



AFTER  
SCHOOL matters®

# Strengthening Our Foundation and Our Future

Lessons Learned from After School Matters Summer 2023

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## Overview of the Report

Teens, instructors, and staff have been forced to adapt in many ways over the last several years because of the pandemic and its aftermath. Despite this upheaval, the After School Matters (ASM) community has emerged stronger than ever. Instructors have risen to the occasion time and time again to create safe spaces where teens experience incredible personal growth, build strong bonds, and develop their passions and skills. This success is due in part to ASM's dedication to learning from our teens and refining our programs and services to best support their needs. Heading into Summer 2023, ASM engaged in this reflection cycle once again.

Based on data and insights obtained from our teens, instructors, and staff, a key priority that emerged for Summer 2023 was the need to **focus on strengthening our foundations while also thinking ahead to the future**. Some examples of how we prioritized this goal include:

- **Providing refresher trainings** to all instructors and staff to reground our practices in positive youth development principles and ensure everyone had the foundational knowledge to provide high-quality and engaging programs post-pandemic.
- **Expanding our responsive programming options** (e.g., more programs running on shorter time frames to accommodate busy schedules, more programs focused on direct pathways to employment, continuing to offer some remote programs).
- **Cultivating and deepening partnerships** with agencies and organizations across the city (e.g., partnering with CPS on programs for incoming freshmen, and expanding mental health support through our partnership with Adler University).
- **Developing new tools and communication strategies** to streamline the enrollment process and help instructors track and support teen engagement.

As you will see in this report, **instructors designed and fostered engaging, supportive, and safe learning environments** where more than 10,000 teens across the city were able to discover their passions, develop new skills, build deep connections, and find a place where they belong. Additionally, **our findings suggest that the strategies ASM instructors and staff implemented ahead of and during Summer 2023, had a positive impact**. Teens' attendance and engagement improved significantly as did their feelings of safety and belonging. Instructors also felt more supported and prepared compared to prior summers. The improvements are important since these elements are foundational for creating high-quality programs where youth can learn and thrive. These findings and others documented in the report are informing our continuous efforts to adapt and enhance our programs and supports for teens, instructors, and communities.

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**Below is an outline of the report. We hope you enjoy checking it out!**

1. [Overview of Summer 2023 Programs \(p. 3\)](#)

2. [Findings & Insights From:](#)

- [Teens \(p. 10\)](#)
- [Instructors \(p. 17\)](#)
- [Parents/Guardians \(p. 21\)](#)

3. [Key Takeaways \(p. 22\)](#)

## Introduction to ASM

After School Matters (ASM) is a nonprofit organization that provides after-school and summer opportunities to Chicago high school teens to explore their passions and develop their talents, while gaining critical skills for work, college, and beyond.

ASM programs are project-based, led by industry experts, and provide a pathway to progress in skills development and independence.

Teens earn a stipend while participating in programs in the arts, communications and leadership, sports, and STEM. Over the span of nearly three decades, ASM has impacted more than 400,000 teens throughout the city of Chicago.



## How ASM Achieves Their Mission

**Safe Space + Connections to Caring Adults + Teen-Centered, Project-Based Programming + Incentives to Participate =**



After School Matters believes that all young people deserve to dream big, discover their potential, and find a path to a successful future in safe and supportive environments.

## Scale & Reach

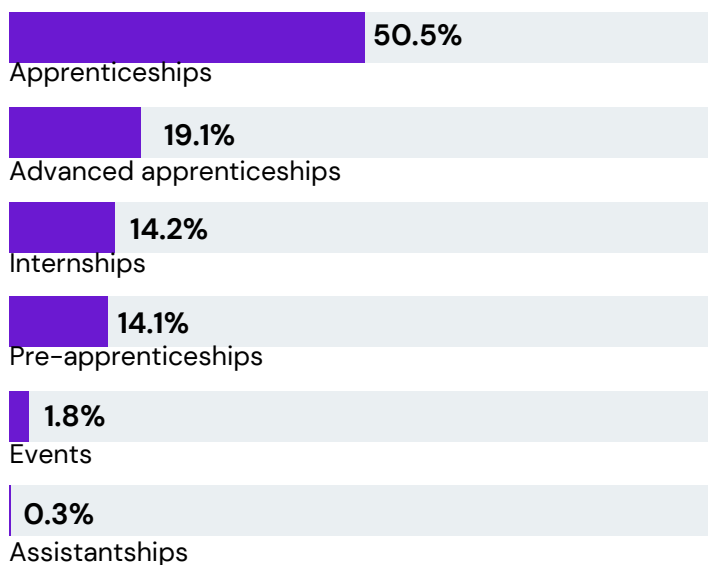
During the Summer of 2023, ASM hosted 674 programs that provided nearly 11,000 opportunities to over 10,000 unique teens in Chicago. To provide these opportunities, ASM employed upwards of 750 instructors and partnered with more than 100 community-based organizations to host programs at 263 sites within 64 of Chicago's 77 community areas.



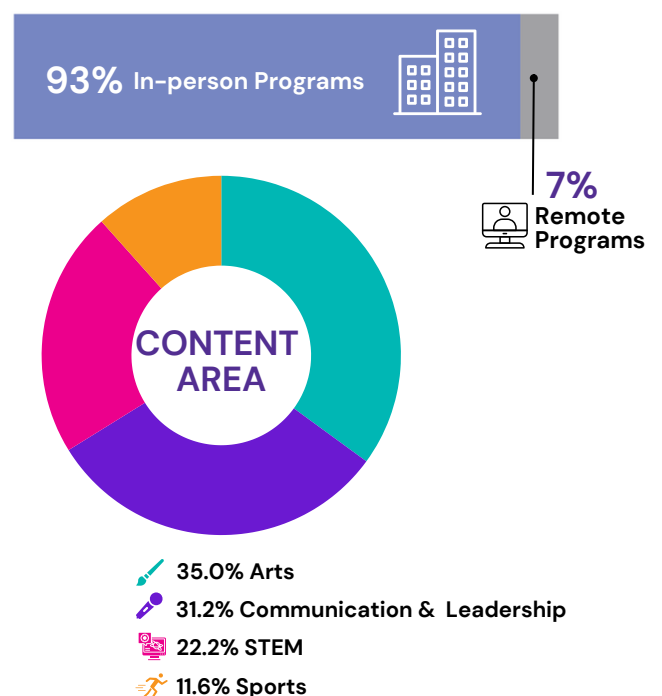
## Types of Opportunities

ASM offered a wide range of programming across different content areas and modes of delivery to meet teens' needs and varying interests. ASM's program model is also scaffolded to accommodate differences in teens' incoming experience and skill level. These offerings include pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, advanced apprenticeships, internships, and assistantships.

