

the
forum
FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT



NATIONAL
COLLABORATION
FOR YOUTH



All youth ready for college, work & life.

National

PARTNER PROFILES & COMMITMENTS

About the Forum for Youth Investment

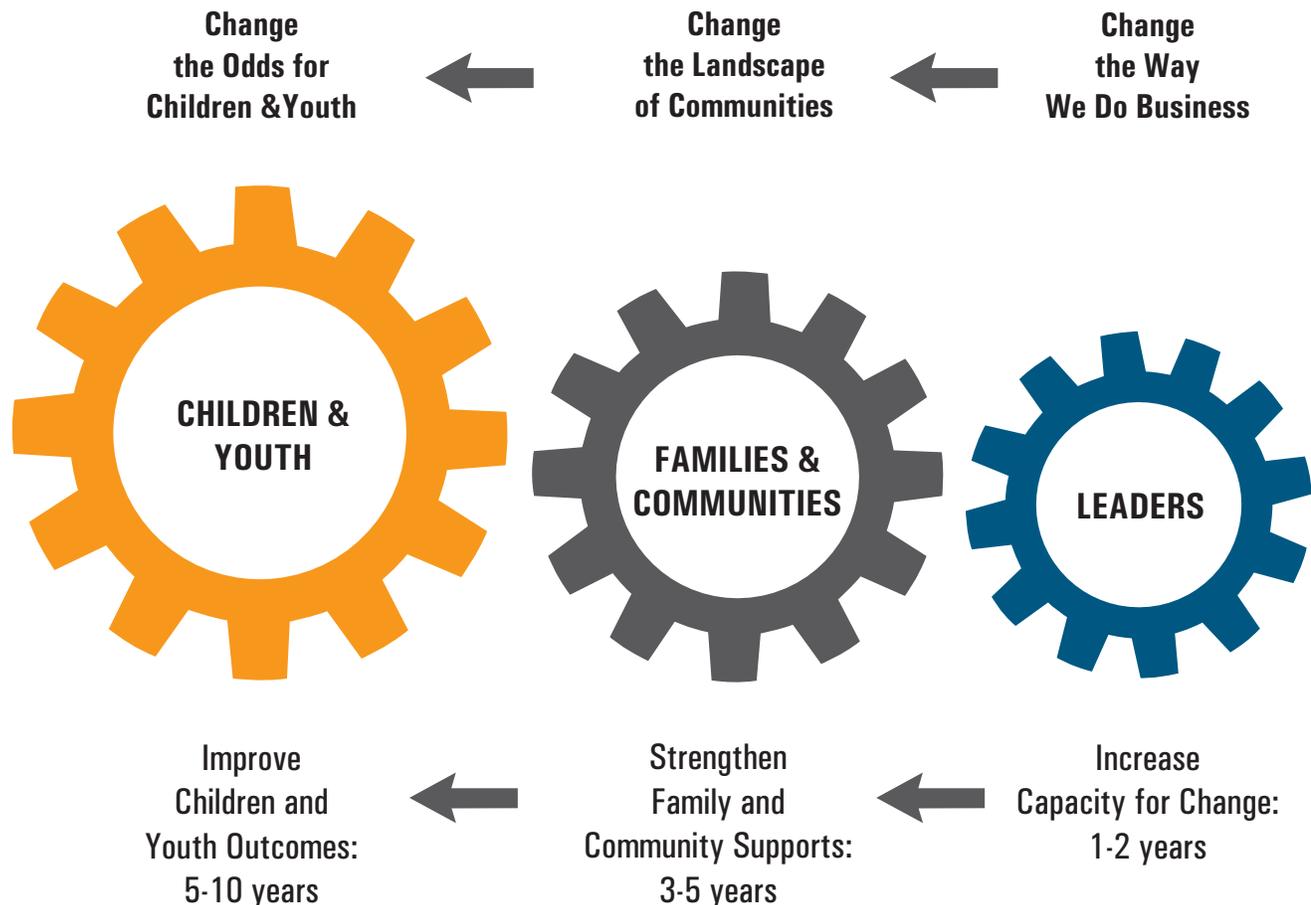
The Forum for Youth Investment is a nonprofit, nonpartisan “action tank” dedicated to helping communities and the nation make sure all young people are Ready by 21™ – ready for college, work and life. Informed by rigorous research and practical experience, the Forum forges innovative ideas, strategies and partnerships to strengthen solutions for young people and those who care about them. A trusted resource for policy makers, advocates, researchers and practitioners, the Forum provides youth and adult leaders with the information, connections and tools they need to create greater opportunities and outcomes for young people.

The Forum was founded in 1998 by Karen Pittman and Merita Irby, two of the country’s top leaders on youth issues and youth policy. The Forum’s 25-person staff is headquartered in Washington D.C. in the historic Cady-Lee House with a satellite office in Michigan and staff in Missouri, New Mexico and Virginia.

About the Ready by 21™ Challenge

The Ready by 21™ Challenge calls on states and communities to change the odds for children and youth by changing the way they do business. This requires broadening definitions of what it means for youth to be ready, for schools and communities to be supportive and for all leaders to be engaged. Working in partnership with the business, government, education and nonprofit sectors, the Forum for Youth Investment provides frameworks, coaching and tools to help leaders think differently, act differently and act together. The Ready by 21™ Big Picture Approach helps leaders – from young people to parents, program directors to policy makers – bring precision to their passion, ensuring that all young people are ready by 21 – ready for college, work and life.

The five year goal is to have a critical mass of leaders in every state across the country who have learned to focus and prioritize differently so that they can set bigger goals, use bolder strategies, be better partners, and work together to ensure that their individual efforts add up rather than simply add on.



Ready by 21 National Partner Profiles and Commitments

WORKING TOGETHER TO ENSURE THAT ALL YOUNG PEOPLE ARE
READY BY 21 – READY FOR COLLEGE, WORK AND LIFE

“We know there are champions in all sectors and roles who are passionate in their support of children and youth and **frustrated with our collective lack of progress.**

Our goal is to give them the frames and tools they need to bring precision to their passion.”

