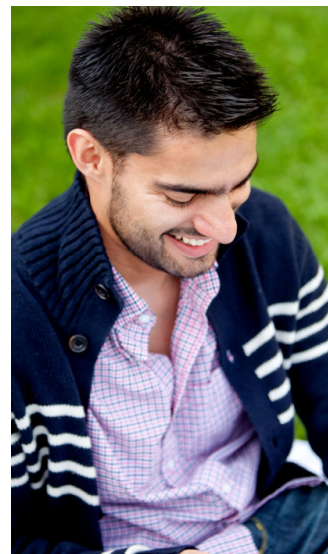




All youth ready for
college, work & life.

CHANGING THE ODDS

for children and youth



Leadership Update 2010



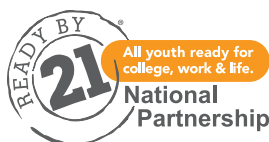
Ready by 21® is a set of innovative strategies developed by the Forum for Youth Investment that help communities improve the odds that all children and youth will be ready for college, work and life.

the forum FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT

A nonprofit, nonpartisan “action tank” dedicated to helping communities and the nation make sure that all young people are Ready by 21® — ready for college, work and life. Informed by rigorous research and practical experience, the Forum forges innovative ideas, strategies and partnerships to strengthen solutions for young people and those who care about them.

The Forum is the home of the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, the Children’s Cabinet Network and SparkAction. The Forum is also the founder of the Ready by 21 National Partnership and the Ready by 21 Policy Coalition (which is managed with Corporate Voices for Working Families).

All of these entities contribute to the Forum’s mission to link researchers, policy makers, program and system administrators, and youth and adult advocates with the information, connections and tools they need to create greater opportunities and outcomes for young people.



An unprecedented coalition of organizations representing government, education, nonprofit, business, research and philanthropy. The National Partnership brings Ready by 21 strategies into states and communities around the country.

The Forum for Youth Investment (the founding and managing partner) and United Way Worldwide (the signature partner) are joined by seven mobilization partners: American Association of School Administrators, America’s Promise Alliance, Corporate Voices for Working Families, the Children’s Cabinet Network, National Collaboration for Youth, National Conference of State Legislatures and Search Institute. Combined, the National Partners reach over 650,000 state and local leaders who impact the lives of more than 100 million children and youth. They have joined forces to offer these leaders more consistent and effective messages and tools.

Ready by 21 Technical Partners offer state-of-the-art, competitively priced, on-the-ground tools and services. These partners include Child Trends, Community Systems Group, The Gallup Organization, the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, The Finance Project, nFocus Software, SparkAction and Results Leadership Group, LLC.



Advocates for policies that advance a seamless continuum of supports from cradle to college and career. The Coalition’s top priority is to advance policies that are designed to strengthen Children’s Cabinets and similar state and local collaborations.

The Coalition’s second priority is to advance policies that are designed to strengthen state and local interagency capacity to establish big-picture goals and long-term plans; administer grants; engage young people in decision-making; improve program quality and accountability; collect and use data to drive decision-making; and provide a seamless set of child and youth services.

The Coalition’s third priority is to ensure that all child and youth policies are designed to align with existing efforts and be implemented as one part of a greater whole. The policy coalition was created by the Forum in 2009, in partnership with Corporate Voices for Working Families.

OUR SHARED BELIEFS

Young people’s success in college, work and life requires early and sustained investments in academic and career preparation, social and civic connection, and health and safety.

Communities’ success at providing what young people need requires coordination of and improvement in all the systems and settings where young people spend their time, starting with families and schools.

Leaders’ success in improving conditions for children and youth requires the intentional integration of their individual efforts as parents, volunteers, service providers, organization heads and policy makers.

Ready by 21’s success at helping leaders strengthen their capacity and align their efforts requires powerful solutions that bring precision to their passion.

Meeting leaders where they are, to get young people where they need to be

Karen Pittman, Co-founder, President and CEO

Merita Irby, Co-founder, Executive Vice President and Chief Program Officer

Rob Schamberg, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer

Kris Minor, Vice President of Partnerships and Communications



Asking leaders to commit to changing the odds for all children and youth rather than helping a select few young people beat the odds is a big ask. Shifting the metric from *trying* to *succeeding* requires that leaders think differently, act differently and agree to be held accountable differently. Passionate leaders know that the shift is necessary, but they also know the risks.

Ready by 21's success stems from our ability to help minimize those risks. We join leaders on the road to addressing America's biggest dilemma – the gap between what we know must be done to make a difference for children and youth, and what we actually do.

America is a country of gaps. The income gap between rich and poor is larger than it has ever been. The achievement gap between white and minority or poor and affluent students remains huge despite almost two decades of initiatives. These are the gaps that are in the news. In some ways, however, these are the downstream gaps that grow steadily because of other gaps that are rarely discussed.

The readiness gap – the gap between the skills and habits students have when they leave high school and those they need to succeed in college and work – is one that is now getting attention, with good reason. Employers and higher education institutions report that almost half of the high school graduates that come through their doors are unprepared for the demands they will face.

The gap that is discussed least and may be the most critical is the leadership gap that allows us to set annual goals that we make little progress towards achieving; to fund sub-par programs and services because they are “better than nothing”; or to jump from problem to problem because we believe the public can't understand the concept of addressing the whole child.

How to Close the Gap

The Forum and the Ready by 21 National Partnership are working with communities to close those gaps, especially the leadership gap. Ready by 21 is catching on faster than we could have imagined since the February 2008 launch of the National Partnership. We think it is because the Forum, now flanked by an impressive set of national partners, believes that leaders in this country can do much better and is willing to say so.

Ready by 21 focuses attention on leaders – not to blame them, but to acknowledge the complexity of the tasks they have undertaken, affirm the pressures on them to create quick fixes and underscore what they know in their gut: that there has to be a better way. We focus on leaders because we believe they're the lynchpin to improving the quality and reach of community supports for children and their families, and ultimately to changing the odds for all young people.

Ready by 21 defines leaders broadly. Leaders are found in all sectors and at all levels, from front-line practice to state policy. Ready by 21 Partners and coaches work with leaders who recognize the need to work collaboratively, inside their organizations, communities and states.

Our National Partnership roughly mirrors the state and local partnerships we support.

Ready by 21 is about standards and solutions, and gets high marks for meeting leaders where they are. We believe our success is linked to the broader “Meet, Challenge, Help, Ask” philosophy (see page 6) we bring to the work, the partners who are helping us go further faster and the people and places that are insisting we bring more precision to our passion so that we can help them realize theirs.

Since the 2008 launch, the Forum and the Partners have taken many steps to streamline our ideas, expand our reach and increase our impact.

Accomplishments

We have begun the roll out of Ready by 21 Solutions, a graduated suite of tools and services linked to four building blocks for effective planning – the specific capacities leaders need in order to build broad partnerships, set bigger goals, use better data and implement bolder strategies. At the core of this suite of tools, described on pages 6-7, is the Ready by 21 Leadership Capacity Audit, a tool that affirms the importance of the building blocks, quantifies the leadership gap and pinpoints areas for improvement for communities.

We have reached thousands of leaders with Ready by 21 ideas – providing training, coaching and technical services – and have gotten to know dozens more deeply by working with them in their states and communities.

We have completed Quality Counts, the first major Ready by 21 challenge, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Atlantic Philanthropies. We have embarked on a second, even more ambitious leadership capacity-building challenge focused in the Southeast, funded in part by the Altria Tobacco Companies – Philip Morris USA, John Middleton and U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Company – and Atlantic Philanthropies, both of which are also providing general support to advance Ready by 21. With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, we have been sharpening the focus on postsecondary success.

Perhaps the most important thing we have done since the launch is to galvanize the Ready by 21 National Partnership. The Partnership is real, powerful, challenging and absolutely essential. The Partnership is changing the way we do business as the Forum and is changing the way our Partners work inside their respective organizations, with members and clients and with each other.

It is time to change the odds for children and youth who now, literally, do not have a fighting chance.

Mobilizing leaders in communities to achieve the common good

Stacey Stewart, Executive Vice President, Community Impact
Nina Sazer O'Donnell, Vice President, Education



United Way Worldwide is proud to be the signature partner in the Ready by 21 National Partnership, and shares the commitment to ensuring that all young people are ready for college, work and life.

The mission of United Way is to mobilize the caring power of communities to advance the common good by focusing on the building blocks of education, income and health. United Way has set ambitious goals to, by 2018: cut the high school drop-out rate in half; reduce by half the number of low-income, financially unstable families; and increase the number of youth and adults who are healthy and avoid risky behaviors.

United Way Worldwide (UWW) believes that education is a critical element to individual and community success — a high-quality education is essential for individuals to earn a living wage, have access to quality health care and contribute to their communities. Collectively, United Ways generate \$1 billion in resources that are dedicated to children and youth. United Way believes that every community must support all children and youth so that they enter school ready to succeed; read proficiently by fourth grade; make a successful transition in and out of middle school; graduate from high school on time; and are ready for success in college, work and life.

United Ways:

- Are leaders in their communities — they are conveners, facilitators, collaborators and partners.
- As a whole, are in transition — moving away from the traditional community chest model to community impact.
- Have significant expertise building coalitions and implementing initiatives to support early learning systems in their communities.
- Need help building internal capacity to successfully transition to community impact, integrate the work across functions and grow their work across the birth-to-21 continuum.
- Need help forging effective and sustainable partnerships with schools and school systems.
- Need help directly engaging individuals in their communities.

Our work with the Ready by 21 Partnership has helped generate organizational change at UWW and in our system. Over the past three years, as the Ready by 21 National Partnership has transitioned from a theoretical construct to an on-the-ground reality, the UW system has also been undergoing our own transformation. UWW and a growing number of local United Ways understand that to achieve our ambitious 2018 goals, we need to challenge our system to build and expand on successes in early childhood education to cover the birth-to-21 continuum; change our business model; extend our reach in communities; and focus on results. United Ways can provide community leadership that engages stakeholders to bring together an often fragmented system of services and supports for children, youth and families, and binds that system together to address young people's needs from birth to adulthood. United Ways are also uniquely positioned to reach across sectors, to engage the voices of those rarely heard in these conversations (e.g., parents, youth), and to address all of the settings in which

children and youth grow and develop (at home, in the community, with informal caregivers, etc.). United Ways can measure their value add in terms of improved community outcomes (including those focused on children and youth) rather than campaign dollars raised.

