



## Career Exploration Program Pilot Request-for-Application

### Funding available for teachers who implement ASA's 10-lesson Middle School Career Exploration Program in Fall 2021

#### OVERVIEW

American Student Assistance is focused on providing middle school students with opportunities to learn about their interests and how to make informed decisions about their future. In order to continue developing and supporting experiential school programming, ASA is seeking teachers who are interested in piloting a 10-lesson career exploration curriculum in their classrooms during fall 2021. During this pilot, ASA will implement a Train-the-Trainer model to provide initial trainings to educators, as well as opportunities for check-ins and connections with other teachers. This is a unique opportunity for educators to test out an engaging program and work in partnership with ASA to provide feedback and recommendations on lesson plans and activities. Both educator feedback and student outcomes will be used to support future ASA research and work.

Teachers who participate in the pilot will receive funding for their classrooms: \$500 for curriculum facilitation in one classroom and \$1,000 for facilitation in two or more classrooms.

The application window will close in August 2021 or once the cohort has been filled.

#### ABOUT THE CURRICULUM

The ASA Middle School Exploration Program is a ten-lesson curriculum for grades six through eight, in which students will enhance their understanding of the skills they have, the relationship between those skills and potential careers, and steps they can take to continue exploration of their possible futures. Students will be challenged to engage in self-discovery, in order to guide their exploration of education and career pathways. Students will finish this program with a better understanding of how to approach decisions regarding their future plans, their skill development, and their career preferences.

This curriculum is expected to be delivered once a week for ten consecutive weeks, twice a week for five weeks, or once a day for two weeks. ASA is open to other instructional timelines. Lessons are designed to be one hour in length, but educators can modify to fit content to a 45-minute block at minimum. Suggested student supports are included in each lesson. The program would fit best in an advisory block or social studies classroom, but can be used in most subject-specific classrooms. ASA will provide resources to teachers who would like to deliver the program to more than one class. In order to address the current educational landscape, lesson plans have been designed to support virtual, in-person, and hybrid instructional models, and this pilot can be run in any of these formats.

See below for a more detailed description of the three units in the ASA Middle School Exploration Program:

#### **Unit 1 (Lessons 1-4): Exploring Self**

Through a range of individual and group-based activities, students will explore their own skills, interests, values, and learning styles in relation to their classmates. By the end of the unit, each student will be able to confidently summarize their own strengths, passions, and attributes.

#### **Unit 2 (Lessons 5-7) Understanding Options: Career Exploration**

Now that students understand themselves, Unit 2 encourages them to envision their futures and introduces them to careers that align with their goals. Games, sorting activities, and presentations fuel the exploration process, helping students gain a clearer picture of the many professional possibilities available to them.

#### **Unit 3 (Lessons 8-10) Informing Future Decisions: Education Pathways**



Does every career require a college degree? Students will look at all the postsecondary education options available – including college – and discover how to prepare for next steps after high school. Every student will leave understanding their strengths, programs that fit their goals, and growth areas to pursue.

## PILOT LOGISTICS

Teachers involved in the Career Exploration Program Pilot will receive detailed lesson plans, written for virtual and in-classroom instructional models, as well as printed handbooks for all students participating in the program. Educators will be reimbursed \$200 for any necessary lesson supplies. All participating educators should be prepared to:

- Attend one initial training virtually & take a presurvey
- Deliver lessons once a week for ten weeks
- Provide feedback on lessons each week
- Participate in two conversations with ASA staff: once after Lesson five and one after Lesson 10
- Record one lesson in its entirety to send to the ASA team
- Send in photos of exemplar student work
- Complete a postsurvey

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Complete the application at <https://asaorg.force.com/grants>. You will need your school's tax ID number in order to create an account. When you get to the application, click "new user" and create an account, unless you have already created an account in the system.

Once you have created an account, log in and at the top left of the screen, under "Click to BEGIN an APPLICATION," click **Small Grant**. Answer the questions below:

1. For **Partner Profile**, answer: How and when would you provide this 10-lesson curriculum? Describe your role, classroom, subject area, and current school plan, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Why do you believe career exploration is important in middle school? How do you currently provide experiential learning opportunities for your students related to informing their future decisions?
3. Why is this specific curriculum pilot program and opportunity helpful for you as a professional?
4. What outcomes are you expecting to achieve for your students?
5. For amount requested, enter \$500 if you plan on facilitating the program with one classroom, and \$1,000 if you will facilitate the program to two or more classrooms.
6. Attach any other relevant information.

## SELECTION & LAUNCH TIMELINE

Application timeline and programming occur on a rolling basis.

- March to April 2021: Application window (note: this could close earlier if enough applicants are selected)
  - Applicants will be notified of their status within two weeks after submission
  - If selected for the next round, a 30-minute interview will be scheduled
  - Applicant will be notified of acceptance into this program within two weeks after the interview
- March to June 2021: ASA Train-the-Trainer Pilot Program Implementation
  - All 10 lessons should be delivered in this window
  - Lessons can be delivered virtually, in the classroom, or in a hybrid model format
- July to August 2021: Classroom funding provided

## QUESTIONS?



Please email Ashley Hemmy, Senior Programs & Curriculum Specialist, at [ahemmy@asa.org](mailto:ahemmy@asa.org).