Karen Pittman, Co-Founder
The Forum for Youth Investment

*“The **Ready by 21 Framework** and the **United Way Community Impact Model** fit hand in glove. Ensuring that young people are ready for college, work and life are goals we must all support.*

Ready by 21 takes the very important step of inspiring our communities to think differently about solutions and to set bold goals.”

Brian Gallagher, President and CEO
United Way of America

About the Ready by 21™ National Partners

Leaders are not just public officials. They are individuals in business, government, education and the non-profit sectors, including young people themselves, who have the capacity, motivation and authority to make improvements in young people's lives.

The ultimate goal of the Ready by 21™ Challenge is to ensure that all young people have the supports and opportunities they need to be Ready by 21 – ready for college, work and life. The five year goal is to have a critical mass of leaders in every state across the country that have learned to focus and prioritize differently so that they can set bigger goals, use bolder strategies, be better partners and work together to achieve greater returns on their collective investments. This goal would be impossible for the Forum to achieve without national partners and this critical mass of leaders.

The six partners who in 2007 made formal commitments to work with the Forum to advance the Ready by 21 Challenge represent the education, government, non-profit, business and community philanthropy sectors. Each was chosen because they had pledged to do business differently and sought out the Forum to help in some way. Combined, they have the capacity to inform, support and champion state and local leaders whose commitments are critical to any major change effort:

THE PARTNERS

United Way of America

American Association of School Administrators

America's Promise Alliance

Corporate Voices for Working Families

National Collaboration for Youth

National Conference of State Legislatures

- United Way of America (UWA) is a ubiquitous community resource with over 1,300 local United Ways that serve more than 90 percent of the country and raise and reinvest more than \$1 billion annually to improve child and youth outcomes. In 2007, the United Way of America announced a commitment to expand on its early childhood development national initiatives in response to community requests for ensuring better outcomes for older youth. The United Way of America is working with the Forum to build and implement a complete set of tools, resources and technical assistance that supports children and youth from birth through young adulthood. In 2008, UWA will work with the Forum to create an expanded framework, pilot the use of the Ready by 21 framework and tools in selected places, and provide learning opportunities for all interested local United Ways and community partners. United Way of America is the Ready by 21 signature partner.
- American Association of School Administrators (AASA) is the professional organization for more than 13,000 education leaders. AASA has a history of championing efforts to address non-academic issues that directly affect student learning. In 2006, funding from Philip Morris USA Youth Smoking Prevention allowed AASA to work with the Forum to bring more focus and intentionality to these efforts. In 2007, the Forum and AASA co-planned a day-long workshop on expanding learning opportunities for 30 superintendents that laid the groundwork for the 2008 AASA strategies agenda.
- America's Promise Alliance (APA) is the largest multi-sector collaborative dedicated to children and youth. The Ready by 21 Partners all count among the more than 170 partners of the Alliance. The Forum has been involved with the Alliance since its inception. In 2007, Alliance Trustees committed to focusing their efforts on improving the lives of 15 million children over the next 5 years. High school graduation was selected as the key indicator of success. With support from State Farm Insurance, the Alliance made a pledge to build awareness on the youth dropout issue by hosting summits in all 50 states and 50 cities over the next two years. America's Promise and the Forum partnered to deliver the Alliance's 2006 Regional Summits, and have agreed to partner to integrate the language, goals and strategies of the 15 and 5 Campaign and the Ready by 21 Challenge.
- Corporate Voices for Working Families (CVWF) is the leading national business membership organization representing the private sector voice in public policy issues relating to working families. Collectively, their 55 partner companies have annual net revenues of over \$1 trillion and employ 4 million individuals throughout all 50 states. CVWF has worked with the Forum over the past three years to expand its commitment to children and youth from early childhood to workforce entry. At the end of 2007, the Corporate Voices board voted to consolidate the organization's child and youth focused work under a workforce readiness umbrella.
- National Collaboration for Youth (NCY) represents more than 50 national, non-profit youth development organizations that collectively serve more than 40 million young people and have a physical presence in virtually every community in the country. In February 2007, the National Assembly (the parent organization of NCY) made a bold commitment to collectively generate unique knowledge about the youth development sector and exercise leadership on behalf of those they serve. NCY stepped up to take the lead. In 2008, NCY and the Forum formed a strategic alliance to use Ready by 21 as the basis for the development of NCY's member knowledge and leadership work.
- National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) is the leading bipartisan organization supporting state legislators and legislative staff in all 50 states. NCSL's members rely on its program staff to get information on a range of legislative and policy issues. The volume, range and fragmentation of concerns related to youth, however, are particularly frustrating to legislators. In 2005, NCSL, the Forum and the National Governors Association addressed this problem by convening state teams with representatives from the executive office and the legislature. In 2007, NCSL began work with the Forum to explore legislative options for integrating youth engagement into policy.

