



Afterschool and Summer Learning:

A City Strategy for Workforce Development

Economic development is the top priority for cities.¹

Cities rely on a prepared, skilled, and homegrown workforce to attract business and develop a vibrant and sustainable local economy. While the precise size and nature of the “skills gap” is subject to debate, mayors, city councilmembers, and other municipal officials increasingly understand the importance of preparing young people for the changing global workforce. They recognize that employers report challenges finding workers with the skills they need. One way city leaders can address this challenge is by supporting high-quality afterschool and summer programs that expose young people to career options while also building the social and emotional skills to help them succeed in work and life. It is a win-win for cities, businesses, families, youth, and our nation – a strategy for addressing future workforce needs and supporting the current workforce by giving working parents the opportunity to focus at work and be productive employees, with the knowledge that their children are in a safe and supportive environment.

CITY CHALLENGE:

In a rapidly changing labor market, a growing number of employers are concerned that they cannot or will be unable to find workers with necessary technical and social-emotional or foundational skills.



92 PERCENT

of business executives believe that Americans do not have the skills they need to do the jobs of today or tomorrow; nearly half also think that Americans lack critical social-emotional skills such as communication, creativity, critical thinking, and teamwork. ⁱⁱ

\$164 BILLION

Businesses spend more than \$164 billion annually on employee education and training to improve workforce skills. ⁱⁱⁱ

\$160 BILLION

is the annual potential value of unfilled job opportunities in the U.S. ^{iv}

CITY SOLUTION:

High-quality afterschool and summer programs can enhance work-related skills and strengthen local workforces by promoting social-emotional/foundational learning skills and engaging students in hands-on, technical projects.

- A study of 213 social and emotional learning (SEL) programs found **positive effects on students' social-emotional skills and attitudes about self, others, and school.** ^v
- **More than 70%** of students participating in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) afterschool programs studied in a multi-state evaluation reported **positive gains in foundational skills**, including perseverance and critical thinking. ^{vi}
- **A study found that SEL skills are even better predictors of economic success than cognitive abilities** and can be connected to wages, work experience, ongoing employment into adulthood, and even closing the gender wage gap. ^{vii}



CITY PROGRAM EXAMPLES:

In Real Life Asheville, NC

In Real Life (IRL) prioritizes foundational skills development with its Real Skills for Real Life Social Emotional Learning program. Students gain social-emotional confidence by focusing on a

specific over a 10-week period. After students self-report on their newly acquired skills, trained service providers facilitate individualized, hands-on experiences for each student. The initiative also features small, intensive homework support clubs that work closely with teachers. Each year the city

invests \$45,000 to recruit and train IRL community service providers. The funds are also used to provide transportation, healthy snacks, integrated school day support, and streamlined registration for disadvantaged families.

Of the 251 IRL students served in the 2016-2017 school year, 76 percent demonstrated social and emotional growth and all participants showed academic improvement.

Sprockets and Urban Roots Saint Paul, MN

Founded on former Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman's vision to provide a safe environment for youth to learn and thrive during out-of-school time (OST), Sprockets is a citywide network that connects students to effective afterschool opportunities while creating a bridge to in-school learning. The network- launched in 2006 and grew out of the Mayor's Second Shift Commission - works in partnership with the City of St. Paul,

St. Paul Public Schools, and many community-based nonprofits to offer afterschool activities, such as homework assistance, acting classes, arts and crafts, STEM enrichment, and career development.

Over 96 percent of the 22,000 students participating in Sprocket's programs reported that they believe the skills they learned through the afterschool programs will help them in their careers.

Work skills programs in the Sprocket's network have increased access to career development for

diverse communities in St. Paul's East Side. One program is Urban Roots which hires 60 diverse youth annually and places them in one of three programs: Conservation, Market Garden, or Cook Fresh. Urban Roots emphasizes communication, initiative, and problem solving, and critical thinking skills. **Youth saw proficiency increases of over 85 percent in each of these skills. Eighty four percent of youth could name three career options they had learned about through the program.**

“One of my main priorities as a mayor is preparing my city’s workforce for the jobs of tomorrow. At the forefront of my agenda is supporting afterschool and summer programs, which can help young people develop the skills they need to participate in our rapidly changing economy. City officials and business leaders must work together to make a serious and sustainable investment in programs that support our children and youth today, as they will build the economy of tomorrow.”

