

2023 SOCIAL BOND FUND IMPACT REPORT

ABOUT AMERICAN STUDENT ASSISTANCE

American Student Assistance® (ASA) is a national nonprofit changing the way kids learn about careers and prepare for their futures through equitable access to career readiness information and experiences. ASA helps middle and high school students to know themselves—their strengths and their interests—and understand their education and career options so that they can make informed decisions. ASA fulfills its mission – in schools and beyond the classroom—by providing free digital experiences, including Futurescape®, Next Voice™, and EvolveMe®, directly to millions of students, and through advocacy, impact investing, thought leadership, and philanthropic support for educators, intermediaries, and others. ASA fosters a generation of confident, crisis-proof young people who are ready for whatever path comes next after high school. To learn more about ASA, visit www.asa.org/about-asa.

BACKGROUND

In March 2021, ASA secured a \$100 million social bond to further its mission. Since then, ASA has used bond proceeds to expand availability of and access to high-quality products, services and opportunities centered on 6th-12th graders—both in-person and digital—throughout the nation, with emphasis on marginalized or economically disadvantaged communities, and students who have faced barriers to education success. Additionally, ASA has funded programs that seek to achieve wide-reaching system change and fundamentally shift education systems to ensure every student is ready for life after high school. In 2023, ASA funded nearly **\$32 million** in digital and in-person program activities with the use of bond funds and provided funding to **48 organizations**, reaching more than **15 million students** through in-person and digital direct-to-student programs.

In addition to the digital programs ASA has created internally, ASA provides multi-year commitments to innovative organizations, programs or partners looking to implement ambitious ideas and drive long-term student success outcomes with particular attention on:

- innovations that will transform education, with specific focus on digital solutions and/or solutions to increase student engagement
- partners and programs to reach underserved learners
- programs to build skills that foster employability and build social capital
- programs that encourage postsecondary education success including access to non-degree paths
- programs that provide professional development for educators to effectively leverage innovative solutions to prepare students for life after high school
- partners to engage in collaborative research, dialogue and collective action to solve nationwide education challenges

IMPACT FROM BOND-FUNDED PROGRAMS:

Total bond spend in 2023 (January 2023 - December 2023) **\$31.77 million**

As ASA explicitly stated in the bond offering, ASA issued the bonds to:

- increase support to a larger number of students and partners
- expand the population served geographically
- bolster digital offering
- direct funds to marginalized or economically disadvantaged communities, and students who face barriers to education success
- affect wide-reaching system change and fundamentally shift education systems to ensure every student is ready for life after high school

Below is a summary of how the bond has allowed ASA to meet some of these goals at an early stage:

MORE STUDENTS REACHED

Leveraging both internal capabilities and partnerships with others, ASA reached its strategic goal to impact at least 15 million students (totaling approximately 50 percent of the 6-12th grade US population) by 2023.

In 2023:

Funding provided: **\$31.77 million**

Students reached: **More than 15 million**

Organizations funded through direct or pooled funding: **48**

INCREASED NATIONAL IMPACT

Prior to 2021, two-thirds of ASA's programmatic funding had been committed to organizations primarily serving the New England region of the United States. One of the goals of the ASA social bond was to impact the great unmet need nationwide. With the proceeds of the bonds, ASA has continued in its current service area, while strategically expanding to serve other areas of the country with new and innovative partner opportunities, in-person programing, and/ or digitally enabled education solutions that provide a larger opportunity for scale and impact. As of 2023, 90% of funding went to national organizations or state-based/local initiatives in communities outside New England.

- **National organizations: 20**
- **State-based or local initiatives serving a targeted community outside of New England: 19**
- **Organizations only serving a New England state or community in New England: 9**

REACH INTO SPECIFIC STATES

In addition to the direct-to-student ASA digital initiatives happening in every state, ASA funding now supports dedicated initiatives happening in 45 states and Washington, DC.

FOCUS ON DIGITAL INITIATIVES

Seventy-four percent of ASA bond-funded initiatives included some component of scaling programs through digital solutions. Such programing included the creation and launch of the new ASA digital program, EvolveMe, a free online tool that helps youth make the process of exploring the future more manageable by allowing them to learn about themselves and their interests; learn important life skills that can help with any future job; experiment with different jobs through online games, mini-lessons, and quests; and earn points that can be redeemed for rewards for completed activities.

FOCUS ON UNDERSERVED LEARNERS

Eighty-five percent of the bond funding committed to external organizations in 2023 went to entities with the explicit purpose of improving the education and career outcomes for underserved learners, marginalized or economically disadvantaged communities, and students who have barriers to education success. Whether through direct programing to students or systems change efforts, ASA prioritized funding for those with a focus on changing outcomes for high-need students and communities.

