

About the Ready by 21™ National Partners

Leaders are not just public officials. They are individuals in business, government, education and the non-profit sectors, including young people themselves, who have the capacity, motivation and authority to make improvements in young people's lives.

The ultimate goal of the Ready by 21™ Challenge is to ensure that all young people have the supports and opportunities they need to be Ready by 21 – ready for college, work and life. The five year goal is to have a critical mass of leaders in every state across the country that have learned to focus and prioritize differently so that they can set bigger goals, use bolder strategies, be better partners and work together to achieve greater returns on their collective investments. This goal would be impossible for the Forum to achieve without national partners and this critical mass of leaders.

The six partners who in 2007 made formal commitments to work with the Forum to advance the Ready by 21 Challenge represent the education, government, non-profit, business and community philanthropy sectors. Each was chosen because they had pledged to do business differently and sought out the Forum to help in some way. Combined, they have the capacity to inform, support and champion state and local leaders whose commitments are critical to any major change effort:

THE PARTNERS

United Way of America

American Association of School Administrators

America's Promise Alliance

Corporate Voices for Working Families

National Collaboration for Youth

National Conference of State Legislatures

- United Way of America (UWA) is a ubiquitous community resource with over 1,300 local United Ways that serve more than 90 percent of the country and raise and reinvest more than \$1 billion annually to improve child and youth outcomes. In 2007, the United Way of America announced a commitment to expand on its early childhood development national initiatives in response to community requests for ensuring better outcomes for older youth. The United Way of America is working with the Forum to build and implement a complete set of tools, resources and technical assistance that supports children and youth from birth through young adulthood. In 2008, UWA will work with the Forum to create an expanded framework, pilot the use of the Ready by 21 framework and tools in selected places, and provide learning opportunities for all interested local United Ways and community partners. United Way of America is the Ready by 21 signature partner.
- American Association of School Administrators (AASA) is the professional organization for more than 13,000 education leaders. AASA has a history of championing efforts to address non-academic issues that directly affect student learning. In 2006, funding from Philip Morris USA Youth Smoking Prevention allowed AASA to work with the Forum to bring more focus and intentionality to these efforts. In 2007, the Forum and AASA co-planned a day-long workshop on expanding learning opportunities for 30 superintendents that laid the groundwork for the 2008 AASA strategies agenda.
- America's Promise Alliance (APA) is the largest multi-sector collaborative dedicated to children and youth. The Ready by 21 Partners all count among the more than 170 partners of the Alliance. The Forum has been involved with the Alliance since its inception. In 2007, Alliance Trustees committed to focusing their efforts on improving the lives of 15 million children over the next 5 years. High school graduation was selected as the key indicator of success. With support from State Farm Insurance, the Alliance made a pledge to build awareness on the youth dropout issue by hosting summits in all 50 states and 50 cities over the next two years. America's Promise and the Forum partnered to deliver the Alliance's 2006 Regional Summits, and have agreed to partner to integrate the language, goals and strategies of the 15 and 5 Campaign and the Ready by 21 Challenge.
- Corporate Voices for Working Families (CVWF) is the leading national business membership organization representing the private sector voice in public policy issues relating to working families. Collectively, their 55 partner companies have annual net revenues of over \$1 trillion and employ 4 million individuals throughout all 50 states. CVWF has worked with the Forum over the past three years to expand its commitment to children and youth from early childhood to workforce entry. At the end of 2007, the Corporate Voices board voted to consolidate the organization's child and youth focused work under a workforce readiness umbrella.
- National Collaboration for Youth (NCY) represents more than 50 national, non-profit youth development organizations that collectively serve more than 40 million young people and have a physical presence in virtually every community in the country. In February 2007, the National Assembly (the parent organization of NCY) made a bold commitment to collectively generate unique knowledge about the youth development sector and exercise leadership on behalf of those they serve. NCY stepped up to take the lead. In 2008, NCY and the Forum formed a strategic alliance to use Ready by 21 as the basis for the development of NCY's member knowledge and leadership work.
- National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) is the leading bipartisan organization supporting state legislators and legislative staff in all 50 states. NCSL's members rely on its program staff to get information on a range of legislative and policy issues. The volume, range and fragmentation of concerns related to youth, however, are particularly frustrating to legislators. In 2005, NCSL, the Forum and the National Governors Association addressed this problem by convening state teams with representatives from the executive office and the legislature. In 2007, NCSL began work with the Forum to explore legislative options for integrating youth engagement into policy.

