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What Is Advocacy?

• Speaking out on issues of concern to the public or special audiences.

• Examples include testifying at a hearing, writing a letter to the editor and communicating with government officials.

Why Should the Network Engage in Advocacy?

• Federal and state governments’ impact on afterschool programs range from funding (appropriations to special state and federal programs) to program standards.

• Legislators and government officials respond to constituents.

• Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network (PSAYDN) members are an important source of information on out-of-school and youth development issues for government officials and the media.
What Are Types of Advocacy?

**Administrative**
*Influencing current policy of the chief executive or an administrative agency by:*
- Addressing the need for new/improved programs
- Working to change how funds are allocated and spent in agency programs
- Testifying at agency hearings on proposed regulations
- Serving on advisory groups
- Contacting key staff on a regular basis

**Legislative**
*Influencing policy change through the legislative branch of government by:*
- Providing draft legislation to be introduced or commenting on legislation
- Testifying at committee hearings
- Asking legislators to support or oppose legislation
- Engaging in budget discussions

**Legal**
*Bringing or joining a lawsuit to seek a remedy when the legal rights of an individual or group have been violated.*

**Electoral**
*Influencing candidates’ and voter’s opinions on issues of importance by:*
- Raising the visibility of an issue during electoral campaigns
- Encouraging candidates to create a platform on a particular issue
- Encouraging voters to view candidate positions and vote accordingly
How Can Network Members Get Involved?

• Write or meet with legislators and administrators on issues of importance.

• Write opinion editorials (op-eds) and letters to the editor of local newspapers on issues of importance.

• Engage local legislators, arrange site visits, meet with your legislator’s district officials and involve legislators in key events.

• Encourage parents and staff involvement in advocacy efforts.

• Participate in local, state and/or federal “Day on the Hill” events with fellow advocates.

• Follow elected officials on social media outlets to keep current with their events and positions.

Advocacy vs. Lobbying: What Can You Do As a 501(c)3?¹

• Most of what you will do will be advocacy, not lobbying.

• You can respond to any request from a public official.

• You can educate/build a relationship with a public official.

• You are lobbying when you ask them to take a specific action on legislation, regulation or appropriations that is under their jurisdiction.

What Is Lobbying?

An attempt to influence directly or indirectly (by asking another person or group) public officials to take a special action on a policy issue.

Examples include asking legislators to increase an appropriation for an afterschool program and asking parents to write letters supporting or opposing legislation to local legislators.

Are There Limits for Nonprofit Lobbying?

• Nonprofits cannot use government funds to lobby government officials.

• Nonprofits must adhere to the section 501(h) expenditure test:
  – Lobbying limits are 20% of the first $500,000 of a tax-exempt organization’s expenditures.
  – For organizations with larger budgets, the limit increases on a sliding scale, to a maximum of $1 million for lobbying. Limits apply to both direct and indirect lobbying.

• Check with your accountant and legal counsel.
What Are the Facts?

• 18% of children were unsupervised after school in 2014 for an average of 8.99 hours per week.

• 321,296 children (17%) in Pennsylvania participate in an afterschool program, yet 811,954 children (50%) would be enrolled in a program if one were available to them.

• Afterschool program participation in Pennsylvania has increased from 9% in 2004 to 17% in 2014, an increase of 8% over ten years.

• Demand for afterschool programs in Pennsylvania has increased from 26% in 2004 to 50% in 2014, an increase of 24% over ten years.

• 93% of Pennsylvania’s parents are satisfied with their child’s afterschool program.

• On average, children spend 7.47 hours and 3.62 days per week in an afterschool program.

• On average, Pennsylvania families who pay for their child’s afterschool program spend $111 per week.

• 33% of Pennsylvania children in an afterschool program qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program.

• In Pennsylvania, the top three providers of afterschool programs are run by public schools, YMCA afterschool programs and Boys & Girls Club afterschool programs.

• 57% of afterschool programs in Pennsylvania are located in a public school building.

• Annually, there are 75,000 STEM job openings across the commonwealth due to industries not being able to find enough qualified STEM workers to fill the positions available. This is due to gaps in skill, knowledge and interest in the sciences.

• 75% of Nobel Prize winners in the sciences report that their passion for science was sparked in a non-school setting.

The Value of Afterschool Programming

• Research shows that high quality afterschool programs can lead to increased Attendance, Behavior and improved performance in Coursework. This means that students participating in a high quality afterschool program went to school more, behaved better, received better grades and did better on tests. These ABCs are critical factors to student engagement and achievement.²

• Expanded learning through afterschool includes three key factors linked to positive outcomes: more time spent learning in afterschool results in greater benefits for youth; when youth like their afterschool program, they show improvement in the classroom; and youth appreciate and need support from afterschool staff.³

• Afterschool and out-of-school time (OST) programs are positioned to address bullying because they offer activities and relationships that can assist students in developing important life skills. According to the Afterschool Alliance, afterschool programs provide access to caring adults and offer a more informal environment that is distinct from the school day.⁴

• With many U.S. students lacking proficiency in math and science, afterschool programs have taken on the challenge of adding science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) to their programming. Everyone can relate to the value of preparing youth for future job and educational challenges. Afterschool sites offering STEM have an additional position that they can use to advocate for their programs and student success.
The Afterschool Hours in America

- There are 11.3 million school-age children alone and unsupervised in the hours after school.\(^5\)

- The parents of more than 23 million school-age children work outside the home.\(^5\)

- Only 10.2 million K-12 children (18%) participate in afterschool programs. An additional 19.4 million would participate if a quality program was available in their community.\(^6\)

- The hours between 3 and 6 p.m. are the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and sex.\(^7\)

- Three in four voters (76%) say afterschool programs are “an absolute necessity” for their community.\(^8\)

- The average value of preventing a baby from growing up to become a youth who drops out of school, uses drugs and goes on to become a career criminal is at least $2.5 million per individual.\(^9,10\)

A growing list of research and evaluation studies indicate that children and youth who regularly participate in quality OST programs benefit in terms of academic performance, social and emotional learning, prevention, health and wellness. The studies highlight improved school attendance; higher graduation rates; stronger academic achievement; and improved positive behaviors, work habits and persistence.