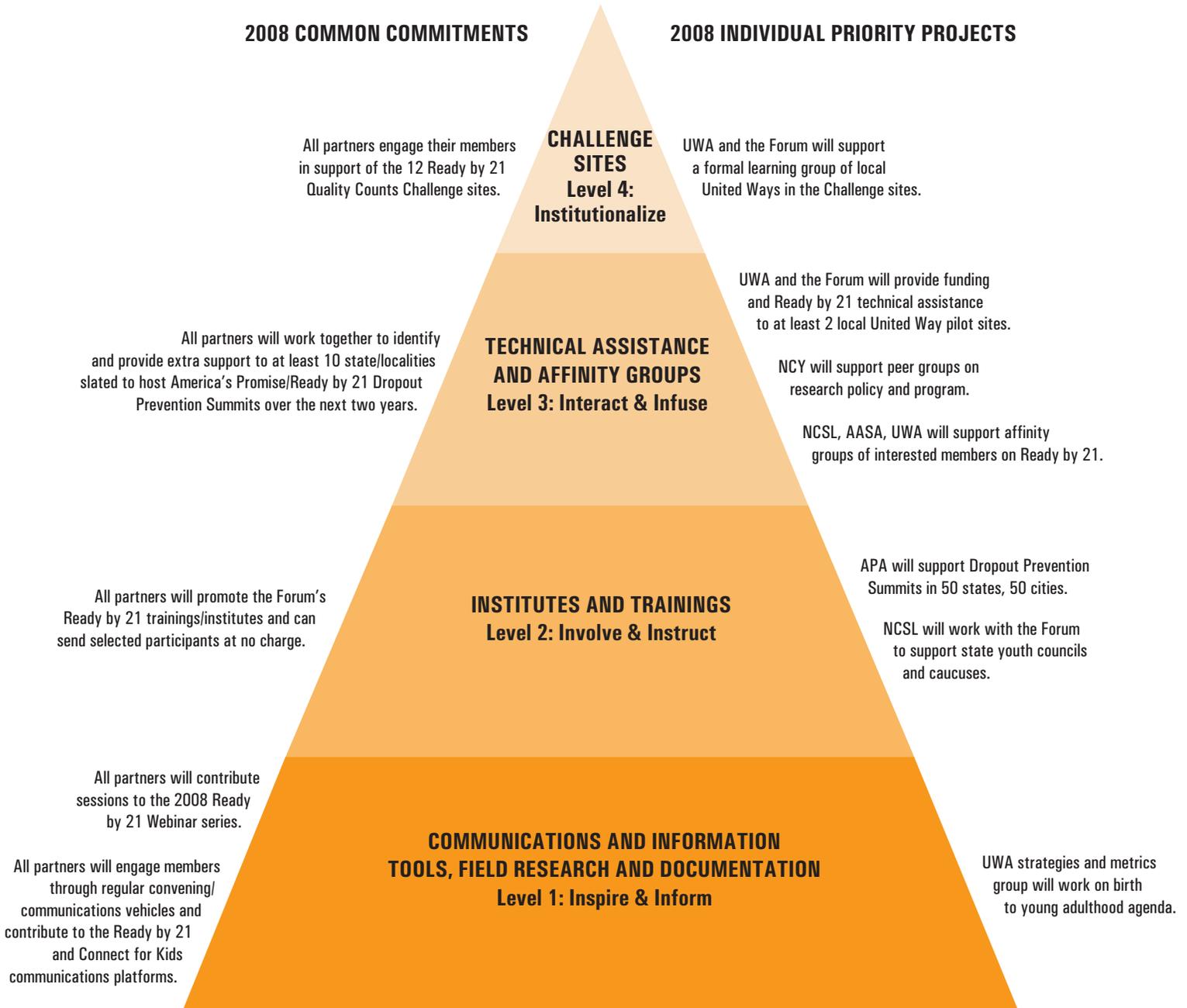
Adding Up the Partner Commitments

As Ready by 21 National Partners, these organizations have agreed to work with the Forum for Youth Investment and with each other. The Partners have shared work plans and identified concrete ways to work together to challenge and support their members and affiliates in states and communities across the country. Their common and individual commitments are outlined below.

READY BY 21™ ENGAGEMENT PYRAMID COORDINATED BY THE FORUM FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT

2008 COMMON COMMITMENTS

2008 INDIVIDUAL PRIORITY PROJECTS



APA & NCY will disseminate "integrated language" that links the 5 Promises to Ready by 21 and other frameworks.
 NCY will document and analyze member capacity, priorities and programs.
 NCY will integrate youth-focused web sites into one comprehensive information and advocacy platform.
 NCSL will document legislative coordinating bodies.
 CVWF will study cost of remedial training, business perceptions of disadvantaged youth, alternative credentials.



All youth ready for college, work & life.

Founding Partner

The Forum for Youth Investment

Changing the Odds for Youth

the
forum
FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT

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ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

The Forum for Youth Investment is a nonprofit, nonpartisan “action tank” dedicated to helping communities and the nation make sure all young people are Ready by 21™ – ready for college, work and life. This goal requires that young people have the supports, opportunities and services needed in the first two decades of life so that they are on track and ready to learn, work, thrive, connect and contribute. The Forum provides youth and adult leaders with the information, technical assistance, training, network support and partnership opportunities needed to increase the quality and quantity of youth investment and youth involvement.

The Forum was founded in 1998 by Karen Pittman and Merita Irby in order to help organizations that invest in youth become more intentional and aligned in their change efforts. In 2002, the Forum began responding to individual change makers and coordinating bodies, helping them infuse a big picture approach into their work at the community and state level. Through this work, the Forum began identifying the most commonly used frames and tools in youth development.

In 2004, with funds from the Atlantic Philanthropies, the Forum began field testing products and services designed to help leaders think differently, and developed networks and supports to help leadership teams act differently. The first Ready by 21 Learning group helped to further hone the Ready by 21 tools, resources and key ideas. The result:

- The Ready by 21 Big Picture Approach helps leaders learn to think and focus differently. The Big Picture Tool Box provides the conceptual, practical and power tools to help change makers frame, focus, collect, analyze and present data – framing and filling the big picture with information that compels leaders to do business differently.
- The Ready by 21 Blueprint for Action helps change managers staffing leadership councils, commissions and similar bodies do their work.

In 2005, the Forum began strengthening its partnerships with national organizations that are committed to helping leaders think differently and act differently, and bringing more people and organizations into the **Ready by 21 Leadership Network**.

In 2007, with funds from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Forum announced the first Ready by 21 Challenge Grants. In early 2008, the Forum issued the **Ready by 21 Challenge** in partnership with United Way of America, American Association of School Administrators, National Collaboration for Youth, America’s Promise Alliance, National Conference of State Legislatures, National Collaboration for Youth and Corporate Voices for Working Families.

The Challenge seeks to bring precision to the passion of stakeholders in youth development by disseminating frameworks, strategies and supports that help communities change conditions for youth and increase their chances for being ready by 21– ready for college, work and life. The five-year goal is to have a critical mass of leaders in every state across the country who have taken up the Ready by 21 Challenge to change the odds for youth by changing the way they do business.

