

# IMAGINE WHAT'S POSSIBLE

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Transformative Policy Ideas from  
100+ Social Innovators

# AS THE 2024 ELECTION APPROACHES,

America Forward, the nonpartisan policy initiative of venture philanthropy firm New Profit, is working alongside the 100+ members of the America Forward Coalition to focus national attention on a set of Federal policy ideas to build more innovative and effective education and workforce systems in America. Together, social innovators, advocates, and policymakers can redefine what's possible and find solutions that expand opportunity for students, workers, and families; strengthen our communities; and safeguard our democracy for generations to come. **Here's how.**



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# IMAGINE **WHAT'S POSSIBLE**

America's greatest strength has always been our people.

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Investments in the systems that educate, train, and support individuals and families in America have, at times, yielded extraordinary returns: caring educators and communities that nurture our children and families, a powerful economy that generates jobs and fuels growth, talented innovators who lead us into the future.

But the benefits of those systems aren't equitably distributed. Despite our abundant resources, we've fallen short of creating a country where all people can achieve their full potential. The systems we've built often provide an extra boost to some, but leave others behind, overlooked, or shut out altogether. And the policymakers charged with fixing this fundamental unfairness often struggle, amid an environment of hyper-partisanship, to craft policies that can move all of America forward.

Maintaining the status quo puts us all, and our great democracy, at risk. Unprecedented challenges surround us, at home and around the world. To meet these challenges, we must work together to create an America where the place you start doesn't determine where you finish. A country where, if things go off track, second chances are real. A country where all people can fulfill their unique dreams and work together to build a better future for us all.

A national election presents a pivotal opportunity for candidates and officeholders to embrace policies that can better serve everyone. Research has shown that the vast majority of people in America want a government focused on collective solutions, rather than one preoccupied with partisanship. And following the election, policymakers will have a unique chance to deliver on those solutions by shaping national systems that reflect the innovation and impact that is America at its best.



## Imagine what's possible.

If every young person, no matter their background, gets what they need to succeed, in and out of the classroom. If every adult, no matter their experience, can secure higher education, training, or work experience that enables them to support themselves and their families. If every person can choose their own path to the future they imagine for themselves and can go as far as their efforts and talents take them. If, for every challenge our country faces, we are able to work together to find and fund solutions worth scaling.

## What's possible is within our reach.

Time and time again, committed leaders across the country have found ways to solve the most persistent problems facing their communities. They have tested and refined their strategies and delivered powerful results, enabling the people they serve to succeed in school, work, and life.

For over 25 years, New Profit, a pioneering philanthropy organization created for and by social entrepreneurs, has supported more than 250 of these high-impact, breakthrough innovators – recognizing both the critical role they play in strengthening our communities and addressing the challenges they face accessing philanthropic capital. These bold, visionary, committed leaders have leveraged their experience with the systems that need changing and are achieving robust, measurable results in communities that have faced unfairness – sometimes over several generations.

New Profit's nonpartisan policy initiative, America Forward, has harnessed the power of over 100 of these innovators – representing all 50 states and operating in 15,000 communities nationwide – bringing them together in coalition to lift up what they've learned and advocate for public policies that foster fairness, inspire new ideas, and reward results. These efforts have unlocked nearly \$2 billion in federal funding to support scalable, evidence-based reforms, and advanced critical policies to help address some of our country's most pressing challenges.

But even more is needed if we are to forge an America that is both flourishing and fair.

Effective social innovators draw expertise from their lived experiences and connection to their communities to develop and implement solutions, assess their impact, and improve or adapt them as the results warrant. In an ideal world, increased access to capital and critical policy frameworks would allow the best of these solutions to take hold on a larger scale – and then continually improve and expand through subsequent investment and policy support.

Unfortunately, that rarely happens in today's America.

One might assume innovators achieving the best results would attract public investment so they could scale their ideas to create a larger impact and serve even more people. But that's often not the case. Too often, rigid rules and outdated, inefficient policies prevent resources from flowing to programs with proven impact. Nonprofit organizations are typically not eligible to apply for federal education or workforce development funding, despite their increasingly important role in delivering high-impact programs and services. And when the government does fund successful interventions, program models often become frozen in time, leaving funded organizations without the necessary flexibility to iterate and adapt, locking out social entrepreneurs who have piloted better-performing programs.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

## Imagine what's possible.

If public investment flowed to organizations close to the communities they serve that offer experience-driven solutions. If funds flowed to programs that work, based on impact, not inertia. If providers made improvements in their programs, even if it means pushing beyond boundaries. If outcomes mattered more than inputs.

## What's possible is now within our reach.

America Forward has been at the forefront of advocating for policy change in support of social innovation for more than 15 years, championing bipartisan solutions to our country's most pressing issues in education and economic mobility.

In 2009, we helped design and usher into law the Social Innovation Fund (SIF), a groundbreaking federal program that combined public and private resources to grow and refine promising community-based solutions with evidence of results in economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development. Over seven years, SIF drove nearly \$1 billion in public and private support to high-impact organizations and provided an essential foundation for a robust, evidence-based ecosystem.

Informed by SIF and America Forward's advocacy, federal policymakers have since created numerous evidence funds to develop, evaluate, improve, and scale promising strategies from public education to public health. Active funds today include the Education Innovation and Research (EIR) program; the Postsecondary Student Success Grants program; the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program; the Teen Pregnancy Prevention program; the Development Innovation Ventures program; and more.

In 2018, the America Forward Coalition led the charge to create the Social Impact Partnerships to Pay for Results Act (SIPPRA), a new cross-issue fund leveraging an innovative approach to address urgent social and economic challenges. This \$100 million demonstration fund at the Treasury Department supports community-driven partnerships through a financial model that prioritizes measurable improvements in people's lives. Ultimately, SIPPRA has the potential to show how the federal government can help communities improve outcomes by redesigning how funding flows.

