



**Beyond School Bells**  
nebraskachildren

# Building Local Partnerships & Sustainability *TOOLKIT*

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# SUSTAINABILITY

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**the endurance of systems and processes;  
capable of being prolonged; to keep up; to withstand**

Sustainability involves a multitude of things—it is not simply “raising money”. Rather, it is built upon a foundation of critical factors. For ELO programs to be sustainable, it is essential to have a quality program, positive outcomes, effective management and so on. For a program to continue to thrive, grow and attain long-term sustainability, it is essential to develop a plan with multiple, critical components. *Sustainability is a process.*

Every sustainability plan will look different. ELO programs are unique and exist in changing environments. While ELO sustainability plans will follow the same, general outline—no two programs will have the same timeline or exact plan. Thus, it is important for each program to develop their own sustainability plan and timeline that fits their program and community.

# Building Collaboration:

## Developing a Community-Wide System for Sustainability

Community partners each possess unique skills and resources to contribute to your program and to expand its base of support. Working with a diverse group of community partners can increase the potential for sustainability because each partner organization comes with its own constituency and contacts that provide a range of support that can benefit ELO. Meaningful and successful partnerships are best structured as a collaboration in which each organization is expected to make both a commitment and a contribution to the collaboration.

Distinguishing collaboration from other types of working relationships will help all of the participating organizations to understand what is expected of them from the start.

*Cooperation:* an informal, short-term relationship without a clearly defined mission or structure. (sharing materials or supplies between two organizations)

*Coordination:* a somewhat formal relationship that involves longer-term interaction around a specific effort. It requires some planning and division of roles. Resources may be shared to a small degree. (sharing building/program space)

*Collaboration:* a more formal and long-term arrangement. It brings separate organizations or individuals into a new relationship with a joint commitment to a common purpose. Such a relationship requires comprehensive planning and well-defined communication. Partners pool their resources and share the products of their work.

### **To enhance your sustainability efforts through collaboration, you need to:**

- Identify your program's current and potential key partners who will help achieve your vision.
- Consider the best way to involve these partners and make the most of the resources they have to offer. Some partners may be more involved than others. (For example, some partners may provide valuable advice and information in the formation of your sustainability plan, while others may offer staff time to teach ELO programming while others might arrange for meetings with potential investors.)
- Create and implement outreach and communications efforts to keep your partners informed of developments, challenges and successes.

### Collaboration

- avoids duplication, allows organizations to do what they do best in support of a common agenda
- increases the number of people concerned with your program's sustainability and offers more avenues or access to potential funding sources
- foundations and state agencies have begun to show greater interest in these types of partnerships when considering funding ELOs

\*Adapted from Afterschool Alliance, Road to Sustainability

# SWOT Analysis

Utilize the form below to capture your view of your community’s ELO program’s Strengths / Weaknesses / Opportunities / Threats as they relate to increasing sustainable programming. Completing this document will be helpful to you as you begin to build/strengthen local partnerships and sustainability.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b></p> <p><i>(Examples: Good variety of activities, Staff is dependable and knowledgeable, Activities are well-planned and age appropriate, kids are engaged, etc)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p><i>(Examples: Some schools are limited by space, school rules, or funding; staffing issues—under-skilled employees, limited time commitment; little variety in clubs/activities; need more rigorous activities, etc)</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p><i>(Examples: partnerships with local college, good volunteer base, potential partnerships, expansion of certain activity, etc)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b></p> <p><i>(Examples: Lack of funding, Lack of space for supplies and programming, Cost of supplies, Finding staff, transportation issues, Expecting donations/funds and not getting them, etc)</i></p>

***Process of Building Partnerships and Sustainability in Your Community***

## Sample Sustainability Process

- \*Complete 'Community Scan' document
- \*Identify 4-5 priority partnerships and complete 'Partner Analysis' document
- \*Begin outreach, schedule meetings
- \*Educating potential partners of importance of ELOs in your community and about your program
- \*community wide EDUCATION (newspaper, television, radio)

- \*Schedule program visits for potential partners
- \*Engage potential/current partners in Lights on AfterSchool event
- \*Create Advisory Board (or strengthen existant group)
- \*Further engage partners in the programming...invite partners to serve on advisory board
- \*Seek increases and commitments for in-kind donations/programming assistance
- \*Continue to engage new potential partners (creating a new priority list)

