



After-School All-Stars New Jersey

Program: Creative Spark: Introducing Arts Programming at ASAS NJ

Who we are

After-School All-Stars provides comprehensive after-school programs that keep children safe and help them succeed in school and life. Our vision is that our All-Stars be safe and healthy, graduate from high school and college, find careers they love, and give back to their communities

The program we are proposing

Creative Spark amplifies youth voices and expression through dynamic music and arts enrichment, providing scholars with hands-on creative experiences that bridge personal or community victories and challenges into artistic expression. Whether composing music, creating digital art, or engaging in spoken word, scholars transform real-life experiences into powerful works of art that foster confidence, collaboration, and resilience.

By exploring diverse forms of art scholars find their voices through artistic mediums that resonate with them. From blending rhythms in music production, to choreographing expressive dance, to crafting spoken word pieces, they shape narratives that reflect their lived experiences.

This initiative builds upon ASAS NJ's legacy of impactful enrichment, ensuring scholars see themselves as creators, advocates, and leaders. Through mentorship, industry exposure, and skill-building, Creative Spark provides structured, career-aligned opportunities that promote long-term success.

Addressing the lack of accessible creative programming, Creative Spark fills a critical gap, benefiting 100 Paterson, NJ scholars and their families annually. Through arts engagement, career exploration, and personal development, ASAS NJ ensures scholars have safe, empowering spaces to thrive.

What makes this a high-impact program

For many underserved youth, creative enrichment is more than an opportunity, it's essential. Creative Spark equips scholars with artistic tools to express themselves, process challenges and develop life-changing skills. Whether bullying, insecurity or community violence, scholars channel their experiences into music, dance, poetry, and visual storytelling, transforming hardships into empowerment and healing through art.

By embedding arts into after-school programming, ASAS NJ supports success and positive outcomes in engagement, creativity, confidence, career exposure, school attendance, behavior and personal and academic growth.

Participants discover new career pathways, deepen mentorship connections, and build leadership skills. Through industry collaboration and showcases, Creative Spark doesn't just expose scholars to the arts, it amplifies their voices, ensuring visibility, recognition, and confidence to shape their futures through artistic expression while enhancing critical thinking, emotional resilience, and career readiness, as proven by the power of ASAS NJ programs.

How we will make it happen

The \$100,000 grant will fund music and arts education, ensuring scholars access to expert-led enrichment that prepares them for success. Specifically, funds will support:

- *Instruction & Mentorship*: Hiring music producers, DJs, dancers, visual artists, spoken word performers, and instrument instructors to provide authentic learning experiences and career insights.
- *Music & Audio Production*: Providing industry standard digital audio equipment, and portable instruments for scholars' technical skill-building.
- *Performing Arts*: Providing materials and equipment for dance, spoken word, songwriting, and creative performance courses.
- *Visual & Digital Arts*: Providing supplies and software for artistic expression.
- *Showcases & Career Exposure*: Hosting live performances, exhibitions, and mentorship opportunities fostering confidence and industry connections.
- *Program Expansion*: Expanding scholar access to ASAS NJ enrichment through Creative Spark.

Every component strengthens academic, artistic, and professional growth, equipping scholars for lifelong success.

How we will measure success

Program success and outcomes will be measured using the following methods: attendance tracking, pre- and post-scholar surveys, assessments and reflections, program and instructor evaluations, school partner surveys and scholar-produced projects, portfolios and performances. Our goal is for 80% of scholars to improve creative skills, with measurable growth demonstrated through skills assessment and showcase participation.