We also recognize that UWW has an important role to play to incentivize change in our system and to provide the necessary supports to make change real. Like other partners in Ready by 21, UWW is meeting our members where they are. Our specific efforts as part of Ready by 21 are focused on providing support, in the forms of technical assistance, grants, learning opportunities and tools.

United Way Worldwide is energized and strengthened by our work with the Forum and the other Ready by 21 Partners. Our national partnership augments our capacity at UWW to tap into additional expertise, networks and resources to support local-level change. We are committed to building our local leaders' capacity to do business differently so we can improve the settings and systems that serve children and youth and, ultimately, so we can realize better outcomes for all young people.

United Way Indicators for the Campaign for the Common Good

As part of its campaign to advance the common good, United Way Worldwide has set ambitious national goals around education, income and health. Among the campaign's indicators are several for children and youth, from cradle to career. Those indicators are the percentage of ...

- babies born who are low birth weight
- children under age 18 who do not have health care insurance
- 3- to 5-year-olds with three or four (out of four) school readiness skills
- fourth-graders who are proficient in reading
- grade 9-12 students who are healthy and avoiding risky behavior
- public high school students who graduate on time
- 18- to 24-year-olds who are not working nor in school
- adults 18 and over who are healthy and avoiding risky behavior



THE NEED

A GAP THREATENS THE AMERICAN DREAM

Every young person needs to be ready for college, work and life.

Too few are.

Only four in 10 are really ready.

Two in 10 are deeply underprepared or off track.

The remaining four are doing well in some areas but not all.¹

The persistent gap between the American dream and the American reality not only threatens our economic competitiveness, it also challenges our most basic beliefs and values.

Working alone, individual leaders are helping selected young people beat the odds, but these fragmented efforts are often too little and too late.

Our youth won't have to struggle to beat the odds if we work together to change the odds.

All 10 are smiling; only four are really ready.



¹Finding Out What Matters for Youth - study by Youth Development Strategies and Institute for Research and Reform in Education, 2002.

How Ready by 21 Made Us 'Amp It Up'

"When United Way Worldwide asked the United Way Council of States to be a part of our Ready by 21 state initiatives, I was intrigued. Only just barely familiar with the Forum and Ready by 21, I figured that it would be a nice addition to the education advocacy tools we already had. What I didn't know was that it had the power to change everything.

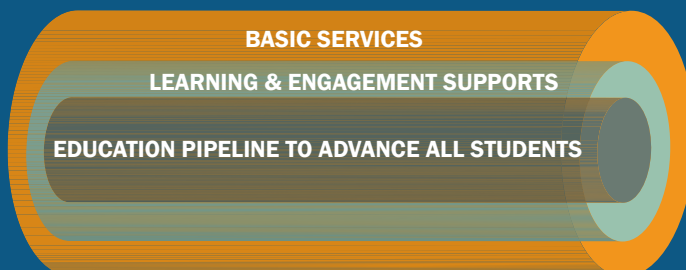
The first Institute that I attended—for local leaders—was a joy simply for the sheer intelligence in that room: people who understood community mobilization and were actually doing it. Listening to their accomplishments and struggles, I became convinced that the Ready by 21 model could be used in any community with a leadership group with a vision for change.

This alone is going to change how we do state level work around education. We've always done advocacy in state houses, but the Ready by 21 model gives us the opportunity to amp it up: building a statewide coalition of the right leaders while developing groups of local leaders who can make their voices heard loudly."

– Tim Ervolina, President
United Way Association of South Carolina

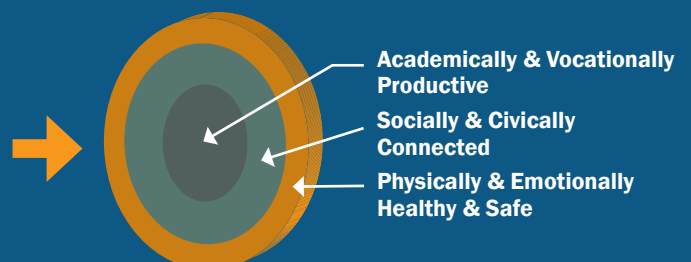
The Insulated Pipeline

The only way to change the odds for all youth is to work together differently to create an insulated pipeline of supports from "cradle to career" – wrapping coordinated, high-quality family and community supports as well as basic services around the traditional education pipeline – and to focus our attention on the whole child.



The Readiness Target

Raising "ready" children and youth requires a steady stream of supports from families, schools and communities to ensure that young people are not only problem-free, but also fully prepared and fully engaged.





POWERFUL SOLUTIONS FOR PASSIONATE LEADERS

Every leadership group, from a volunteer network serving 100 families to a Governor's Children's Cabinet making policies that impact 3 million kids, can do four things better. We call these the four Building Blocks for Effective Change:

- **Build broader partnerships**
- **Set bigger goals**
- **Use better data and information**
- **Implement bolder strategies**

To help them do better, Ready by 21 challenges leaders from the clubhouse to the statehouse to change the way they do business. It offers:

- Clear standards against which to gauge current leadership efforts
- A range of solutions for increasing leaders' capacity to manage change
- Expert facilitation and technical services
- Ongoing coaching and networking supports

To make that happen, the Ready by 21 Partnership:

MEETS

LEADERS WHERE THEY ARE

Ready by 21 is issue inclusive. We work with leaders whose focus ranges from early childhood health to college completion, from creating a leadership council to mapping existing community resources. These are critical issues and tasks that can be a springboard to longer term capacity building.

CHALLENGES

LEADERS TO DO MORE

Ready by 21 is goal-constant. We urge leaders to take a big-picture, long-term view of what's needed even as they focus on short term priorities.

HELPS

LEADERS GO FURTHER FASTER

Ready by 21 is precision focused. Ready by 21 standards and solutions help leaders focus on what they *do* rather than on what they *want done*. We help them build the capacities that let them chart a course and stay on it by assessing their efforts against clear standards.

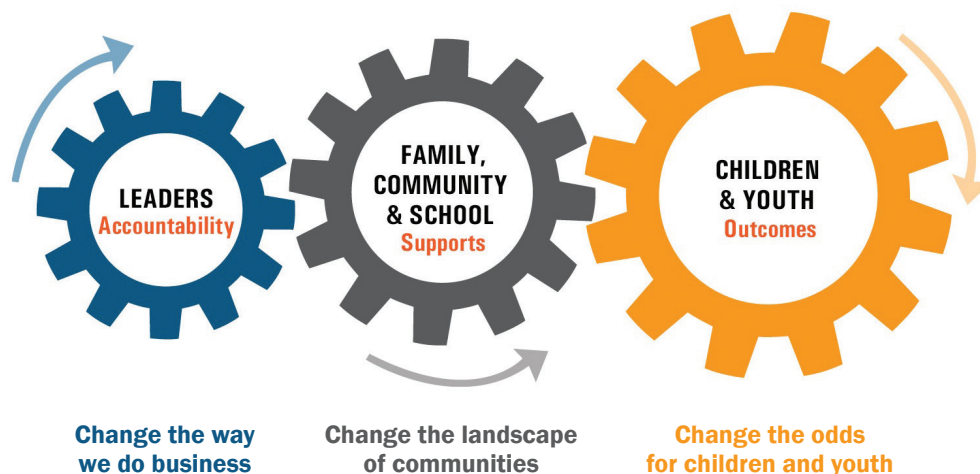
ASKS

LEADERS TO BE CHAMPIONS

Ready by 21 is peer focused. We ask states and communities to identify leaders from within their ranks to be trained as champions for the cause. We expect those who have found the process useful to lead efforts within their communities and to share what they learn with their peers in other communities and states.

The Gears that Drive Change

It can take five to 10 years to reverse bad trends in child outcomes. But leaders can make demonstrable changes in their capacity to "turn the gears" in as little as two years, creating the shared accountability needed to chart and stay on the course toward changing the odds. The interconnected gears represent the changes needed to improve youth outcomes at a large scale.



Moving the small gear makes a BIG difference

STANDARDS AND SERVICES

Partnerships, goals, data, planning, improvement strategies – this is the language of leadership. Rarely does a day go by when leaders aren't challenged by their boards, funders and constituents to build broader partnerships to achieve bigger goals, and to use better data and planning processes to implement bolder improvement strategies.

Standards

Within the four Building Blocks for Effective Change, the Forum has identified 14 standards that leaders consistently cite as important to improve youth outcomes.

Ready by 21 does more than challenge leaders to do better. We define “better” and ask leaders to affirm the definitions and their importance.

We start with questions like, “Have you involved all the key stakeholders?” Then we ask, “How essential is this?” and “How well are you currently doing it?”

The answers are telling.

On average, community leaders — school administrators, United Way directors, city government staffers, youth organization directors and business leaders — report that they have only 40 percent of the horsepower they need to make the lasting improvements that will produce youth who are ready for college, work and life. Public acknowledgement of the “leader capacity gap” is the first step towards changing the way we do business. Ready by 21 takes them on the next steps.

Ready by 21 Leadership Capacity Standards Under the Building Blocks for Effective Change

Broader Partnerships

- Build an overarching leadership council
- Align and strengthen coalitions, commissions and intermediaries
- Engage key stakeholders in setting priorities and solving problems

Bigger Goals

- Establish a balanced set of goals for all children, youth and young adults
- Define supports that the full community must provide
- Create a big picture, goal-oriented action plan
- Define common terms and communicate core messages

Better Data

- Collect complete data about youth outcomes, community supports and leadership actions
- Align and connect data for decision-making
- Use the best information about what works

Bolder Strategies

- Improve systems and settings
- Align policies and resources
- Increase demand
- Engage youth, families and community members in solutions

Services

To meet leaders where they are, Ready by 21 provides tools and services that range from easy ways to learn more, get started or address a pressing need, to more in-depth supports that help leaders design and implement “soup-to-nuts” action plans that require multiple years to implement.

