Next Top Afterschool Program

Afterschool Program

Quality Self-Assessment Tool

Funded by DCYF

Congratulations on entering the competition to be the Next Top Afterschool Program!

Quality Self-Assessment Tool

This Quality Self-Assessment (QSA) tool is designed for a team of staff to complete a program observation for your program. There are 11 sections. Each section is broken out into 3-6 elements, and some indicators of what quality could look like when you are at "low quality", "approaching quality", and at "quality".

There are several sections of this tool that require ONLY evidence of policies and procedures. These sections do not have an observation component, but can be reflected upon and discussed. The information collected should be collected by each person individually, and then reflected upon in a group discussion.

As you share how you rated your program on the tool, an interesting discussion will emerge about how your team perceives quality. This articulation will allow you to be on the same page, identify strategies that work, and decide which practices you want to change.

Why use this tool? This is for you to learn, grow, and create a stronger program that will help youth become healthy, productive adults.

Can you be the Next Top Community-Based Afterschool Program?

Step 1: Decide how you want to use this tool

There are many ways to use this tool

Approach

Assess Yourself

Assess Your Program

Use this Approach If…

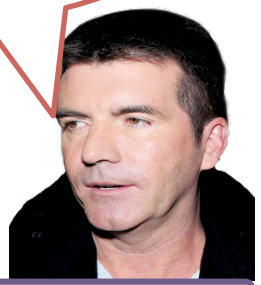
Assess Yourself				Assess Your Program		
If you have control over the components in the section of the tool you have selected	If you would like to identify where **your** program stands on a continuum	If you would like to develop a plan to grow and improve your program practices	If you want ideas to make your program stronger	If you are participating in an program assessment as a group	If you have an opportunity to give input to sections within this tool that you don't necessarily control	If you are willing to hear input from colleagues about an area you are responsible for

Step 2: Select One Assessment Section to Focus on

PART 1:
Organizational Development

- QSA Section 1: Program Assessment & Design
- QSA Section 2: Program Admin & Finance
- QSA Section 3: Community Partnership& Collaboration
- QSA Section 7: Staff Recruitment & Professional Development

Sections in Part 1 don't require program observation.



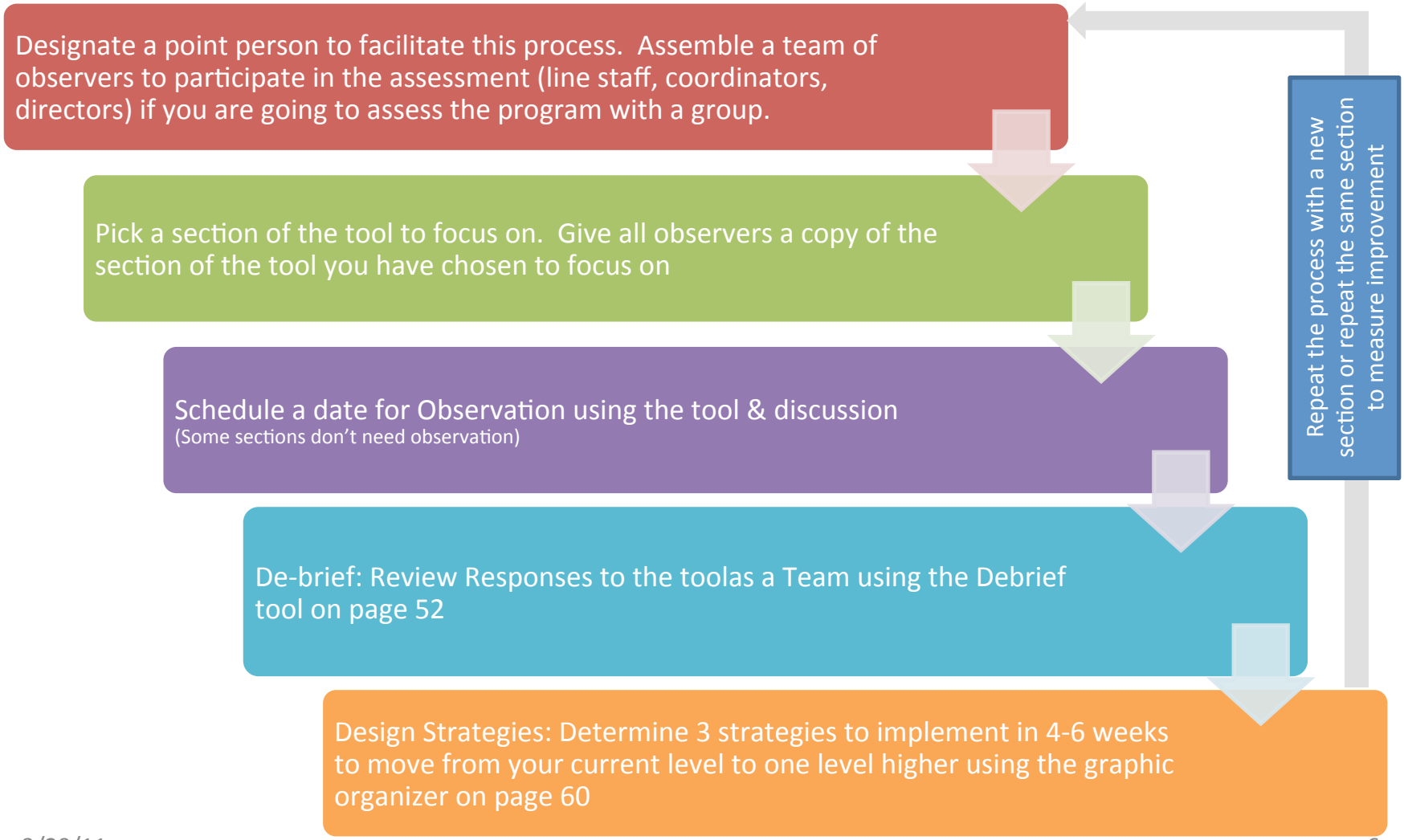
Sections in Part 2 are best assessed through a combination of reflection and program observation.

PART 2:
Program Content & Approach

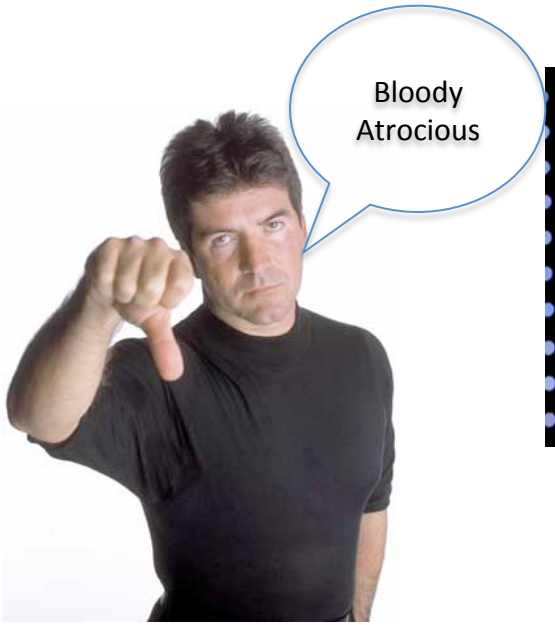
- QSA Section 4: Alignment & Linkage with School Day
- QSA Section 5: Program & Environment Safety
- QSA Section 6: Youth Development
- QSA Section 8: Family Involvement
- QSA Section 9: Nutrition & Physical Activity
- QSA Section 10: Promoting Diversity, Access, Equity & Inclusion
- QSA Section 11: Effectively Supporting English Language Learners

Step 3: Assemble a Team

The following is a suggested process for how to use this Quality Self-Assessment tool. Program Assessments work best when done simultaneously with a group to compare observations. An important outcome of this process is that a staff team are on the same page about what high quality looks like – if you can see it and name it, you can repeat it!



Step 4: Understand what the Quality Levels Mean



Low Quality
This section contains examples of practices and strategies that are not ideal. If you find yourself rating some aspect of your program "low", see if you can try out some of the practices in the Emerging Quality section!

Approaching Quality
This section contains examples of practices and strategies that are typically seen in a functional afterschool program. Ideally you should have most of your ratings score at least at the Emerging Quality level. You can select 1-3 areas that you rate at this level to focus on to adopt some strategies of the "Best Practice" category.

Quality
This section contains examples of practices and strategies that are seen in high functioning organizations. You would do these in addition to the elements of the "approaching quality" section. Some of these ideas may be a stretch. The idea is to always have some ideas of how to make your program even better and tailored to the youth and community you serve. Site visits and literature reviews are great ways to get inspired about other quality practices that practitioners are developing.

