

Transcript of Effective Investments in Positive Youth Development October 13, 2009

Participants

Torey Silloway, The Finance Project
Elizabeth Gaines, Forum for Youth Investment, Policy Director
Diana Hall, SUN Service System, Program Supervisor
Carol Behrer, Youth Policy Institute of Iowa, Executive Director

Presentation

Moderator

Welcome to today's Webinar, Effective Investments in Positive Youth Development: Implications of Research and Practice. Please note: all participants listening by telephone are in a listen-only mode. You can submit questions at any time by using the Questions feature on your screen. Panelists will answer questions during the question-and-answer session at the conclusion of this Webinar. I'd like to now turn the floor over to Torey Silloway of The Finance Project. Mr. Silloway, you may begin.

Torey Silloway, The Finance Project

Hello, everyone. Thanks for joining. This is Torey Silloway from The Finance Project. We apologize; we had a slight glitch there with some technical difficulties. It looks like we have a good number of people back on, either through the audio or listening through your computer. Also you can listen through your computer now if you want to log back on, or you can listen over the phone, either way. So either way is fine. We'll go ahead and start and the Webinar will probably run about ten minutes over just because we're getting a late start. I apologize for that. So welcome again, everybody, to our Webinar: Effective Investment in Positive Youth Development: Implications of Research and Practice, sponsored by The Finance Project.

During this Webinar we will share key findings from The Finance Project's recent report on what works for youth programs and identify gaps in the research. We will discuss three promising strategies for financing and sustaining a comprehensive and seamless system that supports positive youth development, and we will highlight how some states and communities are developing systems and strategies that coordinate support for youth.

We have a number of speakers on our call today that we're excited to have participate in this Webinar as well. I'll introduce those speakers as the agenda comes up here. First of all, let me just go through the agenda. We're going to do a panel discussion for about 40 minutes, and again, this will probably go a little bit over. I will give an overview of our key findings from our recent report which most of you got in your invitation, a pdf version of that report. Then we will have three speakers on the call with us today who are going to talk, and I'll introduce them right now.

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Elizabeth Gaines will be our first speaker after we discuss the report. Elizabeth is the state and policy director at the Forum for Youth Investment where she oversees the Forum's work related to state and local policy, and manages various national partnerships and networks of legislators, advocates and youth councils. Elizabeth is the Forum's primary contact for their partnership with the National Conference of State Legislatures. Elizabeth joined the Forum in 2005 and in her four years at the Forum she has focused on building the Forum's relationships with both executive and legislative policymakers interested in improving youth policy. She is co-author of the *Youth Count Report*, the *Adding It Up Guide to Mapping Public Resources for Children, Youth and Families*, as well as the series on state children's cabinets and councils, *Getting Results for Children and Youth*. Prior to coming to the Forum, Ms. Gaines served as a volunteer coordinator for America Coming Together in Missouri and she also worked as a youth policy analyst for the Citizens for Missouri's Children, a child advocacy organization.

Elizabeth is going to speak about their work at the Forum for Youth Investment, and in particular about the Ready by 21 model which a lot of people are probably already familiar with, and if not, will want to listen in for that; and also talk about her organization's work with states and communities to develop systems that support children and youth.

Carol Behrer is our second speaker. Carol is executive director of the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa, a state-level intermediary organization focusing on improving youth policy and practice. Ms. Behrer worked extensively with state and youth-serving organizations in Iowa on policy and program development and Ms. Behrer is going to talk about the work of the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development, focusing on how they use data to drive results as well.

Diana Hall is our third speaker. Diana is the program supervisor in the SUN Service System – that stands for Schools Uniting Neighborhoods. It's part of the Multnomah County Department of County Human Resources where she oversees the system's program development staff. Ms. Hall is going to talk about their role in building partnerships, and the importance of building partnerships and supporting the SUN school system, as well as some of the lessons learned from their recent history around systems building.

I will start off the Webinar by talking about our recent report entitled "Guide to Effective Investments in Positive Youth Development: Implications of Research for Financing and Sustaining Programs and Services for Youth." This brief does three things: it reviews the research on what works at the program level to promote positive youth development; highlights promising efforts from cities and states to build a system that supports positive youth development; and identifies three strategies for supporting and sustaining positive youth development systems and programs.

In the first section of the report we looked at what works at the program level in supporting youth development. And just to step back for a minute. I realize I didn't have a slide here on defining what positive youth development is. So for everyone on the phone, just so they know what that is, let's just take a step back.