- **Webinars and Institutes** introduce leaders to this way of thinking.
- **Toolkits** are organized around the 14 capacity standards.
- **Technical Trainings** give leaders the capacity to get the most out of Ready by 21 tools.
- **Leadership Capacity Audits and Plans** bring the issue of leader capacity to the forefront.
- **Facilitation** helps leaders get the most out of their planning and outreach processes.
- **À la Carte Services** provide leaders with the supports they need when they need them.
- **Start-Up Packages** are cost-effective ways to tackle common capacity building needs.
- **Scorecards and Workstations** give leaders the tools they need to track progress and performance by linking efforts to outcomes.
- **The Leader Network** provides ongoing opportunities for online learning and peer engagement.
- **The Comprehensive Solution** provides all of these services in one package.

Bundled Supports

The Ready by 21 Comprehensive Solution bundles all of these supports and services into a complete package for communities whose leaders have decided to work together to create a leadership improvement plan to ensure their efforts can be implemented effectively. Our technical partners join forces to ensure that leaders have access to the full range of services needed to meet capacity standards. The Comprehensive Leadership Solution is designed for communities ready to embrace:

3 Goals:

1. Ready Leaders
2. Ready Communities
3. Ready Youth

3 Years:

- Minimum time commitment in learning network

3 Commitments:

1. Lay the foundation (training, partnership structure, audit, capacity plan)
2. Build capacity (actively use Ready by 21 offerings that address capacity gaps)
3. Track and report progress (scorecard, workstation and coaching)



LEADER ENGAGEMENT GOALS

The Ready by 21 National Partnership has set aggressive and ambitious goals to bring Ready by 21 to scale. The goals reflect the Partnership's commitment to meet leaders where they are, starting with basic introductions to the Ready by 21 strategies and staying with leaders as they move through deeper levels of engagement with the ideas and tools. By 2014, Partners are committed to:

Reaching 200,000 leaders

with key messages about the changes leaders need to make.

Recruiting 20,000 leaders

who are prepared to take the lessons home.

Responding to 200 leadership groups

in communities or states with on-site tools and advice.

Redefining success with 20 leadership councils

in communities or states that are committed to cradle-to-career change.

PETALUMA, CA

The Petaluma Youth Network had made progress on its school reform agenda and was ready to launch its second-phase efforts to engage the full community to coordinate resources for kids. They needed an overarching framework to bring leaders and initiatives together. They signed up with the Forum for Ready by 21 training and coaching because it was comprehensive and fit best with their view of the world.

They not only have a plan; they are doing business differently. "From meeting to meeting, we have seen the shift as stakeholders commit to working together, doing whatever it takes," says Pat Landrum, Executive Director of Healthy Communities Consortium, a leader in the Petaluma Youth Network. "It has been a wonderful individual experience to watch the a-has as they shift from thinking of the problem from their own standpoint, own metrics, own goals, to this larger community picture."



IOWA

The Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development was a part of the "Keep the Connections" project during the 2010 gubernatorial transition. While working with the Forum, the collaboration received a complete assessment of its work, gathered key external stakeholders to support the collaboration and developed strong communications materials to ensure a healthy transition into the next administration.

SEATTLE, WA

Through their participation in year one of the Ready by 21 Quality Counts initiative, networks of youth organizations in Seattle and the Yakima Valley pilot-tested the Youth Program Quality Assessment tool, then adopted it as part of local professional development work. That work has expanded significantly with additional investments by the state Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Raikes Foundation.



Snapshots of Success

A look at how local and national partners got started with Ready by 21 in communities around the country.

For a more complete listing of leaders and places engaged with Ready by 21, see pages 20-22.

GREENDALE, WI

As part of the American Association of School Administrators' ongoing work with the Ready by 21 School System Leaders Peer Workgroup, Superintendent Bill Hughes has implemented a Ready by 21 strategy in his community. Greendale has completed a comprehensive inventory and gap analysis of current youth services, and integrated Ready by 21 principles into Greendale's Partners for Community Action (a community forum focused on youth development).

MAINE

The Forum has worked with state leaders for over five years through the Children's Cabinet Network. Lauren Sterling, director of the Maine Governor's Children's Cabinet, has been an active leader in the Network and has brought in Ready by 21 coaches to facilitate Cabinet retreats. She reports that "Ready by 21 has helped the Maine Governor's Children's Cabinet think through and implement the way it articulates and prioritizes the most critical benchmarks for child and youth well-being."

CINCINNATI, OH

In fall 2009, Ready by 21 co-sponsored Search Institute's 2009 national Healthy Communities*Healthy Youth Conference in Cincinnati. Over 1,000 leaders (youth and adults) were introduced to Ready by 21 strategies and tools through plenary and small-group learning sessions. The National Collaboration for Youth brought its Ready by 21 Champions to the conference for training and peer networking. The success of this collaborative conference effort was an important step in the transformation of this annual convening into the BigTent conference for all who care about kids.

NASHVILLE, TN

Recognized three times by America's Promise Alliance as one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People, Nashville tapped into the Ready by 21 partnership to support the mayor's commitment to develop a comprehensive Child and Youth Master Plan. The Nashville Mayor's Office has now agreed to pilot a new Ready by 21 data platform that will help to connect "effort to outcomes" as its Child and Youth Master Plan moves into implementation. A staff person from the Mayor's Office is on the design team for this tool.

A FOCUS ON THE SOUTHEAST

The Ready by 21 National Partnership has been focusing its work on the Southeast region of the U.S. As part of this focus, we have developed the Southeast Cities Challenge to work closely with six communities to develop core leadership capacities that are critical to leaders' efforts to improve child and youth outcomes from birth to young adulthood.

Based on the collective intelligence of the Partnership, we invited six places to be part of the Challenge: Atlanta, GA; Chattanooga, TN; Louisville, KY; Nashville, TN; Northern Kentucky/Cincinnati, OH; and Richmond, VA. These six communities were selected based on their interest in the Ready by 21 approach and the readiness of leaders in these communities to strengthen their collaborative work aimed at improving child and youth outcomes.

At the start of the Challenge, the communities went through a Leadership Capacity Audit that helped them assess how they were doing against the capacity standards. They reviewed their

current activities, measured them against the standards, affirmed the standards' importance with community stakeholders and explored the tools and technical assistance available from the Ready by 21 Partnership to help improve capacity.

Each Southeast community is using the findings and recommendations from the audit process to create a comprehensive leadership capacity building plan. The plans address both "structure" capacities and "action" capacities. All sites are committed to collecting and reporting data on their accomplishments and demonstrating the contribution those accomplishments make to overall child and youth outcomes.

The Challenge communities are eligible for matching funds and subsidies for Ready by 21 Solutions that will help them implement their plans. In addition, they receive ongoing coaching and participate in peer learning and exchange. As part of the Challenge, they are committed to tracking and sharing their progress with their communities, their states and the Ready by 21 Leadership Network.

For an example of how a community is meeting the Challenge, see Chattanooga, Tenn., on page 15.

NATIONAL PARTNERS IN ACTION

Just as Ready by 21 meets leaders where they are, it has done the same with national organizations in the Ready by 21 National Partnership. Ready by 21 has helped partners stretch and grow their own capacities so that, in turn, they can better meet their members where they are, challenge them to think and act differently and help them with training, tools and technical assistance. With eight Mobilization Partners and eight Technical Partners, there are so many rich stories to tell. Read the profiles of three Ready by 21 Partners' experiences and their efforts to take Ready by 21 to scale within their networks. For highlights of all partners' work, see the projects list starting on page 16.

American Association of School Administrators (AASA)

The American Association of School Administrators, founded in 1865, is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders in the United States and throughout the world. AASA members range from chief executive officers, superintendents and senior level school administrators to cabinet members, professors and aspiring school system leaders. The mission of the American Association of School Administrators is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to the highest quality public education for all children.

AASA has embraced Ready by 21 with open arms as a Mobilization Partner. As a part of its Educating the Total Child campaign, AASA staff and members have become even more vocal about the need to expand the definition of readiness beyond a high school diploma and acknowledge that learning happens beyond the school walls. Dr. Daniel Domenech, AASA's executive director, has challenged school administrators to address their "edifice complex" so that they can broaden and deepen their strategic partnerships with community organizations, businesses and postsecondary education. Quintin Shepherd, AASA Ready by 21 Peer Workgroup Field Superintendent and leader of AASA's 22-member Ready by 21 Peer Group, has led this group of like-minded superintendents to explore Ready by 21 tools, resources and concepts and provide feedback to the partnership on the school leader perspective.

Believing that Ready by 21 provides an opportunity to both affirm and inform its members, AASA uses every opportunity to put the "big" question to its members – even in tough times, can we, should we, set bigger goals, build broader and stronger partnerships, collect and use better data and implement bolder strategies? AASA members use every opportunity to respond YES. The caveat: they need clear roadmaps and light supports.

Of the nearly 1,000 superintendents who responded to AASA's 2009 survey to test the Ready by 21 waters, 87 percent recognized a need for a Ready by 21-like initiative in their communities. Fully 20 percent had already heard about Ready by 21 and 240 superintendents reported that they would begin work immediately if they had the tools and training.

AASA took these requests seriously. They trained their staff to use Ready by 21 tools to facilitate discussions and provide coaching, and went on the road. Responding to requests for strategic assistance in Ponca City, OK, Bristol-Warren, RI, and Greendale, WI, among others, AASA worked with school leaders to provide



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

www.aasa.org

guidance and assistance on enhancing their current partnerships, implementing new strategies, refining their goals and optimizing their data systems. AASA centered the June 2010 issue of its award-winning magazine, *School Administrator*, on college readiness, with the cover story article by Karen Pittman and a Ready by 21 sidebar. AASA is also leveraging its network of state associations to mobilize local leaders around the insulated pipeline, including presentations to the Ohio and Kentucky state associations. AASA continues to mobilize its members by connecting school leaders to ongoing Ready by 21 efforts and helping other leaders to become the champions for Ready by 21 in their community.