Over 15 years, innovative, evidence-based policy reforms have collectively channeled more than \$10 billion of federal funding to promising and proven programs. Imagine the even greater impact they could deliver if we let them point the way to solving problems at scale.

Most recently, America Forward has championed new efforts to transform the foundational laws and infrastructure that address our nation's most pressing social issues. We have advanced proposals to implement whole learner approaches to education; to reform federal workforce funding under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) program; to expand Pell Grants and realize the untapped potential of high-quality short-term training to drive economic mobility; and more.

In this campaign season – and into the Administration and Congress that follow – we must focus on using the valuable lessons of the past 15 years to shape the new policies of the future.

It's time for policymakers at every level of government to invest in innovation and impact to unlock the potential of all our people and move all of America forward.

**Here's how.**



Photo by: Center for Whole-Child Education

# ECONOMIC MOBILITY & SOCIAL INNOVATION

## Ensure Economic Mobility for all Americans

The demand for workers continues to grow across the country, yet millions of people who seek work still face systemic barriers to economic opportunity, especially people in historically overlooked communities. To provide long-term, sustainable solutions, policymakers should invest in the growing array of groundbreaking, holistic programs developed and refined by economic mobility organizations that empower workers to build both technical and non-technical skills in new fields and launch stable, well-compensated careers. These programs include models like sector-based training, which involves close partnerships with employers; a focus on specific, high-demand credentials and jobs; and strong coaching, wraparound supports, and an emphasis on enhancing social capital. They also include employment social enterprises: community-focused businesses that provide jobs, training, and support to people breaking through barriers to employment.

But even though the array of strong solutions has dramatically expanded, our policies have not kept pace. Federal workforce funding provides almost no financial support to the training programs with the strongest evidence of driving long-term economic mobility. Moving forward, policymakers must increase investment in these high-impact models and support the continued development of inclusive, effective strategies. At the same time, policymakers must strengthen outdated, counterproductive performance systems; expand support for data-driven improvement; and break down bureaucratic barriers across the nation's workforce system.

One critical starting point is revamping and reinvesting in our nation's core federal workforce laws. We call on policymakers to:

- **Reauthorize and modernize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**, the nation's primary federal workforce legislation, including by making critical investments in evidence-based strategies through a new Workforce Development Innovation Fund, as proposed in the **Better Jobs Through Evidence and Innovation Act**. Policymakers must also make essential system-wide reforms that shift from a compliance-based regime to an inclusive, outcomes-focused approach; strengthen transparency and data-driven decision-making across the system by investing in data infrastructure; and cut down barriers for high-impact community-based providers to participate in WIOA.
- **Ensure the Farm Bill's workforce investments under the billion-dollar Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) program support evidence-based, inclusive, and innovative practices**; cut down numerous barriers to participation for providers and participants, such as addressing the counterproductive benefits cliff; and strengthen coordination and data-driven activities. In particular, policymakers should incorporate the **RESET for America's Future Act and the SNAP E&T Data and Technical Assistance Act (DATA)** in Farm Bill reauthorization.
- **Build on recent bipartisan progress on data and outcomes in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program** to address persistent inequities and ineffectiveness in a program long overdue for reauthorization.



## Ideas to Action

**Per Scholas** works directly with employers to design rigorous, short-term courses that combine business professional skills development with immersive technical instruction for high-demand jobs in technology. Per Scholas programs, delivered at no cost to learners, have an 85 percent graduation rate, and 80 percent of graduates find full-time employment within one year of graduating. Per Scholas' model transforms lives for alumni like Ryan Chapman in Boston, who held a high school diploma and some hardware repair experience when he decided to pursue a career in cybersecurity, securing his CompTIA CySA+ certification within three months. After graduation from Per Scholas, he landed a role with a local employer as a Networking Technician making \$61K/year with clear pathways for growth. In nearly 30 years, Per Scholas has supported 25,000+ individuals like Ryan in achieving economic mobility and advancing to thriving-wage careers.



***“When I got into Per Scholas I remember feeling like my dreams were actually starting to unfold. I remember feeling blessed. My feelings were reaffirmed on the first day I showed up to smiling faces, new friends, and excitement.”***

**Ryan Chapman**  
Per Scholas Alumnus



Source: Per Scholas



- **Advance a reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act** that expands investment in high-quality, responsive career and technical education programs and continues to build the evidence base by investing in practitioner-led innovation.

## Invest in the Infrastructure of Social Innovation

Every day, social entrepreneurs work to create, test, hone, and expand creative solutions to improve outcomes for individuals, families, and communities. Too often, however, outdated government funding structures and processes slow innovation when they should be accelerating it. These barriers include poorly structured grant priorities that elevate the status quo over creative, new approaches, as well as persistent technological and process barriers to leveraging administrative data for improvement and learning in our social programs.

Over the past decade-plus, creative policymakers and advocates have developed an array of strategies to address these barriers across policy domains – and now is the time to learn from these experiments and translate promising pilots into long-term policy reforms. Policymakers should:

- **Invest in federal evidence funds** that support practitioner-led innovation, learning, and scale-up of high-impact social programs across policy domains from preK-12 education to public health. Since the first evidence fund was created in 2009, federal policymakers have invested more than \$10 billion in programs like the Social Innovation Fund; Education Innovation and Research; and Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting. Recent research has demonstrated that these programs provide outsize impacts in terms of innovation and evidence-based results at scale by providing larger grants to applicants with approaches backed by stronger evidence and earlier-stage funding to highly promising, nascent strategies.

Policymakers should expand investment in evidence funds while continuing to refine the designs of these programs.