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Essentially, positive youth development refers to an intentional approach providing an array of supports and opportunities that promote healthy outcomes for youth. Really this is around providing supports and opportunities for youth as a way to prevent them from engaging in risky behaviors. Positive youth development also is about building ongoing relationships with family and adults and affords youth opportunities to build social skills and competencies, and promoting healthy behaviors that help them transition successfully to adulthood. These programs really run the gamut, and you can see in the brief we touch on a lot of different types of programs. We look at everything from after-school programs, mentoring programs, youth engagement programs, sports leagues and other recreational activities, as well as prevention and after-care programs.

Back to the report. The report looked at the research to see not only what programs or program models were achieving results for youth, but also what were the shared elements that cut across each of those programs. We looked at where those programs are taking place, including influence of school environment and peers, the influence of family members and other adults, as well as other aspects that impact youth.

The three things that we pulled out of this report, and you all should have that report where you can find more detailed information, but we have three high-level findings. The first one is opportunities for youth to develop skills and build positive relationships really helps prevent other risky behaviors. What this means is that programs that enhance the positive factors in the lives of youth – this includes connectedness to the family, school and community – can reduce the likelihood that youth will engage in other health-jeopardizing behaviors. These experiences also, the research shows, really have a synergistic effect whereby the more experiences and opportunities youth get, the more they build a resiliency to other negative behaviors. We cite a lot of the research that supports this finding.

Also, youth need a lot of opportunities; and really no single program or setting can provide everything they need. The implication for this is really that while you can have some great programs in your state or community, ideally you really need a continuum of services where agencies and community providers of those services collaborate, share information. It really kind of led us into looking at the systems-building aspect of this work.

Thirdly, youth need opportunities in multiple settings. This isn't surprising, but really, some of the most effective programs are found in areas where youth would normally go and spend their time, for example, school as well as in their homes and with family – with all of those being really important.

The practical implications for this for city and state leaders is really to look at, do you have a mix of these, both services and opportunities, to promote positive youth development. Obviously prevention programs are important as well. It's not that you really need one or the other. I think the research shows that it's important to really have both. Also as you're looking across those programs, there are evidence-based or model programs out there for a lot of the types of services and programs that kids are in or experiencing now. But also – and I think this is again an and/or, not an

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or/and – you also need to really look at the programs you have and look at both the quality of the programs using some kind of quality assurance or program quality measurement system that we'll talk about in a minute.

The next slide is really looking at systems-level research and findings. For this area we tried to look at the research on places that were looking to build systems that support youth and youth development. Part of what we found was that this is an area where there are some gaps in the research. We did find some lessons learned from other systems' growing efforts in other fields, particularly in out-of-school- time programs and with the afterschool networks. We also found a lot of work there around mental health, but not a lot of research on how you build a system, or how you finance a system that supports youth. So we really had to look at these other areas for research on this type of work.

We did find some examples. Obviously there are a lot of examples, and probably people on the phone are in the midst of their own systems-building effort, or maybe they've been doing it for a number of years, so there are obviously a lot of examples of places doing this work out there, and we want to draw on some of those. We've brought a couple of those folks on the phone today and there is a lot more out there that we want to look at in our future work as well.

I think the other finding from the systems-level work, both in youth development and in other fields, is the importance of having a system or infrastructure in achieving the long-term goals of youth development. Really this is about looking beyond just individual programs or the fact that individual programs can have a more long-term sustained impact when they are part of this larger system. I'll just share one piece from the work that we looked at around mental health and systems of care in terms of their lessons learned – obviously they've been at this a long time – around building a system that I think has some applications for youth development.

Some of the aspects of systems that they found most important were things like coordinated funding and aligning budgets with performance outcomes, seeking flexible funding to respond to emerging needs, incentivizing systems and providers to improve quality, and using data to drive management practice decisions as well as implementing integrated delivery systems, which really speaks to again looking beyond the individual programs and looking at building a systems-level infrastructure.

I'm going quickly through this. Obviously we want to move on to the other speakers. The last thing I'll say is we did identify in the report what is known about making an effective program and how to put in place an infrastructure system that supports youth programming, as well as considerations for how to finance or sustain these systems over time. We identified three strategies, and I wouldn't call it a comprehensive framework - I think that's something we want to build on in some of our future work, and I would say two of them are relatively low-cost – not no-cost, but certainly low-cost, which I think are particularly applicable now.

The first strategy is using data to target and track investments. The brief highlights the use of program performance information to target and analyze how investments in

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youth are being made. The brief touches on developing quality assurance systems to measure program quality performance, and the pros and cons of using such a system.

The brief also highlights the importance of, or the pros and cons of, tying funding decisions to data, such as through performance-based budgeting and the use of cost benefit analysis. We have a couple of examples in the brief around that work done in Washington State. And I think Elizabeth Gaines in her discussion of her work with the Forum for Youth Investment is going to touch on some of that as well.

