



INTRODUCTION TO READY BY 21 WEBINAR

In June, the Forum for Youth Investment hosted a webinar on the topic of an 'Introduction to Ready by 21'. The session, part of the Ready by 21 Webinar Series, featured an overview of the Ready by 21 Approach and helped listeners understand the core concepts and how they apply to their work. The session focused on the importance of leadership change- specifically the need for leaders across the country to think differently, act differently, act together and track progress in order to change the odds for children and youth. The session also looked at the Ready by 21 National Partnership, a collection of the leading nonprofit organizations in a range of sectors that have come together in order to expand the reach and impact of Ready by 21.

Q & A

In response to questions submitted during the webinar, please find the following answers:

- **How do you identify "leaders"?** (Meghan Wagner)

We define leaders as those who:

- are change-makers who recognize the need for a new approach to address children and youth issues
- have the capacity (funds, expertise and time), motivation, authority and ability to engage other leaders
- work in all sectors: business, government, nonprofit, education, advocacy, philanthropy, research, and in the community, including children and youth
- work at all levels: setting policy, managing work, doing work

- **How can we get the guide for dropout prevention?** (Esohe Osai)

<http://www.forumfyi.org/content/dropout-prevention-summit-planning-guide>

The America's Promise Alliance, a Ready by 21 National Partner, is supporting 50 state and at least 50 city Dropout Prevention Summits to be held by 2010. The purposes of the Dropout Prevention Summits are many, but the primary intention is to increase public awareness of the dropout and college-readiness crisis. The Forum for Youth Investment and our Ready by 21 partners wrote this guide to provide the cities and states who will be hosting summits over the next two years with steps to getting started and for thinking intentionally about both the planning of the summit as well as the follow-up action plans and implementation that are critical for real reductions in school dropout rates. This guide was created in collaboration with the America's Promise Alliance, United Way of America and our other Ready by 21 national partners.

- **How has the Forum garnered "buy in"?** (Meghan Wagner)

Through the Ready by 21 National Partnership we are working to create a critical mass of leaders in every state that have determined that there is a need for a new approach to improving the odds for children and youth. Change is most effective when it is being led by a wide range of leaders across a range of sectors.



We engage leaders by championing issues important to them and reframing those issues to enable a broader perspective; we facilitate connections and bring a broader set of leaders to the table; we provide a suite of tools and services as well as engagement opportunities; and we help communities define their common goals, take stock of their current reality, create linked action plans and track their progress over time.

- **What are some examples of youth engagement initiative activities? (Paul Beckford)**

A key example of the Forum's work with engaging youth is our Youth Councils Learning Group. Youth Councils are state and local policy advising bodies that provide young people an opportunity for their voices to be counted in states and cities across the nation. This learning group is made up of those youth leaders and the adults that assist them in bringing youth perspective to statehouses and city councils mayor's offices and governor's offices. As a part of this learning group these youth leaders receive Forum tools and resources, documentation and dissemination of their work to a broader audience and an opportunity to connect with their peers in youth councils across the country. For more information, please visit <http://www.forumfyi.org/readyby21/groups/yc>.

- **How much does it cost to get one of these started? (Kate Ashbey)**

There is a tendency in communities, based on prior experience with youth frameworks, to view Ready by 21 as a new program or initiative. This is not what Ready by 21 is – Ready by 21 is a set of tools and a framework to be applied to current initiatives and work. The power of this exercise lies in its capacity to connect complex ideas to each participant's experience and work. So communities can begin doing their work differently based on work that is already being done in their community. The Forum provides a range of support to communities engaging in this work, depending on the level of readiness and engagement.

- **I am working with a local foundation. How do I link them with national partners? (Kate Ashbey)**

Please contact us and we are happy *to set up an informational call with stakeholders to talk with you further about your goals for your community*. From there, we can recommend resources within our National Partnership.

- **How does a local organization become a partner with the Forum for Youth Investment? (Raymond Porter)**

Over the next five years, one of the primary goals of the Forum will be to engage Ready Partners and Support Ready Places in order to change the odds for children and youth. By 2011, The Ready by 21 Partnership seeks to engage 200 states and localities with leadership teams who are taking on the Challenge. If you are interested in being a part of the Challenge, please contact us and we can set up an informational phone call to learn more about your community, your goals, and opportunities for partnership.

- **Do you train leaders to facilitate collaborative efforts/exercises to achieve this type of community effort? (Shelley Johnson)**

We provide various levels of assistance for leaders facilitating collaborative efforts in their community. One opportunity is the Ready by 21 Institute, which is a two day training offered 2-4 times per year. If you are interested in attending an upcoming Institute, please let us know.

- **Can you please speak briefly re: challenge grants you mentioned earlier? Who is eligible? Do you support one agency to oversee collaboration in the community? (Shelley Johnson)**

At the beginning of the grant period, we solicit applications from sites that we feel are ready to be a challenge site. We identify the final list of sites based on the strength of the application. We select sites based on a combination of factors related to two things - the capacity of the local leaders/intermediary and community readiness for change. Any community level intermediary, state level intermediary, state or local agency is eligible to apply for the grant as long as they have a proven record of facilitating community or state level collaboration.