Step 5: Start Assessing

Own this process!
Use the notes section to write down things that are working or not working that this assessment doesn't go into.

Don't be Soft!
Really be critical- the best way to grow and improve is to hold ourselves to high expectations. If something doesn't look right to you, make a note of it and discuss it with peers.

Stay Positive!
Use this reflection and assessment time to come up with ways to make your program even better. Don't be afraid to try something new!

Section 1
Program
Assessment
& Design

Section 1: Program Design & Assessment

In our Program…	Low Quality	Approaching Quality	Quality Practices	Notes
Youth attend programs	❑ Attendance is 50% or less of projected program attendance goal	❑ Attendance is 50% - 70% of projected program attendance goal	❑ Attendance is 90% or more of projected program attendance goal	
We design and conduct activities focused on program goals	❑ Staff are unclear on the purpose of the program ❑ Staff use strategies and approaches in their work that are not in alignment with each other (everyone is not on the same page) ❑ Activities are added on an ad-hoc basis, and do not necessarily align to program goals	❑ There is a clearly defined and well understood vision and mission statement ❑ Staff can articulate program goals and how individual activities support them ❑ Lesson plans state the purpose of the activity as it relates to program goals	❑ Staff and stakeholders agree upon the mission and vision statements ❑All program activities & instructional strategies align to reinforce program goals ❑A set of guiding values are used to solve problems and address issues that arise	

Section 1: Program Design & Assessment

In our Program …	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Activities are evaluated regularly	❑ Programs are not evaluated at all or are evaluated through an ad-hoc process ❑ Participant satisfaction or workshop surveys are given out and never reviewed.	❑ Programs are evaluated at least annually led by management team ❑ Findings from the evaluation are shared with stakeholders (staff, board, etc) ❑ Staff meetings are used to reflect on program progress, needs and issues	❑ Staff and youth participate in regular program evaluation ❑ Assessment is guided by clearly defined, measurable goals linked to participant and community needs ❑Key stakeholders participate in assessing program offerings and impact through surveys, focus groups and other tools ❑ An outside evaluator conducts evaluation using strong research design ❑ Activities are re-designed to reflect the findings from evaluations	
Our program design is youth centered	❑ Programs are designed by adults with no input from youth ❑ Adults lecture youth during program ❑ Program feels overly structured like school or under-structured and chaotic	❑ Activities are defined by staff with some youth input ❑ Activities are based on project-based learning, with structured de-brief sessions ❑ Youth development, academics and recreation activities are offered regularly	❑ Youth and staff work together to design programs ❑ Principles of youth development, academics and recreation are integrated into all aspects of programming ❑ Activities are part of a scope and sequence, part of a unit ❑ A culminating event marks the end of a unit of study, and showcases youth talent and learning	

Section 2
Program Administration & Finance

Section 2: Program Administration & Finance

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Funding sources are transparent and funding requirements are well managed	❑Only the ED is aware of the funding sources ❑Funding requirements are often not met, or late ❑ Staff are not aware of the funding requirements or program goals	❑ED communicates funding sources and their funding timelines to staff and board ❑A reflection process is used to ensure all activities meet funder required standards and hours of operation ❑ Program director and management staff are aware of funder grant requirements	❑The management team have a working knowledge of the program's funding sources ❑Reporting requirements for each funding source are easily accessible in an organizational tool (i.e. binder, spreadsheet) ❑Reporting deadlines are met in a timely and non-stressful manner. ❑ A process is used to share information about funder requirements (in a staff meeting, a logic model, etc)	
We ensure timely recruitment, employment, and termination of all personnel	❑Organization does not aggressively recruit and retain staff ❑Positions are often left open for more than 2 months ❑Staff hired do not have enough of the qualifications needed to work independently and efficiently	❑Job description competencies are used to hire staff. ❑References are checked when hiring ❑New hires attend a new hire orientation ❑New hires are placed on a 90 day probation period to ensure they are a good fit for the organization	❑ED, staff and youth participate in the interviewing process, and utilize case studies and sample presentation (i.e. interviewee presents a mock lesson) ❑ New hires receive training and shadow a senior employee as job orientation ❑Supervisor conducts an exit interview with employees who choose to leave the organization ❑ED conducts regular surveys of employee satisfaction and works hard to understand and respond to needs of staff	

Section 2: Program Administration & Finance

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
We have the ability to establish and implement effective financial policies and procedures	❑ Organization does not work from a budget ❑ Financial matters are not transparent to the staff ❑ Resources (petty cash) are not available to cover basic expenses ❑ Employees' paychecks are delayed a few times a year due to cash flow issues ❑ Organization relies solely on one funding source	❑ Organization produces an annual budget that is balanced and sustains the programs ❑ Staff are able to access resources in time to meet program needs ❑ Organization continuously monitors cash flow and takes immediate action to address problems ❑ Organization has at least 2 funding sources	❑ Organization actively pursues new sources of funding and in-kind resources to enhance sustainability ❑ Youth are involved in grassroots fundraising to fund special programs ❑ All staff are trained in accounting and book keeping to empower their financial literacy ❑ Organization has at least 5 diverse funding sources (government, private, individual donors, foundation, etc)	

Section 2: Program Administration & Finance

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
We maintain accurate records and follow reporting procedures	❑ Attendance is not maintained or enforced ❑Weeks go by without anyone entering funder required data (CMS for DCYF grantees) ❑ Record-keeping and reporting is not accurate ❑ Participant enrollment and registration forms are incomplete (allergy, media release, zip codes, etc)	❑ Accurate attendance is taken daily ❑Funder required data is submitted on time ❑Reimbursement requests are accurate and submitted on time ❑ A procedure for incident reporting is used (accidents, criminal activity, serious violation of program rules, etc.) ❑ Staff know youth medications, special needs (asthma, inhalers, etc)	❑Staff review attendance and contact youth who are missing sessions ❑ The organization uses data to make strategic decisions about programming & operations ❑ Forms for each type of incident reporting are easily accessible to staff and filed appropriately	
The Board provides governance to the organization	❑ The organization has no board, or board meets sporadically and informally ❑ The board is comprised of figure heads who offer no strategic value to the program	❑ The board meets regularly to hear ED updates, review budgets, and provide input on hiring and firing decisions ❑The board is comprised of community members or those with particular relevant expertise	❑ The board is a combination of highly skilled experts in legal, finance, and organizational development and are reflective of the community ❑The board reviews programmatic updates from ED and coaches ED to see issues from multiple perspectives	

Section 3
Community
Partnerships
&
Collaboration

Section 3: Community Partnerships & Collaboration

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
We advocate for our participants' needs	❑ Youth with special needs or accommodations are turned away from the program ❑ Staff treat all youth exactly the same and do not modify instructions or communication style to needs of specific youth ❑ Staff have no knowledge of the issues youth and families are facing in their homes ❑ Staff are not aware of the predominant issues in the community.	❑ Participant enrollment form asks for special needs or accommodations a participant may need ❑ Staff identify youth with special needs or disabilities (Language support, anger issues, low social skills, non-traditional learning styles) and design instructional strategies to meet youth needs ❑ Staff utilize good judgment in making decisions when a supervisor needs to be involved in referrals to program participants or their families ❑ Staff are aware of key challenges and issues in the community.	❑ Staff are active in community events (panels, forums, etc) ❑Staff refer youth to other organizations when appropriate ❑ Staff knows of key organizations in the community offering specialized services (depression, substance abuse, mental health) ❑ Staff expand their services/ skills to meet the needs of particular youth (learn sign language, speak multiple languages, bring in volunteers, etc)	

Section 3: Community Partnerships & Collaboration

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
We develop, maintain and strengthen community through partnerships with other provider organizations	❑ Program consistently has difficulty working in partnership with other organizations ❑ Program does not partner with other organizations in the community ❑ Program competes to take "ownership" of youth for reporting	❑ Program staff and leaders work with other organizations to meet the specific needs of youth (referrals, connection to resources, etc) ❑Collaborative partners' roles & expectations are clearly defined through MOUs or formal agreements ❑ Clear policies and procedures exist to guide the governance of all collaborative work, and the effective engagement of partners	❑ Program partners with other organizations to provide wrap around services for youth ❑ Program works well with others and is seen as a generous resource in the community ❑ Program seeks input from collaborative partners regarding program offerings ❑ The collaborative supports long-term sustainability through joint fundraising and in-kind contributions of materials	
We stay connected to community stakeholders, families and participants	❑ Program is connected to a small section of its population ❑ Staff are only aware of the services they provide ❑ Staff have no relationships with community or past participants	❑ Regular updates are provided to community in a variety of formats (calendars, e-newsletter, events, fliers, etc) ❑ Information is accessible in multiple formats (ie large print, multiple languages) ❑ Past participants come back to visit	❑ Program collaborates with partners to meet goals such as fundraising, administrative support, inclusion of children with special needs or disabilities, etc. ❑ Program conducts regular needs assessments in schools and communities to ensure they are meeting relevant community needs. ❑ A conscious effort is made to keep alumni connected to the organization through volunteer events, board service, etc.	

