

The Collaborative for Building After School Systems: Strengthening the After-School Workforce

INITIATIVE FIVE

GOAL:

To insure that the after-school workforce has the capacity and capability needed to deliver high-quality services to all children and youth who want and need them.

RATIONALE:

Although after-school is one of the fastest growing educational sectors in many cities, most citywide systems do not have comprehensive strategies in place to recruit, train and support a qualified and diverse workforce. Publicly funded programs spend the greatest proportion of their funding on staff salaries, but they receive limited public funding for staff development.

After-school systems must have effective strategies to insure that programs can hire a sufficient supply of qualified staff at all levels – volunteers, front line staff, site coordinators, and organization leadership. This is important because research demonstrates that positive staff-child relationships are a primary factor in achieving the best possible outcomes for children and adolescents. The after-school workforce employs staff of all ages with varying levels of work experience and education, from different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. These primarily part-time workers need sufficient training on the skills required to work effectively with children and youth.

STRATEGY:

As there are already several projects underway that focus on workforce development, CBASS will begin by reviewing efforts from the field in the following areas:

- Finding ways to increase the salary and benefits of after-school staff
- Developing training to achieve desired youth outcomes
- Developing evaluation strategies which demonstrate the impact of trainings
- Establishing core competencies for the after-school workforce

CBASS partners will contribute to the work underway in the field by piloting staffing practices in their cities that will:

- Increase the diversity of after-school leadership
- Retain graduates of after-school programs in the after-school workforce
- Utilize CBASS partner-created professional development models which train across all after-school staff levels, from entry level to leadership

Partners will then quantify the costs associated with these efforts, and formulate strategies to encourage public investment in similar efforts.