"I believe that we have to provide a safety net for students and for children in order for them to grow up and be prepared for college or work in a successful life. And that includes more than school. It takes engaging the community in education and also building partnerships with after-school programs, with community resources and with the metro government so that we are taking a coordinated approach.

"What got me interested in Ready by 21 was that it was a framework that we could use to guide our work in collaborating with community organizations and governmental agencies so that we produce the best results and outcomes for students."

– Dr. Sheldon Berman, Superintendent
Jefferson County (Louisville) Public Schools

Corporate Voices for Working Families

Corporate Voices for Working Families is the leading national business membership organization shaping conversations and collaborations on public and corporate policy issues involving working families. This nonprofit, nonpartisan organization creates and advances innovative policy solutions that reflect a commonality of interests among the private sector (both global and domestic), government and other stakeholders. Corporate Voices provides leading and best-practice employers with a forum to improve the lives of working families, while strengthening the nation's economy and enhancing the vitality of our communities.

Corporate Voices for Working Families recognizes that businesses thrive in communities where youth thrive. Already a leading voice for business around early childhood and family-friendly policies focused on the youngest children and working families, Corporate Voices, in an effort to educate business leaders about the importance of investing in the entire workforce readiness pipeline from “cradle to career,” became involved in the Ready by 21 National Partnership. Corporate Voices believes that Ready by 21 is workforce readiness for business.

As a Ready by 21 Mobilization Partner, Corporate Voices challenges business leaders both nationally and locally to invest in workforce readiness as a business imperative because American business competitiveness and future economic prosperity depends on a skilled and prepared workforce.

Corporate Voices has brought the much-needed business definition of “skilled and prepared” into the larger conversation about youth readiness. Corporate Voices conducted critical research, *Are They Really Ready to Work?* (2006), which reflected employers’ frustrations over the preparedness of new entrants to the workforce. Employers expect young people to arrive with a core set of basic knowledge and the ability to apply their skills in the workplace – and the reality is not matching that expectation. The research highlighted that among recent high school graduates nearly half (42 percent) lack the skills they need to succeed in the workplace.

In 2009, Corporate Voices released *The Ill-Prepared U.S. Workforce*, which found that almost half of employers are providing some type of workforce readiness, or remedial training, for their employees. Because employees are entering the workforce without adequate basic and applied skills, employers are stepping up to provide the training necessary for sufficient job performance.

Nevertheless, according to *What Business Leaders Are Saying About Workforce Readiness*, Corporate Voices found that 97 percent of business leaders surveyed feel that workforce readiness is a business imperative. And, soon-to-be released economic research shows that businesses who partner with community organizations to implement workforce readiness training programs show a positive return on their investment – this is critical for business engagement. With previous research and Ready by 21 funding and goals, Corporate Voices has also taken its national expertise and begun to



www.corporatevoices.org

work “on the ground” helping communities in the Southeast forge and strengthen their business partnerships. To help these local community leaders facilitate more effective business engagement, Corporate Voices, along with United Way Worldwide and the Workforce Strategy Center, produced the *Business Engagement Toolkit for Community-Based Organizations* and accompanying online resource directory. Corporate Voices created a variety of tools and held webinars for both business and community leaders focused on strengthening private and public partnerships.

In order to engage Corporate Voices’ member companies in Ready by 21, eight companies (listed on page 20) came together and formed the Ready by 21 Working Group, which helps to form and advise the work and research around Ready by 21. The Working Group members are also thinking about how their companies can support local business and community efforts in Ready by 21 communities.

Corporate Voices is also leading the federal public policy efforts through the Ready by 21 Policy Coalition and informing corporate outreach for fund development. Corporate Voices was proud to lead the inaugural 2010 Champion Awards: Preparing Youth for Work on behalf of the Partnership.

“Our great nation cannot continue to prosper unless our young people – the workers, consumers, voters and leaders of tomorrow – are prepared to succeed in school and throughout life. Corporate Voices for Working Families, through the experiences of our best-practice corporate partners, knows that there are no quick or easy solutions to the challenges that face our young people, our communities and our businesses in a rapidly changing and more competitive global economy.

“Ready by 21, by harnessing the skills and resources of community and business leaders, is playing a pivotal role in ensuring the future success of our young people, our business community and our nation.”

– Stephen M. Wing, President
Corporate Voices for Working Families

The Gallup Organization

Gallup has studied human nature and behavior for more than 75 years. Gallup's reputation for delivering relevant, timely and visionary research on what people around the world think and feel is the cornerstone of the organization. Gallup employs many of the world's leading scientists in management, economics, psychology and sociology, and its consultants assist leaders in identifying and monitoring behavioral economic indicators worldwide. Gallup's 2,000 professionals deliver services at client organizations, through the Web, at Gallup University's campuses and in more than 40 offices around the world.

In 2009, Gallup partnered with America's Promise Alliance and the American Association of School Administrators to create the Gallup Student Poll (GSP) — a free online survey for public schools that annually measures the hope, engagement and well-being of students in grades 5 through 12 across the United States. This standard version of the GSP captures the collective student voice at national, district and school levels. The survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete and is composed of 20 core items measuring hope, engagement and well-being. These items ask what students do, how they think and how they feel about their lives at home, in school and in their communities. Students also answer demographic questions and may answer a short, randomly assigned index with a few additional items.

The Ready by 21 Partnership listened closely as community leaders grew excited about the power of the GSP and explained how it would be even more valuable if the data could be collected and reported across whatever geography best represents how the community defines itself, not just by school or school district. Leaders also wished young people could be polled outside of school settings and that the poll results could be connected to other data sets to complement what is known about young people's academic and other performance indicators. The National Partnership decided to invest in the enhancements leaders asked for.

The enhanced Gallup Student Poll – or GSPi – will be piloted in the spring of 2011. The GSPi data collection platform allows communities and schools to take a deeper look at student hope, engagement and well-being inside and outside the school. It encompasses all of the enhancements described above and will be able to track individual progress around a composite hope, engagement and well-being score called “Ready for the Future.” To help communities use and translate the data into actionable plans, it will package the technological enhancements from Gallup (a Technical Partner) with community leadership and engagement strategies from the Ready by 21 National Partnership.

Once the pilot is completed, the National Partnership is confident that GSPi will provide community leaders with important and much-needed data. Partners are prepared to help their members use the GSPi data to initiate community-wide dialogue about how well they are preparing young people for college, work and life, and what leaders can do across settings and systems to improve the hope, engagement and well-being of their children and youth.



Technical Partners in Action

Highlights of other technical partners' Ready by 21 projects and contributions include:

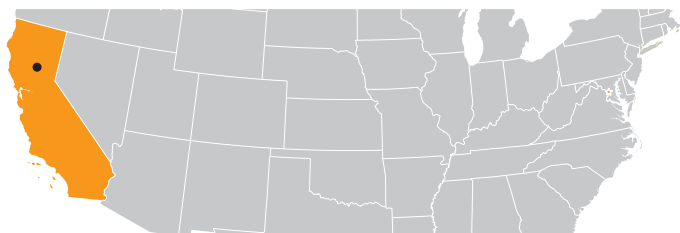
- **Child Trends** partnered with the Forum to develop *Tracking the Big Picture of Child and Youth Wellbeing*, a guide that helps leadership groups set and track progress on goals related to child and youth well-being. The guide shows groups how to select and prioritize population-level results and indicators using a developmental dashboard, and describes ways to use the dashboard to develop an action plan and monitor community progress.
- **Community Systems Group (CSG)** continues to support and enhance the Ready by 21 Workstation, an online data sharing platform. It has trained all of the Southeast Challenge cities to use their online documentation systems to track the accomplishments of their leader groups. Accounting for new programs, policies and practices will help link their leaders' efforts to changes in family and community supports for young people, and to improvements in child and youth outcomes.
- **Finance Project** developed a list and description of federal funding streams that could be used to support sharing or integrating data across public systems.
- **nFocus** worked with Search Institute and Child Trends to develop a package of services, *Great Places to Succeed*, which integrates the software from nFocus, the Developmental Asset Profile from Search Institute and the analytic rigor of Child Trends.
- **Results Leadership Group (RLG)** and the Forum integrated the Ready by 21 and Results-Based Accountability planning processes, trained coaches and field consultants, and conducted a pilot test in Louisville. RLG has also been working with CSG and the Forum to develop an integrated technology platform to track results for leaders, with Nashville serving as a development partner.
- **SparkAction** launched in June and has more than 38,000 e-newsletter subscribers. Its Work Smarter section promotes Ready by 21 ideas and resources. It has ramped up postsecondary completion and youth voices content to reflect Partnership priorities.
- **Weikart Center** is leading the Quality Improvement & Asset-Building Challenge – a research-based technical assistance model that helps youth-serving organizations integrate data about the Developmental Assets with which young people enter a program and data about their experiences in the program. The model helps organizations find ways to strengthen programs so that all participants are exposed to experiences that lead to positive outcomes.

STATE AND LOCAL PARTNERS AT WORK

Ready by 21 strategies can help state and local leaders get further faster, whether they are building a community-wide plan to improve policies and practices related to children and youth or if they are more narrowly focused on improving the quality of youth programs or leadership/coordinating bodies. To engage cohorts of state and local leaders around building key capacities, the Ready by 21 National Partnership and individual partners have offered incentivized “challenges” – big and small – that provide training, technical assistance and cross-site learning. Read the stories of three different places engaged in different Ready by 21 challenges.

Georgetown Divide, CA: Quality Counts Challenge

The Ready by 21 Quality Counts Challenge helped communities assess current capacity and commitment to improve program quality and reach, and then, based on that information, do three things: introduce a strategy for improving program quality and workforce skills, increase available information about the out-of-school time (OST) sector and support the emergence of a leadership agenda connecting quality to other key issues and partners. To date, seven communities and six states have participated in the Challenge.



