

OUR SERVICES

The Forum builds on and contributes to the big ideas coming from the various youth-related fields to develop conceptual and practical tools that help state and local leaders organize and use information to support data-driven planning and accountability.

The Forum's work is organized around six core areas:

Research and Analysis

Synthesize and document the latest research, trends and strategies.
Develop tools that help to incorporate research into planning and action.

Communications

Disseminate ideas, information and tools to promote unified advocacy.

Leadership and Public Engagement

Create public and private engagement opportunities to build a strong national constituency for children and youth.

Advising, Consulting and Training

Provide ideas, expertise and tools to individuals, organizations and localities on various youth program and policy issues.

Network Development

Create and support networks of decision makers to increase the flow of information, ideas and strategies across the allied youth fields.

Long-Term Technical Support

Facilitate and manage planning processes, projects, initiatives or partnerships with national, state and local coalitions.

OUR SUPPORTERS

The Forum receives support from private foundations, corporations, state and local governments, non-profits and individuals. Our major supporters include the Atlantic Philanthropies, Cornerstones for Kids, JCPenney Afterschool Fund, New Mexico Community Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Philip Morris USA Youth Smoking Prevention, the Picower Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Surdna Foundation and the W.T. Grant Foundation.

*“Addressing youth problems is critical...
but problem-free is not fully prepared.
Better preparation is critical...but
young people need to be fully engaged.”*

*Karen Pittman,
Executive Director of the Forum*

10^{years}

Moving Ideas ^{to} Impact

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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.

OUR VISION

All children and youth are ready for college, work and life. All families and communities are supportive. All leaders are effective.

OUR MISSION

To create opportunities and incentives for youth and adult leaders to think differently, act differently and act together because they are:

- linked by core beliefs about what is needed,
- guided by a shared sense of accountability,
- girded by compelling data, and
- driven by a common desire to ensure that all children, youth, families and communities have the supports and opportunities they need to succeed.

OUR STRATEGIES

The Forum moves ideas to impact by:

- bringing research, policy and practice knowledge and perspectives into all of its work.
- working with leaders across all systems and sectors from the frontline to the state house, and
- working with partners at the national, state and local levels.

OUR 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 diverse staff of 25 includes researchers, educators, policy analysts, youth work practitioners, business professionals, advocates and communications specialists.

FORUM PROJECTS, PARTNERS & PLACES

The Forum currently leads, co-leads or manages a number of major initiatives, collaborations, joint ventures and affinity groups that are critical to achieving the Forum’s mission.

Signature Initiative

The Ready by 21® Challenge calls on state and local leaders to change the odds for youth by changing the way they do business to ensure that all young people are ready for college, work and life. The five year goal is to have a critical mass of 2000 leaders in 200 communities in every state prepared to set bigger goals, use bolder strategies and be better partners. To achieve this goal, the Forum offers adaptable tools and trainings, builds partnerships with national organizations, works deeply in selected places, and engages private and corporate donors to raise challenge funds.

In 2007, the Forum announced Ready by 21 “Quality Counts” Challenge Sites in 7 cities (Austin, TX; Columbus, IN; Georgetown Divide, CA; Grand Rapids, MI; Indianapolis, IN; Nashville, TN; St. Louis, MO) and 6 states (Iowa, Kentucky, New York, Oklahoma, Rhode Island and Washington State).

The Forum entered 2008 with 6 Ready by 21 National Partners committed to working together to engage and support their members. Our partners are United Way of America, the American Association of School Administrators, America’s Promise Alliance, Corporate Voices for Working Families, the National Collaboration for Youth and the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Joint Ventures

The David P. Weikart Center on Youth Program Quality is a joint venture between the Forum and the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. The Center’s mission is to position point of service quality as a powerful public idea that drives research, policy, practice and public opinion on what it takes to improve the quality of young people’s learning experiences and to increase returns on current investments.

Managed Collaborations

Connect for Kids is the premier vehicle for providing advocates, professionals, researchers, journalists and parents with the information and tools they need to learn about issues affecting children, families and communities and to take action to improve policies and programs. In 2006, Connect for Kids moved under the Forum umbrella and in 2007, Connect for Kids joined forces with Child Advocacy 360.
www.connectforkids.org

Youth Policy Action Center (YPAC) is a web-based platform where young people and their adult allies can take action on a full range of youth issues and where organizations can promote the critical work that they do and causes they champion. YPAC is a collaborative effort of a large number of organizations, including co-founder Mobilize.org and steering committee members First Focus, YouthBuild USA, The Corps Network, National Youth Employment Coalition, and New Ways to Work.
www.youthpolicyactioncenter.org

The Next Generation Youth Work Coalition is a collaborative effort that brings together individuals and organizations dedicated to developing a strong, diverse after-school and youth development workforce that is stable, prepared, supported and committed to the well-being and empowerment of children and youth. NextGen is led by a steering committee of local, state and national leaders in youth development and after school.
www.nextgencoalition.org

Affinity Groups

The Children’s Cabinet and Councils Network strengthens the work of state children’s cabinets and councils by providing tools, resources, training and a peer group through which to tackle challenges and celebrate success in improving child and youth policy coordination and outcomes.

The Youth Council Learning Group provides supports, convening and peer networking opportunities to the staff and leaders of state and local youth policy councils whose members are typically students in their high school and early college years.

A DECADE OF MOVING IDEAS TO IMPACT

Pittman and Irby created the Forum building on key ideas they developed in starting up the Center for Youth Development (1990), the President’s Crime Prevention Council (1994), the International Youth Foundation’s Learning Department (1995) and America’s Promise (1997). The Forum’s ideas and organizational structure have been through several transformations since its inception in 1998.

