



UNITED TO MOVE AMERICA FORWARD

A Policy Playbook from 100+ Social Innovators
to Advance Equity and Opportunity in America





AT A TIME WHEN OUR NATION FEELS
DESPERATELY FRAGMENTED, WE SEE HOPE.

HERE'S WHY.

10,000 Degrees ★ Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors ★ Acelero Learning/Shine Early Learning ★ Aliento ★ Alternative Staffing Alliance ★ America's Promise Alliance ★ AppleTree Institute for Education Innovation ★ Aurora Institute ★ Bard Early Colleges ★ BellXcel ★ Beyond 12 ★ Bottom Line ★ Braven ★ Children's Aid ★ Citizen Schools ★ City Year ★ College Advising Corps ★ College Forward ★ College Possible ★ Compass Working Capital ★ Connecticut Center for Social Innovation ★ Corporation for Supportive Housing ★ CURYJ ★ Diverse Charter Schools Coalition ★ Educators for Excellence ★ EdLoC ★ Encore.org ★ Enlearn ★ Enterprise Community Partners ★ Eye to Eye ★ exalt ★ Family Independence Initiative ★ First 72+ ★ Freedom Project ★ FUSE Corps ★ Generation Citizen ★ Genesys Works ★ GreenLight Fund ★ Highlander Institute ★ Imblaze by Big Picture Learning ★ iMentor ★ Institute for Child Success ★ Jumpstart for Young Children ★ KIPP ★ Leading Educators ★ LEAP Innovations ★ Let's Grow Kids ★ LIFT ★ Local Initiatives Support Corporation ★ Match Education ★ Maycomb Capital ★ Millennial Action Project ★ Mindright ★ Mortar ★ National Board for Professional Teaching Standards ★ National Center for Learning Disabilities ★ New Classrooms Innovation

Uniting Social Entrepreneurs and Policymakers.



Transforming Local Impact Into National Change.

Partners ★ New Leaders ★ New Politics Leadership Academy ★ New Teacher Center ★ Nonprofit Finance Fund ★ Our Voice Nuestra Voz ★ P.S. 305 ★ Parents Amplifying Voices in Education ★ Peace First ★ Peer Forward ★ Peer Health Exchange ★ Per Scholas ★ Pillars ★ POWER ★ PowerMyLearning ★ Public Allies ★ Push Black ★ Reading Partners ★ REDF ★ Roca ★ Root Cause ★ Sacred Generations ★ Service Year Alliance ★ Single Stop ★ Social Entrepreneurship @ the University of Virginia ★ Social Finance US ★ Springboard Collaborative ★ Station1 ★ Teach For America ★ The Learning Accelerator ★ The Michelson 20MM Foundation ★ The Opportunity Network ★ The People ★ The Urban Association of Forestry and Fire Professionals ★ Think of Us ★ Third Sector Capital Partners ★ Transcend, Inc. ★ Transforming Education ★ Turnaround for Children ★ uAspire ★ UnboundEd ★ Valor Collegiate Academies ★ Wyman Center ★ Year Up ★ YouthBuild USA

UNITED TO MOVE AMERICA FORWARD

United to Move America Forward is a policy briefing book intended for candidates and policymakers at all levels of government who are committed to harnessing the power of government to increase opportunity, advance equity, and achieve sustainable change in America. The transformational policy ideas presented in this playbook stem from the groundbreaking work of over 100 social innovators leading results-driven organizations that are solving America's biggest problems in communities across the country every day. Their insights, and the lived experiences of the community members their organizations serve, shape the proposals presented on these pages and offer a blueprint for policymakers to transform local results into lasting national impact.

AMERICA FORWARD

America Forward is the D.C.-based nonpartisan policy initiative of **New Profit**, a pioneering national venture philanthropy organization that invests in a portfolio of breakthrough social entrepreneurs and systems-change initiatives, catalyzes and builds their impact, and transforms how government and philanthropy pursue social change to ensure that all people can thrive.

America Forward unites social innovators with policymakers to advance a public policy agenda that fosters innovation, rewards results, advances equity, catalyzes cross-sector partnerships, and transforms local impact into national change.

We lead the **America Forward Coalition**, a network of over 100 social innovation organizations that champion innovative, effective, and efficient solutions to our country's most pressing social problems. Our Coalition members are achieving measurable outcomes in more than 15,000 communities nationwide; touching the lives of nearly 9 million Americans each year; and driving progress in early childhood development and learning, K-12 education, postsecondary education, workforce development, Pay for Success and evidence-based policy, poverty alleviation, social innovation, national service, criminal justice reform, and public health.

Since 2007, **America Forward's** community of innovators and advocates has played a leading role in driving the national dialogue on social innovation policy. Together, our Coalition organizations have successfully advocated for lasting policy change in education, workforce development, and Pay for Success policy; leveraged \$1.7 billion for social innovation; and driven millions of federal resources toward programs that are achieving measurable results for those who need them most.

Together we stand **United to Move America Forward** and offer this policy playbook to advance equity and expand opportunity in America.



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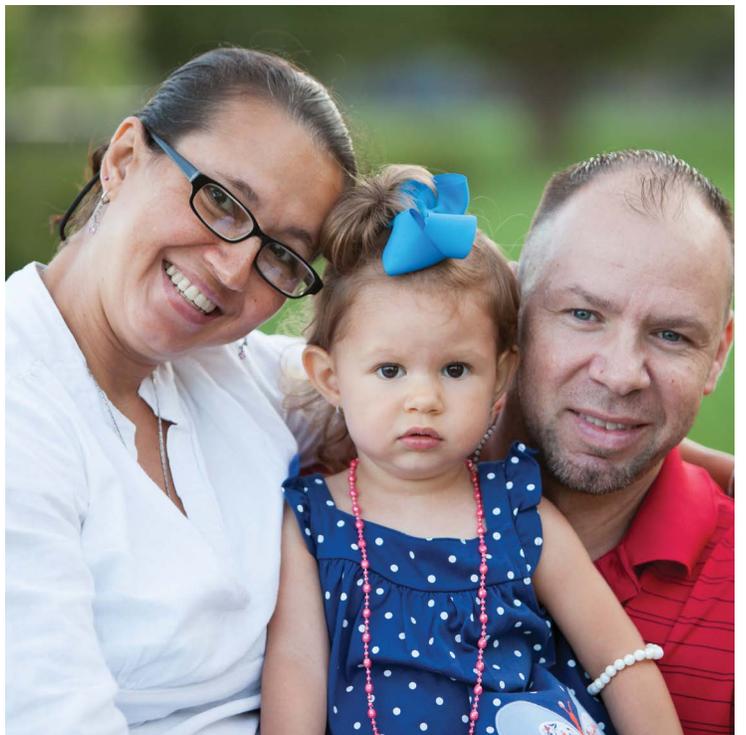
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LIFT



**UNITED
TO MOVE
AMERICA
FORWARD**



UNITED TO MOVE AMERICA FORWARD

**AT A TIME WHEN OUR NATION FEELS DESPERATELY FRAGMENTED,
WHEN THE TIES THAT BIND US TO ONE ANOTHER ARE FRAYING,
THREATENING TO TEAR OUR DEMOCRACY APART, WE SEE HOPE...**



PHOTO BY
PEER FORWARD

WE SEE HOPE IN THE YOUNG PEOPLE who, denied opportunity due to racism, poverty, and systems rigged against them, find a way to achieve their potential and lead change in their communities.

WE SEE HOPE IN THE FAMILIES who, after losing their livelihood, health, or home, still dream of a different future; find ways to scrape, save, and struggle their way to a better life; and help others learn from their experiences.

WE SEE HOPE IN THE PEOPLE who, working in rule-bound government agencies, serving as elected officials, or driving reform from the outside, find ways to renew outdated policies and champion programs that deliver results and change people's lives.

WE SEE HOPE IN THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS who work every day in every corner of our country to run programs, reform systems, and make the success of under-resourced students and families not the exception, but the rule.

AND WE ESPECIALLY SEE HOPE IN THE 100+ AMERICA FORWARD ORGANIZATIONS that believe in the young people, the families, and the government—the collective expression of our democracy.

America Forward organizations are revolutionizing the way children learn. Our social entrepreneurs are reenvisioning what happens in and out of the classroom, achieving unprecedented results for students who face the biggest barriers to success.

America Forward organizations are helping families thrive. Our social entrepreneurs are embracing equity

strategies to pivot away from traditional anti-poverty approaches, leaning into the resourcefulness and aspirations of low-income people to help them secure a better future for themselves and their children.

America Forward organizations are finding ways to restore confidence in government and inspire public engagement. Our social entrepreneurs are paving the way for reformers to rework public programs to achieve measurable results and channel civic activism into lasting change.

What's more, the last decade has brought new tools, capabilities, and approaches that hold the promise of radical transformation. Science has taught us the ways our astonishingly malleable brains develop, respond to context, and learn. Data tell us which programs and interventions work and which ones don't. Technology makes information available, and it simplifies communication, allowing for networking and navigation. And people who are closest to our most pressing problems, whose lived experiences have built critical expertise, have more seats at decision-making tables, developing new strategies and crafting solutions that work.

Thanks to these advances, we are poised to unite to make breakthrough change—to make our nation a place that stands for a fundamental value that no matter where you start you can grow up to be anyone and anything you want to be, if you work hard enough and have the supports you need. A place that confronts and redresses historic injustices. A place that creates the conditions where opportunity is rooted in equity and second chances are real.



Yet we know that today this vision is more myth than reality. Nearly half of Americans who grow up poor remain poor, while less than 1% of Americans who were never poor as children are poor in middle age. Black, Latinx,¹ and Native children are much more likely to live in poor families than are White children. Although only 14% of children in the U.S. are Black, more than half of the children who experience persistent poverty are Black, and a disproportionate share of persistently poor communities are rural. Only 3% of children who spend half their childhoods in poverty will go on to graduate from college. And despite many efforts across five decades, poverty levels, as measured by earned income, have barely budged and remain unacceptably high.

The reasons for the profound, stubborn inequality and inequity in our nation are many and complex. Some go back decades, some centuries. But they are refreshed every day when a child attends a low-performing school or cannot go to college. Or a working family needs food, housing, and medical care but can't afford all three. Or adults facing obstacles, struggling to turn their lives around, have little hope for a second chance at a successful future.

That's not the America we want. And it's not the America we have to accept.

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We can't change the past. **But we can secure a future that meaningfully stands for inclusive, equitable opportunity, if we embrace what's best about America rather than what's worst.** That means confronting historical injustices while building a culture of equity, empathy, responsibility, ingenuity, innovation, accountability, excellence, and progress. It means saying goodbye to division, gridlock, and greed. In the words of the late civil rights activist Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, "we need a country as good as its promise," in order to start a new chapter in the American story. And it's clear that, in the words of late Senator John McCain, "our shared values define us more than our differences."

1. The terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably by the Census Bureau and throughout this document to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish, and other Hispanic descent; they may be of any race. This document refers to this population as "Latinx" to represent the diversity of gender identities and expressions that are present in the community.

WHO WE ARE

This book offers a path forward to create a nation where the place a person starts does not determine the place that person will finish. It draws on the insights of the over **100 results-driven innovators who are part of the America Forward Coalition** and builds on the progress they are making, driving change and improving lives in over 15,000 communities around the country every day.

America Forward is a project of **New Profit**, a groundbreaking venture philanthropy fund founded two decades ago to support social entrepreneurs building lasting local solutions to some of our country's most pressing and intractable social problems. In 2007, **America Forward—New Profit's bipartisan policy initiative—was launched to unite social entrepreneurs with policymakers and leverage this local impact into national change.** Together, our Coalition members advocate for policies that advance equity, foster innovation, reward results, and catalyze cross-sector partnerships. **Our ultimate vision was—and remains—audacious: to scale the most innovative and effective solutions, and to drive systemic change to expand equity and increase opportunity across America.**

Since America Forward's founding, we have seen a seismic shift in the social innovation landscape. Some of our organizations are led by social entrepreneurs working to bring their programs and interventions to scale. Some of our organizations are working to reform the systems in which their programs operate. And some of our leaders are systems entrepreneurs who play the role of "orchestrators," fostering collaboration and providing expertise that helps actors in a system to better understand their roles and see how they can "rewire" their work to alter the behavior of a system as a whole. Today, our full array of Coalition members



delivering effective innovations in education, workforce development, and poverty alleviation are working with policymakers on both sides of the aisle on an exciting range of innovative programs and policies.

Together, the America Forward Coalition has unlocked over \$1.7 billion for social innovation and driven hundreds of millions of federal dollars toward programs that are achieving measurable results for those who need them most. Our community helped craft the Social Innovation Fund (the first federal tiered-evidence innovation fund); influenced the creation of a White House Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation; and successfully advocated for landmark federal workforce and education legislation, elevating the critical role that nonprofits play in helping our education institutions meet the varied needs of students and driving federal resources to programs that deliver meaningful education and workforce results. We stood at the forefront of the evidence-based policymaking movement, and led the field on national Pay for Success policy, creating a new breakthrough federal outcomes fund through the bipartisan Social Impact Partnerships to Pay for Results Act, enacted in 2018, which provides \$100 million in funding to pay for measurable impact and strategies that deliver real outcomes and improve lives.

But we know that despite these wins, millions of Americans are stuck in poverty. They, and their children, still have little hope of moving into the middle class. **That's not the America we, or anyone, want.**

WHAT WE BELIEVE

IN THIS BOOK, we draw from the work of our Coalition members to underscore the three essential lessons we must learn as a country to secure a better future: how children learn, how to create conditions so all adults and families can thrive, and how to restore belief in government by equipping reformers to deliver results.

HOW CHILDREN LEARN

1

Science tells us that the brain grows, responds, rewires, and reshapes itself based on how it is stimulated throughout life, with several critical periods: early childhood, early adolescence, and the period known as emerging adulthood (late teens through early 20s). This means that ability is not static: Skills exist in a potential state in all children. We also know that all children learn differently, so we must provide personalized learning environments so that all children can thrive. These environments should take into account that learning is multidimensional—that social, emotional, motivational, and cognitive growth are connected. They should prioritize strong development of relationships, provide rich instructional experiences, inspire a sense of safety and belonging, and offer integrated supports, while intentionally developing the skills, mindsets, and habits that are key to successful learning. **Families—and students themselves—must be a part of any solution to support and cultivate lifelong learners who can adapt to and thrive in the tectonically shifting economy and world.**

What children learn in the early years becomes the foundation for future learning. As young people enter adulthood, their brains continue to develop and their experiences in and out of formal education settings continue to impact all aspects of their growth. These experiences also enable young adults to apply what they have learned, develop a sense of purpose while refining personal and career goals, and further build essential

workplace skills. Learning experiences for emerging adults can happen during military, volunteer, or national service; on the job or through internships; in college classrooms or workforce development programs; through extracurricular, athletic, or civic organizations; and in many other settings. As with children, interaction with peers and more-experienced adults provides young adults essential learning experiences and helps them develop the confidence they need to navigate social and workplace settings.

Unfortunately, from early childhood through adulthood, while many positive factors can accelerate learning, negative experiences, including trauma and poverty-related adversity, can impede learning absent specific interventions. Faced with these hurdles, how educators approach the learning process can make all the difference—they can have dramatic positive effects or compound the challenges students face.

Faced with these hurdles, how educators approach the learning process can make all the difference — they can have transformative, positive effects, or compound the challenges students face.

Across these ages and stages, America Forward organizations, and in some cases whole communities, have embraced innovative evidence-informed strategies to foster learning for learners of all ages, especially those facing the greatest challenges. Building from a deep understanding of how learning happens, our organizations prepare educators—and families—to help students learn and advocate for what children need. These organizations create environments for learning that change the equation for low-income students and respond to the unique needs of every young person. And these organizations bring the community in, to meet the broader needs of youth and greatly expand the resources available to them. **Policy proposals in this book flow from that on-the-ground experience, with the goal of making learning happen for everyone, no matter their background or individual needs.**

HOW TO CREATE CONDITIONS SO ALL ADULTS AND FAMILIES CAN THRIVE

2

All families have goals and dreams, but families do not have equal means to achieve them. Much as learning involves the whole person, the path to economic success is paved with many interrelated factors, including employment; savings that enable families to respond to crises (or to seize opportunities); and the ability to find and pay for good and reliable health care, child care, transportation, safe and appropriate housing, and resources to access other critical services when needed. **That road is exponentially harder to navigate for people living in poverty.**

Contrary to common stereotypes, low-income families are resourceful, and many find ways to improve their own financial and general well-being. While some do slip back—a rent hike, illness, arrest, or even a cut in work hours could send a whole family into a downward spiral—low-income families are resilient. Nonetheless, we know systemic barriers constantly challenge families’ abilities to leverage their assets, strengths, and capabilities.

Innovative organizations are breaking down these barriers. America Forward Coalition organizations create the conditions that enable low-income families to achieve goals they set for themselves. We have watched what happens when families can control their choices, rather than having others direct them. Armed with the insights gleaned from the families we work with, America Forward Coalition organizations catalyze change in close partnership with communities. Policy proposals in this book flow from that learning, with the goal of taking these lessons to scale.

PHOTO BY
10,000 DEGREES





HOW TO RESTORE BELIEF IN GOVERNMENT BY EQUIPPING REFORMERS TO DELIVER RESULTS **3**

Too often, government agencies operate under a set of norms that focuses on compliance rather than outcomes, resulting in disconnected programs that can't evolve to achieve better results. But that's not true of every publicly funded effort. Government works well when it gets the right people striving toward solutions together, in and outside of government. Government works better when it looks at the full context of a problem to diagnose and address it. Government works best when it asks those closest to the problem to design strategies and provides flexibility to implement them. And government reaches even higher levels of impact when it uses data to track outcomes and then creates a learning loop that enables innovation and pushes resources where they will achieve the most effective results.

Many barriers inhibit public agencies from acting this way. But across this country, **America Forward Coalition**

organizations are leading a movement to empower changemakers in and outside of public agencies to do what it takes to make government deliver results and work better for everyone. We've helped policymakers and agencies develop Pay for Success strategies tying funding to results, integrate disconnected programs, use data effectively, and listen to the students and families they serve. As a movement for measurable outcomes evolves, our Coalition is leading the way, catalyzing change across government by making better outcomes for people, families, and communities central to public funding, through an approach that includes those closest to the problems and puts equity first. Policy proposals in this book flow from that learning, with the goal of changing how government operates not just in a handful of pilots, but as an operating norm.

All of these lessons, gleaned from the experiences of our America Forward Coalition organizations, point the way to a better, more equitable future.

Our country faces other big problems that we don't tackle here. But if we work to change the systems that control how learning happens, how families succeed, and how governments work, we could change the trajectory of the country.

We invite others to join us, United to Move America Forward.

HOW DO WE START?

Government, nonprofits, business, philanthropy, and ordinary people must work together to change the practices, power dynamics, and policies, as well as the resource flows, relationships, and mental models that perpetuate problems and hold the key to sustainable change. We need:

PUBLIC LEADERS WHO TAKE ACTION — AND CARE ABOUT OUTCOMES

We can't innovate to get better results if policymakers won't work across the aisle to solve urgent problems. For example, although there is broad consensus that we have a burgeoning college debt crisis, the major federal legislation addressing higher education access and affordability was last updated in 2008. It was targeted to be reauthorized in 2013 but is now years overdue. In the meantime, student debt has grown by a staggering \$1.3 trillion. This inaction has huge societal implications. Student debt is the reason many millennials are deciding not to have children or buy a home. It also keeps the wealth gap between Black and White families startlingly wide. Today, young White families have 12 times as much wealth as their Black counterparts. Remarkably, student debt accounts for more than half of this wealth gap. **We need public leaders who recognize the urgency of problems like these, look clear-eyed at the data, and refuse to let politics stand in the way of finding solutions to this and many other problems that can only be solved by a government that actually works.**

Nor can we expect better results if public officials will not recognize and lift up the **central and largely unrecognized role that nonprofit innovators are playing to fill the gaps**, knit together solutions, and reform the systems that affect the lives of the most under-resourced people in our nation. Where these organizations receive public funding too often comes with unnecessary restrictions and at a high cost. Many solutions are right in front of us. But it is not until public leaders summon the courage and wisdom to follow the data that we will make real traction on stubborn social problems by unleashing these solutions.



PHOTO BY
LEAP INNOVATIONS

WE INVITE OTHERS TO JOIN US, UNITED TO MOVE AMERICA FORWARD.

- PUBLIC LEADERS WHO TAKE ACTION — AND CARE ABOUT OUTCOMES
- CITIZENS WHO VOTE, VOLUNTEER — AND RUN FOR OFFICE
- BUSINESSES THAT PROVIDE GOOD JOBS — AND DO WHAT'S RIGHT
- PHILANTHROPY THAT FUNDS INNOVATORS — AND ADVOCACY
- ORGANIZATIONS THAT FIND SOLUTIONS — AND CHANGE SYSTEMS
- TRANSFORMATIONAL COLLABORATION



PHOTO BY
LET'S GROW KIDS

CITIZENS WHO VOTE, VOLUNTEER — AND RUN FOR OFFICE

Rather than wringing our hands, we ought to be rolling up our sleeves to build the government we need. Public institutions of all types need the engagement of the public as well as the talented staff to make a difference. But just 2% of Americans, and even fewer Black and Latinx Americans and women, have ever run for political office at any level of government. Less than 1% of Americans serve in the military or civilian national service each year; less than 3% have ever served. Only 7% of the federal workforce is under 30, and the government struggles to hire young staff. Six in 10 Americans did not engage in any political activity during the 2018 election, and those who did engage were likely to be college educated and White. Even though voter turnout in the 2018 midterm election increased across all demographic groups, only half of all voters turned out to vote.

We should not cede the responsibilities of our democracy—and the power that comes with it—to a subset of Americans. By signing up and taking action, we can get the government we need—one that is responsive to the needs and knowledge of those currently underrepresented.

BUSINESSES THAT PROVIDE GOOD JOBS — AND DO WHAT'S RIGHT

We need business to not only provide jobs and make investments, but also be contributing members of the community. Voters want companies to act responsibly but doubt they will act in the public's best interest. Sadly, trust in all types of institutions, including corporations, is at an all-time low.

Supreme Court decisions have given corporations many of the rights of citizens in this country—the right to own property, to equal protection of the law, and to speak out, “contributing to the ‘discussion, debate, and the dissemination of information and ideas’ that the First Amendment seeks to foster.”² **What if corporations also shared the ethical responsibilities of human citizens—not just to pay taxes and obey the law, but to make a sincere and conscious effort to leave the world better than they found it?** We can't build the country we deserve without all sectors stepping up, doing what's right, and working together in common purpose. Our organizations stand ready to partner with companies that share our commitment to a better world.

2. Citizens United v. Federal Election Comm'n, 558 U.S. 310 (2010).

PHILANTHROPY THAT FUNDS INNOVATORS — AND ADVOCACY

The diverse individuals and organizations that make up America philanthropy play a critical role determining which nonprofit organizations grow and thrive, or wither and die. Most philanthropists take a well-worn path, giving to individuals, institutions, and interventions they know well and understand. **Too few philanthropists are willing to take risks on people or programs that are outside of their circles, especially those proximate to problems they hope to solve.** Too few are willing to offer the long-term flexible funding that programs need to build their capacity, and too few will partner proactively, sharing their social capital and professional expertise. Too few look to address root causes and support systems change. And way too few are willing to support advocacy efforts, even though the law permits nonprofits to educate—and lobby—policymakers.

If we are to spur, nurture, and sustain the solutions that will secure the promise of America, we need philanthropy to go beyond business as usual, take risks, and resource the results-oriented people and programs poised to do what it takes.

ORGANIZATIONS THAT FIND SOLUTIONS — AND CHANGE SYSTEMS

Across America, results-driven innovative organizations, including those in our Coalition, are finding solutions to the most intractable problems we face by tapping the tools that business uses to develop better products, reach new markets, influence consumer choices, and create new narratives that open up possibilities for communities. These organizations are using data, listening to the people they serve, and iterating their offerings to get better results. And they are doing this, for the most part, without the kind of unrestricted funding that businesses are able to access.

To our fellow innovators, we say “keep it up,” and don’t stop trying to change the conditions that prevent you from taking your insights “public.” **That means doing the hard work of democracy—speaking out, showing up, and sticking with it even after setbacks.** On top of the groundbreaking work you do every day in communities, you must educate others, and advocate to seek impact on a higher level and make a difference at the scale that is needed.

TRANSFORMATIONAL COLLABORATION

While all of these players can make progress on their own, solving the complex problems our nation faces requires united action by communities; federal, state, local, and tribal government agencies; businesses; philanthropists; nonprofit organizations; and people of all stripes. We’ve got to get better at setting bold goals, valuing innovation and results, and marshaling all available forces to find solutions, measure progress, and redirect as necessary. We’ve got to go beyond pilots and proof points to systemic solutions that are scalable and sustainable. To find these solutions, we’ve got to marry the expertise represented by the people proximate to the problems with the experience of results-oriented nonprofits and lessons gleaned from data. And then we must spread them through market strategies and the scale potential of government. **We all need to go all in.**

That kind of unity is what this book is about.

A PLAYBOOK FOR UNITED ACTION

The following sections offer a playbook for policymakers who see the need for unity, and who believe that prosperity is the right of anyone willing to work for it, not just those born into it. The playbook draws on the lessons that our fellow innovators in the America Forward Coalition have learned throughout decades working in thousands of diverse communities and partnering across sectors, including every level of government.

THE AMERICA FORWARD COMMUNITY OF INNOVATORS STANDS READY TO WORK WITH FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL LEADERS, AS WE JOIN TOGETHER, UNITED TO MOVE AMERICA FORWARD.

PHOTO BY
COLLEGE POSSIBLE



DEFINITIONS

THROUGHOUT THIS BOOK, we talk about a few concepts that deserve further explanation. We include this section for reference because there are many definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion, innovation, social entrepreneurs, systems change, and Pay for Success, and we want to share the way we interpret these concepts.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, encompassing the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. While diversity is often used in reference to race, ethnicity, and gender, we embrace a broader definition of diversity that also includes age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. Our definition also includes diversity of thought: ideas, perspectives, and values. We also recognize that individuals affiliate with multiple identities.

Equity is the state where predictability of success or failure is not correlated with identity or cultural markers such as race, gender, and sexual orientation. Equity strives to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups, and increase justice and fairness within the procedures

and processes of institutions or systems, as well as in their distribution of resources. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities within our society.

Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. It's important to note that while an inclusive group is by definition diverse, a diverse group isn't always inclusive. Increasingly, recognition of unconscious or "implicit bias" helps organizations to be deliberate about addressing issues of inclusivity.

Definitions adapted from the Association of American Colleges & Universities, and the independent sector

INNOVATION

The concept of “innovation” is poorly understood in the context of education and social service programs. Most often, it is talked about as a state of being with an emphasis on the phase of development (e.g., a new program or organization) rather than an ongoing process that is essential to improving, continuously, the way we solve problems. Such a process requires several interrelated components:

1. Inventing - discovering an insight into how to do something better or more cost-effectively;
2. Testing - determining if the invention is really an improvement over the status quo;
3. Implementing - trying the invention out on a small scale, rigorously measuring impact, and making adjustments;
4. Investing - providing resources that will enable a successful invention to take hold on a large scale; and
5. Improving - beginning the cycle again with new rounds of testing that offer innovative insights.

This process may be better understood in the business world, where new value is created every day through innovation and market forces. There, the concept is simple: A product, service, or process is invented and tested. If successful, it attracts investment to take it to market, and then to expand its reach. Profits gleaned from the invention can be reinvested in research and development efforts that will result in continuous improvement or inventions that will displace the original one.

Now think about the social sector, where innovations occur every day in both large and small, new and established, organizations. Some of these innovations will be breakthrough strategies, while others will be less successful. Ideally, organizations would have the resources to learn from failures and make improvements that lead to higher levels of impact.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

While many definitions of “social entrepreneur” exist, the words of the late Greg Dees, a founder of social entrepreneurship as an academic field, sum up this complicated concept well:

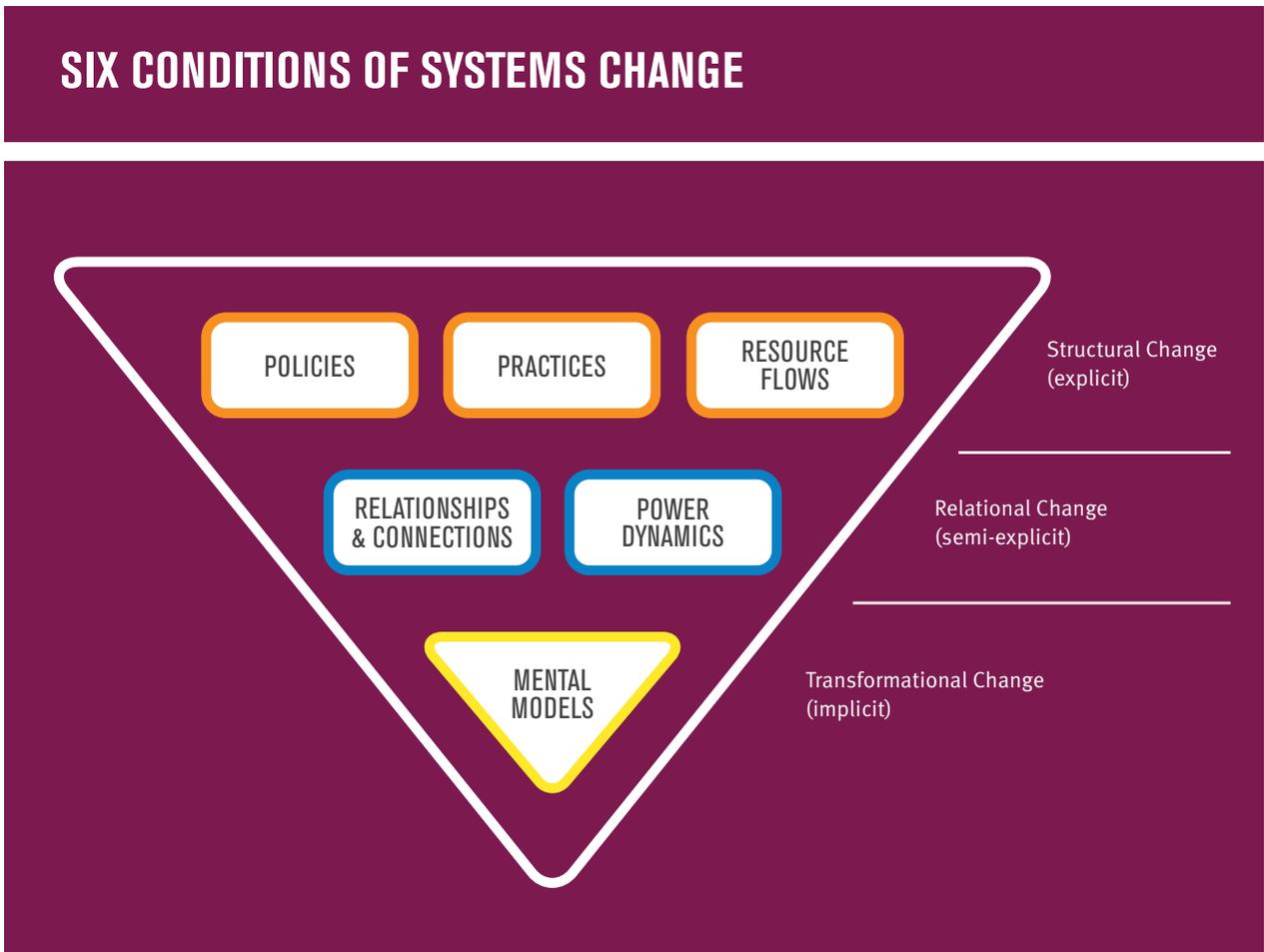
Social entrepreneurs play the role of change agents in the social sector by:

- Adopting a mission to create and sustain social value (not just private value);
- Recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission;
- Engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning;
- Acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand; and
- Exhibiting heightened accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created.

SYSTEMS CHANGE

Some social entrepreneurs and change agents are “system entrepreneurs,” who recognize the full set of conditions that hold social problems in place. They play the role of “orchestrator” to spark shifts in the behavior of the system as a whole. They do this by fostering collaborations and providing expertise that helps actors in a system to better understand their roles, see how they can shift elements of a system, and together “rewire” relationships within that system in order to transform it.

This systems-change paradigm recognizes explicit policies, practices, and resource flows that work together to hold problems in place at a structural level. It also acknowledges the way these conditions interact with a deeper, more implicit set—relationships, power dynamics, and mental models—that collectively reinforces and holds in place inequitable status quos. These conditions, all of which interact to reinforce each other, are depicted in the “Six Conditions of Systems Change” schematic below:



Source: Kania, J., Kramer, M., & Senge, P. (2018). THE WATER OF SYSTEMS CHANGE. Retrieved from <http://efc.issuelab.org/resources/30855/30855.pdf>

PAY FOR SUCCESS AND PAY FOR SUCCESS FINANCING

“Pay for Success” (PFS) is a policy approach to catalyze systems change by making better outcomes for people, families, and communities central to public funding. PFS emphasizes innovation, prevention, accurate data, and “PFS contracting,” which makes payments in part or entirely based on measurable outcomes.

OVERVIEW OF PAY FOR SUCCESS (PFS) MODEL



Pay for Success financing is a tool through which mission-driven investors, including philanthropies, fund services and are later repaid (usually, though not always, by a government entity) through success payments, if those services achieve key outcomes as measured by an independent evaluator. This approach is sometimes referred to as “social impact bonds.”



A growing number of PFS projects have featured no PFS financing and no external investors.

Both PFS and PFS financing are part of a larger “outcomes movement” that seeks to transform how governments partner with communities and direct dollars with a human-centered, equity-driven lens.

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10,000 DEGREES



PART I: HOW CHILDREN LEARN



PART I: HOW CHILDREN LEARN



IF YOUR FAMILY HAS MONEY IN AMERICA, THE ODDS ARE THAT ONE DAY YOU WILL TOO. AND EDUCATION WILL LIKELY PLAY A BIG ROLE.

In all likelihood, you will go to a good preschool and have an enriching home environment, attend high-quality elementary and secondary schools your parents choose for you, and go on to college. If you need extra help along the way—a tutor or assistance applying to college—your family or school will help you find what you need. You will spend summers engaged in enriching experiences tailored to your interests. When it comes time to find a job or internship, you likely will have a social network that can connect you to opportunities. And if you veer from the traditional education pathway, your family will help you find your footing by providing you with counseling and other services.

BUT IF YOU HAVE FEW FINANCIAL RESOURCES, THE ODDS WILL BE STACKED AGAINST YOU. AND EDUCATION WILL LIKELY PLAY A BIG ROLE.

If there is availability, you might attend Head Start or another early childhood program. But if not, or if the program you attend is under-resourced and below quality standards, you may start school without the vocabulary and social-emotional skills you need to thrive in the classroom and read well by third grade. You might attend a good elementary school with high-quality teachers. But if not, you could find yourself in a school that struggles to hire and retain good teachers, where many students have experienced trauma, go to school hungry, or need services that the school can't afford to offer. If you need a tutor, an afterschool program, or something enriching to do over the summer, you might not get it. And although you might like to go to college, your guidance counselor (if your high school has one) may be juggling nearly 500 students and unable to offer personalized support to help you through the process. If you do graduate from high school, but have no college degree or professional connections, you might have

trouble finding work that will pay enough to live on. If you do manage to apply to college and gain acceptance, your limited financial means, and work and family responsibilities, could cause you to drop out without a degree but with plenty of student loans to pay back.

The numbers confirm this story with discouraging consistency. The privilege of wealth, when combined with race and other demographics, confers not only major advantages in your upward life trajectory, but also the ability to take risks and recover from mistakes.

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Children who have never lived in poverty are 10 times more likely to complete a college degree by age 25 and twice as likely to be consistently employed as young adults, compared with children who grew up persistently poor. And, children who grow up in poverty and manage to beat the odds and earn a college degree still see a substantially smaller increase in their lifetime earnings, compared to their peers from upper- or middle-class families.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY.

The following sections examine the ages and stages on the journey from birth to adulthood through the lens of how learning happens, what children need to develop and thrive, the value of providing comprehensive supports along the way, and the importance of putting families and learners in the driver's seat.

YOUNG CHILDREN

OUR GOAL

We strive to ensure that every young child in America enters the K-12 system ready to learn with the skills, mindsets, emotional supports, strong adult relationships, and stability they need to succeed in school and in life.

WHO WE ARE

The America Forward Coalition includes organizations engaged in on-the-ground work, serving early learners, their families, and communities as educators, advocates, case managers, and organizers. Some of our organizations provide coaching and development opportunities for early educators, while others run center-based or family-based high-quality early education programs. And some of our organizations support students and teachers in classrooms in underserved communities by leveraging community members around them, including college students and experienced older adults.

WHY WE CARE

What happens in the first years of life has an impact across a lifetime. Experiences from birth to age 8 affect the development of the brain's architecture, providing the foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health.

WHERE LEARNING HAPPENS

Early learning begins at home through a wide range of experiences in varied settings. Engaging and playful learning experiences help young children make sense of the world around them; develop social and cognitive skills; mature emotionally; and gain the self-confidence, self-control, and critical thinking skills required to engage creatively and effectively in new experiences and environments. Connecting with others through caring, consistent relationships grounded in trust—and through dynamic experiences that develop our youngest learners cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically—allows them to thrive today and puts them on a path to success for the future.

THE PROBLEM

Children from low-income families, especially those who have experienced trauma, face the greatest risk of having adverse childhood experiences impact their long-term development and growth. Without early interventions and opportunities for engaging, interactive, experiential learning and responsive social interaction, children will not develop the “learning to learn” skills they need to be ready for and succeed in school. Many early childhood programs are woefully under-resourced and pushed to adopt too narrow a programmatic frame, focusing only on academic goals rather than the needs of the whole child. Too many children begin life with unfavorable social and economic circumstances that follow them into adulthood. Their families are afforded few choices, and those they are offered may lack in quality or fail to meet all their needs.

THE SOLUTION

Children who live in the most challenging circumstances can make the most significant gains in their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development if they have well-supported families and access to high-quality early childhood development and education environments and services that prioritize safety and belonging, include trauma-informed approaches, and emphasize family engagement. Substantively rich curricula and playful instructional experiences, positive relationships, and the intentional development of foundational social and emotional skills in early childhood (such as self-regulation) make a profound difference. Well-designed facilities and integrated supports, including educational media and other technological solutions, also play an important role in increasing learning, ensuring equity, and encouraging all-important family engagement.

America Forward Coalition organizations employ a range of specific strategies that can change outcomes for low-income young children.

For example, the **Institute for Child Success’** Hello Family initiative seeks to improve outcomes for young children and their families by providing a continuum of evidence-based services for all children born in the city of Spartanburg, South Carolina, from prenatal care through age 5. With initial federal funding from the Social Innovation Fund, the Hello Family initiative is a Pay for Success financing model, in which private investors provide upfront capital for the delivery of services and are repaid, plus interest, by a government or philanthropic payor if mutually agreed upon outcomes are achieved. The initiative encompasses three programs: BirthMatters, which provides community-based doulas to educate and support young low-income mothers through home visits and other supports, from the time mothers are 24 weeks pregnant until each baby is 6 months old; Family Connects, which provides nurses to visit mothers and newborns in their homes regardless of income, assesses families for potential risks, and connects them with community resources; and Triple P (Positive Parenting Program), which offers community-level communications campaigns, along with individual sessions with families, to equip parents with the skills and confidence they need to be self-sufficient in helping their children realize their potential. Hello Family measurement outcomes include reductions in cesarean-section deliveries, neonatal intensive care unit admissions, low birth weight births, infant emergency medical care utilization, and substantiated cases of child maltreatment, and increased breastfeeding at birth.

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors, a program that serves and honors parents of young children, similarly focuses on the primary role that families play in the development and education of young children. Findings from a rigorous evaluation reveal how, with relatively few resources, an evidenced-informed, culturally relevant, and well-managed effort can make a difference in key parenting behaviors associated with academic success. The program has set ambitious outcome goals that include leadership development for parents, developed through a 10-week program

that focuses on how to foster children's learning, respond to children's emotional needs, keep children physically healthy, and advocate for children's well-being beginning at home and into school. Participating parents gain knowledge about high-quality child care and education settings, and improve their ability to plan and set goals for their children. Parents also gain an appreciation for their role as models for their children. Importantly, evaluation evidence shows these practices appear to be sustained over time.

Children's Aid, which serves more than 1,000 children through home-based and center-based programs in New York City, also recognizes the value of providing targeted interventions to children during their earliest years of life. While helping children develop a greater sense of self, a respect for others, and an enduring love of learning are the guiding principles of its work with children ages 0-5, Children's Aid also ensures that parents have the resources, knowledge, and supports they need to navigate the first stages of their child's development. The Children's Aid model is characterized by high-quality, research-based curricula; low student-to-teacher ratios; professional development and academic coaching for staff; a built-in mechanism for engaging parents as partners in their children's development; and ensuring children and families receive wraparound supports to meet their full needs. Early childhood families also benefit from the added value of year-round services with extended day options and healthy meal services.

Targeting 3- and 4-year-olds, **AppleTree** operates preschool charter schools in the District of Columbia, enabling over 3,400 children to develop the social, emotional, and cognitive foundations they need to thrive in school. Research shows that classrooms using AppleTree's Every Child Ready program see statistically significant gains in students' academic performance in early math and language and literacy skills as a result of the instructional method, which emphasizes multiple domains of learning, including early science, math, and social-emotional development. Compared to non-AppleTree peers, AppleTree alums recognize 25% more letters in kindergarten, score 20 points higher on oral reading tests in first grade, and score 70% higher in oral reading tests by second grade. AppleTree makes its approach available to other programs through personalized, ongoing professional development.