Afterschool Programs Benefit Youth, Families and Communities

- Children in LA’s BEST afterschool program attend school more often and report higher aspirations for finishing school and going to college. LA’s BEST participants are 20% less likely to drop out and 30% less likely to participate in criminal activities. Researchers estimate that every dollar invested in the LA’s BEST program saves the city $2.50 in crime-related costs.\(^11\)

- In 2011-12, New York City students in ExpandED Schools improved their math proficiency at more than double the rate of citywide improvement.\(^12\)

- Parents miss an average of eight days of work per year due to a lack of afterschool care. Decreased worker productivity related to parental concerns about afterschool care costs businesses up to $300 billion per year.\(^13,14\)

- Students who participated in afterschool programs that followed evidence-based practices for skill building increased their positive social behaviors by 11%.\(^2,15\)

- Students pre-K through grade 8 in The After-School Corporation (TASC) supported afterschool programs improved their math scores and regular school-day attendance compared to non-participants. High school level afterschool participants passed more Regent exams and earned more high school credits than non-participants.\(^16\)

- Chicago teens that were part of After School Matters for at least three program cycles were nearly two and a half times more likely to graduate than their non-participating peers.\(^17\)
Some of Pennsylvania’s Afterschool Programs

21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC)
In fiscal year 2014-15, Pennsylvania received $41.7 million in federal 21st CCLC grant awards and it is the only federal funding stream solely devoted to afterschool programs. The grants, however, are time-limited, typically for a three-year period.

School-Age Child Care Services
Federal funding that flows through the state includes School-Age Child Care Services at $1.2 million. The major state funding investment in afterschool has primarily been Child Care Services at $155.6 million and Child Care Assistance at $152.6 (Department of Human Services) targeting children from birth up to age 13. There is no substantial state funding targeted for 13-18 year olds.

ELECT/ELECT Student Works
The Education Leading to Employment and Career Training (ELECT) initiative is administered jointly through a partnership between Pennsylvania departments of Human Services and Education. The ELECT program expands the services of existing teen parent programs and can include afterschool programs. ELECT Student Works program concentrates its efforts on the factors that are known to lead to teen pregnancy and other high-risk behaviors that jeopardize the economic and social futures of children in grades 3 through 8.

Workforce Development Board, Youth Employment and Training
Federal funding streams, which flow through state departments, include the Workforce Development Board, Youth Employment and Training at $52 million (Department of Labor and Industry). Annually, approximately 10,000 youth ages 14-21 are served through this program.

Beginning Your Efforts in Legislative Advocacy

So Where Do Your Advocacy Efforts Begin?
The best place to begin is with your local legislator. Determine which legislators or policymakers are in key leadership and/or committee positions. Remain bi-partisan in order to achieve your goal.

Engaging Lawmakers
Outreach to lawmakers is crucial to influencing legislative outcomes. Outreach is anything you do to help influence a change; for example writing to your legislator, writing a letter to the editor and attending events and meetings.

Key reasons to engage lawmakers
Lawmakers respond to their constituents because their voices matter. Before they support an issue, they need to find support in their own districts. Silence from constituents creates indifference in the capitol. Remember: there are hundreds, if not thousands of issues that lawmakers can support.

Key elements to engage lawmakers
Make local appointments to meet face-to-face. It’s hard for policymakers to say no in person. Get to know key staff. Know the issue, including key pieces of legislation.
An advocacy strategy helps to recognize the need, goal and stakeholders; identify target audiences and prepare the proper messages; know capacity and gaps; and monitor and evaluate results. Advocacy planning also ensures that:

- Resources (time, funds and skills) will be used effectively
- Risks are minimized and opportunities are mapped out
- Coalitions have the ability to be built
- Alignment occurs in other areas of work and organizational goals, both long term and short term

**Goal Setting**

*Determine your goals*

What OST issues are important to you? What do you want others to know about OST?

**Action Step #1: Determine your key issues.**

List them here:

- __________________________________________
- __________________________________________
- __________________________________________
- __________________________________________

*Prioritize your goals. Can you zero in on your most important goal? What is it?*

**Action Step #2: Determine your top three goals.**

List them here:

1. __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

**Audience**

*Determine your audience*

What groups or individuals are currently supportive of OST programming in your area? What key decision-makers would you like to have on your side? What other groups would you like to reach with your message? Why are your issues this important to them?

**Action Step #3: Name your key audience.**

List them here:

- __________________________________________
- __________________________________________
- __________________________________________
- __________________________________________
- __________________________________________
Message Development

What is the most important thing you want others to know? That is your key message, one that you will repeat over time. This message should be something you can say in conversation, in interviews or presentations to groups. It should be easy to say and remember – no more than 15 words. It may be simple as: “Young people’s participation in constructive learning activities during non-school hours contributes substantially to their success in school.” Or, “OST programs keep kids safe, inspire learning and help [your city's/region’s] working families.” Use the key messages consistently in news releases, letters-to-the editor and other communications.

In developing your message, think first about your audience. What do you want them to think, feel, do? Feelings are what motivate people to act.

Use language that makes sense to external audiences while keeping a focus on the children you are serving and the difference your program is making.

Remember that elected officials are very busy and need short, persuasive information. Keep the focus on the needs and community or state impact of the program. Look to include student voices when possible.

Develop your talking points. What stories or examples support your key message? You will need at least three talking points, stories or examples that support your key message. Using descriptive, local examples is an effective way to get the attention of decision-makers. These may change based on the needs and interests of your audience.

Examples include the following:

- American Institutes for Research 2011 and 2012 reports from several state education agencies found that teachers report students who regularly participate in 21st Century Community Learning Centers show improvements in homework completion, class participation, attendance, behavior in class, and reading and math achievement scores and grades.

- A 2013 study out of University of California, Irvine’s School of Education found that regular participation in afterschool programs helped to narrow the achievement gap between high income and low income students in math, improved academic and behavioral outcomes, and reduced school absences.

- According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 22 million kids are eligible to attend 21st CCLC programs nationally, but funding allows for only 1.6 million to participate.

Action Step #4: What are your key messages/data points? List them here:

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________
Action Step #5: What are your data needs?
List available data and research/data to collect in order to produce talking points:

OST Provider Newsletters: Your newsletter gives you the power of the press and provides the ability to communicate to a variety of audiences, including parents.

OST Provider Website: Be sure to have a list of ways that supporters can help the program on the front page of the site. These can include:
- Volunteer to help with an OST support campaign (and provide contact info)
- Make letter to the editor suggestions (provide the newspaper’s contact information along with “talking points” to help make the case)
- Contact information for local council members

Letters to the Editor/Op-Eds: Consider writing a pro-OST letter to the local newspaper on a regular basis. A convenient way to do this is to respond to a big issue that the press is covering on a topic that OST helps with or write to educate a particular policy group on an issue. If possible, have a well-known citizen write it.