MOVE THE CONVERSATION

In addition to direct funding of programs, ASA also seeks to promote a better understanding of and drive conversation about Gen Z, the education ecosystem for college and career readiness, and the challenges students, educators, families and communities face. ASA's research reports and thought leadership materials are regularly discussed at national conferences, public events and online forums. ASA funds are used to drive conversation and to support programs that seek wide-reaching system, policy and practice change to fundamentally shift education systems and ensure every student is ready for life after high school. ASA publications in 2023 included [Five Best Practices for Partnering with Middle Schools to Build Sustainable Career Exploration: Lessons Learned](#) and [Exploring Career Paths: A Guide for Middle Schoolers \(And the People Who Care About Them\)](#).

Additionally, several ASA grants fund thought leadership and narrative change campaigns that seek to create national dialogue around earlier career exploration and skills-building, work-based learning in high school, and navigating a path to postsecondary education, including non-degree options, and career. In 2023, ASA thought leadership grants supported the CAPS (Center for Advanced Professional Studies) Network, Free to Dream, Getting Smart and Jobs for the Future, as detailed below.

IMPACT SYSTEMS:

Approximately 75% of bond funding to external programs went to organizations looking to impact systems change in some way or inform improved education policy as a component of their work.

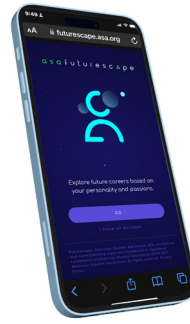
BOND-FUNDED INITIATIVES

Below is a summary of bond-funded initiatives in 2023. Most of these programs fall into one or more categories of desired impact, but they are categorized below based on the primary outcome the initiative aims to achieve. In addition, it should be noted that outcomes listed are in the early stage of impact and will be continuously tracked for long-term impact in years to come.

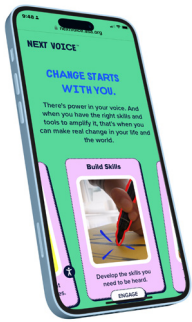
INNOVATIONS THAT WILL TRANSFORM EDUCATION, WITH SPECIFIC ATTENTION ON DIGITAL SOLUTIONS AND/OR SOLUTIONS TO INCREASE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

ASA digital solutions

ASA believes that one of the most powerful opportunities to impact students at scale is to give them the tools and information they need within the channels they interact with most. ASA has developed free digital tools for students to learn about their interests or aptitudes and match those attributes with potential career paths. We reach students with these tools primarily through social media channels where we know they are already spending a lot of their time.

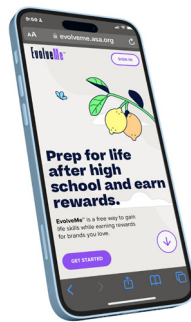


Futurescape: This immersive digital platform offers a journey to self-discovery that helps kids realize their passions and find careers that match who they are and what they love. Offering real-world information on career and other criteria, Futurescape enables high school students to form a greater connection between postsecondary education and their intended career path. In 2023, over **6 million users** used Futurescape to explore careers ranging from actor to biomedical engineer to fashion designer.



Next Voice: Next Voice is a free digital platform that gives teens the chance to gain valuable and actionable real-world advocacy skills through the lens of the world issues that matter most to them, while providing opportunities to test and apply in real time what they've learned along the way. In 2023, more than **70,000 young people** utilized the site to learn more about the social causes they care about and how to advocate for them.

EvolveMe is a first-of-its-kind digital experience that incentivizes students to learn career-ready skills and try on career paths. On EvolveMe, students are introduced to a variety of educational and skill building tasks. These tasks range from things like watching videos about learning to build a personal brand to taking a coding class, practicing mock interviews, or even being connected with a mentor. For every task students complete, they earn points which they can redeem for rewards. Since its launch in the first quarter of 2023, EvolveMe has reached a diverse audience of nearly one million users, with over 60 percent identifying as a race other than white and 21 percent coming from rural communities. From early 2023 to the end of the year, EvolveMe's list of partners grew from nine to 46, and its task offerings to youth on the platform increased from 26 to more than 100. Moreover, 72% of tasks started on EvolveMe are completed.



Future Network: The Future Network is a series of original videos that span five categories and follow Gen Z as they explore and learn about different careers from professionals themselves. Future Network episodes received over **7 million video** views in 2023 alone.



ASA Committed Funds: \$22.1 million



Big Picture Learning (BPL)'s Learning Through Interests and Internships (LTI) implementation continued in 150 locations across the state of California, providing work-based learning opportunities for more than 40,000 high school students. This was accomplished by providing access to ImBlaze, Big Picture Learning's proprietary internship management system app, and expanding B-UnBound, a version of ImBlaze that does not require a connection to a BPL program or school. In 2023, with the support of the ASA grant, BPL commissioned a research team to evaluate B-Unbound and the use of ImBlaze to scale LTIs in California. The research found that ImBlaze has facilitated more than 51,000 internship opportunities for nearly 50,000 students. Additionally in 2023, ASA and BPL continued to partner on the California Coalition for Work-Based Learning Policy Improvement, working to identify focus areas and chart a path forward to policy education and outreach. **ASA Committed Funds: \$500,000**



ASA continued to fund a research and innovation lab at the Becker School of Design & Technology at Clark University to improve our understanding of how commercial video games can teach young students important 21st century skills, facilitate their self-discovery, and provide meaningful career exploration opportunities. In 2023 the project focused on a verifiable data model that

can be used to ascertain the kind of embedded game play statistics that might be indicative of skills young people may be gaining through video game play. The data model will then be used to create a mapping between this game data and certain desirable durable skills such as spatial reasoning, creativity, collaboration, communication, leadership, persistence, technological, media and information literacy, social skills, and global awareness.