Acelero Learning provides early childhood education and family engagement services, all of which are focused on closing the achievement gap for thousands of Head Start children and families across the country. Like AppleTree, Acelero Learning provides direct services, serving 5,000 students in four states. Students tested after two years in Acelero programs reach gains that are nearly double those of the best national sample on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT). These are among the largest-known recorded gains for a Head Start program. In addition, Acelero supports other Head Start providers through its Shine Assist program, which offers hands-on training, access to Acelero's proprietary tools, and the use of its Shine Insight data system.

Combining advocacy with service delivery, **Let's Grow Kids** works statewide to secure affordable access to high-quality child care for all Vermont families. By providing child care programs with strategic grants and customized expert support, Let's Grow Kids increases the capacity of the high-quality early care and learning system statewide, and its focused efforts working with the early childhood educator workforce are growing a pipeline of qualified early educators with clear pathways to advancement. In addition, the organization mobilizes Vermonters from all walks of life to call for policy change and increased investment to create and sustain a high-quality birth to age 5 system. In 2019, this work led to state policy change that expanded financial support for low-income families accessing child care, and it secured increased scholarship funding for early educators.

Other innovators similarly develop a pipeline of future early childhood educators while adding capacity to classrooms. With support from AmeriCorps, **Jumpstart** recruits work-study college students and other volunteers to provide high-quality services to children in Head Start and other community-based preschools twice a week over a 20-week period. By providing students and volunteers with training, coaching, and support, Jumpstart ensures that its members provide children with high-quality, developmentally appropriate experiences and supportive interactions. Jumpstart's curriculum provides deep focus on key areas of oral language development, including specific attention to social-emotional language skills. Results from a recent comparison study found that Jumpstart children make 1.5 times greater gains in important literacy skills compared to those who don't receive the Jumpstart program. An added bonus: Three

out of four Jumpstart Corps members plan to pursue careers in education or public service, and many choose to pursue a career in early education and care.

Encore.org's Gen2Gen initiative similarly seeks to bring new human resources to support young children, their parents, teachers, and caregivers by asking older generations to stand up for younger ones and creating a new norm for later life. When older adults spend time with young children, research shows multiple benefits for both. As part of its effort to engage leaders and activate people age 50+ to step up and help kids who need champions, Encore.org inspires and supports innovators finding new ways to tap experienced talent to help children thrive. Encore.org's newest initiative, Early Childhood Legacy Corps, shines a light on the best innovations and encourages their adoption across America.

Recognizing the importance that physical environment plays in supporting the quality of early learning programs and healthy early childhood development, Rhode Island **Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)** operates the Rhode Island Child Care and Early Learning Facilities Fund, which since 2001, has invested \$20.6 million in planning and developing 164 high-performing early childhood facilities serving over 10,000 children in neighborhoods across Rhode Island. This innovative public-private partnership prioritizes support for projects that expand access to affordable, quality child care opportunities for low-income and high-needs children and families, while helping to develop the business capacity of early learning providers.

SYSTEMS

Multiple systems and government programs are intended to help young children living in poverty, including Head Start, the Child Care Development Fund, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), state and local public schools with pre-K programs, the child welfare system, and tax credits. AmeriCorps and the Higher Education Act also support early childhood programs by providing adult support and professional development.



PHOTO BY
JUMPSTART

POLICY PROPOSALS

1. CREATE AN “EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCELERATOR FUND.”

Support universal high-quality early childhood programming in persistently poor communities.

Imagine an early learning system that has a place for every child, including those whose families cannot pay, and is responsive to every child’s diverse needs. It starts by recognizing the primary role that families play, and uses culturally appropriate and effective ways to help them support children’s learning, understand their options, and make choices for their children. It offers every child a learning environment that is right for them, whose quality is supported through ongoing teacher professional development and aimed at cognitive, social, emotional, and other skills that lead to school-readiness. The system is organized based on clear, measurable outcomes agreed upon by members of the community, including families of young children, who provide expertise and leadership in the system.

To increase the number of places with universal early childhood programming that looks like this, **we need an Early Childhood Accelerator Fund that makes grants to states, in partnership with specific communities** that have high percentages of families living in pervasive poverty. Communities receiving funding would be those that are ready to advance this vision using the federal, state, and local public and private resources available to them, based on a plan to provide universal access to quality programs for all low-income children. Plans should include measurable goals, developed in conjunction with local families; engage a wide variety of early childhood programs; and identify an “accelerator” institution that will work with all providers to improve their quality based on evidence-based practices. They should take into account the needs of the whole child, and integrate trauma-informed practices to support young learners’ cognitive, social, and emotional health and development. While every plan would be uniquely

responsive to individual community needs, each would also build on a growing base of knowledge, informed by innovation and research, so that all communities can adopt effective practices that invest in and engage our youngest learners.

2. STRENGTHEN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE.

Fund a comprehensive strategy to expand, diversify, and raise the education levels of early childhood teachers, particularly those working in federally subsidized programs.

A growing body of evidence links well-trained and supported early childhood personnel with the achievement of positive developmental outcomes for children. The science of early learning clearly indicates that the work of lead educators for young children of all ages requires the same high level of sophisticated knowledge and competencies as K-12 teachers, yet salaries lag far behind. Teachers with four-year degrees employed in Head Start and many public pre-K programs earn between 60% and 70% of the average kindergarten teacher salary. In addition, teachers with college degrees, men, and bilingual teachers are in particularly short supply.

Greater efforts are needed to strengthen the recruitment, preparation, retention, and support of those working with young children and their families (including home visitors, preschool staff, and community health workers). A comprehensive strategy should:

- Provide two years of free education to individuals with bachelor’s degrees who agree to work in Head Start or a federally subsidized child development center for two years, with a bonus for teachers who are bilingual. Fund a national recruitment campaign on colleges, targeting men and campuses with high percentages of Black and Latinx students.
- Expand federal work-study funding, national service, and volunteer opportunities to allow



college students, recent graduates, community members, and older adults to serve in early education classrooms, providing added capacity to implement high-impact approaches.

- Develop a Head Start AmeriCorps program to enable Head Start parents to serve in their children's centers as AmeriCorps members eligible for Segal AmeriCorps education awards, allowing them to earn a college degree or other credential.
- Tap older adults as a talent pool for early childhood programs by authorizing an Early Childhood Legacy Corps to provide financial incentives for older adults to serve in early childhood programs and create a pathway to the professional and paraprofessional early childhood workforce.
- Adopt salary scales, student loan forgiveness, or tax credits to make teaching in early childhood programs financially comparable to teaching in elementary schools.

3. FOCUS EARLY LEARNING RESOURCES ON PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS.

Improve program quality by linking public funding for early learning to achievement of measurable outcomes, while improving data systems and supporting program evaluation.

Too often, national programs for early learning focus on input measures and compliance without a similar emphasis on achieving successful outcomes. Federal early learning law and policy should prioritize performance and outcomes, rather than mere compliance. We suggest the following:

- Set clear, measurable goals and outcomes for all federally funded early child care and education programs, including but not limited to clearly defining whole child school-readiness metrics and parent engagement.



- Give providers flexibility to administer programs with fewer input-driven requirements as long as they meet specific outcome measures, and provide additional funding to those programs that have strong positive outcomes.
- Leverage existing programs such as Preschool Development Grants, Child Care Development Block Grants, and the charter school program to provide incentives to states and communities to create high-quality charter preschools that are designed to improve school-readiness outcomes.
- Award federal training and technical assistance funding, including Head Start assistance funding, based on the performance of training and technical assistance providers.
- Increase demonstration authority and promote the development of a strong evidence base; for example, increase funding for Head Start research, demonstration, and evaluation from 0.25% of total appropriations to 1%.
- Support efforts to strengthen and simplify data systems, including efforts to grow capacity to manage and implement new data systems that allow data sharing between and among early learning settings, K-12 schools, postsecondary education institutions, and external partners in order to

allow for high-quality evaluation and continuous improvement of programs while maintaining student privacy protections.

- Leverage administrative data to track longitudinal outcomes, and build evidence by continuing to track the impact of early childhood programs by measuring third-grade reading and math scores, and other long-term measures such as reductions in child welfare and justice involvement, the attainment of postsecondary credentials and employment, and parental employment.

4. PROVIDE DEDICATED FUNDING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD FACILITIES.

Improve the physical space of early childhood programs to encourage healthy development.

Space matters: A facility's layout, size, materials, and design features can improve program quality and contribute positively to child development while a poorly adapted and overcrowded environment undermines it. Public funding should be available to support the acquisition, construction, and rehabilitation of early childhood facilities serving low-income children.

CONCLUSION

Early learning alone is not an effective equalizer—but expanding access to high-quality early learning opportunities, in all the settings where children learn and grow, is a critical place to start. So, too, is readying families to become educators and advocates for their children, and in doing so, preparing families to play these roles throughout their child’s education.

AMERICA FORWARD ORGANIZATIONS

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors

Acelero Learning

AppleTree

Children’s Aid

Encore.org

Institute for Child Success

Jumpstart

Let’s Grow Kids

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)



PHOTO BY
APPLETREE INSTITUTE FOR
EDUCATION INNOVATION



PHOTO BY Brooklyn
**DIVERSE CHARTER
SCHOOLS COALITION**

SCHOOL-AGE YOUTH

OUR GOAL

We strive to ensure that all children growing up in America, regardless of their backgrounds, receive a high-quality education that enables them to thrive as youth while preparing them to pursue the higher education, training, national service, or work experience they need for meaningful employment and engaged citizenship.

WHO WE ARE

Organizations in the America Forward Coalition provide diverse supports to school-age youth, both in and out of school, in thousands of under-resourced communities across the country. Some of us provide pipelines for more and better-prepared teachers and leaders, while others mobilize volunteers or national service participants to bolster the human capital available to schools. Some of us run charter schools or alternative schools that re-engage young people who have left high school without a diploma, while others transform under-resourced traditional public schools through interventions that address social, emotional, and cognitive barriers to student success. Many of us provide critical student and family supports and improve access to outside providers, while others provide expanded learning opportunities for students. Some of us ensure that students, families, and teachers have roles not only supporting learning, but also in developing the education policies that govern practice. We work in elementary and secondary schools, afterschool and summer programs, and college access and success initiatives.

WHY WE CARE

America will never be a place where everyone has an equitable chance at success until all children can receive a quality education and the supports they need, both in and out of school, to thrive. Our nation needs the valuable perspective and energy of our youth today, and will need the prepared workers, responsible community members, and engaged citizens that children will eventually become. Quality education for everyone is a crucial component of creating safe, healthy, civically enfranchised, and economically secure communities, and foundational to a just society.

WHERE LEARNING HAPPENS

Learning can take place in any environment, not just formal classrooms. What happens in school matters immensely, and should foster the cognitive, social, and emotional development of the child—advancing academic goals—and promote the acquisition of essential workforce, civic engagement, and life skills. What happens outside of school matters just as much—families, after-school programs, volunteers, and community-based organizations are critical to ensuring that our young people thrive. Learning happens best when social, emotional, and cognitive development and growth are connected; when the unique educational needs of each child can be met; and when children are healthy, safe, and well nourished.

THE PROBLEM

Too often, schools are de facto segregated by race and income, with many students facing challenges outside of school that follow them into the classroom. Too many schools that serve children facing the greatest challenges are neither resourced nor designed to respond adequately to their needs, and operate in systems that make it difficult, despite the best efforts of educators, to assemble or develop skilled teachers, and provide the academic rigor, comprehensive supports, and positive school culture that will enable students to learn and succeed.

THE SOLUTION

Children who live in the most adverse circumstances can achieve their potential, with optimal cognitive, social, and emotional growth if they have the opportunity to attend education programs that deeply understand their experiences and are centered on supporting them in safe, equitable, inclusive environments; have dynamic, personalized learning experiences based on rich instruction and the development of critical skills and mindsets (such as skills related to perseverance and independence); have access to consistent, caring relationships with good teachers and other caring adults in their lives; can engage in dynamic learning opportunities outside of school; and receive the comprehensive, integrated supports they need. Expanding opportunities for the voices of teachers, families, and students to be heard increases the odds that policies will be effective and that change can be sustained.

America Forward Coalition members have shown that children facing great challenges can succeed when this network of support is provided inside and outside of school. Our organizations offer schools and families support in a wide variety of ways.

For example, **PowerMyLearning** advances educational equity by enabling students, teachers, and families to work as a team. Its Family Playlists are a new form of homework that “light up” the whole triangle of learning relationships: Students first practice a skill being taught in class; they then teach that skill to an adult family member; and then that family member provides feedback to the teacher on whether their child seemed to understand the skill. Family Playlists put families in the role of teammate and supporter, rather than enforcer, and help teachers track family participation throughout the school year. Results of the program rollout were unprecedented: 91% of families participated in Family Playlists, and 84% of participating families chose to submit personal feedback to their child’s teacher that was filled with pride and emotion (e.g., “I enjoyed working with my son on this assignment; I am very proud of my son’s accomplishment”). The intervention also demonstrated a significant improvement in the learning relationships between students, teachers, and families, with 100% of participating families agreeing that the program helped them understand what their child was learning in school. Importantly, one study found that Family Playlists had a statistically significant impact on students’ state math test scores, equivalent to four months of additional learning. Another found that PowerMyLearning schools outperformed comparison schools in math proficiency by an average of 7 percentage points each year.

Springboard Collaborative leverages out-of-school time to help close the literacy gap. Recognizing that children spend 75% of their waking hours outside the classroom, and that parents’ love for their children is a great, but underutilized resource for education, Springboard Collaborative leverages the common purpose and complementary skill sets of parents and teachers:

- Teachers are the experts on instruction. They know what their students need to make progress, yet the

classroom setting makes it difficult to individually support every child.

- Parents are the experts on their children. While teachers change annually, parents accumulate a wealth of knowledge about their children as learners. Moreover, they are uniquely positioned to personalize learning and read with their children in a one-on-one setting.

These competencies form the basis for a sustainable partnership in which teachers share instructional strategies with parents in exchange for the commitment that families will use these strategies at home and return with meaningful observations. Using this framework, Springboard Collaborative coaches teachers and family members to help their kids read on grade level, with offerings that combine personalized instruction for pre-K through third grade, workshops to train parents to teach reading at home, and professional development for teachers. Program results demonstrate the power of this approach. In a single summer, participating students replaced the typical three-month summer reading loss with a 3.7-month reading gain, and in a single academic year, Springboard Collaborative helped struggling readers achieve a 4.1-month reading gain in just 10 weeks of instruction.

Engaging community members in support of learning is another way to expand resources that will improve education outcomes. For example, **Reading Partners** mobilizes over 10,000 community volunteers, ranging from high school students to retirees, to provide thousands of elementary school students struggling with reading with proven, individualized reading support. A diverse group of AmeriCorps members recruit, train, and provide on-site support to volunteers to work one-on-one with students twice a week, following a structured, standards-based, research-based curriculum. On average, Reading Partners students more than double their rate of learning while in the program, with 85% meeting or exceeding their primary end-of-year literacy growth goal. Importantly, rigorous research studies of the program model have demonstrated that Reading Partners students make larger gains in literacy skills than their peers who receive other reading support services in schools, with English language learners making the largest gains. More recent research indicates that Reading Partners

students also may be gaining important social-emotional learning skills while in the program.

City Year similarly brings together diverse, talented teams of young AmeriCorps members to serve in schools full time, building positive near-peer relationships and providing holistic supports designed to keep students in school and on track to high school graduation. In partnership with school districts, teachers, and principals, City Year seeks to ensure that students in systemically under-resourced schools are prepared with the skills and mindsets to thrive and contribute to their communities, and works to create learning environments where all students feel welcome, build on their strengths, and fully engage with their learning. To do this, City Year AmeriCorps members serve as student success coaches who help students to cultivate social-emotional and academic skills by tutoring students, helping them stay focused in class, organizing schoolwide events, and running after-school programs.

According to research, schools partnering with City Year were two to three times more likely to improve in math and English than similar schools without City Year. Nine out of 10 teachers agree that City Year AmeriCorps members help to foster a positive learning environment for their students. And City Year helped two-thirds of students identified as needing support in key social-emotional skills linked to college and career readiness. An added benefit: Through their work in schools and communities, City Year AmeriCorps members not only make a difference in the lives of students, but also acquire valuable skills that prepare them to become the next generation of civically engaged leaders.

MindRight also harnesses the power of near-peer and community support using technology-enabled on-demand social-emotional coaching to teens dealing with stress and trauma. Working with schools and other partners, MindRight coaches, who are young professionals, former teachers, community members, and college students, communicate with students over their phones, utilizing evidence-based cognitive behavioral practices and mindfulness. Unlike crisis response, MindRight coaches reach out to teens proactively every day to help prevent crises, and they stick with youth during and after a crisis if one occurs. Although still in the early stage, data show that students who use the program show improvement in

psychological well-being, which is also proven to lead to improved academic performance, with 97% of users reporting improved stress management.

While families and community members play important roles in education, teachers have the most direct, sustained contact with students and considerable control over both the material taught and the climate for learning. Therefore, improving teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions through professional development is a critical step in improving student achievement. Research shows that well-qualified teachers and high-quality teaching can close the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students and their more affluent peers.

Leading Educators is one of several America Forward Coalition members supporting the quality of teaching. It helps education leaders build sustainable environments where teachers and students thrive, providing the time for teachers to lead and learn, the tools they need to teach every student to high levels, and support to focus on the initiatives that matter most. The program challenges educators to identify and work through implicit biases that shape expectations for students' abilities, so teachers can create classrooms where every student has an equal opportunity to learn and grow. Leading Educators helps educators to use what they've learned to lead regular school-based planning and practice, both through direct facilitation and modeling strong, grade-appropriate teaching for peers. Each partnership is customized to the specific strength of the district and its schools, drawing from evidence-based teaching and professional learning methods.

Although teachers have much to contribute regarding education policy, for too long, teachers have been treated as subjects of change rather than as agents of change. Founded by public school teachers, **Educators for Excellence (E4E)** is a growing movement of more than 30,000 educators, united around a common set of values and principles for improving student learning and elevating the teaching profession. These values include respect and professionalism, a solutions orientation and growth mindset, and diversity and inclusiveness. E4E teachers work together to identify issues that impact our schools, draw upon their personal experiences to create solutions to these challenges, and advocate for policies and programs that give all students access to a quality education.



PHOTO BY
10,000 DEGREES



Principals are the instructional leaders of schools and, as with teachers, recruiting and retaining talented, diverse talent for this essential role can be challenging. Working hand in hand with partners, **New Leaders** cultivates diverse and talented educators, providing high-quality leadership training that prepares them to elevate instruction across their schools, accelerate student learning, and build a brighter future for their communities. Two-thirds of New Leaders principals are people of color, well above the national average of just 20%, and three-quarters remain in their districts for more than three years, compared with just 50% nationally. Research confirms the quality of leadership offered by New Leaders principals: 85% delivered achievement gains across classrooms they supervised, with results realized during the training year, and the RAND Corporation recently cited New Leaders as the principal preparation program with the strongest evidence of positive impact. And they remain committed—New Leaders alums overwhelmingly work with America’s highest-need students: 78% of students served are low income; 87% are children of color.

America Forward Coalition members are also playing leadership roles helping whole schools and school

systems incorporate evidence-based practices that foster student development and academic achievement. For example, **Turnaround for Children** connects the dots between science, adversity, and school performance by translating research from the science of learning and development into integrated systems, structures, and practices for schools to enable each and every child to thrive, particularly those who have been impacted by significant adversity. Building on 17 years of experience working with schools and a deep understanding of this research, Turnaround’s tools and services—for educators and school and systems leaders—help catalyze positive developmental relationships and learning environments filled with safety and belonging. They also initiate the intentional development of the critical social-emotional and cognitive skills; mindsets; and habits necessary for healthy, whole-child development and academic achievement, no matter what obstacles a child may have faced.

Transcend takes another approach to school redesign, helping communities move away from our current 150-year-old “industrial model,” which perpetuates inequity by taking a one-size-fits-all approach, defining success narrowly, emphasizing compliance and passive

learning, and neglecting the varying needs of all students. Transcend does not advocate for one single, new model of “school.” Rather, it sees the need for two different processes: one that helps communities arrive at their “why” for change by exploring the science of learning, future trends, and the experiences of children traditionally at the margins of school; and another that helps communities create, test, codify, and spread a diversity of new school models designed to address these urgencies. These models include public-private partnerships to bring local businesses into a high school focused on science, technology, engineering, arts, and math; school communities with radically different schedules and routines to support students’ social-emotional learning; and schools where students and their families define their purpose and chart a path toward that purpose.

Still other America Forward Coalition members run nonprofit, public charter schools, developing high-impact educational models and, in some cases, sharing their innovations with other schools. For example, **Match Education** operates high-performing urban public charter schools as well as a unique graduate school of education that trains teachers for high-poverty schools. Drawing from this applied work, Match codifies and shares its strongest content and practices as open education resources to serve educators in all schools—charter, district, private, and parochial. Since launching this platform in 2016, known as Match Export, over 1 million educators in the United States and abroad have downloaded Match’s content. Match Education also incorporates Match Corps, an AmeriCorps program, into its charter schools to ensure that every student receives tutoring support. These programs operate with two key mindsets: to achieve “jaw-dropping results,” and to craft “genuinely inventive solutions to important problems” that can influence the entire public school sector. While its charter school students are selected by lottery and mirror the general population of Boston public schools (most are Black or Latinx, most come from low-income households, about a third are English language learners, and many arrive with math and literacy skills below their official grade level), Match sends from 75% to 90% of its high school graduates to four-year colleges and an additional 5% to 10% of its high school graduates to two-year colleges.

SYSTEMS

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the primary federal education program impacting school-age youth, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is the primary program focused on students with disabilities. A wide variety of additional federal programs and public systems also affect low-income children. For instance, AmeriCorps members serve in a quarter of low-performing schools. Additional federal programs fund school nutrition, child care, substance abuse prevention, mental health, and programs for homeless children. The child welfare, health care, and juvenile justice systems all have significant impacts on school-age youth, and school-age youth are also highly affected by systems that may involve adults in their families, including the criminal justice system and policies affecting people who were formerly incarcerated.

POLICY PROPOSALS

5. SCALE CATALYTIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS.

Recognize and resource innovative nonprofit organizations that partner with or operate schools to improve outcomes for low-income students.

Effective schools create partnerships that result in joint efforts to improve teaching and learning; leverage additional resources, talent, and expertise; catalyze innovation and problem-solving; and increase the rate and level of student progress in line with the school's vision for educational success. They acknowledge that students don't leave their lived experiences at the door when they come to school, and embrace a comprehensive approach to supporting students' cognitive, social, and emotional development, as well as their mental and physical health.

Through the successful efforts of the America Forward Coalition, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) reflects the important role of effective community partners and intermediary organizations by providing both states and districts with the authority to engage partners across a range of programs. It includes specific requirements that states and local districts work with external partners in the development and implementation of programs under Title I, the largest federally funded educational program, which provides supplemental funds to school districts to assist schools with the highest student concentrations of poverty to meet school educational goals.

America Forward continues to elevate the importance of partners, and proposes the following four-point plan to further **support and encourage effective partnerships with external partners**:

1. *Create a transparent marketplace of external partners.*
To enable states, school districts, and schools to find

the interventions and partners best able to advance their goals, a readily available clearinghouse of vetted information, incorporating evidence from the What Works Clearinghouse, should be available, including programmatic costs, qualifications, and a process for engaging potential partners.

2. *Make capacity-building grants to nonprofit organizations with strong evidence.* Few public funding streams provide direct support to nonprofit organizations that work in education. These organizations need access to growth capital in order to expand, even if earned income is available from schools and other sources. Growth capital grants should be available for nonprofits that provide evidence of success, along with operational grants to enable programs to operate in under-resourced schools.
3. *Provide model data-sharing agreements.* Data on student achievement and other outcomes are essential to enabling both schools and external partners to offer tailored supports, assess progress, support continuous improvement, and conduct evaluations. In addition, these data allow for the high-quality evaluation and continuous improvement of programs, helping to ensure that limited resources are invested effectively. Federal policy should ensure that external partners have reliable access to student data, so long as adequate student privacy protections are in place.
4. *Offer incentives for coherent school design and aligned services to schools.* Schools should be encouraged to create a coherent blueprint of their mission, vision, and instructional practices to enable alignment both within the school and with external organizations. We should encourage local organizations serving school-age youth and their families to work closely with schools and align services where possible. Federal and state programs should incorporate incentives for coherent school design work as well as for local organizations to partner with education institutions to improve outcomes for youth and their families.



6. ENSURE ALL STUDENTS HAVE EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND ATTEND SCHOOLS WITH STRONG EDUCATIONAL LEADERS.

Fund innovative strategies to recruit, train, and retain diverse educators.

Effective teachers and school leaders play an outsized role in students' ability to succeed in school. Unfortunately, schools in high-poverty urban and rural areas struggle to recruit educators, especially teachers of color, with STEM and special education teachers in particularly short supply. High teacher turnover consumes economic resources that could be spent on other priorities: Filling a vacancy costs \$21,000 on average—at a national cost of more than \$7.3 billion per year. Half of all teacher turnover occurs in 25% of public schools, predominantly in high-poverty urban and rural areas serving the children who face the most barriers to educational success. These shortages are even more damaging as they can negatively reinforce the achievement gap.

Ensuring that every school has a strong, diverse pipeline of educators, retains those teachers and leaders, and provides them with the support and professional development necessary for them to thrive requires a significant shift in national priorities and paradigms. In addition to existing federal programs for teacher preparation and support, strategies should include **investing in alternative teacher preparation programs with proven outcomes, leaning into the powerful pipeline represented by national service corps members, and funding professional development providers with strong track records.** All new educators should receive induction, coaching, and mentoring assistance during their first two years on the job; receive regular assistance from a rigorously selected, trained, and supported coach or mentor; and be prepared to work with students who have learning and attention issues. Specific attention should be given to the induction, mentorship, and support of teachers and principals of color in an effort to retain them, as teachers of color tend to serve in more under-resourced schools and have higher rates of turnover than their White counterparts. Programs such as student loan forgiveness that are intended to incentivize teachers and school leaders to work in high-need, rural, under-resourced schools and high-need fields should be strengthened and expanded.



7. FACILITATE THE ABILITY OF FAMILIES TO EXERCISE POWER TO INFLUENCE THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION.

Recognize parents as full educational partners, providing the information they need and opportunities to play a leadership role in education decisions that affect their children.

All families have dreams about what they want for their children. Too often only affluent, educated parents are in a strong position to make choices or exercise power to support their child's path through the education system.

However, research shows that parents across all demographics are more expansive in their ideal approach to education than the system that serves them. Parents see academics and preparation for college and career as the floor, not the ceiling, and focus more on the development of holistic skills that make students capable of self-sufficiency, social connection, and productivity. Or, put more bluntly, they tend to think that teaching algebra

and ancient history should not preclude the teaching of critical life skills that will empower their children to thrive in the 21st century. They believe that children learn in different ways, and not every education approach works for each child at any given stage of their education.

There are many ways that school systems can adapt to engage parents as educational partners, and to facilitate their ability to make choices for their children, and ultimately exercise their innate power as agents of change—setting the agenda for change, creating that change, and sustaining it in their communities.

This starts with calling on and incentivizing school systems to provide options along with transparent, easily understood, and accessible information to enable families to make informed decisions and advocate for changes on behalf of their children, school, and school system; finding ways to assess and report learning for a broader range of areas that parents value; developing significant leadership roles for families to have a voice in setting education priorities and in governance; and enabling families and students to have access to the students' own data to inform their personal choices.

8. PROVIDE A TEAM OF NATIONAL SERVICE CORPS MEMBERS FOR EVERY HIGH-POVERTY SCHOOL.

Maximize the impact of AmeriCorps members in and outside of the classroom while expanding this diverse pipeline of informed and motivated educators.

AmeriCorps members currently serve in one out of every four low-performing schools by offering extra help in and out of the classroom; coaching, tutoring, and mentoring students; supporting service-learning; managing volunteers; helping students apply to college; and serving in other ways. Every school serving high percentages of low-income students should have the option of fielding a team of AmeriCorps members to address their priority needs. Not only do AmeriCorps members provide needed support for classroom teachers, but they also often go on to become professional educators who have experience serving in high-need schools.

9. EMPOWER SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO DEPLOY FEDERAL DOLLARS TO LINK FUNDING TO OUTCOMES.

Technical assistance and other incentives are needed to help schools implement Pay for Success strategies.

In 2015, with support from the America Forward Coalition, Congress broke new ground by authorizing the use of Pay for Success for the first time in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), authorizing state and local educational agencies to tie dollars to outcomes relating to safe and supportive schools and student physical and mental health through the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Program. And yet, in the four years since these provisions became law, very few districts have actually used these new provisions. Districts are not used to funding based on results, and they need help to achieve scalable systems change. We need to provide stronger incentives, funding for staff, and capacity and technical assistance to execute pathbreaking Pay for Success projects within the K-12

system, and forge strong community partnerships to change the way these dollars are allocated.

10. HARNESS THE POWER OF TECHNOLOGY FOR EDUCATION.

Employ education technology and data systems to improve education outcomes, including providing necessary training and making technology available on an equitable basis.

Technology has opened new possibilities to improve learning and measure progress, supporting personalized learning and data-informed systems change. However, access to technology and knowledge about its effective use as a learning tool are inequitably distributed. To address this challenge, we propose four priorities.

1. ***End the digital divide in schools and at home.***

Without access to high-speed bandwidth and devices both at school and at home, teachers and students cannot realize the potential of technology-enabled learning approaches. Over the last few years, federal policy has dramatically increased the number of school districts receiving Wi-Fi funding, and today, 99% of schools are on a clear path to delivering enough bandwidth for digital learning in every classroom. To maintain this progress, and provide ongoing support for Wi-Fi in every district, the FCC should renew the E-rate program and make it permanent. Additional support should be made available to make technology acquisition by under-resourced school systems more equitable and to ensure that schools can provide up-to-date technology and related learning tools that students need.

Digital access at home remains a significant barrier to equity in education. Many students still do not have adequate access to the internet at home, and a “homework gap” exists between students whose internet connections at home are slow or non-existent and those who have home connections with adequate speed. One in five teens doesn’t have reliable access to an internet-connected device, and rates vary by students’ race and ethnicity, with Native, Black, and Latinx students experiencing



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LEAP INNOVATIONS

lower rates of internet access than White students. Access also differs geographically, with remote rural locales experiencing the highest percentage of students with either no internet or only dial-up access at home. Finally, one in four students living in poverty has no access to the internet. Innovative strategies and funding are needed to expand out-of-school technology access for students.

2. *Use data to track and improve outcomes while ensuring student data privacy.*

A rich array of data provides critical information about individual student and educator performance as well as school performance, culture, and climate. Data offer educators and policymakers the opportunity to discover the gaps in student learning by providing a snapshot of what students should know, what they do know, and what can be done to meet their needs. Educators who are trained to use data can make more evidence-based instructional decisions. Student data can also enable external providers to align and evaluate their efforts to improve outcomes, provided it can be shared safely with appropriate privacy protections. Data also can enable students and their families to make informed educational choices and advocate for necessary changes at the student, school, and system levels, provided students and families receive training to help them understand the data and how to use it, and data is made consumer-facing and user-friendly.

ESSA requires that rates of postsecondary enrollment be reported at the state, district, and school levels for the students in the year after they graduate from high school, with data disaggregated by race and ethnicity, disability status, English learner status, and status as economically disadvantaged. We propose adding college persistence and completion rates to required data, and making new linked data sets available to researchers so that we can better understand what's working.

Finally, in order for data to be used productively for all of these purposes, privacy protections and access protocols must be developed. Policymakers should engage students and families as well as teachers and other educators in developing rules relating to data collection, secure storage, access,

and ultimately deletion of student data, recognizing that students and their families—not schools or government—are the rightful owners of individual student data.

3. Support professional development for teachers to use technology to support personalized learning opportunities for students.

New technologies and educational software have the potential to transform the traditional classroom and create dramatic shifts in approaches to teaching. Technology allows educators to “personalize learning,” accommodating unique learning styles and paces. Adaptive learning software is beginning to replace textbooks in the classrooms, and students are working directly with computer programs targeted to their needs. In this way, students can engage in unprecedented levels of self-paced, self-directed learning.

Even in a technology-infused environment, interpersonal relationships and skilled educators remain essential. With more data available to track each student’s progress, educators can gain actionable insight into where their students are struggling and where they can accelerate. In addition, with technology providing ubiquitous access to information and calculating power, success in our rapidly changing environment no longer requires memorization, but instead demands facility with technology and the ability to think, learn to learn, and critically assess information and analyze a situation. Teachers must be prepared to support these skills.

4. Make educational technology platform data available to researchers.

With the multitude of education technology providers, massive valuable data exist that could dramatically increase knowledge about the effectiveness of specific educational approaches. An incentive fund to encourage companies to open up the back end of their platforms so researchers can access data and run experiments could vastly increase knowledge about how people learn. With more access to data, experts can conduct higher-quality studies and more easily share their methods and results. Researchers can also test

their ideas on much larger samples and find more generalizable results—and spend their time and energy developing and executing research instead of creating a platform to run their research or recruiting a broad sample of students.

11. END THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE.

Use innovation and evidence-based strategies to improve school safety and stop the practice of referring students, including a disproportionate number of African American, Hispanic, and Native students, and students with disabilities, to law enforcement for minor behavior infractions.

In the last decades, schools have dramatically increased engagement with law enforcement, including placing more than 10,000 police officers in school buildings. While little evidence exists that these practices have in fact increased safety in schools, they have contributed to a dramatic increase in the number of student arrests. In a single academic year (2011-12) more than a quarter million students were referred to law enforcement, and half were expelled due to minor infractions such as disruptive behavior, violation of dress code, displays of affection, or defiant behavior toward authority. During that same time, more than 3 million students were suspended at least once. These disciplinary actions can have lifelong consequences: Research shows that a student is 23.5% more likely to drop out of school after receiving exclusionary discipline.

Students from two groups—racial minorities and children with disabilities—are disproportionately represented in this group. African American students, for instance, are 3.5 times more likely, and American Indian and Alaska Native students are twice as likely, to be suspended or expelled than White students. In fact, more than 70% of students arrested in school-related incidents or referred to law enforcement are Black or Hispanic, and although they represent approximately 1% of the student population, Native students account for 2% of all school arrests and 3% of all incidents referred by school staff to law enforcement. Students with disabilities are similarly overrepresented, and racial disparities are even starker for students with disabilities. One in four Black children with disabilities has been suspended at least once,



versus one in 11 White students. Zero-tolerance policies, which set one-size-fits-all punishments for a variety of behaviors, have fed these trends.

While safety at school is an essential part of a quality education, policymakers should pursue evidence-based strategies to increase school safety while breaking down the school-to-prison pipeline. We propose a four-part strategy:

1. Restore questions through the Office of Civil Rights' Civil Rights Data Collection efforts that focus on school discipline and disaggregated data by demographics.
2. Require, as a condition of federal/state funding, that all school resource officers be trained in social-emotional capacities and reverse zero-tolerance policies.
3. Create a school-safety innovation fund that provides funding to test, evaluate, and scale effective behavior and safety-related practices, with special priorities for initiatives developed by students, families, or teachers.
4. Keep youth out of the criminal justice system altogether. Give priority in existing federal justice grants to applicants that propose a community

partnership approach to reduce behavioral issues that increase a young person's risk of interaction with the criminal justice system.

CONCLUSION

Over the years, policymakers have looked for the “silver bullet” that would make our education system work for everyone. We now know there’s no single reform that leads to transformation. But we do see three common practices: (1) paying rigorous attention to data to measure equity, track outcomes, and inspire continuous improvement; (2) engaging nonprofit and community partners to bring expertise, comprehensive services, and caring adults to the classroom and beyond; and (3) recognizing the primary role that families play in student success. By scaling these practices, it is within our reach to ensure that every student, regardless of income, zip code, racial identity, or ability, receives a first-class education that opens doors to economic prosperity and a successful future.

AMERICA FORWARD ORGANIZATIONS

Acelero Learning

Aliento

America's Promise Alliance

Aurora Institute

BellXcel

Children's Aid

Citizen Schools

City Year

College Advising Corps

College Forward

College Possible

Diverse Charter Schools Coalition

EdLoC

Educators for Excellence

EnLearn

Eye to Eye

Generation Citizen

Highlander Institute

ImBlaze by Big Picture Learning

KIPP

Leading Educators

LEAP Innovations

Match Education

MindRight

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

The National Center for Learning Disabilities

New Classrooms

New Leaders

New Teacher Center

P.S. 305

PAVE

Peer Health Exchange

PowerMyLearning

Reading Partners

Springboard Collaborative

Teach For America

The Learning Accelerator

Transcend

Transforming Education

Turnaround for Children

UnboundEd

Wyman Center

YouthBuild USA

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FORWARD**



EMERGING ADULTS

OUR GOAL

We strive to ensure that all emerging adults, especially those with fewer resources, are equipped with the skills, education, and supports they need to secure good jobs, and become contributing members of their communities, able to support and nurture families of their own.

WHO WE ARE

Every day across the country, organizations in the America Forward Coalition use innovative methods, informed by data and research, to help young people move along their own unique pathways to become successful, contributing adults. Some of us work with secondary school students, exposing them to careers and mentors, motivating them to stay in school and go on to college. Others offer opportunity youth who are neither employed nor in school a second chance to gain the education and training they need to get back on track. Some of us help students persist in postsecondary programs by providing the extra supports they need. And some of us offer national service programs where young adults develop essential workplace and civic participation skills while helping others.

WHY WE CARE

The period of “emerging adulthood”—the late teens and early 20s— is a critical developmental stage where adolescents become more independent and explore various life possibilities. During this time, brain structures continue to develop and enable complex forms of thinking. What happens during this period often determines whether a young person becomes a productive working adult, able to support a family and contribute to the community—or faces a lifetime of challenges.

WHERE LEARNING HAPPENS

While learning happens through formal postsecondary education and workforce development programs, other experiences (such as internships, service opportunities, and employment) play equally important roles.

THE PROBLEM

Emerging adulthood is a time where inequality and inequity deepen as privileged young people receive vastly more supports, educational opportunities, and career connections than do young people from low-income backgrounds who may have not only fewer resources and supports, but also less exposure to career pathways and awareness of resources that can help them find their way. Too many emerging adults don't have the resources they need to secure higher education or training that leads to work with a living wage. Each year, 1.2 million low-income or first-generation students enroll in college, but only a quarter of them will leave with a related first job or enter graduate school. Once they fall off a traditional pathway, it's hard to get back on. While some adults do find their way back into education, it is often only after they have assumed financial and family responsibilities that are hard to balance with traditional higher education programs. Today's postsecondary students are older, more diverse, working full or part time, raising families—and often struggling. In addition, whole categories of people, including court-involved individuals and DACA recipients, are excluded from many parts of the postsecondary education system.

Exacerbating the unfairness and complexity of these systems, numerous policies make it extremely difficult for organizations serving young people to work across programmatic silos. Policy treats the spheres of education and workforce development as entirely separate universes, despite their obvious connections, which not only makes it hard for students to find opportunities that are right for them, but also makes it difficult to access the disjointed supports they need to participate fully. As a result, the most under-resourced young adults often lose their way, unable to pursue their dreams, likely putting their children at risk of a similar future.

THE SOLUTION

America Forward Coalition members have shown that career exposure, intensive college advising, inspiring service opportunities, and internship experiences can motivate students to graduate from high school and help them make well-informed education plans, including applying to and attending a postsecondary program that will help them achieve their personal goals.

America Forward organizations help emerging adults thrive. For example, **Genesys Works** gives underserved students the opportunity to succeed in a professional work environment while still in high school. Students receive skills training the summer before their senior year of high school, and then work 20 hours a week at a paid, year-long internship at partner companies. Throughout the year, students receive more than 60 hours of guidance and counseling on appropriate college and career pathways as well as support from alums who have walked a similar path. Almost all program participants enroll in college, with a 70% completion rate, a much higher rate than their peers. Research shows that for every \$1 invested in Genesys Works, there is an economic return of \$13.45.

College Possible takes a different approach to make college possible for low-income students through an intensive curriculum of coaching and support, grounded in four key pillars: near-peer coaching by AmeriCorps members; research-based curriculum encompassing topics such as finding a best-fit college, academic preparation, financial planning, and personal development; a peer support network among students; and commitment to college success. After high school, College Possible students receive coaching through the transition to college and are supported all the way through college graduation. Depending on the college they attend, students receive in-person coaching on campus or technology-based coaching, and coaches connect them to resources on campus. While 97% of College Possible students (nine out of 10 are first-generation college students) are admitted to college, rigorous research shows that College Possible students are 20% more likely to enroll in college and four times more likely to earn a degree compared to their peers. In 2016, College Possible launched a partnership model called Catalyze, to build the capacity of higher education institutions to support the success of low-income students.

Because getting to college is just a first step, some America Forward Coalition members focus on helping first-in-their-family college students persist in college by providing remediation, coaching, extra supports and services, and access to internships and employer connections. Such a shift in our mindset regarding higher education is critical if we are to reduce the number of students who are unable to complete their

postsecondary education program, are saddled with historic amounts of debt, or graduate unprepared for the rigors of the global economy. Meeting these challenges requires new strategies to make postsecondary education more responsive to the needs of all.

For example, **Single Stop** uses state-of-the-art technology and a network of nonprofit network partners to connect college students to existing nonacademic resources through a unique one-stop shop. Students benefit from an office that assesses student needs, directs students to available resources, assists with application processes, and brings valuable services to campus, such as public benefits and free tax services. An evaluation of Single Stop shows that students who use the service are more successful in college than their peers who do not; they are also more likely to attempt more college credits, giving them a boost in completing their college programs.

