

LET'S TALK THE FUTURE

of **AFTERSCHOOL**

SCENARIO PLANNING



NATIONAL
AfterSchool
ASSOCIATION

Across the country, almost all state stay-at-home orders are being cancelled or loosened but with various strict requirements about what businesses can or cannot be reopened as the COVID-19 pandemic stretches to summer. With the loosening of state restrictions, counties, cities and towns are announcing plans for gradual reopenings and many are setting up planning committees to consider options for reopening schools

and community services. As an afterschool leader, how are you preparing your organization and your team to influence these decisions? What voice does afterschool play in these plans for re-opening? What options are you and your partners advocating for to safely re-open your programs for children and their families? Despite many unknowns, it's important to look to the future. Programs everywhere are

mapping out various situations regarding what reopening could look like to them, often referred to as scenario planning. Scenario planning can prove to be a useful tool for your program in the coming months. For the afterschool and out-of-school time community, scenario planning can help examine the set of realities as to what your programs could look like in the near future upon reopening.

IMPORTANCE of SCENARIO PLANNING

Scenario planning allows organizations and programs to identify and outline available options that position you as an influencer in reopening decisions. Equally important, not preparing for realistic situations could potentially expose your program to increased risk and liability errors and leave staff unprepared to mobilize once your

community is allowed to return.

At its core, scenario planning allows you the ability to truly think beyond the now and identifying your organization's most urgent priorities.

WHERE TO START:

Start at your core values. Each scenario you plan for, and how you plan for it, should speak to the purpose of your programs. Scenario plans that tie to your core values are honest and realistic but are also creative and bold. Bring in your core leaders to begin, then add a couple rising stars, if applicable, to learn and provide a fresh perspective.

A good place to start is conducting a community assessment. What's the current situation? What's changed? What's your part in all of this?

Pull your team together and think about your options. If you can resume programming at your location, what could it look like? For example, you could plan for delivering more online programming to your community, but it's important to examine if that is what your community needs from you. Or, can you begin planning other initiatives that tie into your values.

DRIVING FORCES

After reinforcing your core values, it's important to consider all of the driving forces that will go into your scenarios. Related to COVID-19, some of these forces will be federal, state or city mandates, along with economic and societal issues. Each situation you plan for should take these forces and how they will affect your program, into consideration.

At a higher level than the previous considerations, affirm your core values and who you serve. For example, children and parents are telling you that they miss being connected and the feeling of belonging—so keep them at the front of your mind when developing plans.

WHAT IS OUT OF YOUR CONTROL?

It's just as important to plan for uncertainties when developing scenario plans. Similar to your driving factors, your uncertainties will likely focus on when you can reopen and under what parameters, and also public perception of safety when it comes to facets of everyday life.

PLAUSIBLE OUTCOMES

After considering driving forces and elements beyond your control, it's time to develop two or three scenarios using the best information at your disposal. Some scenarios will follow more conservative plans, while others should push the envelope a little more.

While developing these outcomes, it's important to remember that there isn't a wrong or right way to implement scenario planning. It's a forward-thinking exercise. What's important is

that your plans tie back to your core values and you take the time to consider factors, outcomes and implications.

Once your plans are fully formed, you might also find yourself taking elements of certain plans and putting them together. This is a good thing. These plans are meant to be fluid and adapt to current circumstances.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Space and social distancing are significant elements that will impact your scenario plans. What impact will these factors have on staffing? Scheduling? Space needs? Each of those issues will also create financial implications for your scenarios. Stronger Nonprofits and the Wallace

Foundation have created some helpful financial planning tools to support you in this. You can access those resources specific to scenario planning [here](#).

SCENARIO PLANNING WORKSHEET

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Pull your team together and think about your options. If you can resume programming at your location, what could it look like? If you are planning to deliver more online programming, you should assess whether the current offerings are being utilized by children and parents and what changes you will need to make (including increasing your organization's capacity and skills in virtual programming.) You may also be considering different initiatives that tie into your values and resources.

SERVICE PROVIDERS	INTERMEDIARY
Scenario A: Service delivery in school	Scenario 1: Healthy and Safety Recommendations
Scenario B: Service delivery in community place	Scenario 2: Insurance and Liability issues for re-opening

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