

Roles and Responsibilities in the Out-of-School Time Field

Purpose of This Brief

Out-of-school time (OST) professionals bring expertise, dedication, and deep commitment to the field. While many professionals report fulfillment in their roles, enhancing support for their well-being, compensation, and career growth can further strengthen their impact and longevity in the profession (Moroney et al., 2025). Currently, OST professionals work in a variety of roles and assume a variety of responsibilities, based on local needs and program design (Moroney et al., 2025; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [NASEM], 2025). While these differences afford programs flexibility for adaptation, they can challenge the field’s ability to target professional development opportunities, identify career growth trajectories, and gain recognition for the profession (NASEM, 2025).

The purpose of this brief is to highlight a list of common roles and responsibilities^A that can support the field in clarifying career pathways and investing in professional development. We also offer a starting point for developing shared definitions of more formal role classifications for OST workers (e.g., occupational classifications).

In this brief, we share the following:

- The list of job roles and responsibilities, grouped by [organization-](#) and [program-level roles](#)
- [Why common job roles and responsibilities matter](#), along with [when they might be helpful](#)
- An appendix detailing our [methods](#) and [how to use the job roles and responsibilities in this brief](#)

Supporting the Workforce

The OST field has called for improved wages, career growth opportunities, and recognition for its workforce. For example, the National Afterschool Alliance has identified [core knowledge, skills, and competencies for OST staff](#), and the Afterschool Alliance has developed [policy recommendations](#) for the workforce. Common roles and responsibilities may continue to support these movements in the field.



This work was completed as part of the [OST Cost Study](#) at the American Institutes for Research[®] (AIR[®]). With support from the Wallace Foundation and in collaboration with the Afterschool Alliance and National Afterschool Association, AIR is studying what it costs to operate a high-quality OST program today. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Wallace Foundation. Learn more about the OST Cost Study [here](#).

Suggested citation: Lentz, A. K., Alexander, H. A., & Richter, J. Y. (2025). *Roles and responsibilities in the out-of-school time field*. American Institutes for Research. <https://www.air.org/project/out-school-time-cost-study>

^A To generate the list of roles and responsibilities, we read literature on the OST workforce then reviewed data sources and current job postings in the field. We vetted this list with OST experts—including researchers, field leaders, and practitioners—to ensure the list was relevant.

Organization-Level Roles

The roles outlined below reflect a range of possibilities across OST programs. We recognize that organizational structures vary widely—many programs combine roles, operate with fewer staff, or rely on volunteers. This list is intended to showcase a range of possible roles that could be present, though not every program will have them all.

Organization Leader

Executive Director; Chief Executive Officer; President

- Lead the design of the overall vision and strategy for the organization and/or program.
- Manage the organization and supervise staff.
- Communicate with board members and community partners.
- Develop school and community partnerships.
- Guide development and marketing strategies.
- Lead or support budget oversight.
- Lead or support evaluation, data collection, and reporting.

Administrative Staff

Administrative Assistant; Receptionist; Secretary

- Coordinate staff schedules.
- Support leadership and managers in completing tasks as applicable.
- Manage the office's supply and operational functioning.
- Perform administrative functions, such as answering phones and responding to email inquiries.

Development Manager

Development Director; Fundraising Director; Grant Writer

- Apply for and maintain program funding.
- Lead and design fundraising initiatives.
- Research and identify new funding opportunities.
- Cultivate relationships.
- Write and edit letters of intent, proposals, and reports.
- Collaborate with various teams to request information.
- Collect and maintain donor information.

Human Resources and Finance Manager

Business/Finance Manager; Accountant; Human Resources Director; Chief Financial Officer; Talent Acquisition Manager; Payroll Specialist

- Oversee recruitment, hiring, training, and retention of staff.
- Develop job descriptions and job interview protocols.
- Provide onboarding training.
- Coordinate ongoing professional development.
- Manage staff compensation, benefits, and the performance management system.
- Develop and monitor budgets and conduct financial forecasts and planning.
- Manage accounting, day-to-day booking, and accounts receivable.
- Analyze and report financial data.
- Ensure organizational compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

Marketing and Communications Manager

Marketing Director; Communications Lead

- Lead marketing, communications, brand management, and community engagement efforts.
- Develop and distribute print, digital, and multimedia content and messaging to promote programs, campaigns, fundraising, initiatives, and special events.
- Lead or support participant outreach and recruitment efforts.
- Ensure brand standards are met organization-wide.
- Manage, coordinate, and implement special events for stakeholders.

