



Utilize and adapt the **conversation guidelines and talking points** below to help you prepare for engaging with key stakeholders and decision makers. Use your answers from Step 2/Build Your Case to add program-specific information where appropriate.

[All Stakeholders](#)

[School Districts](#)

[Businesses/Chambers of Commerce](#)

[Collective Impact/Philanthropic Organizations](#)

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### All Stakeholders

Introduce yourself and your organization/program

- Who are you?
  - Provide your background in afterschool/summer learning and position yourself as a youth development expert
  - Mention any direct or indirect public education experience, if applicable
- Who is your organization?
  - Share your organization's mission, vision, and brief history
  - Emphasize community connections
- Who does your organization/program serve? Where applicable:
  - Mention any existing school/district or community partnerships
  - Describe the number of youth you serve and the demographics of your youth/families
  - Emphasize if/where your program targets youth needing additional support
- What does your afterschool or summer program do?
  - Specify if you provide afterschool learning, summer learning, or both and describe your program format and length
  - Outline the specific type(s) of learning and enrichment your program provides (eg, STEM, the arts, physical activity, etc.) and where applicable:
    - Highlight if your program curricula/activities are aligned with GSE and your school districts' curriculum
    - Mention if your program staff includes certified teachers
- What does your OST program provide for youth? How does it support College, Career, and Military Readiness and prepare youth for successful, fulfilling futures? Where applicable, focus on:
  - Applied, hands-on, or project-based learning
  - Social and emotional learning
  - Academic support (eg, tutoring)
  - Caring adult mentors
  - Healthy food and/or physical activity
  - Transportation
  - Certification or any other benefits for youth upon completion



- What does your afterschool or summer program provide for families? Where applicable, focus on:
  - Providing a safe and engaging space for children with working parents
  - Providing your program for free or at a subsidized, minimal cost
  - Providing transportation and healthy meals
  - Directly providing or connecting families with local services and resources—food, healthcare, employment resources, etc.
  - Partnering with schools and supporting families for online or hybrid learning
- I believe our program and your [schools / business(es) / organization] have the same goal of not only ensuring our kids recover, but also preparing them for postsecondary success and fulfilling futures.

### **School Districts**

Understand the school district's goals and priorities

- Ask what the school district's goals are for this summer and the 21-22 school year as well as what strategies and tactics they are considering to achieve those goals
- Be prepared to discuss how your program has helped or can help address these common youth and community needs:
  - Finding and engaging students and families who have stopped attending either virtual or in-person school
  - Reengaging students in learning, including getting youth excited to learn again
  - Addressing students' social, emotional, and mental health needs
  - Addressing students' physical health and nutrition needs
  - Building a safe in-person environment for kids to return to
  - Prioritizing students who need the most support—students from low-income families, students of color, and students in rural areas
- Draw connections between your program's results and youth outcomes and the school district's goals, clearly demonstrating your program's alignment as well as your track record of success in achieving those goals
- Establish the shared goals your program and school district could achieve better together

Outline your unique value proposition to the district in addressing learning recovery

- Identify what programming/supports you could provide through a partnership with the district. Where applicable, include the following with any details specific to your program:
  - A place where youth feel like they belong and are safe and connected—this is something our kids need first and foremost before they can re-engage with academic learning
  - Hands-on and applied learning that expands on and reinforces school day lessons and that are proven to get students engaged and excited about learning
  - Activities focused on developing social-emotional skills
  - Personalized support—whether with academic schoolwork or social-emotional mentorship
  - Strong reach, relationships, and trust in the community and with families, especially low-income households and those hit hardest by the pandemic
  - Access to other supports kids and families need today—counseling, food and health services, etc.
  - A team of qualified youth professionals and/or certified teachers and the infrastructure to hire and train more
- If possible, begin to outline ideas for partnership, highlighting the ease of implementation:
  - Outline who you can serve—where and how many students. Be prepared with your minimum and maximum and know how quickly you could scale to meet your maximum
  - Outline how you will operate—in-person, virtual, hybrid