2008 PRIORITY PROJECTS

2008 Ready by 21 Webinar Series

The Forum will conduct a webinar series to introduce communities to the Big Picture Approach and the core components of the Ready by 21™ Blueprint for Action. Each webinar in the Blueprint series will provide an in depth look at an example of a change maker tackling each component, as well as real time reactions from 2-4 states and cities that have adopted the Ready by 21 Challenge in its entirety. The Ready by 21 partners will also each present a webinar on how best to engage their stakeholders.

2008 Ready by 21 Institutes and Trainings

The Forum will hold a series of trainings and institutes to disseminate the Ready by 21™ tools and strategies for change. These convenings will be open to partners and community change makers. The Forum will be offering scholarships to partners to attend the trainings. The Forum will work together with the Ready by 21 partners to design and promote these events.

Quality Counts Initiative

The Ready by 21™ Quality Counts Initiative aims to improve the quality and reach of youth programs in 20 selected communities across 11 states by providing stakeholders with a range of tools and resources for assessment, planning and action. Sites began by assessing their “horsepower” for change so that they could target their efforts to document the program base, assess and improve practice, strengthen support for youth workers, and strengthen policy and leadership support. The Forum will engage with the Ready by 21 partners and their members to increase the impact of these initiatives at the community level.

Supporting Affinity Groups

The Forum will continue to convene the Children’s Cabinet and Council Network and the Youth Council Learning Group. These vibrant peer to peer groups gather by phone and in person, share best practices, develop collective materials and represent the youth policy interests of states and cities at the national level.

2008 PRIORITY PROJECTS

Establish Metrics and Strategies for a Birth to Young Adulthood Model

Promote the importance of an integrated approach to learning and development from birth to young adulthood and engage local United Ways, experts and leaders to build on UWA's early childhood framework. The intention is to create metrics for a full "two decade" model to include older youth, develop a companion guide on secondary measures, and develop complementary materials to add to its Community Impact portfolio that articulate how Big Picture Planning fits with the UWA call to "focus on a priority area."

Engage Local United Ways

United Way will use its existing outreach and communication vehicles to move the Ready by 21 ideas and materials out to local United Ways beginning with a learning event at the May 2008 Annual Conference. United Way will also create learning opportunities for local United Ways that are already engaged, interested, or committed to community impact level work to improve youth outcomes or want to build on their early childhood development efforts. These opportunities will allow local United Ways to quickly test the "value add" of the Ready by 21 framework and the proposed focus on improving the quality and reach of the programs, places and people in youth's lives.

- Ready by 21 Quality Counts Learning Group – Allows local United Ways in 7 cities and 5 states the opportunity to contribute to a community impact project already in progress to gain insight and understanding.
- Local United Way Strategies and Metrics Work Group – Provides opportunity to 5 to 10 local United Ways with an already strong commitment to improving youth outcomes to create the Young Adulthood model (as an extension of the early childhood framework) and the package of Ready by 21 supports that will be offered.
- JC Penney Pilot Sites – Provides financial support in at least two pilot communities in order to build strong community awareness, partnerships and action plans.
- Tools and Resources – Disseminate youth development materials, training, technical assistance via United Way listservs, webinars, in-person and distance learning courses.



ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

United Way is a national network of nearly 1,300 local organizations that work to advance the common good, creating opportunities for a better life for all by focusing on the three key building blocks of education, financial stability and health. We all win when a child succeeds in school, when families are financially stable and when people have good health.

United Way of America is the national organization dedicated to leading the United Way movement. Local United Ways create long lasting community change by addressing the underlying causes of the most significant local issues. Common focus areas include helping children and youth achieve their potential, promoting financial stability and independence, and improving people's health. United Way's goal is to create long-lasting changes by addressing the underlying causes of problems.

It takes everyone in the community working together to create a brighter future. Living united means being a part of the change.

United Way of America (UWA) is building on its longstanding support of early childhood learning and development. UWA is partnering with the Forum for Youth Investment to expand on its Community Impact model by working to ensure that children enter school ready to succeed and that success follows them so they are ready for college, work and life. Annually, local United Ways devote more than \$1 billion to supporting children and youth.

