



**The Forum for Youth Investment
President and Chief Executive Officer
Washington, D.C.**

Moving Ideas to Impact

THE SEARCH

The Forum for Youth Investment (Forum) invites applications and nominations for its next President & Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Founded in 1998, the Forum is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan “action tank” committed to changing the odds that all children and youth are “ready by 21” – ready for college, work, and life. The Forum connects leaders to ideas, services, and networks that can help them make more intentional decisions that are good for young people. The Forum has transitioned from its start as a Washington, D.C.-based think tank to an action tank working with national, state, and local leaders in more than 35 states. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., more than 50 staff and dozens of consultants are associated with the Forum’s primary teams in Washington, D.C., Ypsilanti, Michigan, and New York City. The Forum’s \$10 million budget is funded by a mix of foundations and corporations, and a fee-for-service contract base.

Building on the inspired leadership of the Forum’s co-founder and first CEO, Karen Pittman, the next CEO will lead a thriving organization that advances equity, research, policy, and practice across all the systems and settings that shape young people’s lives. The Forum has consistently taken a youth-centered approach and nimbly moved into a variety of different areas with great success. The Forum’s dedication to changing the trajectory of young people’s lives and working across a variety of sectors has given the organization a strong national reputation and extensive networks.

The next CEO will assess the organization’s activities and operations in a new political and social environment. With this knowledge in hand, the CEO will work with staff and the Board to set a forward-looking strategic direction and objectives for the organization. To be successful, the next CEO will be a visionary and experienced leader, oriented to the future while building on the past. The CEO will exemplify the core values of quality, transparency, collaboration, respect, leadership, risk taking, accountability, and improvement. The Forum has committed to becoming

an antiracist organization; the CEO must be prepared to deeply and boldly engage with internal and external constituencies to address challenging societal issues, including injustice and racism.

ABOUT THE FORUM

The Forum was co-founded in 1998 by Karen Pittman and Merita Irby. Karen has served as its founding CEO and will transition to a Senior Fellow at the Forum in February 2021. Under Karen's leadership, the Forum has established deep roots as a national nonprofit, nonpartisan "action tank" – combining thought leadership on youth development, youth policy, cross-system/cross-sector partnerships, and developmental youth practice with on-the-ground training, technical assistance, and supports.

The Forum helps leaders think differently about what it takes to manage and sustain change so that they are more motivated to act differently and, ultimately, act together as a part of an allied youth field. Three strategic approaches have guided the Forum's work since its inception:

- **Strengthening Practices & Programs:** The Forum empowers youth development, education, and human service system leaders to adopt, implement, and scale management, staff policies, and practices that ensure young people have access to high quality, coordinated supports they need to succeed.
- **Planning & Partnering for Impact:** The Forum supports boundary-spanning leaders charged with creating or implementing plans that require a focus on the bigger picture. The Forum helps leaders connect the dots across complex and sometimes competing goals, services, plans, and partners.
- **Improving & Aligning Policies:** The Forum helps policymakers, funders, advocates, and rising leaders increase their capacity by aligning with other advocates, departments, sectors, and levels of government to use data and evidence to support the whole child and pursue racial and social equity.

To further these three strategic approaches, the Forum is the organizational home to:

Technical Assistance & Action Centers

- **The David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality** builds the capacity of public and private agencies to implement quality improvement and performance systems that simultaneously foster professional learning and whole-child development with the purpose of improving social sector outcomes. The Weikart Center's research-based core products and services are currently used in over 4,800 out-of-school time settings nationally and form the basis for quality improvement systems in over 140 publicly and privately funded systems. The Weikart Center empowers education and human service

leaders to adapt, implement, and scale best-in-class, research-validated quality-improvement systems to advance child and youth development.

- **Big Picture Approach Training & Consulting** consolidates in one technical assistance center the Forum’s learning, coaching, technical assistance, facilitation, and actionable data services focused on mobilizing the work of community coalitions and partnerships. Big Picture Approach Training & Consulting works with leaders who are boundary-spanning, innovative systems thinkers who use their full sphere of influence to change the odds for children and youth. Those leaders are in partnerships, coalitions, and networks and the community catalysts, intermediaries, and backbone organizations that support them; governmental coordinating bodies; and public systems, multi-service agencies, and youth-serving organizations at the national and local level.
- **SparkAction** is a collaborative online storytelling and advocacy platform, managed by the Forum, to mobilize action for and by young people. SparkAction is a neutral brand that cuts across the silos and creates a central “megaphone” to mobilize like-minded adults and youth around calls to action. The Forum also provides behind-the-scenes supports to help organizations and advocates use digital technology and old-fashioned communications savvy to reach and move their audiences. The Forum has been successful launching and running campaigns and communications projects for Raise the Age New York, the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act, Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance (CTJJA), Opportunity Youth United (OYU), and more.