When the Georgetown Divide (“the Divide”) was selected to participate in the Ready by 21 Quality Counts Challenge, this rural mountain community was perfectly positioned to take its work to the next level. After three years of progress expanding youth development supports across its seven unincorporated small towns and 412 square miles, the community was ready to consolidate and strengthen what they had built.

“The Ready by 21 work that started in 2005 continues to support sustainable collaborative efforts in the school district and throughout the community, resulting in improved outcomes for our youth.”

- Tammy Gabel, Superintendent
Black Oak Mine Unified School District

Through a \$3 million Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant awarded to the Black Oak Mine Unified School District in 2005, the community built sustainable structures to improve supports and opportunities so that all youth would graduate from high school ready to navigate the larger world of postsecondary learning and meaningful work. That work was guided by the Georgetown Divide Ready by 21 Coalition, a broad partnership with over 100 active members clustered into age-based work groups. A Youth Advocate position was established to promote youth engagement across the community’s efforts.

During the Quality Counts Challenge, local leaders strengthened the Coalition and established it as an independent nonprofit intermediary organization. They adopted a major focus on strengthening quality and, in partnership with the Sacramento-based Youth Development Network, expanded an already rich menu of professional development opportunities promoting common language, norms and research-based practices

across the settings where youth spend time. Parents, teachers, principals, youth workers and others who are important in the lives of youth (storekeepers, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, etc.) have benefitted from such trainings.

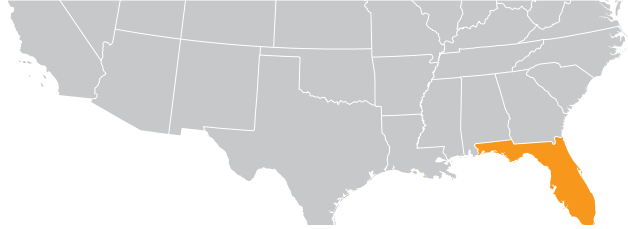
Through the Quality Counts Challenge, the Divide implemented the Youth Program Quality Intervention to assess and improve the quality of after-school and prevention programs as well as classroom instruction. Trained assessors observe programs and classrooms and provide feedback and coaching to staff. Staff then develop specific improvement plans and can access training in areas that need work.

Community leaders were so excited about their experience that they developed a video describing how positive youth development practices are being implemented and strengthened across the community. The community and school district have been recognized for their successes as three-time winners of the America’s Promise Alliance 100 Best Communities for Young People competition, several California Distinguished School recognitions, a Federal Title I Academic Achievement Award and the California Exemplary Career Technical Education Award.



Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet: Keep the Connections Challenge

Since 1998, the Forum for Youth Investment has worked with state policy makers to coordinate and align state efforts to improve outcomes for children and youth. The Keep the Connections mini-challenge is designed to guarantee that the work of state children's cabinets – crucial big-picture state policy coordinating bodies – is not only maintained, but strengthened through gubernatorial transitions. The six states selected to be a part of this work are Maine, Florida, Tennessee, Iowa, Ohio and Georgia.



In 2007, Florida Gov. Charlie Crist signed into law a piece of legislation that created Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet. The statute was built off of years of best practice knowledge accumulated by the Forum-managed Children's Cabinet Network. As a result, a policy coordinating body was set up that had all the pieces necessary to change outcomes for kids in the state of Florida.

In the short time it has existed, Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet has implemented a number of important initiatives. These include: creating a Children's Budget to examine how much various state agencies spend on children and youth, and developing a Children and Youth Information Sharing System so that state agencies can work together and spend less time on paperwork and more time serving young people.

As Florida faced a gubernatorial transition in 2010, the Children and Youth Cabinet risked losing the valuable momentum they had built up over the previous three years. The policy team at the Forum chose Florida to participate in the Keep the Connections Challenge so that the Cabinet could continue its good work uninterrupted by the political cycle and become an even stronger force for children and youth during the next administration.



Following the assessment, the Forum worked with the Cabinet to identify a group of diverse external stakeholders who were committed to its ongoing success. The stakeholder group included representatives from the United Way, state-wide advocacy groups, the youth services provider community, members of the Florida state legislature, members of the judiciary and career agency staff members.

This group of external stakeholders convened several times before and after the election. Together, with support from the Forum, the group decided on a core set of messages and delivered them to the governor-elect and the gubernatorial transition team through a cabinet brochure, talking points and grassroots advocacy. There is every indication that Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet will emerge from this transition stronger than ever and that its work will continue to improve the lives of children and youth across the state.

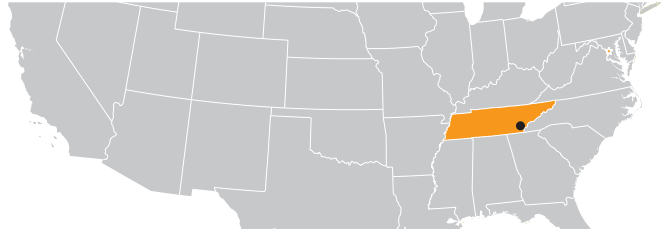
"A good transition plan will help us to ensure some continuity with the many Cabinet initiatives we have already embarked on. Experienced technical assistance in this planning process is crucial for our Cabinet to remain viable as it is handed off to new leadership."

*- Jim Kallinger, Chief Child Advocate
Executive Office of the Governor, State of Florida*

Beginning in April, the policy team worked with the Children and Youth Cabinet to complete a 360° assessment that evaluated the Cabinet on 21 key metrics that correspond with Ready by 21's leader capacity areas: Broader Partnerships, Bigger Goals, Better Data and Bolder Strategies. The Cabinet plans to use the assessment and resulting recommendations from the Forum to convene a new Cabinet member orientation meeting and set the course of action for the next several years.

Chattanooga, TN: Southeast Challenge

Chattanooga is one of six communities selected for the first cohort of the Southeast Cities Challenge, an initiative built around the Ready by 21 Standards and Solutions, to develop core leadership capacities that are critical to improving outcomes from birth to young adulthood. These communities have committed to demonstrate improvements in their leadership capacities and how those changes impact the supports that are needed to improve outcomes for children and youth. For more on the Challenge, see page 9.



It is no accident that Chattanooga was selected as one of six communities to participate in the Ready by 21 National Partnership's first major community challenge in the Southeast. The movement started with Linda McReynolds, Senior Vice President of Community Impact at United Way of Greater Chattanooga, who was inspired by the Ready by 21 message at a May 2009 United Way of America conference. She followed up with a request for a Ready by 21 presentation at an upcoming United Way Annual Campaign Kickoff Luncheon. Chattanooga had been selected to be the home of a new Volkswagen plant. Local leaders knew they had to prepare their community to take advantage of this opportunity and to have the skilled and educated workforce needed to compete for the higher skilled jobs that Volkswagen was bringing to Chattanooga. They saw the Ready by 21 Standards and Solutions as the right fit for the work they wanted to do.

"Chattanooga is committed to the [Ready by 21 Southeast] Challenge to see that the resources and supports are in place for every child to succeed in work and life."

- Linda McReynolds
Senior Vice President of Community Impact
United Way of Greater Chattanooga

The first Ready by 21 visit to Chattanooga was structured to meet the Chattanooga leaders where they were; the team listened to the leaders report on the status of their community through a Ready by 21 lens. Chattanooga had a core team of leaders from a range of stakeholders and sectors who were interested in working to improve their leadership capacity. Based on the community's readiness for Ready by 21 work, Chattanooga was invited to participate in the Southeast Cities Challenge along with five other communities. Chattanooga went through a Leadership Capacity Audit to gauge the community's leadership work against

clear and defined Ready by 21 Standards. The Chattanooga core team is now implementing a plan to address and strengthen broader partnerships, bigger goals, better data and planning and bolder strategies in their work related to children and youth.

The Ready by 21 work in Chattanooga is moving forward under United Way of Greater Chattanooga's Invest in Children and Youth Advisory Committee. The committee has identified five common goals for children and youth, covering the insulated education pipeline from prenatal care to post-secondary success, and formed action planning teams for each goal. Importantly, to strengthen participation in their work, committee members are intentionally reaching out to faith, law enforcement and medical communities, as well as to youth and parents. To better align its efforts across the greater Chattanooga community, the Chattanooga Ready by 21 team is forming a network of out-of-school time providers, whose goal is to build a system to measure and improve program quality (with the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality).

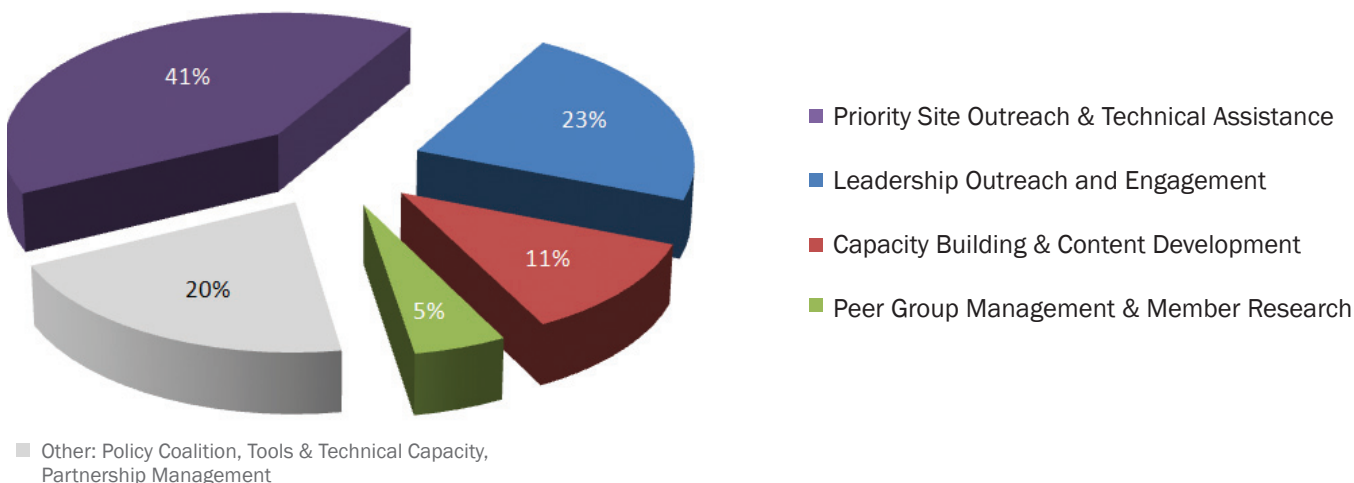
Chattanooga is also creating a map and inventory of the community's current coalitions and initiatives in order to better align them and reduce duplication. And it has begun tracking the accomplishments of its leadership committee in the Ready by 21 Workstation, an online data sharing platform. Its action committees are establishing baselines for the indicators within the desired goals, so that leaders will be prepared to publicly account for their progress.



