

SOCIAL BOND FUND IMPACT REPORT 2024



About American Student Assistance

American Student Assistance® (ASA) is a national nonprofit at the forefront of changing the way kids learn about careers and prepare for their futures through access to career readiness information and experiences for all. 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 2024, ASA funded \$33 million in digital and in-person program activities with the use of bond funds and provided funding to 57¹ organizations, reaching more than 13 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:

- Programs that expand career exploration to middle school
- Programs that increase access to hands-on work-based learning experiences in high school
- Programs that encourage postsecondary education success including access to non-degree paths
- Digital innovation in career readiness education
- Programs to build skills that foster employability and build social capital
- Partners to engage in collaborative research, dialogue and collective action to solve nationwide education challenges and influence change
- Partners and programs to reach underserved learners

¹ Includes four organizations funded through the Catalyze Challenge pooled funding venture.

Impact from Bond-funded Programs

Total Bond spend in 2024 (January 2024- December 2024): \$33.35 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 offerings
- 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 impacted more than 13 million students in 2024 with bond funds.

In 2024

- Funding provided: \$33.35 million
- Students reached: more than 13 million
- Organizations funded through direct and pooled funding: 57

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 programming, and/ or digitally enabled education solutions that provide a larger opportunity for scale and impact. In 2024, more than 80% of the external organizations funded served national or state-based/local initiatives in communities outside New England.

- National organizations: 17
- State-based or local initiatives serving a targeted community outside of New England: 31
- 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

Thirty-six percent of ASA bond funding supported some component of scaling programs through digital solutions. Such programming included 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

More than 85% of the external organizations receiving bond funding in 2024 operate 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. Additionally, funding through the Catalyze Challenge (detailed below) was focused on promoting the efforts of proximate entrepreneurs—those leaders who come from the communities they seek to serve—and/or increasing opportunity for students in rural 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 produced and/or commissioned publications in 2024 included: [Extending the Runway: A 50-State Analysis of Middle School Career Exploration](#) (in partnership with Education Strategy Group), [Reimagining Work-Based Learning to Equip Youth with Durable Social-Emotional Skills](#), [Building Bridges Between Education and Industry: Youth Work-Based Learning as Talent Development Strategy](#), [Measurement for Mobility: How U.S. States Can Use Data to Incentivize Postsecondary and Workforce Success in Public Education](#) (in partnership with Education Strategy Group), and [Launchpad Jobs: Achieving Career and Economic Success Without a Degree](#) (in partnership with Burning Glass Institute).

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 2024, ASA thought leadership grants supported America's Promise Alliance, the Coalition for Career Development Center, Colorado Succeeds, Empower Schools, the Foundation for California Community Colleges, and the Free to Dream campaign, as detailed below.

Impact Systems

Nearly 80% 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 2024. 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.

Middle School Career Exploration



Apprentice Learning
Ignite Purpose

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. With ASA's support, in 2024 Apprentice Learning served 118 eighth grade students through its Apprenticeship program; 68 ninth grade Apprentice Learning alumni through Launch Plus, a paid internship that sharpens participants' readiness for a summer job; 31 rising ninth grade girls and four peer leaders through City Summer Internship (CSI), which blends classroom-based career education and literacy with workplace explorations in fields where women are under-represented; and 33 students and four peer leaders in Activate: City Summer, which recognizes kinesthetic learners' need for a more active program. Ninety percent of apprentices reported that they improved their professional communication skills and feel comfortable in a professional setting, and 93% of alumni survey respondents reported having additional work experience, a strong indicator of future workplace success, and increased lifetime earnings. *ASA Committed Funds²: \$150,000*



The Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) is a membership organization dedicated to helping middle school educators reach every student, grow professionally, and create great schools. ASA provided support for AMLE's efforts to reinforce the important role middle school education plays in positive adolescent development, and the critical need to expand career exploration opportunities in the middle grades. AMLE would like to see policy change that supports developmentally appropriate opportunities for young adolescents to explore a wide range of careers and develop 21st century skills. *ASA Committed Funds: \$15,000*



BISMARCK
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Bismarck Public Schools, the largest school district in North Dakota, is the leader in the state and upper midwest in high quality career and technical education with solid industry and postsecondary partners. ASA funding is being used to create and expand a middle school career exploration facility for all students in three middle schools in Bismarck, North Dakota. This renovated Career and Technical Academy will offer exploratory courses for grades 6-8 with the goal of increasing graduation rates, engaging learners in personalized learning and competency-based education, and creating learners who are college and career ready to more effectively serve the workforce in North Dakota and the region. Additionally, as a pilot expansion into the middle school, this will allow other developing career academies across the state the ability to see what the next level of career exploration looks like and the benefits it provides to students, communities, and the state. *ASA Committed Funds: \$200,000*



