

POWEROFUS

The Youth Fields Workforce

Findings from the National Power of Us Workforce Survey



More than 10,000 youth serving professionals and volunteers answered the call to explore, define, and elevate the youth fields workforce!

A ground-breaking study of a broad field, the Power of Us Workforce Survey provides comprehensive insights into the youth fields workforce, highlighting their different backgrounds, dedication to youth development, varied career paths, and their current experiences and needs in professional learning, well-being, and compensation.

The findings from the report reflect the responses of current paid staff in the youth fields workforce who responded to the survey.

Who is in the youth fields?

Adults who work with young people in strengths-based interest development and enrichment opportunities through community organizations, institutions, and agencies.



Career Pathways

The Power of Us Workforce Survey unveils a journey of purpose-driven passion in the youth fields, where early starts lead to lasting commitments and paths to leadership. Respondents who are drawn to and stay in the youth fields do so because they enjoy working with youth, find purpose in it, and have a personal connection to the communities, places, and experiences with the young people they support.



Respondents first joined the youth fields due to a sense of purpose.

62%

indicated the primary reason for choosing their first job in the youth fields was based on a sense of purpose (e.g., passion/interest, wanting to work with young people, plan to join the field).

What Respondents Value about Their Job



Colleagues

Working with people I like

34%



Altruism

Helping others

34%



Pay

Earning a good living to pay for the things I need

33%



Purpose

Connecting with the organization's mission

29%



Creativity

Developing new ideas, creating new things

27%



Professional Learning

Bringing varied experience and solid educational credentials to their jobs, respondents seek continued, diverse learning paths and supports. The Power of Us Workforce Survey highlights the importance of organizations providing staff with the time, space, and guidance for on-the-job training.



Postsecondary Education

A substantial level of postsecondary education among respondents, with varied alignment between their studies and current roles



Professional Learning Access

High rate of professional learning access within organizations



Demand for Learning

Demand for more diverse and convenient learning opportunities, especially among younger, not White, and early-career respondents



Desire for Support

Desire for support for learning including time off for training and better alignment of learning with job requirements

Most respondents participate in trainings, webinars, and conferences and have access to professional learning through their employer, but many experience a lack of access from other sources.

84%

have access to professional learning through their organization

34%

have access through the internet



Professional Well-Being

The Power of Us Workforce Survey reveals the mixed reality of youth workers' well-being. A majority of respondents report feeling valued at work, belong at their organization, and have the necessary resources to do their jobs. They also see themselves as part of a larger youth fields community. However, notable staff challenges include stress and burnout on the job.



87%

agreed or strongly agreed that they feel **valued** at work

89%

feel they **belong** at their organization

87%

agreed or strongly agreed that they **see themselves** as part of a larger youth fields community

Many respondents experience stress and burnout on the job. The need for less stress was particularly true for those who are older, are White, are full time, have leadership positions, and have sustained careers.

47%

strongly agreed or agreed that they feel **burned out** at work

38%

indicated "**less stress**" was a needed change to their job. This is second highest percentage a list of 20 improvements.



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Compensation

The Power of Us Workforce Survey elevates the importance of compensation and benefits to the workforce and for the recruitment and retention of qualified staff in the youth fields.

The Power of Us Workforce Survey uncovers the realities of pay and aspirations for more fair benefits in the youth fields.

Compensation is higher than childcare workers

Demand for improved pay and benefits

Most have access to basic employee benefits

What Respondents Would Change about their Job

69%

Better Pay and/or Benefits

38%

Less Stress

26%

More Support from Leadership

26%

More Advancement Opportunities

22%

More Opportunities for Collaboration

22%

Improved Work Environment



The Power of Us Workforce Survey is a national survey of the youth fields workforce, defined as paid staff and volunteers who work with youth beyond school hours, beyond the school year, and outside of classroom settings. Data collection began on February 22, 2022, and ended on March 31, 2023. Over 10,000 current and former youth fields staff and volunteers participated in the survey.

The data in the report come from 7,733 current paid staff in the youth fields workforce. The findings represent the characteristics and experiences of the staff who completed the Power of Us Workforce Survey. The results are from a national, cross-sector sample of the workforce and serve as a baseline to inform practice, policy, and future research.

We also examined responses for respondents not in leadership positions and respondents in part time positions. More detailed findings on respondents are available here: <https://air.org/project/power-us-workforce-survey>.

Photos Courtesy of the 50 State Afterschool Network.