READY BY 21 PROJECTS

As of fall 2010, \$33.5 million in total funds have been raised (toward an ambitious \$100 million goal) to support joint Partnership work and individual partners' efforts from 2009-2014. The Ready by 21 National Partnership funds enable Mobilization Partners to bring the Ready by 21 key ideas, tools and strategies to scale around the country. With those funds, partners develop and pursue a variety of projects to promote Ready by 21 to their members, build their staff capacity at the national and local levels, and provide targeted supports to their members in select communities. The chart below shows how the majority of Partnership funds were allocated across four project areas targeted for work with leaders in places. (Note: Approximately 20 percent of funds are for major tool development, national policy and partnership management activities such as evaluation and fund development.)

FUND ALLOCATION CHART



Leadership Outreach and Engagement

Conferences, Presentations and Convenings:

- United Way Worldwide (UWW) is leveraging its annual staff and leadership convenings to highlight Ready by 21 strategies and partners. The UWW education team led nine sessions on Ready by 21 at the March 2010 Staff Summit/Community Leaders Conference near Washington, DC, and hosted a Ready by 21 Breakfast at the May 2009 UWW Staff Leaders Conference in Detroit, MI.
- American Association of School Administrators (AASA) spotlighted Ready by 21 at its March 2010 National Conference on Education in Phoenix, AZ.
- AASA staff leaders and members are also presenting at their state association meetings, including Kentucky and Ohio in summer 2010.
- Corporate Voices for Working Families (Corporate Voices) spotlighted Ready by 21 and workforce readiness throughout its May 2010 Annual Meeting, including a panel on K-12 education and business partnerships, highlighting Louisville, KY.
- National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and the Forum for Youth Investment (the Forum) co-convened teams of state legislators and executive branch leaders from Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina and Tennessee in Nashville for the 5th annual Youth Policy Institute in September 2009. These teams of leaders developed plans to bring Ready by 21 ideas and tools back home to strengthen and align their states' youth-oriented policy work and leadership structures.
- The Forum will bring the Ready by 21 "insulated pipeline" perspective into the Next Generation Learning Initiative convenings sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the Stupski Foundation.
- Search Institute highlighted Ready by 21 at its 2009 national Healthy Communities*Healthy Youth Conference in Cincinnati, OH. Over 1,000 leaders, both youth and adults, were introduced to Ready by 21 strategies and tools through plenary and small-group learning sessions. Search has transformed its annual conference, re-positioning the 2010 convening as the bigTent Conference for all those who care about children and youth, with all Ready by 21 Partners serving as founding and/or convening partners.
- NCSL held an issue forum on a range of youth policy issues at its July 2010 Annual Meeting. In conjunction with the meeting, NCSL hosted a site visit to a one-stop service center highlighting the work of the local Ready by 21 efforts and ways they are insulating the education pipeline with other services to children and their families.
- The Forum presented the Ready by 21 Insulated Education Pipeline approach to the NCSL Task Force on Dropout Prevention.
- The Forum presented the Ready by 21 approach and addressed issues relevant to funders at the Associated Grantmakers of Massachusetts in Boston.
- The Forum presented the Ready by 21 ideas to the Voices for America's Children regional convening of advocates.
- The Forum provided a keynote address in a meeting that was telecast among five regions of Maryland to develop local implementation plans of the Ready by 21 Youth in Transition plan for the state.

Webinar Series:

- UWW has conducted: (1) Introduction to Ready by 21, featuring the work of the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley and the United Way of the Capital Area - Austin; (2) Effective School-Community Partnerships with AASA, featuring the work of Valley of the Sun United Way and the United Way of Greater Toledo; (3) Business engagement with Corporate Voices – to share joint toolkit and featuring the work of the United Way of Central Indiana; and (4) Community Schools, with Marty Blank and featuring the work of the United Way of Lehigh Valley and United Way of Salt Lake.
- Corporate Voices presented a series of nine Webinars over 18 months, with initial topics including children's cabinets, policy and funding alignment, workforce readiness research and the earned income tax credit. It presented a Webinar on workforce readiness, including Ready by 21 and their most recent research to the Society for Human Resource Management's business leaders nationwide.
- UWW and Corporate Voices co-presented a Webinar on business community partnerships, highlighting a new toolkit they co-developed.
- Corporate Voices and AASA co-presented a Webinar on building business/education partnerships.
- UWW and AASA co-presented a Webinar on building effective school/community partnerships.
- The Forum hosts a monthly webinar series on key Ready by 21 topics.

Publications and Electronic Communications:

- Corporate Voices created a comprehensive communications platform and supporting materials for promoting workforce readiness and Ready by 21 to businesses and sector leaders.
- AASA featured an article by Karen Pittman on college and career readiness in June 2010 *The School Administrator*.
- NCSL produces a monthly *Youth Policy News* for legislators and other state policy makers interested in youth issues, highlighting relevant news, research, legislation and other efforts to coordinate and align using a Ready by 21 approach.
- The Forum's monthly *Ready Picks* e-newsletter delivers information on recent research and reports that relate to the four Building Blocks for Effective Change.

Public Policy:

- Corporate Voices and the Forum are co-leading the Ready by 21 Policy Coalition. For details, see the sidebar on this page.
- The Forum presented Ready by 21 at the Virginia Municipal League conference in fall 2010 and began talks with several cities that wanted to learn more and take the lessons home. The Forum will test the model of conducting a City Youth Policy Institute for a cluster of cities in one state.
- The Forum is building support for a National Youth Council among federal policy makers and national youth voice organizations.

FOCUS ON PUBLIC POLICY

With the goal of aligning federal policies with state and local efforts on the ground, the Forum for Youth Investment, in partnership with Corporate Voices for Working Families, launched the Ready by 21 Policy Coalition in 2009.

Coalition members have participated in numerous briefings with Capitol Hill and Executive Branch staff members, and co-authored letters to members of Congress and feedback about Administration statements and regulations. An October 2010 Hill briefing introduced Ready by 21 to 90 Congressional staff members – including many from the six Southeast communities that are implementing a Ready by 21 approach – as well as policy experts from several federal agencies and numerous advocacy allies.

At the Hill briefing, the Coalition unveiled its new policy alignment guide. The *Ready by 21 Policy Alignment Guide* helps policy makers ensure that new child and youth policies align with existing efforts, in order to create a seamless system of supports. The guide can be used to inform any policy that creates a funding stream related to children and youth, no matter what specific topic it addresses (e.g., education, youth employment or juvenile justice) and no matter what form it takes (e.g., a legislative statute, an executive order, or an agency or foundation Request for Proposals).

The guide makes the case for policy alignment and provides an overview of strategies to ensure that policies align with existing efforts to: collaborate, establish big-picture goals and long-term plans, administer grants, engage young people in decision-making, improve quality and accountability, collect and use data to drive decision-making and provide a flexible set of child and youth services. It also provides concrete examples and specific policy language that can be used when drafting or amending legislation.

NOTE: the Ready by 21 Policy Coalition is distinct from the Ready by 21 National Partnership. The Ready by 21 Policy Coalition's recommendations do not necessarily reflect the positions of any individual member of the Ready by 21 National Partnership nor those of the Ready by 21 Partnership as a whole, which does not take official policy positions.

UWW – United Way Worldwide

AASA – American Association of School Administrators

NCSL – National Conference of States Legislatures

NCY – National Collaboration for Youth

Capacity Building and Content Development

Articles, Briefs and White Papers:

- Corporate Voices published findings from a series of surveys of employers, entitled, *What Are Business Leaders Saying About Workforce Readiness?*
- AASA and Corporate Voices co-produced *Common Goals, Unique Strengths: Education and Business Partnerships*.
- Search Institute co-wrote a paper on merging top-down/bottom-up community mobilization and coalition building strategies.
- NCSL created an issue brief on Tennessee's fiscal mapping project.
- The Forum developed an integrated data sharing statement for the Children's Cabinet Network and a publication in partnership with the Data Quality Campaign on creating data linkages across state agencies.
- Corporate Voices published new micro-business case studies that spotlight businesses making significant contributions to postsecondary completion through progressive talent development practices that increase access to career opportunities through education and training.
- Corporate Voices published *From an 'Ill-Prepared' to a Well-Prepared Workforce: The Shared Imperatives for Employers and Community Colleges to Collaborate* to discuss the imperative for collaborations between industry and community colleges. The paper highlights promising practices in employer and community college partnerships, and recommends a set of public and private policies to support the growth of these partnerships in the future.
- The Forum publishes two series of issue briefs: the *Out of School Time Issue Brief* and *Ready by 21, Credentialed by 26*
- National Collaboration for Youth CEO Irv Katz wrote a blog for *Youth Today*, "Youth Orgs Should Ride 'Superman's' Cape," that was also featured in newsletters to thousands of youth and community stakeholders.

Audience-Specific Toolkits and Training Development:

- Corporate Voices and UWW co-developed the *Business Engagement Toolkit for Community-Based Organizations* on effective business engagement strategies.
- Corporate Voices created a Business Engagement Menu for community and business leaders.
- Corporate Voices, with guidance from the Forum for Youth Investment, developed *Business Engagement Stakeholders Wheel: Identifying Business Leaders in the Community*.
- Corporate Voices developed *Call to Action, Ready by 21 Business Engagement Menu: Increasing Communications Between Business and Community Leaders*.