2008 PRIORITY PROJECTS

Establish Metrics and Strategies for a Birth to Young Adulthood Model

Promote the importance of an integrated approach to learning and development from birth to young adulthood and engage local United Ways, experts and leaders to build on UWA's early childhood framework. The intention is to create metrics for a full "two decade" model to include older youth, develop a companion guide on secondary measures, and develop complementary materials to add to its Community Impact portfolio that articulate how Big Picture Planning fits with the UWA call to "focus on a priority area."

Engage Local United Ways

United Way will use its existing outreach and communication vehicles to move the Ready by 21 ideas and materials out to local United Ways beginning with a learning event at the May 2008 Annual Conference. United Way will also create learning opportunities for local United Ways that are already engaged, interested, or committed to community impact level work to improve youth outcomes or want to build on their early childhood development efforts. These opportunities will allow local United Ways to quickly test the "value add" of the Ready by 21 framework and the proposed focus on improving the quality and reach of the programs, places and people in youth's lives.

- Ready by 21 Quality Counts Learning Group – Allows local United Ways in 7 cities and 5 states the opportunity to contribute to a community impact project already in progress to gain insight and understanding.
- Local United Way Strategies and Metrics Work Group – Provides opportunity to 5 to 10 local United Ways with an already strong commitment to improving youth outcomes to create the Young Adulthood model (as an extension of the early childhood framework) and the package of Ready by 21 supports that will be offered.
- JC Penney Pilot Sites – Provides financial support in at least two pilot communities in order to build strong community awareness, partnerships and action plans.
- Tools and Resources – Disseminate youth development materials, training, technical assistance via United Way listservs, webinars, in-person and distance learning courses.



ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

United Way is a national network of nearly 1,300 local organizations that work to advance the common good, creating opportunities for a better life for all by focusing on the three key building blocks of education, financial stability and health. We all win when a child succeeds in school, when families are financially stable and when people have good health.

United Way of America is the national organization dedicated to leading the United Way movement. Local United Ways create long lasting community change by addressing the underlying causes of the most significant local issues. Common focus areas include helping children and youth achieve their potential, promoting financial stability and independence, and improving people's health. United Way's goal is to create long-lasting changes by addressing the underlying causes of problems.

It takes everyone in the community working together to create a brighter future. Living united means being a part of the change.

United Way of America (UWA) is building on its longstanding support of early childhood learning and development. UWA is partnering with the Forum for Youth Investment to expand on its Community Impact model by working to ensure that children enter school ready to succeed and that success follows them so they are ready for college, work and life. Annually, local United Ways devote more than \$1 billion to supporting children and youth.

Both UWA and the Forum for Youth Investment have deep commitments and demonstrated capacity to be catalysts and conveners at the national, state and local levels. Through the Forum's Ready by 21 Challenge, UWA is offering its members a framework, metrics, strategies and supports that help local United Ways' advance the common good by focusing on strategies that change conditions in education, financial stability and health. Technical assistance that the Forum is providing to a number of states and localities affords UWA an opportunity to engage a select group of local United Ways now. This partnership leverages the Forum's research and development and connects local United Ways to important tools, strategies and supports they can use immediately.

The JC Penney Afterschool Fund just awarded the Forum for Youth Investment and UWA funding to pilot community-wide outcome visioning around youth development in two communities; convene national stakeholders and experts to identify outcomes and strategies to develop the vision for a national youth development effort and to pursue additional funding to realize the vision.

UWA and the Forum for Youth Investment are also committed to working with the Ready by 21 Partners to develop a comprehensive planning and implementation process utilizing the Ready by 21 framework in select America's Promise Dropout Prevention Summit sites. This effort will be integrated into Ready by 21 sites where there is an existing initiative or where a standing coalition is already interested or positioned to take on the role.