Section 4
Alignment & Linkage to School Day

Section 4: Alignment & Linkage with School Day

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
We incorporate academic content and skill development to support youth's school success	❑ Program does not seek to partner with schools in any way ❑ Program activities are not connected back to academic skills through de-brief	❑ Staff are aware of state school-day curriculum frameworks ❑ Staff design some academically-oriented activities ❑ Staff communicate with schools to align program goals with school standards ❑ Staff seek input from school teachers on the impact of after school, or to discuss particular youth, or share information about learning goals	❑ Staff participate in school committees (school site council, Wellness Committee, meetings to develop Individualized Education Plans, etc) ❑ Youth who need intensive academic help are connected to tutors, work in small groups, and are encouraged by afterschool staff to seek extra help from teachers ❑ Academic activities are engaging, build on youth interests, and present information to various learning styles ❑ Multiple age-appropriate instructional strategies are used	
We create opportunities for youth to practice productivity and efficiency in homework time & during enrichment activities	❑ During homework time 20-40% of youth are working. ❑ Remaining youth are talking, texting, avoiding getting started.	❑During homework time 40-60% of youth get to work right away ❑20% of youth get to work with staff prompting ❑Some youth ask for help when stuck ❑Some youth wait for staff to approach them to offer ask	❑ All youth get started on homework right away (within 5 minutes) ❑ Youth use an organizational system to focus/organize their time (a HW planner, etc) ❑Youth ask staff for help when stuck ❑ Youth expect staff to check their work ❑ Academic activities exist for youth who finish early	

Section 4: Alignment & Linkage with School Day

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Our staff encourage guide and support during homework time	❑ Staff sit in one place ❑ Staff are doing 50% behavior management ❑ Staff are getting youth supplies (pencils, erasers, scratch paper) ❑ Staff sometimes use a sarcastic or rushed tone ❑Staff use phrases like: "Do this step." "Read that line."	❑ Staff sit in an accessible place near youth who need the most 1:1 help ❑ Staff respond to youth questions when asked ❑ Staff walk youth through homework problem-solving on scratch paper (youth write, staff guide) ❑Staff use encouraging statements with youth such as: "I like how you're thinking!" or "That's a good start" ❑Staff coach youth with statements like: "Tell me where you would start" or "How would you state this problem in your own words."	❑Staff circulate around the room observing each youths' progress ❑ Staff notice when youth make mistakes and walk them through how to solve the problem on scratch paper ❑ Staff support youth to think through how they would solve a problem ❑ Staff encourage youth who finish early to coach other youth ❑Staff use phrases such as: "Where would you start?" ❑ Staff celebrate youth who complete their assignments or work hard the entire period.	
Appropriate space exists for youth to complete HW	❑ Space is over-crowded ❑ Space is noisy ❑ Youth cannot access materials on their own (scratch paper, pencil sharpeners, etc)	❑Enough space exists for youth to spread out their materials ❑ Scratch paper is accessible ❑ Staff can reach all the youth when they circulate (no areas are blocked)	❑ The work area is spacious and physically accessible to all youth (including youth in wheelchairs or other mobility issues) ❑ Room exists for youth to work in groups, or to sit alone if they need a quiet space ❑Materials are accessible (dictionaries, computers, rulers, pencils, scratch paper)	

Section 5
Program
Environment
&
Safety

Section 5: Program Environment & Safety

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Program environment is conducive to independent interactions amongst youth	❑ Space is cluttered, crowded or noisy ❑ Program materials are disorganized ❑ Staff need to intervene when materials need to be shared ❑ Youth are roaming the halls or open spaces with no monitoring. ❑ Bathroom use is un-monitored and leads to rowdy behavior or messes	❑ Materials and supplies are organized and accessible to youth ❑ Youth are aware of what materials they can use, when ❑ If youth need to share resources (computers, books, games, etc) an organized system exists (sign-ins, etc) ❑ Youth have a buddy system for bathrooms, passes are used when youth leave assigned spaces	❑ Youth have leadership roles to set up and maintain program space ❑ Youth use empowered language to share materials such as "I'll come find you when I am done using this…" ❑ Youth take charge of cleaning up space after an activity ❑ Youth use group agreements to remind each other to be responsible for the space ❑ Staff notice when a particular resource or activity is becoming disorganized, and create an organizational system to prevent problems (ie – if you notice youth are making a mess with the glitter, you could put the glitter into a salt shaker)	

Section 5: Program Environment & Safety

In our Program…	Low Quality	Approaching Quality	Quality Practices	Notes
We have the ability to connect and relate to youth	❑ Staff don't know all participants' names ❑ Staff interact physically with youth (allow them to sit on their laps, aggressive tickling, wrestling) ❑ Staff interact with youth on Facebook or through texting ❑ Staff ignore hurtful comments ❑ Each staff person handles conflicts in their own way- no set procedure exists	❑ Staff members address youth by name ❑ Youth-staff ratios do not exceed 20:1 ❑ Youth-staff interactions are relaxed and respectful ❑ Group agreements are used to define expectations for staff and youth ❑ Staff intervene when a hurtful comment is made ❑ Staff know which youth need extra support	❑ Group agreements are reviewed regularly ❑ Program defines hurtful words/ hate speech that youth agree not to use ❑ Youth remind each other when a group agreement is violated ❑ Staff use knowledge of youth culture to connect in appropriate ways (demonstrate appropriate youth-staff boundaries)	

Section 5: Program Environment & Safety

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Staff follow safety and emergency procedures	❑ Staff are not knowledgeable about their role of mandated reporter, or do not take this responsibility seriously ❑ Staff make bad choices about when to ignore an issue, leading to youth hurting themselves or each other ❑ No safety plan or emergency procedures exist	❑Staff can summarize legal reporting requirements for reporting child abuse or when a person may do harm to him or herself or another ❑Staff understand when it is appropriate to inform and involve supervisor ❑Staff can implement key aspects of site safety plan ❑Staff know health and safety procedures and can share them with others	❑ Staff discuss issues with particular youth in a special meeting to share information and pay close attention to youth warranting concern ❑ Staff regularly share with youth their role as mandated reporter, so youth confidentiality is never broken ❑ Staff and youth practice the safety plan ❑ Youth are in charge of health and safety procedures, and teach them to each other	
Staff ensure the health and safety of participants	❑ There are safety hazards in the youth spaces such as chemicals, spills, materials on high shelves ❑ Staff ignore or don't notice when a potentially unsafe situation occurs ❑ Modifications are not made for youth who need special accommodations or adjustments to participate	❑ Staff prepare the program space to be free of foreseeable hazards ❑ Staff intervene when potentially unsafe situations occur ❑ Staff can perform basic first aid	❑ Staff are aware of participants' health and medical needs as appropriate, and adjusts activities as needed ❑ Staff proactively prevent unsafe situations from occurring	

Section 6
Youth Development

Section 6: Youth Development

In our Program we…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Promote a learner-centered program environment	❑ Youth look bored or disengaged in programs ❑ Activities are lecture driven ❑ Youth have little opportunities for input ❑ Activities are limited to worksheets, coloring pages, or simple physical games that do not require much creativity	❑ Youth demonstrate that they are curious and making connections through the questions they ask. ❑Activities are age-appropriate. Staff recognize when an activity is inappropriate and make necessary adjustments ❑ Activities allow participants to explore their personal interests and learn about their everyday world ❑Youth demonstrate that they are challenged and engaged through body language – eye contact, participation, etc. ❑ Activities are creative and use interesting materials	❑Activities challenge youth to take risks, and encourage youth to accept mistakes as opportunities for new learning ❑Youth engage in on-going reflection, assessing their own growth ❑Youth provide input into future projects ❑ Activities are "hands-on" and project-based ❑ Activities offer opportunities for youth to make new connections that are surprising or exciting.	