— *The Honorable Mark Stodola, Mayor, City of Little Rock, AR
National League of Cities President 2017-18*

CITY CHALLENGE:

Fiscal and social challenges for cities increase when young people do not complete high school and are not provided with the exposure, experience, and access to career opportunities they need to gain a foothold in the labor market.



Nearly one-third of high school dropouts are unemployed; **81 percent** of youth who dropped out believe real-world learning opportunities would have helped them stay engaged in school. ^{viii}

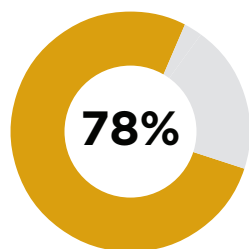
The **30% of high school graduates who do not enroll in college have an unemployment rate of 19 percent** – more than five times the national average. ^{ix}

The current unemployment rate for teens and young adults in the U.S. is **higher than levels reported during the Great Depression.** ^x

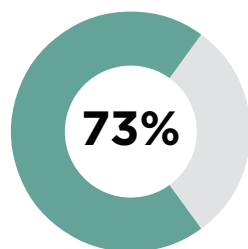
CITY SOLUTION:

Afterschool and summer learning opportunities provide young adults with exposure to real-world skills, mentoring, and development, particularly in the growing STEM field.

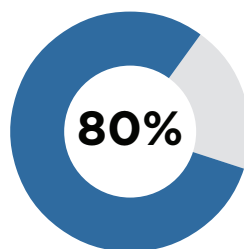
A national study of 1600 youth across 160 STEM afterschool programs found that: ^{xi}



of students report that they are more interested in STEM;



have a more positive STEM identity; and



increased their STEM career knowledge due to their afterschool experiences.

70%

of graduates in a tech-based afterschool program reaching 8,500 students (a majority from underserved communities) nationwide pursued post-high school education and careers in STEM fields. ^{xiii}

65%

of parents say that afterschool programs can help students gain STEM skills. ^{xiv}

Out of 25,000 children served by an afterschool program in 140 locations worldwide, 80% of alumni reported the program was the most important source of support for pursuing a career, and 97% said it taught them to set high goals and expectations for themselves. ^{xii}

CITY PROGRAM EXAMPLES:

Orlando After-School All-Stars Orlando, FL

Answering a need for innovative and effective afterschool and summer programming, Orlando Mayor Glenda Hood formed After-School All-Stars (ASAS) in 1995 and Mayor Buddy Dyer continues to provide strong leadership and support for it today. The initiative, a partnership between the City of Orlando and the nonprofit organization After-School All-Stars, is housed within City Hall as a reflection of Mayor Dyer's commitment to afterschool and a mechanism to help leverage municipal resources for this successful program. Since

its inception, ASAS has provided 3,600 middle and high school students with over 1,100 hours of free academic enrichment programming in areas such as rocketry, aeronautics, robotics, and digital media, as well as athletics and service learning opportunities. For the past five years, Mayor Dyer has made 21st Century workforce skills a priority within ASAS, creating a pipeline for youth into entry-level jobs within the local economy. ASAS' Career Exploration Opportunity Program and Opportunity Jobs Academy program connect youth to more than 100 corporate, government, and nonprofit mentors, boosting preparedness for today's workplace.

94 percent of ASAS middle school students successfully passed a course that includes testing in career knowledge, financial literacy, and STEM skills.

83 percent of ASAS students met or exceeded state standards on proficiency tests, compared to 57 percent of non-ASAS peers.

In 2016-17, every ASAS 8th grader was promoted to 9th grade and every ASAS 12th grader graduated from high school.

