WHAT IS THE MISSION OF YOUR AFTERSCHOOL SCIENCE PROGRAM?

This tool was designed for **afterschool staff and program directors** to explore the mission of their afterschool science program by reflecting on

- the purpose of the program
- learning goals
- activities
- resources

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

PRINT

ENTER YOUR RESPONSES

DISCUSS FUTURE GOALS

The SRI Education Afterschool Science Networks Study

ABOUT THE ASN PROJECT

The ASN project at SRI Education is a five-year research study focused on science in afterschool settings funded by the National Science Foundation. In this project, researchers are examining the types and quality of science offerings within afterschool programs and the factors that influence them.

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INVERNESS RESEARCH

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1 ALIGN PURPOSES, GOALS, AND ACTIVITIES

The aim of this step is to make explicit why you are offering science to youth, what you want youth to get out of their experiences, and what kinds of experiences you want them to have. The examples are merely suggestions. You should write what makes sense for your program. Then do a reality check. Make sure these all align. Play around with them until they do.

PURPOSES: **Why do you offer science?** **Examples:**	**LEARNING GOALS:** **What do you want youth to learn or take away from their experiences? Examples:**	**ACTIVITIES** **What science-related experiences do you want youth to have? What do you want them to do? Examples:**
• To give youth hands-on, inquiry-based science experiences	• To develop interest in science	• Have fun
• To meet program requirements	• To learn and understand science content	• Do hands-on activities
• To offer diverse activities and topics	• To learn how to engage in scientific reasoning	• Do projects, experiments, investigations
• To make up for the lack of science in school	• To learn how to reflect on science	• Be exposed to science phenomena
• To supplement what youth are learning in school	• To learn scientific inquiry practices	• Collaborate
• To offer diverse activities and topics	• To develop science identities	• Have discussions about science

REALITY CHECK!

Do the purpose, learning goals, and activities align? In other words, make sure that the *activities* you offer will lead to your desired *learning goals*, which in turn are coherent with the *purpose* of your program.

2 REVIEW YOUR RESOURCES FOR DOING SCIENCE

In this step, you do an inventory of the resources you have for your science program. Given the activities you want to do, and the goals and purposes they address, do you have all the resources you need? List your resources, then decide if they are sufficient or not.

	EXISTING RESOURCES **What resources do you have right now?**	**RESOURCE CHECK** **Are these resources sufficient to address the activities, learning goals, and purposes of your science program?**	
Time Examples: time per session, frequency per week, month and year, etc.		☐ Yes	☐ No
Space Examples: Classroom, science lab, garden, outside areas, etc.		☐ Yes	☐ No
Materials Examples: Magnifying glasses, microscopes, popsicle sticks, sink with running water, etc.		☐ Yes	☐ No
Curriculum, lesson plans, activity ideas		☐ Yes	☐ No
Staff Capacity Examples: Science knowledge, ability to lead science activities, confidence in science, interest in science, etc.		☐ Yes	☐ No

3 CONSIDER OPTIONS FOR SEEKING ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If you checked "no" for any of your existing resources in Step 2, list those resources here. For each of the resources that you feel are insufficient for the activities, goals, and purposes of your science program, this step allows you to think about how to address those shortages. First, consider what you can do to address additional resources needs. Then consider whether there are other organizations, institutions, or people in your community that can help you address them. Finally, create a to-do list for you and your staff.

NECESSARY ACTIONS **What do you need do to address these resource needs? Examples:**	**POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND PLACES** **What organizations, institutions, or individuals in your community might provide support, advice, or resources? Examples:**	**TO DO LIST** **What are concrete steps you can take? Examples:**
• Schedule more time	• Local museums	• Search the Internet
• Find a field trip site	• Park and Rec	• Make phone calls
• Purchase more equipment	• Local business	• Ask colleagues
• Find curricula that facilitators are comfortable with	• School district or County Office of Education	• Contact potential partners
• Find PD workshop for staff	• University	• Ask parents

NO SOLUTIONS?

If you can't do anything to address your lack of resources:
• Go back to Step 1 and modify your Activities, Learning Goals, and Purposes
• Make sure they align!
• Go to Step 2 and make sure you have the sufficient resources

4 REVIEW SUMMARY & SHARE WITH STAFF

In this step, summarize your purposes, goals, activities, resources, and actions. You can share this with staff and use as a tool for further discussions or planning.

Why we want to offer science
What we want our youth to learn
The types of science experiences we want our youth to have
What resources we have right now
What additional resources we need
Who we might partner with
What we need to do next