Section 6: Youth Development

In our Program we…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Promote physical & emotional safety	❑ Major fights or incidents of hate-speech occur several times a week and are not dealt with immediately ❑Youth use put-downs as jokes ❑ Some staff are more lenient with program rules and behavior expectations than others	❑ Staff set firm boundaries and limits when unsafe or unacceptable behavior occurs ❑Staff enforce program rules fairly and consistently ❑Staff model conflict resolution techniques, and practice solving problems with youth ❑Staff model positive, supportive language with youth ❑ Staff use creative behavior management strategies to deal with challenging behavior	❑ Staff and youth work together to generate and uphold group agreements with youth rights and responsibilities in program space ❑Youth remind each other to follow the group agreements ❑ Youth use conflict resolution processes with minimal guidance from staff ❑ Program rituals are a daily component, led by staff and youth (check in/out, discussion circles)	

Section 6: Youth Development

In our Program we…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Support positive relationships between staff and youth	❑ Staff have minimal knowledge of youth beyond their participation in the after-school program ❑ Youth do not come to staff when they have a problem ❑ Staff talk down to youth, or lecture them when something goes wrong	❑ Staff demonstrate knowledge of what is going on in participants' lives, neighborhoods and schools. ❑ Staff give full attention to participants when they are speaking. ❑When an individual participant is having a problem, staff pay attention and try to assist. ❑Staff communicate high expectations for youth and push/encourage youth to take healthy risks ❑ Staff articulate and maintains appropriate boundaries (such as roles, responsibilities, relationships and confidentiality) with youth	❑ Staff use their relationships with youth to connect them to other adults (school teachers, counselors, professionals, etc) ❑Adults work with isolated youth who don't quite fit in with other youth to build strong relationships and help them to connect with the larger group ❑Staff use direct feedback and communication to give youth insight about themselves ❑ Staff "coach" youth to solve their own problems, and design actions to reach their highest potential ❑ A special case-management time exists for staff to exchange strategies to support struggling youth	

Section 6: Youth Development

In our Program we…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Support relationships between participants	❑ Youth have awkward interactions with each other ❑ Some youth are isolated and are left out of activities ❑ Youth do not know each others' names ❑ Youth spend most of their times in cliques	❑Staff teach participants conflict resolution and negotiation strategies and create opportunities to practice these skills ❑Regular team-building activities are used to facilitate youth relationships ❑Cooperative learning as well as competitive learning techniques are used	❑ Clear systems are in place to disrupt cliques ❑ Isolated youth are supported to work with peers in small groups ❑ Youth are able to connect with one another even if they are very different from each other (in dress, background, ability, etc)	

Section 6: Youth Development

In our Program we…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Facilitate rich learning experiences	❑ Staff are overly directive or bossy with youth ❑Staff give answers with little discussion, and assume youth agree with them ❑ Staff dismiss youth input or feedback ❑Staff do not use a lesson plan and make up the activity as they go	❑Staff seek participation from all youth and don't allow anyone to dominate or be left out ❑Staff seek youth buy-in and input ❑ Staff ask open-ended questions and encourage youth to take risks, buy-in, and offer input ❑ Staff are organized with materials and lesson plan	❑Staff seek balanced participation from youth by using full group, small group and individual reflection ❑Staff encourage participation by asking provocative questions ❑Staff are clear in their instructions and directions to youth ❑ Staff create and invite leadership opportunities for youth ❑ Staff use a consistent lesson plan template and capture post-lesson reflections to modify plans for the next time (or to share with other staff)	
Design and deliver project-based learning and sequenced intentional learning activities	❑ Activities are offered randomly ❑ Youth are exposed to a variety of activities but do not build deep level skills in any one area	❑ There is evidence that the activities connect to each other in some way ❑ Activities promote mastery in a skill area ❑ Core skills are practiced and developed over time ❑Activities promote critical thinking and self-reflection	❑ Activities are part of a scope and sequence, part of a unit ❑ A culminating event marks the end of a unit of study, and showcases youth talent and learning ❑ Youth engage in on-going reflection and can articulate what they have learned ❑Youth make connections between the activity and their personal experiences	

Section 6: Youth Development

In our Program we…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Promote the meaningful engagement and leadership of participants	❑Youth spend most of their time in unstructured activities (i.e. hoops in the gym, reading, using the computers). ❑ The supervising adult is mostly hands-off, but steps in if someone gets hurt/needs help. ❑ Outspoken youth take up more space, while shy youth are often left behind ❑ Youth do not have choices in what activities to participate in	❑Youth have some intentional free-time but also work with adults to build their skills. (shoot hoops in the gym, but also do basketball drills.) ❑ Youth choose from a calendar of various activities ❑ Youth are supported to run check-in and check-out circles, and to coordinate special events, like a service project or a field trip. ❑Adults ask youth for their input (informally or through surveys) on program activities. Some of their ideas are incorporated into program activities	❑Youth facilitate and design workshops for their peers ❑Youth are encouraged to build their skills towards mastery in a particular area, with the coaching and mentoring of a skilled adult ❑Youth are involved in the hiring and evaluating of staff, program design, and planning activities ❑ A formal advisory board made up of adults and youth work together to make programmatic decisions	

Section 6: Youth Development

In our Program we…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Conduct activities that expand participants' knowledge of the community	• The program has no opportunities for community involvement • Youth have no opportunities to reflect on the problems or strengths in their communities	• Adults plan and coordinate a service project for youth to do • Projects are chosen intentionally and connect to program goals •Youth participate by donating items, or taking part in simple activities (i.e. slicing fruit for a soup kitchen) •Community members are invited to share their knowledge and talents with program participants	• Youth plan a community involvement project based on a needs assessment of the community. • Youth lead the planning and coordination of the project. • Youth evaluate projects afterwards, and make suggestions for improvement •Youth serve as organizers, policy-makers, and activists. • Youth have a political analysis of the needs of the community and can articulate why issues like poverty or homelessness exist. • Youth interact with community leaders • Youth have opportunities to reflect on how the activities impact them personally	

Section 7
Staff Recruitment & Professional Development

Section 7: Staff Recruitment & Professional Development

In our Program we…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Strive for-self improvement	❑ Staff don't attend trainings or professional development offerings ❑ Staff are not motivated to learn (leave a learning event mid-way, text during meetings) ❑ Staff resist new ideas/ changes ❑Staff become aware of problems once there is a negative impact on the program or project	❑ Staff regularly attends professional workshops, trainings, and conferences to increase competency ❑ Staff apply new learning to everyday work practices ❑Staff are open to new ideas and learning opportunities ❑Staff ask for feedback or input from supervisors or co-workers about their performance	❑Staff actively expand knowledge through reading, networking, trainings, etc ❑ Staff can identify and resolve challenges before they have a negative impact on the program ❑ Staff come up with 1-3 solutions to problems they see and check in with peers/ supervisor for input ❑ Staff reflects on and evaluates own performance to identify needs for professional growth	
Have Strong Organizational Skills	❑Staff do not demonstrate professional skills (come late to meetings, don't respond to email) ❑ Staff are disorganized, with materials misplaced or missing ❑ Staff don't ask for help when they need it	❑Staff are able to use technology for basic communication and organization (email, calendar) ❑Staff have a file management system for project notes, action items and deliverables ❑ Staff take notes in meetings and follows up on tasks in a timely fashion	❑ Staff use a range of technology to stay organized and efficient ❑ Staff regularly re-organizes work-space to proactively de-clutter ❑ Staff have a range of organizational systems to organize and track information	

Section 7: Staff Recruitment & Professional Development

In our Program we…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Are able to recruit high-quality staff and volunteers	❑ Staff are hired using an ad-hoc interview process or no process at all ❑Management hires staff who are missing critical skill sets or abilities to do a high quality job (conflict mediation, curriculum development)	❑Job description competencies are used to hire staff. ❑New hires are placed on a 90 day probation period to ensure they are a good fit for the organization. ❑Staff are diverse and reflect the racial, ethnic, linguistic, gender, family, and community characteristics of participants	❑ An orientation is given to new staff that reviews policies and procedures ❑ Management meets with staff regularly to discuss new learning opportunities as a strategy for retention	
Supervisors engage, and support afterschool staff in implementing program activities to achieve program goals	❑ Supervisors do not know what staff are doing on a day-to-day basis ❑ Supervisors provide instructions or feedback without offering clear strategies for what to do ❑Supervisors set an expectation then change their mind about what they want with little or no explanation to staff	❑Supervisors provide staff with needed materials, supplies and preparation time ❑ Supervisors use staff meetings to explore instructional strategies or reflect on the program ❑ Supervisors demonstrate new skills to staff when giving instructions or providing feedback	❑ Supervisors communicate high expectations for staff and program participants ❑ Supervisors provide coaching and mentorship to staff, as appropriate ❑ Supervisors lead effective meetings and trainings on select content that models the approach and specific activities and practices staff are expected to use with program participants	