The other strategy is accessing flexible funding, which is obviously important, particularly in supporting systems-building efforts. We know that in trying to collaborate across systems, a lot of programs don't fit within conventional funding guidelines, which makes accessing flexible funding very important. The one example we use here is tobacco master settlement funds, which may or may not be available in your state to those listening, but it is an interesting funding source in that it is a long-term funding source and is very flexible.

The final thing I'll leave on is building and strengthening partnerships, which is another relatively low-cost strategy. Really, building partnerships is key when it comes to developing support for any initiative. It crosses so many agency and policy boundaries, such as building systems that supports youth development. Collaboration offers opportunities to coordinate activities, and really focus on population level impacts. This is an area where I hope Diana Hall from SUN Schools will talk about a lot of the great work they've done in Oregon around this aspect.

With that, I will end this section of discussing the brief. The brief is available both on our website and you should have gotten it in the e-mail invitation. I'll turn it over to Elizabeth Gaines from the Forum for Youth Investment to talk about their work with states and cities across the country. Elizabeth?

Elizabeth Gaines, Forum for Youth Investment

Great. Thanks, Torey. Good afternoon, everybody. Again, Elizabeth Gaines. I'm the state and local policy director at the Forum for Youth Investment. We've been around for about ten years. We were founded by a woman named Karen Pittman who has been really in this field of positive youth development for probably 30 years now. So we really come out of a positive youth development background.

What I want to share with you today is what we've been doing over the past few years, and it's really become the Forum's signature initiative, and we call it Ready By 21 – ready for college, ready for work, ready for life. This Ready by 21 challenge is actually all about systems change. It's about how we can start to change the odds for young people by really changing the way we do business as leaders and as communities. So what we've come to learn over these years working in this youth development field is that young people are not doing as well as they really should be. Some are in fact really in trouble. We also know that families, schools and communities are not providing all of the supports that they need, and some are really struggling to do it.

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We also know that leaders are often not as effective as they really could be, and it's really for those three reasons that this Ready by 21 challenge has been created and issued by the Forum. We think we need a new approach to getting the right set of supports and opportunities in place so that we get to improve children and youth outcomes. The challenges that young people and communities are facing really require a new way of thinking and doing business, and Ready by 21 is essentially a leadership engagement strategy. It's about helping leaders improve what they do, how they do it, and rethink why they're doing it. We really believe that if you can make a real difference in the capacity and the commitment of leaders to create change, that the other two gears that you see in this image are going to really begin to turn more quickly.

What I'm going to do is I have a number of slides. I'm going to give you a quick sort of broad brush strokes sense of how places are really using this Ready by 21 approach to change the way that business is done in their state or community. You can go to the next slide. I'm going to have to just follow along because I just got kicked off the Internet, so I'm going to hope that we're – let me know if we're having a slide problem, okay, Torey?

Torey Silloway, The Finance Project

Okay. We have it up here.

Elizabeth Gaines, Forum for Youth Investment

Okay, great. The Ready By 21 National Partnership, just a little bit of background: The Forum is a very small organization, and what we decided was that since it's all about getting the right stakeholders who are concerned about children and youth and place this together, that the best way for us to do that would be to convene those national organizations that have direct connections to the leaders that are quite often the folks who are in the room, trying to make these better decisions for kids. United Way is our signature partner. They're really just ubiquitous. They're in every community around this country, and they're often community conveners, trying to bring folks together.

Corporate Voices for Working Families, the American Association of School Administrators – those are the superintendents around the country – America's Promise Alliance, the National Conference of State Legislatures, obviously important, the National Collaboration for Youth. And that's those youth-serving organizations which probably many of you on the phone are a part of. It's the association of the Big Brothers, Big Sisters, the YMCA's, the 4H, all of those ones that you think of – and then smaller ones as well.

This partnership came together to really look at how can we improve child and youth outcomes by helping state and local leaders increase their capacity to build broader, stronger partnerships and structures, set bigger goals for their community, define and implement bolder strategies, and then expect and use better data to drive decisions and to track progress over time. Next slide.

Those are what we would consider to be the mobilization partners, the ones that really touch all of these leaders out across the country. We also have a really exciting group

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of technical partners. We're thrilled that the Finance Project has joined us as a technical partner. And this just gives you an idea of who some of those technical partners are, but they come bringing expertise in tracking data, tracking indicators on child and youth well-being, mapping fiscal and program resources, really looking at quality and quality assessments and building leader capacity – all of those things that these technical partners are bringing. Next slide.

What I think we can do is just very lightly and quickly go through what sort of a typical Ready by 21 approach would look like in a place. Obviously there are a lot of things that are already going on in a community before they learn about the Ready by 21 approach, so we're really about sort of meeting leaders where they are, building on the pieces that already exist and helping fill in the gaps and make sure that all the loops have been closed. But in theory, in a sort of utopian society, I think it would begin with taking shape, bringing multiple stakeholders together and using a structure that can implement and track change, and I think Diana is going to talk a little bit about the partnership out in Portland.