Source: YouthBuild

## Ideas to Action

**Propel America's** unique jobs-first higher education model recognizes the urgent need among young people for accelerated, career-connected pathways and structured support through the transition from high school to employment. With locations in five regions and two pathways in high-demand medical fields, Propel's fellowship program includes 1:1 coaching, career navigation, classroom learning, on-the-job training, and follow-up beyond program completion. Propel's durable skills curriculum is co-designed by their employer partners. Their coaches lead sessions that help Fellows develop the confidence, communication, time management, and commitment that's critical for success in their workplaces. Since 2019, Propel America has been able to raise the wages of their Fellows by an average of 40 percent; 82 percent of Fellows have found full-time employment in the year after their fellowship; and, 90 percent report satisfaction in their new roles.



Source: AppleTree

- **Sustain and expand** innovative financing structures to drive dollars to effective strategies, particularly those leveraging existing resources to dramatically improve outcomes among the most under-resourced communities. The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 created the \$100 million **Social Impact Partnerships to Pay for Results Act (SIPPRA)** demonstration program at the Department of the Treasury. SIPPRA represents a transformational shift in how the federal government can invest in locally driven, cost-effective programs under an innovative financing structure that rewards measurable improvements in people's lives. This program should be expanded.
- **Increase accessibility** and expand the infrastructure for federal data linkages to support program improvement, enable coordination, and strengthen transparency. We must build on legislation like the 2018 **Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act** to clarify authority to leverage administrative data for improvement and transparency across policy domains - including access for non-governmental organizations. This includes effectively implementing and fully funding the National Secure Data Service pilot funded by the CHIPS and Sciences Act of 2018.
- **Improve and streamline federal grants and contracting processes.** Far too often, processes advantage the organizations best at completing grant applications, not those advancing the most innovative, effective programs. Building on recent federal customer service initiatives, we propose a new interagency effort to simplify and expand access to procurement and grants processes across agencies moving forward, focusing on outcomes, transparency, and fairness and building on recent progress.
- **Continue and deepen bipartisan efforts to eliminate credential-based barriers** to roles in government and with government contractors, promoting skills-based solutions that emphasize proximate experience and open opportunity.



# EDUCATION

## Increase Early Learning Resources with a Focus on Performance and Results

Science confirms what common sense suggests: children's experiences in their first five years can profoundly shape their chances later in life. Innovators across the country have proven the foundational importance and impact of making quality, culturally appropriate early learning programs available to improve opportunities for children in under-resourced communities.

While the federal government has long invested in Head Start and the Child Care and Development Block Grant, more is needed to support the development of young children. Policymakers should:

- **Focus on performance and streamline implementation** by reducing red tape in Head Start, incentivizing providers to partner with families and organizations in support of common goals, and embracing policies that tie resources to results.
- **Advance initiatives to build a strong early educator workforce**, including creative approaches to early educator preparation and credentialing, such as utilizing Federal Work Study funding and national service opportunities, increasing early educator compensation, and increasing professional development and growth opportunities.
- **Promote innovative early childhood investments in research, data, and systems** to determine the most effective ways to meet the needs of different subgroups.



Source: Transcend Education

### Ideas to Action

**Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors (AP/OD)** supports LatinX (Latino) parents and caregivers to prepare their young children for future success. AP/OD has reached over 200,000 families in the US with their evidence-based parent leadership curriculum. The program was originally developed by and for Latino parents with children ages 0-5 and is now adopted by diverse communities across the country. With the support of partner organizations, AP/OD helps prepare parents/caregivers to overcome challenges and learn to navigate the education system by delivering an effective multi-session curriculum that addresses early childhood development, early literacy, math, health, school readiness, and parent engagement—all known to be significant factors in children's lifelong academic and life success.



## Invest in Whole Learner Education and Mental Health Supports

The impact of the pandemic continues to affect students of all backgrounds and compound the effects of preexisting challenges, like economic hardship, hunger, housing instability, and exposure to violence. This reality, coupled with emerging knowledge about how to help all children thrive, calls for a rethinking of the systems charged with supporting young people's healthy development. This reality also calls for investing in evidence-based strategies that work for kids, including high-dosage tutoring, family engagement, and positive developmental relationships.

Across the country, innovators partnering with schools have achieved dramatic results by embracing the science of learning and development to inform program design and unlock strategies that enable all students to succeed. Research tells us that student success depends on engaging learning experiences that are delivered in safe environments and backed by strong relationships among students, educators, and families. America Forward Coalition members have proposed an innovative new "whole-learner" approach to help schools use evidence-based practices to transform education. At the same time, innovators are developing new responses to the alarming increase in mental health challenges in schools and the significant shortage of behavioral health professionals. We call on policymakers to:

- **Pass the Whole Learner Act.** The Whole Learner Act would scale evidence-based practices that focus on the breadth of skills students need to be successful through a competitive grant program to foster high-quality partnerships and school-wide systems that support whole-learner approaches to education — including mental health support, teacher training, and active family engagement.
- **Support the Youth Mental Health Corps.** America Forward and its partners — the Schultz Family Foundation, Pinterest, and AmeriCorps — have launched the Youth Mental Health Corps to bring together federal, state, and local agencies, philanthropic organizations, corporate-

partners, schools, and nonprofits to pilot a national service program that will provide over 500 young adults with on-ramps into behavioral health careers by engaging as mental health navigators in schools and community organizations in 11 states. Brought to scale with policymakers' support, the Youth Mental Health Corps could be transformative.

### Ideas to Action

**Transcend**, a nonprofit that supports school communities to create and spread extraordinary, equitable learning environments, is a national leader and pioneer in whole learner education. Transcend works with schools in Washington, D.C. and Texas to implement the Whole Child Model, a suite of cohesive practices that put students' socio-emotional wellness and growth at the center of everything a school does. Through practices like Strong Start, the model helps educators create a safe and supportive environment in which students build trusting relationships with peers and adults while developing skills to regulate their emotions, manage stress, and handle conflicts productively. Transcend's Leaps Student Voice Survey has found that students in Whole Child Model schools demonstrate significant growth in key factors related to perseverance, social awareness, and self-efficacy.