### PROGRAM MODEL



### MODE OF DELIVERY

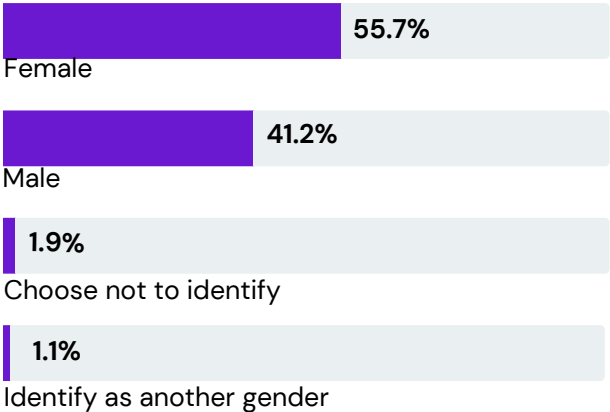




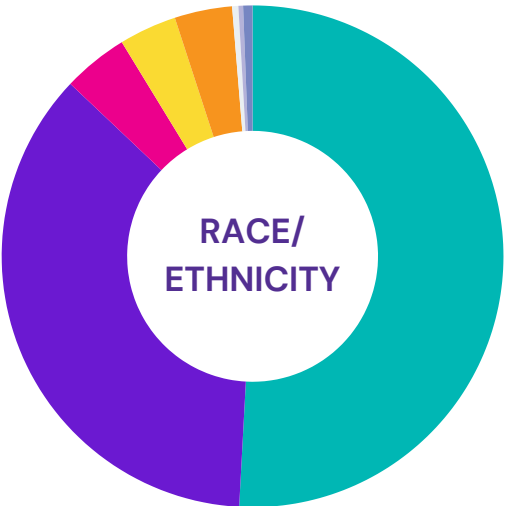
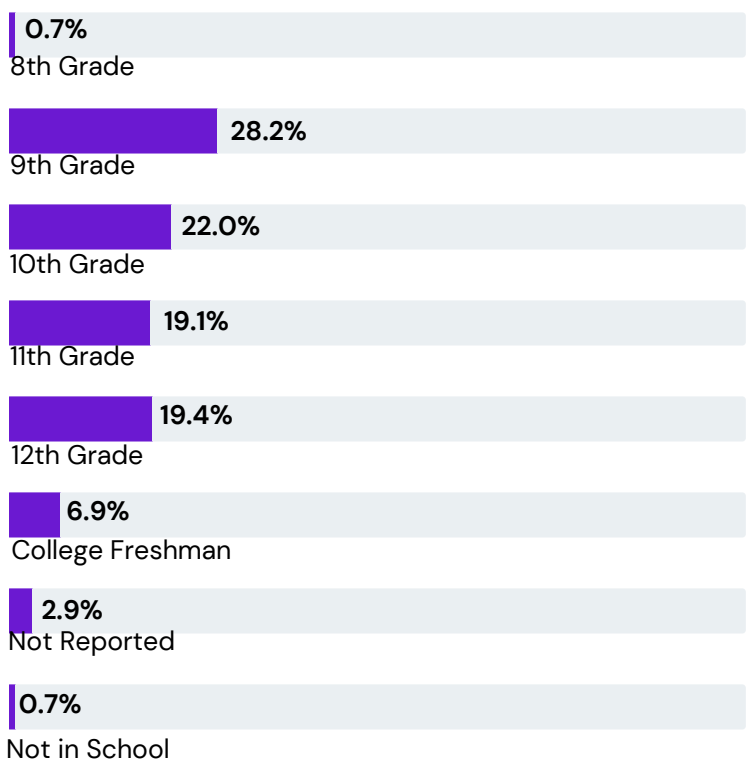
# Who ASM Serves

ASM engages a diverse population of youth between 13 – 23 years of age from across the city of Chicago. More than 95% of teens identified as youth of color and a little over half identified as female. Notably, an increasing proportion of ASM teens are identifying as another gender or choosing not to identify their gender, mirroring recent national trends.

## GENDER IDENTITY



## GRADE LEVEL



- 50.7% Black/African American
- 36.1% Latinx/Hispanic
- 4.2% Asian
- 3.7% White
- 3.7% Multiracial
- 0.4% Middle Eastern/North African
- 0.3% American Indian/Alaskan Native
- 0.6% Not Reported

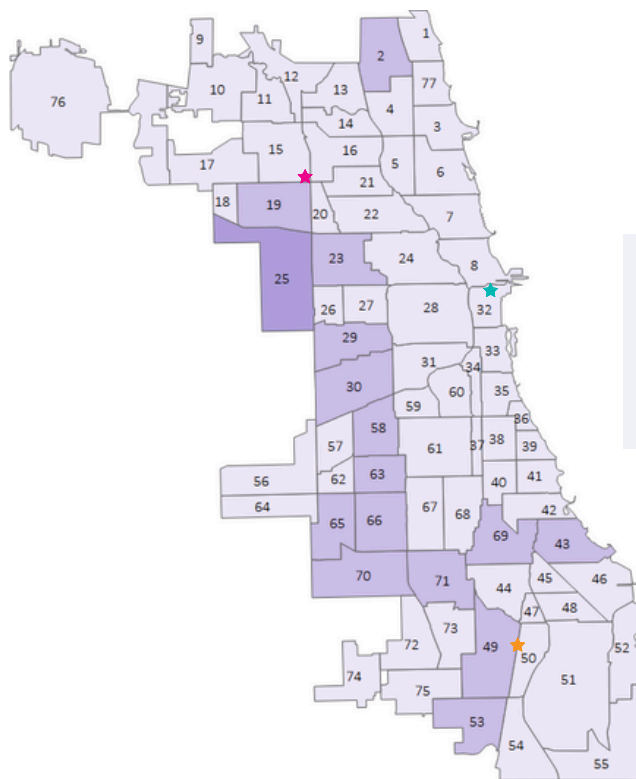
## Where Teens Live and Attend Programs

Teen participants came from all 77 of Chicago's community areas to attend ASM programming.