East Central Educational Service Center's (ECESC) mission is to serve and to connect its member districts by providing resources, support, and collaborative solutions that will enhance and elevate the impact of the educational services provided to the students and communities of East Central Indiana. An ASA grant is allowing ECESC to pilot and develop a new career exploration program for middle school students in Indiana. Forge Your Future is an experience that allows underserved rural students to develop self-awareness through RIASEC, a personality model that helps users choose a career based on their interests and preferences. *ASA Committed Funds: \$100,000*



Hawaii Workforce Pipeline (HWP), a nonprofit on Oahu, connects public high school students with structured internships in diverse job sectors, guided by their interests and career goals. Through professional development and hands-on experience, HWP empowers students to secure fulfilling careers that offer sustainable wages and long-term success in Hawaii. The organization is using ASA funding to expand their efforts in coordinating career-connected learning, including career fairs, classroom engagements, industry mentorship, and internships, for the Windward School District. *ASA Committed Funds: \$99,687*



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 2023-24, ASA funding supported the third JA Inspire, where more than 1,200 students from 20 schools met for the career exploration fair with hands-on demonstrations; 80% of participating students gained newfound awareness of various career options and experienced a 10% boost in confidence regarding career planning. JA also launched 3DE Schools by Junior Achievement, a new instructional model that integrates case-study methodology into the curriculum to act as a bridge between school and the world of work awaiting students following graduation. On average, students self-reported having more confidence on 80% of skills taught in this program. *ASA Committed Funds: \$100,000*



The Immokalee Foundation offers students in Immokalee, Florida (a large agricultural community) the tools, opportunities and support they need to succeed at each level of their education – whether they choose college, vocational programs or certifications that lead to financial independence. ASA funding is helping the Foundation expand the number of students served through their Career Pathways program, which begins in middle school, and gives students from families who have worked as migrant farmworkers for generations an opportunity to learn about in-demand careers that provide a living wage. The program also follows students through high school, providing academic support, paid internships, stipends, career-focused field trips, summer camps, and more. *ASA Committed Funds: \$90,000*



Magnolia Project is a Career Technical Education program that partners with rural low-income middle and high schools, as well as continuation/alternative education high schools, to establish experiential learning pathways embedded into the school day. An ASA grant is helping Magnolia fund and scale the semester-long career exploration model for rural and low-income middle school-age students in Sonoma County, California. *ASA Committed Funds: \$65,000*



MicroSociety Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming education through immersive, real-world learning experiences. MicroSociety works with schools across the U.S. and internationally to help students develop the entrepreneurial, financial, and civic skills needed for future success. Through this program, students construct a microcosm of adult society within their school. Professional mentors support students in their work and provide from-the-field knowledge. ASA funding is being used to redesign and formalize the grades 6-8 model for 21st century learners, expanding opportunities for middle schoolers to take on real job roles in their own student-run societies—where they connect academic lessons to real-world challenges. A new digital platform will introduce students to emerging careers in technology, finance, and public service. *ASA Committed Funds: \$122,000*



American Student Opportunity Collaborative, a fiscally sponsored initiative of the **National Rural Education Association**, provides rural, remote and reservation students with the rigorous courses and highly qualified teachers they need to graduate on time and matriculate successfully to university and career. That coursework includes core classes required for graduation, the electives and career and technical education classes that build a full high school experience, dual enrollment courses giving students the opportunity to prove their readiness for college-level work, career exploration modules that can be dropped into classes grades 6-12, and the guidance needed to negotiate pathways to college and career. The Collaborative has been awarded an ASA grant to expand services and thought leadership into 10 states: Mississippi, Arizona, Alabama, West Virginia, Missouri, Kentucky, Louisiana, South Carolina, Oklahoma, and North Carolina. *ASA Committed Funds: \$360,250*



Rodel Foundation's mission is to strengthen Delaware's public education system and workforce by connecting partners to advance and implement sustainable solutions. Over the past three years, ASA's co-investments have helped the state of Delaware increase the number of students in pathways from 19,000 to 30,000 (from about 50% to 65% of high school students statewide); launch an innovative career exploration pilot in middle grades impacting 5,500 students; and develop new accelerated apprenticeship opportunities for approximately 1,000 high school students. Looking ahead, ASA has committed an additional multi-year grant to Rodel to further expand its pathways programming into the middle grades. *ASA Committed Funds: \$500,000*



Virtual Enterprises International (VE) partners with schools, districts, and businesses across the United States to create educational pathways that align career education and work-based learning with academic standards-based education. VE's two-year middle school program, VE-JV Career Academy (VE-JV), brings together business education, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship by transforming classrooms into offices and students into professionals who create and run start-up companies that simulate the functions and demands of real-world businesses. The VE-JV program currently serves over 7,000 students in six states, including several of the nation's largest school districts (e.g., New York City Department of Education, Los Angeles Unified School District, and Broward County Public Schools). Grant funding from ASA is allowing VE to expand the VE-JV program to create entrepreneurial and work-based learning experiences for middle-grade students. By partnering with ASA, VE creates media that focuses on students and showcases their achievements as evidence for the effectiveness of SEL-infused career readiness initiatives. *ASA Committed Funds: \$200,000*

