

## **Borderland Out-Of-School Time Network**

### ***Moving to Action - Project Summary***

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The goal of the Borderland Out-of-School Time (BOOST) Network *Moving To Action* Project was to identify ways the BOOST Network could work to increase and enhance the delivery of out-of-school time (OST) Programming in the El Paso, Las Cruces and Juarez communities. The specific objectives of the 6-month project included:

- Establishing a BOOST Network Action Team composed of BOOST Network members that would participate, guide and conduct the work of the project.
- Assessing the BOOST Network membership to identify ways the BOOST Network could support and enhance Out-of-School-Time programming.
- Developing a set of recommendations and action steps to be implemented by the BOOST Network leadership.

The United Way of El Paso County coordinated the *Moving to Action* Project with consultation assistance from David Shavel. United Way Staff are to be commended for their significant efforts on the project.

#### **Project Components and Timeline**

The *Moving to Action* Project conducted a qualitative approach for assessing of BOOST Network membership to determine their ideas and perceptions of the role of the BOOST Network in enhancing OST Programming in the region. The approach included the formation of an ad-hoc workgroup called the BOOST Network “Action Team”, composed of BOOST Steering Committee and Network members. The role of the Action Team was to provide input into the assessment process, participate in the data collection and most importantly, analyze the results to establish priorities, recommendations and next steps for the Network.

While OST providers differ in their target audiences, program and services provided, and each community is unique with its own set of resources and challenges, the Moving to Action project sought to identify common characteristics of OST programming that could be used to guide the assessment process. The common characteristics (called Focus Areas) were identified by:

- Conducting a review of research literature related to the successful State and Regional OST networks and coalitions;
- Examining OST Assessment Reports and Strategic Planning processes conducted by other communities in Texas, New Mexico and other states;
- Reviewing previous assessments of OST Programming conducted by the BOOST Network and the United Way of El Paso County;

- Obtaining input from Action Team members.

The analysis led to the determination of the following six focus areas:

- **Programs & Services:** Programs and services are provided to youth that meet their age and developmental needs; are provided at times that are convenient for youth and their families; and are planned and assessed to ensure success in achieving desired outcomes.
- **Accessibility & Inclusion:** Culturally competent programs and services are provided in communities at appropriate cost and locations. Programs and services address youth with special needs and “at-risk” youth.
- **Organizational Capacity & Workforce Development:** OST providers have sufficient tools, support and training to delivery high quality and safe programs and services.
- **Partnerships & Linkages:** Sufficient communication, coordination and collaboration exists among OST providers to ensure that appropriate programs and services are provided to both individual youth and entire communities.
- **Funding & Sustainability:** Individual OST providers and systems have sufficient resources to provide appropriate and effective programs and services over a long enough time to achieve long-term outcomes.
- **Policy & Advocacy:** Proponents of OST can advocate for public and organizations policy that promote the growth and support of appropriate and effective programs and services.

The qualitative assessment approach included conducting focus groups and listening sessions with OST Providers (and BOOST Network members), key informant interviews with selected BOOST Network members and a survey of members attending a BOOST Network Quarterly meeting. The timeline for the work included three components:

1. **BOOST Network Action Team.** The Action Team was composed of Network members who met on five occasions from January – May, 2018. The Action Team was responsible for setting the scope of the project, identifying what data to collect, analyzing the information and developing recommendations for presentation to the full BOOST Network. The Action meetings included the following:
  1. **Jan. 2018:** Orientation, determine “Scope,” determine outcomes, identify data collection methods, and assign data collection activities.
  2. **Feb. 2018:** Review data collected to date, identify additional data collection and prepare for data collection at the March 2018 BOOST Network Membership Meeting.
  3. **Mar. 2018,** Assess data and the priorities for the BOOST Network, identify and prioritize gaps and issues to address, identify strategies to investigate.
  4. **Apr. 2018:** Identify gaps and issues to address, identify initial recommendations and assign outreach for input on recommendation, finalize recommendations and strategies.