ASA Committed Funds: \$150,000



Since 2000, iCouldBe has provided more than 24,000 high school students in under-resourced schools with an online community of professional mentors, empowering teens to thrive in

school, plan for future careers, and achieve in life. Their online e-mentoring platform helps eliminate barriers for building relationships that arise from geography and time constraints or biases related to age, gender, race, and socio-economic status. iCouldBe will use ASA grant funding to improve and scale their digital platform to support mentoring relationships, leverage partnerships with employers and nonprofits to train mentors, and launch a youth advisory board, paid internship program and an alumni program to support mentees post-program.

ASA Committed Funds: \$220,000



U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

The US Chamber of Commerce Foundation has developed EPIC

(Employer-Provided Innovation Challenges), a national network of accredited clearinghouses to provide problem-based learning experiences to learners that are designed and delivered by employers from the private and public sectors. In 2023 the Chamber secured nine Clearinghouse partners, representing a wide range of organization type and size, regional diversity, and urban vs. rural diversity. Most importantly, all can recruit a diverse group of learners from low-income, rural, minority, and historically underrepresented groups. Additionally, the Chamber Foundation partnered with Riipen, a highly regarded experiential learning platform with deep expertise in work-based learning, to provide the technology platform for EPIC and play an important consultancy role to EPIC Clearinghouses as they guide employer partners through the challenge design process. The Chamber Foundation also partnered with Credly to design and host the EPIC digital badge. The first round of EPIC challenges is slated to begin in the spring of 2024.

ASA Committed Funds: \$500,000

PROGRAMS TO BUILD SKILLS THAT FOSTER EMPLOYABILITY AND BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL



In 2023, after engaging more than 800 organizations, America Succeeds released the Durable

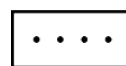
Skills Advantage Framework, an industry-backed rubric for measuring durable skills and assessing student preparedness for employment. The organization has also built a robust community of state and school partners committed to implementing the framework in learner-centered, equitable, and rigorous ways; presented its findings more than 80 times at conferences and events such as ASU+GSV, JFF Horizons, and SXSWedu; and tracked the term “Durable Skills” with “America Succeeds” in hundreds of publications and articles.

ASA Committed Funds: \$50,000



Apprentice Learning partners with schools and employers to provide real-world work


experiences for middle-grade youth, leveraging career exploration to teach skills, ignite purpose, and nurture dreams. In 2023 AL used ASA grant funds to support its City Summer internship program and launch a new pilot paid internship program, Activate: City Summer; in total, their summer programming served 53 interns (99% of whom were Latino, Black or multi-racial) representing nine Boston Public Schools, with 95% daily attendance at 24 worksite visits. In fall 2023, AL’s apprenticeship program sent 103 apprentices from four Boston Public Schools to worksites throughout Boston and introduced \$200 stipends for each student who completes an apprenticeship. **ASA Committed Funds: \$150,000**



BRIC FOUNDATION

BRIC Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated

to increasing representation in Entertainment, Gaming, Media and Tech. It provides career training and exploration for middle and high school students through its pilot Creative Academy in California and its own Animation, Game Design, & VFX Pre-Apprenticeship Program that was officially registered and approved by the California Division of Apprenticeship Standards. This has allowed the creation and expansion of its registered apprenticeships in the entertainment industry and has opened a variety of employment opportunities to Black, Latinx, women, and other underrepresented populations. ASA funding will go toward the 2024 expansion of the BRIC Pre-Apprenticeship Program to Atlanta, Georgia, where it will partner with Disney and Marvel Studios, who create many of their live-action projects there. **ASA Committed Funds: \$125,000**

 **Catalyze Challenge** ASA is a leading partner in the Catalyze Challenge, a collaborative funding initiative with other national philanthropies that has awarded over \$10 million since 2021 to accelerate bold career-connected learning solutions. In 2023, Catalyze kicked off Round 3 of its grant challenge, ultimately awarding \$3.3 million to 15 organizations that focus on increasing learner agency and employer-learner engagement and are expected to positively impact more than 25,000 learners ages 11 to 22 through career-connected learning. Eighty percent of learners served by prior Catalyze grants come from low-income backgrounds, and 58% come from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. ASA's bond funding was committed to this initiative in 2023 but awards were announced in 2024.