Section 7: Staff Recruitment & Professional Development

In our Program we…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Promote the growth and development of staff	❑ Staff are unclear about supervisors' expectations of high-quality performance ❑ Supervision happens in an ad-hoc process (no standard supervision sessions exist) ❑ Feedback is not constructive	❑ Supervisors set realistic goals with staff and reviews them annually ❑ Supervisors schedule and maintains regular 1:1 supervision sessions with staff ❑ Supervisors regularly acknowledge staff for successes, and positive efforts ❑ Supervisors observe staff in action monthly and shares feedback in a constructive and respectful manner	❑ Supervisors set realistic goals with staff and reviews/updates goals quarterly in a formal performance review ❑ Supervisors continually seeks opportunities and resources that allow self and staff to meet personal and professional growth goals ❑ Supervisors work with staff to assess the effectiveness of professional development activities and how they might be improved	

Section 8
Family Involvement

Section 8: Family Involvement

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Families & care-givers have opportunities to participate in the program	❑Families & Caregivers' interaction with the program is limited to drop-offs and pick-ups (if that)	❑Regular orientations are hosted for families to learn about the program, meet staff and see what their youth have been working on. ❑Parents are invited to give input into the program through formal surveys, and informal conversations	❑Families and caregivers have opportunities to play leadership roles (serve on planning or evaluation committees, participate in program assessment, run book clubs, fundraise, etc). ❑ Families are invited to participate in special events in the program	

Section 8: Family Involvement

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Staff adequately inform and collaborate with families & caregivers	❑Only some staff know the parents ❑ Parent-involvement only occurs when there is a problem between the youth and the program ❑ Staff do not have the skills to communicate with parents (due to language barriers, etc)	❑When youth are picked up staff wave hello and good-bye. Staff know parents' names ❑During pick-up times staff check in with caregivers about youth ❑ Staff respect confidentiality regarding knowledge of participant ❑ Staff inform youth before sharing sensitive information with parents	❑Staff communicate constructive feedback (concerns, accomplishments, etc) about youth with caregivers in a respectful, confidential way. ❑Staff know families well enough to refer them to other agencies with resources (family camps, food pantries, adult education, etc) ❑ At least 1 staff member exists who can speak multiple languages ❑ Staff communication with families uses a variety of communication systems (phone calls, emails, 1:1 meetings, sign language, etc)	

Section 9
Nutrition &
Physical
Activity

Section 9: Nutrition & Physical Activity

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
We incorporate activities to promote physical health	❑A physical activity is not an option each day of the program	❑All youth engage in at least 30 minutes of vigorous physical activity per day ❑A variety of physical activities are available to youth, that appeal to all genders, and interest groups	❑All youth engage in at least 60 minutes of vigorous and varied physical activity per day ❑Staff promote an attitude of wellness and engage in physical activity with youth	
Sufficient space exists for activities to take place	❑Youth are in a cramped or unsafe space where physical activities are logistically difficult	❑There is at least 1 space a program can use for physical activities (outdoors, a gym, an empty room)	❑Multiple age-appropriate spaces exist for physical activities ❑Youth leaders facilitate activities	

Section 9: Nutrition & Physical Activity

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Healthy snacks are available	❑Program offers processed snacks that are appealing to youth but contain high sugar or fat content (nachos, cookies, soda) ❑Staff eat unhealthy food in front of youth	❑Program makes a conscious effort to offer healthy snacks daily (fruit, yogurt) ❑ Celebrations and special events maintain healthy eating policies ❑Water is available and encouraged ❑Staff model healthy eating habits with youth	❑Program integrates values around healthy eating into activities: (cooking clubs, gardening, smoothie programs) ❑Youth may run their own snack bar as an entrepreneurship club ❑A select group of youth leaders may be responsible for coordinating snack ❑ Program involves parents in healthy eating or provide youth with healthy food to bring home (from gardens, healthy snacks, etc)	
We promote emotional health	❑ Activity spaces are dominated by one gender, or one clique ❑ Teasing or bullying breaks out during games	❑ Activities are physically & emotionally safe – no bullying or injuries occur during activities ❑ Activities to expand knowledge of risky behavior are offered ❑ Program activities are respectfully competitive – teams are picked at random, activities test a variety of skills (not just basketball, etc)	❑ Staff are aware of youth who are not engaged in physical exercise outside of the program, and talk with them about the importance of exercise ❑ De-brief sessions connect physical activities to character building (playing by rules, teamwork, learning from mistakes, etc)	

Section 10
Promoting Diversity, Access, Equity & Inclusion

Section 10: Promoting Diversity, Access, Equity & Inclusion

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
All youth are welcomed into the program	❑ Youth with special needs are automatically turned away from the program ❑There is little or no interaction between participants with special needs and those without ❑ Some youth are consistently left out of activities ❑ Targeting language, negative stereotypes and hate speech are used in informal interactions	❑ Staff discuss the needs of youth with special needs and identify what accommodations they can offer to family. ❑All youth are engaged and participating in activities in some way, regardless of physical abilities, etc. ❑ Staff check for understanding before moving into next activity ❑ Instructions are charted, spoken, and include pictures or modeling whenever possible ❑ Staff break activities into smaller parts ❑ Staff intervene to explicitly address negative stereotyping and discriminatory statements when they occur	❑ Staff are comfortable discussing the needs of youth with special needs ❑ Staff are able to provide adaptive equipment for youth (earphones for youth sensitive to noise, visual supports, behavior plans) ❑ Staff make it a point to prioritize interactive play over competition in some activities ❑Staff are able to hold a facilitated discussion with program participants to explore strategies to create an inclusive community when one member has special needs	

Section 10: Promoting Diversity, Access, Equity & Inclusion

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Program materials are inclusive to their target youth population	❑ All program materials are in English only. Graphics and images reflect dominant culture, leaving out other groups.	❑ Materials are reflective of the participants' cultures, languages, youth with special needs ❑ Enrollment form includes a place to indicate if youth needs special accommodations.	❑ The mission statement, outreach materials and policies emphasize a commitment to serving ALL youth in the community (specifically youth with special needs, mobility issues, and learning needs)	

Section 10: Promoting Diversity, Access, Equity & Inclusion

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Youth are encouraged to unpack the role of bias in their social context	❑ Youth rarely acknowledge the impact of power or privilege in the program or their lives ❑ Generalizations go unchallenged (such as "the American dream makes it possible for anyone to achieve success if they work hard enough," or, "Anyone can read because there are libraries everywhere.") ❑ Staff are not trained in anti-oppression conversations and miss opportunities to impact youths' awareness of their social context	❑ Facilitator needs the more conscious members of the group to challenge bias, instead of making it part of the training content ❑ Generalizations are challenged with provocative questions such as "What are some of the resources or experiences a person needs in order to be successful?" or "What might make it difficult for someone to utilize a library?" ❑ Staff can describe their own biases	❑ The program presents information and facilitates discussion about systemic privileges to bring awareness to the social context of power ❑ Without blaming or shaming, participants are given the opportunity to discuss ways they hold power, how this power benefits them, and how they can be stronger allies to others ❑ Staff can describe interaction between own cultural values and the cultural values of others ❑ Staff can describe own limitations in understanding and responding to cultural and human differences and seeks assistance when needed	

Section 10: Promoting Diversity, Access, Equity & Inclusion

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Youth have opportunities to explore, share and celebrate their culture with others	❑ Staff acknowledge other holidays but mainly hold a Christmas party ❑ Youth of non-dominant cultures are asked to be spokes-people of their traditions, and put youth on the spot to present/teach their cultural practices	❑ Staff affirms and respects each participant's culture, religion, home language and family values in all verbal and non-verbal exchanges ❑ Holiday seasons are inclusive of many cultures ❑ Special days are celebrated throughout the year to acknowledge all the cultures present in the program ❑ Time is built in to program activities for youth to learn about each others' cultures and traditions through fieldtrips, guest speakers, and other experiences. ❑Staff incorporate community history and knowledge into program activities	❑ Staff encourages youth to name and challenge gender and cultural stereotypes ❑ Program incorporates activities to learn words in other languages, besides English ❑Youth and staff contribute to an altar, or sacred space in the program that reflects important artifacts from their lives, culture or heritage ❑Youth are encouraged to create rituals and traditions for the program, to reflect their shared culture	