High School Work-Based Learning



BRIC
FOUNDATION

BRIC Foundation is a nonprofit 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 supported the

2024 expansion of the BRIC Pre-Apprenticeship Program to the state of Washington, which recently passed a \$90 million investment in their Creative Economy, and reached out to BRIC to help build out the employment pathways in arts, media, and entertainment. *ASA Committed Funds: \$125,000*



The CAPS (Center for Advanced Professional Studies) Network is focused on paving the education-to-employment path through profession-based learning. With ASA's support, CAPS has activated 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. In 2024 CAPS built the Experience.Work platform, which offers robust resources to help educators integrate profession-based learning into their curricula. These include practical guides on establishing industry partnerships, customizable pitch decks, and case studies of successful collaborations. The platform launched in early 2025. *ASA Committed Funds: \$527,000*



Center for Applied Technology (CAST) leads, inspires, and convenes a global community to design equitable, inclusive learning experiences through Universal Design for Learning (UDL) pioneered at CAST. UDL is an evidence-based framework drawing from the learning sciences and research-based instructional methods to design for the widest range of learners from the outset. CAST is using ASA's financial support to expand representation of persons with disabilities in future-forward fields, such as biomanufacturing, nanotechnology, or other advanced manufacturing industries, through the refinement of a web-based eportfolio and simulated work-based learning opportunities. *ASA Committed Funds: \$126,678*



TEEN EMPOWERMENT

The Center for Teen Empowerment employs, trains, and empowers youth to, in collaboration with adults, create peace, equity, and justice. ASA funding is being used to launch career-connected learning initiatives for careers in nonprofit, social services, public health, public service, and arts sectors. The goal is to help youth acquire 21st century skills (communication, organizing, research), build solid relationships with adults they would not have otherwise known, and build an effective "next steps" personal plan regarding future education, employment and career. *ASA Committed Funds: \$90,000*



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 2024 provided programming at five schools to more than 150 students, 19 peer leaders, seven interns and 10 fellows; launched an alumni network; and became an approved vendor with Boston Public Schools. Over 90% of program participants increased their understanding of higher education and career pathways, and grew self-efficacy, leadership skills, civic awareness, and cultural pride; 100% of high school-aged participants had access to early college credits through Chica's partnership with the Franklin Cummings Institute of Technology (another ASA grantee); and 100% graduated from either high school or eighth grade. *ASA Committed Funds: \$100,000*

ConnectED partners with school, district, and community leaders to challenge the status quo to inspire all students, regardless of background, and equip them to succeed in college, career, and civic life. ASA grant funding supports ConnectED's New Mexico Four Corners College and Career Pathways Partnership initiative. The Partnership's primary objective is to build 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 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. As of fall 2024, thanks to ConnectED's efforts, there is at least one comprehensive pathway enrolling all students in grades 9-12 at each of the district's eight high schools and dual enrollment participation is also on the rise. ConnectED also convened leaders from throughout the state to learn from their work, and to develop policies and practices to replicate pathway programs in other areas of New Mexico. *ASA Committed Funds: \$200,000*

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. ASA funding supports Flare's high-touch cohort model, which provides learners with access to workplace mentors and year-round coaching and training to ensure career readiness and long-term success. In the 2023-24 year, 61 students from neighborhoods across Boston spent 17,000 hours in the program, earning nearly \$5,600 in total compensation on average. Thirty-two employers provided 60 internship spots for Flare's high school students and program alumni. Ninety-seven percent of interns received a "proficient" or "exemplary" rating from supervisors, while 98% of supervisors noted that working with interns was valuable. Importantly, 93% of interns were recommended for future internship opportunities with teams they worked with; four converted into part-time roles post-internship. *ASA Committed Funds: \$100,000*



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 an ASA grant, GPS Ed launched an application tool to support engagement with field partners with the goal of expanding high school internship opportunities. Targeted campaigns in Iowa, Missouri, Indiana, Michigan, and Kentucky generated significant interest through outreach efforts, including interviews with state leaders, email campaigns, and social media promotions that achieved nearly 400,000 impressions. GPS Ed also designed and deployed a School Capabilities Survey; created a resource toolkit; and provided resources for regional employers and educators to rapidly increase their capacity to provide high-quality work-based learning in a Healthcare Pathway, to launch in Fall 2025. *ASA Committed Funds: \$300,000*



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, ensures that children are enrolled in school and that all family members have access to healthcare services, case management, cultural orientation, and career training so they can become financially independent and contributing members of their communities. In 2024 ASA funding supported the launch of the New American