Radio: Consider radio spots for airing on local channels. Visit your local radio station and ask them if they would create some public service announcements (PSAs) for OST at a discounted price or through a donation.

Presentations: Civic organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, etc. always welcome guest speakers. Make a list of all the opportunities there are in your community to get some face time and begin scheduling speaking engagements to get your message out. Remember to know your audience. Make sure when you talk about the importance of OST and its services, you are tailoring your comments to what is of interest to your audience.

There are many options for getting out your message. Some examples include:

City Council/Local Government/School Board Meetings: Check online or in newsletters for upcoming schedules. These meetings generally provide for an open comment period and posted for the public.

Public/Budget Hearings: Budget/Appropriations hearings are traditionally scheduled at a particular time in the budget process for local/state/federal governments while public hearings can be called at the discretion of the committee chair(s).

Face-to-Face Meetings with City Council Members, Mayoral Staff, State and Federal Legislators: Contact the local office and ask to speak with the scheduler or the person who handles OST issues. Request a face-to-face meeting and organize other OST providers and advocates from the district/state to attend the meeting.

Virtual Meetings with City Council Members, Mayoral Staff, State and Federal Legislators: If unable to get a face-to-face meeting, organize a virtual meeting through conference call or social media capabilities with other OST providers.
Building Coalitions
Who else may serve as an OST Champion with you?

Beyond those internal circles, who else will you reach out to for OST support? Consider specific individuals/organizations/associations. These could be OST friends, community and civic leaders, educators, parents, students, funders, business/industry, higher education, etc.

Action Step #6: Who are your champions?
List them here:

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________
Putting the Plan into Action
Create an activity timeline for five events/ideas:

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Volunteers Needed</th>
<th>Target Audience</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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Review your plan to make sure you have all of the necessary steps in place:

- What are your goals?
- Who is your audience?
- What are your key messages?
- Who comprises your team?
- What strategies will you implement?
Tips for Developing Your OST Advocacy Action Plan

**Keep informed.** Stay up to date on local, state and national activity. Visit PSAYDN at www.PSAYDN.org and the Afterschool Alliance at www.afterschoolalliance.org to view the latest resources, publications and information on OST advocacy.

**Get to know your local elected officials and their staff.** Visit your representatives’ websites to learn their issues and priorities. Attend town hall meetings, local forums and invite them to OST programs and let them see, firsthand, how valuable they are to the community and to children and youth. This builds a strong grassroots network that can be useful in critical times as legislators are pressed to cut state budgets in order to meet budgetary requirements. Provide them specific ways they can get involved.

**Develop a strong relationship with State Administration officials and staff.** This will allow you the opportunity to demonstrate the value of your program. It is better to be viewed as an active partner in their efforts rather than an additional program that may be replicating what they already do or want to do.

**Develop a strong working relationship with State legislative staff.** This will increase the access to legislators for their participation and/or attendance and encourage them to champion the program’s cause.

**Share Lights On Afterschool.** Invite local officials to visit the program for a special event you have planned or plan an event that coincides with the national Lights On Afterschool event held in October. Let them see how their constituents are using the valuable services provided by OST, and you will gain an important ally.

**Develop an OST print or online newsletter.** Many OST programs have a regular newsletter for students and parents. Write an advocacy update for the newsletter, highlighting ways to help the program, whether that is through a letter-writing campaign, volunteering at events, contacting legislators, or other means. Expand the reach of the newsletter, if possible.

**Make and/or distribute handouts.** Distribute important information about the OST program, its services, and needs in writing for people to read later or pass on to others. These can include the OST’s range of services, a wish list of needs, information about an upcoming event, or any other pertinent OST information.

**Plan an OST community event or fundraiser.** An event during the year is an opportunity to highlight your program. Create an event or promotion that will get your allies, neighbors or other volunteers involved and get special guests.

**Build your network.** You are a powerful agent for change on your own, but involving more people makes your message even stronger. Developing a network of OST advocates in your community is a great way to add voices to the level of support. When you find people who are willing and able to help, keep track of their contact information and availability. Start an email contact alert list to keep in touch with everyone so that when an issue arises, you will know just who to contact to get the word out.

**Recognize a champion.** Develop afterschool champion awards to recognize supportive local legislators or invite elected officials to participate in programming for an evening.

**Get students involved in learning more about their government.** Encourage students to write letters or invite elected officials to the program. Encourage local legislators to publicly recognize their local youth through Legislative Resolutions and other awards. This provides local legislators with feel good opportunities within their local districts and further encourages them to become part of the program’s family of supporters.
Afterschool Advocacy
Elevator Speech

Often when meeting people, we have a need to share in a matter of seconds what we are passionate about – job, volunteer activities, interests. An elevator speech is a short statement exhibiting your passion about your mission, goals and needs that could be delivered for the duration of an elevator ride. In other words, it can be described as a brief pitch that gets right to the point if there is less than a minute to talk. The purpose and intention of your elevator speech will depend on the audience. The example below will assist in crafting a general script to address:

**Why:** Afterschool programs for kids and communities are important

**How:** Strengths and exciting points of your afterschool program impact kids and communities
   - Needs are being addressed by your program
   - Change is affected by your program

**What:** The needs of your program are to be successful

*Note: It is essential that you are concise and right to the point when speaking to your legislator.*

**Example**

**Introduce Yourself**

Hi [SENATOR/ REPRESENTATIVE], I am [YOUR NAME] from [YOUR PROGRAM] in [YOUR LOCATION] that serves [APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF CHILDREN/ YOUTH] ages [APPROXIMATE AGES OF CHILDREN/ YOUTH SERVED]. Our program runs [DESCRIBE TIME THAT PROGRAM RUNS DURING THE WEEK/YEAR].

**Explain the Reason of Your Visit**

*Use one of these examples.*

- I am interested in talking with you about the positive impact our STEM afterschool program is having on the children/youth we serve.
- Are you familiar with our afterschool program? We provide quality, fun, learning programs including STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) activities?