Section 11
Effectively Supporting Language Learners

Section 11: Effectively Supporting Language Learners

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
The program environment is conducive to non-English speakers	❑ Staff have no experience working with non English speakers or English language learners and are baffled by their learning process/needs Staff and youth speak louder to participants, or get closer to them	❑ Staff check for understanding before moving into next activity ❑ Instructions are charted, spoken, and include pictures or modeling whenever possible ❑ Staff break activities into smaller parts ❑ Staff are aware of current theories of language use and acquisition, including English as a second language	❑ Staff or community volunteers are available to translate instructions and written materials into home languages ❑ Staff communicate at least monthly with families about English learners' needs and accomplishments ❑Staff support families to understand school and medical systems to ensure youth are informed and healthy	
Staff adapt activities to be accessible to English learners	❑ English language learners are left out of activities. ❑ Appropriate modifications are not attempted.	❑ Instructions are charted, spoken, and include pictures or modeling whenever possible ❑ Staff break activities into smaller parts ❑Staff respond to attempts at language by extending their words without correcting them (e.g. if the child says "doggy," say "Yes, the little black dog is wagging his tail")	❑ Staff connect with English language learners teachers from the school day to learn of strategies that work with a particular student ❑Some staff can speak to youth in their home language ❑ Staff respond to English language learners' behavior with understanding of their possible meanings, e.g. tries to comfort children and find causes for and solutions to their problems	

Section 11: Effectively Supporting Language Learners

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators	Notes
Youth interaction is supported	❑There is little or no interaction between English language learners and English speaking participants	❑ Youth are paired with strong English speakers to support their progress and participation ❑ Youth are encouraged to connect with strong English speakers through informal interactions during activities	❑ Staff hold a facilitated discussion with program participants to explore strategies to create an inclusive community when one member is learning English	
Youth are provided safe opportunities to practice English	❑ Youth are teased when they mis-pronounce a word or use language incorrectly ❑ Hate speech and racial slurs are used casually ❑English language learners students are not given time to express ideas when time is short	❑ English language learners students have their own clubs where they practice presenting, speaking and expanding vocabulary ❑ Staff ensure no teasing or name calling happens during programs ❑ Programs blend academic and enrichment activities that allow youth to expand vocabulary and make connections, such as book clubs, hosting a talk show, drama groups, spoken word poetry	❑ Youth and staff demonstrate appreciation of English language learners' efforts to integrate new words into their vocabulary ❑ 1:1 English practice sessions are held for youth to dialogue about a variety of topics to connect social English to Academic English ❑ Homework tutoring is done in both English and home languages to separate content mastery from English mastery	

Step 6: Reflect on your Assessment

Transfer your notes from your assessment process into the table below.

Section 1

Program Assessment & Design	Low Quality	Approaching Quality	Quality Practices
Youth attend programs			
We design and conduct activities focused on program goals			
Activities are evaluated regularly			
Our program design is youth centered			

Section 2

Program Administration & Finance	Low Quality	Approaching Quality	Quality Practices
Funding sources are transparent and funding requirements are well managed			
We ensure timely recruitment, employment, and termination of all personnel			
We have the ability to establish and implement effective financial policies and procedures			
We maintain accurate records and follow reporting procedures			
The Board provides governance to the organization			

Step 6: Reflect on your Assessment

Section 3

Community Partnership & Collaboration	Low Quality	Approaching Quality	Quality Practices
We advocate for our participants' needs			
We develop, maintain and strengthen community through partnerships with other provider organizations			
We stay connected to community stakeholders, families and participants			

Section 4

Program Administration & Finance	Low Quality	Approaching Quality	Quality Practices
We incorporate academic content and skill development to support youth's school success			
We create opportunities for youth to practice productivity and efficiency in homework time & during enrichment activities			
We have the ability to establish and implement effective financial policies and procedures			
We maintain accurate records and follow reporting procedures			
The Board provides governance to the organization			

Step 6: Reflect on your Assessment

Section 3

Community Partnership & Collaboration	Low Quality	Approaching Quality	Quality Practices
We advocate for our participants' needs			
We develop, maintain and strengthen community through partnerships with other provider organizations			
We stay connected to community stakeholders, families and participants			

Section 4

Program Administration & Finance	Low Quality	Approaching Quality	Quality Practices
We incorporate academic content and skill development to support youth's school success			
We create opportunities for youth to practice productivity and efficiency in homework time & during enrichment activities			
Our staff encourage guide and support during homework time			
Appropriate space exists for youth to complete HW			

Section 5

Program Environment & Safety	Low Quality	Approaching Quality	Quality Practices
Program environment is conducive to independent interactions amongst youth			
We have the ability to connect and relate to youth			
Staff follow safety and emergency procedures			
Staff ensure the health and safety of participants			

Step 6: Reflect on your Assessment

Section 6

Youth Development	Low Quality	Approaching Quality	Quality Practices
Promote a learner-centered program environment			
Promote physical & emotional safety			
Support positive relationships between staff and youth			
Support relationships between participants			
Facilitate rich learning experiences			
Design and deliver project-based learning and sequenced intentional learning activities			
Promote the meaningful engagement and leadership of participants			
Conduct activities that expand participants' knowledge of the community			

Section 7

Program Environment & Safety	Low Quality	Approaching Quality	Quality Practices
Strive for-self improvement			
Have Strong Organizational Skills			
Are able to recruit high-quality staff and volunteers			
Supervisors engage, and support afterschool staff in implementing program activities to achieve program goals			
Promote the growth and development of staff			

Step 6: Reflect on your Assessment

Section 8

Family Involvement	Low Quality	Approaching Quality	Quality Practices
Families & care-givers have opportunities to participate in the program			
Staff adequately inform and collaborate with families & caregivers			

Section 9

Nutrition & Physical Health	Low Quality	Approaching Quality	Quality Practices
We incorporate activities to promote physical health			
Sufficient space exists for activities to take place			
Healthy snacks are available			
We promote emotional health			

Section 10

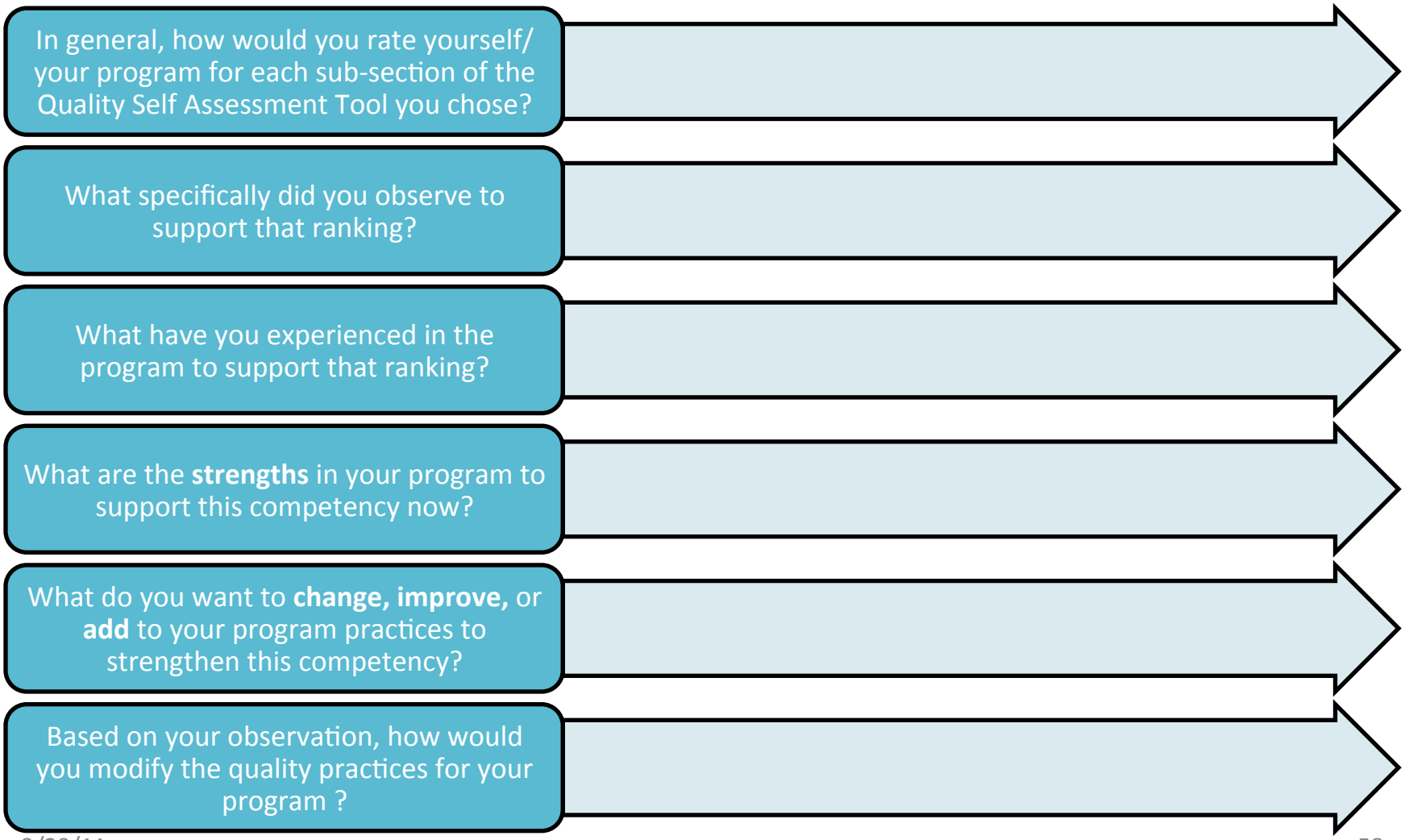
Promoting Diversity, Access, Equity & Inclusion	Low Quality	Approaching Quality	Quality Practices
All youth are welcomed into the program			
Program materials are inclusive to their target youth population			
Youth are encouraged to unpack the role of bias in their social context			
Youth have opportunities to explore, share and celebrate their culture with others			

