

NEVADA

Afterschool

NETWORK

A QUICK GUIDE FOR ADULT ADVOCATES WHO SUPPORT



OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME (OST) PROGRAMS

About Our Quick Guide

Out-of-School Time (OST) Programs are a safe space for children and youth to get homework help, receive academic enrichment, build social skills, and make friendships while their parents work. Who better to tell decision makers the power of OST programs than the adults who send their children to programs or those who work in childcare and education? This quick guide will help you craft and share your unique OST Story.

LET THEM KNOW - WHAT IS OST?

Not everyone is familiar with the term, out-of-school time programs, or OST programs for short, but chances are they have been positively impacted by one.

In your advocacy, you may need to establish a baseline understanding with your audience. Start by explaining that OST programs provide care and/or enrichment programs for K-12 children and youth outside of the traditional classroom setting.

With one foot in education and the other in childcare, these programs keep kids safe while providing unique learning experiences!

EXAMPLES OF OST

- YMCA
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Parks and Recreation
- Summer school & camps
- Programming in faith-based settings
- The afterschool program at your child's school



ELEMENTS OF YOUR STORY

- **Humans are storytellers.** Stories put a face to bigger issues, foster connection, and bring statistics to life.
- Dr. Brené Brown says, “We (humans) are **emotional, feeling beings**; who, on rare occasions, think.” When your story **makes people feel something**, they’re more likely to listen.
- All stories should have a **beginning, middle, and end**.
- **Be authentic** in telling your individual story, **but...**
 - Understand the power of your story being representative of **your generation**.
 - Connect your story to the **larger impact** and value of afterschool. Include data/statistics (just a dash), such as [Nevada After3PM \(2025 Updates\)](#), and the [NAN Nevada Factsheet](#).

CRAFTING YOUR STORY

Depending on your role as either a parent/caregiver or a professional educator, you will have different experiences with out-of-school time programs. All stories will have a beginning, middle, and end, but we have made crafting your story easier based on your role.

Divided into two sections for **Parents/Caregivers** and **Educators/OST Professionals**, this guide will help you craft your story so you can confidently advocate for OST programs.



Parents and Caregivers

BEGINNING:

Who are you? Name, where you live, how many children you have, and their ages, relevant family or career background.

- What challenges or needs were you or your child facing before joining the program?
- What were your concerns about your child's learning, safety, or development?
- How did your child spend their time after school before participating in OST programs?

MIDDLE:

What positive impacts have you seen from your child attending the program?

- What changes have you seen in your child since joining the program? (ex - confidence, academic progress, friendships, behavior, skills, etc.)
- How has the program helped your family? (ex - peace of mind and ability to keep working, support with homework, enrichment opportunities).
- What is meaningful about those things, and what emotions does it evoke?
- The goal is for listeners to hear your passion or meaning associated with your experiences in using out-of-school time programs.

END:

Why is access to OST programs important for your family and others in your community?

- What would happen if this program didn't exist or it lost funding?
- What do you want leaders or decision makers to understand about continuing or expanding these programs?
- End your story by telling the audience what you need from them. Do you want them to fund a program? Create more opportunities? Be clear and direct, then leave them with a hopeful vision of what you would like to see for the future.

Example:

BEGINNING:

Hi, my name is Daniel, and I live in Pahrump, Nevada. I'm a father of two boys, ages 8 and 11. Both of my kids attend an afterschool program at the local community center, and I honestly don't know what I would do without it.

Before they started the program, I was constantly stressed trying to figure out where they would go afterschool while I was still at work. I work full-time at a nursing home, and I can't afford to cut back hours. The program gives me peace of mind knowing they're safe, learning, and having fun while I finish my shift.

MIDDLE:

Since joining, both of my boys have grown so much. My youngest used to struggle with reading, but now he's excited to show me the books he's reading. My oldest used to be shy, but now he talks about his STEM club and the friends he's made. The staff really care about them, and it's not just their grades, but who they're becoming as people.

I read that 4 in 5 parents say afterschool programs help them keep their jobs or work more hours. That's definitely true for me and our rural community. These programs make it possible for me to work full-time and take care of my family.

END:

If our program lost funding, it would be devastating, not just for my family, but for so many parents I know. My eight- and 11-year-olds would probably just be home alone, and I worry that they'll start getting into trouble or that they will start falling behind in school.

As you are making decisions about funding and supporting these programs, please listen to us. These programs aren't extras. They're essential and beneficial to working parents and families like mine. With the right support, we can make sure every child has a safe place to go after school where they can thrive. That's the future of Nevada that I want to be a part of.

Educators and OST Professionals

BEGINNING:

- What is your name, and what is your role or title?
- Where do you work or serve youth, and what kind of program or setting is it?
- How long have you been working with children or youth?
- What inspired you to do this kind of work?

MIDDLE:

- How have you seen OST programs benefit the families you serve?
- Can you share a specific story or example of a child or group of children who thrived because of these programs?
- How do these programs support academic success, personal growth, or family stability?
- How do these programs support the larger community?

END:

- Why do you believe OST opportunities are essential in your community?
- What do you want people in positions of power to understand about the impact of these programs?
- What would happen if the funding for these programs were reduced or eliminated?



Example:

BEGINNING:

My name is Kayla, and I'm the Program Director at Nevada Afterschool Program, which serves middle school students in Minden, Nevada. I've worked in youth development for more than 12 years. I started as a classroom assistant, then an afterschool site coordinator, and now I'm managing multiple sites across the district. I was drawn to this work because I know how powerful it is when young people have a safe, welcoming place to grow beyond the school day. I was one of those kids, and I never forgot how much it meant to have adults who believed in me.