**Peer Health Exchange** provides a platform for young advocates, aged 13-18, to voice their concerns and actively make positive change through its Community Youth Advocates (CYA) group. Youth participants meet on a weekly basis to identify obstacles facing their communities, co-create various solutions, and implement these strategies to effect change. Pritika Kharkwal is a member of a CYA initiative working on a camp focused on navigating social media's impact on youth mental health. She said, "We noticed the gap in society when it came to digital media and its impact, pros AND cons, on mental health. The camp will reach various community members including parents, teachers, educators, and of course, youth! Youth are the next generation, and we can only push for positive change in the community if we are actively involved in building the future we envision."

## Focus on Outcomes in Higher Education

Far too many students face a road full of obstacles to and through post-secondary education. The good news is that we know what can make a difference. Innovative organizations have developed inclusive, evidence-based strategies that put the benefits of higher education within reach of any young person. These strategies include new ways to help students identify postsecondary options early in their educational journey, assess complex financial aid options, and leverage wraparound supports to navigate obstacles in their paths. Most critically, innovative organizations have paved the way for students to achieve career success through transformational experiences and advising during and after their time in college.

These effective programs could do even more if federal funds supported evidence-based strategies that directly address students' needs, rather than solely focusing on institutional funding. Federal policymakers should:

- **Increase investment in Postsecondary Student Success Grants**, a new evidence-based, competitive grant program that enables the development, evaluation, and scaling of evidence-based postsecondary student success strategies to help college students complete their credentials and achieve long-term career success, and ensure non-governmental organizations are eligible for the program.
- **Expand federal student aid**, including **expanded Pell Grants** that support high-quality, short-term career-focused programs, making critical training more accessible for millions of people.

- **Increase access to high-quality, responsive post-secondary navigation services** from middle school onward, including support to navigate career pathways and for early participation in postsecondary experiences.
- **Implement strategies that ensure students and their advisors have access to high-quality, actionable data** to make strong choices about postsecondary programs and financing.

### Ideas to Action

**Braven** partners with institutions of higher education to provide resources to low-income or first-generation college students that equip them with skills, networks, experiences, and confidence to secure a strong first job once they graduate. This year, Braven started a partnership with Delaware State University – its second full-scale HBCU partnership – That will serve 2,500 students over 5 years with the 3-credit “Braven Leadership Accelerator” course, where students will complete assignments to grow their leadership in five key professional competencies: operating and managing, problem-solving, working in teams, networking and communicating, and self-driven leading. The Braven Accelerator Course will be a requirement for all sophomores at the university, and students will also receive continued support through six months after graduation to ensure they obtain strong first opportunities.

**College Possible** works in eight sites nationwide to coach students from low-income backgrounds to get admitted into best fit colleges and complete college with the lowest debt possible. College Possible is currently expanding across Wisconsin after demonstrating the tremendous impact of its model on students in Milwaukee. Since its inception, College Possible Milwaukee has empowered 4,480 students – 88 percent of whom are first-generation college students.

# DEMOCRACY & COMMUNITY BUILDING

## Restore Our Democracy

Hyper-partisanship, perceived government ineffectiveness, and negative politics have led to unprecedented public distrust in our institutions. Healing our democracy and rebuilding trust in government is a long game, but it is essential to start by passing policies that benefit all our communities and rebuild social trust. We must reimagine what's possible and paint the possible for our multiracial, multicultural, and intergenerational democracy by shifting mindsets and attitudes, bridging ideological divides, and celebrating civil discourse that reflects the shared values of a shared America. We must cultivate civic capabilities in our communities, schools, and workplaces and nourish democratic systems. And we must make strengthening and participating in democracy a daily practice.

Young people and the next generation of leaders have been handed the daunting task of restoring American democracy. As a country, we must ensure these growing leaders are civically prepared, informed, and engaged. To make this future possible, policymakers should:

- **Pass the Bipartisan Civics Secures Democracy Act.** This Act would provide a historic investment in civics education and support states and school districts in administering high-quality civics education — greatly increasing the number of young people prepared to become knowledgeable, engaged voters and civic participants. Providing teachers with the professional development that they need to facilitate and encourage productive conversations is essential to growing civic-minded students who care for their communities and about the possibilities our democracy holds.

- **Create a new White House Office of Civic Participation.** Restoring our democracy will require public-spirited leadership at every level of government. At the federal level, a new White House Office of Civic Participation should be created within the Executive Office of the President to coordinate this effort. Focusing on fair elections, broad-based civic participation, and national service, this office would lead a national call to action, propose policies and programs, coordinate the work of federal agencies, and engage leaders at every level of government and the nonprofit sector toward these goals.

## Uplift National Service

National service — primarily funded through **AmeriCorps** — provides critical community services, prepares individuals for diverse career paths, and fosters unity among people from various backgrounds by engaging in a common purpose. By leveraging national service, policymakers can bolster civic engagement, nurture future leaders, and address critical challenges — including support for under-resourced schools and communities — while strengthening our democracy and social fabric.

We call on policymakers to:

- **Fully fund AmeriCorps**, including the summer of service and semester of service programs. Expanding national service through increased support for AmeriCorps offers additional benefits, including providing money for higher education or to pay back loans and offering valuable work experience and career pathways for young people and individuals in transition.



By equipping members with practical skills and fostering a spirit of service, AmeriCorps provides a proven pipeline for hard-to-fill positions in teaching, nonprofit work, emergency management, health care, and similar service-focused fields. By recruiting others to serve, AmeriCorps members enhance the pool of volunteers available to support others in their education and employment journeys. And by generating reliable full-time help for innovative nonprofits, schools, workplaces, and nonprofit organizations it lays the foundation for a more resilient and thriving nation.

- **Address barriers to participation in national service.** Key actions include revising legislatively mandated criminal background-

checks for programs such as AmeriCorps and strengthening recruitment and outreach to ensure equitable and adequate access to national service among underrepresented individuals.