Beyond 12 takes a different approach to helping low-income, first-generation, and historically under-represented students graduate from college. Through a longitudinal student tracking platform and a personalized student coaching service, Beyond 12 provides students with the academic and social-emotional support they need to succeed in higher education. By collecting and sharing longitudinal data that crosses K-12 and higher education, Beyond 12 also provides actionable feedback to high schools and programs about their college preparatory efforts, improves the retention work of colleges and universities by sharing data-driven insights gained from supporting students, and influences the national conversation about student success. Eighty-two percent of students coached by Beyond 12 who entered college in fall 2011 have persisted to their fourth year of college, compared to 59% of first-generation college students nationwide.

We also know that some young people don't graduate from high school, or graduate but can't find a job or a way to pursue further education or training. America Forward Coalition organizations provide these opportunity youth with support navigating and translating cultural cues and meeting the expectations of a workplace. Mentors and a strong peer group can help, as can work-based learning in bridge-building jobs that offer work experience coupled with training, coaching, and transition assistance, leading to success on the job and building a bridge to the next one.

For example, **Year Up** provides training and bridge-building work experience to enable opportunity youth to move from minimum wage jobs to meaningful careers in just one year. Year Up students spend six months in the classroom learning the skills employers are looking for, including technical, professional, and communication skills, and then engage in a paid internship with one of the 250 partner companies, applying their skills and gaining critical work experience, typically in technology-related positions. As a result, 90% of Year Up graduates are employed or enrolled in postsecondary education within four months of completing the program, and their earnings are 53% higher than those in a control group. Year Up has also invested in empowering others to serve opportunity youth by helping employers design and implement inclusive talent strategies. Year Up's Grads of Life initiative encourages employers to hire opportunity youth through a national media campaign. By focusing on both young people and employers, Year Up helps bridge the opportunity divide. In addition, Year Up has launched a new initiative to create a lower-cost version of its model that can be delivered with and through other organizations who learn and implement it.

The experience of serving others, building leadership skills, and participating in program governance also provides important motivation and builds young peoples' ability to succeed as adults. **YouthBuild** programs provide opportunity youth with the chance to achieve a GED or high school diploma while they acquire construction and other skills through service, such as building affordable housing in their neighborhoods. While YouthBuild has a dedicated funding stream at the federal Department of Labor, it also participates in AmeriCorps, which enables members to earn money for college. For many YouthBuild corps members, receiving the AmeriCorps education award enables them to purposely plan for postsecondary education, influences their new and lasting identity as service-givers rather than service-receivers, and positions them as community leaders. While all YouthBuild corps members are low-income young adults, many of whom left high school without a diploma and about a third of whom have been court-involved, they leave the program in a different place:

- 74% obtain their high school equivalency credentials, high school diplomas, and/or industry-recognized credentials.

- 54% go on to postsecondary education or jobs.
- 73% of those placed retain their placement for at least six months.

In addition, recidivism rates within one year of enrollment for all court-involved YouthBuild students averaged 11%, far below the national average of 44%.

SYSTEMS

The numerous systems that serve emerging adults point at different goals and connect to different state and federal agencies, leading to a disconnected, uncoordinated system. These include secondary and postsecondary education institutions; workforce development programs; and national service programs including YouthBuild and other youth corps, community-based organizations, and programs set up to serve special populations, such as youth transitioning out of foster care. Young adults are also affected by the juvenile and criminal justice systems, health care, and programs for young children and their families, which often include emerging adults in their role as parents.

Each of these systems provides elements critical to create the conditions for opportunity. However, the necessary elements are rarely assembled together, in adequate dose, with proper sequencing, and for a sufficient time period. We have invested heavily as a nation in some elements, and neglected others altogether. Any effort to change the circumstances of those now left out of the economic mainstream—and reverse the negative impact on our overall economy—demands that we rethink the way we invest public resources. We must learn from what works and apply that knowledge to enable students, youth, and adults from all backgrounds to succeed economically. The success of America Forward Coalition organizations working with emerging adults tells us that it is possible to achieve these goals and forge a pathway from poverty to economic prosperity.



POLICY PROPOSALS

12. CREATE THE FIRST-EVER INTEGRATED STRATEGY FOR EMERGING ADULTHOOD.

Link and coordinate systems that serve older youth and young adults to improve workforce and other outcomes.

No city, county, or state has a fully integrated strategy for emerging adulthood. Neither has the nation. An integrated strategy would connect the main systems that move students from school to career, or high school to college and then career, with the supports that young people need, especially those who need help their families can't provide. Such a strategy would **build on the federal Performance Partnerships initiative** to set education, employment, and other goals; identify data sources to track progress; and allow for flexibility and innovation to improve results. Those communities that achieve successful results would receive greater flexibility and more funding. To aid in this effort (subject to appropriate privacy protections), the federal government should amend law and regulations, and access protocols to permit federal, state, and local workforce and education agencies, state and local workforce boards, nonprofit workforce development organizations, social enterprises, and certified postsecondary institutions to have access to the National Directory of New Hires, unemployment insurance wage records, and IRS wage data.

13. CONNECT SECONDARY EDUCATION TO POST-SECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES AND CAREERS.

When young people have a purpose in mind that animates their education, they are more likely to work hard and complete high school and make informed choices about postsecondary education. To make career counseling and

postsecondary planning more equitable, we offer the following proposals:

1. CHALLENGE COMMUNITIES TO ENSURE THAT EVERY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT DEVELOPS A WELL-INFORMED, WELL-SUPPORTED CAREER PLAN AND HAS INFORMED, INDIVIDUALIZED COLLEGE ADMISSIONS COUNSELING.

Solve for inequities in access to information to enable all young people to set goals for their future and act on them effectively.

Too often, responsibility for helping students plan for their futures rests with overstretched guidance counselors, leaving students who don't have outside resources without the knowledge they need to make informed choices. **School districts, schools, employers, and nonprofit partners should be challenged, and incentivized, to work together to provide students with career awareness, opportunities for enriching activities, service experiences, and internships, as well as individualized college admissions and financial aid counseling.** Research shows that low-income and first-generation college students often make choices during the application and decision process that are unlikely to lead to the best outcomes, a result of disparities in access to reliable information and guidance. Students need help selecting appropriate higher education options that relate to their career goals, completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), applying for scholarships, understanding financial aid packages, learning how to access and receive disability services, selecting a postsecondary institution, and accessing the additional supports that help prepare students mentally and emotionally for the postsecondary experience.



2. MAKE COLLEGE AND CAREER INFORMATION AS EASY TO ACCESS AS CONSUMER INFORMATION IN OTHER AREAS.

Demystify postsecondary institution outcomes to enable students to make informed decisions about their futures.

Many students and their families struggle to make informed decisions about where to attend college, often due to lack of information about how to pay for college and uncertainty about the institution's track record of graduates moving onto successful careers. Today, information on costs, outcomes, supports, and accommodations at different institutions is not standardized, oftentimes not reported, or presented in a disjointed manner that makes comparisons across institutions difficult if not impossible. To address this challenge, **higher education institutions participating in student aid programs should be required to provide clear, consistent, complete, and actionable information to students and families on postsecondary outcome disaggregated by race, ethnicity, financial aid status,**

major, financial aid offers, and available support services and accommodations.

14. RADICALLY INCREASE COLLEGE COMPLETION.

Although college completion rates are on the rise, they are still disturbingly low. Only three in 10 students at public colleges and universities will graduate in four years; the number increases to just six in 10 after six years. Black students, students who are low income, and students who are first in their family to attend college all graduate at even lower rates. Many will leave higher education without a degree but saddled with debt they can't pay off. The following policy strategies can address this root cause of inequality:

Incentivize institutions to develop plans to increase completion rates, drawing on the expertise of students who face barriers to completion, including low-income students, students with disabilities, and students who are first in their family to attend college.

Too often, responsibility for helping students plan for their futures rests with overstretched guidance counselors, leaving students who don't have outside resources without the knowledge they need to make informed choices.

Once they are enrolled in higher education, under-resourced students face a host of new challenges. Many students need practical supports, such as transportation or personal technology. For students with disabilities, access to accommodations can be an enormous issue upon entering higher education. Only 17% of young adults with learning disabilities receive accommodations and support in college, compared with 94% of students in high school. Other students may need more traditional academic supports to help them deal with the increased rigor of postsecondary coursework. Many students continue to struggle with feelings that they are out of place in college and do not have support systems to help them cope when experiencing academic and other challenges. One out of four of today's higher education students is also raising children, half are financially independent, and two out of three work while they attend college. For the increasing number of "nontraditional" students—older students who are working, commuting, and caring for their own children, and who are rapidly becoming the norm—the difference between success and noncompletion may be access to basic needs such as affordable housing, food supports, and child care.

A competitive grant fund should support the planning and initial implementation of comprehensive college completion plans for individual or groups of higher education institutions in a community. All plans should be developed in conjunction with today's students who can speak to the challenges they face as well as possible solutions. Plans should also include partnerships with evidence-based nonprofit providers to provide academic and nonacademic supports and services (or strengthen those already in place), and address practical barriers like affordable child care, transportation, food, and housing to ensure that all students—especially low-income students, students with disabilities, and first-generation college students—persist and complete their program of study for a degree or certificate. Nonprofit partners are a growing part of the postsecondary support system to provide under-resourced students with the holistic, continuous, and intensive supports needed to increase college completion. All too often, these effective

providers cannot access public funding to take these effective approaches to scale. That should change.

In addition, higher education institutions should allow prior documentation of a disability—such as an individualized education program or a 504 plan—to serve as sufficient documentation for the purposes of qualifying for disability services.

Finally, a Pell Success Award premium should be paid to accredited and certified postsecondary providers that achieve specified retention, completion, and job outcomes among Pell-eligible students.

15. REDESIGN COLLEGE WORK-STUDY TO MAKE STUDENTS READY FOR THE CURRENT AND FUTURE WORLD OF WORK.

Direct a minimum of 50% of work-study grants to support service and other career-related work experience.

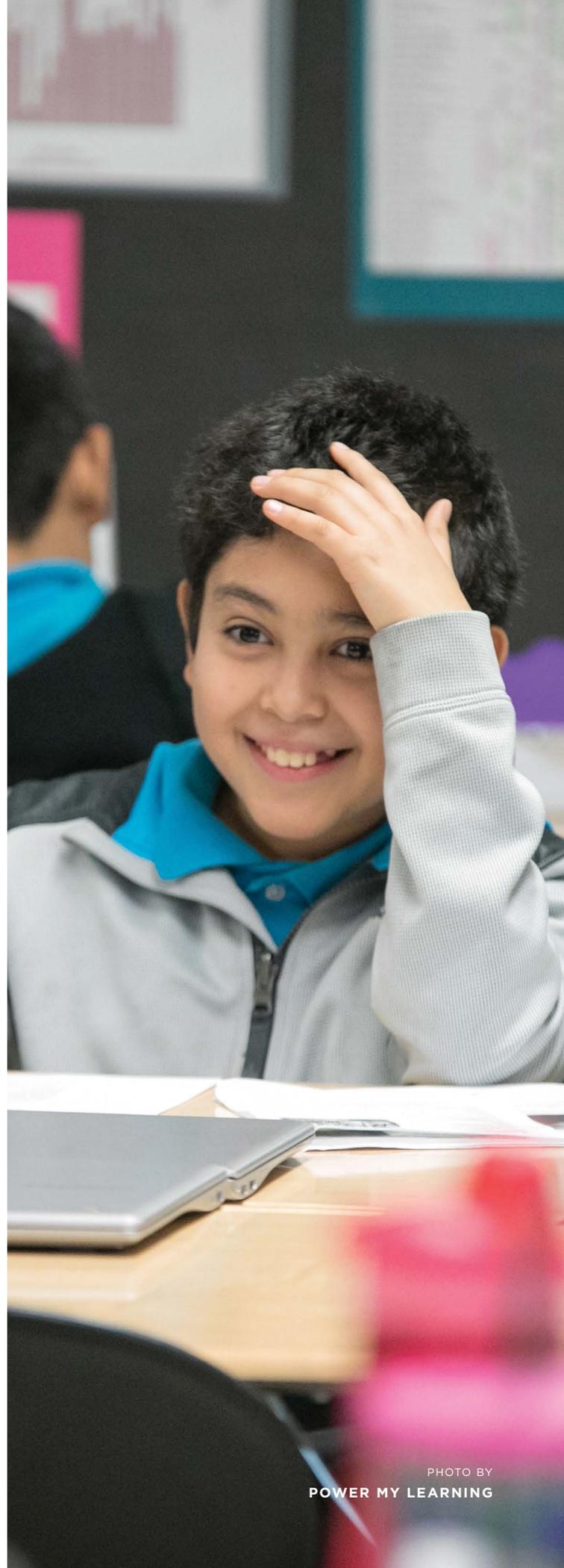
Increasing relevant, meaningful opportunities for students to explore and prepare for careers in their fields of interest will lead to improved completion rates and increased employment after graduation. **Federal policy should encourage institutions of higher education to partner with nonprofits, community organizations, and businesses to provide informed career counseling and hands-on learning experiences** that get students out of the classroom and enable them to apply what they are learning to real-world challenges, creating strong linkages between classroom knowledge and career-focused applications. Toward this end, **at least 50% of work-study grants should support extramural internships; service-learning, career-related work experience; as well as service year opportunities for eligible students, including Pell recipients.** These experiences will provide opportunities for students to strengthen their resumes, link learning to experience, enable students to gain college-level learning through their service, and provide human capital to help other students access and persist in higher education.

16. MAKE STUDENT AID MORE FLEXIBLE AND LIMIT STUDENT DEBT.

Provide grants to address financial emergencies for higher education students and enable graduates to reduce their debt by doing a service year or working in targeted fields.

Nearly half of today's higher education students are supporting themselves and are struggling financially—and students from under-resourced groups remain far more likely than their peers to accrue substantial student loan debt or drop out prior to degree completion. Recently, North Carolina put in place Finish Line Grants to cover costs that might otherwise force community college students close to achieving a postsecondary credential to drop out. Grants like these should be broadly available. For example, **financial aid packages should include “financial shock” grants, individual grants of \$500-\$1,000 that help support students experiencing financial setbacks (such as unanticipated medical expenses, transportation, child care, and unreliable employment schedules).**

To reduce the burden of student loans, **students should be able to reduce their debt across all federal loan programs by doing a service year or taking a high-need public service job.** Students studying to earn credentials and degrees in essential fields predicted to experience worker shortages such as teaching, early childhood, and nursing should receive free or reduced tuition, provided they agree to work in high-need communities after graduation.





17. REDESIGN THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM WITH THE GOAL OF ALIGNING EDUCATION AND TRAINING WITH CAREER PATHWAYS TO HIGH-GROWTH SECTORS.

Tie public funding to workforce outcomes.

All career and technical education programs, including those based at community colleges, should be aligned to local high-growth fields, including those in the public and nonprofit sectors. Programs should have access to the data that will enable them to report on a set of positive labor outcomes, including increases in salary/wages, job promotions, and new employment tied to training. **Public funding should be tied to outcomes, with effective programs receiving the highest levels of support.**

18. TAKE CIVILIAN NATIONAL SERVICE TO SCALE, INCLUDING PROGRAMS THAT SERVE AS “CIVIC APPRENTICESHIPS.”

Recognize the role that national service plays in workforce development, especially for the nonprofit sector, through increased funding and inclusion in “future of work” strategies.

National service has played an important but poorly understood role in developing America’s workforce in several ways: (1) providing “bridge building” work experience to youth and young adults that teach essential workplace skills (21st century skills) and build their professional networks; (2) providing a reliable employment pathway to the nonprofit sector and other specific career fields through “civic apprenticeships” that combine skill development with a motivating social purpose; and (3) building the capacity of programs that assist others in preparing for and finding

employment. In addition to expanding existing national service programs such as YouthBuild and AmeriCorps, communities that develop plans to integrate national service into their workforce development and higher education strategies should receive extra funding to scale positions. **National service should be recognized as a form of workforce development and considered as part of all “future of work” strategies.**

19. STIMULATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATIVE POST-SECONDARY MODELS.

Develop and recognize an alternative outcome-focused accreditation option.

To receive access to federal student aid, colleges and universities must be approved by accreditation agencies that tend to focus more on inputs than outcomes and are slow to promote innovation. **An alternative accreditation model would encourage disruptive innovation in the higher education sector by granting access to federal student aid to new entrants in exchange for a focus on outcomes rather than inputs.** An outcomes-focused system would encourage lower-cost models with stronger completion and career placement results, and grant short-term provisional accreditation that would be continued only if programs achieve specific outcomes, thus protecting critical taxpayer dollars.

20. LAUNCH A GRAND INNOVATION CHALLENGE TO HELP WORKERS SUCCEED WITH AUTOMATION.

Use a national prize to stimulate development of better ways to prepare workers for high-demand jobs.

Human skills—defined as leadership, growth mindset, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, teamwork, computational thinking, etc.—are skills that complement machines and position workers for the future workforce, but are also the skills that are least valued, tested, and designed for in our education

system. Use a portion of existing workforce funding (1%) to build on progress already made in the field and accelerate change through a **grand innovation challenge to raise awareness of the skills most valued by employers, and to catalyze an ecosystem and market for effective delivery of the human skills competencies to help workers succeed with machines.**

21. TEST A GUARANTEE OF FIRST “JOBS” TO EMERGING ADULTS.

Provide supported opportunities to all young people in a community to reduce inequities in the employment marketplace.

A first job teaches workplace behaviors and skills, and develops the pride that comes with a paycheck, while time spent unemployed as a young adult leaves a “wage scar” that lasts into middle age. By marrying a call to action to private- and public-sector employers with growth in youth employment, opportunity youth, and national service programs, **every young person (and people whose jobs have been eliminated) who steps forward could be offered a first (or next) job that develops their skills, resumes, and professional networks.** To increase the odds of success, incorporate a career acceleration course that empowers young adults with the skills they need to succeed when they begin, provide mentoring and social services to see that every participant has the support they need to succeed, and offer tax credits to incentivize the participation of private-sector employers.

22. ACCELERATE INNOVATION AND RESULTS.

Expand Pay for Success strategies and innovation funds to increase college and career success.

A wide range of new approaches are emerging to support under-resourced students through the college application process, provide integrated supports post-enrollment, accelerate time-to-completion strategies, and form tangible connections with career opportunities. Many current practices at the federal, state, and institution levels would benefit from fresh



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WYMAN CENTER

approaches that incorporate recent innovations and best approaches to achieve better outcomes. **Outcomes-based payment models and innovation fund approaches** could simultaneously build evidence for an array of new strategies that actually move the needle on these challenges, accelerate the adoption of innovations, and scale supports and services proven to be effective, as could reforms in numerous federal aid, workforce development, and other education programs.

CONCLUSION

Through the work of results-oriented innovators, America Forward has learned the power of leveraging effective partnerships to create person-centered, flexible systems of support that are able to respond to the changing needs of under-resourced students. Our goal is to apply these lessons more broadly to the postsecondary education and workforce systems. Any effort to close the “skills gap” and change the circumstances of those now left out of the economic mainstream—as well as reverse the negative impact on our overall economy—demands that we rethink the way we invest public resources, and learn from and expand proven programs and practices that work to enable students, youth, and adults from all backgrounds and all regions to succeed economically.

AMERICA FORWARD ORGANIZATIONS

10,000 Degrees
Alternative Staffing Alliance
Bard Early Colleges
Beyond12
Bottom Line
Braven
City Year
College Advising Corps
College Forward
College Possible
Encore.org
Genesys Works
iMentor
Mortar
New Leaders
PeerForward
Public Allies
REDF
Service Year Alliance
Station1
The Michelson 20MM Foundation
The Opportunity Network
Third Sector Capital Partners
uAspire
Valor Collegiate Academies
Year Up
Youth Villages
YouthBuild USA



PHOTO BY
MATCH EDUCATION

PHOTO BY
FAMILY INDEPENDENCE INITIATIVE



**PART II: HOW TO
CREATE CONDITIONS
SO ALL ADULTS AND
FAMILIES CAN THRIVE**



PHOTO BY
LIFT

HOW TO CREATE CONDITIONS SO ALL ADULTS AND FAMILIES CAN THRIVE



PHOTO BY
ENTERPRISE COMMUNITY PARTNERS

IF YOU HAVE MONEY IN AMERICA, THE ODDS ARE WITH YOU.

You likely have reasonably good health, and when something goes wrong, you can select and pay for the specialized medical care you need. Your robust social and professional networks can help you find and succeed at your job. If you want to buy a car or a house, or start a business, or make an investment or cover a loss, you have the money—or access to credit to make it possible. And if you, or your children, are arrested or otherwise need legal help, you can pay a qualified lawyer to get the best possible outcome.

BUT IF YOU LACK FINANCIAL RESOURCES, THE ODDS ARE AGAINST YOU.

While you are likely resourceful and have set goals for yourself and your children, you may lack the financial means to achieve them. You might face health challenges related to the environment you live in: lead paint, contaminated water, unhealthy food options, and limited access to medical care, to name just a few. You and your children may not have professional networks that will help you to access resources and jobs, and the systems that have been set up to provide assistance are complex, confusing, and confounding. If you find a service that's available, it may not be what you need, or the government gatekeepers controlling access to that assistance may make assumptions about you and what you should receive. And if you manage to get ahead, one setback—a health crisis, cut in hours, or car accident—can send you back to square one, exhausting any savings and undermining your ability to work and support your family. The stress of your situation may impair your job performance and your children's ability to learn, exacerbating the challenges your family faces. And your difficulties may pass to the next generation when, as adults, your children are likely to experience the same relentless challenges.

Structural and systemic barriers, rooted deep in our nation's history, have stripped wealth from communities of color over time...

The numbers confirm this story, with discouraging consistency. Low-income people, especially those who live in predominantly low-income communities, experience worse health outcomes than people with more resources; in fact, on average, they live 15 years less than their wealthy peers. Two-thirds of people who file for bankruptcy cite medical issues as a key contributor to their financial difficulty. Researchers have found that transportation is another major factor affecting income—the longer an average commute, the worse the chances of low-income families moving up the ladder, as a broken-down car can mean the loss of a job. Even minor legal infractions—such as a traffic ticket—can balloon to thousands of dollars when fines, processing fees, court costs, and collection costs are added to the original penalty, with jail time a possible result of failure to pay. Given that the average family has less than \$9,000 in savings, and that research shows more than four in 10 American adults couldn't cover an unexpected \$400 expense, financial stability is out of reach for far too many.

Black, Latinx, and Native families are less financially stable than White families, who hold 10 times the wealth of Black households and eight times that of Latinx households. Structural and systemic barriers, rooted deep in our nation's history, have stripped wealth from communities of color over time and contributed to a **persistent racial wealth gap**. These barriers also intersect with barriers to wealth-building for women, who are more likely to be poor than men.

Female-headed households comprise over half of all low-income households with children in the United States, with Black and Latinx families making up a disproportionate share.

Unfortunately, the system put in place to help low-income families includes a maze of 126 separate programs by one count, managed by six different federal agencies with varying eligibility requirements, access points, and application procedures. While more than half of the total population has incomes below 200% of the poverty line, and is likely eligible for some form of assistance, just a quarter of these families receive help from a federal program. What's more, many low-income Americans may enroll in just one or two of the many programs for which they qualify, likely due to program complexity and the stigma associated with public benefits. **The lack of coordination across programs means that people make rational trade-offs with dire consequences.** For example, accepting housing assistance may mean

moving away from a support network, free child care, or easy transportation to a job. And modest success can be easily reversed when a family starts to get ahead and then loses eligibility for programs it still depends on due to an increase in income.

The intergenerational aspects of poverty are well known. **Adults who were poor during at least half of their childhood are 75 times more likely to be poor than those who were never poor as children.** The outcomes are worse for Black Americans, who are more likely to be poor as adults than White Americans with similar exposure to poverty during childhood.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY.



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ENCORE.ORG



PHOTO BY
ROCA

OUR GOAL

We strive to ensure that every family is able to secure what it needs to pursue its goals, including financial security.

WHO WE ARE

Organizations in the America Forward Coalition recognize the power of families to change their circumstances if they have access to information, financial capital, and the services they need. Some Coalition members provide social service navigation help or coaching. Others create jobs or provide working capital directly to families. Still others offer targeted services, develop affordable housing, or help low-income communities improve the quality of life and economic opportunities for residents.

WHY WE CARE

Economic circumstances affect every aspect of the current and future well-being of adults and their children in every kind of community across America.

THE PROBLEM

While Americans still believe the United States is a nation of opportunity, the fact is the number of people moving from poverty to the middle class has steadily declined. Studies by the Urban Institute and the U.S. Treasury have both found that about half of the families who start in either the top or the bottom 20% of the income distribution are still there after a decade, and that only 3-6% rise from bottom to top or fall from top to bottom. Black Americans, households headed by women, and households with more children have the lowest probability of improving their economic circumstances. Sadly, those families who do find a way out of poverty have a 50% chance of becoming poor again within five years. For those who were poor for at least five years, more than two-thirds will return to poverty within five years. Many efforts to end this vicious cycle provide fragmented and sporadic jolts of support without systemically addressing its root causes or valuing the strengths that families and communities possess. **We are not making fast-enough progress to reduce the number of people living in poverty, or the number of places experiencing long-term, large-scale persistent poverty.**

THE SOLUTION

Policy approaches should be rooted in the ability of low-income people to set their own goals, while providing an easy-to-navigate set of services they can access as needed. Investment in whole communities is needed to build results-oriented, inclusive ecosystems that support the economic success and well-being of people trying to find a pathway out of poverty.

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ABRIENDO PUERTAS/OPENING DOORS



Organizations in the America Forward Coalition illustrate promising approaches to support families' efforts to overcome the debilitating effects of intergenerational poverty. These organizations offer insights about how such a system could work, starting with the importance of recognizing families' own resourcefulness. For example, in response to policies that penalize families who struggle to build the necessary assets to weather the next crisis, the Family Independence Initiative (FII) developed an alternative approach: partnering with, learning from, and investing directly in families. With this approach, the families are the experts and FII staff act only as the story-gatherers, connectors, and advocates for the FII model alongside thousands of family partners. FII provides an environment and technology platform for families to build their own community, learns about the actions and activities families are taking to improve their lives, and designs direct capital investments to match their initiatives. Families join FII with five to seven other families in their community. They make a two-year commitment to one another by meeting and journaling monthly. In return, FII provides funding through its UpTogether Fund based on the data they provide, accelerating their mobility. With

a direct average investment of \$3,200 per family, during two years of engagement with FII, families report the following: a 27% average increase in monthly income; a 36% average decrease in subsidies such as TANF and SNAP; 88% of their children now earn excellent, good, or improved grades; and \$1,099 in funds saved through newly established retirement investment accounts.

Compass Working Capital similarly recognizes that assets are a stronger predictor than income of financial well-being and economic mobility, as they provide a cushion in times of economic distress as well as capital that can be invested in opportunities that move families forward. Unfortunately, the opportunity to build assets is out of reach for many families with low incomes, particularly families of color. To address this inequity, Compass provides experienced financial coaches to work with clients to help them understand their current financial situation, identify their personal financial goals, and chart a course for a more secure financial future. It also provides access to savings products and financial education workshops. An evaluation of Compass's asset-building model for families living in federally subsidized housing, supported by HUD's

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS), showed that participants earned more than their matched peers who did not participate, improved their credit and reduced their debt, and depended less on public assistance, resulting in more than \$10,000 in increased income over a five-year period, at a net cost of only \$276 per participant.

Addressing the challenges presented by fragmented and gap-filled support systems is another key to changing outcomes for people with multiple barriers to economic stability. For example, the **Corporation for Supportive Housing** makes assistance easier to access and more effective by combining affordable housing with services for people facing a multitude of complex medical, mental health, or substance use issues. Residents in supportive housing find homes of their own and are linked to intensive case management and voluntary, life-improving services including health care, workforce development, and child welfare. Structured as a tenancy, where residents pay rent and have the same rights and responsibilities of anyone renting, access to supportive housing is not contingent on meeting arbitrary behavioral thresholds. Nearly 40 independent studies over the past three decades have concluded that supportive housing results in tenants' decreased use of homeless shelters, hospitals, emergency rooms, and jails and prisons, all while saving money or realizing budgetary offsets for many public institutions and using no more—and sometimes fewer—resources for better results.

LIFT engages volunteers to help low-income families secure the assistance they need. It partners with high-quality community and early child care organizations that refer parents and caregivers to become “members” of the organization. LIFT works to build a strong, trusted relationship with each member and pairs them with a professionally trained volunteer coach who works with them to create an actionable plan centered around family goals, such as increasing savings and reducing debt, finding educational opportunities, and securing jobs that can provide more economic stability. LIFT also provides families with funds to meet emergency needs and support long-term goals, connects parents to a broader community of their peers and volunteer mentors, and provides access to curated local resources and partnerships.

LIFT believes a critical step for strengthening its impact is to gather feedback directly from the families it serves. Through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, LIFT

regularly collects and analyzes feedback and uses the insights to improve services. Among its most important findings are the importance of building relationships (members who report strong engagement with LIFT staff make up to three times as much progress on their long-term goals, such as securing a full-time job or enrolling in higher education); focusing on holistic solutions (members who report strong social support and self-efficacy go on to achieve 50% more outcomes); and meeting parents where they are. In response to direct member feedback, LIFT is piloting innovations to make its services more accessible, including co-location, weekend hours, and virtual meetings.

Roca similarly focuses on a discrete population: young men in crisis. Disrupting the cycle of incarceration and poverty by helping young people transform their lives, Roca's intervention model is based on a simple, yet powerful theory: When young people are reengaged through positive and intensive relationships, they can gain competencies in life skills, education, and employment, and move toward economic independence and stay out of jail. Focused on males aged 17-24 in crisis, particularly those involved with the criminal justice system, Roca's intervention has four core components:

1. Relentless outreach designed to meet young people where they are and build trust;
2. Transformational relationships using an intensive case management model;
3. Stage-based programming to increase young people's ability to move toward economic independence through life skills, educational and pre-vocational, and employment programming; and
4. Engaged partners, including criminal justice, health, and education institutions, that work to increase systemic capacity to provide supports to young people facing significant barriers.

This rigorous commitment to results requires Roca to use intensive data collection and analysis to determine participant progress and staff performance, and ultimately determine the effectiveness of the model as a whole. The results speak for themselves: 97% of youth served have no new arrests, and 79% have held jobs for at least six months.



Other organizations take a communitywide approach. For example, **Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)** focuses on whole communities, working with residents and partners to forge resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity, including in rural areas. Recognizing the importance of local organizations to achieve these goals, LISC focuses heavily on building the capacity of local nonprofit community organizations that can address local shortages of quality and affordable housing options, health care and medical facilities, job opportunities, quality education, and digital access. With offices in 34 local markets and rural partners across 44 states, LISC supports its partner organizations through capacity-building grants, repayable investments, low-cost lending capital, and equity investments. Since 1980, LISC has invested \$18.6 billion in communities around the country, resulting in \$56 billion in total development—400,500 affordable homes and apartments, and 67 million square feet of commercial, retail, and community space. Over the last 24 years, Rural LISC has leveraged its \$1.25 billion investments in its partners to secure \$3.3 billion from public and private sources, enabling the production of 35,000 affordable homes and apartments, 1 million square feet of commercial and community space, assistance for 700 businesses, the creation of 12,000 jobs, and support for 20 early childhood centers.

The GreenLight Fund addresses systemic challenges in communities by basing its investments on the recommendations of experts who are close to the community serving as the focus of GreenLight's work. With the assistance of a local advisory group, GreenLight assesses the community landscape to discover urgent unaddressed issues, where smart, effective approaches would make a significant difference in the lives of low-income children and families. It searches the country for the most effective solutions—the nonprofits that are creating new ways to deliver services, connect with their clients, and sustain their work. After conducting due diligence, GreenLight invests in nonprofits that are the best fit for the community, meet identified needs with innovation and impact, and can be successfully replicated. Using this method, GreenLight has launched 27 organizations across eight communities.

Other America Forward Coalition organizations support bridge-building work and service experiences. For example, having invested in 186 social enterprises in 26 states, **REDF** works to accelerate the success of employment social enterprises—mission-driven,

revenue-generating businesses that employ, empower, and invest in the potential of people with barriers to employment. For example, REDF has invested in Clean Decisions, a janitorial and general labor service company solely owned and operated by returning citizens in Washington, DC. Not only does Clean Decisions employ members of the returning citizen community, thereby increasing their likelihood of success, but also it provides a significant support network, encouraging all employees to create life and career development plans they review on a monthly basis with management to outline their short- and long-term goals and discuss what Clean Decisions can do to help them on their path. Clean Decisions also provides access to a case manager, a mental health counselor, and weekly community-building gatherings. By investing in social enterprises like this one, REDF has helped thousands of individuals—typically people of color with limited education and employment experiences—to enter the workforce and often secure better-paying jobs in the traditional workforce after graduating from the program. Employment social enterprises supported by REDF have on average increased profits by 19% year-over-year and covered 105% of their costs through the sale of goods and services.

Service Year Alliance similarly strengthens a national network of programs that offer bridge-building experiences, with the mission of making a year of paid, full-time service—a service year—a common expectation and opportunity for all young Americans. Taking a systems-change approach, Service Year Alliance works to alter the narrative that opportunity youth are clients not contributors, improve policies to enable more young people to serve (including individuals from low-income communities), and influence practice by working with individual organizations and whole communities to connect service-year experiences to post-service employment. Research shows that individuals who do a service year develop essential workplace and leadership skills.

These programs tell a story about effective approaches to empowering adults and families to withstand and overcome intergenerational poverty. They:

- **Recognize that people are the experts on their own lives, including their goals and what they need to achieve them.** These programs understand that people closest to the problems are closest to the solution, and their expertise should be respected.
- **Examine the whole ecosystem.** They imagine what the system looks like from the point of view of the community members looking for services, and work to elevate and empower voices with direct lived experience with those systems. They break down silos to deliver a suite of interventions that work for the customer and address the mindsets that hold a problem in place. And they look for ways that the system can counter racial and other biases that exacerbate glaring inequities.
- **Use technology, but stress the human touch.** They understand the power of technology to help people navigate a complex system, learn at their own pace with immediate feedback, and track data. But they also know that caring, coaching, and social capital come from people, not devices.
- **Partner across sectors to go beyond traditional approaches.** They appreciate the value that peers, nonprofits, businesses, higher education institutions, volunteers, national service corps members, and others in the community offer. They help their partners understand how countering biases and unfair perspectives can create transformational impact.
- **Use data to track results and innovate to achieve better outcomes.** They examine data to test approaches, and continuously innovate to increase their effectiveness. They disaggregate the data to secure inclusive impact, and to ensure they don't leave some families behind. They commit to building evidence for what works but, with humility, recognize that what works for some communities might not work for others, or may require an altered approach.

SYSTEMS

A vast number of insufficiently interactive systems have been set up to reduce poverty in America, including: Medicaid; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); unemployment insurance; workforce development and career and technical education funding, including the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA); public and subsidized housing; the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and SNAP Employment and Training Program;

the Community Development Block Grant program; AmeriCorps VISTA; the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit; programs to address homelessness; the Family Self-Sufficiency program; and numerous place-based strategies including Performance Partnerships, the New Markets Tax Credit, Opportunity Zones, and the Sustainable Communities Initiative. In addition, the criminal justice system and the civil legal system have disproportionate impacts on low-income families.



PHOTO BY
ENCORE

POLICY PROPOSALS

WE PROPOSE a set of programs and policies gleaned from the experiences of America Forward organizations. These proposals would strengthen low-income individuals and families by recognizing their assets, investing in self-determined plans, making services easier to access, removing barriers to work faced by specific populations, and increasing investment in communitywide strategies.

23. MOVE 100,000 FAMILIES OUT OF POVERTY BY INVESTING DIRECTLY IN THE INITIATIVE AND STRENGTH OF LOW-INCOME FAMILIES WORKING TOWARD ECONOMIC MOBILITY.

Test innovative asset-focused strategies that enable families to become financially secure.

Programs and policies focusing on low-income people are generally needs-based, which disincentivizes initiative and mutual assistance, and leads to an ecosystem that focuses on deficits. Too many low-income people are faced with the untenable choice of either forgoing opportunities or losing their safety net assistance. Many mistake this plight for a lack of resourcefulness or ambition, when in fact, the opposite is true. Throughout our history, many groups of people—affiliated through religion, neighborhood, national origin, or workplace—have organized to pool their resources and pursue collective action to improve conditions for their members, using both mutual aid and political strategies.

To achieve the goal of 100,000 individuals permanently leaving poverty, **we propose setting up test communities, using TANF funds or an alternative funding source, to engage cohorts of families who sign up to work together to support each other in achieving their financial and personal goals.** Families would do this work in conjunction with a nonprofit partner that commits to providing information about available services and their impact, data and technology tools, and unrestricted financial seed capital. This system would leverage and enrich communities' social capital, elevate natural role models, and provide advice and support—all from the

peer group of the participating family. It would call on families to define their own goals, and find the pathways that work for them, with rich information about how others have succeeded and services available in the community. And it would offer access to financial capital that allows poor families to do what rich ones do—weather setbacks, invest in opportunities, and choose the future they want to have.

24. DEVELOP AN INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY.

Recognize and address the racial, educational, and other barriers faced by people who are unemployed, or leave the workforce altogether.

Although the official unemployment rate is less than 5%, which many economists consider to be “full employment,” this statistic belies the reality that many people are not counted because they have left the labor market altogether due to health, disability, and other reasons. It also masks racial differences—Black Americans today are experiencing unemployment at Great Recession-era levels. Even controlling for parental income, White men earn more than Black men in 99% of census tracts. While the national unemployment rate is the lowest in 50 years, this figure primarily reflects White employment dynamics. In terms of educational attainment, for example, wealth inequality research has shown that White high school dropouts have the same chances of getting a job as Blacks who have completed some college or earned an associate degree. In fact, Blacks face higher unemployment rates than Whites at every level of degree attainment.



In addition, too many young adults struggle to enter the labor market or are unemployed. Experts count nearly 4.6 million “opportunity youth” aged 16-24 who are neither in school nor employed and often face the largest barriers to work. Racial disparities are significant among opportunity youth as well: White youth have a 9% disconnection rate, while 13% of Latinx youth, 18% of Black youth, and 24% of Native youth meet the definition of opportunity youth.

Additionally, high unemployment is often concentrated in specific communities. Despite a robust job market and the fact that many companies are struggling to find skilled labor, the unemployment rate is 10% in low-income neighborhoods, compared with the overall national rate of about 4%. Racial factors may also play a role: In 20 of 28 Black-majority cities with more than 65,000 residents, the average Black unemployment rate is 12%, compared with the general unemployment rate of 4%.

At the same time, a related problem is on the rise—the growing “skills gap,” or difference in the skills required on the job and the actual skills possessed by prospective employees. As much as one-third of the unemployment rate may be due to the imbalance between workers’ skills and open jobs. By 2020, 65% of all American jobs will require post-secondary education and training beyond high school. **While much of the national debate about the skills gap has focused on jobs in the for-profit business sector, social-sector organizations—nonprofits and government agencies—also experience workforce gaps, either due to unavailability of qualified workers or lack of funding to pay for the workforce they need.**

To make a commitment to **inclusive** full employment, we propose six critical policy changes:

1. Reenvision the workforce development ecosystem and ensure that it adequately serves all populations, including high-need adults facing multiple barriers to employment.
2. Engage in job creation in a serious way, including both “bridge-building jobs” and permanent positions with nonprofits, to meet the demands of the future.
3. Make supportive services more seamlessly available across the workforce development and higher education sectors, to enable low-wage workers to climb the economic ladder.
4. Utilize an equity-focused measurement system that tracks not only employment, earnings, and credential or degree attainment, but also the progression of men and women, racial and ethnic groups, court-involved individuals, and other groups of people with systemic barriers.
5. Remove the nearly insurmountable obstacles that returning citizens face when they seek to rebuild their lives after incarceration.
6. Pilot inclusive full-employment zones to demonstrate the power of these approaches.

Each of these policies is discussed in more detail on the following pages.

1. CONNECT THE DOTS TO BUILD AN INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ECOSYSTEM.

Assess, improve, and integrate all the systems that prepare and connect people to work, including the perspectives of both clients and employers.

Any effort to change the circumstances of those now left out of the economic mainstream—and reverse the negative impact on our overall economy—demands that **we rethink the way we invest public resources in the workforce development ecosystem.** We use the term “ecosystem” intentionally. Many people think of workforce development too narrowly, excluding the higher education system, omitting the role that national service programs play, and discounting many external factors that drive who participates and who benefits from the system as a whole.

Looking at the workforce development ecosystem broadly highlights important inequities. Many higher education institutions are designed for full-time college students right out of high school and do not work well for adult full-time workers who may wish to pursue a part-time degree. The federal government invests \$139 billion in postsecondary education, mostly for financial aid for undergraduate degree programs. However, today’s students are increasingly older, with family or job responsibilities, and prefer short-term or part-time education options. In addition, the majority of the \$170 billion that employers invest in formal training each year goes to workers who have already earned bachelor’s degrees and work in higher-paying professional and managerial positions.

A recent report by the Strada Institute for the Future of Work and Entangled Solutions surfaces key recommendations to build an inclusive workforce development ecosystem that align with the America Forward Coalition organizations’ experiences. These include building systems with employers in mind, including implementing “try before you buy” outsourced apprenticeship models to reduce risk for employers and develop sustainable revenue streams; positioning on-ramps as robust talent pipeline solutions for employers, rather than corporate social responsibility efforts; extending support services beyond job placement for retention and advancement;

and incorporating data measurement systems to guide decisions by learners, employers, and providers.

A critical element is having effective organizations focused on connecting adults without postsecondary credentials to a broader range of economic opportunities. These organizations are guided both by the desires of learners to pursue goals that they define for themselves, as well as the needs of employers of all types, not just those from the business community. They ensure that learners are able to ramp up foundational literacy and math skills, get technical training and pursue certifications for a particular industry, have relevant information to make good choices about the education or training they will pursue, and ensure that the choices are available. These options include foundational skills training, traditional and short-term workforce development and credential programs, as well as two- and four-year higher education programs and national service. Organizations also offer or connect future workers to options for supports that will help them succeed, such as English language learning, remedial education, career counseling, mental health services, financial planning, housing, and transportation. They work closely with employers to ensure that program completers will have both the specific technical and content-based skills employers require and the competencies for workplace success they desperately desire. Crucially, these organizations all develop strong employer partnerships and commitments to hire through apprenticeship and internship models, as well as through proactive job placement services.