**Embed the Why, How and What Elements**

*Use these elements in addition to the introduction.*

I am sure you would agree that we need our future leaders to have the skills required to drive a strong economy in the information age. To do this, we must commit the resources necessary to ensure that all children develop STEM knowledge and skills. Afterschool and summer learning opportunities are vital in getting students engaged in STEM learning by letting children and youth experiment with STEM ideas in real world situations. Such opportunities help ignite curiosity and interest, especially for those who might not think of themselves as math and science kids. Our STEM programs provide these opportunities but we need support to build and continue these activities after school. All communities in Pennsylvania need access to high-quality STEM afterschool and summer learning programs to ensure that our children and youth thrive.

**Close with a Follow-Up Opportunity**

*Use one of these examples or both.*

- We are looking for support as we move forward in building and expanding STEM afterschool and summer programs.
- We would appreciate you coming to visit our program to see first-hand how STEM afterschool and summer programs are making a difference in the community.
Organizing a Site Visit for a Policymaker

Inviting policymakers to visit your afterschool program is a powerful way to help them understand the benefits your program provides to the community. Below are suggested steps, a timeline and a sample schedule for the event, as well as sample invitation and thank you letters. Be sure to identify dates during the next Congressional recess; visit www.afterschoolalliance.org to find key dates when your elected officials will be back in your community.

Steps for Setting Up a Successful Site Visit to the Legislative Office

1. Find the Home District Address and Telephone Number for Your Elected Officials
   • For Congress: Visit the Afterschool Alliance website, www.afterschoolalliance.org and click the “Contact Congress” box on the left side of the homepage. Enter your zip code to access contact information for your lawmakers. (You can also visit www.senate.gov or www.house.gov to find this information.) Most Senators and some Representatives have more than one district office. Select the office closest to you. If you do not have access to the internet, look in the blue government pages of your local phone book.
   • For the Pennsylvania General Assembly: Visit www.legis.state.pa.us. You will be able to search for your State Senator or Representative by entering your zip code.

2. Identify a Few Dates When You Could Host a Visit to Your Program
   • Using the date that is optimal for you, write an invitation letter based on the sample provided in this toolkit. Have the letter on hand when you call the district office.
   • For Congress: Be sure to identify dates during the next Congressional recess.
   • For the Pennsylvania General Assembly: Pennsylvania General Assembly members are often available to visit your programs throughout the year. State Senators and Representatives are generally in Harrisburg Monday through Wednesday and in their districts on Thursdays and Fridays, so be mindful of this when scheduling.

3. Call the District Office
   • Tell the person who answers that you would like to schedule a visit to your afterschool program for the Senator or Representative. You may be connected with a legislative aide or a scheduler.
   • Try for the top. Ask if the lawmaker can visit during the next Congressional or General Assembly recess. Provide options for dates and times if your first choice does not work. Be sure to mention that staff and parents will be on hand for the visit and offer to invite media as well. Point out how your program relates to the policymaker’s interests (literacy, improving academic achievement in public schools, keeping communities safe by decreasing juvenile crime, helping families, etc.). Offer to re-send your invitation letter and more information about the program and identify who will be at the visit. Encourage the policymaker to bring staff members.
   • Be flexible. If the lawmaker is not available, ask whether a senior staff person can visit instead. Even if the lawmaker agrees to come, keep in mind that elected officials’ schedules can change with little notice. Several days before the visit, call to confirm the event and be prepared to reschedule.
   • Mail or fax your personalized invitation letter (see sample). Be sure to send along a program profile, brochure and background materials about your program.
4. Before the Visit

Identify youth, parents, program staff, school officials and community partners who would be convincing spokespeople for your program. Ask them to be available for the visit and give them background material on the policymaker, so they will feel comfortable at the event. Share the basic schedule for the visit and clarify their roles (see sample). Be sure to invite key partners, supporters, your school’s principal and even school board members. Send a media advisory to invite press and prepare a press release for the day of the event. Visit www.afterschoolalliance.org for tips and samples. Create excitement surrounding the visit through social media outlets.

5. The Visit

On the day of the visit, have someone wait outside the building to greet and direct the visitors to the correct location. Be sure to have program brochures or a program profile on hand. You may want to make copies of any articles, youth essays, parent letters, awards or other documents that demonstrate community support for your program. Be sure the policymaker has an opportunity to hear from the young people at your program. Let him/her ask questions of the students or facilitate a discussion to get their perspectives on afterschool and what they gain from the program. Other ideas: ask parents to share their perspectives; ask a principal to talk about the ways the program affects students; ask a police officer, youth counselor, pediatrician or health leader to talk about the benefits for youth who attend the program; invite community members to comment on how the program keeps children out of trouble. Take pictures; photos of the visit will be a great complement to a press release or an addition to your program’s newsletter. Please use the sample photo release document to provide to those participating in any of the activities that may be subject to video or photography.

6. After the Visit

Send a thank you letter to your legislator and reiterate your key messages (see sample). Send copies of photos. Your legislator may use them in his/her district newsletter. If you were unable to answer a question during the visit, make sure you follow up. If your organization has a newsletter, write an article about the event and include the photos. Send a copy of the newsletter to the legislator.

Add him/her to your regular mailing list. Don’t forget to stay in contact with your legislator. You have established a great foundation with the site visit and now you can build on this relationship throughout the year.
Sample Press Release for Media for a Local Lights On Afterschool Event

[Your program name] Lights On Afterschool Event Features Legislators, Business Leaders.

[Your city] – Hundreds of children, parents, business and community leaders came together today at a Lights On Afterschool event at [location of event] to celebrate the achievements of afterschool students and draw attention to the need for more afterschool programs to serve the millions of children nationwide who are unsupervised and at risk each weekday afternoon. The gathering was just one of many events across the nation emphasizing the importance of keeping the lights on and the doors open after school.

[Add event specifics, similar to the following]: [Your city] Lights On Afterschool participants saw students [explain activities], while [insert names of any leaders in attendance, such as your mayor, school officials, business leaders], parents and students discussed the importance of afterschool programs. Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, Lights On Afterschool has been celebrated annually since 2000.

[Add a quote here from a notable participant, similar to the following]: “Lights On Afterschool celebrates the remarkable work being done by students who attend our afterschool programs,” [Name of notable] told the crowd. “It is a powerful reminder that afterschool programs offer a range of supports to children and families. Unfortunately, we don’t have enough afterschool programs, and too many kids are home alone in the afternoons or on the streets where they can be exposed to crime or are at-risk. We must open more programs and make sure lawmakers invest more in afterschool.”

