEVEL IMPACT

OST INTERMEDIARY (NATIONAL, STATE, LOCAL) ORGANIZATIONS

Those who work in **OST INTERMEDIARY (NATIONAL, STATE, LOCAL) ORGANIZATIONS** can utilize the OST Job Quality Standards to enhance their work and promote job quality within the OST field.

They can:

- a. Advocate for policies and funding that prioritize job quality in the OST field. They can collaborate with policymakers, funders, and other stakeholders to raise awareness about the importance of job quality and advocate for resources to support its improvement. By leveraging their collective voice, intermediaries can drive systemic change and create an environment that values and supports OST professionals.
- b. Integrate the standards into their quality improvement initiatives. They can use the standards as a benchmark to assess the job quality of OST programs and provide feedback and recommendations for improvement. Intermediaries can also recognize and highlight programs that meet the standards, incentivizing other programs to strive for higher job quality.
- c. Use the standards as a guide to develop resources, toolkits, and training materials that support OST programs in improving job quality. They can provide practical guidance on implementing the standards and offer best practices for creating inclusive job descriptions, designing equitable compensation structures, and fostering workplace inclusion and safety.
- d. Incorporate the standards into their professional development offerings for OST professionals. They can develop training sessions, workshops, and webinars focusing on different standards elements, such as training and professional development opportunities, career advancement pathways, and worker recognition and appreciation. By providing professional development opportunities that align with the standards, intermediaries can help OST professionals enhance their skills and knowledge while promoting job quality.
- e. Offer technical assistance to OST programs to help them align with the standards. They can provide one-on-one support to organizations in compensation analysis, benefits administration, and creating inclusive workplace cultures. Intermediaries can also assist programs in developing policies and procedures that promote job quality and provide guidance on implementing effective performance management systems.

PHILANTHROPY & CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Those who work in **PHILANTHROPY AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY** can support and advance the out-of-school time (OST) profession. By investing in job quality initiatives, philanthropic organizations can create a thriving OST workforce and promote positive youth outcomes.

They can:

- a. Provide financial support to OST programs and organizations that prioritize job quality. This funding can enhance OST professionals' compensation, benefits, and professional development opportunities. By investing in job quality, philanthropic organizations can help attract and retain skilled individuals committed to providing high-quality services to young people.

- b. Offer capacity-building opportunities to OST programs and organizations to help them implement the OST Job Quality Standards effectively, including providing training, technical assistance, and resources to support the adoption and integration of job quality practices. By building the capacity of OST programs, philanthropic organizations can contribute to the long-term sustainability and success of the OST workforce.
- c. Facilitate collaboration and networking opportunities among OST programs and organizations. By bringing stakeholders together, philanthropic organizations can create spaces for knowledge sharing, best practice exchange, and collective problem-solving. This collaboration can help foster a supportive ecosystem that promotes job quality and continuous improvement in the OST field.
- d. Support research and evaluation efforts focused on job quality in the OST profession. By funding studies and evaluations, philanthropic organizations can generate evidence-based insights and recommendations that inform policy and practice. This research can help identify effective strategies for enhancing job quality and provide a basis for advocacy and resource allocation.
- e. Leverage their influence to advocate for policies and practices prioritizing job quality in the OST field. By partnering with policymakers, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders, philanthropic organizations can amplify the importance of job quality and advocate for systemic changes that support OST professionals' well-being and professional growth. This advocacy can help create an environment that values and invests in the OST workforce.

GOVERNMENT (Federal, State, Local) & POLICYMAKING

Those who work in **GOVERNMENT (FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL) AND POLICYMAKING** play a critical role in shaping the landscape of the out-of-school time (OST) profession. Policy-makers can enable an environment that supports OST professionals' recruitment, retention, and professional growth by prioritizing job quality in their policy decisions.