Take Aim: This is really critical because once you've done a good job of setting some broad goals and then some very specific child and youth outcomes or results that use indicators to track them, you're going to be able to tie those things to all the different pieces that you want to proceed and do.

Take Stock: and I think Carol's going to talk a little bit about the work that they've been doing to take stock in Iowa. But this is important and this is where a lot of those technical partners come in and help. Being able to know how much you're doing, how well you're doing it, if there's any improvement happening, tracking the resources you're investing in things – there's a lot that can be done here to establish counts, baseline, benchmarks, and we have a lot of tools to help places do that.

Take Action: This is about really how you take all that information, the vision that you have, the data that you have, the partnership that you've built and really start to work together to make and sustain changes that are needed to reach those goals. So we'll talk a little bit about what that looks like. And then obviously tracking progress. You need to be able to report broadly and assess the pace of change, etc. Like I say, this happens in fits and starts and various pieces are done at various times, and we're sort of just trying to help provide a frame that people can use, some process that they can use, and make sure that they're doing it in the broadest possible sense, thinking zero to 24 across the continuum of developmental needs of young people and really getting them from cradle to premiere. Next slide.

In terms of taking shape, one thing that we like to point out is that school is one piece of a young person's life. But if you think about the ages that are really of concern as I just mentioned, and you think about the times of day that young people are developing, and you think about the range of outcomes that are critical to their success in life, school is really only filling a portion of that developmental space – and this is one of those silly building slides – so you can see the developmental white space, if you will, that exists there, after-school starting to fill in another piece of that space. But as we take shape, as we bring the right people together, we need to

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ensure that those individual stakeholders that can really help fill this picture in are brought into the Ready by 21 process. Next slide.

This one really just shows, these are the sorts of folks that when you think outside the school day that really need to be involved in any sort of systems change effort or in any thinking about how you provide that continuum that Torey was describing. We can go to the next slide.

I wanted to give you an example of a place that – I kind of consider Maryland to have the Cadillac structure, if we were using car analogies here – they would have the Lexus or the Cadillac model. But really, what Maryland has put in place in terms of a system is this structure where the Children’s Cabinet, which is made up of all the child and youth-serving agencies in state government, is directly complemented by this legislative committee, Joint Committee for Children, Youth and Families, that is sort of acting as an oversight committee to the Children’s Cabinet. The Children’s Cabinet is advised by a group of young people who are in the youth council, by a group of citizens who are part of this advisory council for children, and then they have the Governor’s Office for Children, which is essentially acting as staff to the Children’s Cabinet agencies.

Then they relate down to local management boards which are in each county in the state and really mirror the Children’s Cabinet at the local level. So this is just to show you sort of what it can look like at the state level when many different pieces are in place and you’re engaging a range of stakeholders in the system-building. We can go to the next slide.

Torey Silloway, The Finance Project

Elizabeth, just a two-minute warning.

Elizabeth Gaines, Forum for Youth Investment

Okay. A really important thing when we talk about taking aim: You want to get to sort of a common language. There are a lot of different folks out there doing good work, whether you’re in the mental health field, the juvenile justice field, the after-school field, early childhood field – there’s a lot of different language that floats around. So one of the first things we do is get people to sort of settle on some common language. We’ll go to the next slide.

Once you have that common language you can start to do all kinds of things to establish a big-picture vision and set of results. This is something we dashboarded, and we start to identify those things that can fill in those squares, whether it’s the initiatives that we have in place, the big goals that we’ve set for our community, or the indicators of child and youth well-being. We like for people to be able to have a big picture of what it is they’re trying to accomplish and keep that in mind at all times. You can go to the next slide.

I won’t go through this, and you’ll have the PowerPoint deck, but there are a number of really important reasons for using a common framework and set of results across silos and across sectors. Let’s go to the next slide and I’ll show you – this is an example of one state’s Children’s Cabinet vision, their mission as a Children’s

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Cabinet, how they're going to do their work, the really easily communicated message that they put on bumper stickers. And then the serious piece is these outcomes, and these are the things that – they end up linking these outcomes of healthy, safe, learning, transitioning and contributing to all of the data that they collect. In New Mexico they have a Children's Cabinet that collects children's budget information and child and youth well-being information into a report card. But all of those things are using this same frame, so regardless of the agency that's reporting the information, they're using this same frame to identify where they're spending their resources, where they're seeing progress with young people. You can start to see how, once you get that common language going, it can really help you tease out what's really going on in your state or city. Next slide. And I'm sure I'm past two minutes now, Torey, sorry.