Data and Research Manager

Data Analyst; Quality Specialist; Quality Improvement Director; Director of Evaluation

- Maintain databases of student and program information.
- Analyze data and consult on research to inform program planning and implementation as needed.
- Develop, lead, and manage research, evaluation, and quality improvement initiatives.
- Collect, clean, and analyze qualitative and quantitative data.
- Develop reports and data visualizations.
- Support program design, planning, and development.
- Support grant reporting.
- Manage the program database.
- Coordinate with external research partners.
- Lead or support the continuous quality improvement process.

Program-Level Roles

Program Leader

Program or Regional Director; Chief Program Officer; Director of School-Age Programs

- Oversee program operations at one or more sites.
- Recruit, hire, and train new youth-facing staff.
- Oversee and/or develop program curriculum and activities offered at sites.
- Supervise site coordinators and youth-facing staff.
- Design and develop activities.
- Partner with interest holders (for example, families, school-day staff, community partners) on program activities.
- Manage and track program activities (for example, student records, attendance, enrollment, evaluation data).
- Communicate program issues with organization-level staff (for example, safety concerns).
- Support and/or lead reporting for funder requirements.

Site Coordinator

Site Supervisor; Site Director; Site Manager; Center Coordinator; Multi-Site Coordinator

- Coordinate the site's logistics and operations, and maintain the safety of the physical site (for example, take attendance, ensure entrance is secure).
- Hold relevant certifications, though not required
- Oversee program operations at the assigned site.
- Recruit, hire, and train new staff.
- Oversee program curriculum and activities offered at the site.
- Supervise youth-facing staff.
- Communicate and coordinate with stakeholders (for example, families, school-day staff, community partners) on program activities.
- Manage and track program activities (for example, student records, attendance, enrollment, evaluation data).
- Oversee safety and security at the site.
- Communicate issues (for example, safety concerns) with the supervisor.
- Support reporting for funder requirements.

Youth-Facing Staff

Lead Instructor; Coach; Teacher; Mentor; Program Specialist; Classroom Lead

- Develop, plan for, and implement age-appropriate program lessons and activities (for example, securing necessary materials for activities).
- Supervise and instruct young people.
- Create and maintain a physically and psychologically safe and supportive environment for young people.
- Communicate and coordinate with interest holders (for example, families, school-day staff, community partners) on program activities.
- Manage and track program activities (for example, student records, attendance, enrollment, evaluation data).
- Communicate issues (for example, safety concerns) with the supervisor.

Youth-Facing Support Staff

Program Assistant; Assistant Instructor; Classroom Assistant

- Provide support to the youth-facing staff (for example, interns, volunteers from outside organizations) and have direct daily contact with youth.
- Support youth-facing staff in providing age-appropriate program lessons and activities.
- Support supervision of and instruction for youth.
- Maintain a physically and psychologically safe and supportive environment for young people.
- Support tracking of program activities (for example, student records, attendance, enrollment, evaluation data).

Youth Leaders

Youth Lead; Activity Assistant; Youth Mentor; Group Leader; Youth Liaison

- These are program participants in a paid role who support youth-facing staff and youth-facing support staff in designing and delivering program activities.

Operational Support Staff

Food Services; Transportation Services; Maintenance Staff

- Complete tasks to support operational needs of the program, which could include but is not limited to: preparing and serving meals for participants, transporting young people to or from the program, maintaining the cleanliness and facilities of the program site.

