

# TIP SHEET: Sharing Your Story through Stakeholder Visits



Engage Every Student Initiative was created by the U.S. Department of Education to provide high-quality out-of-school time learning opportunities for every child who wants participate.

Site visits can be one of the most effective vehicles for growing awareness of and buy in for your summer and afterschool programs. This resource shares strategies to consider when planning, leading, and documenting stakeholder visits. If you are thinking through sustainability strategies, this is a great place to begin.

## Before the Visit

**Schedule an annual visit during [Lights on Afterschool \(October\)](#) and [National Summer Learning Week \(July\)](#).** By doing so, you can capitalize on national media and advocacy efforts.

**Identify all potential champions and partners who are key to your current and future success.**

Visit the [Afterschool Alliance's step-by-step guide](#) for engaging elected officials. Consider offering guests a speaking role during the visit to build ownership and gather quotes.

**Align the design of the visit to showcase your strengths, goals, and opportunities for support.**

**Design Inputs** - Consider these questions when designing the visit:

- How is your program addressing existing disparities within your district or community? What is the best way to demonstrate through framing, observations, and engagement?

## Design Inputs *Continued*

- What are the most unique and important aspects of your program experience?
- How can you center the perspectives of participating youth and families, particularly those who are often not represented? What would make this opportunity welcoming and enjoyable? How might they benefit from sharing their experiences?
- How can visitors support your goals for sustainability and vision for the future?

## Agenda Checklist

- Brief visitors on what they will experience and how that ties to the program vision and goals.
- Model unique aspects of the program approach into the design, including rituals such as all-camp meetings.
- Prioritize opportunities to observe authentic learning and engagement in action.
- Don't forget to include time for interaction among visitors and program leaders, staff, youth, and families.





## During the Visit

### Share a visitor guide that includes:

- Goals and agenda for the visit
- Key program information
- Activity “look fors” highlighting the practices you want to sustain
- Example questions to help visitors engage with staff, partners, and participating youth in meaningful ways

### Make the funding sources that are critical to run your program visible and central to the conversation about what it takes.

**Share real-time highlights and quotes on social media.** Set norms with guests regarding photos, quotes, and social media use. Tip: Access example posts through the National Summer Learning Association [Social Media Toolkit](#).

**Conclude your visit with a clear ask.** Consider how guests can support sustainability in the five areas noted to the left.

## After the Visit

### Write a compelling summary of the visit.

Tip: Stakeholder quotes make for great headlines and openers.

**Send thank you letters to visitors** that recap highlights and key messages, including your asks and opportunities for support.

**Share your story with local media outlets, Statewide Afterschool Network, and Engage Every Student partners.**

## Planning Resource

[BellXcel SCRI Site Visit Checklist](#)

## Before the Visit (continued)

**What kinds of support contribute to sustainability?** When engaging champions of key organizations and offices, consider the diverse contributions they may be able and willing to offer, such as:

- **Verbal support:** How can visitors build awareness and broad support for your programs?
- **Policy support:** What policies and/or organizational supports would help you better plan and deliver quality programs for all youth who want to participate?
- **Operational support:** How could partner organizations and agencies contribute to your planning and operations?
- **In-kind support:** Where could the program benefit from access to facilities/space, staff/volunteers, and equipment?
- **Funding support:** What are your needs and goals for achieving diversified and sustainable funding?

*Learn more in the Wallace Foundation’s [Summer Sustainability Planning Tools](#)*

**Create background materials.** Describe the program’s goals, population, and results. Include links and visuals. Share them before and during the visit.

Tip: See the Afterschool Alliance [Program Profile Template](#) for ideas.

**Send personal invitations to key media contacts.**

**Brief staff and youth on who is visiting, why, and what to expect.**