In most cases, these connector organizations already exist in one form or another. But they aren’t resourced or mandated to approach their work in this way. Technical assistance and training is needed, as well as a robust data system and feedback loop to learn what works where.

Only by reenvisioning the workforce development ecosystem can we ensure that it adequately serves all populations, including adults with lower levels of education facing multiple barriers to employment.

2. INVEST IN BRIDGE-BUILDING WORK EXPERIENCE, INCLUDING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND NATIONAL SERVICE.

Expand opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment to develop workplace skills through well-supported employment and service experiences.

A second key component of an inclusive employment system is a network of organizations that provide bridge-building work experiences, offering opportunities to broaden learners' essential workplace skills, including critical thinking, creative problem solving, communication, teamwork, persistence, self-efficacy, and professionalism. Organizations may also offer support services, ranging from remedial education to substance abuse counseling. Beyond traditional apprenticeship and on-the-job training, which qualify as bridge-building work experiences in some cases, we see strong promise in two strategies worthy of increased public investment: employment social enterprises and national service.

A. EMPLOYMENT SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Employment social enterprises, such as those funded by REDF, are mission-oriented businesses that provide bridge-building paid employment and wraparound services. They offset a share of their costs through earned income, and in some cases, support from federal programs, including the SNAP Employment and Training Program and WIOA. Evidence shows that social enterprise employees are more likely to retain a job for one year, obtain higher levels of income, and have greater housing stability compared with individuals who only received traditional workforce services. Despite their benefits, employment social enterprises face obstacles in obtaining the capital needed to grow. **We see a three-part national strategy to scale employment social enterprises that can be adapted to state and local policy:** Increase investment; expand the market; and enable social enterprises to access small business resources on an equitable basis.

1. Increase investment in employment social enterprises through an outcomes fund. Employment social enterprises are accustomed to operating

in a market-driven environment in which their products and services must compete with those of other vendors, including traditional businesses. A multiyear fund to invest in the growth and sustainability of employment social enterprises can make periodic payments contingent on meeting agreed-upon outcomes.

- 2. Expand the market for goods and services produced by employment social enterprises.** The public sector should use its purchasing power to drive employment social enterprises' revenue and job growth. Procurement incentives can enable employment social enterprises to expand revenue, allowing them to hire and train more individuals overcoming barriers to employment. Policymakers should ensure that procurement policies include incentives for outcomes-based employment social enterprises in their business preference program, thus enabling them to secure contracts and potentially receive business technical assistance.
- 3. Treat employment social enterprises as small businesses for purposes of assistance programs, regardless of their legal form.** Many employment social enterprises are nonprofits, which means they are not eligible for programs aimed at supporting the health of small businesses. To address this, policymakers should amend the Small Business Act to include nonprofit social enterprises within the definition of a "small business concern" so that they would be clearly eligible for loans, guarantees, and contracts under the Small Business Administration (SBA) programs and designations. Policymakers should also ensure that Department of Commerce policies and regulations include nonprofit employment social enterprises within the definition of a "small business concern" so that they would be clearly eligible for federal loans, guarantees, and grants targeted at businesses. And policymakers should allow the leveraging of existing Community Development Financial Institution and SBA resources to provide for technical assistance and best practice information about social enterprises through existing federal centers of excellence, technical assistance, and capacity-building programs to ultimately increase the capital available for startups and expansion of current social enterprises.

B. NATIONAL SERVICE

While rarely recognized as such, national service is a kind of “civic apprenticeship” that combines work-based learning and career development with a motivating social purpose. The evidence shows that regardless of background, young people in full-time service learn workplace behaviors and skills, experience a specific field, make connections, and change their self-perception. Research demonstrates that the sense of purpose and direction developed through these experiences can inspire a young adult to pursue further education or advance on a career path, leading to future economic success, often in public-service fields that are experiencing talent shortages.

Two types of national service programs are designed to serve as bridge-building work experiences: youth corps and YouthBuild. Some youth corps and YouthBuild sites are also part of AmeriCorps, a diverse program that also includes locally designed and national models that fit this category.

The growth of national service would have a positive impact on the nonprofit workforce, providing both increased pipelines for talent while preparing corps members for future work in the sector. However, it could have an even greater impact on inclusive employment policy if policymakers do the following:

- Increase funding for YouthBuild programs, and encourage diversification of and target funding to communities designated as inclusive employment zones.
- Align expansion of AmeriCorps with workforce needs within the social sector, incentivize communitywide strategies connected to inclusive employment, and prioritize funding for programs that offer the opportunity to earn a credential or post-secondary credit.
- Expand utilization of the 21st Century Conservation Corps authority to contract with youth corps to reduce the backlog of maintenance and other projects on public lands, including national parks, and create similar authorities within state and local government.
- Encourage higher education to offer formal credentials that recognize postsecondary learning through national service.



- Direct government agencies to develop national service programs to address priority needs within their jurisdictions, and integrate specific job skill development into the programs.
- Formally recognize national service as a form of workforce development parallel to on-the-job training and apprenticeship, or create a subcategory in workforce programs.
- Make national service an eligible category for GI Bill funding, parallel to on-the-job training and apprenticeship.

3. CREATE SUPPORTIVE SERVICE POOLS FOR TRAINEES AND LOW-WAGE EMPLOYEES.

Support common wraparound support systems that can be accessed by low-income people looking for—or training for—work, as well as workers who do not receive a living wage.

Although existing workforce programs allow for funding to be used for supportive services such as transportation, child care, mental health support, and assistance with housing for eligible recipients, research by the Institute for Women’s Policy suggests that many supportive service needs have been unmet. In addition, research by Race Forward suggests that less than half of One-Stop Career Centers and community-based organizations provide wraparound services for workers of color. Furthermore, once individuals become employed, they may lose eligibility for these services.

We propose a different system, **where existing funding for these supports is pooled, matched by a national or state fund, made available to all individuals in bridge-building or other workforce development programs, and extended to them on a sliding scale until they achieve living wage employment.** The pool would function like an HMO, modeled on innovative portable benefit structures or union benefit plans in trades where individuals commonly move between jobs.



4. DEVELOP AN EQUITY-FOCUSED MEASUREMENT SYSTEM.

Change the way we measure outcomes of workforce development policy to incorporate race and gender outcomes as well as the quality of jobs.

While existing workforce development policy measures success based on employment, earnings, and credential or degree attainment, the measures do not speak to inclusive and equitable participation or mobility. Knowing how different racial and ethnic groups, court-involved individuals, and men and women are progressing—as well as the race and gender divisions and upward mobility potential of the career tracks they are pursuing—is essential to understanding the true impact of workforce development policies.

A new system should incorporate a measure of job quality, proposed by the Center for American Progress (CAP) and based on the system used by the European Union and other OECD countries, as well as “multiple measures of data analytics to help account for how much structures and policies mitigate—or reinforce—employment bias.” These measures would help drive a process of continuous feedback, with a focus on collecting and sharing data that inform and potentially transform workplace structures. CAP proposes the use of existing data platforms, such as Equal Employment Opportunity Commission data or a tool such as Equity Indicators (developed by the City University of New York Institute for State and Local Governance and funded by the Rockefeller Foundation), which measure the disparities faced by disadvantaged groups.

5. REMOVE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FACED BY INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.

Address the unfair impacts of criminal background checks, qualifications for professional licensing, and eligibility requirements that discourage or prevent court-involved individuals and returning citizens from securing education and employment.

Today, 4.5 million Americans are on parole or probation, and 70 million have a criminal-arrest record of some kind. Given the size of this population, it's obvious that the ability of court-involved individuals to secure employment is critical both to an inclusive workforce system and our economy. However, returning citizens, as well as those with criminal records for even minor offenses, experience significant barriers to employment. In fact, returning citizens are unemployed at a rate of over 27%—higher than the total U.S. unemployment rate during any historical period, including the Great Depression. While bridge-building programs like YouthBuild and social enterprises help, much more must be done to expand employment and education opportunities for a broader range of individuals with criminal justice system involvement. We suggest the following policy changes:

- Implement policies to make it illegal to ask about criminal records on initial job applications, and develop systems to track and mitigate the impact of these policies, including increases in racial bias.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of professional licensing requirements and remove inappropriate barriers to individuals with criminal histories.
- Restore Pell grant eligibility to individuals who are incarcerated.
- Enact automatic expungement of juvenile records for individuals after a specific number of years.
- Remove barriers to entrepreneurship as a pathway to economic justice for currently and formerly incarcerated individuals, including starting ventures from inside prison.
- Revise legislatively mandated extreme criminal background check requirements for AmeriCorps service that are unrelated to actual program requirements and best practices to protect people who are served, and that deter people from applying for positions that are in fact open to, or even designed to engage, court-involved or returning citizens.

6. PILOT INCLUSIVE FULL-EMPLOYMENT ZONES.

Bust the myth that people who are not employed don't want to work by developing comprehensive plans to ensure that everyone who wants to work can work.

What if we could guarantee a good job for every person who wants to work? The elements of inclusive employment described above, if present in specific communities, could demonstrate the power of inclusive employment policy by enabling everyone who wants to work to find a pathway to employment. A pool of funding, together with waivers that enable communities to “de-silo” funding streams, would enable selected communities to map workforce need and assets, find the people who have left or never entered the workforce, and create and implement a comprehensive plan for inclusive full employment.

25. REINVEST 50% OF THE “JUSTICE DIVIDEND” IN COMMUNITIES.

Increase the safety and well-being of communities that have historically higher rates of arrests by investing funding saved due to criminal justice reforms.

In the last decade, more than 25 states have taken steps to reduce the number of people under correctional control. However, despite a steady decline in the total number of individuals held in correctional facilities, spending on prisons and jails continues to rise in some states. For example, MassINC found that, between 2011 and 2016, the average daily population in all state and county correctional facilities in Massachusetts dropped 21%, yet correctional budgets consistently moved in the opposite direction, increasing by nearly 25%, or \$254 million, to almost \$1.4 billion. Although the state's prisons and jails now hold 5,000 fewer individuals than they did at the beginning of FY 2011, under the proposed FY 2019 budget, correctional budget growth will have outpaced inflation by \$117 million.

Simply reinvesting in the criminal justice system may not necessarily increase safety. Overusing police and prisons causes harm, particularly when concentrated in specific

neighborhoods, particularly communities of color, because it leads to higher arrest rates for minor offenses by residents and, as a result, further destabilizes and depresses them economically. Research shows that neighborhoods are safer when residents work with local community-based organizations toward shared goals.

We propose that every jurisdiction that has reduced the number of people in the criminal justice system invest at least half of the savings generated into community-based organizations aimed at improving the safety and broader well-being of residents. Funded organizations should incorporate a decision-making role for local residents; provide research and data to inform their deliberations; and work in partnership with other community agencies, including school and law enforcement.

26. CREATE A WOMEN'S INNOVATION FUND TO CREATE DURABLE NEW PATHWAYS INTO THE MIDDLE CLASS.

Address the barriers that women and single-parent families face through a fund that supports nonprofit-government partnerships aimed at aligning key services.

Too many women and their families in this country face especially acute barriers to escaping poverty and entering the middle class, many stemming from family caregiving responsibilities as well as gender pay gaps. Almost 5 million college students in the United States are raising children today, and women represent over 70% of that population. Fifteen million women work in low-wage jobs, making up two-thirds of the low-wage workforce. Americans receiving means-tested public assistance are disproportionately women, including 85% of adult TANF recipients. Shockingly, over 93% of one-parent families with children receiving public means-tested assistance are headed by women.

To improve these numbers, we need a Women and Families Innovation Fund to support innovative, effective approaches to improve the economic security, educational achievement, health, housing stability, homelessness, early childhood programs, and multigenerational outcomes for women and single-parent families with children under age 18. Overseen by a federal interagency



council, the fund would provide competitive grants to projects where innovative nonprofits partner with state and local governments to advance a promising proposal to improve the status quo, with a rigorous evaluation. The council would also have waiver authority, on a limited and tailored basis, to blend or combine federal dollars awarded by any of the participating departments consistent with local plans. The fund should include incentives for applicants to identify state, local, or philanthropic match funding. To support thorough and inclusive planning processes, the fund should provide resources for feasibility and capacity-building to support the development of innovative full proposals.

27. FUND OUTCOMES-BASED PILOTS FOCUSING ON THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH.

Invest in prevention-focused approaches to improve health outcomes, going beyond traditional programming to incorporate a broader range of strategies.

Health policy is an area ripe for substantial Pay for Success investment because of the substantial costs incurred by government, the connection of health to a wide range of other public policy areas (including

housing, nutrition, and infrastructure), and the growing view among experts that a comprehensive preventive approach is needed. Experts point to the need to address the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age that shape health, also known as the “social determinants of health,” in order to reduce long-standing income disparities in health outcomes.

By using outcomes-based payment contracts, unlocking administrative data to build evidence, properly valuing outcomes, engaging a diverse cohort of funders, and potentially deploying Pay for Success financing where useful to fund the right interventions at the right time, the Pay for Success field holds promise. Outcomes-based pilot programs through major health funding streams like Medicaid, and other workforce, child care, and anti-poverty programs, would enable communities to build financially sustainable and holistic preventive approaches that make families measurably healthier.

In particular, Pay for Success housing projects in Massachusetts, Colorado, Utah, and California, in partnership with Coalition members such as the Corporation for Supportive Housing and Enterprise Community Partners, show increasingly encouraging initial results for the homeless individuals they serve. Enabling Medicaid to make outcomes-based success payments directly to states, cities, and counties for avoided costs associated with emergency hospitalizations for this population could allow this

increasingly proven approach to scale. With unsheltered homelessness a growing crisis in our cities, this innovation could help tens of thousands of our most desperate neighbors put a roof over their heads, which the data repeatedly show is the single best way to enable them to get their lives on track.

Finally, enabling Medicaid pass-throughs and Managed Care Organizations to keep a greater share of the savings generated by prevention, with careful safeguards to prevent any cutbacks in service delivery, could help make the benefits of prevention less diffuse, and create a new set of stronger incentives to seed a new wave of more outcomes-driven prevention initiatives.

CONCLUSION

As a nation, we have missed an opportunity to invest directly in the initiative and strength of low-income families working toward economic mobility. A big part of this problem is the dual systems we have for people of privilege and people without financial means. Safety nets and training and education programs that don't lead to living-wage jobs won't lead to an equitable system. An inclusive workforce development system includes bridge-building jobs, removes barriers faced by returning citizens, and reenvision the workforce development ecosystem. Across the board, we need to develop ways to invest in the expertise of the people most proximate to the problems we hope to solve. That means building a system that respects the goals of the people looking to improve their lives, simplifies access to the services they may want, connects individuals to learning and jobs with potential, and removes the biases that keep whole categories of people from following their dreams. And it means recognizing that housing, health, transportation, education, and other factors that affect family economic security and well-being are deeply interconnected. Place-based approaches have the potential to build out the infrastructure necessary to improve outcomes given these interrelated challenges.

AMERICA FORWARD ORGANIZATIONS

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
 Children's Aid
 Compass Working Capital
 Corporation for Supportive Housing
 Encore.org
 Enterprise Community Partners
 Exalt
 Family Independence Initiative
 Freedom Project
 GreenLight Fund
 LIFT
 LISC
 Our Voice Nuestra Voz
 Per Scholas
 POWER
 REDF
 Roca
 Root Cause
 Service Year Alliance
 Single Stop
 The First 72+
 The Urban Association of Forestry and Fire Professionals (FFRP)
 Think of Us
 Year Up
 YouthBuild



SALUTATORIAN

REGENTS

PHOTO BY
FAMILY INDEPENDENCE INITIATIVE



**PART III: HOW TO
RESTORE BELIEF
IN GOVERNMENT
BY EQUIPPING
REFORMERS TO
DELIVER RESULTS**



PHOTO BY
LIFT

HOW TO RESTORE BELIEF IN GOVERNMENT BY EQUIPPING REFORMERS TO DELIVER RESULTS



PUBLIC DOLLARS HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE LIVES. Used well, with attention to results, these dollars can catalyze progress toward solving America’s biggest challenges at scale. In 2018, across federal, state, and local governments, the public sector spent well over \$2 trillion on social services and social programs—more than five times the amount raised from individuals, foundations, and corporations across the entire philanthropic sector in the United States. **While other sectors are also needed, they can’t come close to the power of government when it comes to scaling what works to achieve better outcomes for the millions of families poorly served by the status quo.**

We see tremendous opportunities for the social entrepreneurs and systems innovators across the America Forward Coalition to partner with government agencies to rebuild and strengthen our social safety net and provide more effective and inclusive systems to unlock the productive potential of *all* people.

Unfortunately, we have a long way to go before this vision becomes reality.

BARRIERS TO RESULTS, INNOVATION, & PARTNERSHIP

Most government programs are designed to address a narrow problem without taking into account its root causes and connections to other challenges. And only a small fraction of government programs are tied to measurements, so much of public funding isn’t linked in any way to demonstrable results. To make matters worse, government agencies spend only about half of their time working on mission-related performance. They spend the other half complying with oversight requirements, at a great cost to taxpayers. Given this reality, **it is not**

surprising that government agencies are disinclined to try new approaches, and they may even be penalized for trying to innovate.

Because of the rigidity in many public programs, social entrepreneurs trying to scale proven solutions through government partnerships are often stymied. **Innovative programs rarely fit well into a public funding stream.** Or if there is a funding stream, it is off limits because the law designates another type of provider or another intervention strategy. Or it covers only a small part of the services, or pays only a portion of the cost. Or the process for securing the funding is complicated and burdensome, beyond the expertise and capacity of most nonprofit staff.

If innovators apply anyway and are successful, they may find that they have to change what they are doing or who they are serving, and that **government oversight focuses on adherence to a complex set of reporting rules emphasizing inputs rather than outcomes and results.** They may well choose to forgo future government opportunities altogether and continue to operate at the level of scale other revenue sources allow.



While most public servants are motivated by mission, they may also be limited by their own experience. With a seniority-driven personnel system designed in the 1940s, the federal government has a workforce whose average age is nearly 50, and an average employee tenure of 15 years—nearly four times the average of the broader workforce. Less than 6% of senior executives at federal agencies were hired from outside the federal government, while over 68% were hired from within the same agency subcomponent. **Because so few people move in and out of government, many people administering programs don't have work experience in other sectors, or lived experience with the issue they are addressing,** thus depriving the agencies charged with solving a problem of important sources of knowledge.

The disconnect between our government and the communities it serves becomes even more jarring when we turn to our elected representatives. While every year the number of people of color and women increases among elected officials, they are still significantly underrepresented relative to their population at every level of government. So, too, are young people: Over the past 30 years, the average age of a member of Congress has increased with almost every new session; today, the

average age of a representative is 57, and the average age of a senator is 61. People from less-advantaged backgrounds, however, make up the most profoundly underrepresented group; they account for just 4% of elected officials, even as millionaires, for the first time, make up a majority of Congress. **As a result, the essential voices of the people who are deeply affected by policies aimed at reducing poverty and inequality are effectively absent from the halls of power where our priorities and policies are determined.**

But it doesn't have to be this way.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

We call on all policymakers, social entrepreneurs, change agents, and ordinary citizens to lift our sights beyond our narrow programmatic interests and unite to make democracy, and government, focus on results and work better for everyone.



PHOTO BY
THE LEARNING ACCELERATOR

OUR GOAL

We aim to reduce poverty and inequity by making government programs and partnerships efficient, effective, and easy to access, with measurable results.

WHO WE ARE

Organizations in the America Forward Coalition work closely with government and community partners to get better outcomes by breaking down silos, improving learning, reducing poverty, and building the modern social-sector workforce our country needs. We use new tools, such as Pay for Success projects and other outcomes-based approaches, to drive resources to providers who can get more powerful results. And we work to ensure that the voices of people closest to the problems are heard, and their expertise heeded.

WHY WE CARE

With the magnitude of challenges we face as a nation, we can't afford to waste public dollars. Government has the power to change lives with the right people and partnerships, appropriate resources, the flexibility to innovate, and the ability to link funding to outcomes and reward results.

THE PROBLEM

We can't make good on the idea that all people can succeed regardless of where they start without government playing a constructive role. That means setting the right priorities and making sure that every tax dollar delivers results. But the complex set of government programs designed to address inequity and fight poverty in America has, to date, not made sufficient progress toward this end for a variety of reasons.

THE SOLUTION

Redesign government programs to focus on results and improve outcomes.

We can't make good on the idea that all people can succeed regardless of where they start without government playing a constructive role. However, too often government programs lock problems in place.

PROGRAMS FOCUS ON COMPLIANCE, NOT OUTCOMES.

Without specific measurable goals and a way to track progress toward them, we can't innovate or build evidence. Although many sources of data are available that would enable agencies and providers to measure impact, too little has been done to make that data usable and accessible to support outcomes measurement. Instead of developing an outcomes-oriented infrastructure, most government programs remain focused on compliance. Complex, detailed rules make it hard for organizations to operate programs, and thereby limit participation of new providers, including grassroots organizations that are most proximate to the population served.

PROGRAMS DON'T EMBRACE THE EXPERTISE OF PEOPLE CLOSEST TO THE PROBLEMS THEY ARE TRYING TO SOLVE.

Unfortunately, the misguided idea that people are poor because they don't want to work or can't make good decisions is deeply embedded in the design of many government programs. Examples include work requirements in public assistance programs that fail to address the needs of individuals unable to work, and limitations in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that support the purchase of certain types of food, but not others such as prepared or hot foods. Rather than value the expertise of people who have lived in poverty, policymakers too often substitute their own judgments for those of the people they hope to help. In contrast, successful businesses know it is important to hear from customers when they design products and services. In fact, more than 600,000 people are employed in market research—an industry growing by 20% a year. But while elected officials spend money on polling to learn how to appeal to voters, policymakers rarely design solutions with the people they are trying to help at the table. **The resulting programs, while well intentioned,**

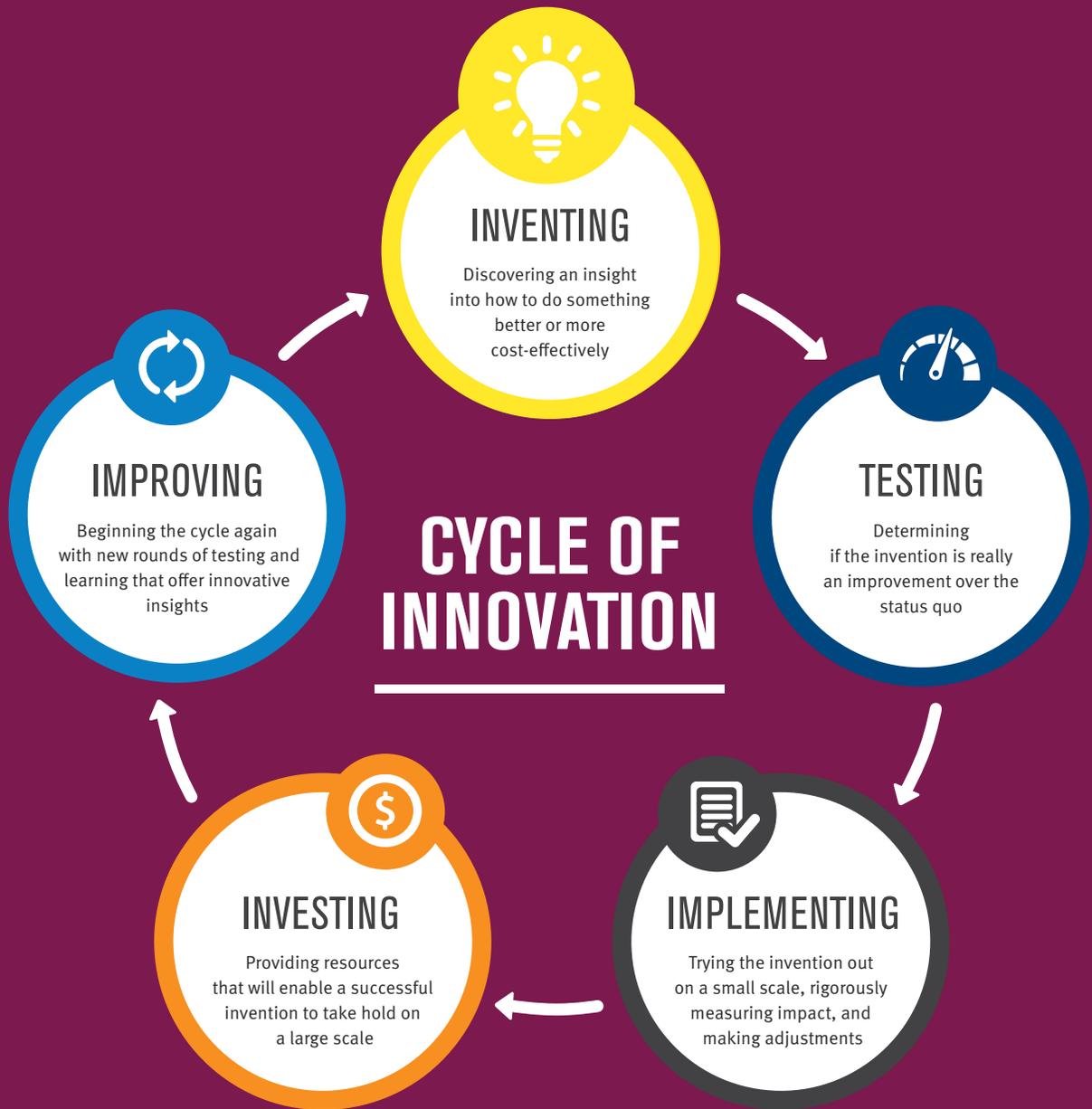
don't always help the people they are designed to serve and sometimes lead to unforeseen consequences.

In addition, too often government funding is channeled to a set of incumbent providers that have established relationships with the agency overseeing the program, not necessarily providers with the best potential for success. Alternative providers closer to the community, as well as nonprofit organizations that could help traditional providers improve, operate outside the system, largely depending on philanthropic funding, which is unevenly distributed across communities.

PROGRAMS SUPPORT SINGLE-POINT SOLUTIONS FOR MULTIFACETED PROBLEMS.

Often individual government programs are deployed to address discrete needs of individuals living in poverty, even though families are likely to experience multiple, interrelated challenges. Rather than building on the assets of these families, helping them in a holistic way, and addressing the larger ecosystem in the community that reinforces and exacerbates challenges, many government programs treat individual symptoms based on the jurisdiction of the executive branch agency and Congressional committees that created them. They provide housing supports, food vouchers, health care, child care, English language classes, legal services, job training, education, and other assistance through individual, uncoordinated rule-bound programs, all of which operate independently. Families navigating through this morass may get some of the help they need to survive, but likely not the kind of support they would choose if they could determine their own paths to change their circumstances.

The same is true of communities where poverty persists. Rather than transform the ecosystem, it's more common for government programs to direct resources to specific providers that map to the agency of government offering the assistance rather than incentivizing the development of a strong community-based system of supports. Imagine how much more robust and effective our social safety net might be if these programs worked seamlessly and holistically together, interacting with each other to create a sustainable ladder into the middle class, rather than the disjointed and fractured maze that families and social entrepreneurs alike find so challenging to navigate.





PROGRAMS FACE CHALLENGES THAT LIMIT THEIR ABILITY TO LEARN AND INNOVATE.

We are in the process of building a growing and evolving body of evidence about what works well. In many businesses and organizations outside of government, an innovation cycle supported by experimentation and data analytics drives improvement. Unfortunately, no such system exists at scale within the parts of government charged with solving the most intractable problems associated with poverty.

Nor is it the norm for one part of government to work with or learn from another—even if they are trying to serve the same people. The processes associated with government programs—passing legislation and issuing regulations and formal policies—move slowly in a gridlocked and partisan climate and are so rarely updated that **discredited practices may actually be frozen in place for decades.**

Agencies may be prone to issuing informal rules and conforming to operating norms that are hard to challenge, even by the people who work in them. In an article published in 2018, professor Jeffrey Liebman, director of Harvard’s Government Performance Lab, identified two main obstacles that prevent state and local government agencies from more successfully scaling approaches that measurably move key outcomes: “First, many agencies lack leadership with a time horizon that is sufficiently long to prompt performance improvement projects, that is philosophically oriented toward using data to drive change, and that is willing to bear the stresses associated with driving change. Second, many agencies lack staff with the combination of spare capacity, expertise, and desire necessary to lead data-driven reform projects.”¹

Operating in similarly constrained systems, just 60% of federal employees report they feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways to do their jobs, a substantial 16 points behind the private sector. All of this might in part explain why in 2015, just 20% of the public believed the federal government is run well, and 59% believed government needed “major reforms,” a 22-point increase over the past two decades. **Far too many public employees at all levels of government serve in systems that do not encourage or incentivize unlocking of creativity, inspire innovation, and encourage data-driven performance management.**

1. Liebman, Jeffrey B. “Using Data to More Rapidly Address Difficult U.S. Social Problems.” ANNALS, AAPSS, 675, January 2018.=

THE SOLUTION

In large part because of the pathbreaking work of America Forward Coalition members, we have learned a great deal in recent years about how to redesign government programs to focus on and improve outcomes.

By using evaluations and data to track what works, we can build evidence and actively manage performance to get better outcomes. By sharing de-identified data with community providers, we can empower them to get better results for the families they serve. We can drive greater resources toward what works best, while modifying and adapting those approaches as needed based on the unique customized needs of individual families and local communities. By enabling those closest to the people served to assemble benefits and services in ways that are easy to understand and access, we can achieve better results. And by recruiting a new generation of diverse talent to elected, appointed, and civil service positions, we can bring new perspectives and approaches to solving critical challenges.

To make it easier for organizations to manage government funds, we should **strip away unnecessary program requirements that aren't tied to results, while maintaining a critical focus on the most underserved and overlooked populations.** Even better, we can acknowledge the larger ecosystem that affects outcomes, and call on public agencies to work in partnership with nonprofits and community-based organizations, as well as other government offices, business, and philanthropy.

One clear way to improve the status quo is to move to a new approach that **ties public dollars to better outcomes.** This shift critically alters the way government agencies think about programs, deemphasizing enrollment and requirement checklists, and focusing attention instead on whether lives actually improve.

A number of America Forward Coalition organizations are at the forefront of developing a new approach designed to achieve this shift, which we have already referenced, called **Pay for Success (PFS).** Pay for Success emphasizes innovation, prevention, and accurate data. It encompasses “PFS contracting,” in which payments are made (typically by the government) in part or entirely based on the achievement of measurable outcomes.

“Pay for Success financing” is a more specific related tool through which mission-driven investors, including philanthropies, fund services and are later repaid (usually by a government entity) through success payments if those services achieve key outcomes, as measured by an independent evaluator. This approach has sometimes been referred to as “social impact bonds.” Over the last decade, more than 25 pathbreaking state and local projects have launched in the United States using Pay for Success financing, pushing jurisdictions to tie public funds to measurable results and forging new partnerships among nonprofits, governments, philanthropy, investors, and evaluators.

While Pay for Success financing is an important tool that can and should continue to scale, it appears that the future of Pay for Success work is not primarily focused on engaging external investors. In fact, a growing cohort of Pay for Success projects features no external investors at all, and several of our Coalition members are scaling Pay for Success approaches across entire agencies and systems to rebuild our fraying social safety net without necessitating Pay for Success financing. We can and should continue to harness the catalytic potential of the financing model, in concert with foundations, impact investors, and other funders. But almost all of the policies we propose in this book do not depend on the financing model, or on partnering with external investors.

Third Sector is a strong example of an America Forward Coalition member that has broken new ground helping state and local jurisdictions across the country develop outcomes-driven initiatives, using integrated data and active performance management of contracts to deliver better results for families and build a stronger social safety net. In Santa Clara County, California, for example, Third Sector worked with local providers to fund mental health supports and other wraparound services through an outcomes-based contract. The county committed to make outcomes payments to providers if an evaluation found those served are ultimately healthier and make fewer trips to emergency rooms, psychiatric facilities, or jails over a six-year period.

On a larger scale, Third Sector is helping Washington State’s Department of Children, Youth, and Families

to tie nearly \$1 billion in biennial funding across over 1,000 contracts for child and family services to improved outcomes and quality standards, a paradigm shift that puts the needs of clients and communities at the center of its contracting structure. Over the past year, Third Sector has engaged in conversations across the federal government about ways to implement outcomes-oriented approaches to federal funding streams, such as TANF and SNAP. Through these discussions, federal agencies are beginning to reimagine how dollars can be deployed to achieve measurable outcomes.

Social Finance is another America Forward Coalition member driving the outcomes-based funding movement forward in partnership with government agencies. For example, Social Finance has helped develop “rate cards”—a menu of outcomes that government seeks to achieve and the prices they are willing to pay for each outcome achievement. They are used as a procurement and contracting tool with the ability to standardize Pay for Success financing and drastically reduce the time such deals take to get to market. One rate card can result in multiple contracts with multiple providers that must deliver against predetermined outcomes and prices, receiving payment only when the stated outcomes are achieved

and participants’ lives are positively impacted. Using this approach, Social Finance recently helped structure and launch a new project in which Connecticut’s Office of Early Childhood agreed to pay bonus payments to a cohort of early childhood home-visiting providers serving families who subsequently benefit from improved birth, health, child safety, and economic security outcomes.

Social Finance is also at the forefront of leveraging federal dollars to scale Pay for Success financing. It helped to structure projects spanning jurisdictions from New York City to Anchorage, Alaska, for the first federal Pay for Success competition, the Social Impact Partnership to Pay for Results Act (SIPPPRA) program. Social Finance also helped scale a promising new intervention called the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs, an intensive set of financial, counseling, and wraparound supports for community college students in Lorain County, Ohio, by leveraging a new state-level funding stream in Ohio tied to improved graduation rates. Based on a rigorous evaluation, the project appears to be on track to double three-year graduation rates for students served, compared to the status quo. Finally, Social Finance is at the forefront of deploying a promising new outcomes-based tool—



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TURNAROUND FOR CHILDREN



income-sharing agreements—through which impact investors fund targeted training and post-secondary education programs, and are subsequently repaid based on a modest share of a student’s future income, if the student earns above a minimum salary threshold.

Many America Forward Coalition members are doing the hard but vital work of partnering with evaluators and the public sector to leverage administrative data to build evidence for the effectiveness of their services. These examples span numerous domains and areas of focus, including **KIPP** for K-12 education; **Bottom Line**, **uAspire**, **College Forward**, and **Braven** for higher education; **Roca** for criminal justice; **YouthBuild** and **Year Up** for opportunity youth; **Per Scholas** for workforce development; the **Corporation for Supportive Housing** for combatting homelessness; and **AppleTree** for early learning. By looking rigorously at outcomes, pursuing evaluations to measure what works, and constantly seeking to build evidence, these and many other members of the America Forward Coalition are demonstrating that social entrepreneurs and nonprofits across America can partner with government to measurably improve the lives of the people they serve.

To use data effectively, implement Pay for Success, or

integrate technology effectively requires expertise not always present in public agencies. America Forward Coalition members are tackling this challenge in a variety of ways.

For example, **FUSE Corps** takes on the talent challenge by partnering with cities and counties on a range of issues, including economic and workforce development, health care, public safety, climate change, and education. FUSE Corps works closely with its government partners to design yearlong strategic projects, recruit experienced leaders to become fellows who will take on those challenges, and provide ongoing support to help fellows achieve their full potential for community impact. By helping to craft new policy, roll out new public services, and improve existing programs, FUSE Corps governments work better for the people they serve. Since 2012, FUSE Corps has placed more than 140 fellows in over 80 local government agencies throughout the country. More than 50% of alums have continued to work in roles in civic leadership after their fellowships, and 90% of partner government agencies have returned each year with requests to host additional fellows.

Other America Forward Coalition members focus on ensuring that the views and voices of underrepresented



people are heard by policymakers. For example, **POWER** is an interfaith organization representing over 50 congregations throughout Southeastern and Central Pennsylvania; it organizes people to work together to transform the conditions of their neighborhood. In the spring of 2011, more than 150 lay and clergy leaders from POWER congregations conducted 40 research meetings with public- and private-sector leaders to gain an understanding of how and why key systems were failing to provide the pathways to opportunity that families need. POWER leaders then held a Founding Convention, bringing together 2,000 congregational members, allies, and city officials to affirm a change agenda. Representing the coming together of dozens of congregations from across the city—across lines of race, income level, neighborhood, and faith tradition—to build broad-based power for policy change, POWER secured commitments from public- and private-sector leaders to work toward a vision of connecting 10,000 low-income Philadelphians with living-wage jobs.

These organizations, and others like them, show us the way. They work with government to improve outcomes by:

- Focusing on results over compliance
- Accessing administrative data to measure long-term effectiveness
- Silo-busting, enabling individuals to receive comprehensive, personalized services
- Building a sustainable pipeline of talent to foster innovation and enable outcomes-based approaches to scale
- Leveraging evaluations and technical assistance to improve the efficacy of services and programs over time
- Receiving and incorporating constant feedback from those closest to the problem, enabling continuous learning, improvement, and innovation

The impact of these strategies underscores the importance of opening more funding streams to support the nonprofits that can help government and providers alike.

POLICY PROPOSALS

28. APPOINT LEADERS FOR INNOVATION AND INCLUSION IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH.

Ensure that the White House, as well as every governor, has a chief social innovation officer to lead efforts to improve government through social innovation.

Changing the long-standing practices of government requires the active leadership of the chief executive. **Creating a new White House Office of Innovation, Outcomes, and Engagement, led by a chief innovation officer reporting directly to the president, with the authority both to help set budgetary priorities through the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and to convene and direct policy through the Domestic Policy Council, will vastly increase the odds that efforts to promote innovation across government will succeed.** Ideally, the chief innovation officer will play a coordinating role with agency heads and other senior officials. Innovation office staff with working knowledge of government, business, and the nonprofit sector will bring the perspectives necessary to make government work better for everyone. A similar office should be established in every major executive branch agency and replicated at the state and local levels. These offices should play a leadership role in five areas:

1. FACILITATE PAY FOR SUCCESS EFFORTS.

Implementing Pay for Success principles takes expertise and coordination. Working with OMB at the federal level, the federal Innovation Office would **coordinate and align federal programs and funding streams to ensure guidance and regulations are more user-friendly to states, local government, and providers pursuing Pay for Success; make it easier to utilize federal dollars for outcomes payments;** and help ensure agencies do not

stymie the implementation of Pay for Success programs. The office would release national guidance on evaluation and data-sharing (including with providers), and restructure federal funds to make the federal regulatory frameworks governing them less disjointed; spread best practices and serve as a central repository of model documents to streamline the Pay for Success development process; and convene federal, state, local, and nonprofit partners to break down silos, and collaborate on multifaceted projects that drive toward solutions. This office would work to make the federal government catalyze rather than obstruct outcomes-based projects. A similar role would be played at the state level, in partnership with state budget offices and agencies.

2. CHAMPION TALENT STRATEGIES.

The chief innovation officer would **lead a campaign to call a new generation of diverse talent to public service.** Traditional hiring pipelines don't necessarily produce a talent pool that is inclusive of a diverse range of expertise, including technology, cross-sector partnerships, and the expertise developed through lived experience in low-income communities. The Innovation Office would work closely with the Office of Personnel Management (or relevant state agency) to track data regarding recruitment, hiring, and retention, and take charge of coordinating a range of strategies across government, including national service, midcareer programs, and professional development strategies for existing employees.

3. DISMANTLE BARRIERS TO EQUITY ACROSS GOVERNMENT.

The Innovation Office should explicitly **prioritize equity, with the goal of seeding and funding more outcomes-based projects that reduce racial disparities, ensuring that all talent strategies have equity at their core,** and make equity central to all place-based and cross-sector strategies. It should develop a philanthropic index to identify areas poorly served by philanthropy that should be automatically exempted from the requirement for matching funds in government programs. As part of this process, it should review and make recommendations

to update long-standing formulas and practices that disadvantage underrepresented communities. It should also review and address government regulations and practices that inappropriately exclude individuals with criminal histories from participating in work, education, or our democracy. And it should help ensure that affected individuals, families, communities, and local nonprofits have direct and continuous input into how programs are designed.

4. COORDINATE PLACE-BASED INITIATIVES.

Numerous place-based initiatives operate across government with little coordination. The Office of Innovation would coordinate these efforts, with the goal of **making it easier for communities to participate in multiple initiatives and increasing their likelihood of achieving positive impact.**

5. DEVELOP CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS.

Every challenge that government seeks to address is impacted by other sectors, including business, nonprofits, and philanthropy. **Working collaboratively with external partners concerned with education, employment, equity, and other issues will greatly increase the potential for impact.** This effort should be led by the Office of Innovation to ensure coordination across government.

29. VALUE THE EXPERTISE OF UNDERREPRESENTED PEOPLE.

Unless the people whose lives are impacted by government programs are included, heard, and respected, important insights will be missed, making programs less successful.

The people whose lives most depend on effective government policies—especially young, low-income people—have the least voice in policy. At every level of government, and in every branch, opportunities

exist to benefit from their expertise, whether through advisory councils, focus groups, or incorporating design thinking into program design. **Every office and agency can host paid fellows who have lived experience with the challenges that the policy is intended to address,** and ensure that their hiring and personnel processes operate with attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion. In addition, **policymakers can support reforms to reduce the influence of money in politics,** make it possible for people to run for office without engaging in excessive fundraising, and mentor candidates from underrepresented groups.

30. INCORPORATE OUTCOME-BASED FUNDING IN EVERY PROGRAM.

Incorporate performance-based payments that are contingent on achieving measurable outcomes, not complying with rules or counting the number of people served, in every major formula and discretionary grant program.