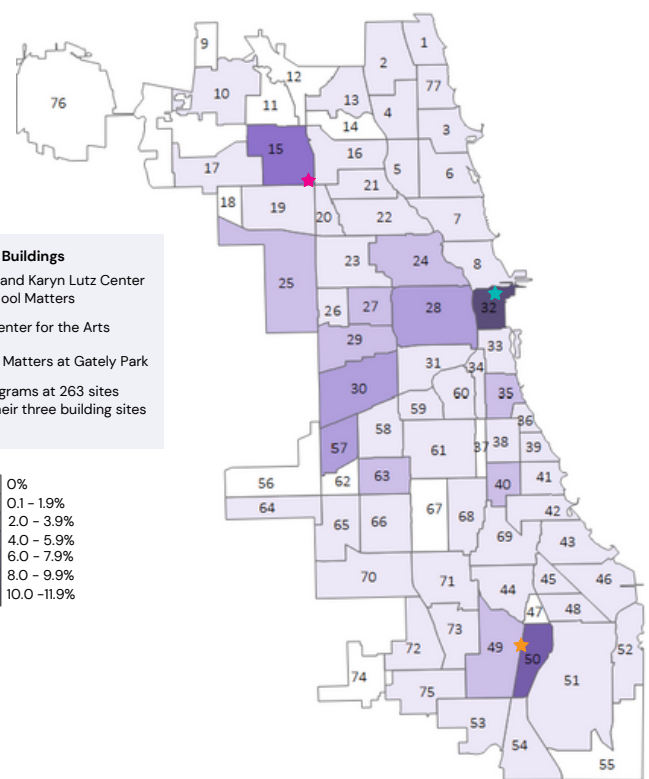
While participants came from all over the city, the top five community areas where the largest proportion of teens **lived** were Austin (4.7%), South Lawndale (3.6%), Roseland (3.4%), Chicago Lawn (3.1%), and South Shore (3.0%). As illustrated in the map below, there is generally a higher concentration of ASM participants who live on the south and west sides of Chicago.

In comparison, the top five community areas where the most teens **attended programs** were the Loop, Pullman, Portage Park, Archer Heights, and Near West Side. Of note, 9 in 10 teens traveled outside of their community area to attend in-person programs.

Percent of ASM Teens Residing in Each Community Area



Percent of ASM Teens Participating in Programs in Each Community Area



**ASM Buildings**

- ★ The Michael and Karyn Lutz Center for After School Matters
- ★ Gallery 37 Center for the Arts
- ★ After School Matters at Gately Park
- ASM ran programs at 263 sites outside of their three building sites

0%  
0.1 - 1.9%  
2.0 - 3.9%  
4.0 - 5.9%  
6.0 - 7.9%  
8.0 - 9.9%  
10.0 - 11.9%

### Chicago Community Area Numbers

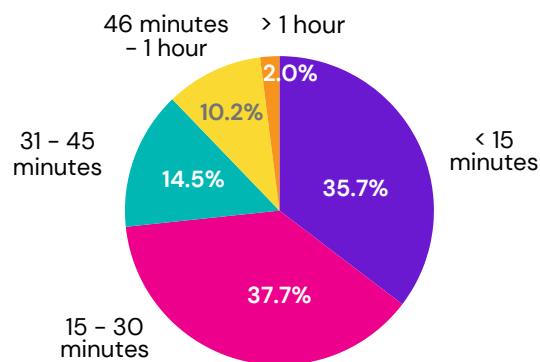
1 Rogers Park	14 Albany Park	27 East Garfield Park	40 Washington Park	53 West Pullman	66 Chicago Lawn
2 West Ridge	15 Portage Park	28 Near West Side	41 Hyde Park	54 Riverdale	67 West Englewood
3 Uptown	16 Irving Park	29 North Lawndale	42 Woodlawn	55 Hegewisch	68 Englewood
4 Lincoln Square	17 Dunning	30 South Lawndale	43 South Shore	56 Garfield Ridge	69 Greater Grand Crossing
5 North Center	18 Montclare	31 Lower West Side	44 Chatham	57 Archer Heights	70 Ashburn
6 Lake View	19 Belmont Cragin	32 Loop	45 Avalon Park	58 Brighton Park	71 Auburn Gresham
7 Lincoln Park	20 Hermosa	33 Near South Side	46 South Chicago	59 McKinley Park	72 Beverly
8 Near North Side	21 Avondale	34 Armour Square	47 Burnside	60 Bridgeport	73 Washington Heights
9 Edison Park	22 Logan Square	35 Douglas	48 Calumet Heights	61 New City	74 Mount Greenwood
10 Norwood Park	23 Humboldt Park	36 Oakland	49 Roseland	62 West Elsdon	75 Morgan Park
11 Jefferson Park	24 West Town	37 Fuller Park	50 Pullman	63 Gage Park	76 O'Hare
12 Forest Glen	25 Austin	38 Grand Boulevard	51 South Deering	64 Clearing	77 Edgewater
13 North Park	26 West Garfield Park	39 Kenwood	52 East Side	65 West Lawn	

## Distance Traveled and Types of Transportation Used

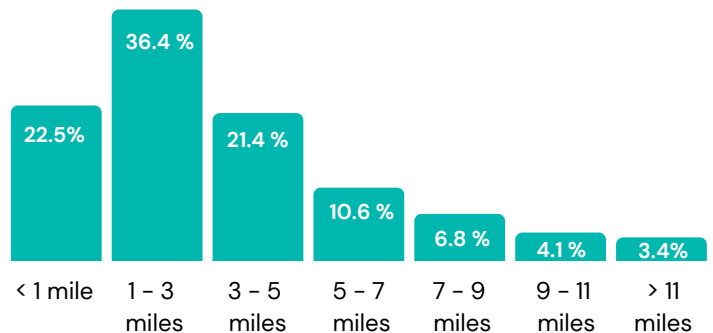
The distance and amount of time teens spent traveling to programs varied greatly.

The majority of teens (73%) reported spending 30 minutes or less traveling to their programs. Examining the distance between teens' residences and program locations, more than half of teens traveled less than 3 miles to attend summer programs, though some teens traveled more than 20 miles.

**Time Spent Traveling One-Way to Programs**



**Distance Traveled One-Way to Programs**



“This was a hands-on opportunity to learn about urban farming/agriculture, hydroponics, growing food to be distributed to the local community, etc. and I didn't want to pass up the opportunity just because it was a far commute. Environmental sciences and urban planning is something I'm really interested in, and this opportunity aligned with my goals, so I went with it.”

