



Earn, Learn, and Inspire: Afterschool Employment As a Path to Career Opportunities

The tremendous expansion* of afterschool programs in California has added an estimated 12,000 new jobs to the field, doubling the number of jobs in After School Education and Safety (ASES)-funded afterschool programs. However, 80 percent of these jobs are part-time, and, with some estimates suggesting annual turnover reaches or exceeds 40 percent every year,¹ recruitment and retention has always been the weak link of this huge and growing workforce. To meet this demand while overcoming these obstacles, California must tap all available resources to find and develop a workforce that has the skills and dedication needed to create the positive outcomes for children and youth that are expected from afterschool programs.

California's workforce needs expand beyond the afterschool sector.

The retirement of baby boomers in high-skill professions and the growth in jobs that require post-high school education will likely sink California into a deficit of people and skills in the coming years. According to projections from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC):²

- By 2025, two of every five jobs (41%) will require a college degree, an increase from less than one-third of all jobs in 2005.
- Only 33 percent of the state's working-age adults will have a college degree in 2020.
- The health and education services industry is projected to be the most important growth industry in the state, increasing from 10.8 percent of all jobs in 2005 to 13.2 percent of all jobs in 2025. (The retirement of baby boomers will also add to workforce needs in health and education.)^{3,4}
- In absolute terms, the total number of jobs is projected to increase by 4.5 million; 3.5 million of those jobs will be for people with either a bachelor's or graduate degree.
- Job growth is expected to be weakest for high school graduates and for those with some college but no degree.

Although the impending retirement of 78 million baby boomers creates problems for the rest of California's workforce sectors, it could be a boon for the after-school sector. According to a 2004 poll by AARP, 79 percent of baby boomers plan to work in some capacity during their retirement years, and 51 percent expect to devote more time to community service and volunteering in

"Learn, Earn, and Inspire." A powerful incentive for afterschool employment.

California's afterschool system has an edge over other part-time, service-industry employers such as Macy's and McDonald's. Jobs in afterschool are an accessible entry point that opens pathways to higher education and the high-skill, high-wage jobs that will become the norm in California.

* In 2002, California voters passed Proposition 49, the expansion of the After School Education and Safety Act, which boosted the state's after-school investment from \$128 million to \$550 million, the largest in the country. The full funding was released to programs in 2006, doubling the number of state-funded after-school programs.

Afterschool and the teaching workforce: Innovations in California

It is projected that during the next 15 years, California will need 830,000 new teachers statewide.⁸ Working in afterschool programs provides a range of skills suitable for any profession, but it provides experiences that are directly relevant to teaching, such as working with youth, developing lesson plans and delivering content through a variety of learning strategies. Community colleges and Workforce Investment Boards are looking at afterschool employment as a catalyst to create teacher-training pathways for disadvantaged youth. With the encouragement of philanthropy, the California community college system, and area workforce programs, afterschool employers would form partnerships with local community colleges, California state university campuses and other community agencies.

These partnerships would recruit and train disadvantaged community residents for afterschool jobs while enrolling them in either education or public service career programs. Students can choose to enter an accelerated teacher training program that combines intensive basic skills, teacher preparation and social support. Those involved in the program can continue on the teacher-preparation path or choose related career pathways leading to other jobs in government, community organizations and social service agencies. It is expected that these students could remain working in afterschool programs for four or five years, gaining real-world experience and supporting their continued college attendance. Many of these students may seek full-time employment in the afterschool and youth fields after they finish their college studies.⁹

One afterschool program is already proving that afterschool is a viable tool for building the teacher workforce.¹⁰ LA's BEST has 1,800 field staff serving 26,000 children in 168 elementary schools across Los Angeles. In addition to providing all those kids with a safe place to learn and grow after school, the program is offering both students and staff a path to a teaching career — and a path to working in afterschool.