Student Startup Academy (NASSA), with the potential to scale to other IRC centers across the country. The pilot project aims to help refugee youth explore diverse career pathways, cultivate essential transferable skills, and access paid experiential learning and youth entrepreneurship opportunities. In its first year, the IRC's Connect 2 Success (C2S) program supported 168 youth in achieving living wage employment, English language proficiency, and academic and career success; extended navigation support to college-bound youth; and helped youth identify and enroll in suitable educational institutions. *ASA Committed Funds: \$200,000*



Island Institute was founded in 1983 to ensure Maine's island and coastal communities thrive and have a resilient future. It runs many programs that support Maine's marine economy, climate solutions, and sustainable communities. ASA's grant supports the Lift All Boats Project, which provides equitable access to Maine's lobstering industry and mentorship to students from historically underserved backgrounds by exposing young people to the lobstering industry, and helping them gain the skills and training needed to move towards gaining a lobstering license. The earn and learn summer-long program is zero cost for students – lunch, supplies and transportation are all provided, a scholarship is available at program's end based on attendance, and a local restaurant buys the lobster students catch just as they do for professional lobstermen. *ASA Committed Funds: \$100,000*



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. During the 2023-24 school year, ASA funding supported NAF's Outcomes-Driven Work-Based Learning program, which reached 113,260 students in 619 career academies, primarily in under-resourced communities. Student responses to NAF's WBL Reflection Form show that 79% agreed their WBL activity provided them with useful information about pursuing their education or career goals; 78% said their WBL activity gave them a glimpse into one or more careers; and 83% felt the work they performed was challenging, allowing an opportunity to build their skills. *ASA Committed Funds: \$400,000*



SparkNC, launched with the support of the North Carolina General Assembly and in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, is an innovative, learner-centered approach to curriculum design and delivery that accelerates middle and high school student progress on pathways to careers in high-tech fields, including cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and machine learning, software development, data analytics, game development, and computer systems engineering. SparkNC is using ASA grant funding for a statewide expansion of STEM career readiness programs across 20 school districts in North Carolina, with a focus on rural areas. *ASA Committed Funds: \$500,000*



Suits for Seniors equips young professionals from low-income communities in Palm Beach County, Florida with real-world experience, industry mentorship, and essential skills to confidently transition into the workforce. Given that 100% of their students qualify for free federal food programs and attend Title I schools, financial support is crucial for their ability to participate in and benefit from hands-on work-based learning experiences. An ASA grant allows Suits for Seniors to provide students with paid internships with corporations, civic organizations, or technical schools, as well as new professional attire. *ASA Committed Funds: \$50,000*



UnCommon Construction (uCC) uses residential construction projects to empower youth with the skills, network, resources, and experience to lead the workforce after high school or college. Through a selective apprenticeship program, students from different high schools across the area apply to join a diverse team to earn above minimum wage hourly pay and school internship credit while building a house from the ground up. ASA grant funding is helping uCC create a “Builder in Residence” train-the-trainer program for leaders, as well as expand into Minnesota and Kentucky. *ASA Committed Funds: \$200,000*

Postsecondary Pathways



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: \$306,000*



Franklin Cummings Tech (FCT), 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 is helping enhance support for students in FCT'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. In 2024 these programs served 136 students, who successfully completed over 75% of their dual enrollment classes. FCT also launched the ASAP Peer-Mentoring program, a student-driven effort that pairs students of the program with coordinators who offer advice and support, and the EC Student Success Seminar, which assist students in developing a well-rounded skill set that promotes sustainability and further room for growth. *ASA Committed Funds: \$150,000*



In 2024 ASA made a multi-year investment to **Jobs for the Future (JFF)** to create the ASA Center for Career Navigation at JFF and support JFF's North Star goal. The new center will empower young people, ages 16-24, to better understand and navigate quality education and career pathways after high school by providing access to resources and opportunities that will lead them to meaningful, quality jobs. The new center aims to lead the field in career navigation for high school students and young people who are neither in school nor employed, with a goal of helping 20 million young learners by 2030. To achieve this, the center will raise awareness about career navigation and high-quality non-degree pathways for young people through convening thought leaders, market research, and advocating for key federal and state policy changes. Ultimately, these efforts will culminate in the development of a comprehensive, free digital platform designed to guide young people in exploring education and career paths that do not require a college degree. *ASA Committed Funds: \$5 million*



Massachusetts Alliance for Early College (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 supports 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. In 2024, 199 students participated and gave the program high marks for teaching valuable professional skills, helping them navigate professional spaces, and growing their professional networks. Fellows participated in Early College Day at the State House, as well as met with Massachusetts education commissioners and the Board of Higher Education. Additionally, five Fellows successfully published op-eds and one participated in the Getting Smart podcast. *ASA Committed Funds: \$75,000*



