



November 2023

# OUT OF SCHOOL WORKS!

IN WYOMING

Wyoming communities and employers need a dynamic workforce, and we all have a role to play in cultivating that workforce.

## The Importance of Mentorship

### U.S. Chamber of Commerce

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce notes the importance of mentorship, specifically to interns: “Once your interns have been hired and you've learned about their personal and professional goals and ambitions, connect them with someone within your organization to mentor them. This gives them a personal relationship within the company and someone to learn and get feedback from. You don't need to necessarily pair them with upper-level employees. It may be more beneficial that they learn from entry- or junior-level employees who have come from a similar path and have similar professional goals. Pairing them with someone closer to their own age can also help your interns learn about company culture and form social connections.”<sup>1</sup>

#### Sources

1. *FrameWorks Institute*: [www.frameworksinstitute.org](http://www.frameworksinstitute.org)
2. *Afterschool Alliance*: [www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM)
3. *U.S. Chamber of Commerce*: *How to Create an Internship*

Leverage the power of out of school time to grow talent, increase competitive advantage and support working families.

## How can stronger community connections make a difference?

- During adolescence, we explore the world around us, mapping out the terrain so we can find our path to adulthood.
- This is a time of trial and error as we pursue new experiences and different ways of expressing ourselves.
- When young people have the opportunity to explore new terrains, they develop the skills they need to become contributing adults.<sup>2</sup>

## Out of school is opportunity.

- Afterschool and summer programs open a new world of opportunities to help young people prepare for the jobs of tomorrow.
- Young people gain hands-on experience and learn to communicate, collaborate, and lead.
- Businesses want to hire responsible problem solvers and team players, and out of school experiences develop these skills.
- Youth serving programs are locally-driven solutions that help children learn and grow, families balance work with home, and employers hire the workforce they need.

OST programs provide integral developmental supports that help young people:<sup>3</sup>



Improve work habits and grades.



Develop strong social skills and build healthy relationships.



Reduce risky behaviors such as tobacco, marijuana, and alcohol use.



**Out of school time experiences help us explore who we are and who we want to be and develop the skills we need to become contributing adults.**

## **Program Spotlight: Big Brothers Big Sisters and The Power of Mentoring**

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) supports Wyoming youth by mobilizing local volunteers as mentors. Purple Haze Iron Eyes has been matched with her Big, Elizabeth “Liz” Lightner, for five years.

Purple’s grandmother wanted Purple to have a Big Sister to help her gain self-confidence. She feels BBBS is a great way for her grandchildren to have positive mentors in their lives. Although it took time, Purple knows she can trust Liz.

Having a Big helps Purple have a level of consistency and stability that she may not otherwise have. When BBBS first met Purple, she was shy and just starting to express herself. Her grandmother wanted her to become more independent and confident. Fast forward five years later, Purple loves trying new things, playing outside with other kids, and confidently interacts with others.

Learn more at [bbbswyo.org](http://bbbswyo.org).

Working with community partners, afterschool and summer programs, employers are uniquely positioned to help young people practice skills like communication, critical thinking, problem solving and teamwork that in turn lead to healthier and more connected communities. The National League of Cities reports that they also help to decrease costs to employers and increase productivity when employees know their children have a high quality and safe places to go when they are not in school.

## **Contact us!**

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**Open the Afterschool Backpack!**

The Wyoming Afterschool Alliance (WYAA) connects people and programs to resources and professional development so that all young people can pursue their passions, practice skills and cultivate communities of belonging. Stimulating opportunities for youth today lead to a bright future for Wyoming and the world tomorrow.