— ASM Teen Participant

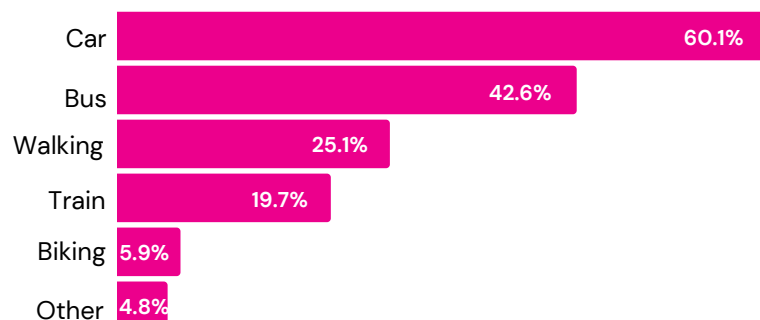
### Top Reasons Teens Traveled 45 minutes or More:

- Teens were interested in the specific program, the program content, or the location
- The program offered them a spot (e.g., first offer or only offer)
- The program felt like a safe, welcoming, or familiar space (e.g., knew the instructor, other teens, or location)
- They could explore new neighborhoods and/or get more experience traveling

While the most common way teens traveled to programs was via car, nearly 1 in 2 teens used public transit at least some of the time.

Analyses also revealed that teens who spent more time traveling were more likely to take public transit (e.g., train, bus). In contrast, those who spent less time traveling were more likely to drive, walk, or bike.

**Types of Transportation Used by Teens**



## Unique Program Opportunities

In Summer 2023, ASM partnered with amazing instructors as well as local and national organizations to provide unique program opportunities to young people. A few examples are highlighted below.

### Bridging Positive Youth Development and Academics

- For the third year, ASM partnered with the Chicago Housing Authority to provide 14 Learn and Earn: Career Connection programs to 594 teen residents enrolled in the first years of high school. These innovative programs merge the benefits of personalized e-learning, direct academic instruction, career-centered education, and youth development principles.
- Chicago Public Schools and ASM launched a new partnership to serve 1,500 incoming 9th graders in CPS's Freshman Connection programs at 35 schools. In this unique collaboration, ASM trained 18–24-year-old CPS alumni who served as Freshman Connection Liaisons to support schools throughout the summer.



### Offering Direct Pathways to Employment

ASM partnered with instructors and CBOs across the city to increase the number of programs designed to help teens develop skills that lead directly to employment. Some examples include programs focused on welding, cosmetology, barbering, and [emergency medical response](#).

### Creating Art for National Audiences

- For the third year, ASM teens partnered with Lollapalooza to create art pieces for the world-renowned music festival and learn firsthand about the extensive planning and effort required to organize a music festival.
- Teens in ASM's Advanced Painting program had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to [partner with NASCAR](#) to create a 200-foot mural which was on public display at NASCAR's Chicago Street Race.





## Findings and Insights from Summer 2023

Each session, ASM collects administrative data, surveys, and observational feedback to understand the experiences of teens, instructors, and parents/guardians, ensuring we continue to provide safe, welcoming spaces where teens can gain skills, discover their passions, and develop strong relationships with their peers and instructors.

As part of ASM's continuous quality improvement process, we also examine how experiences may have changed over time and what possible challenges may have arisen for teens and instructors.

In Summer 2023, 4,598 teens, 189 instructors, and 1,290 parents and guardians shared their feedback via end-of-session surveys. **Keep reading to find out what we learned!**

“ The most important thing I learned in my program this summer was that the community needs a lot of help from the youth. Programs like these give the community hope that the future holds many opportunities. ”

— ASM Teen Participant



“ I've been in this program since freshman year of high school and I've enjoyed each session. There was always someone new in each session. I was able to bring some friends into it. I was able to make new friends as well. I've been able to better my skills as well as challenge myself. It also challenged my time management, which is a very useful skill. I learned how to balance a job and school, making time for both. ”

— ASM Teen Participant

## Teen Experiences: Engagement & Satisfaction

### ASM programs provided teens with a fun, challenging, and engaging experience over the summer.

Not only were attendance rates high (**91%**), but most teens shared they had fun, felt challenged, and explored things that interested them.

The overwhelming majority of teens also reported that they were proud of and satisfied with their experience in Summer 2023, sharing that they would like to participate again and they would recommend ASM to a friend.



**97%** of teens were satisfied with their program



**90%** of teens reported their program gave them something fun to do



**88%** of teens were proud of what they accomplished



**87%** of teens reported they had the opportunity to explore their own interests



**89%** of teens said their program challenged them to try new things



**91%** of teens attended their program on a daily basis



## Teen Experiences: Belonging, Hopefulness, & Safety

**The vast majority of teens felt their programs provided a safe environment to develop meaningful relationships and connections.**

Nearly **9 in 10** teens reported feeling safe, connected to their instructors and peers, that they belonged in their program, and were more hopeful about their future after participating in ASM.

Moreover, **8 in 10** teens reported their program environment was a warm, open space where they could develop friendships, strengthen relationships, and be themselves. Click [here](#) to learn more about how ASM works to foster ecosystems of belonging in our teaching and learning communities.

“Everyday when I came in, I felt welcomed to share my creativity and felt more than welcomed to share my true self and was able to work in a comfortable environment.”  
— ASM Teen Participant



**92%** of teens felt more hopeful about their future after participating in their program



**80%** of teens reported their program provided a safe space to be their true self



**87%** of teens felt connected to the peers and instructors in their program



**90%** of teens reported feeling safe in their program



**88%** of teens felt a sense of belonging in their program



**80%** of teens reported their program helped them strengthen or build new friendships

“It really gave me a safe space to be open and express myself and be part of something beyond myself. As a young person, I don't really have as [many] opportunities to go out to protest and express how I feel about laws and such, but this gives me that opportunity and I feel very proud of that. This program was also a step for me to combat my social anxiety and help me be more open to others and I'm grateful for that.”  
— ASM Teen Participant

## Teen Experiences: Skills Development

### Teens developed skills that will prepare them for college, work, and beyond.

**More than 8 in 10** teens reported strengthening or gaining confidence in their skills and abilities. Additionally, survey feedback indicates that teens gained important 21st-century skills (e.g., collaboration, communication, social awareness) with **82%** of teens reporting they have these skills after participating compared to **62%** of teens before their program started.

The majority of teens also shared that participating in ASM supported their college and career readiness by increasing their motivation to graduate high school and exposing them to new education and career pathways.

“This program made me excited every day and allowed me to gain so much more confidence in my social skills and musical abilities. A personal highlight was going to the recording studio as a group and being able to work together, chat, and make our music come to life.”