Pay for Success seeks to transform how governments partner with communities and direct dollars with a human-centered, equity-driven lens. Projects have built evidence for supportive housing, home visiting, behavioral health, and many other examples, while underscoring the need for data-driven government, outcomes-driven contracts, performance management, program evaluation, cross-sector partnerships, and other approaches. Pay for Success and outcomes-based approaches can empower communities to strengthen their social safety nets, and align policy and services to ensure, as our workforce rapidly evolves, that upward economic mobility keeps up with the relentless pace of technological change.

Over the last decade, the America Forward Coalition, in partnership with other advocates for outcomes-based funding, has worked to make over \$1.7 billion in annual federal funding available for Pay for Success and other outcomes-based models. We have also seen firsthand the challenges presented by the lack of an “outcomes infrastructure” at all levels of government. These include underdeveloped data systems, barriers to data-sharing and integration, insufficient staff

to execute Pay for Success projects and evaluations, limited support for most nonprofits and service providers to scale evidence-based services, as well as an acute funding shortage to address these collective challenges. The high complexity of Pay for Success projects, greatly exacerbated by the lack of “outcomes infrastructure” that can allow an outcomes-based approach to thrive, has imposed considerable burdens on nonprofits, providers, and local governments. Further, aligning incentives across the provider, government payer, and investors can pose additional challenges.

These challenges are further exacerbated by the insistence on utilizing only “rigorously proven” services, leaving out many nonprofits, perspectives, and opportunities for evidence building in partnership with communities. Many grassroots organizations close to the people served don’t have the resources to pursue rigorous evaluations, even if they achieve powerful results. They may have ethical concerns about denying help to people in order to carry out evaluations that require sorting prospective clients into a treatment group and a control group. The Pay for Success field also has far too few funders, policymakers, and program leaders of color. As a result, the leaders who dominate the current field too often collectively deploy capital in under-resourced communities and make critical decisions without including diverse voices proximate to these communities.

To go to the next level of outcomes-based funding, we must address these many challenges. **Government can help build the necessary “outcomes infrastructure” by investing in staff, technical assistance, evaluations, data systems, and other support for social entrepreneurs and state and local governments.**

To make it possible for every major formula and discretionary grant program to more effectively help the individuals they are intended to serve, we should:

- **Allow funding flexibility**, embedded systemically across federal programs, grants, and funding streams, to empower state and local governments to support better data-systems, hire staff, pay for technical assistance, and fund evaluations to create conditions more conducive to outcomes-based payment models.



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PAVE

- **Improve data infrastructure**, including:
 - Developing short-term “proxy” measures tied to long-term outcomes (e.g., credits accumulated for disadvantaged college students, “adherence measures” for juvenile justice prevention, “days in stable housing” for supportive housing for homeless adults) to make it possible to incorporate short-term success payments.
 - Funding technical assistance and staff support so more jurisdictions will be able to bring their data systems into the modern age, making anonymized administrative data available to the social sector in real time, with strong privacy safeguards. This funding should be partly conditional on using the data to develop new outcomes-based payment models, and on recipients sharing scrubbed data with the community at large. This in turn will enable and encourage nonprofits and governments alike to actively manage their performance and track outcomes at the population level, enabling policymakers to make exponentially more data-informed policy and program decisions than is generally possible today.
- **Identify low-cost alternatives to randomized control trials** to make it possible for more organizations to develop an evidence base that will open doors for more funding.
- **Release federal guidance to focus audits more on outcomes and less on compliance.** Audits serve an important purpose in reviewing the financial, programmatic, operational, and management systems and procedures of government to assess whether the agency is operating efficiently. They are driven by a need to conform to a prescriptive compliance framework focused on risk mitigation and financial accountability. And, while audit guidelines generally refer to outcomes, they do not provide guidance on outcomes measurement or reporting. Outcomes audits would instead incorporate a review of an agency’s grantee evidence of program or intervention outcomes. This approach to auditing would still ensure the financial integrity and efficient use of resources, and it would also more clearly articulate what is being accomplished with the money being allocated.
- **Set aside a percentage of major funding streams for innovation and learning.** Every major formula and discretionary grant program should incorporate



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YOUTHBUILD

a minimum percentage to support innovation and learning at the federal level as well as the grantee level, spurring state and local agencies and nonprofit grantees to take bolder steps to innovate and evaluate their programs. These funds would support evaluation, data sharing systems, training and technical assistance, demonstration programs, and other activities that tell us what works and spread that knowledge to improve outcomes.

- **Build community nonprofit evidence capacity.** Make grant funding available for local community nonprofits and providers to build evidence of their effectiveness.
- **Require and incentivize Equity Impact Assessments:** Just as a major public works project requires an environmental impact statement, recipients of major federal grant dollars should submit equity impact assessments, reporting out current status quo key outcomes for individuals served, broken out by race and gender, and map out a strategy for increasing equity, including more effectively engaging leaders with relevant lived experience. The federal government should also pilot incentive grants for communities that measurably increase equity.

31. LAUNCH OUTCOMES-BASED PROJECTS AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS.

Improve health, education, employment, and other outcomes for low-income people by developing new models that combine funding streams and tie payments to results.

The policies proposed above can help improve outcomes for families across this country and help Pay for Success scale. At the same time, policy action in Washington, DC, while critical, is not sufficient. We need bold new leaders at the state and local levels to work together to put this new vision for outcomes-based work into practice. And we need not wait for Washington, DC, to act.

A bipartisan cohort of governors, local officials, and service providers should partner together to launch a

new cluster of Pay for Success projects. Unlike the first generation of projects, which often leveraged Pay for Success financing with support from external investors, these projects need not necessarily incorporate this element. Instead, new projects could leverage a mix of Pay for Success approaches, including outcomes-based payments, improved integrated data, commingled federal funding streams, and innovative partnerships with philanthropy. They could engage the talents of a new cluster of staffers who excel at leveraging administrative data to more effectively manage public contracts based on performance and results. And governors and mayors could commit to scaling these approaches in their budgets if, based on a strong evaluation, they exceeded key outcomes targets.

If governors and other local leaders seize this opportunity, **a new cohort of outcomes-based projects could accomplish critical objectives, including:**

- **Achieving scale and decreasing average project launch costs.** Launching just one project can be complex, requiring staff, technical assistance, structuring, and data support—all of which can be challenging for a single state to easily absorb. Seeding projects across multiple sites could enable intermediaries, policy experts, lawyers, and funders to serve multiple projects at once.
- **Help achieve federal policy change.** Governors and other policymakers working together across the aisle could better secure federal support and policy reforms from Washington, DC. Engaging key federal allies early in the process could also make local officials bolder about pursuing imaginative and innovative new approaches in their communities.
- **Engage new partners and catalyze new funding.** Communities participating in this effort could partner with health care stakeholders and develop new approaches to leverage Medicaid dollars to fund effective prevention strategies such as permanent supportive housing. A multistate cohort could innovate across a range of other promising areas, including higher education, workforce development, and “dual-generation” initiatives that simultaneously support the needs of parents and young children in or near poverty.

32. SUPPORT “SOCIAL INNOVATION ZONES.”

Building on existing place-based and results-focused efforts, provide funding for governor-designated zones of high and persistent poverty, combined with expert technical assistance and waivers to pool federal funding with fewer restrictions, based on a community-designed plan.

Over the last half century, place-based “zone” programs have been implemented to aid communities experiencing persistent poverty. Some have focused on physical infrastructure or coordinated service delivery, while others have taken a market approach, seeking to incentivize investment on the theory that economic interventions can drive change.

Most place-based initiatives focus on a neighborhood or other well-defined location over a period of years, offering a comprehensive array of strategies to improve lives as measured by various socio-economic indicators, such as affordable housing, social services, small business assistance, educational reform, and workforce development. These place-based initiatives, whether undertaken by the philanthropic or public sector, tend to require a single nonprofit service organization or community development corporation to act as “lead agency,” coordinating other organizations to work toward common outcomes. They sometimes blend economic development and human service strategies. And they often call for resident empowerment and cross-sector collaboration involving government, business, nonprofits, and civic associations.

Performance Partnerships make it possible, in communities where there are multiple initiatives overlapping in the same geographic area, to pool resources across government agencies if doing so will lead to better outcomes for at-risk youth. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 authorized the establishment of up to 10 “Performance Partnership Pilots,” each of which is represented by a coordinating body comprised of the nonprofit agencies and other partners engaged in the overlapping initiatives. The Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services, and the Corporation for National and Community Service permit pilot sites to seek waivers

of specific program requirements that inadvertently hamper effective services for youth, as well as pool a portion of their funds for unrestricted use. Subsequent annual appropriations bills enacted in 2015 and 2016 expanded the list of participating federal agencies to include the Departments of Justice and Housing and Urban Development. In exchange for flexibility, the selected jurisdictions are held accountable for a higher level of performance in meeting a set of hard, measurable outcomes.

In recent years, a set of Pay for Success pilots as well as Performance Partnerships have taken place-based strategies to a new level by tying funding to outcomes and loosening restrictions on public dollars. Our Social Innovation Zone strategy would combine both of these approaches to make scalable both place-based strategies and flexible, results-focused funding.

Through this initiative, **governors would designate zones of persistent poverty, ideally building on existing place-based and results-focused efforts. These communities would receive waivers to pool federal funding with fewer restrictions, and use it, based on a community plan, to change outcomes for the whole population.** Communities able to exceed a threshold share of their federal dollars in these zones explicitly tied to an outcome or set of outcomes would receive additional federal incentive dollars to further augment their service array in these zones, and would receive additional federal dollars to scale the approach if the services actually met or exceeded those target outcomes, as measured by validated administrative data.

The community plan would set specific measurable outcomes relating to upward mobility and well-being, along with strategies to achieve them. It would be developed with residents of the zone at the table as full partners, with businesses, higher education institutions, schools, and local government. Plans could flexibly combine relevant federal and state funding streams, consistent with safeguards to prevent the misuse of funds. Federal agencies would provide clear guidance to enable local officials to combine federal dollars, starting with the Social Services Block Grant, higher education and workforce programs, TANF, WIOA, Perkins V, Child Care Development Block Grant funds, and other mandatory spending based on local plans.



High-quality technical assistance would be provided to help selected communities develop plans and to set up measurement systems that integrate data across a variety of sources. Additional federal dollars would be provided for evaluations. While the initial plan would be for a multiyear period, it could be adjusted annually as the community learns what works and what doesn't. The plan could include additional incentive funding for communities to participate.

In implementing this proposal, the federal government would need to develop carefully tailored guidance and guardrails to ensure that communities selected for this initiative use this additional flexibility to enhance rather than reduce services for families most in need. Regulations will need to prevent the practice known as “creaming,” whereby providers or local governments can artificially produce better outcomes by serving lower-risk populations. The antidote to creaming is the use of good, comprehensive data to clearly identify the high-risk individuals a program aims to serve, and requirements that communities selected for this initiative continue to robustly serve those individuals.

Finally, communities selected for “zone” status would need to first meet a set of minimum requirements, demonstrating a commitment to successfully using data to measure and track key outcomes.

Because practice pilots are often slow to become widespread policy even if they are successful, we propose that scaling potential be built into the initial design of the program. Therefore, if a zone shows promise after the first two years of implementation, additional zones within the state can be added and additional technical assistance, investment, and evaluation funding would be provided. The proposal would include strong incentives for governors to scale efforts that come near to achieving—or exceed—the initial outcomes targets.

Finally, the initiative would include funding to support staff, evaluations, technical assistance, data system modernization and integration, and other types of “outcomes infrastructure” essential to make outcomes-based innovation viable and sustainable.



33. REFRAME THE “FUTURE OF WORK” DISCUSSION TO INCLUDE TALENT IN THE SOCIAL SECTOR.

Ensure a talent pipeline for the social sector to fill shortages, support quality and scale, and reflect the communities served.

The people who work for and lead our social-sector programs are the key to their success, both in and outside of government. We know from experience just how important hiring and retaining talent is at every level. We also know that hiring people who have lived experience in the communities served or with the issue we are seeking to address is essential. Many America Forward Coalition organizations point to hiring and retaining talent as a major obstacle to growth.

To date, discussion of the “future of work” has centered on the role of technology displacing workers in the business sector. We call for expanding this conversation to encompass other workforce trends and challenges, namely the importance of preparing and recruiting social-sector talent—the people who will solve the major human service and education challenges of our day, as well as educate the

technology workforce of the future and retrain the workers displaced through technology.

This is no small feat. Nonprofits account for roughly one in 10 jobs in the private workforce in the United States, with total employees numbering 12.3 million in 2016. Over the decade since 2007, nonprofit jobs grew almost four times faster than for-profit ones. For the first time, nonprofit employment now equals manufacturing. Retail trade and accommodation and food services are the only American industries that employ more people than nonprofits. Add public-sector jobs, which include most teachers, police officers, and nurses, as well as government agency employees, and the total numbers 22 million.

As with most segments of the workforce, the federal government will be particularly hard hit by the retirement of the baby boomer population. The Congressional Research Service indicates 52% of public workers are aged 45-64 compared to 42% in the private sector. The aging of the federal workforce reflects long-term retention, which can be a good thing. **But it also means that individuals are not moving across sectors, bringing new knowledge with them, and that young people are not able to enter the field, bringing their lived experience, new skills, and tech savvy to government.**

We propose four strategies to address the talent challenge in the social sector, including government: universal national service, free college for students who commit to work in shortage areas, midcareer talent teams, and support for “encore” careers.

1. SCALE UNIVERSAL NATIONAL SERVICE FOR YOUNG ADULTS.

National service is a proven strategy to develop talent from the ground up—developing young leaders from all backgrounds, including underserved communities, and drawing top talent into fields in need of innovation. Scaling national service and deepening the career development outcomes of these programs are key to reshaping the social sector for the future.

Corps members build both civic and workforce skills that can be useful in either the public or private sector, including for-profit businesses. However, recent research for Service Year Alliance by Burning Glass, comparing the resumes of individuals who have completed a service year with a matched comparison group, revealed distinct patterns that differentiate service year alumni from their peers, both in the careers they forge and in the skills they develop. For example, service year alums go on to complete bachelor’s degrees at higher rates than their peers, are more likely than their peers to work in education and community and social-services occupations, and are more likely than their peers to advertise skills related to leadership and organization. In addition, they appear to advance faster in these fields.

AmeriCorps members play an outsized role supporting the education field. In addition to providing full-time, near-peer corps members to support school success in dozens of high-impact programs, AmeriCorps is a top feeder for both traditional and nontraditional teacher professional preparation programs. Other common paths from service include a variety of nonprofit (50% of VISTA alums work in the nonprofit sector), conservation (12% of park service employees come from the Student Conservation Association), and disaster response (more than half of recent FEMA Corps alums went on to careers in emergency management) careers.

Unfortunately, fewer than 100,000 Americans have the opportunity to engage in a year of civilian national

service each year. Strategies to make it a bigger part of a national strategy for the social sector include:

- **Scale AmeriCorps and targeting expansion to fields likely to experience labor shortages and communities, incorporating AmeriCorps into social innovation zones and other place-based initiatives.**
- Incentivize national service programs to **incorporate the ability to earn workplace credentials or postsecondary credit.**
- **Expand funding for AmeriCorps recruitment and technology solutions to make it easier for corps members to find positions tied to their career goals.**
- Increase both **AmeriCorps living allowances and Segal education awards, and make them tax-free,** to make it easier for low-income people to serve.

2. PROVIDE FREE COLLEGE TO STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FINANCIAL AID WHO COMMIT TO A TERM OF EMPLOYMENT IN SHORTAGE SOCIAL-SECTOR FIELDS OR INNOVATION ZONES AND OTHER UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES.

Providing free college in the form of scholarships or loan forgiveness to students who agree to take jobs in underserved communities and shortage fields solves two problems: It **provides debt-free college access while drawing and retaining talent,** including people from the communities served, into high-need high-turnover fields such as early childhood teaching, social work, and technology-related social-sector work.

This program can be modeled on the National Health Service Corps, a federal recruitment and retention program that reduces health workforce shortages in underserved areas by providing scholarships or loan repayment in exchange for a two-year term of service. Available data indicate that four in 10 remain at their service site, and another four in 10 practice in an underserved area one year after their service commitment has ended. A FY 2012 study found that more than half remain in an underserved area 10 years after completing their service.

3. DEVELOP MIDCAREER TALENT.

To make our public programs more outcomes-driven, we must **open up the constricted public-sector talent pipeline to entrepreneurs, innovators, disrupters, and those with relevant lived experience and proximity to major social challenges**. We need fresh thinking and innovative approaches from experienced and emerging leaders capable of orchestrating shifts across large organizations.

Programs with bipartisan support like the U.S. Digital Service; nonprofit programs including FUSE, Code for America, Third Sector, and Foster America; and secondment programs administered by the World Bank and Johnson & Johnson all point to the systems change potential of recruiting and training midcareer emerging leaders from outside government for temporary public-sector fellowships. For example, the Government Performance Lab embeds fellows in state and local government agencies. By providing the agencies with the ability to use integrated data to measure and scale what works and adjust what doesn't, the Lab has successfully used data to encourage performance management and help move the dial on outcomes in 96 projects spread across 67 jurisdictions in 31 states. In Rhode Island, for instance, a team of fellows dug into the data and adjusted a set of state contracts to reform and improve the state's child welfare system. As a result, Rhode Island increased its foster home capacity by 66%, reduced group home placements by 23%, increased preventive services by 180%, and drove down nearly threefold the share of families necessitating a state intervention after receiving preventive services.

Building off these and other proof points, including Intergovernmental Personnel Act and professional exchange programs that have shown promise, we should build a new talent pipeline into the public sector. A new pilot program of competitively selected midcareer leadership fellows could provide the needed expertise and expose individuals with experience in other sectors to opportunities within government. The pilot would focus on individuals with technology, STEM, procurement and acquisition, human resources, and managerial expertise, all areas in particular where the current public-sector workforce could benefit from a talent infusion.

The pilot would ramp up over time, eventually including

500 full-time fellows per year. Fellows would serve across federal, state, and local agencies to help break down conventional silos, improve information flows, and catalyze systems change. Although fellows would report to upper management and leadership within their agencies, they would also be clustered as a diffuse network, with the goal of moving the needle on a few key measurable outcomes, transcending the existing organizational hierarchy.

The initiative would recruit broadly and energetically, casting a wide net across many sectors. Fellows would have robust support, technical assistance, and training designed to maximize their effectiveness within the public sector; shift agency cultures; and catalyze broader positive systems change across the agencies in which they serve.

While components of this vision could be achieved via an Office of Management and Budget and Office of Personnel Management executive order, bipartisan legislation amending the National and Community Service Act would help provide the necessary funding and authorities.

4. SUPPORT “ENCORE” CAREERS.

Today there are more people in the United States over 50 than there are under 18. By 2035, 140 million Americans, more than one in three, will be over 50. With decades of productivity ahead, adults over 50 are a growing and renewable resource for the nation. Recent research examined the life goals and values of individuals aged 50-92 and found strong support for helping others in later life. Unfortunately, many Americans who are eager for meaningful work later in life don't have a pathway to do so.

Service experiences provide a powerful way to transition into a new stage of work, including from business to the social sector. We support the new Early Childhood Legacy Corps program, proposed by Encore.org, which facilitates these transitions through part-time, modestly stipended service, and engages older Americans in early childhood care where there is an urgent need. By tapping into funds currently available to them **governors can mobilize an underutilized source of talent—older Americans—to provide needed capacity to early childhood settings** by providing a modest stipend

to those making significant commitments to serve in this way. By leveraging intergenerational solutions around early childhood needs, government leaders will have the ability to knit together communities and generations, and to mobilize an underutilized talent source.

34. SCALE HIGH-IMPACT ORGANIZATIONS.

Provide growth capital to help grow high-impact organizations that are central to helping government work better, enabling providers to achieve greater impact and deliver services directly.

1. CREATE A COMMUNITY-SOLUTIONS TAX CREDIT.

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF), discontinued in 2017, invested in evidence-based community solutions in 46 states and Washington, DC. Private and local funders nearly tripled the federal investment, channeling over \$700 million to expand programs that work. These investments provided critical support to nearly 500 nonprofit organizations across the country—helping grow effective programs and develop innovative approaches to some of the most pressing challenges in economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development. The SIF grew into a social impact incubator within the federal government, creating public-private partnerships that deliver high-impact, community-based solutions that work.

Building on this experience, a “community solutions tax credit” would further recognize the asset represented by private-sector funders across the country that have developed highly sophisticated systems for identifying promising solutions to community problems. **These funders would compete for the opportunity to issue a specific amount of tax credits to donors who support evidence-based high-impact initiatives.** The use of a tax credit offers greater potential for scale and sustainability, creates less bureaucracy, and puts the decisions for investment in the hands of experienced private-sector funders instead of the government.





2. CREATE NEW TIERED-EVIDENCE AND OUTCOMES FUNDS AT BOTH THE FEDERAL AND STATE LEVELS, LAUNCH NEW OUTCOMES-BASED PROJECTS AT THE STATE LEVEL, AND EXPAND AND UPDATE A RECENTLY ENACTED FEDERAL OUTCOMES FUND AT THE U.S. TREASURY.

1. *Tiered-evidence funds.* Over the past several years, America Forward has worked with other leaders in the outcomes movement to create new tiered-evidence innovation funds. “Tiered evidence” refers to a practice of providing larger grants to programs with higher levels of evidence to enable replication of approaches that have proven effective in one jurisdiction, while providing smaller grants to pilot, test, and rigorously evaluate innovative new approaches. To date, tiered-evidence funds have been authorized in the areas of K-12 education, teen pregnancy prevention, and global poverty reduction. In addition, bipartisan legislators have introduced legislation, supported by America Forward, to create a Fund for Innovation and Success in Higher Education Act (FINISH Act), which

would create a new tiered-evidence fund to improve graduation rates and boost the attainment of post-secondary credentials for at-risk students. Other potential areas for tiered-evidence innovation funds include early childhood, workforce development, homelessness, criminal justice, and health care.

The advent of **tiered-evidence innovation funds suggests a new vision for government, where taxpayer dollars fund outcomes over inputs, are explicitly linked to impact, and help communities scale approaches that work.** This approach can be transformational. As long as agencies pay based on inputs, they see high upfront costs for the most effective approaches, which often happen to be the most intensive, and therefore the most expensive. By shifting to an outcomes-based approach, with funding tied explicitly to results, the very factors that previously inhibited public sector take-up of these approaches could accelerate it. Of course, it’s also essential that we avoid creating an inflexible recipe, constantly replicating exactly something that worked sometime, somewhere. To be effective, this approach must dynamically incorporate continuous learning, adapting to new information and the tailored needs of communities.

2. *Outcomes Funds.* In order to build proof points and success stories in communities across America, **states should create new “outcomes funds,” raising supplementary capital from philanthropy where necessary, and allowing local government agencies and providers to access the funding over time based on measurable results.** With safeguards and incentives to ensure outcomes funds pay for services for the most under-resourced people (without allowing providers to “game” the system by only serving lower-risk individuals and families), this approach could drive dollars to effective services with lower transaction costs and less complexity than many of the first generation of Pay for Success projects. Governors could appropriate new funding for such approaches or harness existing federal funding streams. Tapping and combining a portion of their state reserves for federal programs such as WIOA, Perkins V, and the Child Care and Development Block Grant would be a good place to start.

3. *Social Impact Partnership to Pay for Results Act (SIPPRA).* SIPPRA is a \$100 million federal outcomes fund housed at the Department of Treasury, recently enacted and funded with substantial advocacy from the America Forward Coalition. While the first cohort of SIPPRA projects represents real progress, many view the notice of funding released by the Treasury in early 2019 as overemphasizing cost-savings, underemphasizing innovation and value for families and the nation, and overly focused on Pay for Success financing, at the exclusion of other components of Pay for Success. **Congress should infuse SIPPRA with a new tranche of funding, exponentially increase funding available for feasibility work, and make this new tranche of funding eligible to fund other more innovative approaches.**

3. PROVIDE BONUS PAYMENTS TO NONPROFIT PROVIDERS THAT ACHIEVE OUTCOMES.

All too often, budget-constrained agencies fail to pay nonprofit providers what their services actually cost. Of equal concern, rules and regulations frequently sharply limit how nonprofits can use these dollars, impacting

their ability to grow and scale. This is antithetical to what venture philanthropies like New Profit have repeatedly demonstrated over the past two decades: that social entrepreneurs doing good work need unrestricted growth capital to scale.

We propose a new approach that will help address both these challenges. Across selected major formula funding streams and grants such as TANF; the Social Services Block Grant; the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; and the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program, **the federal government should offer modest bonus payments of 10% beyond base contracts for nonprofit providers that exceed certain target outcomes based on independently validated administrative data,** with safeguards to make sure harder-to-serve individuals are not excluded in order to inflate outcomes. Critically, nonprofits could use these bonus payments in any way, so long as they were program- and mission-related, creating a new source of public-sector unrestricted growth capital based on positive impact.

This proposal would help enable a new wave of outcomes-based projects. More important, it would create healthy external pressure from local providers for state and local governments to improve their data systems, and to help catalyze scalable outcomes-based contracting by creating incentives for both providers and local governments to do more of it.

35. EXPECT MORE FROM THE COMPANIES THAT DO BUSINESS WITH THE GOVERNMENT.

As the corporation social responsibility (CSR) movement grows, promote greater transparency regarding the companies that government does business with by making contractors and their CSR records easily accessible.

The modern corporate responsibility movement started in the 1990s and has grown and matured over the decades. While initial efforts were a response to stakeholder pressure and market positioning, today it is widely accepted that companies should be accountable for their environmental, social, and governance

practices. Not only are millennials demanding higher standards from the businesses they support and work for, but also research documents the link between good CSR, financial performance, and sustainability. Today, CSR extends beyond the early focus on environmental practices, worker exploitation, philanthropy, and employee volunteering, to encompass a much broader range of practices, including pay; sexual harassment; data privacy; health and safety; supply chain accountability; and diversity, equity, and inclusion of a broader set of underrepresented people.

To push companies to do more without the worry of shareholder backlash, **an order should require all contractors to make their CSR records and policies public.** While we would not at this time support requiring a specific set of CSR practices, a policy of this sort would build awareness, expand data, increase transparency, discourage contracting with companies with poor CSR track records, and enable future analysis of the relationship of CSR practices to performance.

CONCLUSION

We can't get the results we need, and that all people deserve, without a government that works for everyone. That government is within our reach—if we have the courage as a country to listen to and lift up the voices of all people; make the hard decisions to support what works based on data, not political expediency; and expect more from the companies, policymakers, and citizens that have the power to make the difference.

AMERICA FORWARD ORGANIZATIONS

Bottom Line
 Braven
 Connecticut Center for Social Innovation
 Corporation for Supportive Housing
 Encore.org
 FUSE Corps
 Institute for Child Success
 KIPP
 LISC
 Millennial Action Project
 New Politics Academy
 Nonprofit Finance Fund
 POWER
 PushBlack
 REDF
 Roca
 Root Cause
 SE @UVAUVA Pay for Success Lab
 Service Year Alliance
 Social Finance
 The People
 Third Sector

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HIGH-IMPACT ORGANIZATIONS

UNITED TO MOVE AMERICA FORWARD

AMERICA FORWARD COALITION

NATIONAL IMPACT



15K

COMMUNITIES
IMPACTED



\$2.47B

CUMULATIVE
ANNUAL BUDGET



\$1.7B

LEVERAGED
IN GOVERNMENT FUNDING
TO SUPPORT RESULTS



9M

LIVES
TOUCHED

AMERICA FORWARD COALITION

APPENDIX

HIGH IMPACT ORGANIZATIONS: HOW CHILDREN LEARN

137	10,000 DEGREES
137	ABRIENDO PUERTAS /OPENING DOORS
137	ACELERO LEARNING/SHINE EARLY LEARNING
138	ALIENTO
138	ALTERNATIVE STAFFING ALLIANCE
138	AMERICA'S PROMISE ALLIANCE
139	APPLETREE INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION INNOVATION
139	AURORA INSTITUTE
139	BARD EARLY COLLEGES
140	BELLXCEL
140	BEYOND 12
140	BOTTOM LINE
141	BRAVEN
141	CITIZEN SCHOOLS
141	CITY YEAR, INC.
142	COLLEGE ADVISING CORPS
142	COLLEGE FORWARD
142	COLLEGE POSSIBLE
143	DIVERSE CHARTER SCHOOLS COALITION
143	EDUCATION LEADERS OF COLOR (EDLOC)
143	EDUCATORS FOR EXCELLENCE
144	ENCORE.ORG
144	ENLEARN
145	EYE TO EYE
145	GENERATION CITIZEN
145	GENESYS WORKS
146	HIGHLANDER INSTITUTE
146	IMBLAZE BY BIG PICTURE LEARNING
146	iMENTOR
147	INSTITUTE FOR CHILD SUCCESS
147	JUMPSTART
148	KIPP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
148	LEADING EDUCATORS
148	LEAP INNOVATIONS

149	LET'S GROW KIDS
150	MATCH EDUCATION
150	MINDRIGHT
150	MORTAR
151	NATIONAL BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS
151	NATIONAL CENTER FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES (NCLD)
152	NEW CLASSROOMS INNOVATION PARTNERS FOR LEARNING
152	NEW LEADERS
152	NEW TEACHER CENTER
153	P.S. 305
153	PARENTS AMPLIFYING VOICES IN EDUCATION
154	PEACE FIRST
154	PEER FORWARD
154	PEER HEALTH EXCHANGE
155	POWERMYLEARNING
155	PUBLIC ALLIES
155	READING PARTNERS
156	SERVICE YEAR ALLIANCE
156	SPRINGBOARD COLLABORATIVE
156	STATION1
157	TEACH FOR AMERICA
157	THE LEARNING ACCELERATOR
157	THE MICHELSON 20MM FOUNDATION
158	THE OPPORTUNITY NETWORK
159	TRANSCEND, INC.
159	TRANSFORMING EDUCATION, INC.
159	TURNAROUND FOR CHILDREN
160	UASPIRE
160	UNBOUNDED
160	VALOR COLLEGIATE ACADEMIES
161	WYMAN CENTER
161	YEAR UP
161	YOUTHBUILD USA

HIGH IMPACT ORGANIZATIONS: HOW ADULTS & FAMILIES THRIVE

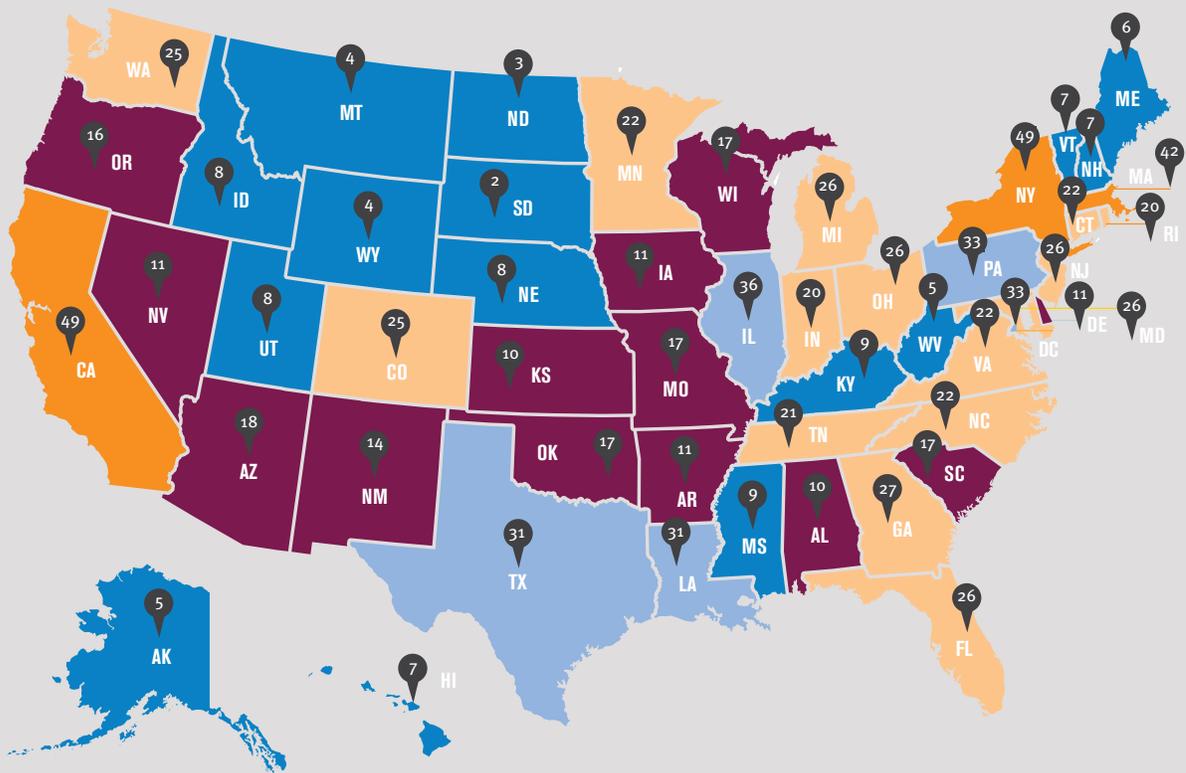
162	CHILDREN'S AID
163	COMPASS WORKING CAPITAL
163	CORPORATION FOR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
163	ENTERPRISE COMMUNITY PARTNERS
164	EXALT YOUTH
164	FAMILY INDEPENDENCE INITIATIVE
164	FREEDOM PROJECT
165	GREENLIGHT FUND
165	LIFT
166	LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT CORPORATION
166	OUR VOICE/NUESTRA VOZ
166	PER SCHOLAS
167	PILLARS
167	POWER
167	REDF (THE ROBERTS ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT FUND)
168	ROCA
168	ROOT CAUSE
168	SACRED GENERATIONS
169	SINGLE STOP
169	THE FIRST 72+
169	THE URBAN ASSOCIATION OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROFESSIONALS
170	THINK OF US

HIGH IMPACT ORGANIZATIONS: HOW GOVERNMENT DRIVES RESULTS

171	CONNECTICUT CENTER FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION
171	CURYJ
171	FUSE CORPS
172	MILLENIAL ACTION PROJECT
172	NEW POLITICS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
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AMERICA FORWARD COALITION

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ALABAMA

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Transforming Education
YouthBuild USA

ALASKA

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
America's Promise Alliance
LISC
Millennial Action Project
PowerMyLearning

ARIZONA

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
Aliento
Alternative Staffing Alliance
Eye to Eye
Jumpstart
LISC
Millennial Action Project
New Leaders
PowerMyLearning
Public Allies
REDF
Teach For America
The People
Transcend
Transforming Education
Wyman Center
Year Up
YouthBuild USA

ARKANSAS

Acelero Learning/Shine Early Learning
City Year, Inc.
Jumpstart
KIPP Schools
LISC
Millennial Action Project
New Leaders
PowerMyLearning
Teach For America
Transforming Education
YouthBuild USA

CALIFORNIA

10,000 Degrees
Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
Acelero Learning/Shine Early Learning
Alternative Staffing Alliance
America's Promise Alliance
BellXcel
Beyond 12
Braven
Citizen Schools
City Year, Inc.
College Advising Corps
Curyl
Diverse Charter Schools Coalition
EdLoC
Educators 4 Excellence
Eye to Eye
Family Independence Initiative
FUSE Corps
Generation Citizen
Genesys Works
ImBlaze
iMentor
Jumpstart
KIPP Schools
Leading Educators
LEAP Innovations
LIFT
LISC
Millennial Action Project
Mindright
New Classrooms Innovation
Partners for Learning
New Leaders
Peer Forward
Peer Health Exchange
PowerMyLearning
Public Allies
Reading Partners
REDF
Sacred Generations
Springboard Collaborative
Teach For America
The Michelson 20MM Foundation
The Urban Association of Forestry and Fire Professionals (FFRP)
Third Sector Capital Partners, Inc.
Transcend
Transforming Education
Turnaround for Children
uAspire
Year Up
YouthBuild USA

COLORADO

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
Alternative Staffing Alliance
America's Promise Alliance
BellXcel
City Year, Inc.
Diverse Charter Schools Coalition
EdLoC
Eye to Eye
FUSE Corps
ImBlaze
KIPP Schools
LEAP Innovations
LISC
Millennial Action Project
New Leaders
Peer Health Exchange
PowerMyLearning
Public Allies
Reading Partners
REDF
Teach For America
Third Sector Capital Partners
Transcend
Transforming Education
YouthBuild USA

CONNECTICUT

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
Acelero Learning/Shine Early Learning
America's Promise Alliance
BellXcel
Compass Working Capital
Connecticut Center for Social Innovation
Educators for Excellence
Eye to Eye
Jumpstart
LEAP Innovations
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New Classrooms Innovation
Partners for Learning
New Leaders
PowerMyLearning
Public Allies
REDF
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Teach For America
Third Sector Capital Partners, Inc.
Transcend
Wyman Center
YouthBuild USA

DELAWARE

Alternative Staffing Alliance
America's Promise Alliance
Eye to Eye
ImBlaze
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Public Allies
Springboard Collaborative
Teach For America
Third Sector Capital Partners
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Year Up

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
America's Promise Alliance
AppleTree Institute for Education Innovation
Bard Early Colleges
BellXcel
Citizen Schools
City Year
Diverse Charter Schools Coalition
EdLoC
Eye to Eye
FUSE Corps
Genesys Works
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KIPP
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FLORIDA

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GEORGIA

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HAWAII

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IDAHO

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ILLINOIS

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College Possible
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INDIANA

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KANSAS

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YouthBuild USA

KENTUCKY

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LOUISIANA

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New Leaders
Our Voice/Nuestra Voz
PowerMyLearning
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The First 72+
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Transforming Education
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MAINE

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MARYLAND

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MASSACHUSETTS

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MICHIGAN

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MINNESOTA

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MISSISSIPPI

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MISSOURI

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MONTANA

LISC
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YouthBuild USA

NEBRASKA

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NEVADA

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NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW JERSEY

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Bard Early Colleges

BellXcel
Braven
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Partners for Learning
New Leaders
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NEW MEXICO

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Partners for Learning
Public Allies
Teach For America
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Wyman Center
YouthBuild USA

NEW YORK

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
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America's Promise Alliance
Bard Early Colleges
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Children's Aid

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Diverse Charter Schools Coalition
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Generation Citizen
Genesys Works
Highlander Institute
ImBlaze
iMentor
Institute for Child Success
Jumpstart
KIPP Schools
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New Classrooms Innovation
Partners for Learning
New Leaders
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REDF
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Teach For America
The Opportunity Network
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Third Sector Capital Partners, Inc.
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Year Up
YouthBuild USA

NORTH CAROLINA

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Diverse Charter Schools Coalition
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KIPP Schools
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Millennial Action Project
New Leaders

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YouthBuild USA

NORTH DAKOTA

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PowerMyLearning
The People

OHIO

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Learning
Alternative Staffing Alliance
America's Promise Alliance
Bard Early Colleges
BellXcel
Citizen Schools
City Year, Inc.
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Wyman Center
YouthBuild USA

OKLAHOMA

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
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Learning
Alternative Staffing Alliance
America's Promise Alliance

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City Year, Inc.
Diverse Charter Schools Coalition
Generation Citizen
KIPP Schools
Leading Educators
LISC
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Partners for Learning
PowerMyLearning
Reading Partners
REDF
Teach For America
Third Sector Capital Partners
YouthBuild USA

OREGON

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
Alternative Staffing Alliance
America's Promise Alliance
Citizen Schools
College Possible
Family Independence Initiative
(FII)
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Millennial Action Project
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REDF
Single Stop
Third Sector Capital Partners, Inc.
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PENNSYLVANIA

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
Acelero Learning/Shine Early
Learning
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BellXcel
Citizen Schools
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College Advising Corps
College Possible
Compass Working Capital
Diverse Charter Schools Coalition
Eye to Eye
FUSE Corps
ImBlaze
Jumpstart
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Mindright
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Peer Forward
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REDF
Single Stop
Springboard Collaborative
Teach For America
Transcend
Wyman Center
Year Up
YouthBuild USA

RHODE ISLAND

BellXcel
City Year, Inc.
College Advising Corps
Compass Working Capital
Diverse Charter Schools Coalition
Eye to Eye
Generation Citizen
Highlander Institute
ImBlaze
Jumpstart
LEAP Innovations
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PowerMyLearning
REDF
Teach For America
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Wyman Center
Year Up
YouthBuild USA

SOUTH CAROLINA

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
Alternative Staffing Alliance
America's Promise Alliance
BellXcel
Citizen Schools
City Year, Inc.
College Advising Corps
Diverse Charter Schools Coalition
Institute for Child Success
LEAP Innovations
LISC
New Leaders
Peer Forward
PowerMyLearning

Reading Partners
Teach For America
YouthBuild USA

SOUTH DAKOTA

LISC
Teach For America

TENNESSEE

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
Alternative Staffing Alliance
America's Promise Alliance
BellXcel
City Year
Diverse Charter Schools Coalition
EdLoC
Eye to Eye
ImBlaze
KIPP Schools
LEAP Innovations
LISC
New Classrooms Innovation
Partners for Learning
New Leaders
PowerMyLearning
REDF
Teach For America
Transcend
Valor Collegiate Academies
Wyman Center
YouthBuild USA

TEXAS

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
Acelero Learning/Shine Early Learning
Alternative Staffing Alliance
America's Promise Alliance
BellXcel
Citizen Schools
City Year, Inc.
College Advising Corps
College Forward
Diverse Charter Schools Coalition
Family Independence Initiative (FI)
Generation Citizen
Genesys Works
Highlander Institute
KIPP
LEAP Innovations
LISC

Millennial Action Project
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Per Scholas
PowerMyLearning
Public Allies
Reading Partners
REDF
Teach For America
Third Sector Capital Partners
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Transforming Education
Wyman Center
Year Up
YouthBuild USA

UTAH

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
College Advising Corps
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LISC
PowerMyLearning
Third Sector Capital Partners, Inc.
Wyman Center
YouthBuild USA

VERMONT

LEAP Innovations
Let's Grow Kids
LISC
Millennial Action Project
PowerMyLearning
Wyman Center
YouthBuild USA

VIRGINIA

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
BellXcel
College Advising Corps
Eye to Eye
FUSE Corps
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Millennial Action Project
New Leaders
Peer Forward
Per Scholas
PowerMyLearning
SE@UVA
Single Stop
Teach For America
The People
Think of Us
Third Sector Capital Partners, Inc.

