



## Horizons National's Theory of Change Overview

### Horizons National's Assumptions

Horizons National is entering this Theory of Change with several assumptions, including that out-of-school time (OST) programs like Horizons are valuable, and more high-quality options are needed to improve students' overall educational experience and post-secondary outcomes. Additionally, we recognize that out-of-school time programs are one of many factors that contribute to a student's success, and that each student and family determines their own definition of success.

### Horizons National's Long-term Goal for this Theory of Change

Our long-term goal is that more youth succeed as a result of consistently participating in high-quality, holistic educational opportunities outside of school, and therefore that these programs play an essential role in advancing educational equity.

### Horizons National's Outcomes Pathway and Supporting Activities

We have developed a pathway of outcomes that we believe will lead to this long-term goal. We recognize it's going to take more than the work of Horizons National and our affiliate programs alone to achieve it, and look forward to partnering with schools, peer organizations, and communities to increase impact. We also believe it is critical that stakeholders, who are representative of the communities our program and others like ours exist to serve, are engaged in informing and influencing these outcomes at each step of the way.

**As a first step, we need an ecosystem that supports high-quality, student-centered out-of-school time programs. This means:**

- **There is a common definition of high-quality, holistic OST.** To reach this outcome, as a sector, we will need to:
  - Align on a shared vision, mission, and goals
  - Expand research and evidence base
  - Employ quality assurance
- **The OST workforce is adequately trained and representative of communities served.** To reach this outcome, as a sector, we will need to:
  - Invest in educators and human capital
  - Advance our equity, diversity, and inclusion practices
  - Provide relevant, accessible professional development
- **There are supportive policies in place for high-quality OST.** To reach this outcome, we will need to advocate for local, state, and federal guidelines as a sector.
- **There is increased and stable funding available for OST.** To reach this outcome, as a sector, we will need to increase awareness about the importance of high-quality OST.



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With a supportive ecosystem in place, **we will build toward a mid-term outcome in which students and families participate and are engaged in high-quality OST.** This requires us to create partnerships and foster strong relationships between students, program staff, peers, schools, families, and communities. These partnerships will lead to:

- **The availability of new high-quality programs and providers**
- **The growth and replication of existing high-quality programs and providers**

We also need to research, develop, and test new models, which will lead to the addition of new, high-quality OST models and increased awareness of the availability of high-quality OST programs. Across all OST programs, we need to establish data transparency, share data publicly, and commit to continuous learning, so programs remain high-quality and student-centered. In turn, all of these activities will make **high-quality OST accessible to more students.**

These increasingly-available, **high-quality OST programs will play an essential role in advancing educational equity,** leading to our long-term goal of **more youth succeeding as a result of consistently participating in high-quality, holistic educational opportunities outside of school.**

### Measurement

While we recognize there are many things that could be measured to ensure we are tracking toward our long-term goal, we focused on the top-level outcomes that would indicate a supportive ecosystem, increased student and family engagement and participation, and overall student success as a result of participation in high-quality OST.

More students succeed as a result of consistently participating in high-quality, holistic educational opportunities outside of school

#### Student success metrics:

- % increase in gains in reading and math (measure in weeks of grade equivalence)
- % increase in high-school graduation rates
- % increase in post-secondary degree/certificate attainment

Students and families participate and are engaged in high-quality OST

#### Increased enrollment and retention:

- % increase in student enrollment
- % increase in student attendance
- % increase in year-to-year retention

Ecosystem is supportive of high-quality, student-centered OST

#### Funding goals

- % increase in federal funding