“After-School All-Stars connects high school students with dedicated mentors from our business community and gives them the real-world skills that help them succeed in their first job and beyond.”

— *The Honorable Buddy Dyer
Mayor, City of Orlando, FL*

Project Exploration Chicago, IL

Project Exploration was founded in 1999 as a response to social justice concerns about low representation of female, minority, and low-income individuals in the sciences. Through a partnership with Chicago Public Schools, Project Exploration reaches more than 1,000 students every year, 85 percent of whom are from low-income backgrounds. Project Exploration strives to ensure every Chicago student becomes STEM literate, promotes a diversified STEM workforce in Chicago, and works to mitigate the poverty that pervades Chicago's STEM deserts.

The program provides afterschool classes on STEM, takes students on scientific field trips to places like Yellowstone National Park, and offers visits to local colleges. Over the past 12 years, Project Exploration has received funding from the City's Department of Family and Support Services.

60 percent of Project Exploration graduates are pursuing, or have already received, degrees in science, technology, engineering, or math. One-third are employed in a science-related field, and 85

percent report that the program introduced them to opportunities they might not have otherwise considered.^{xv}

Project Exploration is one of the national STEM Ecosystem cities and leads Chicago STEM Pathways Collaborative including the Mayor's office, the city's libraries, Chicago Public Schools, museums, and other non-profits to develop a Chicago STEM learning community.

CITY CHALLENGE:

Businesses' "bottom line" suffers due to higher costs and reduced productivity when employees' children lack a safe place to go after school.

Businesses lose an estimated

\$50-\$300 BILLION PER YEAR

in healthcare costs and reduced job productivity from working parents who do not have adequate afterschool support for their children. ^{xvi}

More specifically, U.S. businesses lose

\$3 BILLION ANNUALLY

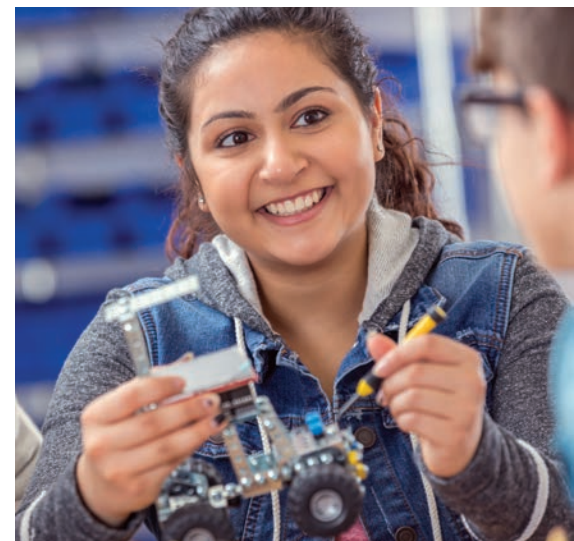
due to childcare-related employee absenteeism. ^{xvii}

CITY SOLUTION:

Afterschool and summer programs can increase both parents' productivity and earnings.

A study of **Boys & Girls Clubs in California** found that their programs **enabled more parents to keep their jobs, generating \$1.84 billion in annual earnings.** ^{xviii}