Step 6: Reflect on your Assessment

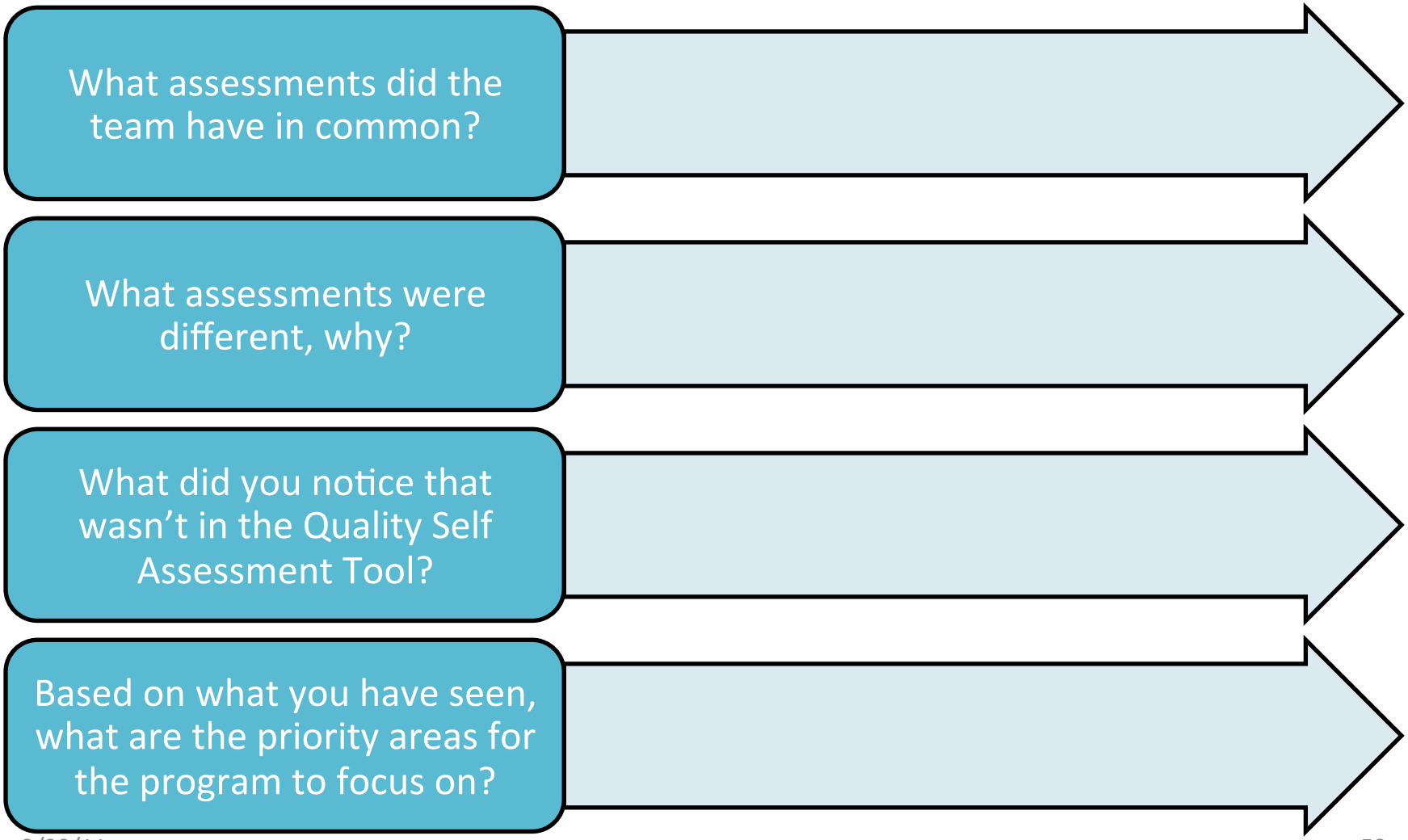
Section 11

Effectively Supporting Language Learners	Low Quality	Approaching Quality	Quality Practices
The program environment is conducive to non-English speakers			
Staff adapt activities to be accessible to English learners			

Step 6: Reflect on your Assessment



Step 7: De-brief with your Observation Team if you did this process in a group



Step 8: Design Strategies

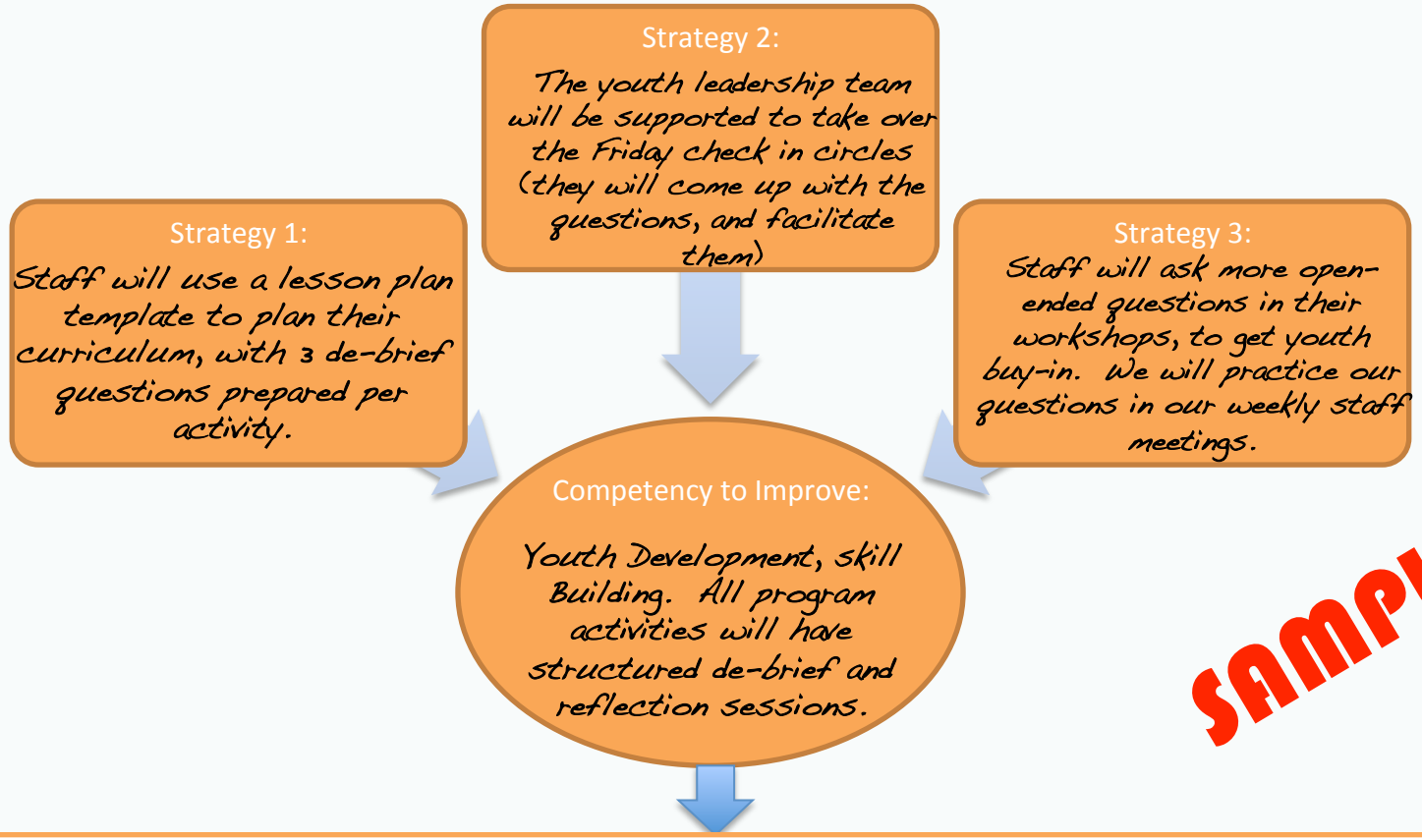
Determine 3 strategies to implement in 4-6 weeks to move from your current level to one level higher