Funded organizations include:

The **Centers for Applied Science and Technology (CAST Schools)** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a network of five tuition-free, industry-led, career-themed high schools in San Antonio and one pre-k through 12th Academy. CAST's innovative school model allows students to learn by doing and gain real world experience through internship, job shadowing and mentorship opportunities, and is among the first of its kind in the state of Texas. With the Catalyze grant, CAST becomes part of a national initiative dedicated to career-connected learning and enabling students to steer individual educational journeys.

The **Chicago Scholars Foundation** is a nonprofit organization that works to support under-resourced students through college and into their careers. They have a long history of helping over 6,000 students navigate college and careers, often surpassing national averages. With Catalyze's support, they're launching REACH, an innovative app with a 'metaversity' setting and a video-game-like approach that rewards students for completing real-world tasks that will help them get into college and start a career, to scale their proven curriculum to learners nationwide.

Educate Texas, an educational initiative of Communities Foundation of Texas, is the trusted change agent to strengthen Texas public and higher education. The Catalyze grant will allow them to pilot comprehensive healthcare apprenticeships for students and gain valuable insights from fellow grantees whose programs also guide young people toward promising careers.

Escalate is a customizable skilling and support platform that stops frontline turnover for enterprise companies. It was founded to engage employers in a new way and drive change for under-resourced communities across the US. It will use the Catalyze grant to partner with a Fortune 10 company to launch three new career pathways for frontline workers to upskill and advance in their careers.

The **Generation Schools Network** co-creates and implements programs with K-12 schools and districts nationwide who seek evidence-based, innovative strategies to improve their district or school ecosystem's ability to meet the needs of the whole student. The Catalyze grant enables GSN to create intentional place-based entrepreneurship pathways that empower special populations or justice-involved youth.

Hack Club is a community of over 24,000 teen hackers from around the world who code together. The Catalyze grant will support its mission to equip teenagers from diverse backgrounds with technical and career skills and provide leadership opportunities for teenagers, enabling them to establish Hack Clubs alongside thousands of their peers.

The **Hidden Genius Project** trains and mentors Black male youth in technology creation, entrepreneurship, and leadership skills to transform their lives and communities. With the support of the Catalyze grant, they will focus on creating and testing innovative learning opportunities for the 21st century, leveraging the talents of young people and enhancing STEAM education across their communities.

The **National Center for Grow Your Own** is committed to creating a world where an aspiring educator can become a teacher for free and get paid to do so. The Catalyze grant will enable NCGYO to work together with Breakthrough Collaborative to develop and scale an apprenticeship model based on their successful approach to attracting young people to teaching.

The **National Education Equity Lab** delivers online college credit-bearing courses into teacher-led high school classrooms across the country. With the support of Catalyze, they will help thousands of low-income high school students achieve economic mobility by providing them with college credit-bearing courses and supports from renowned colleges across the nation.

The **National Indian Education Association** advances comprehensive, culture-based educational opportunities for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. The Catalyze grant will enable NIEA to pilot a new summer program in Wisconsin that will bring together learners and employers to facilitate pathways for Native American opportunity youth to gain career readiness, financial literacy and interpersonal growth.

The **New Bridge Cleveland Center for Arts and Technology** is a trauma informed Social and Emotional Learning center assisting students to identify and pursue educational and career pathways that lead to fulfilled lives and a sense of purpose. With the support of the Catalyze grant, New Bridge is setting out to spark youth interest in health careers through engaging exploration

that will pair hands-on learning labs with virtual simulation and expose middle school students to a wide variety of allied health careers.

The New Trade Program LLC facilitates apprentice-based learning for jobs in tech, helping individuals earn a livable income by providing the skill training, hands-on experience, and network required to get hired into high-demand tech jobs that don't require a college degree. The Catalyze grant offers the opportunity to accelerate the development of their programs and offer access to a significantly higher number of students from underserved communities.

Project Success connects students to their purpose through a proven methodology of experiential learning called DIG (Dream. Ignite. Grow.). Catalyze funding will enable them to launch a career pathway initiative with Minneapolis Public Schools and local employers to facilitate workshops, expeditions and certificate programs for students.

The Reinvention Lab is Teach For America's future of learning research and design engine. As a Catalyze grantee, they will continue to refine their efforts to advance systems change and reimagine career readiness for high school students that centers their interests and builds their agency.

RevX is a learning model, centered around a relevant cause children care deeply about, that schools and out of school programs can learn from to enable children to claim their power and transform the world. With the Catalyze grant, RevX is expanding its micro-apprenticeship program for learners starting in third grade in the Bronx and rural Mississippi to equip them with hands-on career experiences.