— ASM Teen Participant



**90%** of teens reported improving or gaining new skills



**84%** of teens reported gaining confidence in their skills and abilities



**72%** of teens reported their program showed them new college/career pathways

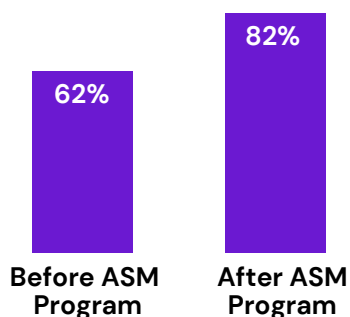


**70%** of teens reported their program made them more determined to graduate high school



**70%** of teens reported their program made them more interested in pursuing a career in an area their program covered

### 21st Century Skills



“I’ve been in ASM for about four years. It’s been impactful in my life throughout each year. I’ve received help from past staff members... they’ve guided me through issues and now I’ve grown and became an assistant. I learned new skills. I discovered that I want to become an art teacher, which is going to be my career in college. This program helped me to see what I want to pursue in the future.”

— ASM Teen Participant



## Teen Experiences: Instructor Preparation & Support

**ASM instructors provided the support and structure teens needed to be successful in programs.**

Nearly **9 in 10** teens felt strongly that their instructors were prepared for programming, which included starting on time, setting clear learning goals, and handling any problems that arose.

Similarly, **86%** of teens agreed their instructors were supportive, e.g., instructors treated them with respect, showed concern for their well-being, and provided feedback on their work.

“The best thing about my instructor is that she makes sure everyone is comfortable in what they do no matter what. She listens to our problems and gives us advice. She makes sure everyone is included.”

— ASM Teen Participant



**91%** of teens reported their instructors treated them with respect



**88%** of teens reported their instructors started their program on time



**88%** of teens reported their instructors monitored and provided feedback on their work



**87%** of teens reported their instructors set clear learning goals



**87%** of teens reported their instructors showed concern for their well-being

“[Our instructor] didn't sugar coat things and he treated us like young adults and not children, he held high expectations for us, and assisted us when we needed help. Thanks to his experience I have learned several new things about not just space but problem solving and craftsmanship.”

— ASM Teen Participant

## Importance of the Program Payment\*

Stipends and wages were an important source of income for teens and their families.

More than **1 in 2** teens and more than **2 in 5** parents and guardians reported that the program stipend was a very or extremely important source of financial support for their families. This is a 11 percentage point increase for teens (57% vs. 46%) and a six percentage point increase for parents/guardians (44% vs. 38%) from Summer 2022.

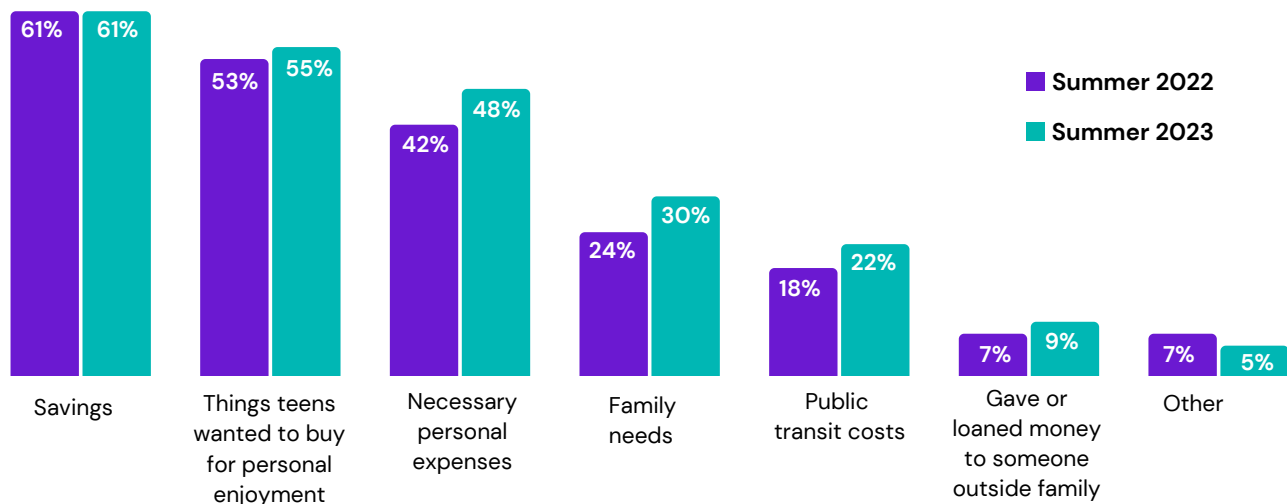
While teens reported they used their payment for a variety of purposes, nearly **1 in 3** teens said they used their stipend to contribute to family needs (e.g., rent, utilities, groceries) and **nearly 1 in 2** teens said they used their stipend to cover necessary personal expenses (e.g., school fees, work clothes). Importantly, more teens said they used their program payment to contribute to family needs and to pay for public transit costs compared to Summer 2022. Overall, these findings may reflect the increasing financial strain experienced by families in 2023 ([Gallup, May 2023](#))

**57%**  
of teens and  
**44%**  
of parents said  
the stipend was  
a very important  
source of income



“ [The stipend] allowed me to help my mom pay for things that she couldn't [pay for] on her own at the moment. ”  
— ASM Teen Participant

## Ways Teens Utilized Their Stipend/Wage in Summer 2022 and Summer 2023



\*In Summer 2022 and 2023, teens received either a stipend or an hourly wage, depending on their program model. The data here was collected from teens that received a stipend or a wage. In total, ASM provided \$9.3 million in teen stipends and wages during Summer 2023.