Torey Silloway, The Finance Project

One minute. One minute.

Elizabeth Gaines, Forum for Youth Investment

Okay. This one is a local example. This is actually an example from Austin, Texas. It just pulls out what they've put into one of those squares. This is relating to high school and learning, but it just shows you that as you start to organize your stuff into a frame, you can really be able to have a lot of stuff embedded behind it and have that detail, but also have the thing that communicates broadly to a bigger audience. Okay, next slide.

Once you have your vision in frame, you want to be able to take stock into that frame. So whether it's taking stock of child and youth outcomes or taking stock of the family and community supports that you have in place and what kind of quality they are, or taking stock of leaders and their capacity and the decision-making that's going on among leaders and the priorities that are being set, you want to take stock in a range of ways, and we have tools that help folks to take stock in each of these different areas. And we'll just skip quickly over the next slide which goes into more detail on that. Next slide.

This gives you an example of a place that used a dashboard to track their indicators, and the red means that the indicators got worse over a year. The green means that they got better. You can imagine that doing this could really help you to understand the bigger picture of how well young people are doing, as opposed to sort of indicator by indicator and then not having a story to tell. That was in Tennessee, and what this did was this really sparked the Tennessee legislature to say, okay, so here are the indicators; we don't know how well we're doing in terms of investing in each of these different result areas. We need to do something about that.

So in Tennessee – you can go to the next slide – they really have set the ball in motion to develop a children's budget assessment that tracks every investment in state government in children and youth and categorizes it by that common language so that you can see what you're spending on the ages, what you're spending on the various outcomes, and a whole range of other things. So they're going to be able to know if they're really investing in the things that they care about.

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In the next slide – then I think we can call ourselves done – this is just to remind you that without doing this, without sort of taking shape, taking aim, taking stock of what you have, the typical approach is this: that if you think of all of those different systems and services that are out there working for an individual family, it creates a lot of chaos not only for the recipients of those services, but for the people who are on the ground trying to provide those and bumping into each other, and for the leaders that are trying to make sense of it, fund it, know whether they're having the outcomes that they intend.

So we really just encourage people to – you can go to the next slide, and this is the last slide, Torey – encourage people to think about tackling these things in a more intentional way. The Ready by 21 approach provides an opportunity to do that. I'd be happy to answer any questions later about what we're seeing in places, and I will cede the floor to Carol.

Torey Silloway, Finance Project

Great. Thanks, Elizabeth. Just so people know, before Carol talks, participants, you can ask a question by clicking on the "Ask the Experts" tab at the bottom of your screen. That will send an e-mail to us and we'll go over as many questions as we can at the end of the Webinar, so I just want to let people know they can go ahead and submit questions.

Next up is Carol Behrer, Executive Director of the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa.

Carol Behrer, Youth Policy Institute of Iowa

Thanks, Torey, and thanks, Elizabeth. Before I get into my slides, I wanted to note that the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development, which I'm going to talk about, has benefited so much from the work of the Forum for Youth Investment and the Ready by 21 frameworks. We apply those things all the time and I do highly recommend anyone out there checking out their tools and materials, it's wonderful.

As Torey mentioned earlier, the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa is an intermediary organization. We work extensively with both state government as well as local youth-serving organizations and planning bodies on a variety of youth policy and practice efforts. I want to briefly tell you a little bit about the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development because it is one of those examples of a system-building effort that's been around for about a decade now. It started back in 1999 when the state government had an opportunity to apply for and received a federal grant that sort of made it walk the talk. State government for years had been mandating as part of funding streams that communities and youth organizations collaborate across systems and build coalitions, and back in the nineties, state government didn't do a very good job of that. So it kind of forced the state of Iowa to bring together representatives of all those different systems that impact young people and get them in the same room together to start to understand what each other does, how they work, and create a common understanding of what positive youth development looked like, what it was.

Over the years the Collaboration has involved about a dozen different state agencies, dozens of community partners, whether they be individual organizations or planning

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bodies, community coalitions. And really, we've spent a long time developing that common language and understanding across these different systems on how we can work more efficiently, more effectively together than working in those silos that we'd mentioned earlier today.

I think what the Collaboration has done is really create and help support that underlying infrastructure for positive youth development programs to operate under. Over the last several years the Collaboration has leveraged more than \$6 million in public and private investments that is going directly towards those system-building activities. **Those aren't ... dollars;** those are things that have supported capacity-building, training, community planning, state planning. And those dollars are really key to having that foundation on which you can then provide those effective programs.

Very recently the Collaboration was successful in getting legislation passed. We now are a recognized statutory authority, and it's called the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development Council. That involves our department directors and key individuals at the state level to really provide that overarching direction and to do those things like take aim and take stock. Next slide, Torey.