- 42 percent of staff plan to become teachers, and 34 percent are in college pursuing a degree in education.
- In an informal survey of 3rd- through 6th-graders, when asked what they wanted to be when they grow up, the most common answer was “teacher.”
- 9 percent of staff are former LA's BEST students. In addition, each site has two part-time high school positions.

They are also a setting in which people can “learn and earn” as they steer toward longer-term job development paths. Pilot workforce development projects, such as CalSAC's PATHWAYS (Partnering to Advance Training and Hiring Workers in Afterschool Youth Services) project in California that included afterschool employment have proven to help younger workers disconnected from career paths find meaning in work and given them the incentive to broaden their skills for careers in higher-wage, high-demand professions.⁵

Afterschool employment provides real-world experience that builds job skills and opens doors to a variety of careers. An entry-level afterschool job reinforces basic work habits such as time management (including punctuality), accountability and team work, and provides daily experience in quick-thinking and problem solving—skills useful for any future career. Staff can move quickly to higher levels of responsibility, including site management, which provide additional skill-building opportunities such as mentoring new staff, coordinating with the school leadership and recruiting and coordinating community partners.

California: rich in resources to build the afterschool workforce.

An important partnership for afterschool employment is the community college system. Afterschool programs can be a great fit for community college students, providing a work schedule that complements the college day at wages equal to or better than other part-time

jobs. Afterschool employment also gives students the opportunity to act as role models to the youth they serve. Additionally, community colleges can help recruit their own students to fill positions, and provide support in building the afterschool workforce⁶ by

- setting up test-prep courses/supports to prepare candidates for employment in afterschool programs;
- providing work experience or co-op education credit for afterschool work;
- offering introductory coursework for new entrants specific to afterschool work and professional development for the incumbent afterschool workforce;
- creating “bridge” programs to develop the skills of under-prepared young adults who wish to work in afterschool but may lack basic skills in English and math; and
- integrating afterschool work as one step toward a career ladder that leads to teaching, youth development and/or public service careers.

Afterschool: an asset for California's workforce today *and* tomorrow.

By making afterschool part of a long-term, statewide workforce development and education strategy, afterschool employers can recruit and retain qualified individuals to work in afterschool for years—maybe even choosing it as a career— while providing them the skills for other career pipelines that may interest them. At the same time, the people and skills deficit California faces over the next 20 years is addressed. Offering this choice of career options might give afterschool workers reason to stay focused on career goals, including increasing their own educational qualifications. In turn, this will inspire the children and youth they serve to reach for their own dreams. Linking afterschool employment to broader workforce and education strategies will create a circle of growing aspirations between afterschool staff and afterschool students.

¹ “CalSAC’s Afterschool Workforce Development Initiatives: *Providing Workforce Solutions for the Future*,” California School-Age Consortium, 2006.

² “Can California Import Enough College Graduates?” *California Counts: Population Trends and Profiles*, Public Policy Institute of California; Volume 8, Number 4; May 2007.

³ *Closing the Health Workforce Gap in California: The Education Imperative*, The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2007, http://www.collegecampaign.org/assets/docs/hcwfs/cco_alliedhealth_report_10-30-07_final.pdf.

⁴ California Teachers Association, <http://www.cta.org/issues/other/Teacher+Shortage.htm>.

⁵ California School-Age Consortium.

⁶ The Career Ladders Project.

⁷ “Baby Boomers Envision Retirement II - Key Findings,” AARP, May 2004: http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/econ/boomers_envision_1.pdf.

⁸ “After Graduation Where Do Students Go?” op-ed by Dr. Diane Siri, Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools, *The Mid-County Post*, Volume XVII, Issue 12, June 13, 2006 - June 26, 2006: <http://www.mcpost.com/article.php?id=242>

⁹ Gruber and Pereira Associates.

¹⁰ “Afterschool: A Powerful Path to Teacher Recruitment and Retention” Afterschool Alliance Issue Brief, July 2007: http://www.afterschoollalliance.org/issue_briefs/issue_teach_recruit_28.pdf.