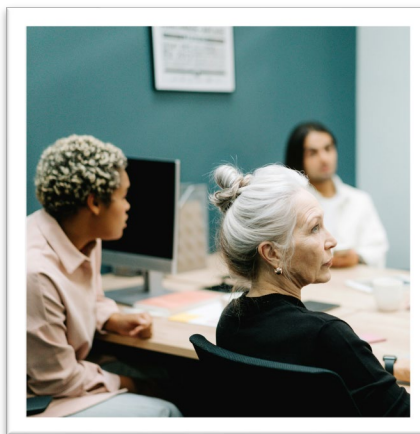
Why Job Roles and Responsibilities Matter

The OST field has made significant strides in supporting the workforce by deepening our understanding of professionals' backgrounds and experience (Moroney et al., 2025), developing national job standards (National Afterschool Association, 2021), and advocating for supportive policies (Afterschool Alliance, 2024). This work has revealed the wide range of roles and responsibilities that exist across the field. OST leaders have called for continued efforts to strengthen the workforce by investing in professional development, clarifying career pathways, and pursuing federal recognition of an occupational classification for OST workers, which could help establish wage protections. However, a critical first step in advancing these goals is identifying common roles and responsibilities across the OST workforce.

When Job Roles and Responsibilities Might Be Helpful

OST professionals, capacity builders, and policymakers can use the job roles and responsibilities in this brief for several purposes. Below, we share a few examples of when they may be helpful.

- **Assessing current staffing roles and making decisions around hiring for new positions.** Organization leaders may use these lists of job roles and responsibilities to review how key roles and responsibilities map onto their current staffing structure. This review may help clarify key roles for each staff member's position and identify any skillsets that the organization may prioritize in future staffing decisions.
- **Building the capacity of the workforce.** Higher education institutions can tailor coursework and degree options to align with different roles and responsibilities in the profession. Similarly, OST capacity builders can tailor professional development opportunities to specific roles and responsibilities.
- **Convening local, state, and federal government leaders to create and adopt occupational codes.** Drawing from this guide, policymakers may use these lists of job categories to create dedicated occupation codes for the OST workforce. These codes may support a broader understanding of equitably designed wage and compensation structures aligned with OST staffing roles.



Appendix

We followed a five-step process to identify common job roles and responsibilities in the field (Exhibit A). This included reviewing existing resources and materials (Exhibit B) and consulting with current out-of-school time (OST) experts, such as researchers, field leaders, and practitioners (Exhibit C). Information on how to use these job roles and responsibilities can be found in Exhibit D.

Exhibit A. Methods for Developing Job Roles and Responsibilities for Out-of-School Time Personnel

- 1** • **Reviewed literature on the out-of-school time (OST) workforce** to understand the current landscape of roles and responsibilities in the field
- 2** • **Leveraged existing data sources of job descriptions** to generate an initial list of job roles and responsibilities (Exhibit B)
- 3** • **Scanned active job listings in the field** to identify any gaps in or necessary modifications to the preliminary list of roles and responsibilities
- 4** • **Convened a panel of OST experts** to review and modify the list of roles and responsibilities as needed (Exhibit C)
- 5** • **Validated the list with OST state network leads** to check the relevance of the list of roles and responsibilities to the field

Exhibit B. Data Sources

The [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) (BLS) publishes annual labor market data, including wage and benefit information, for job descriptions that align with the Federal Office of Management and Budget's Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system. The SOC categorizes workers into occupations based on their job duties and provides specific role descriptions for each position. With more than 800 occupations represented, BLS data are among the most comprehensive wage and occupation information available for U.S. workers.

We used SOC BLS wage data to identify occupations that are like the OST roles we found. We first identified SOC occupation groups that were close matches to OST job categories. Next, we identified specific positions within these SOC occupation groups by comparing their job descriptions with the job descriptions for each OST job category. We selected SOC occupation groups based on the stated responsibilities of the roles and compared them with OST job categories to identify the closest alignments. We considered the role of each position within the organization, along with its associated responsibilities and required qualifications (if specified). For example, we compared the definition of *OST program leader* with various management positions in kindergarten, secondary school, and preschool/daycare. We determined that instructional coordinators and education administrators had the most similar responsibilities and organizational roles. Similarly, we compared the role of *youth-facing staff* with other positions in the BLS and selected *teachers* as the equivalent position due to the similar nature of responsibilities.