Networks & Initiatives

- **The Children’s Cabinet Networks** bring together federal, state, and local leaders to assess and align government policies horizontally (across systems) and vertically (across levels of government). The Networks consist of the Local Children’s Cabinet Network (in partnership with the Education Redesign Lab at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Children’s Funding Project) and the State Children’s Cabinet Network (in partnership with the National Governors Association). The Forum also works to support policy alignment at the federal level, for example, by partnering with the American Institutes for Research to provide technical assistance to the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (the federal government’s current closest equivalent to a children’s cabinet). Members of these networks share best practices and learn more about tools that focus on bringing efficiency and effectiveness to their efforts to improve outcomes for young people.
- **The Opportunity Youth Network**, managed by the Forum in partnership with the Aspen Forum for Community Solutions and Gap Inc., has brought together the country’s leading philanthropists, corporations, federal government officials, nonprofits, and formerly disconnected youth to work together to reconnect one million opportunity youth in five years. The Opportunity Youth Network (OYN) was launched in March 2013 to capitalize

on the momentum created by the White House Council on Community Solutions, which brought new visibility and focus to the needs of opportunity youth. Opportunity youth – also commonly referred to as disconnected youth – are the 5.5 million young people 16-to-24-years-old in the United States who are currently not in school and not employed.

- **Opportunity Nation** aims to address and assist in disrupting social and racial inequity in America, using data to tell the full story of opportunity and to re-imagine the ‘American Dream’ for all people, despite their zip codes. Opportunity Nation’s goal is to continue to highlight, collect, and write the stories that matter to communities. Through the efforts of Opportunity Nation partners, the Local Opportunity Index, and a commitment to young leaders and communities of color, Opportunity Nation works to combat the generational impact that racism has played in advancing access for Black, Indigenous, and people of color.
- **The Readiness Projects** advance work informed by science and grounded in practice, supporting adults in all settings and systems across the diverse youth fields. The Forum, the National Urban League, and the American Institutes for Research have united to devote time, resources, and perspectives to stimulate equity-driven solutions and policies through the Readiness Projects. Together, it is possible to dramatically change the odds for youth if the nation commits to upending inequities, embracing science-informed strategies, and accelerating progress. With additional partners, the Readiness Projects accelerate work that demands equitable learning and development opportunities, and builds on the strengths of people working at all levels to help children, youth, and young adults thrive.
- **The Evidence-Based Policy and Practice Initiative**, launched in 2015 to leverage the learning the Forum has done in the field and in partnership with the W.T. Grant Foundation, creates proactive strategies to drive the next generation of governmental policy innovations designed to use evidence to improve the quality of programs.

Since 2018, the Forum has also proudly served as the temporary fiscal home for the Detroit-based Youth Development Resource Center (YDRC). The YDRC focuses on empowering youth development providers in Detroit that fill opportunity gaps in youths’ access to quality learning experiences — expanding the time, places, and ways in which youth learn and grow.

For more information, please visit <http://www.forumfyi.org>.

THE ROLE

The CEO provides overall leadership for the Forum and works collaboratively with its Board of Directors to establish strategic priorities. The CEO will work in partnership with the Board and the executive leadership team to set and execute long-range goals, strategic initiatives, plans, policies, and procedures that advance the Forum's mission. The CEO represents the organization to key external stakeholders and ensures that the Forum continues to be an active and influential contributor to addressing youth issues and youth policy. Three Executive Vice Presidents and a Chief Operating Officer report to the CEO, and along with two Vice Presidents, comprise the seasoned executive team.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Substantial opportunities await the new CEO in the future. Specific opportunities and challenges include the following:

Set a strategic vision that accelerates the Forum's impact on equity for youth

The next CEO will lead the organization through important conversations about the Forum's programs and lay out a well-organized and inspiring plan for the future. Helping all young people be ready by 21 – ready for college, work and life – is the vision that drives the Forum's work. The organization's current activities align strongly with this mission. These activities are, however, expansive, covering point of service up through federal public policy. The challenge will be clearly connecting these components, setting direction and benchmarks for the organization's continued growth, remaining disciplined and mission-oriented about strategic goals and big ideas to pursue.