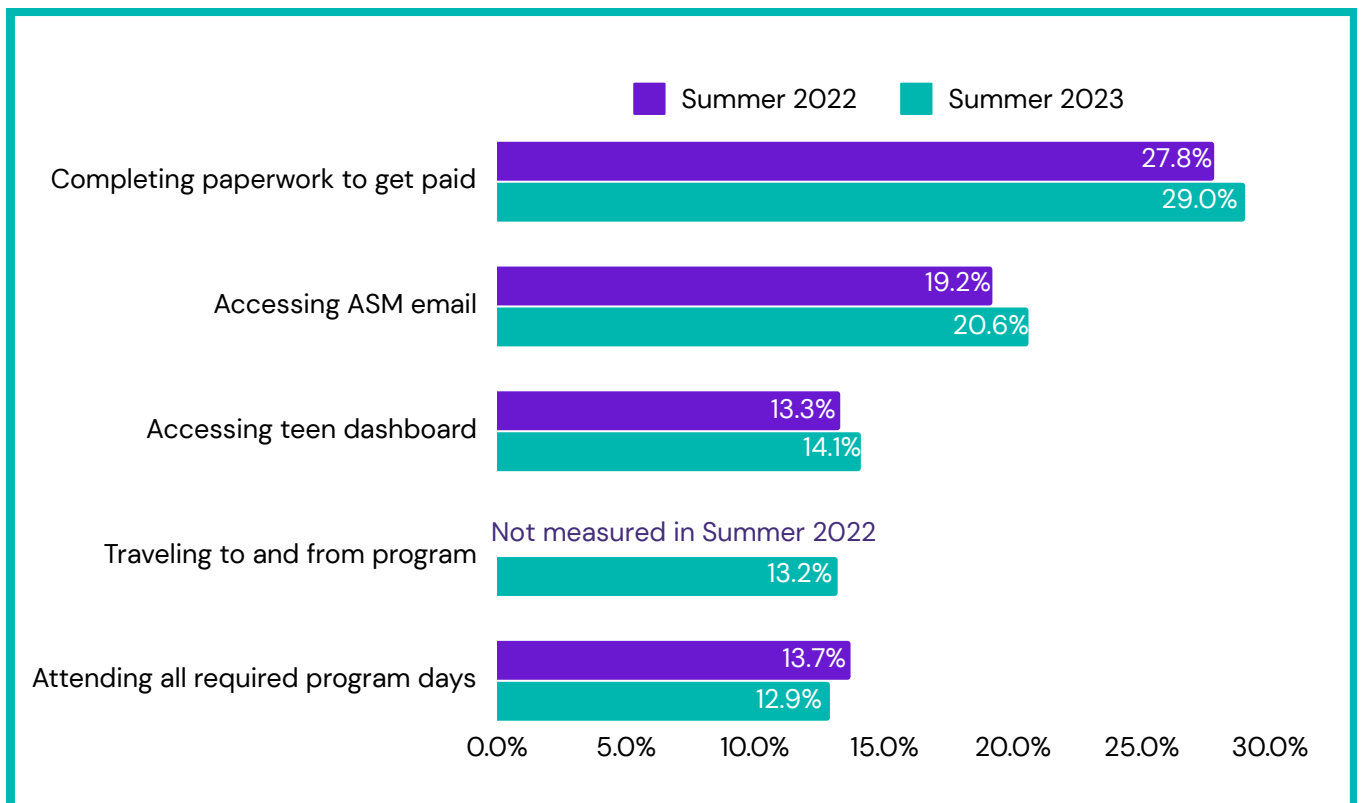
## Teen Experiences: Barriers to Participation

**The most common barriers teens experienced were completing payment paperwork and accessing technology.**

While 2 in 5 teens did not experience any challenges, others did report encountering one or more challenges during the summer session. The top challenges teens reported included completing payment paperwork, accessing technology (e.g., email, teen dashboard), traveling to and from programs, and attendance. The proportion of teens reporting challenges in these areas was similar to Summer 2022.

These challenges may be due to a number of factors. For example, starting in Summer 2022, ASM was able to increase wages for many teen participants through the city's One Summer Chicago initiative. While this was a wonderful opportunity, it did require eligible teens to complete additional paperwork for the first time (e.g., I9s and W4s). We also heard from teens and instructors that teens are still getting used to traveling across the city and juggling various responsibilities after the pandemic.

### Top 5 Challenges Teens Reported in Summer 2022 and Summer 2023



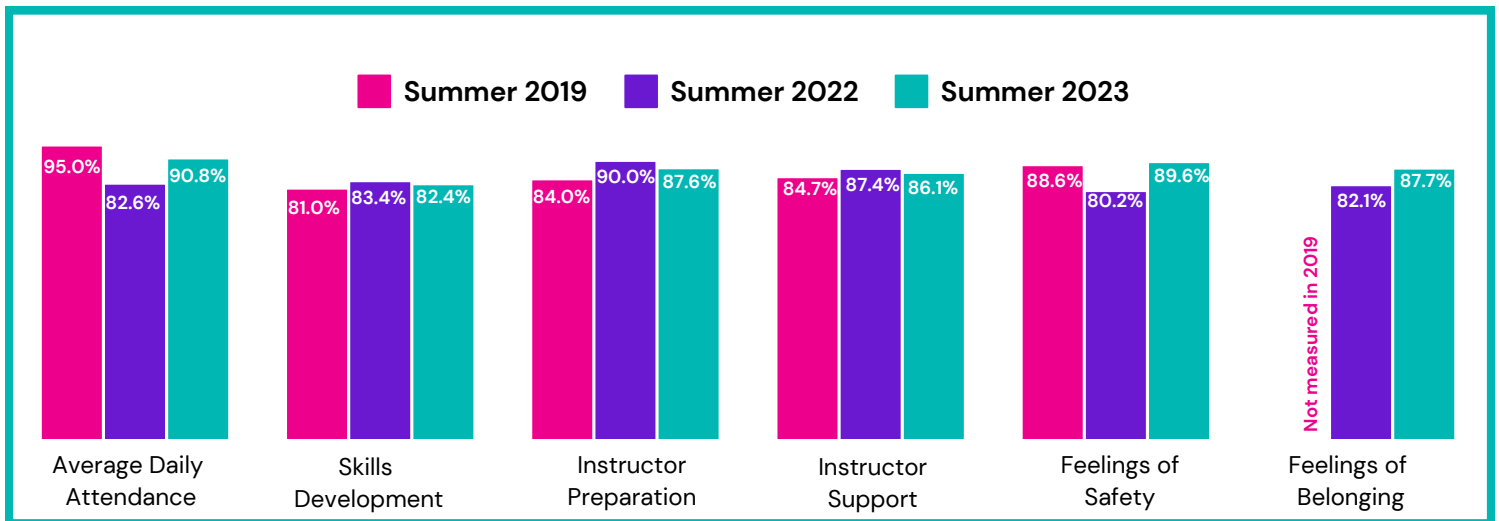
## Teen Experiences Across Summers

**Teens' program experiences were comparable and in some cases even better than prior summers, including pre-pandemic.**

Findings show that average daily attendance rates, as well as feelings of belonging and safety, increased in Summer 2023 compared to Summer 2022. This is especially important considering these were specific outcomes that were targeted for improvement by ASM staff and instructors in Summer 2023. Teens' reports of instructor preparation and support were also on par with Summer 2022 and even higher than pre-pandemic levels.