- \*Seek financial commitments to your program, long-term sustainability
- \*Seek long-term in-kind commitments
- \*Ask current partners to reach out to other potential partners
- \*Further development of community-wide ELO systems planning

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# Key Community Partnerships

*Working with a diverse group of community partners is essential to improving the overall program quality and increasing the potential for sustainability. It is important to seek out potential partners from each of these four key sectors in your community.*

## **EDUCATION**

### **School District**

Superintendent  
School Board  
Principal  
Teaching Staff  
District Office personnel

### **Local College or University**

Academic Departments  
Career Center  
Student Clubs  
Athletic Departments

## **COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Religious Groups**

Church council  
Churches  
Local faith-based organization

### **Non-profit Organizations**

Museums  
YMCA  
Artistic/Science organizations Environmental

### **Service Organizations**

Rotary  
Lions  
Optomists  
PEO  
Soroptomists  
Elks  
Kiwanis

## **CITY GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC SERVICES**

Mayor's Office  
City Council  
Police Department  
Parks and Recreation Office  
Library  
Health and Human Services Dept

## **BUSINESS**

Chamber of Commerce  
Industries in your community  
Local businesses  
Local banks  
Hospital  
Auto dealerships  
IT businesses  
Electric company  
Co-Op  
Local farmers/ranchers  
Local grocery store  
Local nursery/arbor

## Creating a Program One-Page Overview

When meeting with potential partners, community members or policy makers it is helpful to have a document that clearly presents your program's information. This document should be different from the material you use to market your program to parents.

Putting together a one-page overview that captures these details is an effective way to communicate critical information. This document will help to highlight the opportunities available for youth, the outcomes being realized and the needs your program faces. It's also a way to communicate your program information with clarity and consistency.

### **You will need to collect the following information for your one-page overview:**

- Types of programs offered
- Positive outcomes seen within program
- Program examples of engaged learning, school/community partnerships and family engagement
- Number of children and youth served
- Number of low income children served
- If applicable, the number of children/youth on a wait list and resources needed to serve those youth (this helps to build the case for support)
- Resources needed to build/sustain your program
- Contact information for your program and director contact information

### **Tips for creating a powerful one-pager:**

- Keep each thought short and succinct
- Create headings to make it easy for the reader to skim the page and understand the main points
- Group common facts and figures together under a single heading
- Use bullet points to organize your messages
- Add a candid photo that exemplifies learning in action—don't forget to include a caption with the photo along with a photo credit when necessary (make sure to get a proper photo release form signed)
- Create a pie chart (or other visual) that communicates your funding sources along with a description of your financial needs

*\*\*A Free "One Page Program Overview" Template is available on the Beyond School Bells Website to utilize in creating your program's document*

# SPARK Afterschool & Summer Program



## Our vision and goals . . .

The SPARK program is designed to provide students with a safe, supported, and structured afterschool environment that offers a variety of academic and enrichment opportunities to students and families. Programming has met the goals of increased academic success, positive social and personal skills, and increased community and parent involvement.

## Program highlights . . .

After School Program: 150 student participants

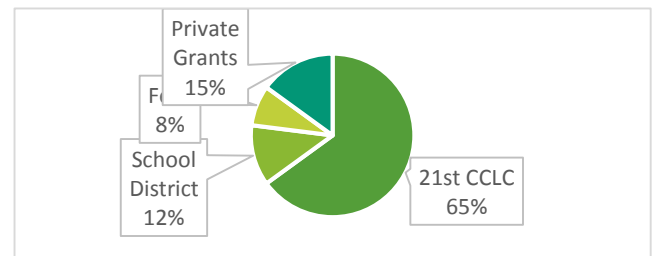
Summer Program: 120 student participants

- \* 71% of students receive free/reduced lunch
- \* 57% of elementary students participate in the program.
- SPARK provides afterschool and school half-day programming at three elementary schools and the middle school.
- SPARK offers homework assistance for the first 30 minutes of our program, followed by hands-on learning experiences through daily club activities. These clubs include robotics, gardening, knitting, drama, tae kwon do, computer programming, painting and technology.
- SPARK has seen clear academic outcomes for nearly three-quarters of those served on a regular basis around improved school skills, classroom performance, and homework completion.