- Outline cost and cost effectiveness and mention that you are prepared to leverage your community relationships (funding, content, libraries, parks, cultural institutions) to enhance this partnership

### **Businesses/Chambers of Commerce**

- With the incredible investment of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) ESSER III funds, we have a once in a generation opportunity to not only help our young people and their families recover but to rebuild a sustainable, equitable system of support that will help our kids and communities to be stronger and more resilient in the future.
- Afterschool and summer programs address gaps in our state's talent pipeline by helping young people develop employability skills, learn by doing, and connect with mentors.
- Fully supporting afterschool and summer learning is an essential strategy for an equitable, robust economic recovery and a necessary investment in our children's future.
- We need your help to make sure ESSER III funding is serving the kids that most need it and addressing the most important things through recovery efforts.
- Afterschool and summer programs offer a critical time and space for youth to:
  - Engage in hands-on, applied learning
  - Interact with adults and peers to develop meaningful relationships
  - Build social skills
  - Develop critical thinking and problem-solving
  - Participate in physical activities
  - Access enrichment opportunities
- Afterschool and summer programs are proven to help young people learn, grow, and thrive and build a successful future in their communities. Through our programs, students:
  - Explore career paths
  - Gain workforce skills
  - Have higher graduation rates
  - Improve work habits and grades
  - Attend school more often
  - Get excited about learning
  - Develop strong social skills
- Specific key mindsets and skillsets that afterschool and summer programs help to develop include the following, which are directly aligned with the top 10 skills employers are looking for, as reported in the 2020 World Economic Forum Jobs of the Future Report:
  - Curiosity
  - Persistence and Grit
  - Adaptability
  - Resilience
  - Resourcefulness
  - Problem-solving
  - Teamwork
  - Idea Generation
  - Creativity
- Afterschool and summer programs are the lifelines that support working parents.
  - They help working parents keep their jobs
  - They provide support to parents who are trying to find jobs during the pandemic
  - They help women return to the workforce
- Provide a call to action:
  - Can you introduce me to your school district contacts or call for a community roundtable discussion?



- Would you be interested in authoring an op-ed?
- How else can you help?

### **Collective Impact/Philanthropic Organizations**

- Thank you for all that you've been doing to support the youth and families of our community throughout the pandemic. As a local afterschool/summer provider with years of experience in positive youth development, we share your goal of helping our kids and community recover.
- With the incredible investment of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) ESSER III funds, we have a once in a generation opportunity to not only help our young people and their families recover but to rebuild a sustainable, equitable system of support that will help our kids and communities to be stronger and more resilient in the future.
- High-quality afterschool and summer programming is a key component of any comprehensive recovery strategy. Not only does it accelerate academic learning, but more importantly, it also builds the social and emotional skills and relationships with both peers and caring adults that the pandemic has forced many to forgo for over a year and that are foundational to academic recovery.
- With collective impact/philanthropy organizations who focus on early childhood initiatives, highlight the correlation between their programs and afterschool/summer programs:
  - Participation in both early education and afterschool opportunities in elementary and middle school positively impacts academic achievement, including as students transition into high school and leading into young adulthood
  - The longer term effects of afterschool programs are comparable in size to high-quality early education programs, demonstrating the importance of high-quality early education *and* high-quality afterschool programs for children's later academic and social outcomes
  - The effects of early childhood education and afterschool are cumulative, meaning a student who experiences both has twice the benefits
- Outline our coalition's advocacy strategy for more and better community partnerships:
  - With the powerful investment of the American Rescue Plan and specific focus on learning recovery in ESSER III, we have an incredible opportunity to build something new and sustainable that will continue to serve our youth long after the pandemic and relief efforts are gone.
  - By doing this work in partnership, we can optimize available resources, create efficiencies, and align on shared goals to yield *better* outcomes for *more* kids.
  - Together we can create a comprehensive ecosystem of support for our students and families.
- Provide a call to action:
  - Can you introduce me to your school district contacts or call for a community roundtable discussion?
  - Would you be interested in authoring an op-ed?
  - How else can you help?