ASA Committed Funds: \$1.5 million



The Center for Black Educator Development

The Center for Black Educator Development works to scale

access to summer and year-round apprenticeships and in-classroom teaching experiences, beginning in high school, with the goal of building the skills of young people interested in teaching and increasing the number of Black educators in Philadelphia, Detroit and Memphis. In 2023, eight high school apprentices, 15 college apprentices and two college coaches taught 105 elementary scholars as part of the CBED program. Elementary scholars made gains in early literacy skills and increases in positive racial identity; high school apprentices realized increases in positive racial identity, academic self-efficacy, and considering teaching as a career; and college apprentices reported increased interest in careers in teaching and increases in teaching skills.

ASA Committed Funds: \$200,000



Chica Project

Chica Project aims to close the opportunity gap between Latinx and other female-identifying youth of color by providing peer-to-peer mentorships. With this funding, the organization in 2023 expanded learning opportunities for young people through internships and fellowships, enhancing a peer leader pipeline and delivering career readiness curriculum to more than 130 youth supported by 27 intergenerational mentors, both in and out of middle and high school settings in the Greater Boston area. Over 90% of Chica's program participants expanded their comprehension of higher education and career pathways, fostering personal growth in self-efficacy, leadership skills, civic awareness, and cultural pride. Notably, every high school-aged participant gained access to early college credits through Chica's impactful partnership with the Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology, another ASA grantee, and all 8th-grade participants successfully transitioned to high school, marking a crucial milestone in their educational journey.

ASA Committed Funds: \$100,000



Cobble Hill Farm Education & Rescue Center

Cobble Hill Education & Rescue (dba CHARM) is a 25-acre property in Williamstown, Massachusetts that serves the community by engaging students and families to learn about and enjoy the many benefits of farming and the natural environment. It offers engaging experiential learning opportunities for students and educators integrated with its animal rescue operation. Beginning in the summer of 2023, CHARM brings cohorts of fifth/sixth graders and seventh/eighth graders to the farm for four and two weeks, respectively, to benefit from and enjoy a wealth of educational, social, and recreational learning opportunities.

ASA Committed Funds: \$10,000



CommunityShare

CommunityShare ignites civic engagement and a passion for learning by activating the wisdom and lived experiences of educators, students, and community members. They collaborate with communities to co-create real-world learning experiences that build relationships, shared understanding, and collective agency. In partnership with ASA, CommunityShare is proposing to bring career-connected learning to thousands of under-resourced 6-12 grade students across the U.S., by scaling its online platform nationally and growing the skills and capacity of school districts and other youth-serving organizations to develop regional, career-connected learning ecosystems. CommunityShare plans to both deepen and grow its work through existing partnerships with school districts and organizations in Arizona,

Tennessee, Ohio and New Mexico, as well as expand its work into new geographic regions in partnership with regional organizations who want to implement its model.

ASA Committed Funds: \$150,000



ConnectED

ASA grant funding will help support ConnectED's New Mexico Four Corners College and Career

Pathways Partnership initiative. The Partnership has as its primary objective building a system of regional college and career pathways that will prepare young people for the economic transition in the region as it shifts from decades of dependence on oil, coal, and gas, to a greener economy focused on hydrogen and other forms of green energy. The region is home to the eastern half of the Navajo Nation, and of the 10,000 students served by the participating districts, about 75% are Native American and nearly 80% are economically disadvantaged. In 2024 the project will focus on designing an energy pathway for approval by the Public Education Department that concentrates on preparing students for careers and jobs in green energy; accelerating the number of students enrolling in and completing dual credit in college and career pathways; supporting the housing construction goal of Navajo Nation to build 1,000 new homes on the nation; strengthening and expanding pathways in information technology to include a broader focus on digital media; planning and delivering a College and Careers Pathway Experiential Site Visit/Regional Summit in Gallup for the surrounding region in the fall to showcase the work in the four corners region; and creating pathway Advisory Councils for Construction Technology and Information Technology. **ASA Committed Funds: \$200,000**



Flare Education

Flare Education

Flare Education creates high-quality professional training,

paid workforce opportunities, and career development for high school students in the Greater Boston area to help break the cycle of poverty and systemic racism. Through this high-touch cohort model, learners have access to workplace mentors and year-round coaching and training to ensure career readiness and long-term success. They launched their most recent cohort for school year 2023-24 with 88 students across eight Boston Public Schools and 28 employers. In 2023 more than 80% of students and 75% of employers reported high customer satisfaction. Based on self-reported skills-based assessments, Flare's program delivers an average formative gain of 25%+ on six key learning standards so that students are able to confidently advocate for themselves in a work environment; build relationships with other working professionals; identify and use appropriate forms of workplace communication; share and demonstrate their professional skills at work;

collaborate with their team to complete a specified task and/or successfully solve a defined problem; and use a personal organization system to navigate complex tasks. Additionally, Flare is demonstrating impact with early longitudinal outcomes that show program alumni are on a path towards building generational wealth, with 10 graduates in 2- or 4-year postsecondary programs and pursuing workforce pathways post-program.