## Our funding . . .

As SPARK looks to the coming years, plans are being made to sustain programming. A decrease in federal grant dollars necessitates the importance of local support. We would like to serve all youth in our community; however, we are unable to do so at this time due to our limited funding.

Wait list of 50 students. We have a suggested \$50 annual program fee; payment is not required to attend. Programming costs (total cost per child for the program to operate): \$535/afterschool and \$215/summer.



SPARK Afterschool and Summer Program

123 A St. Sample, NE 68881

Steve Sample-Director [steve@sparkprogram.org](mailto:steve@sparkprogram.org)



# Identifying and Building Partnerships

## **(1) Complete Community Scan worksheet**

- With your “community partnership” contract person and site directors, spend time completing this document to think through potential partnerships and current community connections.

## **(2) Prioritize 3-4 partnerships**

- It is important to prioritize potential partnerships that have been identified after completing your COMMUNITY SCAN document.
- In identifying potential partners, try to prioritize from a few different types (i.e. city government, business, service).
- Continue to revisit this list of partnerships and reprioritize as you begin outreach/develop partnerships. This process will continually be evolving and new priority lists will be created.

## **(3) Utilize the Partnership Analysis worksheet**

- After completing the COMMUNITY SCAN document, identify 4-5 potential partners.
- Use the PARTNERSHIP ANALYSIS document to record how these partners can benefit/contribute to your program. When you can clearly spell out the benefits of partnering with your program, partners will be much more likely to want to participate.
- For existing or previous partners, think about how you might encourage them to take their involvement to the next level.

## **(4) Education/Outreach to targeted partners**

- Utilize your ONE PAGE PROGRAM OVERVIEW document to highlight your program.
- Utilize 3-4 infographic documents (found in the resources section of BSB website) in discussing the importance of ELO programs. Know and be comfortable with this information.
- Utilize your program video (if you have had this made for your program).
- Approach this meeting/presentation with a clear purpose. It is easier for partners to respond to requests when they know what is being asked of them.
- Be open to areas of collaboration with this partner that they may present to you that you had not initially thought of.

## **(5) Following Up**

- Follow-up with ‘the ask’—advisory board, provide resources, services, etc.
- If the meeting was a presentation (for example, at a Chamber of Commerce meeting), follow up with the director/chair of the group.
- If the partnership is working, find ways to publicize it’s success (newsletters, newspaper)

# COMMUNITY SCAN Document

Mapping out potential partners for your ELO program

Name of business, organization, faith based sector...	Previous contact occurred with this business, organization	Previous partnership existed with the business, organization	Direct personal connection/s (i.e. you personally know individual/s with this business, organization)	Indirect personal connection/s (i.e. someone you know who has personal connection with individual/s at this office/business)	Contact person (who to make initial contact with at this organization, business)
Local Hospital					
Local Bank 1					
Local Bank 2					
Mayor's Office					
City Council					
School Board					
Library					
Parks and Rec Dept					
Police Dept					
Local Church Counsel					
Local College					
Local Museum					
Largest employer in your community (business, industry)					
Chamber of Commerce					
Rotary Club					
Elks Club					
4-H Extension					
Local Grocery Store					
Health/Human Svcs.					
Local YMCA					
Local auto dealer/s					
Local electric company					
Local Co-op office					
Local farm/ranch					
Optomists					

## PARTNER ANALYSIS Document

After completing the COMMUNITY SCAN document, identify 4-5 potential partners. Use this document to record how these partners can benefit/contribute to your program. When you can clearly spell out the benefits of partnering with your program, partners will be much more likely to want to participate. Think about how you might encourage them to take their involvement to the next level.

<b>Name of potential partner:</b>	<b>What can this partner offer our program? Identify resources, services, or materials.</b>  <b>(If you have had previous contact, think about what they have offered in the past and how they could take their involvement to the next level)</b>	<b>How might this partner benefit from a partnership with our program? What does our program bring to the partnership?</b>  <b>(Consider the stake they may have in preparing youth and how your program can help them meet this goal)</b>	<b>Could this partner play a role on our program's community advisory group?</b>	<b>What is our specific ask of this partner?</b>