The Rush Education and Career Hub (REACH) is an employer-driven cradle-to-career education hub that prepares Black, Latinx, and other under-represented youth for healthcare and STEM careers. ASA grant funds are being used to support the Rush Education and Career Hub (REACH) program, which is designed to meet the unique needs of underserved learners, focusing on the development of occupational identity, and removing barriers that low-income students of color face. Specifically, the program will produce a toolkit, pilot programs in new settings, and offer technical assistance to other healthcare institutions, creating pathways to career-connected learning for thousands of students. The toolkit will be grounded in a first-hand understanding of legal considerations and the bureaucracy healthcare institutions must navigate to establish robust career-connected learning programs. It will also incorporate templates, guides, and ready-made learning experiences (from hospital tours to supervisor handbooks to job descriptions and shadowing experiences) that may be customized to each healthcare institution. *ASA Committed Funds: \$141,450*

Digital Innovation

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. Through our digital ecosystem of free career exploration and experimentation experiences, ASA directly engages with kids and empowers them to see their futures more clearly. Last year (2024) marked the first full year where all of these experiences were available to students. To maximize our reach and impact, we leveraged new technologies like A.I., machine learning, and predictive analytics to improve the efficiency of our direct-to-kid marketing efforts, while also continuing to optimize the user experience within the platforms themselves. Altogether, in 2024 over 13 million learners engaged with our ecosystem, which includes:

- **Next Voice:** 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.
- **EvolveMe:** 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. In 2024, EvolveMe users gave tasks in the platform an average rating of 4.7

out of 5 and achieved an 81% task completion rate. In 2024, we continued to expand the number of partnerships and tasks available—now reaching 57 partnerships and 185 tasks—while also working with our partners to optimize their offerings based on user engagement and feedback.

- **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 2024, Futurescape reached a diverse audience, with 55% of users identifying as persons of color.
- **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.

In 2024, ASA received multiple recognitions for its suite of digital experiences. ASA earned the distinction of Webby Honoree, with EvolveMe, Futurescape, and Next Voice being recognized for Best User Interface, Websites and Mobile Sites, in the 28th annual Webby Awards—the leading international awards organization honoring excellence on the Internet. Organized by the Webby Awards, the Anthem Awards—the largest and most comprehensive social impact award—also recognized ASA with the Gold medal in the “education platform” category for EvolveMe. Additionally, EvolveMe placed as a Finalist in the 2024 EdTech Digest Cool Tool Awards—the world’s largest awards program dedicated to recognizing outstanding contributions in transforming education through technology. *ASA Committed Funds: \$10.3 million*



Big Picture Learning (BPL) is a global network of schools and initiatives that activate opportunities for students to live lives of their own design. ASA funding supports BPL’s Learning Through Interests and Internships (LTI) program, which in 2024 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, BPL’s proprietary internship management system, and expanding B-UnBound, a version of ImBlaze that does not require a connection to a BPL program or school. In 2024, there was a 25% increase of schools using ImBlaze in California (from 45 schools to 60), 106 internship experiences were completed, and 972 total LTI experiences (e.g., interest exploration, informational interviews, shadow days) were recorded. As with ImBlaze, B-Unbound is steadily growing in California. More than 4,000 new Navigators connected to B-Unbound during this period with an additional five new B-Unbound sites and six new partners.

ASA Committed Funds: \$600,000



Big Thought’s Learning Pathways is a city-wide initiative in Dallas, Texas to help youth connect skills developed during out-of-school time (OST) experiences to the pursuit of a high school degree, postsecondary attainment, and a livable wage. ASA’s grant is helping launch digital badging credentials for OST programming and expand a Strategic Plan Outcomes Framework to understand skill development and economic mobility within the OST ecosystem. ASA will have access to hundreds of OST program providers and gain insight on both the short- and long-term impact of OST programs and credentialing. In 2024 Big Thought served 20,000+ youth and created 21 unique badges/micro-credentialing opportunities. *ASA Committed Funds: \$375,000*



In 2024, ASA joined with **Roadtrip Nation** to create a multi-year strategic initiative that will harness the power of Roadtrip Nation’s storytelling expertise to reach tens of millions of parents and students through middle school age-appropriate stories. Specifically, Roadtrip Nation’s “Explore Your Interests