- **Strengthen ties between national service, education, and economic mobility policies,** such as prioritizing AmeriCorps funding for programs that offer participants clear paths to attainment of a valuable credential, including climate resilience and conservation careers; increasing service opportunities in the Federal Work Study program; building strong pathways to recruit AmeriCorps members into teaching and the behavioral health field; and strengthening transparency into corps member workforce outcomes.

## Ideas to Action

**Generation Citizen (GC)** partners with schools to implement a project-based civics curriculum that engages over 33,000 students a year in their own communities. Their results show that comprehensive civic education makes young people more academically engaged, more likely to vote and stay informed about current events, and more accustomed to working together to solve problems. Of the students who took an Action Civics class in the 2021-2022 school year, 92 percent showed confidence in Civic Skills while 93 percent were confident in creating a plan to address a problem.



Source: Generation Citizen

# CONCLUSION

The 2024 election provides us with an opportunity to reimagine the possible.

In the face of unprecedented challenges, we must find common ground, work together, and transform what is working in communities all across the country into national change.

Many of the challenges we face have evidence-based, homegrown solutions. Social innovators have been providing students and teachers with the tools they need to thrive, moving the needle on increased access to high-quality education, and helping our workforce increase skills to make economic mobility a reality.

The upcoming election gives us the chance to put our communities at the center, uplift responsive policy solutions, and invest in what works.

Together, we have the opportunity to eliminate hyper-partisanship and legislative deadlock, restore faith in our institutions, and make real progress for people across the country by making room at the policy table for the voices of proximate leaders who know what their communities need and who are ready to serve.

## **Imagine the possible:**

Where we prioritize people, not political advantage.  
Where we turn towards each other, not turn our backs. Where we invest in the solutions that work, not the status quo.

**Together, we can realize the possible – and move all of America forward.**



Source: AppleTree

# THE AMERICA FORWARD COALITION



Source: Peer Forward

The **America Forward Coalition** is 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 9.5 million Americans each year; and driving progress in education, economic mobility, social innovation, national service, and democracy. To date, America Forward has leveraged \$1.9 billion for social innovation.

## **10,000 Degrees** **Education**

10,000 Degrees provides scholarships and support to low-income students in California who want to pursue higher education.

## **Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors** **Education**

Abriendo Puertas / Opening Doors engages parents of students nationwide to participate in local programs to strengthen their leadership, knowledge, and support systems.

## **Acelero** **Education**

Acelero Learning designs and delivers inclusive, anti-bias, and rigorous approaches to eliminate the gaps between young children's inherent potential and their achievement in school and life.

## **Aliento** **Education**

Aliento, a youth-led organization, serves undocumented, DACA, and mixed immigration status families, transforming trauma into hope and action by investing in the well-being, emotional healing, and leadership development of those impacted by the inequities of lacking an immigration status.

## **Alternative Staffing Alliance** **Economic Mobility**

Alternative Staffing Alliance delivers competitive staffing services that connect employers with qualified, motivated talent while supporting thousands of marginalized job seekers to enter the labor market and achieve their employment goals.



## **American Student Assistance**

### **Education**

American Student Assistance helps middle and high school students make informed choices to achieve their education and career goals through research, platforms, impact investing, and advocacy.

## **America's Promise Alliance**

### **Education**

America's Promise Alliance is a community of 100 leading nonprofits working in K-12 education, postsecondary to workforce pathways, and democracy and civic engagement.

## **AppleTree**

### **Education**

AppleTree is a non-profit organization consisting of a research institute and a network of exemplary charter preschools in Washington, D.C., working at the intersection of research, policy, and practice.

## **Aurora Institute**

### **Education**

The Aurora Institute leads the growth of the nascent field of K-12 next-generation, competency-based education and personalized learning across the United States.

## **AVANCE**

### **Education**

AVANCE provides a strengths-based, culturally responsive, multi-generational approach to economic mobility for low-income Latinx families.

## **Bard Early Colleges**

### **Education**

Bard Early Colleges is a network of tuition-free satellite campuses of Bard College that offers courses that replace the last two years of traditional high school with a tuition-free, rigorous, and supportive immersion in college study.

## **BARR Center**

### **Education**

BARR (Building Assets, Reducing Risks) is a proven model that enhances the education system through its two pillars—relationships and data—empowering students, teachers, and families with data to foster a unified, personalized culture of support and success for every student, inside and outside the classroom, while strengthening schools and communities.

## **BellXcel**

### **Education**

BellXcel, a national leader in out-of-school-time education, provides solutions that enable school districts and other youth-serving organizations to customize evidence-based summer and afterschool learning programs.

## **Beyond 12**

### **Education**

Beyond 12's mission is to increase the number of low-income, first-generation, and historically underrepresented students who graduate from college. In partnership with high schools and colleges, their technology platform and our coaches together provide students with the academic, social, and emotional support they need to succeed in higher education and in life. They address the college completion challenge at its root by acting as a data and service bridge between K-12 and higher education.

## **Big Thought**

### **Education**

Big Thought is an impact nonprofit that closes the opportunity gap by equipping all youth in marginalized communities with the skills and tools they need to imagine and create their best lives and a better world.

## Bottom Line

### Education

Bottom Line supports low-income and first-generation-to-college students in pursuing a college degree.

## Braven

### Education

Braven supports untapped students from college to career by partnering with higher education and employers to offer a two-part experience that begins with a credit-bearing college course followed by a post-course experience that lasts through graduation, ensuring that students are able to graduate college and land a strong first job that sets them on a path to economic freedom.

## Colorado Equitable Economic Mobility Initiative (CEEMI)

### Economic Mobility

CEEMI provides Colorado with a more equitable economic ecosystem by investing in evidence-based programs through a blend of public, private, and philanthropic funds and connecting Colorado's siloed workforce development system.

