

American Student Assistance Awards More Than \$10 Million in Grants to Nonprofit Organizations Focused on Preparing Today's Youth for Postsecondary Education and Career Success

BOSTON, April 12, 2023 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Based on a recent study, [less than half](#) of respondents who identified as members of Generation Z said they had enough information to decide what post-high school pathway was best for them. To better prepare young people to make informed decisions about post-high school education and career pathways, American Student Assistance® (ASA), a national nonprofit changing the way kids learn about careers and navigate a path to postsecondary education and career success, has announced \$10.1 million in grants to several organizations nationwide focused on increasing access to meaningful career exploration and work-based learning opportunities both in school and beyond the classroom, as well as diverse, viable post-high school pathways including non-degree options.

"Sadly, many young people today are inadequately prepared to make informed, confident decisions about what they want to do after high school," said Julie Lammers, Senior Vice President, Advocacy and Corporate Social Responsibility, ASA. "Through our partnerships with these innovative, mission-aligned organizations, we're looking to increase opportunity for young people to explore their interests through real-world career experiences, build skills to be workforce ready, and have the tools necessary to craft a well-informed postsecondary plan based on passions and ultimate career goals."

The grantees include the following forward-looking nonprofit organizations:

- Big Picture Learning (BPL), which will leverage its \$1.5 million funding over a three-year period to scale BPL's ImBlaze and B-Unbound programs, which give students access to informational interviews, shadow days, internships, and mentorships that are integrated within their educational experience both in and out of school.
- [The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation](#) has been awarded a \$1.5 million grant over three years. The U.S. Chamber Foundation grant will fund the launch of the pilot phase of the Employer Provided Innovation Challenges (EPIC) initiative, an online platform that brings high school and postsecondary learners and incumbent workers together to create solutions to real-world, employer-led challenges. The challenges will be provided by regional and national partners, including large corporations, small and medium enterprises, governmental agencies and municipalities, and non-profit organizations.
- Jobs for the Future, which will leverage its one-year \$1.5 million grant to continue its work on shifting the national narrative on post-secondary pathways. Through a combination of policy work, thought leadership efforts, and employer engagement, JFF and ASA aim to measurably shift confidence in learners seeking agency in their decision-making around education and career options.
- NAF, which has been awarded an \$800,000 grant over two years, will design and pilot an Outcomes-Driven Work-Based Learning Framework to provide educators, school district leaders, and employers with an assessment to determine the success of any work-based learning activity.
- The Center for Black Educator Development, which will leverage its \$400,000 two-year grant to scale access to summer and year-round apprenticeships and in-classroom teaching experiences, beginning in high school, for students interested in pursuing careers in education with the goal of increasing the number of Black educators in Philadelphia and Detroit.
- Apprentice Learning, which will leverage its \$300,000 two-year grant to fund a middle school work-based learning pilot in an urban school district, in collaboration with school leaders, business leaders, and youth serving organizations. Apprentice Learning partners with more than 60 retail, corporate, and other local business partners in Boston to create workplace-based career opportunities for middle grade students as an integral part of the school day in select Boston Public Schools.
- Chica project, which will leverage its three-year \$300,000 grant to close the opportunity divide for Latinx and female-identifying youth of color by providing peer-to-peer mentorships. With this funding, the organization will also expand learning opportunities for young people through internships and fellowships, enhancing a peer leader pipeline and delivering career readiness curriculum, both in and out of school settings.
- Flare Education, which will use its three-year \$300,000 grant to create high-quality professional training, paid workforce opportunities, and career development for high school students to help break the cycle of poverty and systemic racism.
- The Rennie Center, which will leverage its \$290,000 funding to develop student-led research projects designed to empower groups of students or "student Changemakers" to identify needs in their

communities and advocate for change, build, and hone advocacy skills.

- America Succeeds, which will leverage its \$250,000 funding to establish an industry-backed rubric for measuring durable skills and assessing student preparedness for employment. As part of this initiative, America Succeeds and CompTIA have committed to bringing employers from a variety of industries together to define what an individual – upon entering the workforce – should be able to know and do relative to durable skills.

About American Student Assistance® (ASA)

American Student Assistance® (ASA) is a national nonprofit changing the way kids learn about careers and navigate a path to postsecondary education and career success. ASA believes all students should have equitable access to career readiness learning, starting in middle school, so they will be equipped to make informed, confident decisions about their futures. ASA fulfills its mission by providing free digital-first experiences, including Futurescape® and Next Voice™, directly to millions of students, and through impact investing and philanthropic support for educators, intermediaries, and others. To learn more about ASA, visit www.asa.org/about-asa.

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