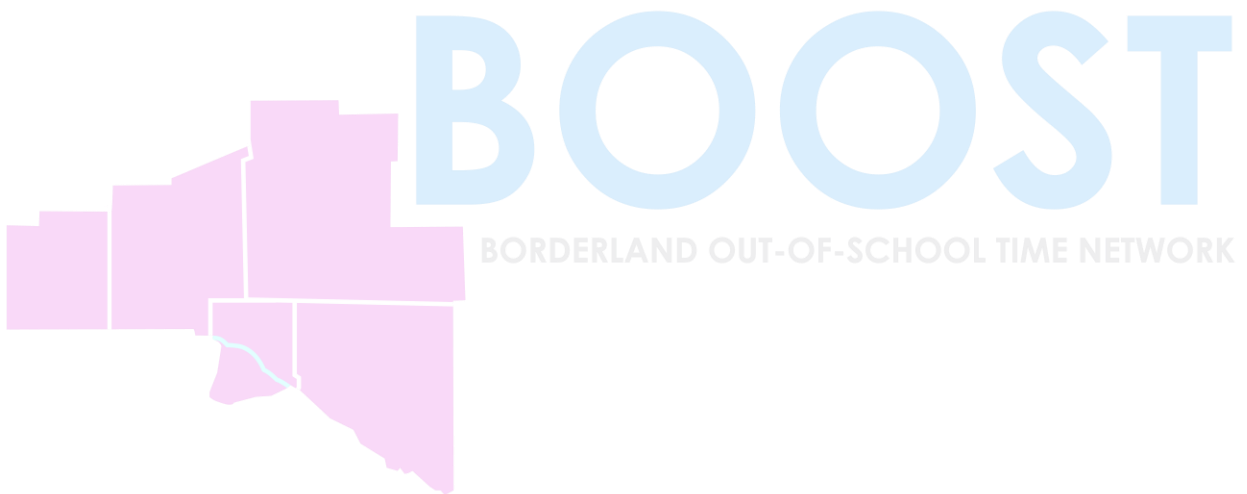
5. **May 2018:** Communicating the recommendations to BOOST Network, develop Action Plans for implementation and prepare for June Network Meeting.
2. **Assessment of BOOST OST Network Members.** The assessment effort involved engaging the BOOST OST Network membership in three separate data collection activities:
- Regional Focus Group Sessions – The United Way staff conducted listening sessions at three regional meetings of BOOST OST Members. The sessions were conducted in **January 2018**.
  - Key Informant Interviews with BOOST Network Members – BOOST Network Action Team members conducted several key informant interviews with selected BOOST Network members after the initial Orientation meeting in **January and February 2018**.
  - BOOST OST Network Meeting Discussions – The BOOST Network Action Team members conducted small group discussions at the **March 2018** BOOST Network Quarterly meeting.
  - BOOST OST Network Member Survey – The BOOST Network members attending the **March** Quarterly meeting completed a written survey.
3. **Analysis and Recommendations.** In **April and May 2018** the Action Team examined the assessment results to make the following recommendations:
- Focus Area: Organizational Capacity Building & Workforce Development**  
Goal: OST providers in the Paso del Norte region have sufficient tools, support and training to delivery high quality and safe programs and services.
  - Focus Area: Funding and Sustainability**  
Goal: Individual OST providers and systems have sufficient resources to provide appropriate and effective programs and services over a long enough time to achieve long-term outcomes.
  - Focus Area: High Quality Programs and Services**  
Goal: Programs and services are provided to youth that meet their age and developmental needs; are provided at times that are convenient for youth and their families; and are planned and assessed to ensure success in achieving desired outcomes.

## Next Steps

The BOOST Network and member OST Providers have an opportunity to significantly impact the lives of families and children in the El Paso, Las Cruces and Juarez communities. The recommendations prepared by the BOOST Network Action Team provide a starting place for the Network to move to action.