**PARTNER ANALYSIS SAMPLE**

Name of potential partner:	What can this partner offer our program? Identify resources, services, or materials.	How might this partner benefit from a partnership with our program? What does our program bring to the partnership?	Could this partner play a role on our program's community advisory group?	What is our specific ask of this partner?
Local Factory, STEM-oriented business (i.e. IT focused company)	STEM programming—career information, have representative financial and in-kind support,	We are educating youth on STEM careers, preparing them for the workforce	Yes	<p>“easy ask”: to have a representative from their company participate in your upcoming career spotlight program, commit to a week of programming</p> <p>“middle ask”: financial ask of providing the supplies for STEM programming (paying for costs of science materials for a specific program and/or the school year)</p> <p>“hard ask”: as the STEM employers in your community, ask them to lead and financially sponsor a STEM Club at your program (dedicate staff time to develop curriculum, paying for all costs associated with program)</p>
Local Grocery Store	Primarily financial resources; food donations; nutrition/career programming	Advertise their sponsorship to the public (thank you in the newspaper, in newsletters) Keep youth involved in safe, productive activities (prevent loitering and theft)	Yes	<p>“easy ask”: to have a representative from their store participate in career day or nutrition program</p> <p>“middle ask”: food donation for an event, parent night (i.e. provide hot dogs and buns for a family cookout night)</p> <p>“hard ask”: provide food item for your program for all the students year round (i.e. yogurts and juice boxes)</p>
Police Dept	Programming—career presentations, safety demonstrations; awareness lessons	Keeping youth involved in safe programming during peak crime hours	Yes	<p>“easy ask”: provide a safety demonstration, career week presentations</p> <p>“middle ask”: commit to a semester of programming (i.e. two days a week police officer leads a class/program); provide safety books or some form of in-kind resources that can be utilized for programming</p> <p>“hard ask”: commit to curriculum development for programming, jointly participate in writing a grant together or fundraiser</p>
Local/Reg Hospital	Financial resources; Programming, in-kind donations; Health fairs for families	Community exposure, prevention	Yes	<p>“easy ask”: providing programming, career week presentations, health presentations, nutrition</p> <p>“middle ask”: commit to semester long programming/clubs, in-kind donations, providing financial support for event, material donations</p> <p>“hard ask”: unrestricted funding for initiative (i.e. \$25,000)</p>

# Establishing a Community ELO Council

## Essential Partners to be considered for participation:

- ✓ School Principal and/or Superintendent
- ✓ School Board member
- ✓ Representation from City Government/Mayor's Office
- ✓ Parks and Recreation Department
- ✓ Hospital
- ✓ Local College/University
- ✓ Chamber of Commerce
- ✓ Business/Industry Sector
- ✓ Parent
- ✓ Media/Newspaper
- ✓ Additional key partner/s to your program

## Purpose and Role of the ELO Council/Advisory Committee/Stakeholder Group

There are many different names that you can give to this group—choose a name that works for your program and community. This is the key group of stakeholders in your community that will work with you to strengthen the sustainability of your program. For this document, we will use the term “advisory committee”. A true advisory board is exactly that—*advisory*. Advisory boards/committees are different from governing boards. The board of directors of a nonprofit organization is its legal, governing body. In contrast, an advisory committee does not have any formal legal responsibilities. Rather, an advisory committee is convened by the organization to give advice and support. Advisory committees are immensely valuable and useful in a number of important ways for ELO programs:

- (1) Creates a link and partnership with a specific group of stakeholders
- (2) Offers opportunities for strengthening partnerships and building your program’s long-term sustainability. Through these connections, direct financial and in-kind support for your program can be attained.
- (3) Taps into the brainpower of trusted and valued community members—allows you to look at partnership building through another lens (which may give you different, helpful perspectives).

## Developing/Strengthening your ELO Council

- (1) Make sure the purpose, role, and authority of the advisory board are documented in writing. A purpose statement for the advisory board is helpful when recruiting potential advisory members, so they know why the advisory board is important, and what their role will be.
- (2) Quarterly meetings should be held. Mornings or the lunch hour are often optimal meeting times. Choose a “friendly” meeting environment; provide breakfast/lunch/refreshments (you can utilize your grant money for these meeting expenses).
- (3) The ideal community board should have 10-15 members (keeping in mind that everyone will not always be in attendance at your meetings).
- (4) The individual working on your community partnership work should take a very active role in this group, be co-leading it with you.