## Center for Whole-Child Education

### Education

The Center for Whole-Child Education provides educators with evidence-based resources and toolkits to promote schools to embed an equitable whole-child approach to America's education system.

## Children's Aid

### Education

Children's Aid offers comprehensive support to children, youth, and their families in targeted high-needs New York City neighborhoods while also advocating for policies that improve the lives of children within New York's most under-resourced communities.



Source: PowerMyLearning

## Children's Literacy Initiative

### Education

Children's Literacy Initiative aims to dismantle structural racism by providing Black and Latinx children with anti-racist literacy instruction from birth to grade eight. CLI focuses on leader and teacher coaching, cultural competency, and equitable outcomes to ensure all students, particularly Black and Latinx students, receive the education they deserve. CLI believes literacy is key to creating lasting social change and a just society.

## Citizen Schools

### Education

Citizen Schools empowers schools, districts, and communities to work together to create and sustain authentic experience-based learning opportunities.

## City Year

### Education

City Year is a national organization that partners with public schools to support student success and close achievement gaps.

## CoGenerate

### Economic Mobility

CoGenerate brings older and younger people together to solve problems, bridge divides, and co-create the future.

## **College Advising Corps**

### **Education**

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.

## **College Possible**

### **Education**

College possible works to make college admission and success possible for low-income students in the United States through an intensive curriculum of coaching and support.

## **Corporation for Supportive Housing**

### **Social Innovation**

The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) offers training, education, capital funds, loan products, and consultation to support housing-based services for the most vulnerable people, while also engaging in policy reform to address health care, social determinants of health, criminal justice, and opioid issues.

## **Diverse Charter Schools Coalition**

### **Education**

Diverse Charter Schools Coalition (DCSC) catalyzes and supports the creation and expansion of high-quality diverse public charter schools through strategic research, advocacy, membership activities, and outreach.

## **Educators for Excellence (E4E)**

### **Education**

E4E is a teacher-led organization that ensures educators have a leading voice in the policies that impact their students and profession. E4E's two long-term goals are: better outcomes for all students — especially those impacted by opportunity gaps — and the elevation of the quality and prestige of the teaching profession.

## **Education Leaders of Color (EdLoC)**

### **Education**

EdLoC works to catalyze the academic and economic advancement of young people of color by harnessing the power of our multi-racial, multi-sector, and values-aligned membership network.

## **Enterprise Community Partners**

### **Social Innovation**

Enterprise Community Partners focuses on increasing the supply of affordable homes, advancing racial equity in the housing system, supporting residents, and strengthening communities to be resilient to the unpredictable and make upward mobility possible.

## **Envision Education**

### **Education**

Envision transforms the lives of students and prepares them for success in college, career, and life through the use of its acclaimed and nationally replicated model to authentically measure academic content, leadership skills, and deeper learning competencies.

## **Equal Opportunity Schools**

### **Education**

Equal Opportunity Schools' mission is to ensure that students of color and low-income students have equitable access to America's most academically intense high school programs and succeed at the highest levels.

## **Eskolta School Research and Design**

### **Education**

Eskolta is a non-profit organization of educators and design strategists committed to improving educational and social-emotional outcomes for historically underserved students.



### **Exalt** **Economic Mobility**

Exalt provides youth, ages 15-19, with previous involvement with the justice system, a 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 to equip youth with the tools and experience to avoid further criminal justice system involvement.

### **Eye to Eye** **Education**

Eye to Eye is a national organization whose mission is to improve the educational experience and outcomes of neurodiverse students while growing the movement for a more equitable and inclusive society for all.

### **Freedom Project** **Economic Mobility**

Freedom Project advocates racial equity and anti-oppression while holding incarceration-related restorative workshops and initiatives throughout the Washington area.

### **FUSE Corps** **Social Innovation**

FUSE Corps embeds private sector executives in city and county agencies to lead projects that improve public services and equity.

### **FutureFit AI** **Economic Mobility**

FutureFit AI is a leading workforce development technology company, building AI-powered solutions that transform how workforce systems connect job seekers, skills, and opportunities at scale.

### **Generation Citizen** **Democracy**

Generation Citizen is transforming how civics is taught by partnering with school districts to deliver real-world civic education.

### **Future Caucus** **Democracy**

Future Caucus works directly with our nation's leading young policymakers on both a national and state level to bridge the partisan divide and lead a new era of collaborative governance.

### **Genesys Works** **Economic Mobility**

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

### **GenUnity** **Democracy**

GenUnity's mission is to bring residents together across difference to grow as everyday civic leaders, build community, and drive change on the local issues they are passionate about and proximate to.

### **GreenLight Fund** **Social Innovation**

GreenLight Fund is a national nonprofit network matching local communities' unmet needs with evidence-based social innovations.



Source: PAVE

### **i.c.stars**

#### **Economic Mobility**

i.c.stars identifies, trains, and jump-starts technology careers for low-income adults with a technology-based curriculum that combines project-based training with a broader perspective on community impact and a “bigger than you” sense of accountability.

### **ImBlaze by Big Picture Learning**

#### **Education**

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

### **Institute for Child Success**

#### **Social Innovation**

Institute of Child Success (ICS) supports policymakers, service providers, government agencies, funders, and business leaders focused on early childhood development, healthcare, and education — all to coordinate, enhance, and improve those efforts for the maximum effect in the lives of young children (prenatal to age eight).

### **Jumpstart for Young Children**

#### **Education**

Jumpstart provides language, literacy, and social-emotional programming for preschool children from underserved communities and promotes quality early learning for all.

### **KIPP**

#### **Education**

KIPP schools are tuition-free, public charter schools that offer a common approach and a personalized learning experience for students in grades PreK-12.

### **Latinos for Education**

#### **Education**

Latinos for Education (L4E) develops, places, and connects essential Latino leadership in the education sector while mobilizing Latino voices to promote practices and policies that remove barriers to equitable educational opportunity.