ASA Committed Funds: \$100,000



Franklin Cummings Tech

Franklin Cummings Tech, formerly the Benjamin Franklin Cummings Institute of Technology, delivers transformative technical and trade education that leads to economic advancement. The institution annually enrolls more than 900 learners, most of whom (75%) identify as people of color, making it one of few Minority Serving Institutions in Massachusetts, and the only college in the Commonwealth where most students are men of color. ASA grant funding will enhance support for students in Franklin Cummings Tech's expanding Early College postsecondary pathways programs, which provide local students in 11th and 12th grades with college coursework and credits, at no cost to the high school student. Support will include efforts to significantly boost students' uptake of field-related service learning and project-based learning opportunities, as well as create curriculum enhancements that embed completion of industry-recognized credentials into Early College programs. **ASA Committed Funds: \$150,000**



International Rescue Committee

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Atlanta creates opportunities for refugees and immigrants to integrate and thrive in Georgia communities. A dedicated team of caseworkers, in partnerships with local schools, organizations and businesses, ensure that children are enrolled in school and that all family members have access to healthcare services, case management, cultural orientation, and vocational training so they can become financially independent and contributing members of their communities. ASA funding will support the launch of the New American Student Startup Academy (NASSA), a pilot project aimed to help refugee youth explore diverse career pathways, cultivate essential transferable skills, and access paid experiential learning and youth entrepreneurship opportunities. Through this partnership, ASA will support a cohesive exploration and navigation program aimed specifically at refugee youth, with the potential to scale to other IRC centers across the country.

ASA Committed Funds: \$100,000



Junior Achievement of Greater Boston

Junior Achievement of Greater

Boston is dedicated to preparing the youth of Greater Boston, through in-school and out-of-school programs, to lead self-sustaining, responsible lives by building the skills needed to succeed in the working world, manage their finances, and think creatively about the world around them. They will use an ASA grant to link all of JA's program offerings (JAInspire, 3DE, high school programs, and JA Pathways for Alumni) into a cohesive middle school to career strategy, expand all offerings and opportunities to scale across the Greater Boston area, and provide the potential to share successes with the more than 100 local areas across the nation served by JA.

ASA Committed Funds: \$100,000



Rodel Foundation of Delaware

In 2023 ASA continued its grant to the Rodel Foundation of DE to support expansion of Delaware's Pathways program, which links education and

workforce development programs to let young people gain real-world work experience while in school. Over the past three years, ASA's co-investments have helped the state enroll over 23,000 students in pathways; build a new initiative that impacts 5,500 middle grade students participating in innovative career exploration pilots with the intent of scaling statewide; support 1,000 technical school district students in accessing accelerated apprenticeship programs with the intent of expanding across multiple sectors; gather data on over 500 graduating seniors in regard to how their pathway experience impacted their post-high school trajectory and laid groundwork for development of a new integrated data system; strengthen the tech sector and create a nationally-recognized, earn-and-learn summer internship model for high school students interested in tech careers through the Tech Council of Delaware; and publish a roadmap of Delaware Pathways to assist other states in developing similar initiatives. **ASA Committed Funds: \$567,000**

SUPPORTED ORGANIZATIONS



Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE)

In 2023 ASA entered into a 10-year, \$25 million affiliation agreement with

the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE), the nation's leading entrepreneurship education organization. Through this strategic alliance, NFTE and ASA will expand access to high-quality entrepreneurship education programs, services, and opportunities for middle and high schoolers from rural, marginalized, and economically disadvantaged communities—both in-person and digitally—through school district partnerships, curriculum

development and collaborative programming, and business plan competitions. ASA's support will help NFTE move from a school-by-school approach to a more systemwide strategy to work with states and school districts to more effectively and efficiently expand the number of schools, teachers, and students that the organization works with each school year. NFTE currently serves 50,000+ students annually across 30 U.S. states.

ASA Committed Funds In 2023: \$1 Million

PROGRAMS THAT ENCOURAGE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SUCCESS INCLUDING ACCESS TO NON-TRADITIONAL PATHS



CONSORTIUM OF UNIVERSITIES
of the Washington Metropolitan Area

Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area

ASA continues to support

Reach4Success, an initiative by

Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area to provide free postsecondary education planning and financing information to residents of Washington, DC.

ASA Committed Funds: \$206,000



Massachusetts Alliance for Early College (MA4EC)

MA4EC breaks down barriers to college and career success for all students, particularly for those that

have historically been underserved and underrepresented, by supporting the growth of and creating conditions for high-quality, high-impact Early College programs across Massachusetts. Early College programming provides real college classes during the high school day, so students graduate with both college credit (reducing the cost and time to degree completion) and the proven confidence, habits, and skills needed to be successful in college and career. ASA grant funding will support MA4EC's Early College Fellowship program, an important part of their efforts to scale high-quality Early College programs to serve 45,000 students by coalition building, policy conditions and innovation. Through the Fellowship program, youth will participate in events, media training, focus groups, and research projects to expand impact, lead their community, and center student voices in the Early College conversation.