Advance the Forum's development as an antiracist organization

Equity is at the core of the Forum's mission. This work includes transforming systems of learning and development in school and out, enhancing systems of support for the most marginalized young people, and striving to evaluate and dismantle structural racism and implicit bias in the systems and settings where young people spend their time. The CEO sets the tone for the organization and communicates publicly its commitment to equity and antiracism. The Forum can become a bridge between education, youth development, and social justice organizations.

The Forum is simultaneously further focusing its commitment to diversity and equity in its external work and turning this lens inwards to its organizational practices and processes. The next CEO will lead these efforts and ensure that the Forum's internal culture is rooted in diversity, equity, and inclusion for all staff. The CEO will broaden opportunities for organizational leadership and implement structures and processes that result in effective and equitable decision-making.

Connect all parts of the organization

The Forum has grown in an organic way to include a wide array of mission-focused activities. As the Forum grew and brought new programs and initiatives in, the organization successfully operated with a hub and spoke structure. In the last three years the Forum has moved away from this structure and launched an internal initiative, “#OneOrg,” to build out systems, processes, and structures that will better connect its staff and align their work to enhance collective impact. The next CEO will continue to advance this work and, in doing so, will need to prioritize, manage change, and maintain the organization’s entrepreneurial ethos.

Develop an effective and comprehensive strategy for sustainable resource development

The Forum is in excellent financial shape. The organization enjoys a well-diversified stream of funding in large part due to the breadth of its work, its strong reputation, and successful revenue generation by its CEO and other staff leaders. The next CEO is expected to continue to build and grow diversified sources of funding. As these efforts mature, the CEO will need to bring creativity, excellent relationship-building skills, and a clear plan for the staffing required to successfully expand the organization’s budget.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Forum seeks in its next CEO a passionate and proven leader who will confidently build on its successes and deftly guide the organization forward. The CEO will be a captivating communicator who effectively shares its important work with internal and external audiences. The CEO will be committed to and adaptive in their development of people and teams. Building from their strong business and organizational knowledge, the CEO will advance the development of efficient operational structures across the organization. The CEO will work seamlessly with the Forum’s dedicated Board and staff.

While no one candidate will embody every quality, the Forum seeks candidates with many of the following qualifications and attributes:

- A proven record of senior-level experience in youth development, education leadership, philanthropy, nonprofit leadership, business, educational technology, public policy, and/or government.
- Evidence of a commitment to ensuring that all children and youth are ready for college, work, and life.
- Demonstrated skill with developing an innovative vision, leading strategic implementation, setting metrics, and assessing progress and outcomes.
- A history of advancing racial and other forms of social and economic equity.
- Dedicated to empowering and developing staff at all levels.
- A confident, innovative, entrepreneurial, and independent thinker.
- Politically savvy, creative, and intellectually curious.

- Proven fiscal, business, and operational management skills; a record of reliable and responsible financial oversight.
- Knowledgeable about research, policy, and practice on youth issues.
- Experience building partnerships and connections across many sectors; the ability to build alliances across youth fields.
- Experience and success with philanthropy and/or fundraising.
- Superb written and oral communication skills.
- A leadership style centered around learning, growth, humility, and vulnerability.

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications should be sent in confidence via <https://www.imsearch.com/search-detail/S7-773>.

Ericka Miller, Partner
Amy Segal, Managing Associate
Becky Israel, Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller
1300 19th Street NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036

The Forum for Youth Investment is committed to creating a diverse work environment and is proud to be an Equal Opportunity Employer and drug-free workplace, and to comply with ADA regulations as applicable. All applicants are considered for all positions without regard to race, religion, color, sex, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, physical/mental disability, severe/morbid obesity, medical condition, military/veteran status, genetic information, marital status, ethnicity, alienage or any other protected classification, in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws. We encourage individuals of all backgrounds to apply.

If you are a qualified candidate with a disability, please contact the Isaacson, Miller team through the website link above if you require a reasonable accommodation to complete your application.

Forum for Youth Investment Organization Chart
(As of 2/1/21)