[Add specific quotes, names, similar to the following]: “We are all very proud of our afterschool students,” said [your program director]. “There’s no reason that learning should stop at 3 p.m., particularly if the alternative is unsupervised time in front of a television set, or any of the dangerous or unhealthy behaviors that can ensnare children in the afternoons. Like so many other afterschool programs around the nation, ours is supported by funding from the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative.”

Lights On Afterschool is organized by the Afterschool Alliance, a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool programs. More information on the Afterschool Alliance, Lights On Afterschool and America After 3PM is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

Sincerely,

[Your name]
Sample Follow-Up Thank You Letter to Send to Your Member of Congress or General Assembly Member

[YOUR PROGRAM LETTERHEAD]
[DATE]

The Honorable [MEMBER’S NAME]
[MEMBER’S ADDRESS]
[MEMBER’S CITY, STATE ZIP]

Our program staff and students would like to thank you for taking time out of your schedule to allow us to share with you the quality work happening in our science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) afterschool program, and how additional resources could bring the activities to our other afterschool sites.

It is essential that our STEM model program is a priority because it encompasses so many fundamental skills students need as they pursue college and career interests. Due to the gap in skills, knowledge and interest in the sciences, annually, there are 75,000 STEM job opening across the commonwealth that remain available, as there are not enough qualified workers to fill these positions. More STEM afterschool opportunities for children means there will be an increase in STEM-literate citizens who are informed problem solvers and decision makers.

I know firsthand the potential impact of STEM education in our community [INSERT A FEW SENTENCES ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL STORY/PERSPECTIVE]

As you evaluate your budget choices and legislative priorities, we ask you to consider [INSERT YOUR REQUEST].

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]
[ADDRESS]
[CONTACT INFORMATION]
Steps for Setting Up a Successful Site Visit from an Elected Official to Your Program

Planning Timeline
Work backward from the date of the policymaker’s visit to make sure that you are well prepared. Use the suggested timeline below as a tool to help you plan. Allow at least one month between the invitation and the actual visit to be sure you have enough time to coordinate guests and schedules.

Time Prior to Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Prior to Task</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Month</td>
<td>Invite the policymaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Weeks</td>
<td>Invite parents, community members, school officials and youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Weeks</td>
<td>Develop schedule for the day; identify roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Week</td>
<td>Finalize program agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Days</td>
<td>Call policymaker’s office to confirm visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Days</td>
<td>Invite the media, create a social media plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Policymaker and staff arrive at the program and are greeted by the program director or other lead host.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:05 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Lead the policymaker and staff on a tour. Let them see the youth activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Afterschool snack time. Let the policymaker enjoy a snack and talk with the children about their favorite parts of the program. Ask the kids where they would be if they did not attend afterschool or what their friends outside the program do after school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.</td>
<td>After the snack, facilitate a discussion between parents and the policymaker. Ask the parents to explain how the afterschool program helps their families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Ask your invited guest (principal or superintendent, police officer, youth counselor, etc.) to talk about the benefits they see the program offering youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Thank you and goodbye!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Photo Release Form

[NAME OF YOUR PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION]
Permission to Use Photograph/Video

Please return this form to the afterschool program coordinator [OR INSERT NAME].

Name of Program: ___________________________________________________________________________________
School/Organization: ___________________________________________________________________________________
Name of Child: ___________________________________________________________________________________

I grant to [YOUR ORGANIZATION/PROGRAM], its representatives, employees, affiliates and those acting under their
permission, the irrevocable right to use and publish photographs and/or videos of the child named above in connection
with the above-mentioned program.

I authorize the [YOUR ORGANIZATION/PROGRAM] to publish, distribute, exhibit, copyright and license photographs
and/or videos of the child named above in connection with the above-mentioned program in print and/or electronically
for the purpose of promoting [YOUR ORGANIZATION/PROGRAM] and its activities.

I hereby transfer and assign to the [YOUR ORGANIZATION/PROGRAM] any and all rights, title and interests that
I may have related to photos and/or videos of the child named above in connection with the above-mentioned program.
I agree that [YOUR ORGANIZATION/PROGRAM] will have the perpetual right to copy, reproduce, display, publish,
edit, modify, assign, license and register for copyrights and trademarks, distribute, sell and otherwise use photographs
and/or videos of the child named above in connection with the above-mentioned program.

I further affirm that I am the parent or guardian of the child listed above. I have read and fully understand the above
agreement.

Signature: ____________________________________
Printed Name: ____________________________________
Date: ____________________________________

Permission to Use Photograph/Video Forms should be submitted to:

[YOUR ORGANIZATION/PROGRAM]
ATTN: [NAME]
[ADDRESS]
[ADDRESS]
Sample Letter Inviting Your Member of Congress or General Assembly Member to Your Program

[YOUR PROGRAM LETTERHEAD]
[DATE]

The Honorable [MEMBER’S NAME]
[MEMBER’S ADDRESS]
[MEMBER’S CITY, STATE ZIP]

Dear [MEMBER’S NAME]:

I would like to invite you and your staff to visit the [NAME OF YOUR AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM] during your next district working session. Our program provides 300 middle school children with safe, educational afterschool activities during the critical hours from 3 to 6 p.m., when many parents are still working and juvenile crime rates triple. Students in our program are not only safe, they are doing better in school and show more interest in learning.

We would like to take you on a short tour of our program on [DATE] at [TIME]. If that time is not convenient, we would be happy to work with you to find a time that is. I have also invited the media and members of the local [SCHOOL, POLICE, other ORGANIZATION] and several parents to attend. They are eager to talk with you about the importance of keeping afterschool programs open and making these programs available to more children.

I hope you will join us to see our program and our students in action. Afterschool and youth development programs play an important role in the healthy development of our children and youth and ultimately the success of our communities — they inspire students to learn, keep kids safe and help working families. The [NAME OF YOUR COMMUNITY] community relies on us.