ASA Committed Funds: \$150,000



NEW PROFIT

The Postsecondary Innovation for Equity (PIE) II initiative, funded through New Profit in collaboration with a growing list of foundation

partners like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Lumina Foundation, Walmart, and the Walton Family Foundation, is focused on supporting young entrepreneurs in the creation of postsecondary pathways

and innovations in the education-to-employment space. With ASA funds, a cohort of five organizations launched in 2022 to build evidence behind new approaches to connecting young adults from low-income communities with the postsecondary credentials and work experience needed to access upwardly mobile careers. In 2023 New Profit provided these organizations with in-depth coaching, training, and support, including a learning community that met virtually and in-person throughout the year and assistance with establishing key performance indicators.

FUNDED ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDE:

Cara Collective

Cara Collective engages job seekers, employers, and other organizations to build an inclusive economy by developing employment pathways to advance transformative individual and community success. It reconnects individuals from communities facing major barriers to economic mobility with the power of gainful employment. The organization's program combines leadership development, transitional job experiences, permanent job placement, and coaching services. Refined over more than three decades, the Cara Collective approach has a dual focus on both workplace competencies and socio-emotional skills to fully support members of overlooked communities and ensure the success of its program participants.

CodePath

CodePath brings together employers, students, and colleges to eliminate inequities in tech education, diversify the field, and provide underrepresented students with a path toward economic mobility. It has built infrastructure that layers onto the existing postsecondary education system to ensure that students nationwide have access to the tech sector's most competitive roles. Its no-cost programs are developed by software engineers and center on the needs and successes of students who self-identify as Black, Latinx, Indigenous, or come from low-income backgrounds. CodePath is building a two-sided marketplace for tech, cultivating job-ready students on the supply side, and trusted employer partnerships on the demand side while delivering systemic change to universities.

Inner City Computer Stars Foundation (i.c.stars)

Inner-City Computer Stars (i.c.stars) is an educational and workforce development organization offering technology training, leadership development, and career readiness to inner-city young adults. i.c.stars was founded to close the gaps in the education-to-employment pipeline by creating a leadership development program for underserved, unemployed or underemployed people of color in the Midwest through digital skills training.

The Chicago-based organization fuses digital skills training, leadership development, wraparound services, career support, and a growing network of employer and corporate partners to help people from overlooked communities secure careers in tech, become financially independent, and transform into leaders driven to affect positive change in their respective communities.

The Knowledge House

The Knowledge House creates a pipeline of talented workers equipped with technical skills that provide economic opportunity, living wages, and career mobility. Their model combines specialized training in digital skills, coding and design, career support, and a comprehensive network of partners to help disconnected job seekers secure rewarding careers in the tech industry. The Knowledge House offers software and design job training, access to professional networks, and a diverse set of support services that meet the unique needs and positions of its graduates for successful careers in the tech sector.

Project Basta

Basta's mission is to close the employment gap for first-generation students of color and change the face of workforce leadership. Basta's program model works to enhance the social capital of young people, with an emphasis on first-generation college students of color. The organization's programs, products, and services achieve this by enhancing students' networks, preparing young people for the particularities of the contemporary job market, and confronting inequitable hiring practices. By addressing not only student preparedness but also employer behaviors, Basta takes a systems-level approach on both the supply and demand sides while also partnering with intermediaries such as higher-ed and nonprofit organizations working with young people.

ASA Committed Funds: \$500,000

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH, DIALOGUE AND COLLECTIVE ACTION TO SOLVE NATIONWIDE EDUCATION CHALLENGES



GPS Education Partners

GPS Ed is a technical expert in building high quality-work based learning across the Midwest and in other high demand areas. With the support

of the ASA grant, GPS Ed will work to identify, secure, and launch a regional career readiness and work-based learning ecosystem that engages a collection of high schools, colleges, and communities to expand its existing programs in Minnesota and Illinois. The work GPS Ed has ongoing across the Midwest will inform better practices,

exemplars, and case studies that will ultimately benefit an ASA-led national conversation to rethink the problem of career readiness and work to build a framework for scalable replication across the country.

ASA Committed Funds: \$300,000



Mastery Transcript Consortium

Mastery Transcript Consortium® (MTC) is a national and global nonprofit membership organization that develops tools to help educators and learners capture knowledge and skills gained regardless of where this happens. Their

MTC Learning Record (MLR) was specifically designed and developed with the help of Out-of-School-Time (OST) organizations, and the resulting scalable software platform is now ready for widespread piloting. Credentials issued by OST organizations not only expand the range of domains and spaces in which young people can formally get “credit” for their learning, they also give students increased agency as they pursue future opportunities—whether internships, employment, or additional training and education. ASA funding will help MTC (1) Implement a compelling national pilot program that will yield demonstrated proofs of concept for use of competency-based learning records by varied OST organizations; and (2) Build and launch a full go-to-market strategy to bring the MLR to a wide array of OST partners, at scale, in a sustainable model.