The [Power of US \(POU\) Workforce Survey](#) was a 2022–23 national survey designed by the American Institutes for Research, in partnership with the Wallace Foundation, to collect information about the youth fields workforce in nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, public agencies, and private organizations, including OST programs. The survey gathered information about youth fields workers' employment and wages in specific positions and whether staff have access to various benefits, such as paid leave, health insurance, retirement benefits, and retirement savings contributions. We compared the reported responsibilities and required education and experience for each POU staffing category with the same information for OST job categories, using the same process as for the BLS data. We then selected the POU staffing categories that most accurately represented each OST job category as the comparison categories.

Exhibit C. Expert Panel Members

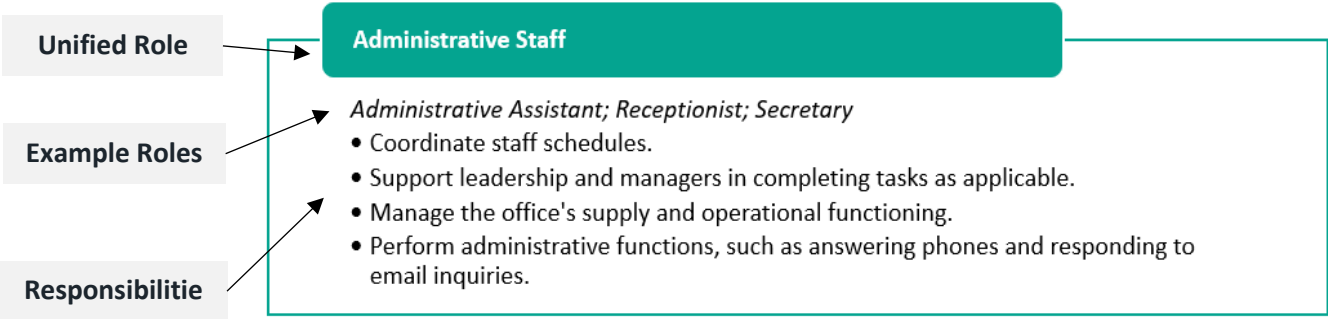
- Julee Brooks (Woodcraft Rangers)
- Dirrick Butler (Project OneTen)
- Linda Galib (AIR)
- Sil Ganzó (ourBRIDGE)
- Jessie Kerr-Vanderslice (AIR)
- Dr. Neil Naftzger (AIR)
- Dr. Dorothy Moulthrop (Open Doors Academy)
- Dr. Marlo Reeves (AIR)
- Samantha Sniegowski (AIR)
- Dr. Amy Syvertsen (AIR)
- Gislene Tasayco Prado (AIR)
- Heather Taylor (Tahlequah Public Schools and Boys and Girls Club of Tahlequah)
- Angie Toone (Utah Afterschool Network)
- Dr. Femi Vance (AIR)
- Dr. Deepa Vasudevan (AIR)

Note. Here we provide the organizational affiliation of each contributor at the time this work was completed.

Exhibit D. How to Use These Job Roles and Responsibilities

We organized this guide into two sections: [organization-level roles](#) and [program-level roles](#). We consider **organization-level roles** to include those that support the **operations** of an OST program. These roles sometimes take place in a central office and often involve more limited interactions with young people. We consider **program-level roles** to include those responsible for **implementing programming**. People in these roles often work directly with young people and families.

In the example below, we provide the **unified role title** in the green header, **examples of similar roles** we identified in the field in italicized text, and **job responsibilities** in the bulleted list.



While we provide a list of all possible job roles we identified, we acknowledge that **not all OST programs are likely to have all the jobs listed**. It is not uncommon for staff at OST programs to take on a number of roles, particularly at smaller organizations. In these cases, we recommend collapsing job responsibilities under the role that represents the majority of a staff member’s responsibilities.

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