A profile of the [NAME OF YOUR AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM] is enclosed for your reference. I will contact your office within the next two weeks to follow up. I look forward to seeing you on [DATE]. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]
[PHONE NUMBER]
[EMAIL ADDRESS]
# Federal and State Budget Advocacy Timeline

## Federal Budget Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month(s)</th>
<th>Advocacy Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Reaction to budget; the President delivers budget to Congress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March – April</td>
<td>Urge Budget Committee and Congress to adopt adequate spending plan-denominator. The Congress prepares budget resolutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May – September</td>
<td>Urge legislators and key committees to adequately fund specific programs. The appropriation bills will be developed and considered by the House and Senate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>New federal fiscal year begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October – December</td>
<td>Urge President to adequately fund key programs. The President develops budget.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## State Budget Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month(s)</th>
<th>Advocacy Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Reaction to budget; the Governor delivers executive budget to General Assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February – March</td>
<td>House/Senate Appropriations hearings on budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April – June</td>
<td>Urge adequate funding for key programs. The budget is negotiated and passed by the General Assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>New state fiscal year begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July – December</td>
<td>Develop recommended spending programs and share with key executive branch officials. The Governor works on new executive budget.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Elections**

- Take the time to become informed and vote for candidates who will put children and youth first. Remember that every vote counts.
- Register to vote and vote in elections.
- You can find voter registration information and polling locations at www.votespa.com
- Primary elections in Pennsylvania are held on the third Tuesday of May in all years except Presidential years, when it is held on the fourth Tuesday of April.
- General elections are held on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November.
- Call and/or write the candidates.
- Attend campaign forums and events and ask questions about what issues they support and how will they support the need for afterschool and youth development programs.
- Write a letter to the editor in support or opposition.

**Media Outreach Ideas and Tips**

Afterschool advocates can generate local news coverage on the challenges afterschool programs face at the local, state and federal levels. Following are ideas, along with some how-to information, for getting out your message about afterschool. At a minimum, you will want to send a news release and/or a letter to the editor about your visit. You will also find in this toolkit some other ways to generate media coverage. **On the following pages are some tips and sample materials for you to:**

- Send a letter to the editor of your local newspaper
- Pitch yourself to a local radio talk show
- Write an opinion article for your local newspaper
- Look for a local cable television interview opportunity
- Talk with the editorial writer of your local newspaper

**Messages that Work**

- Afterschool programs help the economy; help build strong, safe communities and prepare our future innovators.
- Afterschool programs give working parents peace of mind and help them keep their jobs.
- Parents value afterschool programs for many reasons and are highly satisfied.
- Afterschool programs provide critical support for working parents and the economy.
- Afterschool programs provide a safe environment and help kids develop valuable life skills.
- Parents depend on afterschool programs, believe they keep kids safe and out of trouble.
- Consistent participation in afterschool programs leads to improved behavior, academics and attendance.
• Parents believe afterschool programs help their kids succeed, and they are seeing the results.

• Afterschool programs help students graduate from high school and gain workforce skills.

• Afterschool programs help our nation’s students prepare for the future.

• Afterschool programs provide important access to nutrition and exercise.

• Afterschool programs boost opportunities for healthy lifestyles.

• Consistent participation in high quality afterschool programs can help eliminate the achievement gap.

• Afterschool programs can equalize the playing field.

• Afterschool programs bridge divides between “haves” and “have nots.”

• Afterschool and summer learning programs emphasizes improving access for underserved students.

• Afterschool programs coordinate efforts with the school district and community in providing mentors, academic support and hands-on experiences.

Newspapers

Write an Opinion Article for Your Local Newspaper

Do some research on your newspaper’s opinion page. Check every day for several days to see if they take local articles called op-eds, (short for Opposite the Editorial page) or guest editorials. Some papers only use staff or syndicated columnists. If your paper does accept op-eds, call and ask for the opinion page editor’s office and say you are thinking about writing an op-ed on the funding challenges facing afterschool programs in the community and what it means to families. Then ask what the procedure is: word count, who to send it to and how and any other guidelines the paper observes. Write it and submit it, following the paper’s instructions and then call the next day to verify it arrived.

Four Tips for Writing an Op-Ed Piece

1. Never exceed the word limit.

2. Op-ed pieces are opinion articles, so write with a thoughtful point of view but without being harsh.


   Start with a lead paragraph that captures the reader’s attention and gives a sense of the direction of your op-ed. For example: Up in Carbon County, middle school students are begging to stay afterschool! Why? They want to be a member of a team that is building a remote control 5’6” robot. The SHINE 21st Century Community Learning Center program engages students in STEM: science, technology, engineering and math. This afterschool program provides the opportunity for students to put STEM skills in action with tangible results.

4. If you are not successful placing your op-ed piece in a local newspaper, look for a website (the school system, an ally or your own program) that will publish it.
Talk with the Editorial Writers of Your Local Newspaper

There is nothing quite like having an editorial on your side to help generate support from policymakers. Editorial writers are often looking for topics, so if you think your newspaper’s general editorial disposition might favor full funding for afterschool; see if you can spark an editorial.

Call the newspaper, ask for the editorial page, and ask who writes editorials on local education issues. Depending on the size of the paper, it could be the editorial page editor, a columnist or even a reporter. Ask to be connected with that person, and then request a meeting to talk about the funding challenges facing afterschool programs. If he/she agrees to meet, bring whatever fact sheets or other material you may have, as well as information on the impact of budget shortfalls. For this information, check the Afterschool Alliance’s website at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

Be prepared to explain the threat to local programs, what inadequate funding would mean for children and families, and how many would likely be affected if the federal, state or local government fails to increase afterschool funding next year. Remember, the writer will be thinking in terms of how he or she might write an editorial, so be sure to provide a local angle and specific facts that support your case.

Send a Letter to the Editor of Your Local Newspaper

Look at your newspaper’s letters page. Scan the page itself, and the newspaper’s website letters section, for instructions on word counts and where to send your letter. If you can’t find instructions, count the number of words in a given day’s letters. Also, see whether published letters all refer to stories or editorials the newspaper recently ran; some newspapers insist on it, some don’t. Then write a letter that reflects what you have learned: length, tone, keyed to something already in the paper or not, etc. If you are responding to something in the paper, remember not to bury your own message by spending all of your space refuting the other message.

Be sure your letter addresses that afterschool is the key to inspiring students to learn, keeping them safe and helping working families. Also mention that afterschool programs are facing funding shortfalls. Follow the newspaper’s instructions on how to submit the letter, and be sure to include a phone number (not for publication), where the paper can call to confirm that it is actually from you.

You will find a sample letter on the next page. We urge you to modify the content of the letter, so that if the newspaper asks if the letter is being submitted to other papers around the state and nation; you can honestly answer that the letter is unique. Newspapers are increasingly sensitive to this issue.
To the Editor:

Each weekday afternoon in America, after the final school bells ring, as many as 11.3 million children have no adult supervision for several hours. These latchkey children, as they have come to be called, are the children of working parents – our neighbors, friends and family. In Pennsylvania, more than 1.4 million school-age children and youth (ages 5-17) have parents that work outside of the home, and more than 346,458 kids are on their own during the hours after school.

