

DHS OST 21st Century Skills Rubric Instructions

Purpose

The purpose of the 21st Century Skills Rubric is to regularly assess the development of important skills over the course of a youth’s participation in the OST program. By assessing youth proficiency and monitoring growth over time, providers are able to thoughtfully develop programming that builds on youth strengths and promotes continued practice of these important skills. Ultimately, 21st Century Skills Rubric scores will be aggregated across all OST programs, providing PHMC and DHS a valuable tool to measure system-level impact on Philadelphia’s youth.

What Does the Rubric Measure?

The 21st Century Skills Rubric measures five essential skills that youth will need for success in higher education and the workplace. The Rubric is informed both by the DHS Outcomes for Youth in OST Programs and important 21st Century Skills.

DHS Outcomes

The Department of Human Services is committed to achieving system-wide youth impact. In order for DHS to better understand how OST programming is improving the lives of participating youth, there is a need to identify areas where OST programming makes an impact, and track youth progress in those areas over time. To that end, DHS together with providers developed the following OST Project goals, outcomes, and indicators. The 21st Century Skills Rubric, measures several (but not all) of these indicators.

GOAL AREA	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS
Participating youth will have academic success	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased Engagement in Learning 2. Increased Engagement School 3. Aspires to Educational Excellence 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved Quality of Homework Time 2. Increased Opportunities for Problem Solving & Critical Thinking 3. Awareness of High School Choices
Participating youth will develop positive life skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved Life Skills 2. Improved Relationships 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Goal Setting 2. Personal Accountability 3. Work with Others to Accomplish Goals 4. Improved Interactions with Peers 5. Improved Interactions with Adults
Participating youth will be ready for college and/or career	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepared for Higher Education and Employment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness of and Interest in Careers

21st Century Skills

Additionally, DHS has long recognized the importance of developing “21st Century Skills.” These skills, such as communication, collaboration and critical thinking, are identified by



employers as essential for success in the 21st Century workplace. By emphasizing a structured activities approach, DHS expects providers to conduct the kind of OST programming that helps youth develop these important skills. The 21st Century Skills Rubric provides a tool to measure growth in these areas as well.

Expectations for Rubric Completion

Completion of a 21st Century Skills Rubric for *each youth* who participates in a structured activities project cycle is an essential part of the structured activities process. The Rubrics should be completed within one to two weeks of the completion of the project, and before the next project begins.

Only one copy of the Project Information cover page needs to be completed for each project. Consequently, an elementary program that completes one project with all grades would complete only one Project Information page, while an elementary program that completed a different project with each grade, K-5, would complete six Project Information pages. Regardless, a program still completes a unique Rubric for each participating youth.

It is important to complete each Rubric accurately. The Rubric scores should be based on a youth's participation throughout the entire project (rather than being based on a single observation or performance in the Culminating Event or Product). Additionally, when completing the Rubric, providers are strongly encouraged to read the definition of each skill level closely, to best evaluate a youth's level of mastery.

Implementation Tips

- Photocopy the rubric for each youth at the start of the project. Write each youth's name at the top and keep the rubrics in a binder or folder. As youth demonstrate proficiency, record notes or comments in the right column. This will help you to complete the rubrics at the end of the project. Circle scores in pen or marker instead of pencil.
- For older youth especially, talk with the youth about the 21st Century Skills they should be developing during their projects. Throughout the project, provide youth feedback on skill development, especially praising growth when you notice it.
- When assessing a youth's level of skill mastery, try to use objective benchmarks, rather than comparing youth to one another. A youth who communicates effectively, based on his/her grade level, would not receive a lower score because another youth happens to communicate even more effectively.
- Assess youth as honestly as possible. This information is used to evaluate, at the system-level, the impact of OST programming on youth as they develop these essential skills. The more accurate the data you provide, the better equipped DHS and PHMC will be to set system priorities that promote youth growth in these important areas.
- Assistant Group Supervisors are typically the best staff members to complete the rubrics as they work closely with the youth and are able to monitor progress throughout the project.