Peer Group Management and Member Research

Peer Working/Advisory Groups:

- UWW awarded five capacity-building grants to local United Ways in the Southeast (Chattanooga, Louisville, Cincinnati, Richmond and Atlanta).
- UWW initiated a Learning Community with an in-person meeting at the March 2010 Staff Summit. UWW's Learning Community is comprised of senior staff from the five local United Ways in the Southeast that have been awarded UWW capacity-building grants to strengthen their ability to lead and/or participate in intensive Ready by 21 work locally. The Learning Community meets

monthly via conference calls and Webinars and provides an opportunity for cross-site learning and a source of strategic advice to UWW on the integration of Ready by 21 into UWW strategies and the development of tailored Ready by 21 tools for the UWW system. As this group matures, these leaders will be deployed to provide outreach to the broader system on Ready by 21 strategies.

- AASA convened its Ready by 21 School System Leaders Peer Workgroup in person and via Webinar. The 22 superintendents on the Workgroup are learning about Ready by 21 and advising AASA on how the strategies and tools can best support school administrators nationwide. As part of the Peer Workgroup, Superintendent Bill Hughes of Greendale completed a comprehensive inventory and gap analysis of current youth services and integrated Ready by 21 principles into Greendale's Partners for Community Action.
- Corporate Voices developed a Ready by 21 Business Leadership Team (formerly Working Group) as part of its larger Workforce Readiness Task Force. The teams convene quarterly by conference call to provide feedback on Corporate Voices content and tools development and for peer-to-peer learning.
- NCSL convened a 12- to 15-member Legislative Youth Advisory Group by phone and in person during annual meetings to advise NCSL and build their capacity around youth issues and the use of Ready by 21 strategies.
- Through Take the Challenge Home mini grants, Search Institute engaged five local coalition builders in peer learning about what it takes to integrate top-down and bottom-up approaches to community change.
- National Collaboration for Youth (NCY) recruited 17 Ready by 21 Champions who were appointed by NCY members' CEOs. Twelve Champions attended and met at the 2009 Search Institute conference. In late 2010, NCY reconvened its peer group via conference call and began recruiting additional Champions, and plans monthly calls throughout 2011.
- The Forum hosted a set of two meetings in August 2009 for state policy makers to interact with national experts as well as federal policy makers on the topics of postsecondary education success and the importance of cross agency data sharing to improve outcomes for children.
- The Forum convened two virtual roundtables for state leaders from the Children's Cabinet Network and one in-person roundtable in Washington, DC, with the Federal Interagency Working Group on Children and Youth, in addition to their regular bi-monthly conference calls on topics of interest to the network.
- The Forum held a two-day convening of America's Youth Councils in October 2009, with 40 youth and adult staff from state and local youth councils participating in peer-to-peer learning and a Capitol Hill briefing, in addition to their bi-monthly peer to peer conference calls.
- AASA convened 15 urban and 14 rural school districts to form Urban and Rural Healthy Schools Coalitions. These working groups meet to share resources and to discuss the unique needs of urban and rural districts in addressing the barriers and implementing strategies to creating and maintaining healthy school environments.
- AASA convened four districts for a School Improvement Lead District Collaborative to implement comprehensive systems of learning and student supports to improve educational outcomes.

Research Studies, Surveys and Focus Groups:

- AASA conducted three focus groups with superintendents in February 2010 to learn about their school/community partnerships. Data gathered will inform a publication on collaboration due out in spring 2011.
- AASA issued a survey to its members regarding school/community partnerships. Survey findings are informing tool development and training plans for 2010-2011. Of the more than 1,000 respondents, nearly 200 expressed interest in learning more about Ready by 21 strategies and offerings.
- The Forum interviewed 13 states about their collection and use of data in order to understand the data sharing needs across state agencies. It also interviewed states on their progress in developing postsecondary supports for youth transitioning to adulthood.
- Corporate Voices conducted an annual member survey of corporate goals and expectations around workforce readiness. Corporate Voices also conducted two focus groups with corporate Chief Learning Officers on what works in entry-level workforce development and community investments.
- Corporate Voices engaged research partners from McBassi and Conference Board to develop an economic study and tool on the financial return on investments in workforce readiness activities.
- Search Institute conducted research and published *Teen Voice 2010: Relationships that Matter to America's Teens*, a national study of 15-year-olds that examined their "sparks," voice and relationships.
- AASA engaged five states (WI, MI, KY, MT, IN) in building the capacity of school administrator associations and school board associations to collaborate to reduce the burden on children with chronic illnesses and the negative effects on student achievement. AASA further engaged communities (in those five states) to increase the capacity of parents and community groups to work with school leaders and schools to strengthen policies and practices to improve children's health.

Priority Site Outreach and Technical Assistance

Challenge and Mini-Challenge Grants:

- UWW awarded five capacity-building grants to local United Ways in the Southeast (Chattanooga, Louisville, Northern Kentucky/Cincinnati, Richmond and Atlanta) in April 2010 to help them work effectively across the age continuum and to provide leadership and support to Ready by 21 efforts in their communities. Sites were selected after extensive assessments, interviews, site visits and an Invitation for Proposals process. Grantees have formed a Learning Community and convene monthly. UWW is also working with its Council of States to build the capacity of UW state associations to support Ready by 21 strategies and to align state policy development efforts.

Priority Site Outreach:

- Corporate Voices developed landscape analyses for 14 cities in the Southeast with potential for being part of the first cohort of the Southeast Challenge.
- Corporate Voices provided targeted technical assistance and facilitated corporate introductions, as requested, for cities participating in the first cohort of the Southeast Challenge.
- The Forum provided ongoing assistance to Florida's and Tennessee's state children's budget analyses.
- AASA has participated in several site visits, including Northern Kentucky, Chattanooga and Louisville, helping to facilitate and strengthen school leaders' participation in local Ready by 21 efforts.
- The Forum facilitated and advised Minnesota legislators as they formed a child and youth legislative caucus using a Ready by 21 approach over multiple retreats and meetings.
- The Forum provided long-distance coaching and technical assistance to the community of Petaluma, CA, as it developed its Ready by 21 action plan.

FOCUS ON POSTSECONDARY SUCCESS

With support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Forum for Youth Investment has intensified its focus on the transition to adulthood, with a new emphasis on the power of postsecondary credentials in moving low-income families out of poverty. Over the past year the Forum has convened state policy makers and youth development leaders on this subject, engaged its Children's Cabinet Network to determine the extent of their focus on and interest in postsecondary success and launched the Ready by 21, Credentialed by 26 issue brief series. Forum staff have conducted site visits to several community colleges and youth organizations focused on increasing the success of low-income college students and collaborated with the Campaign for Youth to compile examples of innovative partnerships between community-based organizations (CBOs) and community colleges in preparation for the first-ever White House Summit on Community Colleges.

The Ready by 21 Partnership has also embraced postsecondary success as a goal and will launch a mini-challenge in 2011 to help 3-5 local child/youth-focused coalitions articulate goals and strategies for ensuring low-income young people can access the academic, basic (transportation, health care, financing) and social (high expectations, supportive relationships) supports they will need to successfully complete a credential. Several of the Southeast Challenge cities have articulated specific goals related to postsecondary success as part of their current Ready by 21 efforts and are actively engaging higher education stakeholders in their work to insulate the full education pipeline.

In other Partnership activities, the Forum will work with Corporate Voices for Working Families to further articulate the positive role that employers can play in supporting postsecondary success. It will also work with the National Collaboration for Youth to further engage the youth development sector and to articulate the role that youth development principles and organizations play in postsecondary access and success.



PARTNERS AND WORKGROUPS

Ready by 21 is strengthened by an incredible and growing team of staff and field leaders among the National Mobilization and Technical Partners. In addition to the strong staff teams that all partners have assembled, most Mobilization Partners have also convened working groups of their members to test, adapt and champion the Ready by 21 ideas and tools for their respective constituencies. We appreciate the following individuals and organizations for their contributions to the Partnership and for modeling the idea of “doing business differently” to improve outcomes for children and youth.

FOUNDING PARTNER

The Forum for Youth Investment

www.forumfyi.org

Karen Pittman
Merita Irby
Kiley Bednar
Bob Bowen
Ian Faigley
Andrea Felix
Kris Minor
Larry Pasti
Stephanie Randall
Rob Schamberg
Aja Taylor

- Krista Parent, South Lane School District (OR)
- David Pennington, Ponca City Public Schools (OK)
- Stan Sawyer, Westbrook School System (ME)
- Kevin Settle, Mount Vernon City Schools, District 80 (IL)
- Quintin Shepard, Amboy Community Unit School District #272 (IL)
- Rob Slaby, Storey County School District (NV)
- Kim Stasny, Oxford School District (MS)
- Barbara Thompson, Montgomery Public Schools (AL)
- Terry Thompson, M.S.D. of Wayne Township (IN)
- Earl Watkins, Jackson Public Schools (MS)
- Sam King, Rockdale County Public School District (GA)

SIGNATURE PARTNER

United Way Worldwide

www.liveunited.org

Nina Sazer O'Donnell
Ayeola Fortune
Heather Padgett

United Way Worldwide Peer Working Group Members

- Atlanta: Katrina Mitchell and Etha Henry
- Richmond: Barbara Couto Sipe and Sandra Booth
- Louisville: MaryKate Poling and Mary Ann Stuetemann
- Cincinnati: Patricia Waldsmith and Barbara Terry
- Chattanooga: Linda McReynolds and Julie Thomsen
- Kentucky: Terry Tolan
- South Carolina: Tim Ervolina

MOBILIZATION PARTNERS

American Association of School Administrators (AASA)

www.aasa.org

Sharon Adams-Taylor
Bryan Joffe
Angela Johnson Davis

AASA Ready by 21 School Systems Leaders Peer Workgroup

Superintendents:

- Jimmy Cunningham, Hampton School District (VA)
- Melinda Thies, Bristol-Warren School District (RI)
- Richard Hasty, Plattsmouth Community Schools (NE)
- Bill Hughes, Greendale School District (WI)
- Judith Johnson, Peekskill Schools (NY)
- Mike Johnson, Bexley City School District (OH)
- Tom Langdon, Big Rapids Public Schools (MI)
- Rick Lyons, M.S.A.D. #22 (ME)
- Kevin Mitchell, Park County School District #1 (WY)
- Steve Norton, Cache County School District (UT)
- Donna Ottaviano, North Providence School Dept (RI)