Roadtrip” will send three young adult “roadtrippers” on a multi-week national road trip in summer 2025 that will introduce them to inspiring role models and mentors—and help spur their own self-discovery and exploration. Roadtrip Nation will produce a documentary about the trip, as part of their long-running, regional Emmy Award-winning public television show. This two-part series is set to premiere on public television and online in the spring of 2026, reaching 50 million households across the country. In addition, with support from ASA and Strada Education Foundation, Roadtrip Nation will develop and launch a first-of-its-kind digital experience, using generative AI and Roadtrip Nation’s Interview Archive of 12,000+ videos, that makes exploration and experimentation accessible to middle and high school students. The Virtual Roadtrip will allow students to explore the world, the people living in it, and the paths those people have taken, instead of just exploring a list of careers that exist today. Moreover, the AI-powered experience will match kids with content based on self-selected inputs such as demographics, external pressures, and physical or emotional challenges, to connect young people with others who look like them and have faced similar life experiences. *ASA Committed Funds: \$250,000*



Tarrant To & Through Partnership (T3) aims to ensure more Tarrant County Students have the training and skills they need to thrive in today’s workforce. ASA funding is helping scale up the organization’s Pathways to Careers (P2C) platform that guides parents and students in selecting a best-fit career pathway and supports advisors. The platform helps students identify their interests and the credentials needed to achieve family-sustaining wage careers. Students and parents access the platform on their own time and share their selections with T3 advisors and high school counselors. *ASA Committed Funds: \$100,000*



U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Foundation

The **U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation** harnesses the power of business to create solutions for the good of America and the world. The 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 2024, ASA grant funding supported the Chamber’s efforts to secure an additional nine Clearinghouse partners, bringing the total to 18. Clearinghouses stand up EPIC challenges in their communities and recruit the employer partners that provide real-world challenges, as well as the education partners that provide teams of learners who work on the challenges. In the first round of programming, eight Clearinghouse partners stood up 13 unique EPIC challenges sponsored by 14 employers for 120 students. Sixty-five percent of the learners were high schoolers. After completing their EPIC challenges, 88% of learners felt more prepared for the workforce; 80% felt more informed about available career options; and 79% felt better prepared to make a career choice. The Chamber Foundation also partnered with Credly to design and host the EPIC digital badge, which aligns with the America Succeeds Durable Skills Framework and provides participants with a credential of their EPIC experience. *ASA Committed Funds: \$500,000*

Skill-Building and Social Capital Development



America Succeeds engages business leaders in modernizing education systems to drive equity and opportunity. ASA funding supported the build and launch of their Durable Skills Framework, which in 2024 continued to gain traction, with 1,361 downloads representing all 50 states and Washington, DC. More than 50% of users expressed plans to integrate the framework into their classrooms, products, or upskilling and training programs; 120 individuals indicated plans to use the framework for policy alignment; and 350 people cited it in research. America Succeeds also launched and completed

Phase 1 of the Research Practice Collaborative to explore how innovative schools and programs are preparing students for success through the development of durable skills – core competencies like communication, critical thinking, and adaptability. *ASA Committed Funds: \$450,000*

The **CERES Institute for Children & Youth** at Boston University Wheelock College of Education & Human Development is dedicated to community-engaged research and evaluation. Through a co-constructive process, communities and community-engaged researchers identify the core problems that young people are facing, design solutions that capitalize on the inherent assets of young people and their communities, and continually learn and improve on these solutions until positive education and life outcomes are realized for all. The Institute is using ASA funding to support its Youth-Centered Social Capital project, which aims to develop a deeper understanding of how youth view their social capital. The project will work directly with youth and leaders from youth-serving organizations to develop youth-centric tools for navigating social networks to pursue education and career goals; identify design concepts to guide existing and/ or new programming to support youth social capital development; and support organizations' capacity to leverage youth voice and experience in shaping social capital supports. *ASA Committed Funds: \$100,000*



CommunityShare connects PK-12 educators with community partners who co-create real-world projects driven by students' passions. CommunityShare is using ASA grant funding to expand their online learning platform, design a regional learning ecosystem to connect young people to social capital, and build out their industry and educator community of practices and educator fellowships. In 2024, 12,700 students engaged in CommunityShare real-world learning experiences with community partners; 100% of educators reported students developed critical thinking, problem-solving and collaboration skills; and 87% of students increased career and college readiness. Additionally, CommunityShare expanded to five new regions: Grand Rapids, Michigan and Northeastern Michigan; Denver, Colorado; Columbus, Ohio; and Flagstaff, Arizona. *ASA Committed Funds: \$200,000*



Get Schooled (GS) offers free, personalized help and resources for young people who want to pursue their academic and career goals. GS is using ASA funding to support the development, implementation, and launch of its AI Interview Coach, an engaging and autonomous interview experience that allows youth the chance to practice job interviewing and enhance their chances of securing employment. In 2024 they signed up 898 registered users who completed 526 interview sessions. Results from post-Interview Coach user surveys also showed that 86% reported an increase in their confidence levels after using the tool. *ASA Committed Funds: \$165,000*



