

Instrument 1

NCASE Out-of-School Time Workforce Focus Group Protocol

Focus group questions for OST program directors/leaders:

- 1) Please share your first name, your role, how long you have been in that role, and the type of program at which you work
 - a) What age groups does your program serve? (Elementary/middle/high school/mix)
 - b) Does your program accept Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), commonly referred to as child care vouchers or subsidy?
- 2) What do you like most about your current leadership role?
- 3) Thinking back to when you first started working in the OST field, what drew you in?
 - a) How long have you been in the OST field?
 - b) How has your work/role evolved since you started working in the field?
- 4) What do you think is going well in your work in terms of supporting the direct service staff? To clarify, throughout this interview, when we ask about “direct service staff”, we are asking specifically about staff who work directly with children and youth.
 - a) *Prompt if interviewee doesn't have examples or seems stuck:*
 - i) How does your program support staff retention (e.g., compensation and benefits, opportunities for advancement)?
 - ii) How does your program support staff well-being? To clarify, when we talk about well-being, this includes multiple dimensions of health, such as emotional and mental health, physical health, and social health.
 - iii) How does your program support staff effectiveness (e.g., professional development, coaching)?
 - iv) How does your program support staff retention in the OST field?
- 5) Thinking about your current work, what, if anything, do you think is missing that could make your direct service staff feel more supported?
 - a) *Prompt if interviewee doesn't have examples or seems stuck:*
 - i) To support staff well-being?
 - ii) To support staff effectiveness?
 - iii) To support staff staying in this particular OST program or organization?
 - iv) To support staff staying in the OST field?
 - b) *If appropriate, for each type of support noted as missing, ask:*
 - i) What do you think would need to happen to make that/those things available to staff?

- 6) [If staff recruitment hasn't already come up in discussion] We know staff recruitment is a general challenge for OST programs. How successful have you, your program, or organization been at recruiting new staff? What strategies do you think have been most effective?
- 7) Since you've been in your current leadership role, have any changes been made with the intention of better supporting direct service staff? If so, please describe those changes.
 - a) *Prompt with examples if interviewee seems stuck:*
 - i) Professional development, teaching supports, supportive leadership, supportive relationships with colleagues, scheduling changes to support planning time, wellness programming (e.g., targeting physical health, mental health, etc.), services and supports for children they work with (e.g., mental health consultation, special education services), time working directly with children and families
 - b) *Additionally, if not mentioned prompt about:*
 - i) Have any changes been made regarding compensation/benefits packages (including paid time off)?
- 8) Since you've been in your current leadership role what changes, if any, have been made regarding staff recruitment? Have there been any new strategies, approaches, or outreach to new populations?
- 9) What would enable you to continue working long-term with this program/organization or in the OST field overall?

Focus group questions for direct service staff:

- 1) Please share your first name, your role, how long you have been in that role, and the type of program at which you work
 - a) What age groups does your program serve? (Elementary/middle/high school/mix)
- 2) What do you like most about working in OST?
- 3) Thinking back to when you first started working in the OST field, what drew you in?
 - a) How long have you been in the OST field?
 - b) How has your work/role evolved since you started working in the field?
- 4) We know recruitment is a general challenge for OST right now. How successful has your program been at recruiting new staff? How were you recruited? What strategies do you think have been most effective?

- 5) In what ways do you feel supported at work? These could be things that make you feel valued or appreciated, things that make your job easier, or things that help you be the best youth worker you can be.
 - a) *Prompt with examples if interviewee seems stuck:*

Coaching and opportunities for feedback, supportive leadership, supportive relationships with colleagues, paid planning time, compensation and benefits, wellness programming (e.g., targeting physical health, mental health, etc.), services and supports for children you work with (e.g., mental health consultation, behavior guidance supports, special education services), access to professional development, opportunities for job advancement, etc.
- 6) What, if anything, do you think is missing from your work that could make you feel more supported?
- 7) How do you feel about credentials or degrees for the youth fields? Do you have one, and/or would you get one if it was available?
 - a) [If respondent has a degree/credential] Do you recall how you made the decision to pursue it? (e.g., were they motivated to seek it out or did a supervisor/colleague suggest/recommend it)
 - i) What, if anything, helped support you in obtaining it?
 - ii) To what extent has your credential/degree helped you in your work/career? Are you paid more than you were before you earned that credential/degree? Did you get a promotion or new title afterwards? Do you feel better prepared/trained to work with youth?
 - iii) Given what was required to attain your credential/degree, did it seem worthwhile? Why or why not?
 - b) [If respondent does not have a credential/degree] Have you considered pursuing a degree or credential? Why or why not?
 - i) If yes: What do you see as the potential advantages of pursuing this? What would support you in being able to pursue this?
 - ii) If no: Can you say more about that? What influences your decision not to pursue such education or training at this time (e.g., lack of available opportunities, perceived relevance, etc.)?
- 8) What would enable you to continue working long-term with this program/organization or in the OST field overall?