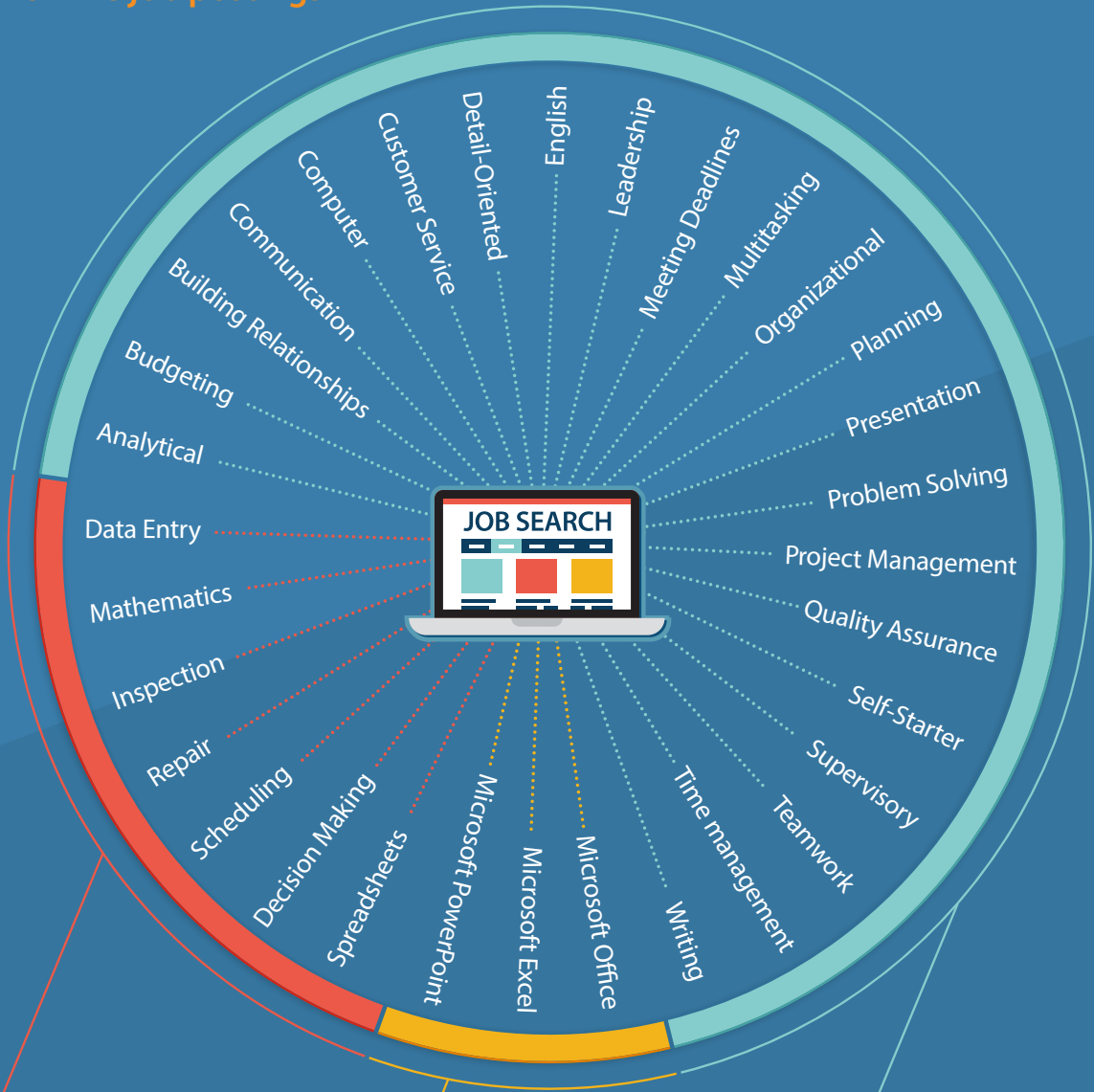
75% of parents (and 85% of those with a child in an afterschool program) **agree that afterschool programs help give working parents peace of mind about their children while they are at work.** ^{xix}



Parents of 52,000 students served by The After-School Corporation programs reported that its afterschool offerings helped them balance work and family life; **60% said they missed less work than before due to the program, 59% said it helped them keep their jobs, and 54% said it allowed them to work more hours.** ^{xx}

SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT

Frequently requested skills by employers from online job postings



Specialized Skills

Job specific skills that permit one to perform tasks. These skills are not generally transferable across occupations.



Software Skills

Skills that are related to computer operations. Software skills can be subdivided into two broad categories (systems skills and application skills).



Foundational Skills

These are necessary building blocks to develop new skills and must be obtained first before acquiring software skills and specialized skills.