### **Leading Educators**

#### **Education**

Leading Educators partners with school systems and states to transform teaching at scale by surrounding educators with practical and research-based math, literacy, and science supports and the instructional infrastructure to practice what they teach, together.

### **LEAP Innovations**

#### **Education**

LEAP Innovations catalyzes innovation and education to transform how students learn.

### **LIFT**

#### **Economic Mobility**

LIFT seeks to break the cycle of poverty by investing in parents, working to build families' well-being, financial strength, and social connections to lift two generations at once.

### **Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)**

#### **Economic Mobility**

LISC, a community development financial institution, provides financing, training, and technical assistance in support of local initiatives that forge resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity across America — great places to live, work, visit, do business, and raise families. These initiatives encompass affordable housing, economic development, family income and wealth building, healthcare, childcare, education, and community safety and justice.

### **The Community Outcomes Fund | Maycomb Capital**

#### **Social Innovation**

The Community Outcomes Fund provides flexible, impact-driven capital to expand high-quality human services in low-income communities.

## **Mortar** **Economic Mobility**

MORTAR aims to create diverse communities by enabling historically marginalized entrepreneurs to access the resources needed to start and run successful businesses.

## **National Math and Science Initiative** **Education**

The National Math and Science Initiative provides professional development programs for STEM educators and students.

## **New Politics Academy** **Democracy**

New Politics Academy is building a movement to revitalize American democracy by recruiting, supporting, and empowering servant leaders who put community and country over self.

## **New Teacher Center** **Education**

New Teacher Center partners with school districts to co-create thriving, inclusive cultures where all students succeed in heart and mind.

## **Nurse-Family Partnership** **Social Innovation**

Nurse-Family Partnership is an evidence-based, nurse home visiting program that improves the health, well-being, and self-sufficiency of low-income, first-time parents and their children.

## **One Million Degrees** **Education**

One Million Degrees accelerates community college students on career pathways to upward economic mobility through coaching and professional development.



Source: Service Year Alliance

## **Opportunity@Work** **Economic Mobility**

Opportunity@Work works to rewire the U.S. labor market so that all individuals Skilled Through Alternative Routes (STARs) can work, learn, and earn to their full potential.

## **Our Voice/Nuestra Voz** **Education**

Our Voice/Nuestra Voz is an issues organizing effort in New Orleans working in education, immigration, and criminal justice to build the power of Black and Brown communities to create a more equitable city.

## **P.S. 305** **Education**

P.S. 305 is a diverse network of thousands of families organized into a federation across Miami-Dade County working to win on education issue campaigns and combat educational injustice.

## **PAVE** **Education**

PAVE connects, informs, and empowers parent leaders to give families in DC a voice and choice in the vision for education in our city.

## **Peace First**

### **Social Innovation**

Peace First is co-led by young people and supports young people ages 13-30 to create a more compassionate, just, and peaceful world by providing digital tools, community support, start-up funding, and stories celebrating their social change journeys and impact.

## **PeerForward**

### **Education**

PeerForward creates a corps of students, Peer Leaders, who lead their classmates through the necessary steps to get to and through higher education.

## **Peer Health Exchange**

### **Education**

Peer Health Exchange increases young people's knowledge in the issue areas of identity, sexual and mental health, substance use and consent, both in person and online, through health education curriculum, peer support, and help seeking behavior resources that drive meaningful change in service of health equity, especially in under-resourced districts.

## **Per Scholas**

### **Economic Mobility**

Per Scholas drives equitable access for Americans to launch their careers in technology, through rigorous tuition-free training and certifications, professional development, and employer connections.

## **Pivot Fund**

### **Democracy**

The Pivot Fund serves Black, Brown, and immigrant communities in the U.S. by investing in trusted, culturally competent news organizations that deliver news to those from underrepresented communities. The Pivot Fund disrupts and reimagines the journalism industry, ensuring equity for the BIPOCTM (Black Indigenous Other People of Color and Traditionally Marginalized) community news organizations and the communities they serve.

## **Power of Place Learning Communities**

### **Education**

Power of Place Learning Communities builds regional networks to provide educators in neighboring communities with a place to come together and connect through energizing learning experiences that foster reflection, conversation, and innovation.

## **Project Evident**

### **Social Innovation**

Project Evident collaborates with nonprofits, policymakers, and education agencies to enhance their impact through Strategic Evidence Planning with initiatives such as First Place for Youth, PowerMyLearning, and ParentCorps.

## **Project Quest**

### **Economic Mobility**

Project QUEST works to strengthen the economy and transform lives by preparing individuals for in-demand, living-wage careers.

## **Propel America**

### **Economic Mobility**

Propel provides accelerated and supported pathways to a rewarding career and upward mobility for young people, while helping employers fill critical talent shortages in healthcare.

## **ProUnitas**

### **Education**

ProUnitas helps school districts implement and deliver student supports in a more timely, integrated, and accountable way so that every student stays in school and graduates with a purpose.



## **Public Allies**

### **Economic Mobility**

Public Allies is a national movement committed to advancing social justice and equity by engaging and activating the leadership of all people.

## **Reading Partners**

### **Education**

Reading Partners mobilizes communities to provide students with the proven, individualized reading support they need to read at grade level by 4th grade.

## **REDF**

### **Economic Mobility**

REDF invests in businesses called employment social enterprises that reveal and reinforce the talent of people breaking through barriers to employment.

## **Saga Education**

### **Education**

Saga Education is a national leader in high-impact, in-school tutoring that leverages both the power of human capital and technology to accelerate student outcomes and create more equitable learning for students.

## **Service Year Alliance**

### **National Service**

Service Year Alliance is an organization relentlessly pursuing a bold vision — making a year of service a common expectation and opportunity for all young Americans as a way to tackle important challenges while transforming their own lives.