As a group, decide how you will measure the success of these strategies

Schedule a Follow up Meeting in 4-6 weeks to assess the impact of your strategies

Tweak your strategies based on the feedback

Quality Improvement Strategies

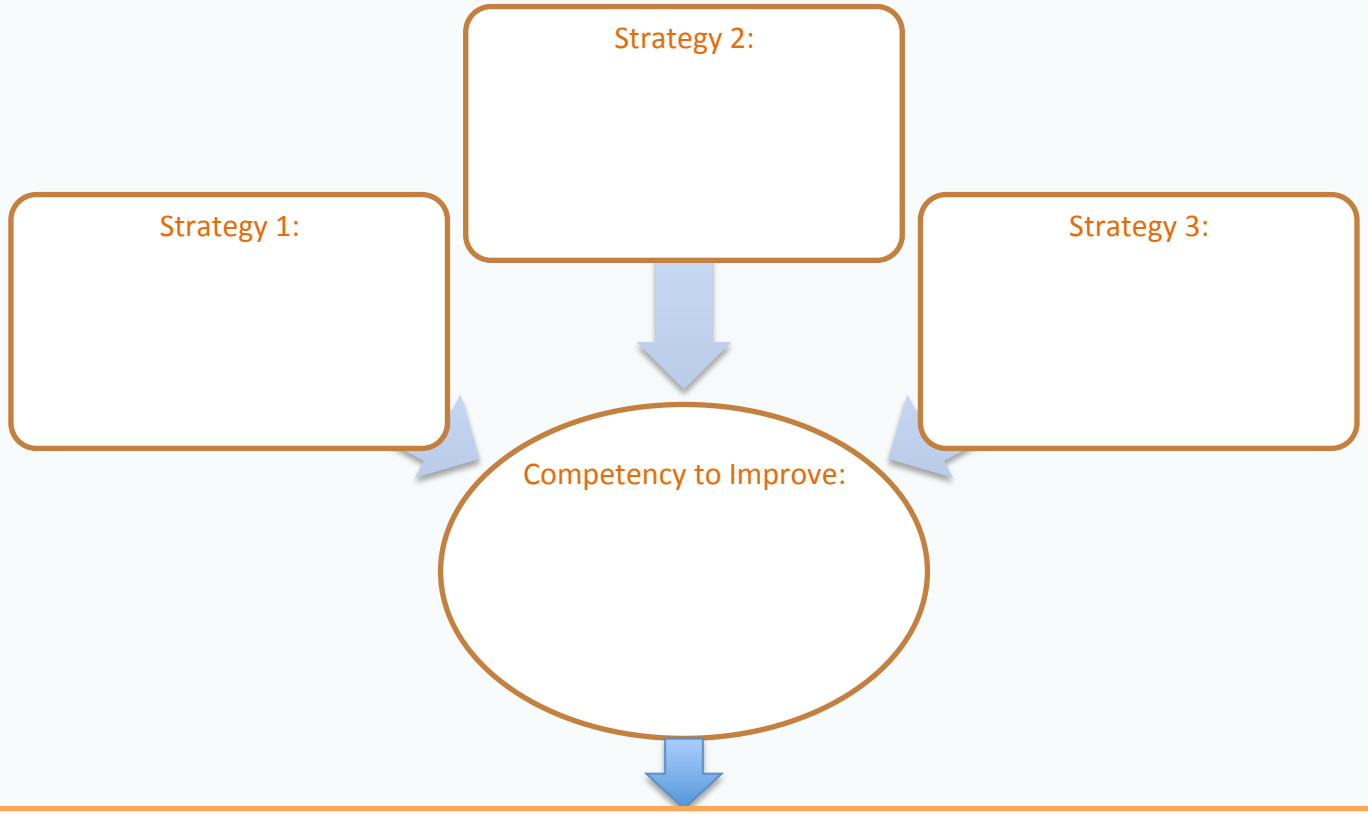


SAMPLE

We will know we are successful when we see this:

Youth are participating in our workshops more, and asking more questions (3-5 deep questions per session). More youth take on leadership of the sessions by stepping into the youth leadership team by expanding our enrollment from 12 youth to 20 youth. Staff will get better at sharing power with the group by asking open questions, even if it means we are less in control.

Quality Improvement Strategies



We will know we are successful when we see this:

AFA Competency Reference Guide

Section 1: Program Assessment & Design

- Competency 4- Deliberately designs and conducts activities that are focused on program goals*
- Competency 13S Ability to design program activities that support program goals and incorporate needs and interests of program participants, their families and the broader community*
- Competency 14S Ability to articulate within the organization and to external stakeholders the program's mission and goals, and how program activities align to them.
- Competency 15S Ability to gather and review data *and conduct evaluations* for timely program improvement

Section 2: Program Administration & Finance

- Competency 3 - Maintains accurate program records and follows reporting procedures*
- Competency 1S- Maintains accurate program records and follows reporting procedures*
- Competency 2S- Ability to establish and implement effective administrative policies and procedures, as appropriate*
- Competency 3S- Ability to establish and implement effective financial policies and procedures, as appropriate *

Section 3: Community Partnership & Collaboration

- Competency 17- Advocates for the participants' needs, providing referral information when appropriate*
- Competency 10S - advocates for the participants' needs, providing referral information when appropriate*
- Competency 11S-Ability to support long-term sustainability through collaborative relationships and fundraising*
- Competency 12S-Has a working knowledge of and abilities to use resources within the broader community

Section 4: Alignment & Linkage with School Day

- Competency 13- Incorporates academic content and skill development that contributes to participants' school success and helps address the achievement gap

AFA Competency Reference Guide

Section 5:Program Environment & Safety

- Competency 1- Ensures for the health and safety of participants ,
- Competency 2 Follows safety and emergency procedures*
- Competency 6 *Ability to connect and relate to youth**
- Competency 7S *Ability to connect and relate to youth*

Section 6: Youth Development

- Competency 5- Supports a program environment that is learner-centered*
- Competency 7-Promotes a sense of physical and emotional safety*
- Competency 8-Supports positive relationships between *staff* and program participants*
- Competency 9-Supports positive relationships between participants*
- Competency 10-Conducts activities that expand the participants' knowledge and understanding of their own immediate community and the larger global community
- Competency 11-Promotes the meaningful engagement and leadership of the participants
- Competency 13-Incorporates academic content and skill development that contributes to participants' school success and helps address the achievement gap
- Competency 14-Ability to implement project-based learning

Section 7: Staff Recruitment & Professional Development

- Competency 19- Strives for self-improvement
- Competency 20- Communicates effectively with other staff, *stakeholders, and parents*
- Competency 4S-Ability to successfully manage program staff*
- Competency 5S-Ability to recruit high-quality staff and volunteers*
- Competency 6S-Ability to engage, and support afterschool staff in implementing program activities to achieve program goals*
- Competency 8S-Strives for self-improvement
- Competency 9S-Ability to promote the professional growth and development of program staff

AFA Competency Reference Guide

Section 8: Family Involvement

- Competency 16- Adequately informs, shares information, and collaborates with important adults*

Section 9: Nutrition & Physical Activity

- Competency 12 - Incorporates activities to promote physical health

Section 10: Promoting Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- Competency 18 – Respects and honors cultural and human diversity*
- Competency 21- Ability to effectively support English learners

Section 11: Effectively Supporting English Language Learners

- Competency 21- Ability to effectively support English learners