The Action Team members along with United Way Staff will share the results with the BOOST Network members at the June 2018 BOOST Network Quarterly meeting. At the meeting they will engage the members in a discussion about ways to implement the recommendations. The objective of the discussion will be to obtain members input and buy-in to the recommendations and next steps. The

Lessons Learned and Recommendations section below discusses considerations for the BOOST Network as they move forward with this initiative.



## Lessons Learned and Recommendations for *Moving to Action*

The following “lessons learned” and recommendations are based on the Action Team Recommendations and my participation and involvement in the project:

1. **Steering Committee:** Involvement of an active BOOST Network Steering Committee is necessary for the BOOST Network to move forward. The Steering Committee must provide leadership to the members that includes: establishing and prioritizing goals, establishing the Network committee structure, and clarify the role of BOOST Network members is to become actively engaged in the work of the Network and committees. The Steering Committee membership can be expanded to include: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Committee Chairs and at-large members as identified.
2. **BOOST Membership:** It is important for the BOOST Network members (as a whole) to reach consensus on the definition of what it means to be a member of the Network. In successful coalitions and member-led organizations, membership responsibility includes attending meetings, active participation on sub-committees, and involvement in the Network planning, implementation and funding efforts. This increased level of member involvement in the work of the Network represents a shift in the expectations of membership from a “passive” role of attending meetings for education and networking, to a more “active” role of leading, planning and implementing strategies that impact OST providers throughout the region. It is imperative that this “shift” is discussed and agreed upon by the full BOOST Network membership.
3. **Sustainability.** As a volunteer organization, it is critical for the BOOST Network to be a member-led organization. As described above, this means that BOOST Network members (and their Organizations) must become actively involved in the Network leadership, decision making, on-going planning, implementation efforts, and funding of the Network. Moving forward from a sustainability perspective, it is important that the Network member organizations establish their on-going commitment to the Network by:
  - Committing staff resources to lead, facilitate and be active members on the Network – not just to attend Network meetings.
  - Providing financial support for the operations of the Network. This may take the form of membership dues or organizational donations
  - Participating in grant writing and other fund development efforts design to generate resources for the BOOST Network
4. **Role of United Way.** To date, the United Way of El Paso County has served as the “backbone” organization for the Network in leading, organizing, administering and funding the Network. To ensure the sustainability over the long-term, beyond any one organization and funding source, the ownership of the Network must be passed to the Network member organizations. This also represents a transition for the Network as it must move from being dependent on United Way staff to developing its own member capacity. The Steering Community must take responsibility for leading the discussion about how to transition to become a true member-owned and operated

organization. United Way staff can (and will) play a key role in mentoring BOOST Network members in this transition.

5. **BOOST Network Structure:** In order to accomplish the goals included in the Action Team Recommendations, the BOOST Network can organize itself to take on specific tasks and initiatives. The formation of committees (or Action Teams) provides an effective way to organize to: “do the work”. The subcommittees may be ad-hoc (temporary) or standing (permanent) and will include specific objectives and timelines for completing their tasks. Based on the initial recommendations provided by the Action Team three committees may be established:
- **Steering Committee** – (already exists) provides leadership to the members that includes: establishing and prioritizing goals, establishing the Network structure, coordinating committees, planning and conducting Network meetings and identifying and obtaining the resources needed to operate the Network.
  - **Workforce Development Committee** – focuses on providing training, mentoring and networking opportunities among BOOST Network members, OST Providers and other organizations in the communities. This effort may include planning BOOST Network sponsored trainings (e.g., conferences) and identifying and ensuring Network member access to training opportunities available from other organizations.
  - **High Quality Programming Committee** – establishes standards for high-quality OST programs and services based on research and existing standards. The committee will promote the adoption and use of the standards by OST providers. This committee will work with the Funding and Sustainability Committee to ensure providers have access to the resources necessary to achieve a high standard of care.
  - **Funding and Sustainability Committee** – identifies potential local, statewide and national resources available to support OST programming. The committee will also provide training and access to technical assistance to OST providers in grant writing and other fund development activities.