

Aspen Institute to Fund Opportunity Youth Collaboratives

WASHINGTON, Jun. 20 /CSRwire/ - The Aspen Forum for Community Solutions will commit up to \$6 million in funding to support work with opportunity youth, the 6.7 million young Americans who are disconnected from education and the workforce. In July the Aspen Forum for Community Solutions will launch the Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund (OYIF), awarding grants of up to \$500,000 to communities around the country whose collective impact strategies are designed to channel the untapped potential of America's young adults.

"The time is now to bring together leaders and advocates across party lines and all sectors – business, education, non-profit, philanthropy, and government – to move the needle on the challenges facing our communities. Cities and towns across the country are deploying this collaborative strategy successfully, and we're going to ensure others can do the same," said Melody C. Barnes, former director of the White House Domestic Policy Council and Chair of the Aspen Forum for Community Solutions.

More than 90% of invited communities have applied for an OYIF grant with aims to further collective impact and community collaborative strategies that increase education and employment outcomes for opportunity youth. Strong partnerships with allies such as the Ford and Gates Foundations are matching that enthusiasm: the OYIF will launch with more community grants than initially expected.

Simultaneously, the Aspen Forum will convene roundtable discussions around the country with mayors, community leaders, philanthropies, and businesses to explore successful community collaboratives. Through these discussions, the Forum will collect and publicize proven strategies of how community movements can engage multiple systems, sectors and residents in devising local solutions in conjunction with community leaders.

This month the Forum will launch AspenCommunitySolutions.org, a digital hub and information exchange platform for the collaboratives. Follow [Facebook.com/AspenCommunitySolutions](https://www.facebook.com/AspenCommunitySolutions) and [@AspenFCS](https://twitter.com/AspenFCS) on Twitter to stay connected.

"How do you help 6 million young people come back into schools and the workforce? You can't do it alone," said Walter Isaacson, President and CEO of the Aspen Institute. "That's why we're investing in cross-sector collaboratives that bring all the stakeholders together with shared interests, metrics, and best practices. We know that when you collaborate you have the ability to achieve significant, lasting impact in the community – and that collective approach is what drives our success."

Support for the Aspen Forum and Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund is made possible by contributions from Jobs for the Future; Annie E. Casey Foundation; Rockefeller Foundation; Carnegie Corporation; Nellie Mae Education Foundation; Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Casey Family Programs; Joyce Foundation; Hewlett Foundation; Hilton Foundation; Helios Education Foundation; Ford Foundation; California Endowment; Bloomberg Philanthropies; James Irvine Foundation; John S. & James L. Knight Foundation; Marguerite Casey Foundation; W.K. Kellogg Foundation; Greater Texas Foundation; and Nancy & Miles Rubin.

The Aspen Institute's Forum for Community Solutions and Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund builds on the work and recommendations of the White House Council for Community Solutions. The Forum is

chaired by Melody C. Barnes, former director of the White House Domestic Policy Council, and run by Executive Director Steve Patrick. For more information, visit AspenCommunitySolutions.org.

The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, DC. Its mission is to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. The Institute is based in Washington, DC; Aspen, Colorado; and on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It also has offices in New York City and an international network of partners. For more information, visit www.aspeninstitute.org.

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