In most cases, families’ income levels shape their options. Affluent families typically spend close to $8,900 per child each year on enrichment compared to families in the lowest income quintile, who spend slightly more than $1,300 per child each year. As a result, by 6th grade, kids born into poverty are likely to suffer a 6,000-hour learning gap compared with their middle-class peers. What these kids need is a safe environment where they can take part in constructive, educational activities. That is exactly what afterschool programs offer, and over the last several years we’ve seen a huge growth in such programs around the country. Unfortunately, too many children who need afterschool still do not have access to it. In addition, to make matters worse, many programs are being forced to cut services or hours, or even to close, because of budget shortfalls. A minority of Pennsylvania students benefit from afterschool programs while many youth in the state are unable to enroll because space is limited and funding is not keeping pace with demand. Program leaders report that they are serving a high-need population; are serving more children than expected; and are struggling to maintain funding.

Afterschool programs keep kids safe, help them learn and relieve their parents of worries about what their children are doing during the sometimes perilous afternoon hours. Our kids and our communities need these programs, and as afterschool programs face budget crunches and cutbacks, they need all of us to stand up for them.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

[PHONE NUMBER]

[EMAIL ADDRESS]
Pennsylvania Newspapers of Importance

There are hundreds of daily and weekly newspapers in Pennsylvania. The most important paper is your hometown paper. Lawmakers read their hometown papers to assess current issues and determine what their constituencies believe. Below is a list of key papers from around the state that we will target information to as a way to educate readers and reporters about after school time.

Bradford
The Bradford New Era - www.bradfordera.com

Central Pennsylvania
PennLive - www.pennlive.com

Centre
Centre Daily Times - www.centredaily.com

Delaware County
Daily Times - www.delcotimes.com

Erie
Erie Times-News - www.goerie.co

Hazleton
Standard-Speaker - www.standardspeaker.com

Lancaster
LancasterOnline - www.lancasteronline.com

Lehigh Valley
The Morning Call - www.mcall.com

Lehighton
Times News - www.tnonline.com

Philadelphia
Philly.com/The Inquirer Daily News - www.inquirer.com

Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette - www.post-gazette.com

Punxsutawney
The Punxsutawney Spirit - www.punxsutaweyspirit.com

Reading
Reading Eagle - www.readingeagle.com

Scranton
The Times Tribune - www.scrantontimes.com

Uniontown
Herald-Standard - www.heraldstandard.com

Warren
Times Observer - www.timesobserver.com

Wilkes-Barre
Times Leader - www.timesleader.com

Williamsport
Sun-Gazette - www.sungazette.com

York
York Daily Record - www.ydr.com
Look for a Local Cable Television Interview Opportunity

Cable television varies from place to place, so there are no firm rules about what kinds of local interview opportunities may be available on your cable system. However, many cable systems have a channel devoted to local government or a local school system.

Look through the listings of your local cable system to see what is possible in your community; then send a pitch letter (like the radio letter provided on page 30). Particularly for TV, offer to bring several youth from your program.

Pitch Yourself to a Local Radio Talk Show

First, scout local talk shows. Most medium-size or larger markets have a talk-news station, and that is probably where you will have the best luck. Check listings for that and other stations carefully; they are often available on the web. Don’t overlook public radio and college/university stations. See which programs are locally produced.

Then listen to each show, to get a sense of whether any of them would be useful shows to pursue. Put together a three-paragraph pitch letter like the sample that follows. It should explain briefly (in less than one side of a piece of paper):

• Why afterschool is important?
• Why and how it is threatened?
• How funding shortages affect local children and their families?
• Why you are qualified to talk about it?

Address the letter to the show’s producer (call the station for the name). Send the letter, then call to follow up the day after it arrives.
Sample Pitch Letter to a Radio Talk Show

[DATE]
[NAME OF PRODUCER]
[NAME OF SHOW], [RADIO STATION NAME]
[ADDRESS]

Dear [MR./MS. PRODUCER]:

As any working parent in [NAME OF COMMUNITY] can tell you, the hours immediately following the regular school day are often a time for parents to worry about what their children are doing – whether they’re safe and constructively engaged. Over the last two decades, the increasing number of afterschool programs has helped millions of families across the nation. However, millions more are without the after school care they need as a result of severe funding shortages. A minority of Pennsylvania students benefit from afterschool programs while many youth in the state are unable to enroll because space is limited and funding is not keeping pace with demand. Unfortunately, program leaders report that they are serving a high-need population; are serving more children than expected; and are struggling to maintain funding.

As the director of the [NAME OF PROGRAM] in [NAME OF COMMUNITY], I have seen first-hand what a difference afterschool makes in the lives of our kids, our families and our communities. Afterschool programs are more than just babysitting. Quality afterschool and youth development programs give children the opportunity to enhance their learning, engage in sports and recreational activities, build social relationships, and explore interests that may lead to careers. The programs are an integral part of preparing our youth for post-secondary education, productive employment and active citizenship.

I think the issue would be of interest to your listeners, many of whom would enroll their children for afterschool programs if one were available to them. If you are interested in doing a segment or show on the subject, I would be happy to join you, and to help identify a parent or student who has benefited from afterschool, as well as a teacher or school principal who could describe the vital role that afterschool programs play in reinforcing academic learning from the regular school day. I will be in touch to follow up. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]
[YOUR TITLE]
[YOUR PHONE NUMBER]
Creating Your Afterschool Success Story

Preparing children and youth for college, career and life takes more than just reading, writing and math. Afterschool programs in Pennsylvania play a critical role in promoting youth wellbeing and success. This template shares how you can create your own afterschool STEM success story to share with policymakers and local media.

1. Describe ways your STEM program:
   - Helps kids develop skills they need to succeed in college, career and life
   - Keeps kids on track and safe after school
   - Maintains a commitment to quality
   - Helps working families and engage parents

2. Answer one or two questions of your choosing about your STEM program. Include details that will help others visualize activities kids are engaged in and understand how these experiences impact kids and their families. It may be helpful to have a specific child or family in mind as you are describing experiences and impact. Think about sharing an activity or event that is close to your heart that others need to hear about.
   - Describe 1-2 activities your afterschool or summer program offers that help kids develop future workforce and life skills, such as cooperation, leadership or critical thinking.
   - Describe 1-2 activities your afterschool or summer program offers that help kids build interest and skills in one or more of the STEM fields. Be as detailed as possible and use vibrant language to make the examples come alive.
   - Describe a specific example that demonstrates how kids’ experiences at your afterschool or summer program helped ignite interest in STEM subjects, or gain employment or skills in a STEM-related field.
   - How does your program help prepare kids to succeed in your community and/or state’s local workforce? Be specific; for example, if manufacturing is a dominant sector in your community, how does your program prepare kids for manufacturing jobs?
   - Do you have partnerships with local businesses or professionals serving as mentors that support career exploration, apprenticeships, internships or other such activities that expose kids to career paths and skills? If yes, describe the most successful example.