MIDDLE:

Our program does so much more than provide supervision. I've seen kids build confidence, improve in school, and discover their passions like robotics, theater, or helping others through community service. One student who comes to mind is Jaylen, a fifth grader who was quiet, disengaged, and struggling in school. Through our tutoring program and STEM club, he found a love for coding and started participating more in class. His teacher told us it completely changed the way he showed up at school, eager to learn.

We also support working families. Most of our parents have jobs that don't allow them to pick up their kids until 6 PM. I always share the statistic that 4 in 5 parents say afterschool programs help them keep their jobs or work more hours, because we see it firsthand. These programs are a lifeline for families and a launchpad for kids.

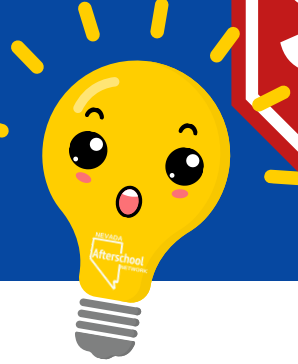
END:

OST programs are not a luxury. They're essential. We contribute to a seamless learning experience for our children. We reinforce learning and create spaces for kids to be seen, heard, and inspired. Without continued support and funding, programs like ours would have to reduce hours, staff, or even close. That would hurt the kids who need it the most and potentially cause their parents to drop out of the workforce. Please understand that investing in OST is investing in the future of children, families, and communities in Nevada.

Crafting Your Story



WAIT! HAVE YOU INCLUDED DATA OR
STATISTICS IN YOUR MESSAGING?
FIND RESOURCES BELOW



- More than 9 in 10 Nevada parents favor public funding for afterschool opportunities. 
- Nearly 9 IN 10 VOTERS agree that afterschool programs are an absolute necessity for communities, an all-time high for support. 
- 89% of voters agree having access to quality affordable afterschool and summer programs is important to help parents work to strengthen the economy. 

TAKING THE AUDIENCE INTO CONSIDERATION

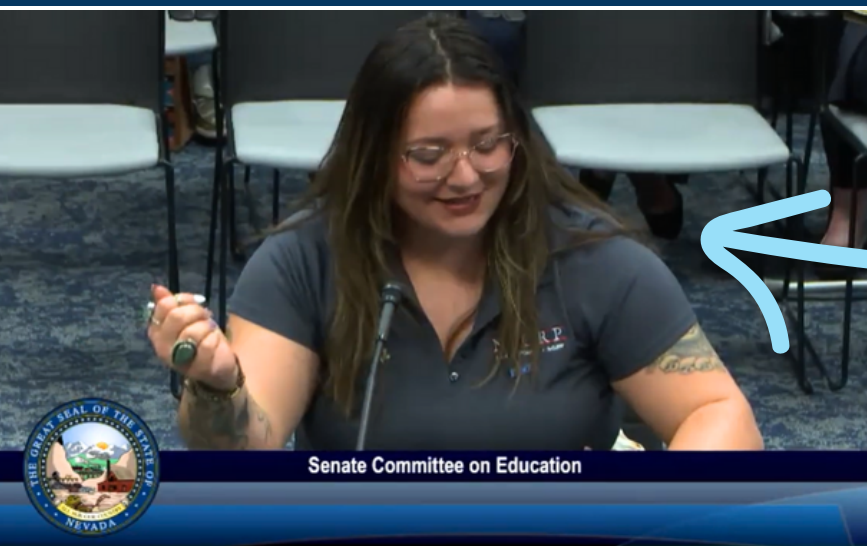
- **Consider who you are speaking to and adjust accordingly**
 - Are they familiar with OST programs? With your community? If not, this is an opportunity to educate them and clarify the importance.
 - If they're unfamiliar with OST programs, start by explaining why these programs are important. You could say, "*Afterschool programs support working families like mine by providing a safe space for children to learn and grow outside the classroom.*"
- **Consider their experiences and perspectives**
 - Consider how your story may resonate with them. Any potential points of connection will help you be heard.
- **Hold those in power accountable**
 - Have they stated positions, like campaign promises or media statements, that you can point to in support of your call to action?

SAME STORY - MULTIPLE FORMATS



Your story is uniquely yours but the environment you are sharing it in will change. Consider crafting different versions of your story. This might include:

- **An Elevator Pitch:** How long are you in an elevator? Maybe a minute or two. Have a short, impactful version of your story that you could tell on an elevator ride.
- **Social Media Content:** How does your story translate on social media? Consider videos or photos that fit on socials.
- **An Official Public Speaking Script:** Longer and more formal stories are perfect for telling your story to decision makers like school boards as well as local, state, and federal representatives.



NAN Program Specialist Kadie Zeller providing public comment during the Senate Education Committee about the importance of supporting and funding STEM in afterschool and other OST programs to support more women in STEM funding for afterschool programs!

NAN IS HERE TO SUPPORT YOU!

Questions on this guide can be directed to NAN@unlv.edu

To keep up to date on policy changes impacting out-of-school time, follow us on social media: and click here to [click here to sign up for our newsletter!](#)



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [NAN Advocacy Webpage](#)
- [NAN Advocacy Toolkit](#)
- [NICRP Children's Week Advocacy Video Playlist](#)
- [NAN OST Advocacy Google Folder](#)