The only outcome that was lower than in Summer 2019 was average daily attendance. While attendance increased by 8 percentage points from the prior summer, this pattern echoes what schools are seeing post-pandemic. Chronic absenteeism in the schools improved from 2021 – 2022 to 2022 – 2023, but rates are still not back to pre-pandemic levels ([New York Times, March 2024](#)).

### Comparison of Attendance Rates and Key Outcomes Across Summers



“This summer has been phenomenal. The teens in my group developed a community of trust and sisterhood. They also exhibited strength and proficiency in various areas of leadership. I am super excited about their future endeavors. Truly a group of INNOVATIVE and DETERMINED individuals.”

— ASM Instructor



## Instructor Experiences: ASM Support and Resources

### Instructors felt connected to youth and supported by ASM.

The overwhelming majority of instructors (**9 in 10**) felt strong connections with the youth they served. More than **90%** of instructors reported feeling proud of what they achieved with their youth and finding joy in leading their programs.

Most instructors also felt connected to their ASM supervisor and that they had the support and resources needed from ASM program staff to run high-quality youth development programs. Instructors felt their program specialists (primary support person at ASM) were particularly good at resolving problems (82%), responding to calls/emails (82%), and having a sense of what was going on in their program (87%).

“This was my first summer teaching with ASM and I enjoyed it immensely. The teens were great, I was able to receive all necessary teaching resources/art materials and felt very supported by the ASM staff. I most appreciated the freedom I was provided in building my curriculum and classroom structure/norms. My program coordinator was very responsive to my questions and requests.”

— ASM Instructor



**98%** of instructors felt connected to their youth and **88%** felt connected to their ASM supervisor



**94%** of instructors were proud of what they accomplished with their youth



**92%** of instructors found joy leading their programs



**86%** of instructors were satisfied with their experience as an ASM instructor



**85%** of instructors had the supports and resources needed to be successful



**79%** of instructors felt supported by their ASM program specialist



## Instructor Experiences: Professional Development

### Instructors increased their professional skills and were satisfied with ASM's professional development offerings.

In Summer 2023, ASM instructors filled nearly 1,000 seats at ASM's professional development events. The vast majority of instructors reported the facilitators of these vents were well-prepared, helpful, and that trainings contained useful content for their work.

When asked what trainings they would like offered in the future, more than 2 in 5 instructors said they would like to see more offerings related to teen and instructor mental health. Other popular topics for future professional development include those focused on youth development best practices, building relationships, and having time to connect and collaborate with instructors within the same content area. ASM staff is currently using this and other information to plan training opportunities for next year.

“This is an essential training for people who work with young people. Being able to educate on mental illness makes me feel prepared to talk to teens and make them feel safe.

— ASM Instructor, Suicide Prevention Training



**93%** of instructors reported the facilitators were well-prepared and helpful



**90%** of instructors reported the training contained content they can use in their work



**88%** of instructors were satisfied with the quality of the trainings



**88%** of instructors reported increasing their professional skills

“Overall, it was a great life experience for me. I grew a lot personally and professionally. I enjoyed coming into work and embraced the challenges I encountered. I would like to think I rose to the occasion of being a program instructor in a great way.”

— ASM Instructor

## Instructor Experiences: Barriers & Challenges

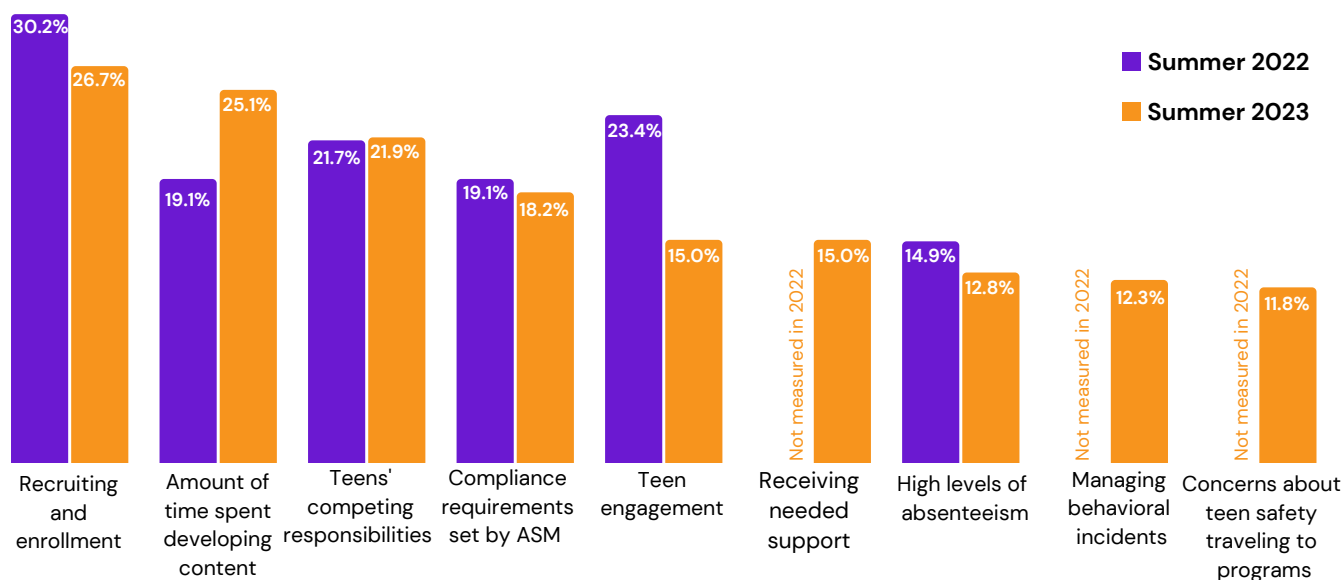
The most common barrier instructors experienced was recruiting and enrolling teen participants, though this declined from Summer 2022.

While most instructors felt they had successful summers, some also encountered one or more challenges during the Summer 2023 program session. Similar to Summer 2022, the most common challenges were related to recruiting/enrolling teens, developing content for programming, and teens' competing responsibilities or scheduling constraints.

However, like the improvements found for teen attendance rates, fewer instructors reported challenges with recruitment, enrollment, absenteeism, and especially teen engagement in Summer 2023 compared to Summer 2022.

The one area that proved more challenging in Summer 2023 was finding the time to create program content. It is possible this shift could reflect that instructors had more time to think about and update their content if they were spending less time recruiting and engaging young people, though more information is needed to fully understand this change. ASM is currently using this information to help improve supports for instructors, particularly in the elevated areas.