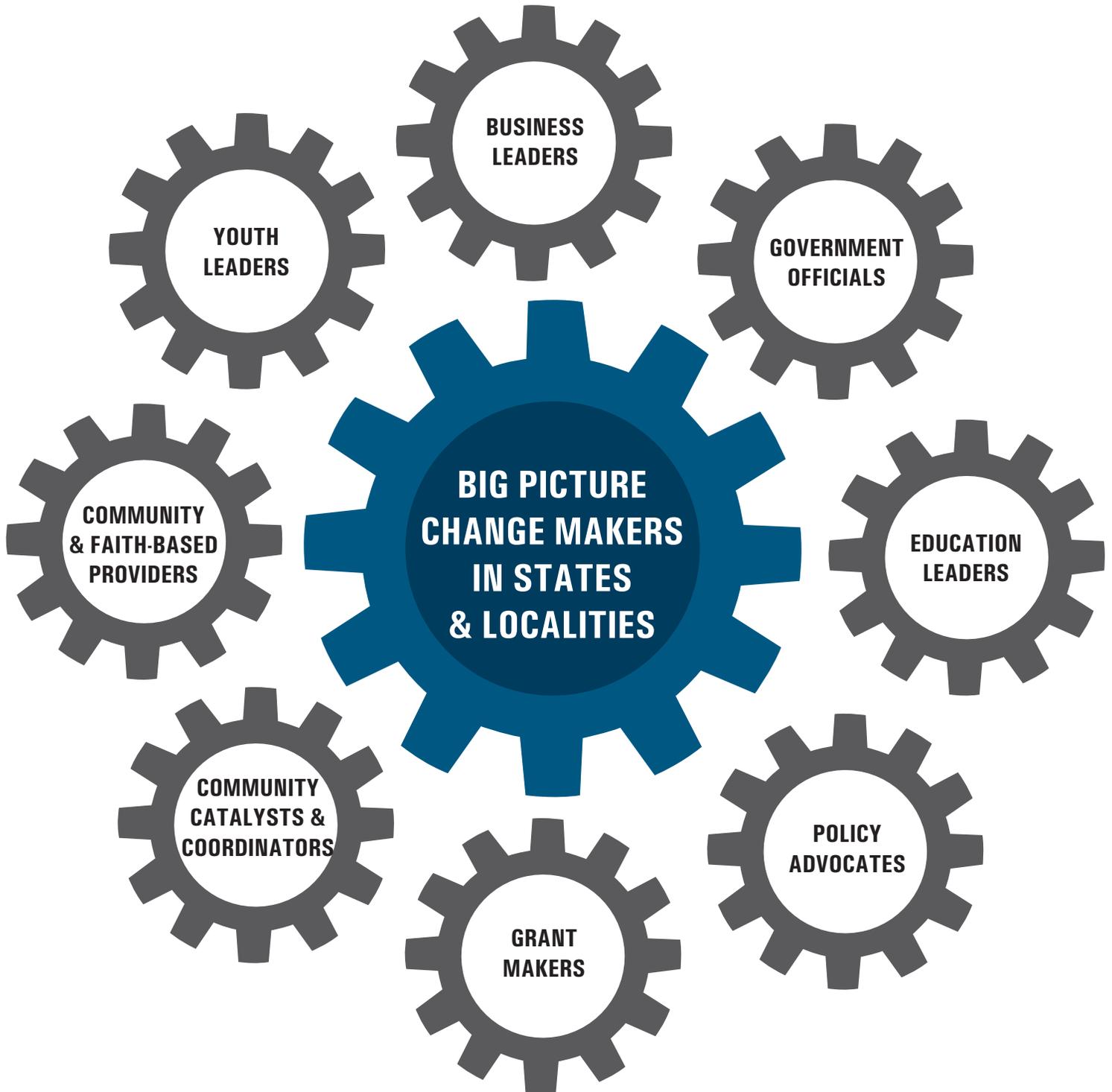
Both UWA and the Forum for Youth Investment have deep commitments and demonstrated capacity to be catalysts and conveners at the national, state and local levels. Through the Forum's Ready by 21 Challenge, UWA is offering its members a framework, metrics, strategies and supports that help local United Ways' advance the common good by focusing on strategies that change conditions in education, financial stability and health. Technical assistance that the Forum is providing to a number of states and localities affords UWA an opportunity to engage a select group of local United Ways now. This partnership leverages the Forum's research and development and connects local United Ways to important tools, strategies and supports they can use immediately.

The JC Penney Afterschool Fund just awarded the Forum for Youth Investment and UWA funding to pilot community-wide outcome visioning around youth development in two communities; convene national stakeholders and experts to identify outcomes and strategies to develop the vision for a national youth development effort and to pursue additional funding to realize the vision.

UWA and the Forum for Youth Investment are also committed to working with the Ready by 21 Partners to develop a comprehensive planning and implementation process utilizing the Ready by 21 framework in select America's Promise Dropout Prevention Summit sites. This effort will be integrated into Ready by 21 sites where there is an existing initiative or where a standing coalition is already interested or positioned to take on the role.

Aligning the Gears

Building strong national partnerships is an intentional part of the Forum's Ready by 21™ roll out strategy. Rather than trying to directly reach all Big Picture change makers, the Forum works with national organizations that represent and support state and local stakeholders (corporations, funders, educators, advocates, providers, community foundations, United Ways) and those who believe in the Ready by 21 goals so they can directly support Big Picture change makers within their networks.





2008 PRIORITY PROJECTS

Promote “Outside the Box” Thinking

AASA members are committed to promoting the development of broad learning systems that reach beyond schools to support the development of academic, social, vocational and civic competencies in all children and youth.

To crystallize this commitment, AASA will identify opportunities to disseminate recommendations such as those introduced in *Engaging Every Learner: Blurring the Lines for Learning to Ensure That All Young People Are Ready For College, Work and Life* and the Superintendents of the Year report throughout their networks and to introduce these ideas in discussions with business, government and community leaders.

Support Local Documentation and Dialogue

With support from the Forum, AASA will identify opportunities to engage interested superintendents in documenting effective “blurring the lines” practices and discuss options for taking these principles and practices to scale. Options under consideration include:

- Establishing an informal learning group of superintendents interested in creating an AASA product that can be disseminated to members and through the Ready by 21 Partnership.
- Offering “bring the lessons home” scholarships to superintendents interested in sending a 2 person school-community team to Ready by 21 Big Picture trainings to learn to facilitate “blurring the lines” conversations.

Deepen Cross-Sector Engagement

AASA will use its connections to Ready by 21 Partners to identify opportunities to increase the presence of superintendents in discussions about improving youth outcomes, starting by exploring opportunities to support within-state discussions that could be brought into the National Conference of State Legislatures Policy Institutes and other state-level policy meetings.



ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

The American Association of School Administrators, founded in 1865, is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders across the United States. AASA members range from chief executive officers, superintendents and senior level school administrators to cabinet members, professors and aspiring school system leaders.

As school system leaders, AASA members set the pace for academic achievement. They help shape policy, oversee its implementation and represent school districts to the public at large. AASA members are more than the leaders of educational systems.

AASA has championed efforts to address non-academic issues that directly affect children in public schools, such as school climate, obesity and the physical environment, by working directly with local school district leaders, state affiliate directors, and other strategic partners across sectors. Many of these efforts involve partnerships with other national organizations.

In 2006, AASA began to work with the Forum for Youth Investment to bring more focus and intentionality to these efforts. The partnership is focused on strengthening local and state efforts to “blur the lines” between school and community as settings for learning and between education, prevention and youth development. To date, with funding from Phillip Morris USA Youth Smoking Prevention, AASA and the Forum have:

- Published a paper on “blurring the lines” in an education volume edited by Paul Houston, AASA’s Executive Director.
- Worked with the Public Education Network to assemble school-government-community leadership teams across the country to learn about the Forum’s Ready by 21™ approach and explore opportunities for strong community-school partnerships anchored in shared responsibility for joint action.
- Jointly planned a day-long session on expanding learning opportunities for the AASA 2007 Superintendents of the Year, engaging them in “outside the box” dialogue with experts from business (Corporate Voices for Working Families), community (United Way) and policy research (Brookings Institute).
- Prepared summaries of the meeting to be shared with all superintendents and with the broader youth development community through an article in Youth Today.

