

Influencing Stakeholders to Increase OST Job Quality

In partnership with State Affiliates, the National AfterSchool Association has fostered positive youth outcomes by supporting, developing, and advocating for afterschool professionals and leaders for over thirty years. Staff recruitment and retention challenges remain the most significant barrier in the Out-of-School Time field. It is time for a comprehensive overhaul of job quality in our sector.

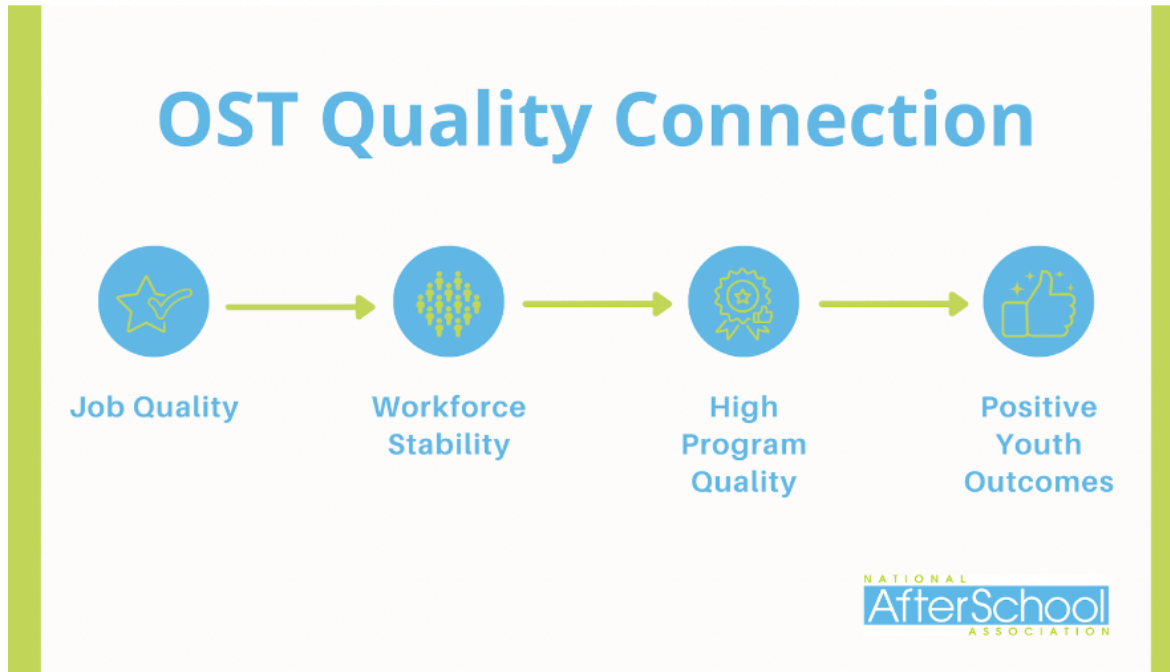
What is Job Quality?

Job quality includes several factors: pay, benefits, schedule, working conditions, agency, and respect. Jobs land on a spectrum; like program quality, jobs can be at various levels of quality.



Why is job quality a critical starting point?

Guaranteeing job quality creates workforce stability, allowing OST professionals to deliver high-quality programs that ultimately lead to positive youth outcomes.



What Does the Data Show?

The Afterschool Alliance has reported that roughly half of the program providers across the country are extremely concerned about finding staff to hire or staffing shortages.

- 53% Northeast
- 52% Midwest
- 50% South
- 49% West

Research from Temescal Associates has shown the following factors are contributing to staffing shortages:

- 77% Preference for Full-Time Employment
- 39% Compensation
- 80% Unqualified Candidates

While we work on policies and funding to increase program access for kids, and as we fight for equity for young people and communities, we must ensure that people in the OST profession have the job quality necessary for this essential work.

What stakeholder activities can you encourage to support job quality?

First, engage all stakeholders in understanding the elements of job quality and its impact on the workforce.

Grantmakers

- Educate current and potential grantees about job quality
- Incentivize job quality by awarding grants to programs that demonstrate efforts to address job quality issues
- Implement strategies to increase the flexible use of grant funds for staff wages and other job quality elements

State Education Agencies

- Provide job quality training for grantees
- Conduct an equitable pay analysis to understand the needs and impacts of job quality
- Adjust the amounts awarded to publicly funded afterschool programs. Increase the per-student rate, giving programs additional funding to recruit staff and increase wages.
- Incentivize job quality by awarding grants to programs that demonstrate efforts to address job quality issues
- Implement strategies to increase the flexible use of grant funds for staff wages and other job quality elements
- Adopt NAA's Core Knowledge Skills and Competencies to ensure compensation commensurate with experience, expertise, and/or skill achievement and professional recognition.

State Child Care Agencies

- Provide training for grantees on job quality
- Incentivize awarding of grants to programs that demonstrate efforts to address job quality issues
- Evaluate childcare reimbursement rates to determine their role in preventing wage increases and address them accordingly.
- Recognize NAA's Core Knowledge Skills and Competencies as the framework for a broad-scale system that provides access to competency-based OST training and education.

State and Local Elected Officials

- Understand the impact of program quality and the relationship between skilled staff and youth outcomes
- Conduct an equitable pay analysis to understand the needs and impacts of job quality
- Implement strategies to increase the use of program funds for staff wages and other elements of job quality
- Celebrate OST professionals, recognizing their value and contributions.

Note: This list is just the beginning. Many of the strategies are universal and can be applied in discussions with the other stakeholders, such as:

- Organizational Leadership and Boards
- Chambers of Commerce and Business Leaders
- Education Associations
- 21CCLC Administrators
- Workforce Development Commissions and Related Groups
- and more!

Achieving job quality will take rethinking compensation, making benefits more accessible, and creating clear opportunities for advancement. The afterschool and youth development sector can be a leader in bringing equity to hiring and workplace practices. Expanding the number of good jobs in our field - and improving the quality of many existing ones - must be a central goal of our work to support positive outcomes for young people and equitable opportunities for all.