Transcend
Transforming Education
Wyman Center
Year Up
YouthBuild USA

WASHINGTON

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
Alternative Staffing Alliance
America's Promise Alliance
BellXcel
City Year, Inc.
Diverse Charter Schools Coalition
Enlearn
Eye to Eye
Freedom Project
FUSE Corps
ImBlaze
Jumpstart
LEAP Innovations
LISC
Millennial Action Project
New Leaders
PowerMyLearning
Reading Partners
REDF
Teach For America
Third Sector Capital Partners, Inc.
Transcend
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Year Up
YouthBuild USA

WEST VIRGINIA

America's Promise Alliance
LISC
Peer Forward
PowerMyLearning
YouthBuild USA

WISCONSIN

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Acelero Learning/Shine Early Learning
Alternative Staffing Alliance
America's Promise Alliance
City Year, Inc.
College Possible
Eye to Eye
LEAP Innovations
LISC
Millennial Action Project
New Leaders

PowerMyLearning
Public Allies
REDF
Teach For America
Transcend
YouthBuild USA

WYOMING

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
Eye to Eye
LEAP Innovations
LISC

NATIONAL

Aurora Institute
Corporation for Supportive
Housing (CSH)
Encore
Enlearn
Enterprise Community Partners
GreenLight Fund
National Board for Professional
Teaching Standards (NBPTS)
National Center for Learning
Disabilities (NCLD)
New Politics Academy
New Teacher Center
Nonprofit Finance Fund
Pillars
Push Black
Root Cause
Service Year Alliance
Social Finance U.S.
The Learning Accelerator
The People
UnboundED





10,000 DEGREES

FOUNDED	1981
HEADQUARTERS	SAN RAFAEL, CA
LOCATIONS	CA

Helping students from low-income backgrounds get to and through college in order to positively impact their communities and the world.

10,000 Degrees is a 2019 California Nonprofit of the Year serving the greater San Francisco Bay Area helping students from low-income backgrounds get to and through college. The organization provides students with comprehensive wraparound support including financial aid counseling, college matching, near-peer coaching, financial aid management, and transfer support from community college to four-year college. 10,000 Degrees serves more than 10,000 students and families annually and currently supports more than 2,000 students in four-year colleges and more than 800 in community colleges. 10,000 Degrees is powered by its innovative fellowship program, which features recent college graduates from similar low-income backgrounds hired full time for two-/three-year commitments. Most fellows are 10,000 Degrees program alumni who work one-on-one with high school and college students, delivering deep content expertise along with high cultural competency, as they help students successfully navigate life on and off campus.

IMPACT

- Over 80% of 10,000 Degrees students who start at four-year colleges earn bachelor's degrees within six years.
- 10,000 Degrees community college students transfer to and graduate from four-year colleges at three times the national average.
- Due to approximately \$18 million in free financial aid, 10,000 Degrees students graduate with 85% less student loan debt than the average college graduate.

ABRIENDO PUERTAS / OPENING DOORS

FOUNDED	2007
HEADQUARTERS	LOS ANGELES, CA
LOCATIONS	AL ; AK; AZ; CA; CO; CT; DC; FL; GA; IA; ID; IL; IN; KS; LA; MA; MD; MI; MN; MO; NC; NE; NH; NJ; NM; NY; NV; OH; OK; OR; PA; PR; SC; TN ;TX; UT; VA; WA; WI; WY

Honoring and supporting parents as leaders of their families and their child's first and most influential teacher.

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors (AP/OD) works with parents of young children to promote practices fostering children's learning and development, parent leadership, and advocacy. AP/OD is one of the largest programs in the United States working with Latino parents of children 0-5 years old. Since 2007, the program has served over 80,000 low-income parents/families in over 500 family-serving organizations and schools in 38 states around the country. Through listening to what Latino parents wanted in a comprehensive curriculum, a shared design process, and ongoing customization, the program successfully meets a diversity of families where they are, while creating visioning and growth opportunities. Understanding that the first five years of children's lives are crucial for lifelong learning and social and cognitive development, AP/OD helps families build the knowledge and skills to be their children's best first teachers.

IMPACT

- Parents demonstrated significant increases in their knowledge of language and literacy development, social-emotional development, health development, and school preparation.
- Parents exhibited noteworthy gains in understanding their rights as parents, and their children's rights in school.
- Partner organizations report that over 1,000 AP/OD parent program graduates are now facilitating other AP/OD parent groups in their local communities.

ACELERO LEARNING / SHINE EARLY LEARNING

FOUNDED	2001
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	AR; CA; CT; FL; GA; HI; IN; KY; LA; MD; MI; NV; NJ; NM; NY; OH; OR; PA; PR; TX; WI

Bringing a relentless focus on positive family and child outcomes to close the achievement gap and build a better future for children, families, and communities served by the Head Start program.

Acelero Learning is a for-profit company committed to a relentless focus on positive child and family outcomes in order to close the achievement gap and build a better future for children, families, and communities served by the Head Start program. In 2009, after seven years of building and growing its own high-performing Head Start program that developed powerful new approaches to data, curriculum, and family services, Acelero began disseminating its proven methodology. Acelero's subsidiary, Shine Early Learning, focuses on providing training and technical assistance to other Head Start programs in a continued effort to leverage Acelero Learning's innovations to impact the early childhood community at large.

IMPACT

- Children served for two years through the Acelero Learning Head Start program show outcomes that are nearly triple those of the best national Head Start sample, scoring 16.15 points versus the national average of 6.4 points on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test.
- Acelero Learning has over 1,000 employees who serve more than 5,000 low-income children and their families in four states.
- Shine Early Learning has intensive Shine Assist partnerships with over 35 Head Start programs that serve more than 36,000 children across the country.

ALIENTO

FOUNDED	2016
HEADQUARTERS	MESA, AZ
LOCATION	AZ

Transforming trauma into hope and action with dreamers, undocumented students, and mixed-status families.

Aliento is a community organization that is DACA, undocumented, and youth-led. It is directly impacted people and allies who are invested in the well being, emotional healing, and leadership development of those impacted by the inequalities of lacking an immigration status. In Aliento, community healing is created through art that leads to thriving communities. This art reflects the humanity of undocumented immigrants and mixed-status families. Aliento's vision is to see youth from migrant families empowered to lead their communities and institutions toward more equitable solutions that reflect the values of honoring most impacted peoples' leadership, truth and reconciliation, spaces for sharing and listening, transformative work, and growth.

IMPACT

- Aliento engages, trains, and organizes over 16,000 people through its programs.
- Nearly 700 of its youth have stepped into leadership positions, leading events, meeting with stakeholders, and educating allies about its mission.
- Aliento has successfully advocated for the passage of resolutions in support of migrant families, including tuition equity for all students regardless of immigration status.
- It has organized hundreds to educate lawmakers on the impact of not having access to higher education, resulting in the passage of legislation in the Senate.

ALTERNATIVE STAFFING ALLIANCE

FOUNDED	2007
HEADQUARTERS	NORTHAMPTON, MA
LOCATIONS	AZ; CA; CO; DE; FL; GA; IL; IN; LA; MA; MD; ME; MI; MN; MO; NC; OH; OK; OR; SC; TX; TN; WA; WI

Helping people with obstacles to employment enter and advance in the workforce.

Alternative Staffing Alliance, managed by ICA Group, is a national network of employment social enterprises that deliver staffing services to businesses, and recruit, place, and support job seekers who struggle to get work due to criminal records, disabilities, homelessness, lack of skills and experience, and other factors. Using this business model, ASOs supply employers with reliable, well-matched talent and empower individuals to succeed in the labor market and become more financially stable.

IMPACT

- In 2018, Alliance members placed 32,000 job seekers in competitive employment and generated \$190 million in earned revenue, of which about 80% is paid in wages and statutory benefits.
- ASO workers earn an average wage of \$11.80 per hour. Half of the enterprises responding to its 2017 performance survey pay wage rates at or above their market's living wage for a single adult.
- Besides paying good wages, alternative staffing businesses strive to improve the quality and dignity of temporary work by promoting high safety standards and equipping candidates for long-term success through coaching and skills training, placement in temp-to-hire opportunities, and access to social supports.

AMERICA'S PROMISE ALLIANCE

FOUNDED	1997
HEADQUARTERS	WASHINGTON, DC
LOCATIONS	AK; CA; CO; CT; DC; DE; FL; GA; IA; IL; KS; KY; MA; MD; MI; MN; MO; MS; NC; NE; NM; NV; NY; OH; OK; OR; PA; SC; TN; TX; WA; WI; WV

Making the promise of America real for every child.

America's Promise Alliance is a nationwide coalition of nonprofits, corporations, educators, community and civic leaders, and youth who are joined together by the shared belief that every young person deserves to succeed, and every adult is responsible for making that happen. Through coordinated leadership and campaigns, America's Promise Alliance members work together to provide the "5 Promises" necessary for every child to thrive. Its campaigns, initiatives, and distinctive convenings align organizations and individuals behind a common vision for a better future and bold goals to reach it. With the efforts of more than 450 organizations, 250 state and community partners, and thousands of individuals, the Alliance does what no single organization can do on its own: catalyze change on a scale that reaches millions of young people.

IMPACT

- The nationwide graduation rate is 84.6%. More than 2.8 million additional high school graduates have completed their high school education since the beginning of the America's Promise Alliance GradNation campaign.
- Graduation rates have increased in some high-poverty states by more than 10 percentage points since 2011, showing progress is possible.
- By 2017, two states (Iowa and New Jersey) remained at the national goal of 90% and 25 additional states had surpassed 85%. Six-year trend lines show 24 states making gains of 5 percentage points or more.

APPLETREE INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION INNOVATION

FOUNDED	1996
HEADQUARTERS	WASHINGTON, DC
LOCATION	DC

Erasing the achievement gap before kindergarten.

AppleTree is a nonprofit committed to erasing the achievement gap by providing young children with the social, emotional, and cognitive foundations they need to thrive in school. After winning an Investing in Innovation (i3) grant in 2010 from the U.S. Department of Education, AppleTree created an evidence-based, comprehensive instructional model for 3- and 4-year-old children called Every Child Ready. Developed through an innovative research-to-practice approach, the instructional model is constantly tested and improved in real-world classrooms. During the 2014-2015 school year, Every Child Ready educated more than 1,600 children. Of those, more than half attend a partner school or early learning center where AppleTree is deeply involved in helping implement Every Child Ready by providing professional development, mentoring/coaching of teachers and school leadership, and various assessment tools measuring school quality and children's progress.

IMPACT

- Every Child Ready (ECR) students across all ability levels made greater gains in early math skills than students receiving different comprehensive, math-focused curricula.
- AppleTree students made greater gains in receptive vocabulary than students receiving other commonly used curricula, especially those starting below the normal range.
- The effects of Every Child Ready appear to increase with more exposure, as students with years of ECR finished pre-K performing above the 50th percentile in receptive vocabulary, expressive vocabulary, print knowledge, phonological awareness, and early math skills.

AURORA INSTITUTE

FOUNDED	2002
HEADQUARTERS	VIENNA, VA
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Driving the transformation of education systems and accelerating the advancement of breakthrough policies and practices to ensure high-quality learning for all.

For almost two decades, Aurora Institute has led the field of innovative education leaders and practitioners, shaping the future of teaching and learning for millions of children throughout the United States and around the world. Aurora Institute is focused on providing equal access, ensuring high-quality educational opportunities, and driving policy and practice yielding more equitable outcomes. Aurora Institute is student-centered, equity-oriented, and future-focused. Each year Aurora Institute convenes more than 3,000 leaders for an annual symposium to further the transformation of the nation's education systems. Through research and publications, webinars and convenings, and technical assistance and networks, Aurora Institute acts as a knowledge-building hub, supporting experts, leaders, practitioners, and other policymakers alike by building knowledge about emerging issues, tapping into the field, driving demand, and building capacity for innovative models.

IMPACT

- More than 200 publications have been developed to build the field of personalized, competency-based education.
- Technical assistance was provided to policymakers and legislative bodies in more than 30 states and D.C. in 2018-2019.
- Language and funding was included in federal legislation supporting personalized learning and competency-based education.
- Over 100 school visits were conducted to observe and research student-centered learning models in action.

BARD EARLY COLLEGES

FOUNDED	2001
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	DC; LA; MD; NJ; NY; OH

Enabling students from all backgrounds to succeed in college.

The Bard Early Colleges—tuition-free, satellite campuses of Bard College operated through partnerships with public school systems—empower high school students, particularly those at risk of not completing postsecondary education, to access, afford, and complete college prepared to contribute to civic life and a range of professional pathways. The Bard Early Colleges simultaneously work to influence and lead a growing early college movement focused on equity and excellence. The Bard Early Colleges are founded on the belief that many high school-age students are eager and ready for the rigors of a college education. These Bard Early Colleges provide an opportunity for adolescents to pursue a college course of study in the liberal arts and sciences and graduate with up to 60 college credits and an associate degree from Bard College alongside a high school diploma, at no cost to the student.

IMPACT

- 83% of Bard High School Early College (BHSEC) students (Class of 2018) earned an associate degree concurrently with their high school diplomas.
- Approximately 97% of BHSEC graduates (Class of 2018) graduated from high school with over one year of college credit.
- Over 85% of BHSEC graduates who attend four-year colleges and universities earn a bachelor's degree.

BELLXCEL

FOUNDED	1992
HEADQUARTERS	WESTWOOD, MA
LOCATIONS	AL; CA; CO; CT; DC; HI; IA; ID; IL; IN; KY; LA; MA; MD; MI; MN; MS; NC; NE; NH; NJ; NY; OH; PA; RI; SC; TN; TX; VA; WA

Envisioning all children on a path to excel.

BellXcel empowers educators with evidence-based solutions that make it easier and more cost-effective for them to design and deliver high-quality, measurable summer and after-school learning experiences that improve children's academic skills, social-emotional development, and self-confidence for lifelong success. BellXcel is a national nonprofit leader in out of school time education. Partners use BellXcel to create holistic learning programs that can combine academics, enrichment, social-emotional learning (SEL), professional development, and community and family engagement. In 2018, BellXcel-Powered programs reached approximately 19,000 pre-K scholars and 2,100 educators at 154 sites in 32 U.S. states.

IMPACT

- Over 25 years, BellXcel has impacted over 175,000 children, and 10,000 plus educators.
- Scholars enrolled in BellXcel-powered summer programs in 2018 showed 2.5 months of gains in math and two months of gains in reading, reversing summer learning loss.
- According to a Bellwether study, 100% of teachers reported that BellXcel positively influenced their approach to the new school year.
- 91% of educators surveyed reported that scholars were more prepared for school in the fall; 90% of educators reported that scholars had higher self-confidence.

BEYOND 12

FOUNDED	2009
HEADQUARTERS	OAKLAND, CA
LOCATIONS	CA; GA

Ensuring all students have the opportunity to succeed in college and beyond.

Beyond 12 is a national technology-based nonprofit whose mission is to significantly increase the number of students from under-resourced communities who graduate from the nation's colleges and universities. Through personalized student coaching service, a longitudinal student tracking platform, and an analytics engine, Beyond 12 helps high schools, college access and scholarship programs, and colleges provide their students with the academic, social, and emotional support they need to succeed in higher education. By collecting and sharing longitudinal data that cross K-12 and higher education, Beyond 12 not only provides students with differentiated coaching that ensures they earn a college degree, but also provides actionable feedback to high schools and programs about their college preparatory efforts, improves the retention work of colleges and universities by sharing data-driven insights gained from supporting students, and influences the national conversation about student success.

IMPACT

- Beyond 12 tracks the postsecondary progress of over 50,000 college students and coaches close to 2,000 students each year.
- 67% of Beyond 12's coached students graduate or remained enrolled at the end of their sixth year, compared to 44% of underrepresented minority students and 56% of first-generation students nationally.
- Beyond 12 has been acclaimed nationally for its innovative approach as a Robin Hood College Success Prize finalist, as a Google Bay Area Impact Challenge winner, and as one of Fast Company's top 10 most innovative companies in education.

BOTTOM LINE

FOUNDED	1997
HEADQUARTERS	BOSTON, MA
LOCATIONS	IL; MA; NY

Helping first-generation students from low-income backgrounds get into and graduate from college, and go far in life.

Bottom Line, with its integrated, data-driven approach, not only helps first-generation college students gain admission to college, but also continues to work with students upon arrival on campus to ensure they have the tools and support needed to graduate and secure a good first job. Students work one-on-one with an advisor who serves as a relentless ally for their ambition. Through its Access Program, high school students progress through each aspect of the college admissions process, from drawing up a list of schools and drafting a personal statement, to finding scholarships and choosing the right school for them. The Success Program then helps students transition to life on campus and supports them for up to six years as they navigate diverse obstacles such as selecting courses, securing internships, maintaining financial aid, overcoming personal challenges, and building a professional "brand" as they prepare to graduate and enter the workforce.

IMPACT

- Over 95% of Bottom Line high school students commit to a college by May 31.
- 78% of Bottom Line students graduate with a bachelor's degree from college.
- Bottom Line students are up to 43% more likely to graduate from college in six years or less compared to their peers.
- Bottom Line supports almost 8,000 students annually.

BRAVEN

FOUNDED	2013
HEADQUARTERS	CHICAGO, IL
LOCATIONS	CA; IL; NJ; NY

Empowering first-generation, low-income, and/or under-represented college students to put education to work.

Braven empowers promising, underrepresented young people—first-generation college students, students from low-income backgrounds, and students of color—with the skills, confidence, experiences, and networks necessary to transition from college to strong first jobs. Braven is embedded within large public universities and partners with employers to build cutting-edge career education into the undergraduate experience for low-income and first-generation college goers and provides students, who often feel disconnected from campus, with a network of supporters and sense of belonging. Braven fellows are persisting in college and achieving exciting levels of internship and job attainment.

IMPACT

- Braven's most recent class of college graduates are 23 percentage points more likely to secure a strong full-time job—characterized by pathways to promotion, employee benefits, and market-competitive starting salaries—or enroll in graduate school.
- 48% of Braven graduates are already out-earning their parents in their first job out of college—by comparison, the average American at age 30 only has a 50-50 shot of earning more than their parents.
- Braven graduates were 22 percentage points more likely to have at least one internship during college than their peers.

CITIZEN SCHOOLS

FOUNDED	1995
HEADQUARTERS	BOSTON, MA
LOCATIONS	CA; DC; GA; ID; IL; IN; KS; LA; MA; MI; NC; NM; NY; OH; OK; OR; PA; SC; TX

Helping all students to thrive in school and beyond through hands-on learning and career mentors.

Citizen Schools partners with underserved U.S. middle schools to ensure students have access to hands-on, project-based learning with mentors. In 2006, it pioneered the Expanded Learning Time (ELT) model, through which AmeriCorps teaching fellows deliver academic support and partner with volunteer “Citizen teachers” from the community for after-school “apprenticeships”—local lawyers teach mock trial and public speaking; software engineers teach robotics and coding. In 2017, it launched Catalyst, which brings apprenticeships to classrooms during the school day. In 2019, it renamed its US2020 model to Makers + Mentors Network, a national coalition of 21 communities that provide hands-on STEM education and maker-centered learning across the country, with over 10,000 STEM mentors serving 150,000+ students in the 2018-2019 school year.

IMPACT

- Citizen Schools' evidence base shows significant and long-term impact for students, including three additional months of learning in math in first year attendance and a 71% on-time high school graduation rate (compared to just 59% of matched peers). In addition, 70% of students exhibited mastery of 21st Century Skills.
- Citizen Schools students are 25% more likely to enroll in college than low-income students nationally, two times more likely to graduate from a four-year college, and 30% more likely to earn a postsecondary degree/certificate in a STEM field.

CITY YEAR

FOUNDED	1988
HEADQUARTERS	BOSTON, MA
LOCATIONS	AR; CA; CO; DC; FL; IL; LA; MA; MI; MO; NH; NY; OH; OK; PA; RI; SC; TN; TX; WA; WI

Uniting diverse teams of young adults for a year of full-time service in systemically under-resourced public schools.

City Year helps students and schools succeed. It recruits and trains a diverse group of young adults to serve as AmeriCorps members in schools all day, every day—student success coaches who work as tutors, mentors, and role models, preparing students with the skills and mindsets to thrive in school and in life. In partnership with teachers, City Year AmeriCorps members provide individualized academic and social-emotional support to students who need it most; serve as essential resources in the classroom; and contribute to a positive school culture, climate, and community. In 2018-2019, 3,000 AmeriCorps members served in 349 schools across 29 U.S. cities. Through their work in schools and communities, City Year AmeriCorps members not only make a difference in the lives of students they serve, but also acquire valuable skills that prepare them to become the next generation of civically engaged leaders.

IMPACT

- Schools partnering with City Year were two-to-three times more likely to improve on English and math assessments.
- City Year helped two-thirds of students identified as needing support to move on-track in critical social-emotional skills linked to career readiness.
- City Year is building pathways to education careers; 47% of City Year alumni work in the education field as teachers, administrators, and counselors, and at education nonprofits.

COLLEGE ADVISING CORPS

FOUNDED	2005
HEADQUARTERS	CHAPEL HILL, NC
LOCATIONS	CA; GA; IL; IN; KS; MA; MI; MO; NC; NY; PA; RI; SC; TX; UT; VA

Increasing opportunity for America's students.

College Advising Corps is a national nonprofit increasing the number of first-generation, low-income, and/or underrepresented students applying to, enrolling in, and graduating from college. Believing a college education constitutes the greatest determinant of upward social mobility and lifetime earning potential, College Advising Corps places recent graduates from its partner colleges in underserved high schools to act as full-time college advisers. In addition to guiding students through the admissions and financial aid processes, advisers work with teachers and administrators to instill a college-going culture in the school. Corps advisers take an open-door, whole-school approach and embed themselves in the school community, opening the eyes of students and their parents to the possibility of a postsecondary degree. College Advising Corps students also persist in their postsecondary studies at rates mirroring the national average despite its serving schools with large numbers of low-income and first-generation college students.

IMPACT

- Students who meet with the College Advising Corps adviser in their school are 30% more likely to apply to college and 26% more likely to apply to three or more schools compared to the other seniors in their schools.
- College Advising Corps students are 23% more likely to be accepted to a college or university and 27% more likely to submit a FAFSA and apply for financial aid.

COLLEGE FORWARD

FOUNDED	2003
HEADQUARTERS	AUSTIN, TX
LOCATION	TX

Coaching underserved students to achieve the benefits of higher education and a college degree.

College Forward believes that access to higher education is the right of every young person, regardless of socioeconomic status. College Forward provides intensive, individualized college access and college completion services to low-income and first-generation students. In collaboration with school districts, higher and other community organizations, College Forward orients high school students and their families to the college experience, preparing them for entrance examinations, applications, and the financial aid process. Once enrolled, "collegians" are supported through a unique completion program to ensure their attainment of a bachelor's degree. Texas ranks among the lowest in the country for persistence and graduation rates among college students; however, 83% of College Forward students who enroll in college persist in their studies.

IMPACT

- 99% of College Forward students graduate from high school and are accepted to college each year.
- More than 90% of College Forward students enroll in college within 12 months of high school graduation, and 77% attend four-year colleges and universities.
- College Forward's program has grown to support over 15,000 first-generation, low-income students to and through college, and partnered with over 70 educational institutions across the country to provide technical training and resources.

COLLEGE POSSIBLE

FOUNDED	2000
HEADQUARTERS	ST. PAUL, MN
LOCATIONS	IL; MN; NE; OR; PA; WI

Making college admission and success possible for low-income students through an intensive curriculum of coaching and support.

College Possible serves students when and where they need support. The key to its success is near-peer coaching—leveraging the power of young, idealistic, and dedicated recent college graduates serving as AmeriCorps members to offer advice, mentoring, and support to students from low-income backgrounds as they navigate the often complex world of college preparation and persistence.

IMPACT

- 97% of College Possible students earn admission to college.
- College Possible students are four times more likely to graduate from college than their low-income peers.

DIVERSE CHARTER SCHOOLS COALITION

FOUNDED	2017
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	CA; CO; DC; GA; IN; LA; MA; MD; MI; MN; MO; NC; NH; NJ; NY; OK; PA; RI; SC; TN; TX; WA

Catalyzing and supporting the creation and expansion of high-quality diverse public charter schools through strategic research, advocacy, membership activities, and outreach.

The Diverse Charter Schools Coalition (DCSC) connects members with each other and with outside resources to help improve their practice. It encourages school founders and leaders of high-performing public schools in the Coalition to embrace diversity while serving as a beacon and resource for new founders and other school leaders interested in creating integrated charter schools. It supports research and analysis on the impact of diversity on the academic and social outcomes of its students and students attending similarly diverse schools across the nation. It makes federal, state, and local policy recommendations that support new and existing diverse-by-design public charter schools. It also advocates for government and philanthropic support to incentivize demographic diversity in public schools.

IMPACT

- An ever-expanding coalition, DCSC currently has 57 member schools and networks across 21 states and D.C., totaling 175 individual schools serving over 50,000 students.
- The academic benefits of diverse schools include stronger test scores, a reduced achievement gap between White students and Black and Latino students, increased rates of college attendance, and enhanced critical thinking skills.

EDUCATION LEADERS OF COLOR (EDLOC)

FOUNDED	2016
HEADQUARTERS	LOS ANGELES, CA
LOCATIONS	CA; CO; DC; LA; MA; NY; OH; TN

Increasing the number of effective, values-aligned Black and Latino leaders in high-level positions in education and adjacent fields where they can be a transformative force in the lives of children, families, and communities.

Guided by its Third Way Values of ending generational poverty, creating sustainable change, creating schools it wants for all children, advancing multiple solutions, and going beyond education, Education Leaders of Color (EdLoC) is a community of 350+ leaders of color working to elevate the leadership and influence of people of color in education and leading more inclusive efforts to improve education. EdLoC seeks to break through the polarizing divides that have consumed efforts to improve public education by identifying, equipping, and proliferating the field with values-aligned leadership, aligning its members toward these values and policy priorities, and providing them with access to resources. EdLoC's members are uniquely situated to address the needs of Black/Latinx communities, sharing many common experiences with those they serve.

IMPACT

- A 350+ member national community provides support, training, and connections for its members.
- Leadership pipeline services connect 200+ leaders of color to school districts, charter management organizations and, foundations seeking talent for 40+ positions.
- EdLoC's new philanthropic arm, the Boulder Fund, distributed \$1.7 million to 15 EdLoC innovators working to advance innovative third-way policy and programs.

EDUCATORS FOR EXCELLENCE

FOUNDED	2010
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	CA; CT; IL; MA; MN; NY

Ensuring teachers have a leading voice in the policies that impact their students and profession.

Founded by public school teachers, Educators for Excellence (E4E) is a growing movement of more than 30,000 educators, united around a common set of values and principles for improving student learning and elevating the teaching profession. They work together to identify issues that impact their schools, create solutions to these challenges, and advocate for policies and programs that give all students access to a quality education. Through six chapters in communities across the country, they provide opportunities for teachers to stay informed, expand their leadership, connect with colleagues and decision-makers, and advocate for change. To create change for students and colleagues, they build a movement of forward-thinking educators, identify and train teachers to take on leadership positions, create teacher-led policy recommendations, and advocate for implementation of teacher-generated ideas.

IMPACT

- Since 2011, E4E teachers have written more than 40 policy papers, shaping important legislation.
- Educators' voices have been elevated through thousands of media stories and advocacy actions on issues such as school climate, teacher leadership, and education funding.
- Teachers conducted a groundbreaking national survey in 2018, *Voices from the Classroom*, capturing the views and opinions of educators across the country on a wide variety of issues impacting students and the teaching profession.

ENCORE.ORG

FOUNDED	1999
HEADQUARTERS	SAN FRANCISCO, CA
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Realizing the potential of longer lives and intergenerational connection to solve the most pressing social problems.

Encore.org is an ideas and innovation hub that taps the talent of the 50+ population as a force for good. With the support of 250 partner organizations, 100,000 supporters, and thousands of activists, Encore.org's Gen2Gen campaign mobilizes people 50+ to stand up for and with young people, helps youth-serving organizations tap experienced talent, and brings the generations together to improve life for all. Encore.org connects and provides fellowships to people seeking midlife transitions to the nonprofit sector; to innovators working to engage older adults in early childhood care and education; and to new and necessary thought leaders working at the intersection of aging, longevity, intergenerational connection, and social justice. Encore.org's newest initiative taps older homeowners to help solve the affordable housing challenge facing national service members.

IMPACT

- More than 2,000 seasoned professionals have been placed in fellowships where they've contributed the equivalent of more than \$200 million to nonprofit organizations in over 50 metropolitan areas—increasing nonprofit capacity and age-integrating the nonprofit workforce.
- Encore.org helped scores of nonprofits—including AVID, Jumpstart, Girls Scouts, MENTOR, Strive for College, the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities, Thread, and more—incorporate Encore talent in paid and volunteer roles.

ENLEARN

FOUNDED	2012
HEADQUARTERS	SEATTLE, WA
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Supporting underserved students with equity-focused learning interventions that enable students to not only meet but also surpass the grade norms of their peers.

Enlearn has developed a groundbreaking, equity-driven personalized learning platform to radically accelerate learning among the most underserved learners. Driven by machine learning designed specifically to address equity gaps in education and with an initial focus on math, the Enlearn platform was built on over 12 years of research and iteration in learning science, education technology, machine learning, and knowledge representation. Critical to Enlearn platform's impact on learning is the ability to follow the student thought processes being used to solve a problem in real time, which provides very rapid, laser-specific diagnostics of knowledge gaps and misconceptions, as well as insights on mindset, confidence, and engagement with learning. By diagnosing key learning obstacles and misconceptions in real-time, Enlearn is able to deliver the right problem with the right support at the right time, personalized to the student's learning DNA.

IMPACT

- In studies with over 100,000 students, the Enlearn platform resulted in 96% of participating students across all grades from 1-12 achieving mastery on an algebra post test after only 1.5 hours of use.
- Teachers tripled the frequency of providing personalized, 1:1 support to students in classrooms using Enlearn compared to control groups.
- Students attempted 4.5 times more math practice problems in classrooms using Enlearn compared to control classrooms.



EYE TO EYE

FOUNDED	1998
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	AL; AZ; CA; CO; CT; DE; DC; FL; GA; IL; LA; MA; MD; NC; NJ; NY; OH; PA; RI; TN; VA; WA; WI; WY

Improving the life of every young person with a learning disability or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Eye to Eye is a national, nonprofit mentoring program changing the lives of thousands of children and young adults across the United States. Using a research-based arts mentoring model in which committed college students with learning disabilities (LD) and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) mentor children who face the same challenges, Eye to Eye helps students with LD/ADHD improve self-advocacy and meta-cognitive abilities, skills proven to be essential to the life and success of LD/ADHD adults. Eye to Eye's grassroots approach to mentoring leverages partnerships with parents, communities, schools, and universities to create a network of advocates surrounding each child.

IMPACT

- Students participating in Eye to Eye's program show a 20% increase in self-esteem, putting them statistically significantly higher in their personal growth than students without learning differences.
- Depressive symptoms in Eye to Eye's participants fell by a statistically significant 16%.
- 87% of Eye to Eye mentees reported their mentor helped them think positively about the future, with 85% reporting increased self-esteem as a result.
- 87% of mentees felt more academically empowered after the program, and 73% believed their mentor helped them to become self-advocates.
- 89% of mentors in the program felt their participation made them better advocates for themselves as well.

GENERATION CITIZEN

FOUNDED	2008
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	CA; MA; NY; RI; OK; TX

Ensuring that all students in the United States receive a "drivers' education" for democracy, in the form of action civics.

Generation Citizen (GC) is transforming how civics education is taught by bringing the subject to life. As a nonprofit organization, it champions real-world democracy education that equips all young people with the skills and knowledge needed to effect change. To ensure American democracy represents the voices of all people, GC prioritizes working with students from communities that have been historically excluded from the political process. In the classroom, its Action Civics program inspires robust civic participation by inviting students to engage directly with the local issues and institutions impacting their communities. It provides thought leadership, conducts research, and builds coalitions to advocate for state- and district-level policies that ensure schools prioritize Action Civics. Nationwide, Generation Citizen is activating a movement of young people prepared to lead in the nation's democracy.

IMPACT

- GC has reached 60,000 students since 2008, with over 18,000 receiving the Action Civics program in the 2018-2019 school year.
- After participating in GC, 70% of students believe they have power to make a difference in their communities with a 175% increase in the number of students who have ever contacted a public official.
- GC impact analysis shows that youth are engaged in local issues even before topics gain mainstream attention.

GENESYS WORKS

FOUNDED	2002
HEADQUARTERS	HOUSTON, TX
LOCATIONS	CA; DC; IL; MN; NY; TX

Providing pathways to career success for high school students in underserved communities through skills training, meaningful work experiences, and impactful relationships.

Genesys Works opens the doors of opportunity for high school students in underserved communities by providing the skills training, professional work experience, and support they need to achieve career success and a lifetime of economic self-sufficiency. Its program consists of eight weeks of technical and professional skills training, a year-long paid corporate internship, college and career coaching, and alumni support to and through college. The goal is to move more students into professional careers, creating a more productive and diverse workforce in the process.

IMPACT

- In 2018, Genesys Works served 4,404 students (trained, employed in internships, and program alumni); 100% of program participants graduated high school and 94% enrolled in college.
- Collectively, Genesys Works interns earned \$7.04 million during their internships, and program participants received 111,020 hours of professional training in 2018.
- The median salary of employed alumni was \$45,000-\$50,000.
- 23% of alumni earn more than both parents combined; 46% earn the same or more than at least one parent.

HIGHLANDER INSTITUTE

FOUNDED	1990
HEADQUARTERS	PROVIDENCE, RI
LOCATIONS	IA; MA; NJ; NY; RI; TX

Partnering with communities to imagine and create more equitable, relevant, and effective schools; and using research to build capacity to improve outcomes and experiences for all students.

Highlander Institute envisions students, educators, and communities partnering as agents of change to design classrooms that empower, schools that adapt, and systems that liberate. Highlander Institute specializes in learning models that are focused on creating equity through education. The Institute designs and implements proof-of-concept work, building not only the tools that enable districts to diagnose problems and design solutions from a student-centered perspective, but also the capacity-building strategies that energize local educators to customize Institute knowledge and experience, mobilizing home-grown teams of learning specialists driven to personalize the learning experience for all students.

IMPACT

- During the 2018-2019 school year, across 99 schools in nine states, 96% of classroom teachers coached by Highlander Institute shifted their teaching practices toward more personalized models.
- Classrooms coached and supported by Highlander Institute have shown statistically significant growth in student outcomes, especially with Black and Latinx students.

IMBLAZE BY BIG PICTURE LEARNING

FOUNDED	2014
HEADQUARTERS	PROVIDENCE, RI
LOCATIONS	CA; CO; DE; FL; ID; IL; KY; LA; MA; MI; MO; NH; NJ; NM; NV; NY; OR; PA; RI; TN; WA

Helping all students increase their social capital, and schools disrupt opportunity gaps that exist for young people, through community-based internships and mentorships.

ImBlaze by Big Picture Learning is a powerful mobile platform that encourages students' interests by enabling them to find and pursue internship opportunities with adults in their community who share their interests. Through ImBlaze, students can pursue internships connected to relevant projects that often result in actual career opportunities. ImBlaze empowers equitable student agency, ownership, and choice, and accelerates place-based, real-world learning for all students. What's more, educators can use the tool to facilitate students' search processes, track internship attendance, and ensure student success, making it a seamless option for schools wishing to implement more progressive practices while also adhering to local compliance structures.

IMPACT

- In five short years, ImBlaze has resulted in students spending over 100,000 days out in the community learning from mentors.
- There are currently over 23,000 internship opportunities cataloged in ImBlaze, making the connection between mentor and learner that much closer.
- In the Big Picture Learning network, which serves as the home base for ImBlaze, over 75% of students who do not head to college following graduation secure employment through their high school internships. ImBlaze facilitates many of these connections.

iMENTOR

FOUNDED	1999
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	CA; IL; MD; NY

Building mentoring relationships that empower first-generation students from low-income communities to graduate high school, succeed in college, and achieve their ambitions.

Since its founding in 1999, iMentor has matched more than 33,000 students with mentors and established a track record of significantly improving college outcomes for its students. iMentor began with a single class of students in the Bronx, and now serves more than 10,000 students in 40 schools across the country, increasing the number of first-generation students who go to college, graduate with a degree, and are prepared to successfully enter the 21st century workforce. iMentor has developed a rigorous and innovative model that reimagines the ways schools and communities support students on their journey to post-secondary success. The pillars of this model include: multi-year partnerships with high schools, integration of technology to drive success, and a data-driven approach to innovation anchored by in-house data collection, analysis, and evaluation.

IMPACT

- Nationally, 73% of iMentor students enroll in college on time compared to 54% of students from demographically and academically similar schools in its regions.
- Nationally, 45% of iMentor's college entrants graduate college within six years of enrollment, compared to 25% of low-income youth nationwide.

INSTITUTE FOR CHILD SUCCESS

FOUNDED	2010
HEADQUARTERS	GREENVILLE, SC
LOCATIONS	NJ; NY; SC

Fostering the success of all children.

The Institute for Child Success (ICS) is a nonpartisan research and policy institute working with policymakers, service providers, government agencies, funders, and business leaders to advance a culture that supports and sustains the success of all children. Resting on its three core pillars—research, policy, and integration—ICS identifies research-based approaches to meet the challenges of early childhood development, health care, and education, and supports its partners in implementing these best practices. ICS focuses on the broader systems that foster the education and health of children, bringing about change that is exponential. Through its work to integrate and align the efforts of service providers and advocates in the early childhood field, ICS brings together diverse perspectives and maximizes the effect in the lives of young people.

IMPACT

- ICS is working to expand evidence-based home visiting through research on innovative practices, legislative advocacy, and technical assistance to jurisdictions exploring alternative financing models.
- ICS has published a series of papers and is hosting a series of events to help policymakers support the development of strong executive function in young children.
- ICS works continually to develop Pay for Success mechanisms to support the scaling of effective early childhood interventions.

JUMPSTART

FOUNDED	1993
HEADQUARTERS	BOSTON, MA
LOCATIONS	AR; AZ; CA; CT; DC; GA; IL; MA; MO; MS; NJ; NY; PA; RI; WA

Ensuring every child in America enters kindergarten prepared to succeed.

Jumpstart tackles the early education challenges in the U.S. through direct service, workforce development, and policy advocacy. Jumpstart provides direct service programs that develop the language, literacy, and social-emotional skills that are critical for preparing young children for success. Jumpstart trains college students who implement the curriculum in preschool classrooms in underserved communities. A proud member of AmeriCorps, Jumpstart has served over 123,000 children and engaged 50,000 volunteers since 1993. Jumpstart also develops a high-quality early education workforce through programs that prepare college student volunteers to enter the teaching profession and train and support current early education practitioners in the classroom. In addition, Jumpstart advocates for public policies that strengthen the workforce and promote equitable early education for all.

IMPACT

- Over the course of the year, 90% of Jumpstart children make gains in the language and literacy skills determined to be predictors of school success. Jumpstart children's gains in literacy skills are 1.5 times greater than the gains of children in non-Jumpstart classrooms.
- Based on a study of Jumpstart's impact on key social-emotional competencies, Jumpstart children are two times more likely to score in the "strength" range compared to the national norm.
- 73% of student volunteers are interested in pursuing a career relevant to their Jumpstart service.



HIGH-IMPACT ORGANIZATIONS – HOW CHILDREN LEARN

KIPP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FOUNDED	1994
HEADQUARTERS	SAN FRANCISCO, CA
LOCATIONS	AR; CA; CO; DC; FL; GA; IL; IN; LA; MA; MD; MN; MO; NC; NJ; NY; OH; OK; PA; TN; TX

Helping children develop the academic and character strengths they need to succeed in college, lead choice-filled lives, and build a better tomorrow for themselves, for their communities, for us all.

KIPP, the Knowledge Is Power Program, is a national network of free, open-enrollment, college-preparatory public schools that prepare students in underserved communities for success in college and in life. KIPP builds a partnership among parents, students, and teachers that puts learning first. More than 88% of KIPP's students are from low-income families and eligible for the free or reduced-price meals program, and 95% are African American or Latinx. By providing outstanding educators, more time in school learning, and a strong culture of achievement, KIPP is helping all students climb the mountain to and through college.

IMPACT

- As of the 2019-2020 school year, KIPP has a total of 242 schools serving more than 100,000 students, with plans to continue growing annually.
- As of the fall of 2018, 91% of KIPP students graduate from high school and 80% enroll in college.
- 45% of alumni who graduated from KIPP high schools completed a bachelor's degree, approximately three times higher than the average for students from low-income families.

LEADING EDUCATORS

FOUNDED	2008
HEADQUARTERS	NEW ORLEANS, LA
LOCATIONS	CA; GA; IL; LA; MD; MI; OK

Partnering with school systems to build and sustain the conditions, teaching, and leadership to ensure that the students furthest from opportunity succeed in school and in life.

Leading Educators (LE) works to cultivate equitable and excellent experiences for every student every day. By partnering with school systems to implement curriculum-based supports for strong teaching and learning, LE aims to erase the variability in students' opportunities to learn and succeed in school. Its approach harnesses the potential of teacher leaders, working within supportive systems to drive sustained progress today and beyond.