- a. Advocate for legislation that promotes job quality in the OST profession, including measures such as establishing minimum wage standards, ensuring access to benefits like healthcare and retirement plans, and creating pathways for career advancement. By enacting supportive policies, policymakers can help address the historical challenges of low wages, limited benefits, and unclear professional pathways hindering job quality in the OST field.
- b. Allocate funding dedicated explicitly to enhancing job quality in OST programs, including funding for professional development opportunities, competitive compensation packages, and resources for program improvement. By prioritizing funding for job quality initiatives, policymakers can demonstrate their commitment to supporting the OST workforce and ensuring the delivery of high-quality services to young people.
- c. Foster partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders in the OST field, including convening meetings, task forces, or advisory committees that bring together policymakers, OST program leaders, educators, and other relevant stakeholders. By facilitating collaboration, policymakers can ensure that the expertise and perspectives inform policy decisions of those directly involved in the OST profession.
- d. Prioritize data collection and evaluation efforts related to job quality in the OST profession, including conducting surveys, studies, and

evaluations to assess the impact of job quality initiatives and identify areas for improvement. By collecting and analyzing data, policymakers can make informed decisions and track progress toward enhancing job quality in the OST field.

- e. Use their platform to advocate for the importance of job quality in the OST profession,

raising public awareness about the challenges OST professionals face and the positive impact that job quality can have on youth outcomes. By advocating for job quality, policymakers can build public support and generate momentum for policy changes prioritizing OST professionals' well-being and professional growth.

GOVERNMENT LEADERS & AGENCIES

GOVERNMENT LEADERS AND AGENCIES have a significant role in promoting job quality in the out-of-school time (OST) profession. Government agencies can enable an environment that supports OST professionals' recruitment, retention, and professional growth by prioritizing job quality in their policies and practices.

They can:

- a. Develop policies prioritizing job quality in the OST profession, including establishing guidelines and standards for compensation, benefits, and professional development opportunities. By setting clear expectations and requirements, government agencies can create expectations that support OST professionals' well-being and professional growth.
- b. Ensure that OST programs comply with relevant regulations and standards related to job quality, including conducting regular inspections, audits, and assessments to ensure that programs meet the requirements for compensation, working conditions, and professional development. By enforcing compliance, government agencies can protect the rights and well-being of OST professionals.
- c. Allocate funding and resources dedicated explicitly to enhancing job quality in OST programs, including providing grants, subsidies, or incentives to support competitive compensation, benefits, and professional development opportunities. By investing in job quality initiatives, government agencies can demonstrate their commitment to supporting the OST workforce and promoting positive youth outcomes.
- d. Offer training and technical assistance to OST programs to help them implement the OST Job Quality Standards effectively, including providing guidance, resources, and capacity-building opportunities to support adopting and integrating job quality practices. By offering training and technical assistance, government agencies can ensure that OST programs have the knowledge and tools to create a supportive, high-quality work environment.
- e. Foster collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders in the OST field, including working closely with OST program leaders, educators, and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement job quality initiatives. By collaborating, government agencies can leverage the expertise and resources of different stakeholders to create comprehensive and effective strategies for enhancing job quality in the OST profession.

RESEARCH

Those who work in **RESEARCH** can utilize the OST Job Quality Standards as a valuable framework for studying and assessing job quality within the out-of-school time (OST) field. By incorporating the standards into their research, researchers can contribute to understanding job quality and its impact on OST professionals and the broader field.

They can:

- a. Design studies that investigate the relationship between job quality and various outcomes in the OST field, including examining the impact of job quality on employee retention, job satisfaction, program quality, and youth outcomes. By incorporating the standards into their study design, researchers can ensure that the dimensions of job quality outlined in the standards are considered and measured.
- b. Collect data that aligns with the indicators and elements outlined in the OST Job Quality Standards, including surveying OST professionals to gather information on their experiences related to job design, compensation, benefits, workplace inclusion, training, and engagement. Researchers can also conduct interviews or focus groups to gain qualitative insights into the lived experiences of OST professionals and how job quality impacts their work.
- c. Use the standards as a framework for analyzing and evaluating the data collected, including assessing the extent to which organizations meet the standards and identifying areas for improvement. Researchers can also examine the relationship between different dimensions of job quality and various outcomes, using statistical analyses to determine the impact of job quality on employee well-being and program effectiveness.
- d. Use the standards to compare job quality across different organizations or sectors within the OST field, including benchmarking organizations against the standards to identify best practices and areas for improvement. By comparing job quality across different contexts, researchers can gain insights into the factors contributing to high-quality jobs and inform recommendations for enhancing job quality in the field.
- e. Based on research findings, provide recommendations for policymakers, funders, and practitioners to improve job quality in the OST field, including advocating for policy changes that support equitable compensation, benefits, and professional development opportunities for OST professionals. Researchers can also guide organizational best practices to enhance job quality and create supportive work environments.
- f. Conduct longitudinal studies to examine the impact of job quality over time, including tracking changes in job quality indicators and outcomes for OST professionals and assessing the long-term effects of job quality on employee retention, career advancement, and program quality. Longitudinal studies can provide valuable insights into the dynamics of job quality and its implications for the OST workforce.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Those who work in **HIGHER EDUCATION** can utilize the OST Job Quality Standards to inform their curriculum, training, and professional development offerings for students pursuing careers in the out-of-school time (OST) field. By incorporating the standards into their programs, higher education programs can equip graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote job quality and contribute to positive outcomes in the OST profession.