Types of Challenges Reported by Instructors



“Attendance has been really wild because students are trying to work multiple jobs and/or are overwhelmed by returning to full time, on-site work after COVID. This culture shift has been difficult to address and grow from.”

— ASM Instructor

## Instructor Feedback Across Summers

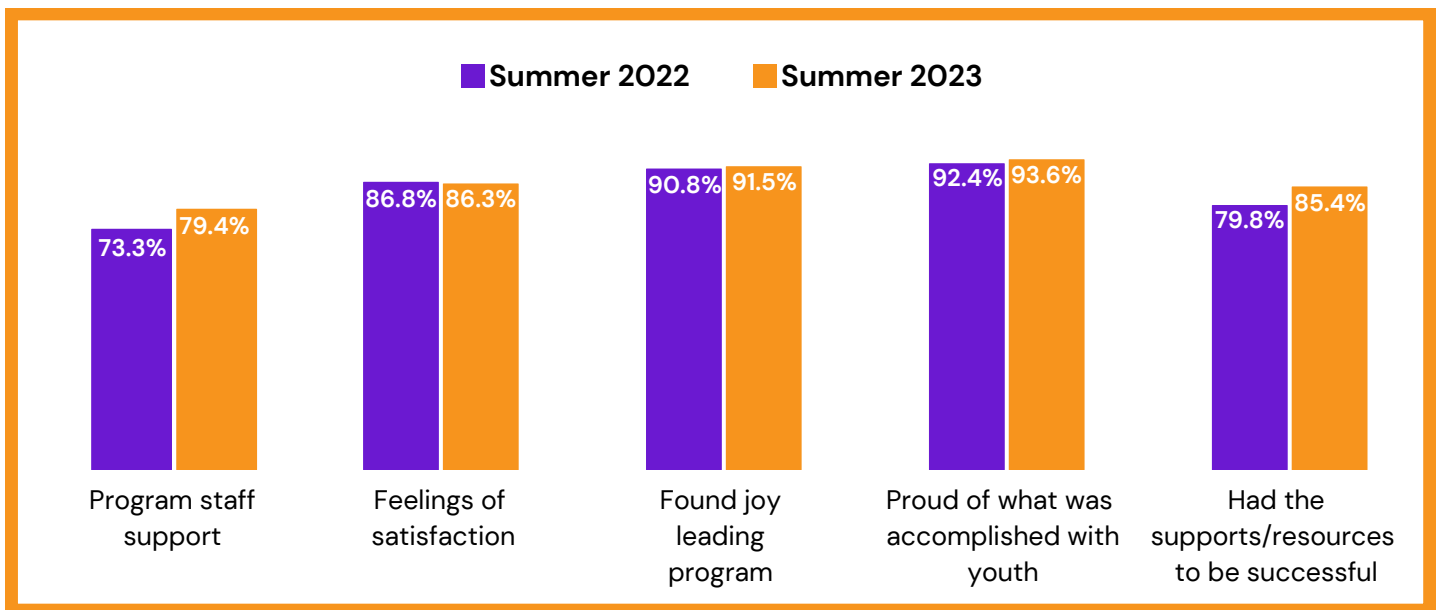
**Instructors felt more prepared and supported by ASM in Summer 2023 than in prior summers.**

When comparing instructors' feedback across the summer, findings suggest that instructors' experiences in Summer 2023 were comparable, and in some cases even more positive, than in Summer 2022.

The greatest areas of growth were instructors feeling supported by ASM staff and having the resources needed to be successful. It is possible that these shifts in sentiment were due in part to the strategic efforts ASM made to provide additional support to instructors and staff heading into Summer 2023 (e.g., refresher trainings on core youth development best practices).

“My experience as an instructor was seamless coming from New York City to teach. My program specialist provided me with all the support possible to ensure I was settled to teach in Chicago! I could not have done it without her support and guidance!”  
— ASM Instructor

Comparison of Instructor Survey Feedback Across Summers





## Parent and Guardian Experiences

**Parents and guardians were overwhelmingly satisfied with their teens' program experience.**

The vast majority of parents and guardians felt that ASM provided their teens with a fun, safe place to go where they gained new skills and friendships. Moreover, nearly all parents said they would have their teen participate again and recommend ASM to other families.

“ I appreciate programs such as ASM, for providing a safe place for teens to go during the summer months. ASM encourages kids to be professional, and responsible while learning a skill. The stipend has allowed my daughter to pay for school supplies and clothes for the upcoming school year. ”

— ASM Teen Parent/Guardian



**94%** of parents/guardians were satisfied with ASM



**92%** of parents/guardians reported their teen(s) enjoyed their experience



**85%** of parents/guardians reported their teen(s) gained new skills



**91%** of parents/guardians reported ASM provided a safe place for teen(s) to go



**79%** of parents/guardians reported their teen(s) developed new friendships or strengthened existing relationships

“ My teens were able to meet good people from different backgrounds and areas and learn and travel to other parts of the city. Thank you! ”

— ASM Teen Parent/Guardian

## Key Takeaways

Heading into Summer 2023, ASM continued to build upon our structures, systems, and teaching methods by leveraging feedback from teens and instructors to create new trainings, supports, and program opportunities.

Findings from this report suggest that strengthening our foundation in this way empowered instructors to create supportive environments where 10,000+ teens gained new experiences, deepened relationships, and developed skills that will set them up for future success.

### In particular, ASM learned:



**Teens developed a strong sense of belonging, connection, and hope for the future.** This is especially promising considering the heightened sense of isolation and loneliness many adolescents are experiencing. It also underscores the impact that high-quality youth programs can have on socio-emotional well-being.



ASM programs supported teens' college and career readiness by **strengthening their 21st-century and content area skills while exposing them to new career pathways.**



Teens and parents felt **ASM programs were safe spaces in the city where teens could learn and grow.**



**Most instructors felt connected to and inspired by their youth** and were **satisfied with the professional development and supports ASM provided**, setting them up to create impactful opportunities for youth.



**Stipends and wages enabled teens to participate in enriching experiences while earning money that served as a key source of income for many.** This is crucial at a time when financial strain remains high for families across the city.



ASM **improved in key priority areas** compared to previous summers. This included **growth in teen engagement, teens' feelings of belonging and safety, and instructors' feelings of support**, suggesting the strategies that ASM instructors and staff employed to grow in each of these areas had an impact.

ASM is already using these and other insights to **strengthen our foundations and future initiatives** in ways that will ensure teens continue to experience warm, engaging, and impactful programs they want to **come back to time and time again.**

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## Acknowledgements

### ASM Leadership

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Tony Diaz (Chief Program Officer)  
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