

Afterschool Alliance and National AfterSchool Association Team Up to Support a Thriving Afterschool Workforce

[Washington, D.C., June 18, 2024] — The Afterschool Alliance and the National AfterSchool Association (NAA) are pleased to announce a strategic partnership intended to foster a skilled and stable workforce within the afterschool and summer field to ensure increased access to quality programming for more children and youth.

The Afterschool Alliance is the leading national voice for afterschool and summer learning programs and the young people and families who depend on these programs to keep youth safe, inspire learning, and help working families. NAA focuses on supporting, developing, and advocating for those who work with and for youth in out-of-school time (OST). With NAA's 35 years of national leadership in professional development for the OST field and the Afterschool Alliance's 24 years as the nation's leading advocate for afterschool, the collaboration comes at a time when the country is coping with the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, as programs are experiencing staffing shortages while students' needs continue to grow.

While both organizations have been working for decades to better support the afterschool field and have partnered on events and projects in the past, this strategic partnership is the first time the two national leaders are formally collaborating to address a pressing need by combining NAA's leadership on professional development and the Afterschool Alliance's policy and advocacy expertise. Through NAA's annual Workforce Summits and the Afterschool Alliance's ongoing surveys and outreach to the field, the needs of the afterschool workforce over the last several years have been well documented.

- Staffing shortages and the ability to recruit staff have been top of mind for program providers, with more than eight in 10 reporting concerns in surveys conducted during fall 2021 (87%), spring 2022 (86%), fall 2022 (85%), spring 2023 (84%), and fall 2023 (81%).
- Program provider surveys through 2021, 2022, and 2023 have found a majority of programs report difficulties hiring staff, retaining staff, or both. The most recent survey,

conducted in the fall of 2023, found 57% of program providers reporting this to be the case.

- When asked about the resources that would be most helpful to their programs, the most common response from program providers was advice on staff burnout and on keeping teams engaged.

“We are thrilled to partner with the Afterschool Alliance to help take our Thriving OST Workforce Initiative to the next level,” said National AfterSchool Association CEO Gina Warner. “Research and the lived experience of our workforce shows that skilled and knowledgeable program staff are critical to desired youth outcomes, and our initiative strives to provide research, resources, standards, and best practices to strengthen the workforce. Our collaboration represents a firm dedication to quality afterschool programming by recognizing OST professionals as essential contributors to young people's educational and social-emotional development.”

NAA's Thriving OST Workforce Initiative was launched in March of 2022 and recognizes the critical role well-trained and supported professionals play in delivering high-quality afterschool experiences. With thousands of individuals and organizations taking the Pledge to the Profession, the Thriving OST Workforce Initiative is building momentum throughout the field within the United States and its territories.

The new strategic partnership officially began in March 2024 with the following set of initial activities:

- NAA hosted the [third annual Workforce Summit](#) as part of the 2024 NAA Convention
- NAA began circulating draft national OST Job Quality Standards, set for release on June 25, 2024
- The Afterschool Alliance and NAA, along with partners including Grantmakers for Education Out-of-School Time Impact Group, California School-Age Consortium, Every Hour Counts, National Summer Learning Association, National Urban League, and the Partnership for Children and Youth, released a [new searchable online database featuring promising national, state, and local strategies to address workforce challenges](#)
- The Afterschool Alliance released [new Policy Recommendations to Support the Afterschool and Summer Workforce](#)
- The Afterschool Alliance and NAA convened afterschool and summer advocates to share resources and strategize at the Alliance's 23rd annual *Afterschool for All Challenge*

“By joining forces, we expect to drive change that will make a positive difference in the lives of children and youth across the country,” said Jodi Grant, Executive Director of the Afterschool

Alliance. "Creating successful paths to recruit, retain, and build careers for afterschool and summer professionals will help make more quality programs available. We are very pleased to coordinate with NAA on this badly needed initiative that will enhance the stability of the afterschool and summer workforce."

With a shared commitment to positively impacting youth, families, and communities through quality afterschool and summer programs, this partnership maximizes the strengths of two national leading organizations. The Afterschool Alliance will lend its expertise and advocacy prowess, and NAA will provide valuable resources to the field through the Thriving OST Workforce Initiative. Both organizations are excited about this partnership's potential and its positive impact on OST programs and youth nationwide. Learn more about [NAA's Thriving OST Workforce Initiative](#) and access resources at the [Afterschool Alliance workforce page](#).

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Afterschool Alliance

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org

National AfterSchool Association

The National AfterSchool Association (NAA) is the professional membership association for people who work with and for youth during Out-of-School time. NAA fosters positive youth outcomes by supporting, developing, and advocating for OST professionals. The Association is the leading network of OST professionals. To learn more, please visit www.naaweb.org.