

# Staffing

## Where to Begin

Securing the right staff is one of the most critical factors in the success of any afterschool program. While there is no single formula for staffing, one of the most important early decisions is hiring a full-time Program Director. This individual should be brought on during the planning phase to help shape the program's structure and culture. Ideal candidates will have strong leadership, organizational, and interpersonal skills, along with experience in youth development or education.

Regardless of how your program is structured, it is essential to hire individuals who genuinely enjoy working with children and youth—particularly in informal, less structured learning environments. While academic support may be a component of your program, it should also serve as a space where students can relax, express themselves, and build positive relationships after a structured school day.

## Key Staffing Roles

### Program Director:

A leadership role requiring experience in program management, youth development, and strategic planning. This person sets the tone and direction of the program and oversees daily operations.

### Site Directors:

These individuals manage daily activities at program sites and can range from recent college graduates to experienced educators or retired teachers.

### Program Staff:

Typically part-time roles ideal for college or high school students, paraprofessionals, or individuals seeking flexible work schedules. These staff members support student engagement, facilitate activities, and build strong relationships with youth.

**An estimated 850,000 skilled professionals serve 10.2 million young people in afterschool programs each year.**

## Ideal Staff Qualities

- Passion for working with children and adolescents
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Strong communication and teamwork skills
- Patience and empathy
- Commitment to youth development and community engagement

## Staff Recruitment Strategies

To identify and attract qualified staff, consider recruiting from a variety of local and community-based sources:

- **Local Schools:** Paraprofessionals and educational associates often seek additional income opportunities.
- **Colleges and Universities:** Reach out to students in early childhood education, teaching, social work, or human services programs. Also explore federal work-study partnerships.
- **Community Job Fairs:** Participate in or host local job fairs to connect with potential hires.
- **Shift-Based Workplaces:** Employees from businesses with rotating shifts may be interested in part-time afternoon work.
- **Parents and Guardians:** Some may be interested in working with the program their children attend.
- **Current Volunteers:** Volunteers already familiar with your program may be a strong fit for paid roles.
- **Retired Educators:** Former teachers often bring deep experience and a desire to stay engaged in education.
- **Civic and Service Organizations:** Groups like Kiwanis, Lions Club, and Rotary often have members interested in youth-focused service.
- **Senior Volunteers:** Programs such as RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program), Foster Grandparents, and other 55+ initiatives can connect older adults with meaningful opportunities to support youth programs.