I want to give you a couple of examples of those things that the Collaboration has done in the take aim area, and taking stock. Early on in the Collaboration's history we spent a lot of time coming up with and building consensus around common result areas and essentially our vision, so this is sort of a macro-level approach to ground us all and identify what our shared responsibility and shared accountability is for results. We've used results-based accountability language, if you're familiar with that, and it just is so important to not stay in those silos but to work across systems, and these common result areas give us that vision and that sense of joint responsibility to achieve shared results.

Then we also constantly recognize and acknowledge the individual contributions that each system and each program makes to improving these outcomes. But I'm always at the same time emphasizing how interrelated they are and how we really have to work together.

The next slide talks about the youth development indicators, and this is where some of the data-driven aspect of our work starts to come in. Again, we're still operating at a fairly macro level here, but we've done a lot of work to, as Elizabeth said, take stock of where we are. We have identified indicators – I think they're population-level youth indicators – for each of the result areas. There are about four or five specific indicators that we've been sharing data across these systems for the last several years and trying to know whether things are red, yellow or green in the Ready by 21 tools.

Several of the criteria that went into selecting indicators: We wanted them to be state-level data, but readily available and reliable, but also something we could disaggregate to at least the county level in the state. We draw from data across multiple systems, and one of the most useful sources of data we have is the Iowa Youth Survey which is a huge data collection effort that's a joint effort of several state

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agencies, and they survey 100,000 young people once every three years – same grades, each of three years.

Another one of our macro-level sort of taking-stock projects was a state program inventory and budget analysis, a little probably more simple than the one example that Elizabeth gave you, but knowing where our money is going was another one of those fully data driven pieces and critical to our work.

The next slide – actually I think we can probably skip over this. We've identified some cross-cutting issues including transitioning youth and disproportionality in youth program quality that we believe touch multiple systems that are involved in the Collaboration. And I want to talk just briefly then about youth program quality, because this is where we've started to get into a little bit more micro-level data.

Again, one of the things that we've recognized is that it doesn't matter if you're receiving funding from a juvenile justice agency, prevention organization or an after-school funding stream. If you're delivering services to young people, quality really should be much the same, where we can measure it in the same ways. So again, we've worked a lot with the Ready by 21 initiative and the Wyckert Center for Youth Program Quality to build capacity, to measure program quality using a common instrument across these different systems. We're still in a little bit of a testing stage on this, but we've been able to again promote that common language and understanding of what youth program quality is, and as we have that data from probably 100 different programs now across the state that are funded by a variety of different state agencies. We're starting to see where the gaps are and what we need to do, and it's really going to inform our capacity-building efforts around professional development for youth workers, which we know is such a key ingredient to quality.

Those are just a couple of the examples of how we've really approached the system-building work in Iowa, and we have again ten years of history, so I could talk a lot longer, but I'll turn it back over to you now, Torey.

Torey Silloway, Finance Project

Great. Thanks, Carol, so much. The last speaker today is Diana Hall of the SUN Service System, and I'll turn it over to you, Diana.

Diana Hall, SUN Service System

Great, thanks, Torey. It's a pleasure to be here today. I think it's still a few minutes in the morning where I am, but afternoon for the rest of you, so good afternoon. I wanted to just share that there is some additional information on our website. I think you have the website address in the resources tab. We pulled out a few key documents that we thought might be of interest to people after the Webinar, related particularly to the partnership and some of our system-building, so you're welcome obviously to surf through the Web as well.

I wanted to just say, it was really helpful going last, having heard what Elizabeth and Carol had to offer, and hearing and resonating with a lot of the things that they shared. We found that all three of the key findings in this particular document from the Finance Project really were indicative of our experience at the local level over the last decade.

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We are a county and city effort, so we're a little bit bigger than one city here in Multnomah County. We have about 700,000 people, so we're a fairly good size. And I wanted to hone in particularly on some of the partnership lessons we've learned, but before I do that, I just wanted to take a minute or to to make sure everybody had an understanding of where we've gotten to, sort of what we've achieved, though also acknowledging that we have a far way to go as well. Next slide, please.

The SUN Service System is an integrated service system of care. We're looking at a broad array of social and support services across a variety of partners that we provide to youth and their families, with the goal of creating education success and self-sufficiency. For us, creating this system of care – and it looks like, Torey, I still need you to advance to the next slide. In creating this system of care, it really meant what Elizabeth mentioned earlier about needing to change the way that we do business across our different systems, and in the following slide you'll see we took stock in the mid to late nineties and looked at the context for change, which is in the following slide, and had some things – I think those first several bullets will be things that everyone was experiencing in that time period.

