



## **Development of the Academic Athletic Coach Staff Position General Overview for High Schools & School Districts**

### **Introduction**

The AthLife Foundation has an established national platform that works to ensure that deserving kids from our nation's most challenged, yet promising communities, can achieve in their future careers beyond sport. Through grant funding, training and industry leading resources, we help schools create a critical professional mentoring position in secondary education, called an **Academic Athletic Coach**.

The **Academic Athletic Coach** works year-round to create high impact programming, taps into a student's passion for their sport and athletics, drives academic achievement, and prepares kids for post high school success. The work is grounded in proven and tested Positive Youth Development through Sport approaches and best practices. Our mission is enhanced by regional and local community partners and champions.

### **Impact of an Academic Athletic Coach (AAC)**

Since 2010, the AthLife Foundation has assisted over 100 high schools across 15 states (+DC) create, train, support, and develop the professional **Academic Athletic Coach** staff position in various ways. The concept has had great success across the secondary education landscape for 25 years. On the higher education level, it has been in place for over 50+ years, as the academic athletic support and student-athlete development profession has canvassed the entire collegiate institutional landscape across all divisions to great benefit of the student-athletes served.

Equal parts mentor, advisor, and advocate, the AAC can be uniquely positioned as an asset to create a stronger bridge from athletics to vital educational departments and the fabric of the school, as well as an anchor to drive resources to create the high impact programming that can change the trajectory of a young person's life.

### **How Our Grant Funding Works**

- Each interested school can access the AthLife Foundation Grants Portal via the [AthLife Foundation Grant Application](#) web page to evaluate potential grant opportunities.

- Each school can typically request up to \$10K to create a minimum part-time position. (Note: In some geographic areas, requests can be as low as \$2500, and can be up to \$25K).
- Schools recruit, interview, hire and manage the staff in the position.
- Some schools have taken a team approach to building the staffing. We recommend that if a school elects to have multiple Academic Athletic Coaches, that a clear lead person is identified.
- Each school targets a minimum of one male and one female athletic team for primary support to initiate program building:
  - Impacting current team cultural norms is challenging work, the AAC needs to develop programming for all student-athletes regardless of levels of academic achievement. They are building a true student-athlete development program. The prescribed philosophy includes, *problem free does not mean prepared for the future*;
  - Recommended a 20 hour/week position(s) for up to 150 student-athletes;
  - Number of student-athletes and teams can be expanded and increased depending on the head coach and athletic director's ability to support the AAC, programming, and create accountability for student-athlete engagement.
- Note on co-investing: Traditionally, our grant funding requires a co-investment from schools. Depending on geographic location and funding partner, schools are encouraged to co-invest a minimum of 25% of the amount they are requesting.
- Long term, the goal is to empower the district/schools to take majority or full ownership of the AAC position and program developed, and fully integrate the AAC position into the very fabric of the staff. Experience indicates this can be a 2-3 year process.
- Funding beyond year one is predicated on:
  - Desire from schools to continue;
  - Available funds from the AthLife Foundation;
  - Reasonable success in establishing the position and development programming for student-athletes;
  - 100% commitment from the school staff in the training/professional development offerings, and engagement in the national resource platform.

### **What are the Costs to the District or School?**

The AthLife Foundation is committed to remain fluid and flexible, but we do not want to lose sight of the long term goal for the school's majority or full ownership of the position over time. In our history, school investments into their own positions have ranged from \$10K for one (1) part-time AAC all the way up to \$350K for three (3) full-time AAC positions at one high school.

Schools can work to co-invest in various ways. As a granting organization, the AthLife Foundation does not seek funding from schools or contractual service relationships. Any allocated or identified matching sources stay internal to the school or district.

Examples of what other schools have done to support both the position and their programs:

- Additional funds to extend the position's hours and reach (after school program funding, 3<sup>rd</sup> party CBO, Title I, staffing budget allocation, etc.)
- Allocation of daytime duty, prep period, off-loading of a course or part of a caseload for an existing staff;
- Dedicated space in the building for the AAC to function;
- Existing afterschool resources in the form of tutors and teacher support for study halls to supplement the programming being developed by the AAC;
- AAC access to student-athlete participant academic data.

The AthLife Foundation traditionally hosts a National Conference and training each summer (July-August). The district and participating schools are encouraged and required to send a minimum of two staff members and plan accordingly to support their staff to attend this in person professional development offering.

### **School District/School Responsibilities if Awarded**

- Set up an account to receive grant funding throughout the academic year for awarded schools;
- Manage payroll for the created position for each awarded school;
- Designate an administrative contact for the AthLife Foundation grants team from each school, as well as a point of contact at the District level;
- Recruit, identify, hire the staff for the AAC position, the staff person either becomes, or is an already existing employee, part-time staff, or contractor of the school district or school;
- Supervise, manage, and support the development of the AAC, document hours, pay, etc.;
- Commit to creating a student-athlete development program unique in name and meaning to the school community - the AthLife Foundation is not a prescriptive, packaged program.
- Adhere to a grantee year round Data Collection Protocol (within FERPA guidelines).

### **Additional Resources**

- ***AthLife Inc. & AthLife Unlimited:*** Our platform is further backed and supported by AthLife, Inc. a provider of education and career development services of athletes which includes, NFL Players Association, The Trust (Powered by the NFL Players Association), Major League Soccer, MLS Players Union, National Basketball Association, National Basketball Retired Players Association, NBA Players Legacy Fund, in addition, more than 40 Division I institutions, from every major conference in the areas of education and life skill development, including an ongoing relationship with the University of Virginia. AthLife Unlimited is a nationally recognized entity in the sports marketing world across every professional sports league in conjunction with Marvel Entertainment. AthLife Inc. and AthLife Unlimited work to network their constituents to provide unique, exciting opportunities for the high school student-athletes we serve.

- **3ACE (The Alliance for Academic Athletic Coaches & Educators):** Created and established by the AthLife Foundation to virtually connect Secondary Education professionals who work to develop student-athletes holistically both on and off the playing field and beyond sport. This national peer-to-peer network (3ACE Connected Community) aims to:
  - Legitimize the Academic Athletic Coach & Student-Athlete Development Support Staff as a true profession in Secondary Education;
  - Provide readily accessible industry leading best practices, innovative programmatic ideas, and shared resources for schools to develop high impact programs for the holistic development of their student-athletes on a national scale;
  - Serve to establish professional development and training content for past and future national conferences, regional conferences, local professional development, and virtual offerings;
  - Provide a strong communications platform through the 3ACE Connected Community for the most relevant information and opportunities available for the profession and industry;
  - This is no cost to school staff, coaches, AD's and administrators. Profiles are easy to set up by visiting [3ace.connectedcommunity.org](http://3ace.connectedcommunity.org)
  
- *AthLife Foundation Data Collection Protocol*
  - Seasonal program surveys followed by end of year outcome data;
  - Option for longitudinal graduate tracking;
  - The data collection protocol does not ask for individual student academic data. Team by team data averages are collected to remain within FERPA regulations and guidelines.