In 2008, AASA hopes to build on this momentum by creating opportunities for superintendents interested in documenting and deepening their “blurring the lines” work in their districts and states, crafting recommendations for other interested superintendents, and engaging in cross-sector dialogue.

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All youth ready for college, work & life.

National Partner

America's Promise Alliance

Helping 15 Million Children and Youth Receive The 5 Promises over the Next Five Years



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ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

The America's Promise Alliance is the nation's largest multi-sector collaborative dedicated to the well-being of children and youth. With over 170 partners, the Alliance leads the way in bringing together businesses, youth-serving organizations, elected officials, educators, faith groups, funders, and individuals of all ages. Each of the Forum's Ready by 21 National Partners is also a member of the Alliance.

The Alliance is founded upon the principle that all young people need and deserve five fundamental resources – caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, effective education, opportunities to help others. These have been institutionalized in the American lexicon as the Five Promises – clear, simple, achievable steps to ensure children grow up to become successful adults and citizens.

The Alliance has developed a comprehensive five-year plan to bring more of the Five Promises to 15 million disadvantaged youth in the next five years. The Alliance's top priority is high-school completion, with an emphasis on college and career-readiness, as the chief measure of success. The Alliance work is focused on raising awareness about need, advocating on behalf of young people, and taking direct action through the strongest possible alliance of partners.

Awareness: The Alliance is convening "Dropout Prevention Summits" to build urgency and harness leaders' attention around the dropout crisis plaguing America's high schools. The Governors of all 50 states and the Mayors of the 50 cities with the highest concentrations of low-performing high schools will be invited to host summits. Initial funding for the summits has been provided by State Farm Insurance.

Advocacy: First Focus is the bi-partisan affiliate dedicated to making the wellbeing of young people a priority in federal and state budget policy.

Action: The Alliance is collaborating on three national strategies: to enroll all eligible children in SCHIP and Medicaid, to integrate school and community services to provide year-round supports, and to provide middle-school students with real world experiences through service and career exploration.

The Forum for Youth Investment has a long history with the America's Promise Alliance. Karen Pittman was a part of the team brought to design the organization and has been a steady advisor throughout each phase of the America's Promise Alliance's work. Currently, Karen sits on the Trustee Steering Committee and the Research Council. The Forum made a major commitment to the Alliance's 2006 Regional Summits. Karen Pittman and Merita Irby collectively kicked off each of the Summits with a two-hour presentation that introduced participants to some of the Ready by 21 frames and tools.

America's Promise has agreed to partner with the Forum for Youth Investment to integrate the language, goals and strategies of the 15 and 5 Campaign and the Ready by 21 Challenge and to use the Ready by 21 National Partners as a cross-sector sounding board and coordinated delivery unit to ensure that the Dropout Prevention summits are implemented and sustained strategically.

2008 PRIORITY PROJECTS

Integrate Messages: Leadership, Promises, Outcomes

The America's Promise Alliance will encourage its partners to use common language to define youth outcomes and youth supports. America's Promise Alliance will work with the Ready by 21 Partners to develop and disseminate an "integrated language" graphic to demonstrate the relationship and alignment between the Five Promises, the Ready by 21 goals (ready for college, work and life) and key readiness indicators for youth and communities including, but not limited to, high school completion.

Ready by 21 Dropout Summits

America's Promise Alliance recommends the Ready by 21 approach as an effective planning and decision-making framework for collective impact. The Alliance will work with the Forum for Youth Investment to help position Ready by 21 Partners as the local organizers and leaders of a subset of the dropout prevention summits. While encouraging all Alliance affiliates to get involved, the Ready by 21 Partners will work to ensure that their state or local affiliates participate in the planning, implementation and follow-up of the summits.

The Partners will develop a "Getting the Most out of Your Summit" Planning Guide that will help local coordinators:

- Identify other initiatives and coalitions that can be linked to the summit.
- Frame the dropout issue within the larger picture of what it takes to be ready for college, work and life.
- Ensure that the needs of all youth, including those not in school, are addressed.
- Engage the range of stakeholders – including educators, government, business leaders, youth organizations, youth and families – needed to make a difference.
- Identify the resources and strategies that, if expanded, could increase youth success.

America's Promise will work with Duke University evaluators to document Ready by 21 as an element of the process.

2008 PRIORITY PROJECTS

Present the Business Case for Youth Investments

- Articulate the business case for greater public investments in youth policies and programs.
- Cultivate high level corporate champions to spread the Ready by 21 framework and the role of business in that framework.
- Continue to disseminate *Are They Really Ready to Work?*, working with the Partners to reach new audiences.
- Disseminate via website and presentations the 2007 CVWF Workforce Readiness Business Case that promotes the development of a new approach to learning.
- Connect with federal and state policy makers via Congressional briefings, National Conference of State Legislatures Roundtables, and Ready by 21 Challenge sites.
- Investigate alternative credentialing systems that could be used as a proxy by employers to evaluate young people's workforce readiness.

Make the Case for Youth Investments to Business

CVWF will develop convenings, trainings and reports to help companies to think about workforce readiness as a business sustainability issue:

- Document corporate efforts to assess the impact of philanthropic investments in youth and education;
- Partner with other business organizations to conduct research on current spending on remedial training in order to build the case for investing in early and comprehensive preparation;
- Release a toolkit based on *Business Leadership: Supporting Youth Development and the Talent Pipeline*, designed to help businesses create youth development strategies that enhance workforce readiness skills.
- Identify pathways to work experiences for disconnected youth; document business perceptions of this population that limit recruitment options.
- Begin to work to help companies think across internal functions to be more strategic about their work on youth issues.