Particularly critical for us in looking at our local conditions were those last two bullets about how we were using our resources and the fact that all of our systems and partners were experiencing reductions in resources, though I don't know that we could have imagined what that was going to become like decades later. So for us, we're really looking at that broader context and the need to create a system for what we were doing. We had hundreds of great youth development and social service programs, but we didn't have any structure for them, we didn't have any sense of them, and we didn't necessarily have shared indicators that were helping us understand how they were contributing, if they were, towards the larger goals that we had for our community.

Then in the next slide, when we started then to take action, the first way we took action was in creating policy. There was a variety of policies, but they were really structured on these two broad areas you'll see here: supporting education and school success as a means of reducing long-term poverty, and improving the way that resources for students and families were delivered, with a particular focus on getting those resources out into the school buildings as a non-stigmatizing and easily accessible location for families and youth to access them.

In our system we often talk about working towards a no-wrong-door policy, so no matter where a family or youth touches us, that those people are informed about the other services and linked to those other providers so that folks experience a seamless or smooth connection.

The other way we take action, which you'll see in the following slide, is in actually then aligning the services into a system of care. These are the service areas that we have aligned across our community. We do these things within the context of youth, family and community engagement, and really trying to broaden out and take advantage of all of those resources and strengths that are in the community, knowing that we're going to need all of them to be able to get to where we're going.

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We deliver that set of services, you'll see in the next slide, at six regional service centers, 58 SUN community schools. You'll see there, with the number of community schools that we've gotten to, that we've really focused on getting those services out through the school, and considering what we're creating there as a vehicle to attach other resources and partners to.

In terms of the core partners, for what we've been able to align to date, in the next slide you'll see our major partners: the county and the city, six of the school districts in our county – there are eight, the State Department of Human Services, businesses, and nonprofit agencies. You'll see 20 we contract with, and over 300 connect to us in a variety of ways, from the local Tae Kwon Do folks to the faith community in our community sites. And then community members, and I just would want to highlight the importance of engaging all ages and all sorts of community members, whether that's the youth themselves or those in the community that don't have school-age children.

The next slide gives you a picture of the resources that we have aligned into this system. This is a yearly picture from last year. We've called it an estimate because it still doesn't capture everything that I think we're accomplishing and connecting to in kind with each other, but it gives you a picture of the total resources that are in that pot including operating cash as well as in kind, and I would encourage folks – I know today's focus is not on all the different places you might be able to find resources – but there are a lot of great opportunities, particularly with the current environment nationally, to connect with schools. There's a strong emphasis on community schools and community and school partnerships through the Secretary of Education.

Then the next slide, as we went about building this partnership over the last decade, we found that there were several things that were particularly important for us, one of which was making sure we had a governance table with representatives of those partners that you saw on that list who could come and sit and think about all those indicators that Carol and Elizabeth discussed and make choices about what we were going to track and about what services we were going to align.

In the last few years in particular, we've gone deeper in our work on shared responsibility and found that this image was useful for us, so I'll share it in case it's of use to others, because we really wanted to focus in on that area where in the Venn diagram our worlds overlap, which is for us where we have the school-age children and their families, because we know that we are all touching them in some fashion and that we have an opportunity to consider what it means if we really share responsibility, what it means in terms of how we might use our resources differently, how we might share funding with each other, and how we might change policy to affect the kind of changes we want to see more broadly.

In the next slide there are some overarching lessons learned that we have found.
How am I doing, Torey?

Torey Silloway, Finance Project

You have one more minute.

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Diana Hall, SUN Service System

I know we want to get to questions. I think mostly for this I'd just like to focus on the importance of engaging and maintaining your champions at a variety of levels. For us it's been particularly important to get government officials, because they were where we started our initiative, and other community leaders and to really approach them and ask what it was that their vision was for youth, because invariably we share a lot of the same goals, and we share a lot of the same challenges in terms of reducing funding, increased accountability and restrictions. So you really strike a chord with people when you come to ask what it is that they're envisioning and how you may be able to work together, rather than coming in with what you're doing and the hope that they're going to align to you. And I think I'll leave it at that so we can get to the questions.

Torey Silloway, The Finance Project

Great. Thanks, everyone, to all of our speakers and obviously all of our participants. I've been going through your questions here and we have time for just a couple. Again, we're going to go to 3:15, if people can hang in for ten more minutes since we started late.

I'll read the first question we have, and anyone can take this on, any of our speakers. This is, "In this systematic approach to youth development" – I'm going to read directly—"I often find that one partner is not at the table or not included while at the table, that program being health." I assume they mean the health department. "I think that many see health where public health is focused primarily on healthcare or prevention only, but they have a much broader role. Can any of you talk about this from your experiences?"