Source: Georgetown University Center for Education and the Workforce

ABOUT THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES:

NLC is dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities. NLC serves as a resource and advocate for more than 19,000 cities and towns and more than 218 million Americans. The NLC Institute for Youth, Education, and Families helps municipal leaders act on behalf of the children, youth and families in their communities. NLC launched the YEF Institute in January 2000 in recognition of the unique and influential roles that mayors, city councilmembers and other local leaders play in strengthening families and improving outcomes for children and youth.

THE 50-STATE AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK

Thanks to the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, every state has an organization dedicated to broadening afterschool and summer learning opportunities for youth. Find your state network below. Tap them as an expert resource to support children in your city and join their efforts to improve programs, policies, and expand local, state, and federal funding.

- **Alabama Afterschool Community Network**
alacn.org
- **Alaska Afterschool Network**
akafterschool.org
- **Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence**
azafterschool.org
- **Arkansas Out of School Network**
www.aosn.org
- **California Afterschool Network**
afterschoolnetwork.org
- **Colorado Afterschool Partnership**
coloradoafterschoolpartnership.org
- **Connecticut After School Network**
ctafterschoolnetwork.org
- **Delaware Afterschool Network**
- **Florida Afterschool Network**
myfan.org
- **Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network**
afterschoolga.org
- **Hawaii Afterschool Alliance**
hawaiiafterschoolalliance.org
- **Idaho Afterschool Network**
idahoafterschool.org
- **Illinois-ACT NOW: Afterschool for Children and Teens**
actnowillinois.org
- **Indiana Afterschool Network**
indianaafterschool.org
- **Iowa Afterschool Alliance**
iowaafterschoolalliance.org
- **Kansas Enrichment Network**
kansasenrichment.net
- **Kentucky Out-of-School Alliance**
kyoutofschoolalliance.org
- **Louisiana Center for Afterschool Learning**
laafterschool.weebly.com
- **Maine AfterSchool Network**
maineafterschool.org
- **Maryland Out of School Time Network**
mdoutofschooltime.org
- **Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership**
massafterschool.org
- **Michigan After-School Partnership**
miafterschool.org
- **Minnesota - Ignite Afterschool**
igniteafterschool.org
- **Mississippi Statewide Afterschool Partnership**
- **Missouri AfterSchool Network**
moafterschool.org
- **Montana Afterschool Alliance**
mtafterschoolalliance.org
- **Nebraska - Beyond School Bells**
beyondschoolbells.org
- **Nevada Afterschool Network**
<http://www.nvafterschool.org>
- **New Hampshire Afterschool Network**
<https://www.nhafterschool.org>
- **New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition**
njacc.org
- **New Mexico Out of School Time Network**
nmost.org
- **New York - Network for Youth Success**
networkforyouthsuccess.org
- **North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs**
ncafterschool.org
- **North Dakota Afterschool Network**
ndafterschoolnetwork.com
- **Ohio Afterschool Network**
ohioafterschoolnetwork.org
- **Oklahoma Partnership for Expanded Learning Opportunities**
opelok.org
- **Oregon ASK**
oregonask.org
- **Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network**
psaydn.org
- **Rhode Island - Afterschool Leadership Circle (ALC)**
uwrj.org/take-action/join-us/afterschool-leadership-circle/
- **South Carolina Afterschool Alliance**
scafterschool.com
- **South Dakota Afterschool Partnership**
- **Tennessee Afterschool Network**
tafterschool.org
- **Texas Partnership for Out of School Time**
tpost.org
- **Utah Afterschool Network**
utahafterschool.org
- **Vermont Afterschool Inc.**
vermontafterschool.org
- **Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time**
v-post.org
- **Washington Expanded Learning Opportunities Network**
schoolsoutwashington.org/pages/waelonetwork
- **West Virginia Statewide Afterschool Network**
- **Wisconsin Afterschool Network**
wiafterschoolnetwork.org
- **Wyoming Afterschool Alliance**
wyafterschoolalliance.org

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