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ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Corporate Voices for Working Families (CVWF) is the leading national business membership organization representing the private sector voice in the dialogue on public policy issues related to working families. CVWF is a non-profit and nonpartisan organization that facilitates research and provides public and private policy solutions in three key areas: workforce readiness, including early childhood education; after school care and youth development; family economic stability; and flexibility in the workplace, including issues of the mature workforce. Collectively its 55 partner companies employ more than 4 million individuals throughout all 50 states, with annual net revenues of over \$1 trillion.

Corporate Voices members have been leaders in recognizing the importance their employees place on ensuring that their young people are in safe and enriching environments while they are at work. As a result, two early pillars of work focused on the importance of early childhood education from the business perspective as well as the business case for after school. In response to growing concern among its members about the readiness of young people entering the workforce, Corporate Voices initiated a new body of work focused on youth development and workforce readiness.

As part of that new work, Corporate Voices began discussions with the Forum for Youth Investment and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills about work readiness of young people and the role that positive youth development can play in ensuring that young people have the skills they need to make the transition from school to work. At the same time, the Forum introduced Corporate Voices to Philip Morris USA (PM USA) which ultimately led to PM USA's membership in Corporate Voices along with financial support for the overall workforce readiness body of work.

Over the past three years, the work has been shaped in large part by the results of the 2006 workforce readiness survey: *Are They Really Ready to Work? Employer's Attitudes Toward Entry Level Workers' Skills Survey*. Other key projects have included the promising practices report: *Business Leadership: Supporting Youth Development and the Talent Pipeline*, and the 2007 stakeholders meeting that confirmed that cross-sector collaboration is not only needed but possible. Educators, community-based organizations, business and policymakers all have important roles to play in ensuring that all young people have opportunities to develop the range of skills they need. Through each phase of Corporate Voices' work, the Forum has been a key strategic partner providing substantive expertise and support.

At the end of 2007, the Corporate Voices board voted to consolidate the organization's child and youth-focused work under a workforce readiness umbrella in order to signal its understanding of the importance of early and sustained investments in youth.

Corporate Voices recently adopted the Workforce Readiness Statement of Principles to capture the essence of what Corporate Voices believes are the essentials to ensure that young people are ready for work. They also reflect the principles that under gird the Forum's Ready by 21TM Challenge to broaden the definitions of what it means for youth to be ready, for schools and communities to be supportive, and for all leaders to be engaged.



All youth ready for college, work & life.

National Partner

National Collaboration for Youth

Creating a Strong, Singular Voice for Children and Youth



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ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

The National Collaboration for Youth (NCY) is a coalition of more than 40 of the nation's leading youth-serving/youth development agencies. Its members collectively reach in excess of 40 million children and youth annually. NCY is a part of the National Human Services Assembly (NHSA), which is the nonprofit corporate entity for both organizations. NHSA is an association over 70 of the nation's leading national non-profits in the fields of health, human and community development and human services that are committed to helping individuals, families and communities thrive. Since 1978, the youth-serving/youth development members of the National Assembly have come together to share strategies and shape agendas under the banner of the National Collaboration for Youth. The Forum for Youth Investment has been a member of NCY since 2003. In 2007, Karen Pittman, the Forum's Executive Director, was elected NCY chair.

In 2007, the National Assembly made a bold commitment to not only provide individual members with business services and professional development opportunities, but to proactively and systematically facilitate the membership's collective efforts to 1) exercise leadership on behalf of the people and communities they serve, 2) generate and disseminate their unique knowledge and perspectives on human development and the role of human services, and 3) reinvent the Assembly's image and structure – making a "go to" organization. NCY principals Karen Pittman (chair), Don Floyd (vice chair) and Irv Katz (Assembly President) took advantage of this opportunity to propose a formal process to redefine NCY in this context, recasting it as the coalition representing the country's leading youth-serving organizations.

NCY supports a first-class information center, has active projects and research and program peer groups, and has played a pivotal role in advancing youth policies such as the Federal Youth Coordination Act. The challenge is to help NCY members realize their full collective potential as organizations that employ more than 100,000 paid staff, utilize more than 6 million volunteers and serve more than 40 million young people in virtually every community across the country.

As an Atlantic Philanthropies Grantee, the Forum was able to secure independent support for the strategic reframing of NCY, including a proposed partnership with the Forum. The Management Assistance Group conducted stakeholder interviews, worked with a CEO steering committee and helped craft a plan that will be presented to the National Assembly Board and the National Collaboration members for approval in February and March 2008. The plan proposes that the National Collaboration for Youth use the Ready by 21™ framework as a starting point to:

- Articulate a clear vision of what "developed youth" look like, what "developmental supports" are, and what families, youth organizations, schools, communities and governments must do to ensure that all young people are competent and contributing.
- Provide a clear picture of the power and potential of the youth-serving sector – both what it can contribute and what it needs to do to strengthen quality and reach.
- Toward these ends, create new governance and staffing structures that increase member engagement and organizational capacity.

The plan further proposes that the National Assembly and the Forum for Youth Investment form a strategic alliance to help NCY realize these goals.

2008 PRIORITY PROJECTS

Document Members' Collective Vision & Horsepower

NCY members reach more than 40 million children and youth annually, but the breadth, depth and purpose of that reach is not documented. NCY will use Ready by 21 Big Picture tools to survey members about their language, programs, priorities and strategies and use that information to:

- Propose common language that links but does not replace the terms and categories used by members, but allows NCY to speak on behalf of youth with one voice.
- Map the landscape of combined national efforts.
- Identify strengths and gap areas, and create recommendations for leveraging strengths and addressing gaps.
- Assess the value of supporting similar documentation efforts at the local level through affiliates.
- Begin to document emerging practices in priority areas.

Set Bold Agendas to Support Youth, Youth Workers, Youth Organizations

Many NCY members run youth programs. All have a deep understanding of youth development. NCY will build on this expertise and use the Ready by 21 framework as a starting point for outlining the critical competencies of youth, youth workers and the organizations that support them and explaining the interrelationship between the three components. NCY's Research, Program and Policy workgroups will be charged with developing agendas that address the critical issues identified in each component. NCY leadership will also identify the broader coalitions in the field that work on these issues.