IMPACT

- During the 2018-2019 school year, LE worked with 172 schools and 15 school systems to develop the instructional leadership skills of 645 teacher leaders, impacting the work of 2,800 teachers and 67,387 students. Since 2008, LE has worked with approximately 2,000 teachers and school leaders across the country.
- 74% of teachers who participated in school-based professional learning increased their alignment score on LE's content knowledge assessment, with an average increase of 15 points in ELA and 10 points in math.
- Recent evaluation data from its Louisiana school partners shows that 61% of students in LE schools scored significantly above the mean score in math compared to the similar control group of students. In other words, the intervention led to an 11% increase in percentile rank for an average student.

LEAP INNOVATIONS

FOUNDED	2014
HEADQUARTERS	CHICAGO, IL
LOCATIONS	CA; CO; CT; DC; FL; GA; ID; IL; IN; LA; MA; MI; MN; NY; OH; PA; RI; SC; TN; TX; UT; VT; WA; WI; WY

Transforming education nationwide into a uniquely personal experience, designed to prepare, inspire, and empower all learners to ignite their unlimited potential.

LEAP Innovations was founded on the belief that all children, regardless of race, cultural background or socioeconomic status, have unlimited potential and a right to a high-quality education. LEAP Innovations gives districts and schools foundational change-management support to make sustainable shifts to a personalized learning model. Its work enables new learning environments, helping educators design their approach, hone their practice, develop professionally, and work with new technologies to empower this shift. By driving the adoption of personalized learning, as well as fostering a connected ecosystem of learning to support personalized pathways, LEAP is working side-by-side with educators and innovators to create a new paradigm for education that is truly centered around the learner.

IMPACT

- LEAP has worked with more than 140 schools; 2,400 in-service and pre-service educators; and nearly 40,000 students (90% students of color; and 80% qualify for free or reduced-price lunch).
- Students in the first three cohorts saw statistically significant improvement in literacy.
- Students in ELA classrooms in the bottom third of their incoming test scores showed a statistically significant increase of 8.3 percentile points.
- For four consecutive years, teachers stated the LEAP programs improved their teacher practice (99%+) and increased student engagement (90%+).

LET'S GROW KIDS

FOUNDED 2000

HEADQUARTERS BURLINGTON, VT

LOCATION VT

Securing affordable access to high-quality child care for all Vermont families by 2025.

Let's Grow Kids is a statewide movement pursuing transformational change for Vermont's kids, families, communities, and economy. Let's Grow Kids increases quality and capacity of the early care and learning system to support kids, families, and early educators today, while simultaneously mobilizing Vermonters from all walks of life to call for policy change and increased investment to create and sustain a high-quality birth-to-5 system for the future.

Success in 2025 will mean that 100% of Vermont families with children birth to age 5 have affordable access to early care and learning opportunities in their communities that meet their needs; 100% of Vermont families will pay no more than 7%–15% of annual income for child care; and 100% of child care programs will participate in Vermont's quality recognition system with the majority performing at the highest levels.

IMPACT

- *Let's Grow Kids established universal pre-K in the Vermont state legislature.*
- *Participation increased in Vermont's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) from 15% to 75%, and 500+ new, high-quality child care spaces were created throughout the state.*
- *It launched a data-driven public awareness and education campaign, which has engaged 30,000+ grasstops and grassroots supporters.*



HIGH-IMPACT ORGANIZATIONS – HOW CHILDREN LEARN

MATCH EDUCATION

FOUNDED	2000
HEADQUARTERS	BOSTON, MA
LOCATION	MA

Delivering extraordinary results for our charter school students, equipping our graduate school of education students for success in high-poverty public schools, and serving as a source of innovation in education nationwide.

Match Education is the combined brand name of the three legal entities through which work is conducted. An engine of discovery and applied innovation in education, Match Education operates a high-performing urban public charter school, and a unique graduate school of education that trains teachers for high-poverty schools. Out of this applied work, Match Education refines, validates empirically, and disseminates new ideas and practices on core questions in education reform. Its entities focus on the following areas of work: Match Public Charter School, a high-performing, innovative charter public school in Boston, serving students from pre-K to 12th grade on multiple campuses across the city; the Charles Sposato Graduate School of Education, which grants a master's in effective teaching (MET) degree; and Match Export, its vehicle for sharing the inventions developed in its applied work.

IMPACT

- By 10th grade, nearly 100% of Match students have achieved proficiency in math, literacy, and biology.
- 100% of CSGSE trainees have received at least one offer for a full-time teaching position.
- Match Export has had over 1 million unique visitors to its free, publicly accessible websites. Best practices are shared with teachers and instructional coaches, as well as all curriculum materials for grades 3-12.

MINDRIGHT

FOUNDED	2016
HEADQUARTERS	NEWARK, NJ
LOCATIONS	CA; DC; NJ; PA

Empowering communities of color to heal from trauma from systemic oppression.

MindRight is a tech and social justice startup with the mission to empower youth of color to heal from trauma from systemic oppression, including structural violence, poverty, and racism. It provides culturally responsive, personalized mental health coaching over text message to teens. It also provides partners real-time data on student emotional well-being to drive systems change to better support youth of color. MindRight's vision is to use technology to create opportunities for systemic healing for communities of color. Forbes has recognized MindRight as one of the top 30 innovations of the next century.

IMPACT

- On average, for every 100 students, MindRight is supporting 10,000 incoming texts/month.
- 90% of all surveyed users reported improved stress management.
- 56% of users who screened for high trauma in pre-assessment reported reduction in PTSD indicators. This is compared to youth who did not use MindRight, where 43% who screened for high trauma reported reductions in PTSD indicators.

MORTAR

FOUNDED	2014
HEADQUARTERS	CINCINNATI, OH
LOCATION	OH

Enabling underserved entrepreneurs and businesses to succeed, creating opportunities to build communities through entrepreneurship.

MORTAR was created to bridge the gap between untapped entrepreneurs and a city on the rise, existing to ensure that all entrepreneurs and small businesses—regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, race, or background—have an opportunity to participate in the rejuvenation of its city. The hope is that its approach will create a local economy where entrepreneurs of all backgrounds and colors can not only participate, but also transfer economic opportunity and ownership to future generations. Mortar sees from the success of its graduates that there are entrepreneurs—male and female—throughout the region with great ideas who need resources and training to create vibrant businesses, sustainable jobs, and stable households—and when these resources are available, great things can happen.

IMPACT

- Since 2014-2018, MORTAR has supported the dreams of nearly 250 entrepreneurs through 17 cohorts of its Entrepreneurship Academy, including 87% entrepreneurs of color.
- 67% of alumni are Black women.
- To date, 71% of MORTAR alumni are still in business.

NATIONAL BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS

FOUNDED	1987
HEADQUARTERS	ARLINGTON, VA
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Advancing accomplished teaching for all students.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was founded to advance the quality of teaching and learning by maintaining high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do; providing a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards; and advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification in American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers. Recognized as the “gold standard” in teacher certification, the National Board believes higher standards for teachers means better learning for students.

IMPACT

- More than a decade of academic research makes clear that the nation’s 122,000 National Board Certified Teachers have a measurable impact on student learning.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

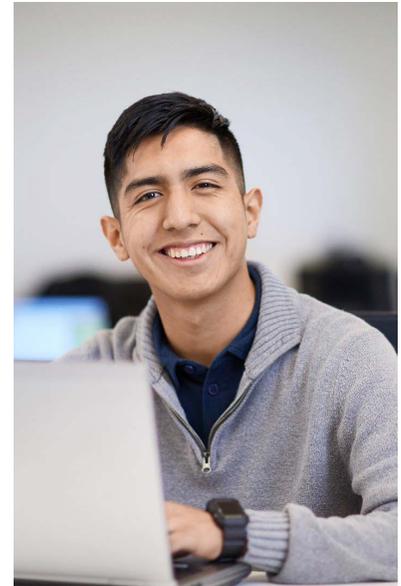
FOUNDED	1977
HEADQUARTERS	WASHINGTON, DC
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Improving the lives of people with learning and attention issues.

The mission of the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) is to improve the lives of the 1 in 5 children and adults nationwide with learning and attention issues—brain-based difficulties that include trouble with reading, writing, math, organization, concentration, listening comprehension, social skills, motor skills, or a combination of these—by empowering parents and young adults, transforming schools, and advocating for equal rights and opportunities. NCLD works to create a society in which every individual possesses the academic, social, and emotional skills needed to succeed in school, at work, and in life.

IMPACT

- NCLD succeeded in getting the Respond, Innovate, Succeed and Empower (RISE) Act introduced into both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate in 2019 to improve the Higher Education Act and increase post-secondary access and completion for students with disabilities.
- NCLD operates a Young Adult Leadership Council of 25 young adults who are empowered and poised to share their experiences and use their voices to create change at the local and federal levels on behalf of students with learning and attention issues.
- NCLD works closely with its Professional Advisory Board of experts and dozens of partners in the fields of education, disability, and civil rights to lift up the voices of students with learning and attention issues and other marginalized groups.



NEW CLASSROOMS INNOVATION PARTNERS FOR LEARNING

FOUNDED	2011
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	CA; CT; FL; GA; IL; MA; NJ; NM; NY; OK; TN

Creating and inspiring better ways to give every student an educational foundation for lifelong success.

Founded in 2011, New Classrooms Innovation Partners is a national nonprofit that partners with schools to design and implement innovative learning models. Its work is driven by a commitment to create and inspire better ways to give every student an educational foundation for lifelong success. The first learning model is called Teach to One: Math (TTO), which middle and high schools across the country—public schools, district schools, charter schools, independent schools—can adopt as their core math program. TTO ensures each student is learning the right math lesson at the right time to best meet their individual needs. It is used by thousands of students in schools nationwide.

IMPACT

- An independent third-party study found that students across the full set of 14 TTO schools that operated the program for three years saw 23% greater learning gains than students nationally on the NWEA MAP test. Students grew even more—53% above the national average—in schools aligned to growth-aligned accountability measures.
- Students consistently make learning gains on NWEA's MAP test that are 1.5 times the national average.
- Students who begin the year below grade level in math achieve learning gains that are 1.8 times the national average.

NEW LEADERS

FOUNDED	2000
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	AL; AR; AZ; CA; CO; CT; DC; FL; GA; IA; IL; LA; MA; MD; MI; MN; NC; NE; NJ; NY; NV; OR; PA; RI; SC; TN; TX; VA; WA; WI

Recruiting, developing, and supporting outstanding leaders for high-need public schools.

New Leaders transforms underperforming schools by developing outstanding leaders at every level of the education system from teacher leaders to principals and their supervisors. It works in deep partnership with the state, district, and charter partners, delivering leadership solutions that build on their strengths and address their most-pressing priorities. Its evidence-based programming cultivates diverse, equity-driven leaders equipped with the skills to elevate instruction, enhance learning, and build vibrant, inclusive school communities. To encourage widespread adoption of effective, sustainable leadership practices, it also advocates for federal and state policies that support the work of school leaders everywhere.

IMPACT

- New Leaders has trained 3,900 education leaders who annually reach nearly half a million PK-12 students, mostly students of color and children from low-income families.
- In 2019, the RAND Corporation found that students who attend New Leader schools perform significantly better than their peers in both math and literacy.
- Through its work advising school systems, New Leaders has impacted 13,000 leaders and 7 million students across the country, truly scaling best practices to impact many more students in need of great leadership.

NEW TEACHER CENTER

FOUNDED	2008
HEADQUARTERS	SANTA CRUZ, CA
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Improving student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of new teachers and school leaders.

New Teacher Center (NTC) works with schools, districts, state policymakers, and educators across the country to develop and implement induction programs aligned with district learning goals. NTC induction programs include one-on-one mentoring and professional development, all taking place within school environments that support new teachers. NTC has developed a comprehensive induction program that provides new teachers with one-on-one mentoring and professional development opportunities within the school environment. In addition, the organization develops and provides innovative programs, services, resources, and tools that address national issues related to new teachers and teacher development. Finally, NTC advocates for and designs public policies to strengthen new educator induction and mentoring.

IMPACT

- When teachers participate in the NTC induction model, students gain up to five months of additional learning.
- After two years of NTC support, new teacher retention in Hillsborough County Public Schools District increased 31%, and 90% of NTC-trained mentors and coaches remained in the district after five years.
- Evidence shows that NTC-trained mentors provide more instructionally focused support and student-centered support than control teachers.

P.S. 305

FOUNDED	2017
HEADQUARTERS	MIAMI, FL
LOCATION	FL

Informing, activating, and empowering low-income families to improve educational outcomes for children in Miami-Dade County through civic engagement in the school system.

P.S. 305 is Miami's first and only educational advocacy organization, working to improve Miami-Dade's K-12 public schools. Guided by the values of equity and excellence, P.S. 305 focuses on creating clarity around all elements of the education system and engages parents in a leadership development pipeline that trains and empowers them to become decision-makers and amplify their voice for great schools for all children. Its goal is for students, parents, teachers, and community members to be informed about the performance of schools and actively work to improve academic outcomes by advocating for quality, choice, and accountability at all levels of the education system. This diverse group of stakeholders accomplishes this primarily through grassroots organizing to implement best-practice policies at the school district level.

IMPACT

- P.S. 305 has trained over 200 parent leaders in pursuit of a more equitable education system in Miami-Dade County.
- 100% of parent leaders who have completed P.S. 305's Parent Power Accelerator would recommend this to future participants.

PARENTS AMPLIFYING VOICES IN EDUCATION

FOUNDED	2016
HEADQUARTERS	WASHINGTON, DC
LOCATION	DC

Connecting, informing, and empowering parent leaders to give families in a voice and choice in the vision for education in Washington, D.C.

PAVE is dedicated to creating an environment where the vision for education in D.C. is not created for children and families but rather with children and families, shifting and changing the dynamics of power so that communities and parents are partners in creating great schools in the city. PAVE intentionally and constructively asks parents to engage in education policy in D.C.; creates opportunities for parents to lead and advocate; helps parents to understand the system; builds relationships between parents and those who are making and influencing the education landscape; and advocates on behalf of great school options and equitable supports for all children, regardless of sector.

IMPACT

- PAVE led the #WeNeed25 coalition to secure \$20.25 million for out of school time (OST) programs.
- It surveyed over 1,000 D.C. families to ensure increased funding goes toward the programs and areas that need it most.
- It represented 30% of the parent and community engagement process for the new citywide report card with focus group and canvassing efforts.
- It led a first-of-its-kind selection process for a new school operator serving both Ward 8 and military families, where a committee of eight parents identified the school they wanted to see in their community.

PEACE FIRST

FOUNDED	1992
HEADQUARTERS	BOSTON, MA
LOCATION	MA

Empowering young people with the tools, community, and resources they need to create a just and peaceful world.

Founded in 1992, Peace First is a national nonprofit that exists to create the next generation of peacemakers. It views young people as natural problem solvers and creative thinkers, and it invests in their ability to see themselves as leaders through a unique blend of free digital resources and real-life programming, including leadership training and critical design tools. Every young person is afforded the choice to work with online mentors and subject matter experts, as well as garner peer-to-peer support from the peacemaking community. And every team that enlists in the Peace First Challenge is provided the opportunity to secure start-up funding in the form of \$250 mini-grants to help catalyze their ideas into reality. All of this takes place on the Peace First platform—the world's largest marketplace for youth-led social change initiatives.

IMPACT

- Peace First supports thousands of young people across 138 countries around the world.
- 96% of young people who leveraged its platform built relationships with people with different worldviews.
- 89% of youth who leveraged its platform are now more likely to respect and work to understand people who are different from them.
- 96% of youth who leveraged its platform are now more likely to notice something that's not right and want to fix it.
- 100% of youth who leveraged its platform believe that they can, and should, make a difference after completing a project.

PEER FORWARD

FOUNDED	1996
HEADQUARTERS	WASHINGTON, DC
LOCATIONS	CA; DC; FL; MD; MI; NY; PA; SC; VA; WV

Transforming the lives of low-income youth by connecting them to college and careers.

Peer Forward, a national leader in college access and persistence for low-income high school students, has been transforming young lives nationwide since 1996. In high schools throughout the United States, Peer Forward creates a corps of students, Peer Leaders, who lead their classmates through the necessary steps to get to and through higher education. To date, Peer Forward has guided more than 350,000 low-income youth from more than 500 schools on the path to college and career.

IMPACT

- In 2018-2019, 61% of all seniors in PeerForward partner schools applied to higher education, and nearly half of all students applied to three or more institutions, greatly increasing their chances of enrollment.
- PeerForward high schools achieve statistically significant higher rates of FAFSA application—15%-26%—for financial aid than similar schools, increasing the likelihood of eventual enrollment and completion.
- PeerForward expands the postsecondary counseling capacity of a high school counselor's office eightfold. PeerForward Peer Leader teams conducted 1,373 activities and events, including 432 geared toward career preparation for students in grades 9-11, reaching an estimated 89,000 students.

PEER HEALTH EXCHANGE

FOUNDED	2003
HEADQUARTERS	SAN FRANCISCO, CA
LOCATIONS	CA; CO; IL; MA; NY

Empowering young people with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to make healthy decisions.

Peer Health Exchange (PHE) recruits, selects, and trains college student volunteers to teach a skills-based health curriculum. As slightly older peers, PHE's volunteers are well positioned to lead honest conversations about young people's choices and health. In PHE's program, young people learn essential health information and develop critical skills including decision-making, communication, advocacy, and access to health resources in their schools and communities. By applying the skills they learn in PHE workshops outside of the classroom, PHE young people can make informed choices that contribute to better health and life opportunities.

IMPACT

- The American Institutes for Research conducted an independent evaluation comparing students who received PHE to those who did not. The PHE program has a statistically significant effect on sexual and mental knowledge, skills, and help-seeking behavior.
- As a result of the program, PHE students were more likely to: visit a health center; know how to access contraceptives, and show greater intentions to use them in the future; accurately define what constitutes consent in a sexual situation; and identify the warning signs of poor mental health.



POWERMYLEARNING

FOUNDED	1999
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	AK; AL; AR; AZ; CA; CO; CT; FL; GA; IL; IN; KS; KY; LA; MA; MD; MI; MN; MO; MS; MT; NC; ND; NJ; NV; NY; OH; OK; OR; PA; RI; SC; TN; TX; UT; VA; VT; WA; WI; WV

Ensuring that all children reach their fullest potential.

PowerMyLearning is a national education nonprofit that strengthens the triangle of learning relationships between students, teachers, and families so every child succeeds. It believes that students are most successful when supported by a triangle of strong learning relationships between students, teachers, and families. It partners with schools and districts nationwide to transform teaching and family engagement through innovative coaching and workshops, and through its award-winning digital platform, PowerMyLearning Connect. As a nonprofit, PowerMyLearning is especially committed to students from low-income communities, students with learning differences, and English language learners.

IMPACT

- PowerMyLearning schools outperformed comparison schools in math proficiency by an average of 7 percentage points each year.
- 88% of students in partner schools say they know how to find resources to help them learn things they do not understand in math.
- 94% of teachers improved at using data to drive their instruction and supporting student agency.

PUBLIC ALLIES

FOUNDED	1992
HEADQUARTERS	MILWAUKEE, WI
LOCATIONS	AZ; CA; CO; CT; DC; DE; FL; IA; IL; IN; LA; MD; MI; MN; NM; NY; NC; OH; PA; TX; WI

Creating a just and equitable society and the diverse leadership to sustain it.

Public Allies aims to change both the face and the practice of leadership by cultivating talented, diverse, “home-grown” leaders from underrepresented backgrounds. Cognizant of the connection between leadership development and community development, the majority of the program’s participants—or “Allies”—are from the communities, and often the very neighborhoods, in which they serve. A national movement operated in collaboration with hundreds of nonprofit organizations in 24 communities nationwide, Public Allies has launched nearly 8,000 careers in public service. Its signature AmeriCorps program combines a 10-month nonprofit apprenticeship with a community-centered approach to leadership development that emphasizes the practice of six core values that invigorate public life: collaboration, diversity and inclusion, asset-based change, continuous learning, integrity, and innovation.

IMPACT

- 80% of alumni continue to work in the public-service sector.
- 90% percent of Allies, including those previously disconnected from school and work, are enrolled in school, employed, and/or taking on another term of service within 90 days of graduation from the program.
- At year-end, 79% of organizations hosting Allies indicated that the apprentices improved the level and quality of services their organizations provide.

READING PARTNERS

FOUNDED	1999
HEADQUARTERS	OAKLAND, CA
LOCATIONS	CA; CO; DC; MD; MN; NY; OK; SC; TX; WA

Helping children become lifelong readers by empowering communities to provide individualized instruction with measurable results.

Reading Partners is a proud AmeriCorps national service program that supports K-4 students who need support with foundational reading skills and are six to 25 months behind grade level in reading. Reading Partners operates in over 200 reading centers in schools in under-resourced communities in 10 regions across the country. Trained, supervised, community volunteers provide one-on-one literacy tutoring twice weekly during and after the school day. Using a research-based curriculum and evidence-based program model that achieves results, Reading Partners engages each school and community in a program that inspires change, works to improve educational equity, and spreads the joy and power of reading.

IMPACT

- Experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations demonstrate that over the course of a year, students in the program improve their general reading skills as well as specific skills in sight word efficiency, fluency, and reading comprehension.
- Annually, 85% or more of K-5 students meet or exceed their individualized literacy growth goals.
- Annually, 85% or more of K-2 students demonstrate mastery of foundational literacy skills.
- Annually, 50% of third- and fourth-grade students with grade equivalency gaps of one year or more double their rate of learning.

SERVICE YEAR ALLIANCE

FOUNDED	2016
HEADQUARTERS	WASHINGTON, DC
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Working to make a year of paid, full-time service — a service year — a common expectation and opportunity for all young Americans.

Service Year Alliance is working to make a year of paid, full-time service—a service year—a common expectation and opportunity for all young Americans. A service year before, during, or after college gives young people the chance to transform their lives, make an impact in their community, and become the active citizens and leaders our nation needs. Service Year Alliance is working to accomplish its mission by supporting the national service field to grow the number of service year positions available to young people; improving and enhancing the service year experience for currently serving corps members; and ensuring that all young people, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to serve.

IMPACT

- Since Service Year Alliance’s founding, federal funding for full-time AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, and YouthBuild positions has grown from \$916 million in FY 2015 to \$1.255 billion in FY 2019—a cumulative increase of \$1.2 billion in funding for service years over Service Year Alliance’s existence.
- Service Year Alliance recently announced the Serve America Together campaign, which works to build public awareness, engage presidential candidates, and empower communities, and works with Congress to pass legislation that will make national service a common expectation and opportunity for all young Americans.

SPRINGBOARD COLLABORATIVE

FOUNDED	2011
HEADQUARTERS	PHILADELPHIA, PA
LOCATIONS	CA; CT; DC; DE; MD; NY; PA

Closing the literacy gap by bridging the gap between home and school.

Low-income parents—often perceived as liabilities rather than as assets—have been left out of the teaching process. Parents’ love for their children is the single greatest, and most underutilized, natural resource in education. Springboard Collaborative closes the literacy gap by bridging the gap between home and school. Springboard coaches teachers and family members to help their kids read on grade-level. Its offerings combine personalized instruction for pre-K through third grade, workshops training parents to teach reading at home, and professional development for teachers. By training parents and teachers to collaborate, Springboard puts students on a path that closes the literacy gap by fourth grade. Springboard has set an ambitious goal: to help 100,000 students reach reading goals and 30,000 students read on grade level by 2023. It is Springboard’s ambition—and its charge—to prove that all parents can teach.

IMPACT

- Springboard’s summer and after-school programs average a three to five month reading gain, closing the gap to grade-level performance by 54% in just five to 10 weeks.
- In schools that struggle to get 20% of parents to report card conferences, Springboard’s weekly family workshops average 91% attendance. For every hour a teacher leads a family workshop, parents deliver 25 hours of home-based instructional time.
- Through Springboard’s emphasis on coaching, teachers and families turn effective practices into lasting behavior change. A six-month follow-up study showed teachers and parents sustain habits long after programming has ended.

STATION1

FOUNDED	2016
HEADQUARTERS	BRONX, NEW YORK
LOCATION	MA

Inspiring and empowering people of all backgrounds to pursue science and technology to foster an equitable, creative, prosperous, and sustainable world.

Station1 is a nonprofit educational institution that is based on a new model of higher education—one that is built on a foundation of inclusion and equity, learning through frontier project-based inquiry and research, and the integration of science and technology with societal perspective and impact. Station1 creates and implements transformative education, research, and internship programs that educate a diverse range of students and fosters academic success, meaningful careers, and lifelong learning in the changing world.

IMPACT

- Station1 carried out extensive national and international engagement through over 25 invited keynotes, presentations, and workshops (1,200+ attendees).
- It received three major grants from MIT and is developing and implementing a STEM discipline-specific version of the social inquiry curriculum at MIT.
- Local community engagement is occurring through collaborations and partnerships, for example, with Riverwalk, the Lawrence History Center, and The Youth Development Organization.

TEACH FOR AMERICA

FOUNDED	1990
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	AL; AZ; AR; CA; CO; CT; DC; DE; FL; GA; HI; IL; IN; KS; KY; LA; MD; MA; MI; MN; MO; MS; NV; NL; NM; NY; NC; OH; OK; PA; RI; SC; SD; TN; TX; VA; WA; WI

Enlisting promising future leaders in the movement to end educational inequity.

Teach For America (TFA) works in partnership with communities to expand educational opportunity for children facing the challenges of poverty. TFA recruits and develops a diverse corps of outstanding college graduates and professionals to make an initial two-year commitment to teach in high-need public schools in urban and rural low-income communities, and become lifelong leaders inside and outside the classroom in the movement to end educational inequity.

IMPACT

- A growing body of rigorous independent research continues to demonstrate that Teach For America corps members promote student achievement and have an immediate impact on students and communities.
- TFA's growing network of nearly 60,000 alumni have gone on to lead in every sector in education, as teachers, state public education chiefs, district and school leaders, and leaders of some of the most high-performing schools in the country, as well as in fields outside education that impact the lives of students and their communities.

THE LEARNING ACCELERATOR

FOUNDED	2012
HEADQUARTERS	PRINCETON, NJ
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Connecting teachers and leaders with the knowledge, tools, and networks they need to enact personalized and mastery-based practices to transform K-12 education.

The Learning Accelerator (TLA) envisions a future in which each student receives an effective, equitable, and engaging education—one that is informed by data and supported by technology—enabling them to reach their full and unique potential. It is the leading national nonprofit helping to make the “potential” of personalized and mastery-based education possible and practical for every teacher and student. By identifying promising approaches, building networks for learning at scale, and openly disseminating knowledge across disparate and previously unconnected stakeholders, it makes it possible for any educator, at any level, to improve teaching and learning for every child, in every classroom, in every school in America.

IMPACT

- TLA offers hundreds of openly licensed, action-oriented resources accessed by over 100,000 visitors to TLA's online platforms and conferences, with even further distribution via more than 160 partnerships with education organizations across the country.
- Its Innovation Director Network works with 18 advanced districts, serving nearly 1 million students to capture lessons and tools, encourage collaboration, and build the evidence base for how to scale approaches.
- TLA identifies needs, mobilizes resources, and launches solutions to ecosystem problems and gaps, including supporting the creation of EducationSuperHighway, Open Up Resources, the Learning Commons, and the Innovative Learning Expert Hub.

THE MICHELSON 20MM FOUNDATION

FOUNDED	2010
HEADQUARTERS	LOS ANGELES, CA
LOCATIONS	CA

Catalyzing innovation in education.

Founded in 2010 by Dr. Gary K. Michelson, The Michelson 20MM Foundation is dedicated to ensuring that equitable educational opportunities that lead to meaningful careers are accessible to all. At the cutting edge of higher education, the foundation helps forward-thinking entrepreneurs, nonprofits, and organizations close the opportunity gap. Stimulating change through advocacy, grant making, and venture philanthropy, the foundation aims to support students at every step of their journey, from enrollment to life post-graduation.

IMPACT

- The foundation has invested over \$1.2 million invested across 20 start-ups since 2016.
- It has awarded over \$1.5 million in grants since 2010.
- It offers free resources used by over 4 million students and more than 5,000 schools nationwide.
- The foundation's work has resulted in more than \$350 million in student savings.

THE OPPORTUNITY NETWORK

FOUNDED 2003

HEADQUARTERS NEW YORK, NY

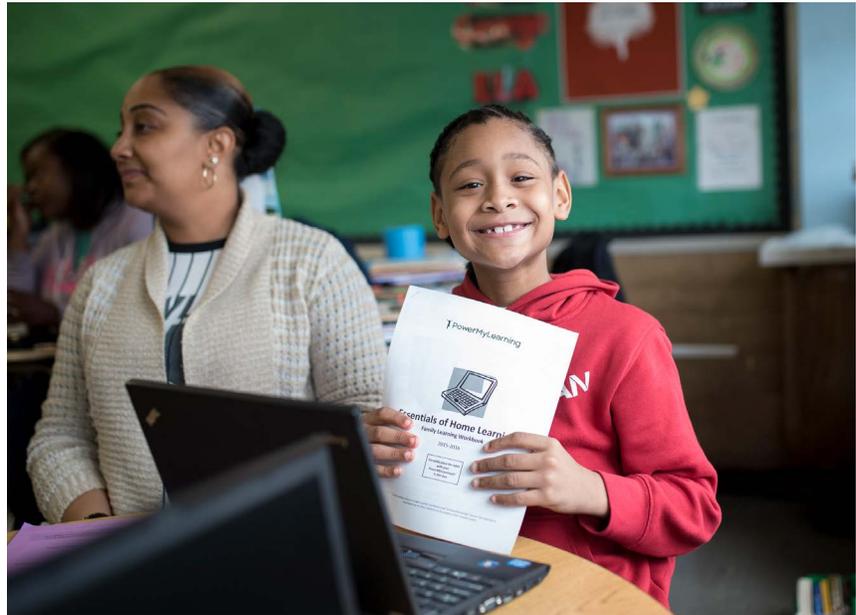
LOCATION NY

Igniting the drive, curiosity, and agency of underrepresented students on their paths to and through college and into thriving careers, powered by a commitment to access and community.

The Opportunity Network (OppNet) connects students from historically and systematically underrepresented communities to college access and success, internships, career opportunities, and personal and professional networks. Its founding OppNet Fellows program, an intensive six-year experience for students beginning the summer after 10th grade, cultivates the passions and skills of students to persist through college and launch the careers of their choice upon graduation. Anchored in its proprietary Career Fluency® curriculum, which articulates the necessary skills and mindsets for college and career readiness, the OppNet Fellows program integrates individualized college guidance, robust networking opportunities for professional and personal growth, multi-industry career exposure, experiential learning for college success, and five summers of skill-building paid internships and enrichment programs.

IMPACT

- 92% of students in the six-year OppNet Fellows program graduate from college within six years, and 90% secure meaningful employment or graduate school admission within six months of college graduation.
- 870 students were served in 2019.
- 97% of internship supervisors would re-hire their OppNet intern.



HIGH-IMPACT ORGANIZATIONS – HOW CHILDREN LEARN

TRANSCEND, INC.

FOUNDED	2015
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	AZ; CA; CO; CT; DC; FL; GA; IL; IA; LA; ME; MD; MA; MN; MO; NM; NC; NV; NJ; NY; OH; PA; RI; TN; TX; VA; WA; WI

Supporting communities to create and spread extraordinary, equitable learning environments.

Transcend, an R&D and design organization, supports communities to create and spread extraordinary, equitable learning environments with the vision that one day, all young people learn in ways that enable them to thrive in and transform the world. Transcend does this by playing two roles. First, Transcend activates demand and readiness by supporting communities across the country to ignite and advance their conditions for innovation, so more of them are eager and able to pursue better learning environments that reflect their local aspirations and context. Second, Transcend expands the supply of options by partnering with a limited number of schools and other entities to build and spread innovative learning models that offer communities a diverse range of outstanding, relevant options to adapt to their unique contexts.

IMPACT

- Transcend launched a redesign experience with a cohort of 10 schools—scaling it to serve 50+ schools nationally.
- Transcend's work with Valor Collegiate Academies has resulted in over 60 schools adopting Circle1—impacting more than 30,000 students across the country.
- Transcend has engaged over 40 research experts, developed over 15 knowledge products, been published in over 35 articles and blog posts, spoken at over 20 conferences, and disseminated knowledge products to nearly 350 unique schools and over 1,000 unique organizations.

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION, INC.

FOUNDED	2016
HEADQUARTERS	BOSTON, MA
LOCATIONS	AL; AZ; AR; CA; CO; DC; DE; GA; ID; IL; IN; LA; MA; MI; MN; MO; NJ; NM; NY; NC; TX; VA; WA

Fostering the development of the whole child so that all students, particularly those from underserved populations, can thrive.

Transforming Education, Inc. (TransformEd) partners with school and system leaders to identify and implement evidence-based practices and policies that create positive learning environments and support students' social-emotional development. TransformEd works with partners in intensive one-on-one engagements as well as in networked learning communities to engage in priority setting, needs assessments, knowledge building, data collection and analysis, strategy development and action planning, change management, and continuous improvement, all focused on whole child development, with a specific focus on social-emotional development and positive learning environments.

IMPACT

- In a recent partnership with a national cohort of innovative schools, student perceptions of their own social-emotional competencies and of the school climate improved from one year to the next in schools that were working with TransformEd.
- Of the 19 school districts TransformEd works with in Massachusetts, 96% found TransformEd's most recent professional development session to be valuable.
- Of the six Boston-based charter management organizations TransformEd partners with, 100% agreed that TransformEd's work helped them think about challenges they are experiencing in a different way.

TURNAROUND FOR CHILDREN

FOUNDED	2002
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	CA; DC; NY

Translating neuroscientific research into tools and strategies for schools with high concentrations of students impacted by adversity, in order to accelerate healthy development and academic achievement.

Too many students are behind in school and too many schools don't know what to do about it. Science is key to understanding the problem and also key to the solution. By studying the impact of adversity on the developing brain, Turnaround for Children is on to something big. It is connecting the dots between poverty, stress, and academic performance. Turnaround translates the science that explains the impact of stress on learning and behavior for teachers and administrators into tools and strategies that cultivate a safe environment, reduce stress, increase engagement in learning, and accelerate student development and academic achievement. Turnaround acts as a catalyst for change by raising awareness about and addressing the challenges that affect any school facing adversity, particularly those in high-poverty communities.

IMPACT

- During the 2018-2019 school year, Turnaround for Children trained more than 100 superintendents, 100 principals, and 4,500 educators, and impacted approximately 50,000 students.
- 83% of educators would recommend Turnaround's professional learning series to a colleague, and 79% of school leaders say the series has impacted their practice.
- Turnaround collaborated with Edutopia on the "How Learning Happens" video series featuring Dr. Pamela Cantor and Linda Darling Hammond, which has been viewed 7.6 million times since January 2019 and counting.

UASPIRE

FOUNDED	1985
HEADQUARTERS	BOSTON, MA
LOCATIONS	CA; FL; MA

Ensuring that all young people have the financial information and resources necessary to find an affordable path to and through a postsecondary education.

uAspire is a national leader in providing college-affordability services to young people and families, alleviating financial barriers to college success. uAspire delivers programming directly to young people and families in high schools and also virtually, using text messaging and other technologies. In addition, uAspire provides best-in-class instruction, resources, and ongoing support on issues of college affordability to frontline college access and success providers in partner school districts and charter management organizations, community organizations, and higher education institutions across the country. Through policy and systems-change efforts, uAspire works to ensure that people and institutions of influence at local, state, federal, and higher education levels have the information, data, and perspective they need to enact positive, lasting change.

IMPACT

- uAspire reaches more than 100,000 students through its direct service and practitioner training programs.
- uAspire helped the high school class of 2014 secure over \$150 million in financial aid—a return on investment of \$61 in financial aid for every \$1 invested in its advising programs.
- 65% of uAspire’s advisees enroll at a postsecondary institution during the fall immediately after high school graduation, compared to a national average of just 53% for low-income students, and 89% of advisees reenroll for a second year compared to 69% across all income levels.

UNBOUNDED

FOUNDED	2015
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Disrupting the cycle of institutional racism that manifests in education systems, which denies students of color an equal opportunity to learn and thrive in society.

UnboundEd’s capacity-building programs are designed explicitly to close the education provision gap caused by systemic bias and racism at every level of the education ecosystem. UnboundEd believes sustained and scaled change is possible through the development of vertical cohorts of educators within a system. Leveraging their positional and relational power, these educators commit to learning and changing together on behalf of the students in their systems. When placed within UnboundEd’s multi-year capacity building learning arc, these educator cohorts are able to affect change within their sphere of influence and their system as a whole. Today, UnboundEd is known as a leading provider of high-quality OER resources and capacity-building professional development services actively engaging educators in high-quality curricular materials and pedagogical content knowledge, while also directly confronting and pushing them to become aware of the role that race plays in their system and in their own work.

IMPACT

- UnboundEd’s immersive professional development experience, the Standards Institute, serves 7,000 educators from 250 education systems across 34 states, working to shift their understanding of aligned materials and mindsets about student potential.

VALOR COLLEGIATE ACADEMIES

FOUNDED	2013
HEADQUARTERS	NASHVILLE, TN
LOCATION	TN

Empowering its diverse community to live inspired, purposeful lives.

Valor Collegiate Academies is a network of free, public college preparatory charter schools in South Nashville that serves a diverse population. It currently operates three public charter schools serving grades five to 10 with approximately 1,400 students. Its middle schools are at full growth and its high school will serve 800 students at scale in 2021-2022. Both Valor middle schools are among the highest-performing academic schools in Tennessee. Valor is committed to serving a socioeconomically diverse population that reflects the Nashville community at large. Approximately 50% of Valor scholars come from lower-income backgrounds. Valor has no racial majority within its richly racially diverse community of Hispanic/Latino, MENA (Middle Eastern North African), White, African American, and Asian scholars and families.

IMPACT

- On the spring 2019 TNReady state test, Valor scholars achieved the highest overall scores of all non-academically selective middle schools in Metro Nashville Public Schools. Valor scholars’ scores were in the top 2% of both achievement and growth scores in Tennessee.
- In its first year of operation, Valor’s first high school class of ninth graders was #1 in the state and showed an average of 3.7 points of growth on the ACT in just one year.
- Since inception, Valor’s low-income scholars have outperformed their middle- and upper-income peers in Nashville and throughout the state.

WYMAN CENTER

FOUNDED	1898
HEADQUARTERS	ST. LOUIS, MO
LOCATIONS	AZ; CT; DC; FL; GA; HI; IL; IN; IA; KY; MA; MI; MO; NE; NJ; NM; NY; NC; OH; PA; RI; TN; TX; UT; VT; VA

Empowering teens from economically disadvantaged circumstances to lead successful lives and build strong communities.

Wyman Center was founded in 1898 to provide vulnerable children healthy recreation and character-building activities through summer camps. More than 120 years later, Wyman has evolved and become an expert at meeting the needs of teens in St. Louis and across the nation. It provides long-term and nationally recognized programs to more than 23,000 teens nationwide. Wyman blends a teen-centered approach with evidence-based practices to create a flexible strategy to youth development that helps each teen define and achieve personal success, build life and leadership skills, strengthen their academic success, and create lasting connections to others and to their communities. Two of Wyman's anchor programs are the Teen Outreach Program (TOP), and Wyman Leaders.

IMPACT

- 94% of teens agree participation in Wyman programs increased their understanding of how postsecondary education can help them achieve their career goals.
- 92% of Class of 2018 teens enrolled in a postsecondary education or training option during their first year after high school, compared to 69% nationally.
- 88% of Class of 2017 teens persisted in a postsecondary option from Year 1 to Year 2, compared to 72% nationally.
- Rigorous research has shown reduced sexual health and academic risks, such as teen pregnancy and school suspensions, for teens participating in TOP.

YEAR UP

FOUNDED	2000
HEADQUARTERS	BOSTON, MA
LOCATIONS	AZ; DE; CA; FL; GA; IL; MD; MA; NJ; NY; NC; PA; RI; TX; VA; WA

Closing the Opportunity Divide by ensuring that young adults gain the skills, experiences, and support that will empower them to reach their potential through careers and higher education.

Year Up is an award-winning, national 501(c)(3) organization that empowers motivated young adults to move from minimum wage to meaningful careers in just one year. Through a one-year intensive program, Year Up utilizes a high-expectations, high-support model where students spend the first six months learning in-demand technical and professional skills, focusing on one of five career pathways, before applying their skills during a six-month corporate internship with a top company. Throughout the program, students earn an educational stipend, complete coursework eligible for college credits, and receive ongoing support and career guidance.

IMPACT

- Year Up has served more than 24,000 young adults since its founding in 2000, and will serve more than 4,700 young adults in 2019 nationwide.
- 90% of Year Up graduates are employed and/or enrolled in postsecondary education within four months of program completion, and employed graduates earn an average starting salary of \$40,000/year.
- 70% of Year Up graduates are employed full time in roles within one of the five career pathways Year Up trains students.
- 45% of Year Up interns are converted to hire directly from their internship host company.

YOUTHBUILD USA

FOUNDED	1990
HEADQUARTERS	SOMERVILLE, MA
LOCATIONS	AL; AZ; AR; CA; CO; CT; DC; FL; GA; HI; ID; IL; IN; IA; KS; KY; LA; ME; MD; MA; MI; MN; MS; MO; MT; NE; NV; NJ; NM; NY; NC; OH; OK; OR; PA; RI; SC; TN; TX; UT; VT; VA; WA; WV; WI

Unleashing the intelligence and positive energy of low-income young people to rebuild their communities and their lives.