America's Promise Alliance

www.americaspromise.org

Caroline Brachman
Forrest Moore

Corporate Voices for Working Families

www.corporatevoices.org

John-Anthony Meza
Sara Toland
Jennifer Weber
Dorian Friedman

Corporate Voices Ready by 21 Business Leadership

Team Member Companies

- Abbott Nutrition
- Altria Client Services
- CVS Caremark
- Ford Motor Company Fund
- The TJX Companies, Inc.
- Knowledge Learning Corporation
- Marriott International, Inc.
- KPMG LLP

The Forum for Youth Investment Policy Networks

Thaddeus Ferber
Elizabeth Gaines
Danielle Evannou

Children's Cabinets Network

- Colorado Prevention Leadership Council (CO)
- Statewide Commission on Children, Youth and Families (DC)
- Governor's Children and Youth Cabinet (FL)
- First Lady's Children's Cabinet (GA)
- Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development Council (IA)
- Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund (KS)
- Governor's Children's Cabinet (LA)
- Governor's Children's Cabinet (MD)
- Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet (MA)
- Governor's Children's Cabinet (MI)
- Governor's Children's Cabinet (NM)

- Council on Children and Families (NY)
- Family and Children First Cabinet Council (OH)
- Commission on Children and Youth (OK)
- Commission on Children and Families (OR)
- Governor's Cabinet for Children (PA)
- Governor's Office of Children's Care Coordination (TN)
- Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund (TN)

America's Youth Councils Network

- Arizona Governor's Youth Commission
- Arlington Teen Network Board (VA)
- Boston Mayor's Youth Council (MA)
- Colorado Youth Advisory Council
- Cuyahoga County Youth Advisory Committee (OH)
- DC Youth Advisory Council
- Des Moines Youth Advisory Board (IA)
- Governor's Statewide Youth Council (MA)
- Hampton Youth Commission (VA)
- Indiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council
- Louisiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council
- Maryland Youth Advisory Council
- Mayor's Youth Council Indianapolis (IN)
- MEPB Youth Advisory (IA)
- Minnesota Alliance With Youth
- Multnomah County Youth Commission (OR)
- Nashville Mayor's Youth Council (TN)
- Nebraska Foster Youth Council
- Nebraska Governor's Youth Advisory Council
- Nevada Youth Legislative Issue Forum
- New Hampshire Youth Advisory Council
- New Mexico Youth Alliance
- North Carolina Youth Advisory Council and State Youth Council
- Orange County Youth Bureau (NY)
- Petaluma Youth Network (CA)
- Philadelphia Youth Commission
- San Francisco Youth Commission (CA)
- State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council
- Washington State Legislative Youth Advisory Council
- Westchester County Youth Council (NY)

National Collaboration for Youth

www.collab4youth.org

Irv Katz
Neosho Ponder
Natalie Thompson

National Collaboration for Youth's Ready by 21 Champions

- Ian Bautista, United Neighborhood Centers of America
- Carla Benway, Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.

- Deb Bialeschki, American Camp Association
- Rivka Burstein-Stern, Afterschool Alliance
- Gary Chapman, Communities In Schools
- Geri Anne Elsen, Campfire USA
- Roz Hamby, The Y
- Suzanne Harper, Girls Scouts of the USA
- Susan Houchin, Girls Inc.
- Beth Lovell, Volunteers of America
- Jennifer Neal, Leadership & Renewal Outfitters
- Lisa Schiller, Lutheran Services in America
- Jennifer Sharma, Child Welfare League of America
- Linda Stewart, National Mentoring Partnership
- Terri Sullivan, Search Institute
- Janet Wakefield, Leadership & Renewal Outfitters
- Nicole Yohalem, Forum for Youth Investment

National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)

www.ncsl.org

Jack Tweedie
Rochelle Finzel

NCSL Legislative Youth Advisory Group

- Senator Vivian Figures (AL)
- Senator Mark DeSaulnier (CA)
- Representative John Mizuno (HI)
- Senator Amanda Ragan (IA)
- Representative Steve Butterfield (ME)
- Senator Thomas McGee (MA)
- Representative Joe Mullery (MN)
- Representative Carolyn M. Gargas (NH)
- Representative Marvin Lucas (NC)
- Representative Louise Bishop (PA)
- Representative Tony Payton (PA)
- Representative John DeBerry (TN)
- Senator Yvonne Miller (VA)

Search Institute

www.search-institute.org

Gene Roehlkepartain
Terri Sullivan

"Take the Challenge Home" Learning Circle Members

- Joan Bickweat, Rochester Monroe County Youth Bureau (NY)
- Cindy Carlson, Hampton Coalition for Youth (VA)
- Cindy Lawrence, Nashville, TN
- Laura Hansen, Nashville Mayor's Children and Youth Master Plan
- Susan Ragsdale, Nashville Youth Coalition
- Barry Nelson, Metro Youth Partnership (MN)
- Mary Schissel, Mason City Youth Task Force (IA)

TECHNICAL PARTNERS

Child Trends

www.childtrends.org

Sharon Vandivere

Community Systems Group

www.communitysystemsgroup.com

Jeff Stowell
Paul Evensen

The Finance Project

www.financeproject.org

Shawn Griffin

The Gallup Organization

www.gallup.com

Valerie Calderon

nFocus Software

www.nfocus.com

Ananda Roberts

Results Leadership Group, LLC

www.resultsleadership.org

Karen Finn
JaNay Queen

SparkAction

www.sparkaction.org

Caitlin Johnson

David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality

www.cypq.org
Charles Smith
Tom Devaney



Ready by 21 strategies are being used in local and state efforts nationwide. The following states and cities are engaged in activities that are directly or indirectly informed by Ready by 21 strategies and tools.

SOUTHEAST CHALLENGE – FIRST COHORT

Atlanta, GA

Brad Bryant, *Georgia Department of Education*

Dr. Jean Walker, *United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta*

Chattanooga, TN

Linda McReynolds, *United Way of Greater Chattanooga*

Dr. Mary Tanner, *University of Tennessee-Chattanooga*

Louisville, KY

Mary Kate Poling, *Metro United Way*

Mary Gwen Wheeler, *Louisville Metropolitan Government*

Nashville, TN

Danielle Mezera, *Office of the Mayor*

Northern Kentucky

Polly Lusk-Page, *Northern Kentucky Education Council*

Patricia Waldsmith, *United Way of Greater Cincinnati*

Richmond, VA

Barbara Couto Sipe, *United Way of Richmond and Petersburg*

Cheryl Henig, *Bridging Richmond*

QUALITY COUNTS SITES

Georgetown Divide, CA

Stephanie Root, *Georgetown Divide Ready by 21, Inc.*

Columbus, IN

Jacque Douglas, *Council for Youth Development*

Rose Ellen Adams, *Childhood Connections*

Indianapolis, IN

John Brandon, *MCCOY*

Iowa (state-wide)

Steve Michael, *Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development*

Amy Croll, *Community! Youth Concepts*

Kentucky (state-wide)

Rebecca DeJarnatt, *Louisville Office of Youth Development*

Grand Rapids, MI

Lynn Heemstra, *Our Community's Children*

St. Louis, MO

Ron Jackson, *St. Louis for Kids*

Claire Wyneken, *Wyman Center*

New York (state-wide)

Matt Beck, *New York State Office of Child and Family Services*

Oklahoma (state-wide)

Sonia Johnson, *Oklahoma Afterschool Network*

Sharon Rodine, *Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy*

Rhode Island (state-wide)

Joseph Morra, *Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance*

Elizabeth Devaney, *Providence After School Alliance*

Nashville, TN

Michael McSurdy, *Oasis Center*

Austin, TX

Candy Markman, *Mayor's Afterschool Initiatives Austin, TX*

Suzanne Hershey, *Austin Ready by 21 Coalition*

Laura Garcia, *Greater Capital Area United Way*

Washington (state-wide)

Schools Out Washington

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND ASSET-BUILDING CHALLENGE

Asheville and Buncombe County, NC

Ann Von Brock, *United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County*

Gina Gallo, *United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County*

Fort Myers, FL

Shannon Lane, *Fort Myers Youth Services Coalition*

Wicomico County, MD

Linda Hardman, *Wicomico County Partnership for Families and Children*

KEEP THE CONNECTIONS CHALLENGE STATES

Florida Children and Youth Cabinet

Georgia Children's Cabinet

Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development

Maine Children's Cabinet

Ohio Children and Family First Cabinet Council

Tennessee Governor's Office of Children's Care Coordination

UWW OUT OF SCHOOL TIME SITES

New Orleans, LA

Phoenix, AZ

Minneapolis, MN

SEARCH INSTITUTE'S TAKE THE CHALLENGE HOME

Monroe County, NY

Mason City, IA

Hampton, VA

Moorehead, MN

Nashville, TN

OTHER CITIES AND STATES USING READY BY 21 COACHING THROUGH LOCAL PLANNING PROCESSES

Spartanburg, SC

Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Jackson, MS

Petaluma, CA

Massachusetts

Maryland



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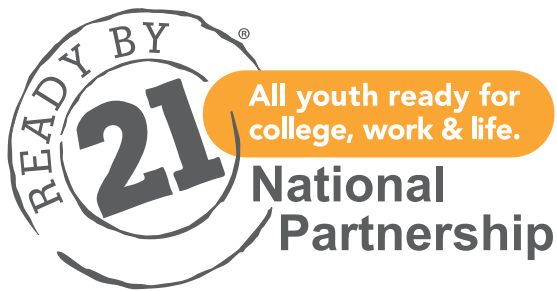
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To learn more about Ready by 21 or the Ready by 21 National Partnership, contact 202-207-3330 or youth@forumfyi.org,

Ready by 21 | c/o The Forum for Youth Investment | 7064 Eastern Avenue NW | Washington, DC 20012
www.readyby21.org

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