- a. Integrate the dimensions of job quality outlined in the standards into their curriculum, including incorporating courses or modules covering topics such as job design, compensation, benefits, workplace inclusion, training and professional development, and employee engagement. By including these topics in the curriculum, university programs can prepare students to understand and address the challenges and opportunities related to job quality in the OST field.
- b. Provide students with experiential learning opportunities that allow them to apply the principles of job quality in real-world settings, including internships, practicum experiences, or service-learning projects in OST programs where students can observe and contribute to implementing job quality practices. By engaging in hands-on experiences, students can develop a deeper understanding of the importance of job quality and gain practical skills for promoting it.
- c. Can conduct research and evaluation studies that examine job quality in the OST field, including partnering with OST organizations to assess the implementation of job quality practices, evaluate their impact on employee well-being and program outcomes, and identify areas for improvement. By conducting rigorous research, university programs can contribute to the evidence base on job quality and inform best practices in the field.
- d. Can offer professional development and training opportunities for OST professionals, including current practitioners and alums. These offerings can focus on enhancing job quality in areas such as job design, compensation and benefits, workplace inclusion, and employee engagement. By providing ongoing professional development, university programs can support the continuous improvement of job quality practices in the OST field.

OST ORGANIZATIONAL/SENIOR LEADERSHIP

Senior Leadership of Organizations that Employ OST Professionals (Boards of Directors, CEOs, COOs, VPs, Executive Directors, etc.) or Directors/Managers/Coordinators Level Leadership at OST Organization/Youth Program can play a crucial role in promoting and implementing the OST Job Quality Standards. They can utilize the OST Job Quality Standards to improve job quality within their organizations or programs. By aligning their practices with the standards, employers can create a supportive and inclusive work environment that attracts and retains skilled and committed OST professionals.

They can:

- a. Adopt the OST Job Quality Standards as official policies of the organization. By formally adopting the standards, the board demonstrates its commitment to prioritizing job quality, sending a clear message to staff, stakeholders, and funders that the organization values the well-being and professional growth of its OST workers.
- b. Incorporate the OST Job Quality Standards into the organization's strategic planning process, including aligning the organization's goals, objectives, and strategies with the standards to ensure that job quality is a central focus. By integrating the standards into strategic planning, the board can guide the organization's efforts to enhance job quality and create a supportive work environment for OST professionals.
- c. Provide oversight and hold the organization accountable for implementing the OST Job Quality Standards, including regularly reviewing progress, monitoring compliance with the standards, and evaluating the organization's performance with job quality. By actively engaging in oversight and accountability, the board ensures that job quality remains a priority and that the organization is working towards meeting the standards.
- d. Allocate resources to support the implementation of the OST Job Quality Standards, including budgeting funds for competitive compensation, professional development opportunities, and other initiatives that enhance job quality. The board and leadership demonstrate its commitment to investing in OST professionals' well-being and professional growth by allocating resources.
- e. Advocate for job quality in the OST field and establish partnerships with other organizations and stakeholders, including engaging in advocacy efforts to promote policies and practices that support job quality and collaborating with other organizations to share best practices and resources. By advocating and partnering, the board and leadership can contribute to a broader movement toward enhancing job quality in the OST profession.
- f. Review and update their job descriptions and postings to align with the standards, including clearly defining responsibilities, skills, and requirements in an inclusive and accessible manner.
- g. Provide information on salary ranges, anticipated schedules and hours, and benefits offered. Employers can attract a diverse candidate pool by using inclusive language and avoiding unnecessary educational or experience requirements.
- h. Incorporate the standards into their interviewing and selection processes, including providing implicit bias training to resume screeners and interviewers, removing identifying information from resumes during screening, using relevant skills-based requirements for resume screening and interviews, conducting interviews with teams of two or more, and using consistent interview questions for each candidate. These practices help ensure fairness and equity in the selection process.
- i. Develop a comprehensive onboarding process