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 socioeconomic status. iCouldBe used ASA grant funding to improve and scale their digital platform to support mentoring relationships, with more than 551 mentees served in 2024. Mentees reported a 13% gain in the strength of their networks and a 17% gain in progress towards education or career goals. Additionally, iCouldBe launched a youth advisory board, an alumni program to support mentees post-program, and a paid internship program where interns drew on their experiences as mentees to review and provide feedback on various aspects of the program, including the curriculum, program data, engagement between mentees and mentors, UX/UI, and more. *ASA Committed Funds: \$220,000*



In 2023 ASA entered into a 10-year supporting organization agreement with the **Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE)**, the nation's leading entrepreneurship education organization. Through this strategic alliance, NFTE and ASA are expanding 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. In 2024, NFTE reached nearly 60,000 students nationwide; piloted a new middle school program that supports early career exploration and fosters student engagement while developing the skills needed for success in the innovation economy; and piloted an enhanced BizCamp experience that incorporates technology instruction, hands-on learning experiences, field trips, and engagement with local tech professionals and entrepreneurs. *ASA Committed Funds: \$4,448,985*



Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD) is a nonprofit organization that helps young people with disabilities reach their full potential through mentorship, career development, and leadership programs. An ASA grant is helping this organization expand the Career Immersion component of their career readiness programming, which provides individualized one-to-one and small group job counseling to students aged 14-22 with disabilities in Greater Boston. The Career Readiness program supports students through a three-tiered curriculum of academic learning, real-world experiences, and mentoring. Participants learn job-readiness and soft skills, as well as create resumes in classroom training. Real-world experiences with community partners, such as guest lectures, job shadows, and internships, provide a hands-on complement to classroom learning. Professional mentors provide the support and guidance for youth to be successful in employment, postsecondary education, and independent living. *ASA Committed Funds: \$100,000*



The **Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy's** mission is to improve public education through well-informed decision-making based on deep knowledge and evidence of effective policymaking and practice. With ASA support, the Center has launched a "Student Changemakers" project to increase voice and agency through youth participatory action research. The project aims to develop student-led research initiatives within Massachusetts schools to empower groups of students ("Student Changemakers") to identify areas for growth in their schools. In the 2023-24 school year, 19 students participated in the project, receiving 35 lessons. Project topics included improving school bathrooms; changing the school cell phone policy; adjusting the class schedule to allow for longer lunches; improving the quality of school lunches; and incorporating calming corners on campus. The project culminated in student showcases and town hall presentations to peers, administrators, and teachers. Project participants noted gains in identifying a problem, developing research questions, conducting research, and collecting and analyzing data. In the fall of 2024, Rennie recruited an additional five educators across three new schools and expanded beyond middle school to grades 9-12. *ASA Committed Funds: \$100,000*



SquashBusters challenges and nurtures under-served youth – as students, athletes and citizens – so that they recognize and fulfill their greatest potential in life. ASA funding supports the expansion of the career readiness component of Squahsbusters' Engage, Enroll, Employ program for middle and high school students. The program helps students develop a career identity and explore the skills and education necessary to achieve their professional goals. In FY25, ASA funding will support 285 students in grades 6-12 in three New England cities: Boston, Lawrence, and Providence. *ASA Committed Funds: \$30,000*



United Planet is a nonprofit organization that connects volunteers who want to make a difference with communities in more than 40 countries, where they learn, teach, work, engage and immerse themselves in a culture outside their comfort zone. With the financial support of ASA, United Planet is expanding immersive virtual internships in advocacy and global citizenship, including developing digital resources like the Global IQ app and Global Citizen Leader Booster platform for students to learn about the UN, experience diverse cultures, and gain the skills to become a 21st century leader. Through hands-on learning and skill-building experiences in over 25 countries, students will broaden their global perspectives and enhance the diversity of their postsecondary options. *ASA Committed Funds: \$200,000*



ASA awarded funding to **Uplift Education**, the largest public charter school network in North Texas, to support a pilot for a specialized Road to College & Career (RTCC) program focused on specialized populations, specifically scholars with severe disabilities in self-contained classrooms, preparing them for life after high school. This pilot aims to dramatically improve postsecondary outcomes leading to greater independence, higher employment rates, and better overall quality of life. *ASA Committed Funds: \$100,000*

Collaborative Research, Dialogue, and Collective Action to Influence Change



America's Promise Alliance (APA) is a national nonprofit dedicated to advancing educational equity and postsecondary success for historically underserved youth. For more than 25 years, APA has united the nation's leading youth-serving organizations in a shared effort to solve field-wide challenges that no single organization can tackle alone. ASA funding is supporting the launch of APA's AI-powered advising tool that directly strengthens students' access to career connected learning by improving how they explore, evaluate, and pursue postsecondary pathways aligned with long-term career goals. It is also being co-developed with organizations that serve 127,000+ students annually and have decades of experience supporting first-generation youth to and through postsecondary success. Their collaboration ensures the product is grounded in real career-connected learning challenges and designed to scale across nonprofit and public education systems. More than just a tool, this project will build the infrastructure for a more equitable advising field, enabling young people to make better-informed choices that connect learning to meaningful, sustainable careers. *ASA Committed Funds: \$50,000*



