



Washington



How did you engage stakeholders in the process of creating statewide quality standards?

- The quality standards were developed through a 9-month process involving an external consultant, staff, and a variety of key stakeholders from the expanded learning opportunities (ELO) field in Washington.
- Statewide ELO stakeholders established overarching goals and domains.
- Small workgroups developed quality standards based on nationally recognized, research-based best practices in youth development.
- An online survey and several statewide focus groups, including youth, were used to review and provide feedback to the draft document.



What advice do you have for other states before they start to develop or implement their own quality standards?

- Establish buy-in from a few supportive stakeholders prior to engaging in a full process.
- Host stakeholders' meetings to explain what quality standards are, how they are being used by ELO networks around the country, and why it is important to develop them for your state.
- Consider having a consultant support your process and manage your stakeholder meetings and workgroups.
- Take time to review the existing quality standards across the nation. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Make sure that your quality standards are customized to meet the needs of the ELO stakeholders in your state.
- Create a feedback process involving your constituents, including youth.



What challenges did you encounter and how did you overcome them?

- School's Out Washington (SOWA) had many of the components of a quality improvement system in place but not quality standards. We had core competencies, several programs in the state were using a quality assessment tool, and SOWA provided training and coaching services to the field.
- In 2012, we secured resources to fund the development of quality standards.
- SOWA's goal was to create a process that would engage and create buy-in from statewide ELO representatives and experts that represented the geographic, programmatic, and participant diversity of the state.
- Prior to starting the formal process, SOWA hosted a "Why quality matters" presentation with our closest partners to introduce them to the importance of developing quality standards and create early buy-in. We started with a comprehensive stakeholders' kickoff meeting. The group went through a collective process to establish shared goals and select standard domains. They reviewed other states' standards and worked in small groups to prioritize the proposed domains, and they discussed how to format the quality standards document. After the meeting, staff from the participating organizations volunteered to participate in one of four workgroups to write the document.



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Please share your thoughts with us via e-mail at SANSupport@air.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

- The move from a large-group process to smaller work groups with volunteer stakeholders from across the state posed a few challenges.
- We convened a combination of in-person and virtual meetings so the work groups could stay connected despite their various geographic locations. We hired an external consultant who helped organize our meetings and workgroups, and guide us throughout the process. Our consultant had system-building and field experience, which was critical to navigate the process and keep us on track. When the draft document was complete, we hired an editor to synthesize the collective workgroup's notes. We then contracted with the Forum for Youth Investment to conduct a research review to ensure the standards were aligned with best practices.



What successes are you most proud of?

- SOWA contracted with the Forum for Youth Investment to complete a research review to ensure our standards aligned with evidence-based best practices. The summary of evidence is in the appendix of the document, which serves as a valuable resource for providers and stakeholders.
- Having the evidence-based research summary in the document has helped us demonstrate the importance of the standards to external policymakers, educators, and the funding community. Our standards were also adopted by the state's Expanded Learning Opportunities Council (ELOC) as the recommended quality standards for ELO providers and programs in Washington.
- The quality standards document completed our Quality Improvement System. The standards are now aligned with the program quality assessment tools from the David P Weikart Center. SOWA has core competencies, youth program quality standards, aligned program quality assessments, and training and coaching services that support the continuous improvement system for the ELO field in our state.
- SOWA is proud of establishing a Cultural Competency and Responsiveness domain in both our core competencies and quality standards. This domain ensures that program staff and administrators have the training required to be responsive to the diversity of their program participants, families, and the communities they serve. Having this domain in both documents prioritized the development of SOWA's Structural Racism and Cultural Responsiveness workshops, which are now an integral part of the aligned quality training that we offer to the field.



Who did you work with to create your quality standards?

The following organizations were represented at the Stakeholder's Gathering that provided guidance on the overall structure and content of this document:

Asian Counseling and Referral Service
 Boys and Girls Club of King County
 Boys and Girls Club of South Puget Sound
 City of Seattle Human Services Department
 Community Day School Association
 Educational Service District #113
 Forum for Youth Investment
 Girl Scouts of Western Washington
 Greater Tacoma Community Foundation
 Highline Community College
 New Futures
 Northwest Leadership Foundation

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
 Omak School District 21st Century CLC
 Peace Community Center
 PONCHO
 Puget Sound Educational Service District
 Raikes Foundation
 School's Out Washington
 Seattle Public Schools
 SOAR
 Spokane County United Way
 Spokane Public Schools
 Urban Impact

Volunteers of America
 Washington State Department of Early Learning
 Washington State Department of Social and health Services
 Washington State House of Representatives
 Washington State Mentors
 Washington State PTA
 Washington State University Extension 4-H
 YMCA of Greater Seattle
 Youth Development Executives of King County