YouthBuild USA, which is part of a global YouthBuild movement, is the national headquarters and nonprofit support center for over 250 programs across the United States. YouthBuild programs provide an opportunity for unemployed and out-of-school young people ages 16 to 24 to reclaim their education, gain job skills, and become leaders in their communities. Students work to earn a high school diploma or equivalent credential and prepare for postsecondary success, while gaining hands-on construction skills by building affordable housing and other community assets in their neighborhoods. Students may also learn job skills in other high-demand careers like health care, culinary, hospitality, manufacturing, and IT. YouthBuild programs are sponsored and managed by local nonprofits and government agencies. Primary funding for local programs comes from the U.S. Department of Labor under the federal YouthBuild program, reauthorized in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.

IMPACT

- 79% of students obtained high school or other credentials.
- 50% of students went on to postsecondary education or jobs.
- 73% of those placed retained their placement for at least six months.
- There is a 9% recidivism rate for students within one year of enrollment.

CHILDREN'S AID

FOUNDED	1853
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATION	NY

Helping children succeed and thrive.

Children's Aid is a multiservice organization that helps children in poverty to succeed and thrive. It provides comprehensive supports and programs from cradle through college in targeted, high-needs New York City neighborhoods, touching the lives of nearly 50,000 children, youth, and families in more than 40 locations. All aspects of a child's development, beginning in early childhood and continuing through young adulthood, are addressed through four key areas: learning and cognitive development, social and emotional skills development, access to quality health care, and support to ensure a stable and happy family life. In addition to direct service, the National Center for Community Schools and the CAS-Carrera Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program provide technical assistance to communities nationally and beyond.

IMPACT

- 92% of Children's Aid preschoolers met or exceeded their cognitive skills milestones, and 90% of after-school students demonstrated typical or strong social-emotional skills.
- The Carrera Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention program has been shown to reduce teen pregnancy and birth rates by 50%.
- Nearly 19,000 children and family members participated in health and wellness programs as of mid-year 2018.
- More than 4 in 5 high school seniors in targeted programs were accepted into one or more colleges.



HIGH-IMPACT ORGANIZATIONS – HOW ADULTS & FAMILIES THRIVE

COMPASS WORKING CAPITAL

FOUNDED	2005
HEADQUARTERS	BOSTON, MA
LOCATIONS	MA; PA; RI; CT

Supporting families with low incomes to build assets and financial capabilities as a pathway to greater economic opportunity, and out of poverty.

Compass Working Capital (Compass) operates financial coaching and savings programs and works to promote economic mobility and financial security for families with low incomes by influencing field-related practice and policy. Compass' work combines a fundamental and unwavering belief in people with a commitment to the role that assets play in supporting families to access greater economic opportunity. Assets are a stronger predictor than income of financial well-being and economic mobility. Despite the critical role that assets play in enabling families to move forward, the opportunity to build assets continues to be out of reach for many families with low incomes—particularly families led by women and families of color. Compass is working to change that, with a focus on expanding access to its high-impact model for the federal Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program, the federal government's largest asset-building program for families with low incomes.

IMPACT

- Families in Compass FSS programs have saved more than \$5 million in their FSS "escrow" savings accounts and made significant progress across a variety of financial security indicators—such as increasing earned income, reducing debt, and building credit.
- An interim cost-benefit analysis of Compass' FSS programs found that participants gained more than \$10,000 in increased income at a net cost of only \$276 per participant.

CORPORATION FOR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

FOUNDED	1991
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Advancing solutions that use housing to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people, maximize public resources, and build healthy communities

Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) is the national champion for supportive housing, demonstrating its potential to improve communities for vulnerable individuals and families. CSH engages broader systems to fully invest in solutions that drive equity, help people thrive, and harness data to generate concrete and sustainable results. By aligning affordable housing with services across sectors, CSH helps communities move away from crisis, optimize their public resources, and ensure a better future for everyone. CSH investments create multi-sector partnerships where philanthropy, government, housing, health and human services, and other person-centered providers leverage its expertise and work together to achieve measurable social change. CSH is always eager to share how it leverages systems change to better deliver housing and programs, and then link these achievements to capital to realize the overall performance improvements and best practices that change lives.

IMPACT

- CSH has helped communities design and create 335,000 units of supportive housing.
- CSH funding, expertise, and advocacy have provided \$1 billion in direct loans and grants for supportive housing across the country.
- CSH operates in 48 states and in over 300 communities.
- CSH is involved in over 20 Pay for Success initiatives in the United States.

ENTERPRISE COMMUNITY PARTNERS

FOUNDED	1982
HEADQUARTERS	COLUMBIA, MD
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Creating opportunity for low- and moderate-income people through affordable housing.

Enterprise Community Partners improves communities and people's lives by bringing together nationwide know-how, partners, policy leadership, and investment to multiply the impact of local affordable housing and community development. Enterprise connects people to opportunity, starting with a well-designed home, made affordable and linked to resources like good schools, jobs, transit, and health care, so everyone has a fair chance to reach their full potential. With social enterprise activities in all 50 states, Enterprise is working with local partners to test and scale new solutions to some of the most pressing housing and economic challenges facing low-income communities. Enterprise also has a strong presence in Washington, D.C., and city halls across the country, where it works to translate proven solutions into effective public policy.

IMPACT

- Since 1982, Enterprise has raised and invested \$43.6 billion to build or preserve nearly 585,000 affordable homes, creating strong communities and touching millions of lives.
- 28 states and several cities across the country have adopted Enterprise's Green Communities Criteria as the local standard for affordable housing construction and rehabilitation projects.
- Through its 2019 initiative Health Begins with Home, Enterprise has committed \$250 million over the next five years toward promoting health as a top priority in the development and preservation of affordable homes.

EXALT YOUTH

FOUNDED	2006
HEADQUARTERS	BROOKLYN, NY
LOCATION	NY

Transforming the lives of court-involved youth by equipping them with the skills and experience necessary to become self-sufficient members of society.

Exalt elevates expectations of personal success for youth ages 15-19 who have been involved in the criminal justice system. It inspires youth at a critical crossroads to believe in their worth, from the first steps in contemplation through the journey to create lasting behavioral change. Its powerful combination of structured classes for tangible skill development, individualized support to navigate the education and justice systems, placement in paid internships, and an alumni network of resources equips youth with the tools and experience to avoid further criminal justice system involvement. At exalt, youth are empowered to see a future filled with hope—and exalt provides the road map to get there.

IMPACT

- 95% of participants do not recidivate two years post program compared to the 60% state average.
- 99% of participants are enrolled and progressing in school two years post program.

FAMILY INDEPENDENCE INITIATIVE

FOUNDED	2001
HEADQUARTERS	OAKLAND, CA
LOCATIONS	CA; LA; MA; MI; NM; TX; IL; OR; OH

Trusting and investing in low-income families across the nation so they can work individually and collectively to achieve prosperity.

Family Independence Initiative (FII) has been advancing a movement toward economic and social mobility for low-income families by investing in its initiative. FII believes that unrestricted cash transfers offer families choice and control over their lives. Through its technology platform, UpTogether, it facilitates the exchange of financial and social capital and gathers proof points that trusting low-income communities and directing dollars straight into their hands has a better return on investment than traditional government or nonprofit programs. UpTogether also focuses on the role of social networks, strengthening new and existing relationships, so that all can thrive. Using the rich strength-based data and highlighting the power of community, FII partners with philanthropy, policymakers, and government agencies to join in this alternative approach that fortifies social connection, directly invests in initiatives, and honors family agency.

IMPACT

- During their engagement with FII, families increase their savings by 120% and their total income by 21%.
- While working with FII, 30% of families start a small business.
- 80% of the children in FII families improve grades or school attendance.
- 75% of families report improvements in their health after working with FII.

FREEDOM PROJECT

FOUNDED	2001
HEADQUARTERS	SEATTLE, WA
LOCATION	WA

Healing the trauma and dismantling the stigma from the impact of mass incarceration through the strategies of racial equity, anti-oppression, compassionate communication, and mindfulness.

Freedom Project seeks to address the trauma, stigmatization, internalized oppression, and isolation that stem from involvement with the legal system with programs proven to reduce recidivism. Nonviolent communication (NVC) and mindfulness classes inside prison offer nonjudgmental spaces to practice empathy for self and others and heal from the trauma and isolation of incarceration. The organization's Safe Return Reentry program offers personal, community-based support around the trauma, stigmatization, and the challenges of returning home after prison. Community programs aim to dismantle discrimination and biases toward people with conviction histories. Freedom Project centers its work on the leadership of those most impacted; twice a month, it works on program development with a leadership group of incarcerated individuals. The organization also collaborates on leadership development with other organizations led by formerly incarcerated people.

IMPACT

- Freedom Project's programs reduce a person's chances of being reincarcerated by 43%, according to a 2014 peer-reviewed study by Antioch University.
- Importantly, while it tracks a variety of metrics, Freedom Project believes that standard data reporting is challenging as it does not account for systemic impacts of racism, trauma, and discrimination.
- Most importantly, Freedom Project stays in relationship with its participants, understanding the difference between intention and impact, and holding itself accountable for its impact.

GREENLIGHT FUND

FOUNDED	2004
HEADQUARTERS	BOSTON, MA
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Bringing innovative and successful organizations to local communities.

The GreenLight Fund is a network of local sites focused on transforming the lives of children, youth, and families by identifying, attracting, and supporting the expansion of innovative, high-impact nonprofits from around the country into high-poverty urban areas. GreenLight Fund works with community leaders to identify social service gaps and systematically search the country for proven solutions designed to address priority local issues where the need is greatest. GreenLight facilitates the replication of one high-performing, results-oriented program locally each year in each site and provides on-the-ground support—including multi-year funding, introductions to key stakeholders and potential local champions, help navigating the local terrain, and strategic input—to ensure effectiveness and sustainability over time.

IMPACT

- Since 2004, GreenLight has supported the expansion of 23 organizations into its seven communities.
- This past year, these organizations reached nearly 73,000 children, youth, and families; employed 218 staff members; and engaged 137 board members.
- GreenLight Fund has invested \$17.9 million as multi-year seed investment in the 23 organizations in its portfolio, which has leveraged \$84.5 million of additional funding from a variety of sources in each community.

LIFT

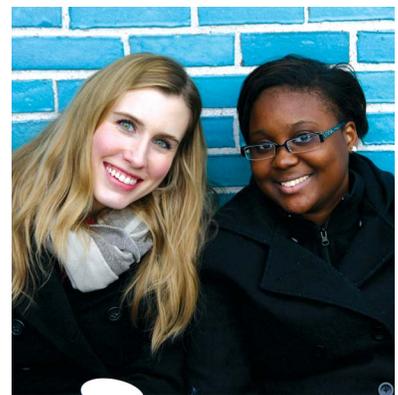
FOUNDED	1998
HEADQUARTERS	WASHINGTON, DC
LOCATIONS	CA; DC; IL; NY

Breaking the cycle of poverty.

LIFT exists to unlock the potential of parents living in poverty to provide a brighter future for children, while impacting the societal, economic, and relational systems that hold them back. LIFT designs its programming around the simple yet revolutionary insight that just as well-off families leverage capital investments and social networks to access new opportunities and accumulate greater assets, so too do families living in poverty need access to financial and social capital to achieve economic mobility. LIFT offers parents long-term, personalized coaching, and 1:1 financial and career support in an environment of dignity, respect, and love, understanding that all parents—regardless of their socioeconomic status—want the best for their children. Over time, LIFT parents work to achieve greater economic stability that enables them to build a brighter future for their children.

IMPACT

- Since 1998, LIFT has served more than 100,000 individuals.
- Parents who committed to LIFT's program for at least three months reported an average savings increase of \$1,100 and an average debt decrease of \$2,000 last year. For parents who saw an increase in income, the average annual increase in salary was more than \$9,300.
- More than 19,000 hours were spent working with LIFT parents across nearly 3,500 one-on-one meetings last year—that's the equivalent of \$559,574 of donated time.



LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT CORPORATION

FOUNDED	1979
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	AK; AL; AR; AZ; CA; CO; CT; DC; DE; FL; GA; HI; IA; ID; IL; IN; KS; KY; LA; MA; MD; ME; MN; MO; MN; MS; MT; NC; ND; NH; NJ; NM; NV; NY; OH; OK; OR; PA; RI; SC; SD; TN; TX; UT; VT; VA; WA; WV; WI; WY

Together with residents and partners, LISC forges resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity across America—great places to live, work, and visit; do business; and raise families.

The Local Initiatives Support Corporation, known as LISC, is one of the country's largest organizations supporting projects to revitalize communities and bring greater economic opportunity to residents. It invests in affordable housing, better schools, safer streets, growing businesses, and programs that connect people with financial opportunity. It provides the capital, strategy, and know-how to local partners to get this done. LISC's work impacts the lives of millions of Americans in both rural areas and urban centers across the country.

IMPACT

- \$20 billion was invested, leading to \$60.4 billion in total development.
- 400,500 affordable homes and apartments and 67 million square feet of commercial, retail, and community space were constructed.
- 212 schools were built, serving 80,000 children each year; 227 early childhood centers were built, serving almost 24,000 children each year; and 391 recreational spaces were built, serving 662,000 children each year.
- 90 financial opportunity centers, 98 healthy food projects (including grocery stores and farmers markets), 90 health projects and health care centers, and 32 performance spaces were also built.

OUR VOICE/ NUESTRA VOZ

FOUNDED	2015
HEADQUARTERS	NEW ORLEANS, LA
LOCATION	LA

Building the capacity of parents in the greater New Orleans area to act as advocates in order to ensure educational equity for all students.

Our Voice/Nuestra Voz (OVNV) organizes parents to increase educational outcomes and equity for students in New Orleans and Louisiana. From working car lines to conducting parent one-on-one meetings, OVNV sets out to build authentic relationships in communities, learn about the obstacles they face, and devise solutions to provide a better education for all students. OVNV does not set an agenda that parents adopt. Instead, parent leaders set their own agenda for their communities, students, and schools.

PER SCHOLAS

FOUNDED	1995
HEADQUARTERS	BRONX, NY
LOCATIONS	GA; MD; MA; OH; TX; MI; NJ; NY; PA

Opening doors to technology careers for individuals from often overlooked communities.

Per Scholas is a national nonprofit that drives positive and proven social change in communities across the country. Through rigorous and tuition-free technology training and professional development, it prepares motivated and curious adults who are unemployed or underemployed for successful careers as technology professionals, and creates onramps to businesses in need of their talents. Today it provides solutions in 11 cities across the country. To date, Per Scholas has trained more than 10,000 individuals, helping them build lasting, life-changing skills and careers in technology.

IMPACT

- 85% of students graduate, and 80% of graduates land jobs.
- \$21/hr is the average placement wage for 2019 graduates.
- 87% of students are people of color, 30% are women, and 30% are young adults.
- On average, in their first job post-graduation, alumni earn four times their pre-training wage.
- Two third-party impact evaluations demonstrate that Per Scholas graduates earn more, are less likely to rely on public assistance, and report significantly higher levels of life satisfaction compared to a group of equally qualified candidates who did not enroll at Per Scholas.

PILLARS

FOUNDED	2010
HEADQUARTERS	CHICAGO, IL
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Creating, expanding, and investing in opportunities for American Muslims to engage in civil society and the media, and in the realm of public discourse through funding programs, leadership development platforms, strategic partnerships, and public campaigns.

Pillars amplifies the voices, talents, and leadership of American Muslims to expand rights and opportunities for all people. Founded by a small collective of individual philanthropists, Pillars has grown into a community of grassroots leaders, advocates, media makers, educators, and entrepreneurs who believe Muslims have a critical role to play in movements for social change in the United States. Since its start in 2010, Pillars has invested more than \$3 million in organizations and individuals who are creating a deeper understanding of our complex communities, and who are driving people to learn more and take action. Its grants and partnerships support a fierce combination of emerging and established American Muslim leaders who are transforming society.

IMPACT

- Pillars has invested \$4 million into American Muslim communities.

POWER

FOUNDED	2011
HEADQUARTERS	PHILADELPHIA, PA
LOCATIONS	PA

Building communities of opportunity that work for all.

POWER works with faith communities in Pennsylvania to address local and statewide issues while simultaneously strengthening the life of its 50+ congregations. At the center of POWER's faith-based community organizing efforts is the belief in potential transformation—of people, institutions, and the larger culture. This belief stems directly from the shared principles of POWER's faith communities and influences the way leaders relate to public officials, community members, and one another. POWER equips community leaders with the skills needed to reach out into their neighborhoods, identify common concerns, research possible solutions, and work with public officials and private businesses to put those solutions into effect. Through issue-based campaigns, leaders learn how to build and sustain strong teams and networks, research and analyze community issues, develop campaign strategy, and work with elected officials to implement changes in public policy.

IMPACT

- 500 clergy and lay leaders have attended trainings, planning, and strategy sessions; engaged in research work; and conducted relational outreach within their congregations and communities since fall 2010.
- POWER members have conducted more than 1,000 conversations with fellow and sister congregants, peers, and neighbors, to identify shared dreams and concerns, and common themes of struggle and hope.
- In spring 2011, more than 150 lay and clergy leaders from POWER congregations conducted 40 research meetings with public- and private-sector leaders in five key areas.

REDF (THE ROBERTS ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT FUND)

FOUNDED	1997
HEADQUARTERS	SAN FRANCISCO, CA
LOCATIONS	AZ; CA; CO; CT; GA; IL; IN; LA; MA; MD; ME; MI; MN; MO; NJ; NY; OH; OK; OR; PA; RI; TN; TX; WA; WI

Investing in and advising high-impact social enterprises to employ and empower people overcoming barriers to work.

REDF is a pioneering venture philanthropy galvanizing a national movement of employment social enterprises—purpose driven, revenue-generating businesses that help people striving to overcome employment barriers get jobs, keep jobs, and build a better life. For people with histories of incarceration, homelessness, mental illness, substance abuse, and limited education, social enterprises provide the paying jobs and services they need to stabilize their lives, develop a work history, and build skills and confidence. When employees are ready, social enterprises help them find competitive employment.

IMPACT

- Since 1997, REDF has invested in 183 social enterprises in 26 states, which have in turn employed 37,700 people and earned \$755 million in revenue.
- In 2019, REDF supported 101 social enterprises, which employed 1,500 people and earned \$35 million in revenue, in 25 states.

ROCA

FOUNDED	1988
HEADQUARTERS	CHELSEA, MA
LOCATIONS	MA; MD

Disrupting the cycle of incarceration and poverty by helping young people transform their lives.

Roca’s intervention model is designed to engage a group of high-risk young people who are often forgotten and left out by other services: the ones who don’t show up for programs, education opportunities, or jobs. The young men (ages 17 to 24) Roca serves are deeply involved in the justice system and in violence, and are on track for long-term incarceration and future engagement in violence. The young mothers (ages 16 to 24) Roca serves face a multitude of risk factors, and in addition, refuse or are unable to participate in parenting programs or home visiting programs. Roca’s four-year intervention model proves that these vulnerable and resilient groups of young adults can, in fact, live safe, stable, and hopeful lives. Roca also works closely with law enforcement and criminal justice agencies, with specific emphasis on the police, to engage them in the success of young people.

IMPACT

- Roca served 904 very high-risk young men in 2019 and retained 80% of them throughout the year.
- Of those who completed the two-year, intensive component of the model, 97% had no new incarcerations.
- 77% of those who completed the first two years of the model had jobs.

ROOT CAUSE

FOUNDED	2004
HEADQUARTERS	BOSTON, MA
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Partnering with organizations to design, implement, and measure strategies that enable more people to achieve lifelong success.

Root Cause serves foundations, nonprofit organizations, companies, school districts, and public agencies through projects centering on collective action, measurement and improvement, and strategy and implementation. Its practical, action-oriented approach ensures partners deliver meaningful and measurable life outcomes in areas such as health and well-being, education and youth development, and economic security.

IMPACT

- Since 2004, the Root Cause team has pioneered evidence-driven approaches to strategy, measurement, learning and improvement, and collective action to ensure more people achieve lifelong success. More than 200 partners have been helped to improve people’s health and well-being, increase education and youth development outcomes, and strengthen the economic security of people and families nationwide.
- Root Cause has incubated and spun off two independent nonprofits, Interise and the Social Innovation Forum, as well as one consulting firm, Impact Catalysts.

SACRED GENERATIONS

FOUNDED	2018
HEADQUARTERS	SACRAMENTO, CA
LOCATION	CA

Restoring Native land and people by organizing system-impacted tribal communities to end educational inequity, mass incarceration, and climate injustice through data sovereignty, civic leadership, and policy advocacy.

The first institutions of mass incarceration and educational inequity in this nation were reservations and Indian boarding schools. Educational inequity, mass incarceration, and climate injustice are interconnected issues and Sacred Generations is building the power of sovereign solutions to drive transformative systems change because system-impacted tribal communities have an unquestionably unique proximity to cultural genocide and healing in the homelands. Fueled by an indigenous worldview of healing to honor the sacred, Sacred Generations envisions a world where Native land and people impacted by mass incarceration have full restoration of social, economic, political, and spiritual well-being. Led during a heightened era of indigenous rights violations to protect sovereign families, the three ways it invokes systems change include collecting data to transform Native narratives through data sovereignty; building power to protect indigenous rights through civic leadership; and developing pathways to champion tribal sovereignty through policy advocacy.

IMPACT

- Sacred Vote, its groundbreaking voter education designed to heal voters and combat current or future threats to tribal sovereignty, was named to Fast Company’s list of 2019 World Changing Ideas in the Social Justice, Experimental and General Excellence categories.

SINGLE STOP

FOUNDED	2007
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	CA; FL; LA; MA; MS; NJ; NY; PA

Providing coordinated access to the safety net, and connecting people to the resources they need to attain higher education, obtain good jobs, and achieve financial self-sufficiency.

Single Stop USA is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to helping financially vulnerable families and students gain economic mobility by connecting them to existing benefits and services intended for them. These basic resources, such as food, health insurance, child care, and tax refunds, increase the likelihood that families are healthy and stable, with parents who work and children who attend school. By working in partnership with community colleges, commercial centers, and place-based need organizations, Single Stop is focused on scalable service delivery channels with an eye toward increasing the volume, impact, and sustainability of its work.

IMPACT

- In 2013 alone, Single Stop and its partners served more than 151,000 families and individuals in New York City, connecting them to more than \$488 million in benefits, tax refunds, and supportive services.
- Since 2007, Single Stop and its partners have served nearly 1 million families and individuals, connecting them to over \$2.8 billion in benefits, tax refunds, and supportive services.
- For every dollar invested by Single Stop, there is a \$20 return on investment to society.

THE FIRST 72+

FOUNDED	2014
HEADQUARTERS	NEW ORLEANS, LA
LOCATION	LA

Stopping the cycle of incarceration by fostering independence and self-sustainability through education, stable and secure housing and employment, health care, and community engagement.

The First 72+ is working to stop intergenerational and cyclical incarceration in New Orleans by addressing the root causes. The primary drivers of recidivism in the community are inability to access housing, unstable and free employment, and financial insecurity. It provides free transitional housing to five formerly incarcerated men at a time, for 90-120 days, rent-free. The organization provides holistic support through its five key programs: 1) free transitional housing, 2) case management / peer mentorship, 3) the reentry legal clinic, 4) the Rising Foundations small business incubator, and 5) the Pay it Forward communal loan fund. It encourages, and facilitates, homeownership and small business ownership because its program is designed to not only keep people out of prison, but also help people transition from being liabilities in their community to being asset builders.

IMPACT

- In 2018, in partnership with the Office of Jonathan Tate and with the input of current and former residents, The First 72+ designed an eight-bed home with space for a social enterprise to put residents to work. It is currently working to raise remaining funding for this project.
- Residents in the transitional house live rent-free for three to six months. Residents are provided meals and clothing, and easy access to the office (right next door) where they receive case management, peer mentorship, legal services, and even support with starting small businesses.

THE URBAN ASSOCIATION OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROFESSIONALS

FOUNDED	2016
HEADQUARTERS	AZUSA, CA
LOCATION	CA

Addressing environmental and criminal justice reforms in California, by increasing the supply of wildlife personnel from nontraditional and underrepresented communities, and by providing the training, skills, resources, and experiences needed to secure gainful employment.

The Urban Association of Forestry and Fire Professionals (FFRP) empowers those previously incarcerated who are in fire camps, by providing the skills and resources needed to succeed in a meaningful wildland career post-release. FFRP does this in three ways: It ensures that those in fire camps are motivated to use their skills in a professional capacity post-release; it establishes a temporary worker hub for on-the-job training, skills transfer, case management, and reentry support; and lastly, it assists job seekers in attaining full-time employment. FFRP's activities include visiting California fire camps to provide inspiration and pre-release career planning; offering a "Wildland Hazard Mitigation Specialist" pre-apprenticeship that provides paid on-the-job training and case management to participants; and hosting resume, application, and interview workshops to support career development.

IMPACT

- FFRP has matriculated over 60 people into entry-level fire careers, all in an effort to address urgent environmental and criminal justice needs.

THINK OF US

FOUNDED

2014

HEADQUARTERS

RICHMOND, VA

LOCATION

VA

Leveraging innovative technology to improve the lives of youth in foster care.

Think of Us is a systems change nonprofit with the mission to leverage innovative technology to improve outcomes of foster youth and families by upgrading traditional programs and services into tech-enabled interventions that capture, codify, and enhance existing best practices and the system capacity. Its ultimate goal is for foster youth to successfully transition into a prosperous adulthood. It sees this process as a communal endeavor that connects employment, education, and abilities. Think of Us envisions a future where communities are designed to maximize the development and wellness of maturing youth so that they can transition into healthy, stable, and thriving adults. Its work to-date indicates that it is possible to develop a collective impact, not only providing the tools, but also streamlining the systems that help young people utilize the resources at their disposal.



CONNECTICUT CENTER FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

FOUNDED	2013
HEADQUARTERS	NEW HAVEN, CT
LOCATION	CT

Harnessing innovative brilliance for social good.

The Connecticut Center for Social Innovation (CCSI) is a nonprofit focused on the development and financing of outcomes-based models for social service distribution. CCSI collaborates with diverse actors from the public and private sectors, to formulate novel social service innovations that promise to restore the American dream. CCSI goes beyond merely identifying new ways to distribute social services; it strives to develop funding models that invite private capital investment in the delivery of these self-sustaining, cutting-edge interventions. In its work to help families across the nation, CCSI targets six areas: poverty reduction, early childhood interventions, workforce initiatives, criminal justice reform, health care, and homelessness.

IMPACT

- CCSI staff organizes both local and statewide informational conferences designed to educate governments, legislators, and nonprofit organizations about new and innovative financing methods, including social impact bonds, pay for performance contracting, and the development of financial impact analyses.
- CCSI is currently assisting the City of New Haven in designing a major, data-based criminal justice reentry program that will provide services to justice-involved citizens from the time of sentencing to three years after release.
- CCSI's affiliate, One Million Americans, publishes the national online newsletter Reentry Central, which is circulated weekly to more than 9,000 criminal justice professionals nationwide and provides subscribers with the largest nongovernmental database on reentry in the United States.

CURYJ

FOUNDED	2011
HEADQUARTERS	OAKLAND, CA
LOCATION	CA

Unlocking the leadership of young people to dream beyond bars by investing in their healing, activism, and aspirations.

As a community-led restorative justice organization, CURYJ develops community organizers, social entrepreneurs, inter-generational leadership, and allied multi-sector partnerships. CURYJ's advocacy, culturally based human development, and evidence-supported strategies promote capacity-building, interdisciplinary education, and intergenerational organizing. The organization advances community mobilization and engagement through Homies 4 Justice (H4J) and Dream Beyond Bars (DBB), which prepare systems-impacted young people, ages 14-24, to become community leaders and agents of change. CURYJ also holds Community Healing Circles for youth, family, and community stakeholders, and facilitates sustained advocacy to create community accountability structures that realign resources, systems, and infrastructure around "alternatives to incarceration."

IMPACT

- CURYJ co-wrote Proposition 57, which ended direct file for youth in California and increased opportunities for parole for adults in prisons.
- It was part of the statewide coalition that won the public's right to access police records in 2018 as it relates to deadly and serious use of force, sexual assault, proven dishonesty, false reporting, and planting and destroying evidence.
- CURYJ co-sponsored California's recently passed police accountability bill, SB 392, which changed the standard for police use of force from reasonable to necessary.

FUSE CORPS

FOUNDED	2012
HEADQUARTERS	SAN FRANCISCO, CA AND BOSTON, MA
LOCATIONS	CA; CO; DC; IN; KS; LA; MN; MO; OH; PA; VA; WA

Enabling local government to more effectively address the most pressing challenges facing urban communities.

FUSE is a national nonprofit that partners with local government to help urban communities thrive. It works with cities and counties on a range of issues, including economic and workforce development, health care, public safety, climate change, and education. Its approach centers around an executive fellowship program. FUSE works closely with government partners to design yearlong strategic projects, recruit experienced leaders to take on those challenges, and provide the ongoing support to help fellows achieve their full potential for community impact. By helping to craft new policy, roll out new public services, and improve existing programs, it allows governments to work better for the people they serve.

IMPACT

- FUSE builds capacity within government agencies, fosters a culture of innovation and cross-sector collaboration, and helps to develop community-centered policies that respond to community needs.
- Since 2012, FUSE has placed more than 140 fellows in over 25 local government agencies throughout the country. More than 50% of alumni have continued to work in roles in civic leadership after their fellowships, and 90% of its partner government agencies have returned each year with requests to host additional fellows.

MILLENNIAL ACTION PROJECT

FOUNDED	2013
HEADQUARTERS	WASHINGTON, DC
LOCATIONS	AL; AK; AR; AZ; CA; CO; DC; FL; GA; HI; IL; IN; KS; LA; MA; ME; MI; MS; NC; NE; OH; OR; PA; TX; VT; VA; WA; WI

Developing the next generation of leaders to transcend the partisan divide in favor of future-focused solutions and necessary democracy reforms.

Millennial Action Project (MAP) is the largest nonpartisan organization activating young lawmakers to transcend political divisions and strengthen American democracy. MAP's programs help over 800 leaders in elected office convene across party lines, develop and share innovative policy ideas, engage the public in cross-partisan political dialogue, and amplify impact stories to statewide and national audiences.

IMPACT

- Congressional Future Caucus helped to lift ban on federal funding for CDC research on gun violence.
- The Better Access to Technical Training, Learning, and Entrepreneurship (BATTLE) for Servicemembers Act, a priority for the Caucus, was passed into law with 2018 NDAA.
- Independent evaluation finds that 78% of members of the Future Caucus became more bipartisan after joining the Caucus.

NEW POLITICS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

FOUNDED	2013
HEADQUARTERS	WASHINGTON, DC
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Revitalizing American democracy by recruiting, developing, and electing servant leaders who put community and country over self.

New Politics revitalizes American democracy by recruiting and developing servant leaders who put community and country over self to serve in the political arena. New Politics Leadership Academy focuses on leaders who have significant service experience (military, AmeriCorps, Peace Corps) and provides programming, leadership development, and guidance on political pathways. At a time when the number of service veterans in Congress is at an all-time low, New Politics is working to help servant leaders overcome the traditional barriers to entering the political arena. New Politics recruits, develops, incubates, elects, and advises candidates and their campaigns. It supports candidates throughout the entirety of their journey.

IMPACT

- In the past five years, New Politics has helped 63 candidates run for office across eight levels of government, winning 36 primary and 28 general elections on both sides of the aisle.
- New Politics raised \$7.2 million for servant leader candidates in the 2018 cycle.
- New Politics Leadership Academy has run 103 programs in 31 cities in the past two years.

NONPROFIT FINANCE FUND

FOUNDED	1980
HEADQUARTERS	NEW YORK, NY
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Unlocking the potential of mission-driven organizations through tailored investments, strategic advice, and accessible insights.

Nonprofit Finance Fund (NFF) brings nearly 40 years of national and hyperlocal experience to help mission-driven organizations adapt, thrive, and drive positive change. A community development financial institution (CDFI), it provides financing and consulting to help nonprofits and their funders better connect money to mission results. NFF also advocates for funding covering the full costs of delivering programs, services, and measuring impact. It is proud pioneers in the efforts to shift the U.S. social sector toward a system that ties funding to demonstrated results. NFF manages over \$347 million. Since 1980, it has provided \$875 million in financing and access to additional capital in support of over \$2.9 billion in projects for thousands of organizations nationwide. NFF also serves as a partner and advisor in the impact sector, bringing the latest thinking plus decades of experience financing, advising, and consulting to its work with nonprofits, foundations, investors, and governments.

IMPACT

- NFF has provided \$118.5 million in loans and new market tax credits to 29 organizations in 2018.
- In 2018, NFF consultants served 4,878 nonprofit leaders from 204 organizations.
- In 2018, NFF gathered, analyzed, and released data from almost 3,400 nonprofits through its State of the Nonprofit Sector Survey.

PUSHBLACK

FOUNDED	2015
HEADQUARTERS	WASHINGTON, DC
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Building deep, daily relationships with Black-Americans through their phones in order to transform Black civic engagement.

PushBlack attracts Black voters through its innovative daily Black history and news service, which is based on Facebook Messenger. With this daily relationship, PushBlack encourages subscribers to take advocacy actions, register to vote, and turn out on election day. Over the past year, PushBlack has experienced explosive growth, attracting over 4 million messaging subscribers.

IMPACT

- In 2018, 523,421 PushBlack subscribers shared 19.4 million GOTV messages with their friends.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP @ THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

FOUNDED	2012
HEADQUARTERS	CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA
LOCATION	VA

Cultivating the next generation of social innovation leaders.

In 2012, Social Entrepreneurship at the University of Virginia (SE@UVA) was founded to respond to student interest in sustainable approaches to tackle the world's toughest challenges. Spearheaded by the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, SE@UVA prepares future social entrepreneurs to launch or work within organizations arrayed along the continuum of innovative nonprofits to world-changing for-profits, and everything in between, including public-private partnerships and innovative financing. Over the past seven years, SE@UVA has launched courses and workshops, sponsored grants and internships, built a world-class advisory board, and connected students with thought leaders in the field. In 2015, it launched an interdisciplinary minor in social entrepreneurship.

IMPACT

- Over 529 students declared the minor in social entrepreneurship since 2014, and over 400 students are enrolled in classes annually.
- 87.5% of students feel more confident in their leadership abilities.
- 88.2% of students report increased empathy and understanding of cultures different than their own.
- 94% of students know more about how to sustainably address the world's problems.
- 94% of students have used knowledge gained in the classroom in a real-world situation.
- 35.1% of students plan to start their own social enterprises.

SOCIAL FINANCE U.S.

FOUNDED	2011
HEADQUARTERS	BOSTON, MA
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Mobilizing capital to drive social progress.

Social Finance is dedicated to mobilizing capital to drive social progress. Social Finance believes everyone should have the opportunity to thrive and opportunities can be catalyzed through Pay for Success. To date, Social Finance has mobilized nearly \$100 million of capital to address a wide range of social issues including criminal justice, education, health, and workforce development. The Pay for Success field that Social Finance helped build has mobilized nearly half a billion dollars globally to drive social progress. In the U.S., Social Finance is a leading intermediary and advisor, working across the lifecycle of Pay for Success projects from early analysis and design, to structuring and implementation, to active performance management. Social Finance has wide-ranging experience across diverse issue areas, geographies, and target populations, and has worked with dozens of government entities and service providers.

IMPACT

- Social Finance has conducted over 50 Pay for Success feasibility studies; it has executed 13 Pay for Success projects across social impact bonds, career impact bonds, and outcomes rate cards, that touch 35,000 individuals.
- Social Finance is actively leading the development of over 10 new pipeline Pay for Success projects; managing four federal-level grants, each dedicated to developing multiple Pay for Success projects around the country; and providing active performance management services for six launched Pay for Success projects.

THE PEOPLE

FOUNDED	2019
HEADQUARTERS	LANSING, MI
LOCATIONS	NATIONAL

Bringing Americans together to engage in civil discourse, and establish and carry out nonpartisan governmental reforms.

The People is creating a movement across the country led by the people of America to restore power to citizens and communities in the governmental process. Its model of democratic engagement shifts influential power away from special interests and lobbyists and restores power to the people through building grassroots movements, communities, and action. The People works with concerned citizens to identify common concerns and frustration, root causes keeping the problems in place, and opportunities for solutions. The People builds agency and understanding between the people of America to then addresses their shared concerns and frustrations.

IMPACT

- The People is building on CEO Katie Fahey's success of Voters Not Politicians, which mobilized 14,000 in Michigan to end partisan gerrymandering.
- The People launched by bringing two Americans from every state (also matching the demographics of the country) to Washington D.C. to identify common American values, concerns, and visions for the future.
- The People has developed a nine-part training series and workbook/cohort model that helps people go from feeling frustrated to taking action in their community.

THIRD SECTOR CAPITAL PARTNERS

FOUNDED	2011
HEADQUARTERS	BOSTON, MA AND SAN FRANCISCO, CA
LOCATIONS	CA; CT; CO; DC; DE; FL; IA; IL; IN; LA; MA; MD; MN; NC; NY; NV; OH; OK; OR; TX; UT; VA; WA

Accelerating America's transition to a performance-driven social sector.

Third Sector uses funding, data, and incentives as levers to impact how governments, service providers, and community stakeholders work together. This process leads to quantifiable improvements in people's lives by creating new incentives to inspire sustainable operational changes within an organization. It works alongside communities to realize a thriving future of educational opportunity, economic mobility, housing stability, and physical and mental health. It seeks out and elevates diverse local perspectives and fosters an inclusive environment where these voices are centered in the decision-making process. When Third Sector's work is complete, organizations entrusted to use public funds will have the systems, tools, and data to do more and do better for those they serve.

IMPACT

- Third Sector has worked with 40+ communities to deploy more than \$455 million of government resources toward outcomes, including helping to launch nine Pay for Success projects across the country.
- Third Sector led the project construction and financing for Massachusetts' \$28 million Juvenile Justice Pay for Success initiative, the largest to date in the nation.
- Third Sector led Cuyahoga County, Ohio, in the feasibility and project construction for the first county.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

UNITED TO MOVE AMERICA FORWARD

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

UNITED TO MOVE AMERICA FORWARD is a policy playbook designed to start a dialogue that will shape the next era of innovative, evidence-based policymaking. It was created through a series of individual conversations and roundtable discussions with well over 100 social innovators, systems entrepreneurs, and thought leaders who are part of the America Forward Coalition and its larger network. This book would not have been possible without their collective wisdom, creativity, and determination.

Social entrepreneurs and systems-change leaders have much to teach us about what it takes to develop sustainable, scalable, evidence-based, effective organizations that deliver results; what it means to tackle systemic barriers that hold problems in place; and how bold vision and relentless tenacity coupled with deep listening and authentic collaboration can create meaningful change that increases opportunity, advances equity, and improves people's lives. We are deeply grateful for, and inspired by, our America Forward Coalition members and all they do in communities across the country every day to surmount our most daunting challenges. They embody the promise of a better America.

Many people played a part in the creation of this briefing book, and we are grateful for their input as idea-generators, contributors, researchers, readers, editors, and advisors. **UNITED TO MOVE AMERICA FORWARD** would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of the America Forward team at New Profit including: Jessica Crawford, external affairs director; Nicole Hall, executive assistant; Nithya Joseph, advocacy director; Roger Low, policy director; and Karen Quarles, government affairs director. Special recognition goes to Jessica Crawford for project-managing this briefing book process from development to delivery. We also appreciate the always-wise counsel of our America Forward policy advisors: Lee Foley of Capitol Hill Partners, and Danica Petroschius and Aileen Ma of the Penn Hill Group; the creative partnership of David Payne and Chelsea Hachey of CODAVATE in the design of this book; and the thorough eye of Kelli Lakis of KML Consulting in copy editing this text. And we are forever grateful for the guidance and support of our America Forward Advisory Board: David Belluck (chair), Ed Cohen, Deb Jospin, Shirley Sagawa, and Ron Schrager.

Profound thanks go to Shirley Sagawa. Shirley has worn many hats throughout America Forward's journey—from initial visionary, to senior policy advisor, to Advisory Board member. Over the years working together, we've learned a simple truth: Ideas are better, organizations are stronger, and writing is more compelling if Shirley is at the table holding the pen. On this project, Shirley served as primary author, taking on the daunting task of synthesizing multiple perspectives and complex policy ideas into a cohesive and powerful text with her characteristic brilliance, focus, and positivity. We are grateful for her talent, time, and friendship.

The belief that there are real, meaningful, and powerful ways to make our world a better place, and that by galvanizing resources and uniting people across sectors we can transform this belief into reality, is the cornerstone of the daily work of America Forward and New Profit. This belief also forms the foundation of the lifework of New Profit's founder, Vanessa Kirsch, a remarkable leader whose vision transformed the venture philanthropy and social innovation sectors and created America Forward.

*While we have worked hard to stay faithful to our many Coalition members' contributions, we ask readers to accept that any errors or omissions contained in **UNITED TO MOVE AMERICA FORWARD** are solely the responsibility of the America Forward team and not that of our thought partners.*

With gratitude.



DEBORAH SMOLOVER, CHIEF EDITOR
Managing Partner, New Profit
Executive Director, America Forward

AMERICA FORWARD AT NEW PROFIT

ABOUT

America Forward is the D.C.-based nonpartisan policy initiative of **New Profit**, a pioneering national venture philanthropy organization that invests in a portfolio of breakthrough social entrepreneurs and systems-change initiatives, catalyzes and builds their impact, and transforms how government and philanthropy pursue social change to ensure that all people can thrive.

America Forward unites social innovators with policymakers to advance a public policy agenda that fosters innovation, rewards results, advances equity, catalyzes cross-sector partnerships, and transforms local impact into national change.

We lead the **America Forward Coalition**, a network of over 100 social innovation organizations that champion innovative, effective, and efficient solutions to our country's most pressing social problems. Our Coalition members are achieving measurable outcomes in more than 15,000 communities nationwide; touching the lives of nearly 9 million Americans each year; and driving progress in early childhood development and learning, K-12 education, postsecondary education, workforce development, Pay for Success and evidence-based policy, poverty alleviation, social innovation, national service, criminal justice reform, and public health.

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