ASA Committed Funds: \$200,000



NAF

NAF is a national education non-profit that builds upon what career and technical education programs offer with experiential hands-on learning experiences that complement career-focused curricula.

NAF’s unique approach to providing school-integrated, career-track curricula provides transformative outcomes annually for approximately 113,000 students in 619 academies, primarily in under-resourced communities. In 2023 ASA funding supported five successful pilots of NAF’s Outcomes-Driven Work-Based Learning (ODWBL) in which educators tested training resources, incorporated new WBL activities, and provided feedback on the overall approach; students participated in a workshop or social media campaign design competition using the ODWBL approach; and NAF refined the WBL Participation Tracker. NAF’s five ODWBL-related pilots reached 61 participants from 23 districts across 12 states and the Virgin Islands. The WBL Participation Tracker data collected in 2023 include 1,273 work-based learning activities logged and 19,065 student participants in WBL. Additionally, based on 3,174 WBL Reflection Forms collected in 2023, 74% of students agreed that the WBL activity provided useful information for pursuing their education or career goals; 69% felt more

confident in their skills as a result of their WBL experience; and 70% felt that another person or people cared about them and their success during the WBL activity. **ASA**

Committed Funds: \$400,000



Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy

With ASA support, the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy has launched a “Student Changemakers” project to increase voice and agency through youth participatory action research. The project aims to develop student-led research projects within Massachusetts schools to empower groups of students (“Student Changemakers”) to identify areas for growth in their schools to help lead local responses to COVID recovery. In 2023 the Rennie Center recruited one Boston Public School for participation and launched programming to half of the school’s eighth grade, with plans to extend programming to the remaining half in spring 2024, as well as to several other schools and/or out-of-school programs in the Greater Boston area.

ASA Committed Funds: \$100,000

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND NARRATIVE SHIFT CAMPAIGNS TO CREATE NATIONAL DIALOGUE AROUND CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING



capsnetwork
collaborate · innovate · educate

Caps Network

The CAPS (Center for Advanced Professional Studies) Network is a 501c3 nonprofit organization focused on paving the education-to-employment

path through profession-based learning. With ASA’s support, CAPS will activate an “Industry Ignition” story campaign, sourcing its various industry voices to explain the “why,” “how” and “what” behind decisions to work directly with high school students. The campaign will build industry awareness of the benefits of providing work-based learning to youth and provide tactical resources like a playbook, microsite, video guide, and positive stories from early adopters.

ASA Committed Funds: \$145,000



Free to Dream

In 2023 ASA launched a partnership with the nonprofit organization FREE TO DREAM on the “I AM FREE TO DREAM”

national campaign – led by Common, Academy and Grammy Award winning artist, actor, and activist – to increase equitable access to invaluable career exploration and skill-building experiences and resources for disconnected opportunity youth (those who are neither working nor in school) and justice-involved youth. The campaign will spotlight youth-led innovations and real-world impact in sustainability, equity, and social good by

featuring hundreds of projects through both digital content and regional events (projects will be aligned to/inspired by the UN Sustainable Development Goals and similar frameworks). The initiative aims to reach 10 million+ people through the mass creation and distribution of dynamic movement-building content, such as original videos, podcasts and blogs, as well as youth-centered events in Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City.

ASA Committed Funds: \$500,000



Getting Smart

In 2022, ASA provided grant funding to the nonprofit Getting Smart to support their work with a diverse group of leaders to author and publish a series of content on new high school pathways, unbundling and rebundling learning, and the future of credentialing. Since the campaign launch, Getting Smart content has included more than 150 blogs, 40 podcasts, a Credentialed Learning Toolkit for system leaders, an interactive publication on Support and Guidance for New Pathways Journeys, and The Portrait Model, a paper focused on networks supporting New Pathways. Getting Smart also launched a social media campaign, receiving more than 150,000 views of their website, and hosted a New Pathways convening in Tacoma, Washington in October 2023.

ASA Committed Funds: \$195,000



Jobs for the Future

A narrative change campaign launched in 2021 with Jobs for the Future (JFF) aims to change the perceptions of postsecondary education paths that do not include two- and four-year degree programs. This work continued in 2023 with the publication of *Beyond Degrees: Education to Career Pathways - Students Say Yes, but Are Educators and Parents Willing and Prepared to Help Them Navigate Options?* and *Success, Redefined: How Non-degree Pathways Empower Youth to Chart Their Own Course to Confidence, Employability, and Financial Freedom.*

ASA Committed Funds (2022): \$1.5 million

Thought Leadership Events

By playing a major role in sponsoring education conferences like SXSW, ASU+GSV, JFF Horizons, the Association for Middle Level Education and others, ASA was able to drive conversation and put needed attention on issues of career readiness, career connected learning, and digital direct-to-kid initiatives.

ASA Committed Funds: \$1.05 million