3. If possible, include a compelling quote from a child, parent or employer that supports your story (along with name and age of student quoted, name of parent, or name/title if quote is from local business).
Example Success Story
The following is an excerpt from an afterschool STEM Success Story received from St. Helena-Incarnation OST program.

In the fall of 2015, St. Helena-Incarnation OST engaged in a five-week study of Pennsylvania's bountiful fall harvest. This project served roughly 65 urban youth in K-5 who rarely have the opportunity to explore life on the farm and the observable changes in plants and animals as they undergo season change.

STEM learning was the focus of this project as students made observations, collected data and then analyzed and interpreted the information. Students asked great questions about seasonal change and developed personal connections with nature, which instilled feelings of pride and accomplishment. When a staff member asked why a student had jumped into a young tree, the student responded that he was trying to hug Charlie, his adopted study tree.

Real life experiences were extended in trips to local working farms and petting zoos. At Shadybrook Farm, students picked pumpkins, which were later used in a pumpkin dissection to learn about all of the elements of the pumpkin life cycle. At the zoo, students were able to get up close and feed traditional Pennsylvania farm animals.

When you ask the kids about the great part of the project, they tell you it was the appreciation of the bounty of nature in our weekly cooking classes that featured apples, pumpkins and making butter. The unit wrapped up with a family potluck dinner celebration complete with student performances and delicious food.

At PSAYDN, the use of social media is a new addition to our advocacy toolbox. PSAYDN utilizes two social media platforms: Twitter and Facebook. Your organization will need to decide what platforms are appropriate for the work you plan to do.

Twitter
Effective Twitter users engage in two-way conversations and build relationships. Twitter is a great tool for breaking news, tracking specific topics, engaging with people in your field of study and sharing your information.

www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/TwitterTips.pdf

Facebook
Facebook is an online social network that connects people and organizations. Users connect by “friending” each other or “liking” public figures and organizations. Members then communicate through messages, personal status updates and public wall posts.

www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/FacebookTips.pdf

Need help? Check out these Afterschool Alliance webinars
Social Media Outreach Strategies for OST Programs
With most Americans today engaging with at least one social media site, social media is a valuable and cost-effective way to reach your community. In this webinar, communications experts from Burness Communications will walk through goal setting strategies to effectively leverage social media to advance your program’s mission and goals, and the Afterschool Alliance will give an overview of social media resources specifically for the afterschool community.

www.afterschoolalliance.org/webinars.cfm?ID=46B8FC38-5056-A82E-7A69A49BFC285E0B
Digital Outreach Strategies: Social Media Metrics
This webinar digs deeper into strategies to help OST programs make the most of their social media outreach. Communications experts from Burness Communications will discuss social media metrics and demonstrate how you can use a variety of free and low-cost tools to measure your performance on social media, enhance your digital strategy and advance your organization’s goals.

www.afterschoolalliance.org/webinars.cfm?ID=F18CEA62-5056-A82E-7A8016F8CFA60C5A

Social Media Policy
According to the document from the National PTA “Social Media Policy: Guidelines and Aids for National PTA Social Media Efforts,” organizations should craft their own social media policy. Consideration should be given to:

- Social media roles: Who does what?
- What should be said online?
- Monitoring policy
- Responding to negative comments
- Privacy and permissions
- Copyright and attribution
- Personal vs. professional

Social Media Tips
- Keep your posts brief and link to a video/visual for the story
- Ask questions in posts to encourage participation
- Encourage others to comment on your stories by asking questions
- Post multiple times using different perspectives on a story highlight
- Use trending themes to discuss what’s important to your organization
- Design your messages so that others will want to share your postings
Resources to Help You Begin Your Advocacy Efforts

Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network (PSAYDN)
Promotes sustainable, high quality out-of-school time youth development programs through advocacy and capacity building to enhance the welfare of Pennsylvania’s children, youth and families.
www.PSAYDN.org

Afterschool Alliance
A nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. The Alliance works at the national, state and local level by engaging in the following efforts: research and policy analysis; public awareness and media outreach; technical assistance; and opinion leader and policymaker education.
www.afterschoolalliance.org

Alliance for Justice
A national association of environmental, civil rights, mental health, women’s, children’s and consumer advocacy organizations. Since its inception in 1979, the Alliance has worked to advance the cause of justice for all Americans, strengthen the public interest community’s ability to influence public policy and foster the next generation of advocates.
www.afj.org

Congress.org
A service of Capitol Advantage and Knowlegis, LLC; private, non-partisan companies that specialize in facilitating civic participation.
www.congress.org

Pennsylvania General Assembly
Pennsylvania State Senate
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
www.legis.state.pa.us

Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
A strong, effective and trusted voice to improve the health, education and well-being of the commonwealth’s children.
www.papartnerships.org
References


4 Center for Safe Schools. Bullying prevention in out-of-school and afterschool settings. 2014.


About the Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network

The Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network (PSAYDN) promotes sustainable, high-quality out-of-school time youth development programs through advocacy and capacity-building to enhance the welfare of Pennsylvania’s children, youth and families. PSAYDN’s mission is that all children and youth deserve access to high-quality out-of-school time programs that promote positive youth development and support the successful transition to adulthood.

PSAYDN is managed by the Center for Schools and Communities with leadership from the PSAYDN Steering Committee. The Steering Committee represents the organizational partners in the Network’s leadership, and provides oversight for the Network work plan and the appropriate use of fiscal and administrative resources to ensure effective implementation.

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For more information on afterschool or to join PSAYDN, please visit our website at www.PSAYDN.org.

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Information used for this toolkit has been adapted with permission from materials from the Afterschool Alliance. This toolkit is available on the PSAYDN website (www.PSAYDN.org). Copies of the sample letters are provided in alternative formats for your convenience, including Microsoft Word. Please check the website for additions to the toolkit and other helpful resources to assist with your advocacy efforts.