## **Single Stop**

### **Economic Mobility**

Single Stop seeks to ensure that the billions of dollars of life-changing resources in America reach the impoverished who need it most, giving them access to safety net programs and a boost up the economic ladder.

## **Social Creatures**

### **Social Innovation**

Social Creatures is a nonprofit organization that combines scientific research with a deeply inclusive community approach to craft and scale sustainable solutions that tackle the root causes of social disconnection and promote overall health by cultivating socially connected and inclusive communities.

## **Social Finance**

### **Social Innovation**

Social Finance is a national impact finance and advisory nonprofit that works with the public, private, and social sectors to create partnerships and investments that measurably improve lives.

## **Social Impact Architects**

### **Social Innovation**

Social Impact Architects is a social change agency that provides consulting and learning experiences to changemakers working alongside them to design creative and transformative solutions to social issues.

## **Springboard Collaborative**

### **Education**

Springboard Collaborative coaches educators and family members to help kids learn to read on grade level by 4th grade.

## **Stockton Service Corps**

### **Education**

Stockton Service Corps is a place-based initiative dedicated to working with community partners to deliver high-impact services to Stockton, and create a pathway for community leadership through service.

## **TalkingPoints**

### **Education**

TalkingPoints facilitates communication between teachers and families, particularly those from diverse linguistic backgrounds, to support student success.

## **Teach For America**

### **Education**

Teach For America finds, develops and supports equity-oriented leaders to transform education and expand opportunity for all children.

## **Tech Goes Home**

### **Education**

Tech Goes Home provides digital literacy training and affordable access to technology for underserved communities, aiming to bridge the digital divide and empower individuals with essential digital skills.

## **The Farmlink Project**

### **Economic Mobility**

The Farmlink Project connects farms with surplus produce to food banks and communities in need, addressing food waste and food insecurity issues simultaneously.

## **The FIND Design**

### **Education**

The FIND Design works to mitigate the effects of systemic and personal trauma on Black girls, and other girls of color ages 11-17, by providing safe spaces for healing, long-term mentorships, and programming that transform their mental health and overall well-being.

## **The Learning Accelerator**

### **Education**

The Learning Accelerator is dedicated to advancing the use of blended and personalized learning in schools to improve student outcomes.

## **The Michelson 20MM Foundation**

### **Social Innovation**

The Michelson 20MM Foundation is a philanthropic organization focused on supporting initiatives in education, innovation, and research to enhance access and equity in higher education.

## **The Opportunity Network**

### **Economic Mobility**

The Opportunity Network is committed to equipping underrepresented students with the tools, resources, and networks to access educational and career opportunities.

## **The People**

### **Democracy**

The People is an advocacy organization dedicated to promoting social justice and empowering marginalized communities through grassroots activism and policy advocacy.

## **Think of Us**

### **Economic Mobility**

Think of Us leverages technology and innovation to improve the foster care system and support youth transitioning into adulthood.

## **Third Sector Capital Partners**

### **Social Innovation**

Third Sector Capital Partners advises government agencies on effective ways to reshape their policies, systems, and services toward better outcomes for all people, no matter their race, background, and circumstances.

## **Throughline Learning**

### **Education**

Throughline Learning is a nonprofit organization partnering with communities to imagine and create more equitable, relevant, and effective schools. Our team supports partner schools and districts through professional learning communities, workshops, teacher and leader coaching, community-driven school redesign, and student-centered data services.

## **TNTP** **Education**

TNTP is an education nonprofit that brings research, policy, and impact consulting together to reimagine America's public education system, aiming to catalyze a movement to redesign America's public education system so that it meets the expectations of tomorrow—for young people, families, communities, and the nation.

## **Transcend Education** **Education**

Transcend Education works to directly support schools and leaders with the mission of creating more equitable learning environments using tools, models, and insights from a national network of schools and through engaging top leaders in school systems, philanthropy, and policy.

## **uAspire** **Education**

uAspire works to improve the economic mobility of underrepresented students by creating financial solutions to diverse postsecondary pathways.

## **UF Lastinger Center for Learning** **Education**

The UF Lastinger Center for Learning is a research and innovation hub at the University of Florida dedicated to improving education through professional development, research-based programs, and community partnerships.

## **UpTogether** **Economic Mobility**

UpTogether is a national nonprofit organization with a bold goal of changing policies, systems, and underlying beliefs so that all people in the United States are seen and invested in for their strengths and are able to build power, reinforce their autonomy, and drive their own economic and social mobility.

## **UnboundEd** **Education**

UnboundEd is dedicated to advancing educational equity by providing educators with high-quality professional development, curriculum resources, and support in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices.

## **Valor Collegiate Academies** **Education**

Valor Collegiate Academies is a network of public charter schools in Nashville, Tennessee, dedicated to preparing all students for success in college and beyond through rigorous academics, character development, and personalized support.

## **Vehicles for Change** **Economic Mobility**

Vehicles for Change works to provide families with multiple barriers to employment with affordable and reliable transportation to promote independence and economic stability.

## **Voice for Adoption** **Social Innovation**

Voice for Adoption is a national advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that all children in foster care have permanent, loving families through policy reform, education, and support for adoptive families.

## **Wyman Center** **Education**

Wyman Center empowers teens from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve educational success, leadership skills, and emotional well-being through innovative programs and supportive relationships.



## Year Up

### Economic Mobility

Year Up provides young adults with professional skills training, internships, and support to launch successful careers and break the cycle of poverty.

## YouthBuild

### Economic Mobility

YouthBuild is a nonprofit organization offering education, job training, and leadership development opportunities to unemployed and out-of-school young people, empowering them to rebuild their communities and transform their lives.

## Zearn

### Education

Zearn is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing engaging and personalized math instruction for students, supported by classroom resources and professional development for educators.



Source: Springboard Collaborative

# CONNECT WITH AMERICA FORWARD



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