that aligns with the standards, including providing new hires with an employee handbook that outlines expectations, policies, and guidelines. The handbook should use inclusive language and equitable policies. Employers can also conduct a formal orientation process introducing new staff to the organizational culture, norms, and expectations, helping set a positive foundation for their experience within the organization.

- j. Assess their compensation practices to ensure they meet the standards, including setting equitable and livable wages, correctly classifying workers under wage and hour laws, and reviewing compensation practices regularly to ensure transparency and equity. Employers can also provide stable hours and scheduling, offer comprehensive benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, and paid time off, and consider additional benefits that support employee well-being and remove barriers to professional development.
- k. Prioritize workplace inclusion and safety by implementing practices that align with the standards, including promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion as core values, providing opportunities for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility training, ensuring reasonable accommodations for workers with disabilities, and following workplace health and safety laws. Employers can also create mechanisms

for workers to provide input on safety and well-being and establish clear rights and responsibilities for all employees.

- l. Invest in training and professional development opportunities that align with the standards, including providing on-the-job training, access to workshops and courses, and support for attaining credentials or certifications. Employers can also establish performance management processes that include ongoing communication, feedback, and goal-setting to enhance professional growth.
- m. Establish performance management processes that align with the standards, including setting clear expectations and goals, providing regular feedback and coaching, and offering opportunities for professional growth and advancement. Employers can enhance employee engagement and retention by implementing performance management practices that support job quality.
- n. Implement practices that recognize and appreciate workers' contributions and create opportunities for worker engagement, including regular recognition and appreciation for achievements, providing opportunities for input and involvement in decision-making processes, and creating channels for continuous improvement and feedback.

OST PROGRAMS WORKING DIRECTLY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Those who work in **OST PROGRAMS DIRECTLY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH** can use the OST Job Quality Standards as a guide to assess and advocate for job quality in their work settings. By familiarizing themselves with the standards and applying them to their own experiences, youth service workers can improve their job quality and contribute to a positive work environment.

They can:

- Use the standards as a self-assessment tool to evaluate the job quality in their current work settings. They can review each dimension of job quality outlined in the standards and reflect on how their job aligns with the indicators and elements. This self-assessment can help workers identify areas of strength and areas for improvement in their job quality.
- Can collaborate with their colleagues to collectively promote job quality within their organization. They can form support networks or committees focused on job quality to share resources, exchange ideas, and advocate for changes. Workers can amplify their voices and collectively impact job quality by working collaboratively.
- Advocate for job quality improvements within their organizations. They can use the standards as a reference point to converse with supervisors, managers, and colleagues about the importance of job quality and its impact on employee well-being and program outcomes. By advocating for changes that align with the standards, workers can create a more supportive and equitable work environment.
- Provide feedback to supervisors and managers about job quality issues they observe or experience. They can use the standards as a reference to articulate specific areas for improvement or suggest changes that align with the elements and indicators outlined in the standards. By providing constructive feedback, workers can contribute to a culture of continuous improvement and foster a more supportive work environment.
- Use the standards to guide their own professional development goals. They can identify areas of job quality that they would like to improve or develop further, such as seeking training opportunities, pursuing certifications, or acquiring new skills. By investing in their professional growth, workers can enhance their job quality and contribute to their career advancement.
- Use the standards as a reminder to prioritize their well-being and self-care. They can reflect on how their job aligns with the dimensions of job quality, such as compensation, benefits, and work-life balance. If they identify areas of concern, they can take proactive steps to address them, such as seeking support, setting boundaries, or accessing available resources.

For more OST resources and professional development information, please visit

WWW.NAAWEB.ORG