With a mission to make career readiness for all the first priority of American education, the **Coalition for Career Development Center (CCDC)** informs, connects and empowers leaders working in and with industry, government, education, and communities to implement evidence-based career and talent identification practices. In 2024, ASA grant funding supported the development of a series of ALLready (Accelerating America's Learners and Leaders) playbooks for expanding career exploration in middle school, each written for specific stakeholders to ensure all students are prepared for a career at this critical stage of life. The series includes playbooks for industry, education, government and community leaders. ALLready Playbooks have attracted a great deal of interest, inquiry, and participation even at the pre-production stage and the CCDC anticipates the series will bring increased brand awareness; higher stakeholder engagement; tangible playbook adoption in cities, schools and leadership development efforts; partnership growth; and grassroots peer-to-peer promotion. *ASA Committed Funds: \$280,000*



Colorado Succeeds is a nonprofit, non-partisan, coalition of business leaders whose mission is to apply their expertise, influence, and capital to improve Colorado's schools. ASA funding is being used to support advocacy efforts to change systems in Colorado, by investing in data systems, communications, and advocacy tools for business coalitions and campaigns to destigmatize non-degree pathways. The project will take a comprehensive multi-faceted approach to expanding career-connected learning in the state, mobilizing and impacting several key stakeholders and audiences, including educators, employers, and legislators. *ASA Committed Funds: \$200,000*



Empower Schools collaborates with state agencies, policymakers, school districts, higher education institutions, workforce partners, and communities nationwide in service of millions of students. They strive to advance economic mobility for underserved and underestimated students: 80% of students served identify as Black/African American, Hispanic, or economically disadvantaged and one of their three focus areas is underserved rural communities. An ASA grant is helping Empower Schools create college and career pathways for students in middle and high school in Indiana, as well as advance the Rural Collaborative where rural school districts, higher education, and workforce partners create formalized partnerships to share research in Indiana, Texas and Colorado. *ASA Committed Funds: \$183,000*



FOUNDATION *for* CALIFORNIA
COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Foundation for California Community Colleges (FoundationCCC), in collaboration with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, facilitates collaboration, accelerates innovation, and increases systemwide resources. ASA grant funding supports FoundationCCC research on equity gaps and long-term outcomes for dual enrollment students. The project will examine career-connected activities in courses taken by California community college dual enrollment students. The research will be the catalyst for local and state conversations across the nation to ensure career-connected activities provide dual enrollment students with equitable work-based learning experiences and help inform policy and programmatic changes that improve access and success for students who historically have been underserved by educational systems. *ASA Committed Funds: \$95,353*



The nonprofit organization **FREE TO DREAM**, led by Academy and Grammy Award Winning Artist, actor, and activist Common, launched its "I AM FREE TO DREAM" campaign with ASA funding. This national campaign works to increase access for all 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. In 2024 ASA funding supported the campaign's Year 1 launch, which included appearances at the ASU+GSV Summit and the Aspen Ideas Festival. Other Year 1 milestones included development of the DREAMKEEPER™ Resource Kit, which equips educators, mentors, and community leaders with practical tools to guide transformative dreaming practices, as well as the Chicago DREAM Summit and the NBA All-Star DREAM Summit held during the NBA All-Star Weekend. Overall the campaign reached and engaged ~1,000 youth through community activations and partner networks, with 62% feeling empowered to take action after participating in summit activities and 47% discovering new career pathways they hadn't previously considered. *ASA Committed Funds: \$500,000*

Pooled Funding

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 2024, Catalyze kicked off Round 4 of its grant challenge, ultimately awarding \$3.5 million to four organizations that focus on career exploration for young adolescents and activating industry partnerships. 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 2024, but awards were announced in 2025. Together, the four organizations are expected to positively impact more than 60,000 learners. *ASA Committed Funds: \$1.5 million*

They include:

American Student Opportunity Collaborative will use Catalyze funding to expand virtual and in-person middle school career exploration programming to rural communities in Colorado and Ohio through their partnership with National Rural Education Association.



CareerWise will use Catalyze funding to implement two new employer-driven youth apprenticeship models in Colorado and New York through sector strategies that activate industry associations and business intermediary organizations.



The Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation will use Catalyze funding to expand ElevateEdAZ's structured career exploration and work-based learning to seven new high schools in Arizona via meaningful employer partnerships and co-designed CTE programs.



Propel America will use Catalyze funding to launch new earn-and-learn pathways in the healthcare industry for Medical Assistant and Pharmacy Technician roles in Los Angeles and Philadelphia alongside three new employer partners.

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: \$1.7 million*