Establish a Measurement and Metrics Work Group

Many of NCY's members have undertaken major efforts to define, document and assess their impact on youth. There is a need to make sure these independent efforts "add up" and an opportunity to identify common lessons and challenges and create recommendations for funders, policy makers and the field.



2008 PRIORITY PROJECTS

Support Cross-Branch Planning Teams

In order to inform legislators and governor's staff about the Ready by 21 Approach, NCSL will again work with the Forum to convene teams of state leaders in a two-day Youth Policy Institute. This year, in addition to the legislative and executive branches, judicial branch and education sector representatives will be included in the teams. Teams will hear the latest thinking in youth policy (with an emphasis on cross-cutting policies and budget and policy alignment mechanisms) and spend time together working through the Ready by 21 blueprint. Returning teams will push further in their youth policy action plans while new teams will develop initial action plans.

Bringing Youth Voices into Policy

NCSL will continue their commitment to bring youth voices into youth policy by informing their members about the creation and strengthening of legislative youth advisory councils. NCSL will work in partnership with the Forum for Youth Investment to engage members of the Youth Council Network in discussions about how to strengthen their work with the legislative branch. New technologies such as web and video conferencing and social networking sites (Facebook, etc.) will be used to advance this effort.

Researching Legislative Coordinating Structures

NCSL will research and support the legislative coordinating structures that some states are using to respond to siloed oversight of children and youth policies, services and funding. The experiences and successes of states that have created joint committees or children's caucuses will be documented and shared with the Legislative Advisory Group, at the Institute, with the broad membership and with the Ready by 21 Partners.



NATIONAL CONFERENCE
of STATE LEGISLATURES

The Forum for America's Ideas

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ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

NCSL is the leading bipartisan organization supporting legislators and staff of the nation's 50 states, its commonwealth and territories. NCSL provides research, technical assistance and opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas on the most pressing state issues.

In 2004 NCSL and the Forum for Youth Investment identified frustration amongst legislators due to the volume and range of issues affecting youth. The two organizations began to explore interest in finding a new way of doing business for children and youth. Many echoed the sentiment of this New Mexico legislator who stated "The legislature gets overwhelmed with each of the pieces. We hear from 180 people who want \$1M each for their youth issue, and we don't know which pieces are important and which are not." This fragmentation of policies for youth not only impacts legislatures but also hinders the efforts of public and private agencies, the communities they are based in, and the youth and families they are trying to serve.

In 2005, The Forum, NCSL and the National Governors Association agreed to tackle this fragmentation of youth policy by convening state teams made up of legislators and executives at a Policy Institute where they could learn about the connectedness of the policies they each work on in their silos. Participants ranged from the Juvenile Justice Committee Chair to the Secretary of Education to the Child Welfare Division Director. These participants met across party affiliations and branches of government to collectively plan how to improve youth outcomes in their states.

This first Institute was so successful that the convening organizations have continued holding Institutes annually. Currently, 20 states have gone through the Institute and created action plans. These plans have blossomed into full fledged Children's Cabinets, statutory changes, new ways of providing training, new ways of integrating data collection, and the direct involvement of youth directly in policymaking efforts.

In addition to the Institutes, NCSL and the Forum have created publications to disseminate key ideas to a broader legislative audience, organized audio conferences, and provided on site technical assistance for well over half of the states. This project also has helped build connections across NCSL's organizational structure to work toward positive youth outcomes.

In 2007, NCSL created a non-partisan, multi state, bicameral Legislative Advisory Group on Youth as a strategy for recognizing legislators who have taken on these issues, documenting strategies and building a cadre of champions who can work with NCSL and the Forum to develop messages, tools and resources that will help state legislators strengthen youth policy.

Become a Ready by 21 National Partner

The Forum and its partners are issuing the Ready by 21 Challenge to change the odds for youth by changing the way we do business so that all youth are ready for college, work and life. Working in partnership with national organizations that represent the business, government, education and nonprofit sectors, the Forum for Youth Investment provides frameworks, coaching and tools to help leaders think differently, act differently and act together. In order to change the odds for youth nationwide, the Forum is seeking to engage a minimum of 20 additional partners by the year 2010.

Partners in this effort come in all shapes and sizes. We welcome the involvement and participation of any organization as long as they are committed to working with the Forum and its partners to broaden the impact and reach of Ready by 21. The partnerships and commitments detailed in this packet represent years of work toward the common cause of improving youth outcomes. If you are interested in becoming engaged, we can scale the partnership to your organization's capacity and focus. Partnership activities can range from linking to our website, connecting to affinity groups and assisting in the development of a training, to a long-term commitment to working together to achieve the aims of Ready by 21.

For more information or to begin the partnership process, please contact Thaddeus Ferber, Program Director, at thaddeus@forumfyi.org or by telephone at 202-207-3333.

PARTNER BENEFITS

- Demonstrate your commitment to a coordinated national approach to improving youth outcomes
- Connect your organization's members to other sectors engaged in this challenge
- Provide members with valuable information, tools and resources about what it takes to change the odds for children and youth
- Deepen connections with the existing group of Ready by 21 National Partners

Inspire and Inform through General Communications

- Add a Ready by 21 link to your website
- Engage members through your regular convening/communications vehicles – the Forum can provide content and recommend presenters
- Encourage members to sign up for Ready by 21 updates (through Forum Flash and Connect for Kids) and sign up for the Ready by 21 Webinar series

Involve and Instruct through Institutes and Trainings

- Encourage members to sign up for Forum's Ready by 21 trainings/institutes
- Consider sponsoring a Ready by 21 training as a pre-session to your conference
- Talk to the Forum about training scholarships for key members
- Identify topics for future Ready by 21 trainings and institutes that speak to the particular needs and experiences of your members

Interact and Infuse through Technical Assistance and Affinity Groups

- Propose a Ready by 21 briefing for an existing affinity group that is focused on Big Picture issues
- Bring Ready by 21 tools, frames and partners into projects you have underway
- Encourage members to connect with current Ready by 21 affinity groups if appropriate

Institutionalize through Challenge Sites

- Create opportunities for your members to learn about and become engaged in current Ready by 21 Challenge Sites
- Create a joint proposal for a project

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