Elizabeth Gaines, Forum for Youth Investment

This is Elizabeth. I sent an e-mail response to this question. I think that in many of the places that Ready by 21 approach is being used, health is clearly at the table. I think one of the things, though, that struck me as I was reading that question was that really, the public health world has its own taxonomy and language and way of operating, as do many other fields that are concerned about children and youth, and that's why that common language is so important that we talk about, because getting to a place where one person's counseling is another person's mentoring, is another person's something else – knowing how to communicate across fields and knowing how to compare apples to apples is a really important first place to start, I think.

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Torey Silloway, The Finance Project

Great. Carol or Diana, any thoughts on that?

Diana Hall, SUN Service System

This is Diana. I would just comment that the county as the local health provider and the educational service districts providing health services out here have been part of our partnership from the beginning -both from the service angle but also from the public health standpoint that Elizabeth was commenting on. I think there is a real fertile partnership there, or fertile ground for partnership, because of the way that health professionals particularly in the public sector tend to see themselves.

Torey Silloway, The Finance Project

Okay, great. I have another question here that's directed to you, Elizabeth, but I think any of you can answer as well. It says, "We are working on a youth initiative focusing on the school connectedness protective factor. Do you have examples of effective programs that focus on school connectedness? What are some good measurements, indicators that can show impact later on? What have you seen in other states?"

Elizabeth Gaines, Forum for Youth Investment

I think that's a great question for Diana in terms of the practical sense of things that are working. But in terms of school connectedness, I have to make a plug for one of the Ready by 21 technical partners, which is the Gallup organization. They're the folks that you see doing regular surveys all the time. They've joined up with us because they have this well-being survey that can be taken free in public schools: <http://www.gallupstudentpoll.com/home.aspx>. A superintendent or a principal can decide to use this survey, Web-based, and it measures hope, engagement, and well-being of young people in their schools. It really gives some interesting data back to people that are running schools about how well young people are connecting and are engaged in their school. So in terms of taking stock, I think that survey is a great way to find out. Diana, do you have any practical examples?

Diana Hall, SUN Service System, Program Director

I'd need to pull our student survey to get this totally correct, but we do ask – and we don't do as much as we might like to do, but it's something that we've been able to manage across all of our sites over the years consistently – we ask students once a year in a student survey about a variety of issues related to the youth assets, like the Search Institute assets, and school connectedness is one of those. We talk about – I'm trying to remember how it's phrased, but we do talk about their sense of the school and how supportive the school is. We do tend to also look at some of those other less school-specific connectedness around do they have adults that they can go to for help, do they feel like the people available to them believe in them and believe that they can do good things and that kind of thing.

Torey Silloway, Finance Project

Great. Any thoughts from you, Carol?

Elizabeth Gaines, Forum for Youth Investment, Policy Director

Carol, what about the Iowa Youth Services –

Torey Silloway, Finance Project

Right.

Carol Behrer, Youth Policy Institute of Iowa

Yes, we have several questions in the Iowa youth survey that relate to how young people feel about their school. I think we've – if I can remember now off the top of my head – I think we have a school connectedness set of questions that deal with that, a construct that we've been measuring. I don't think "youth connectedness" is the word, though; I've forgotten what it is.

Then in terms of sort of responding to that, because we do see it as a key indicator, as part of our Collaboration, our Department of Education has a major initiative called Learning Supports, and it really is all about how do we ensure that young people that might not be particularly connected to school, how do we build those supports around them to improve that. And it's all those different things that happen in schools that aren't academic.

Torey Silloway, The Finance Project

Right. I have another question here – we have about three more minutes – a question that says, "What would you suggest one can go about finding funding? I'm a small community that doesn't have a United Way or other agencies. We've lost our funding as of this year. Our grant ended one year earlier than expected because of budget cuts. I have a school-based mentoring program and our school is having major budget cuts also." Obviously this is relevant probably to a lot of people. I'll let any of the speakers address that first and then I'll probably follow up on that as well.

Elizabeth Gaines, Forum for Youth Investment

Yes, I'd say, Torey, go for it. You're the expert.

Torey Silloway, The Finance Project

Okay. This is an area obviously that The Finance Project, we've done quite a bit of work around in just a couple things. We have a Finding Funding resource center on our website which I think is in all the materials – www.financeproject.org. The Finding Funding center includes an interactive web-based database that allows you to look at federal funding sources. You can cut the data, whether you're looking for mentoring programs or youth development, and you can cut it at a lot finer level than that as well. So there's a lot of information through our website through the Finding Funding resource center.

Obviously The Finance Project has a lot of briefs, and probably the most relevant one is our brief on finding funding for mentoring programs: [Finding Resources to Support Mentoring Programs and Services for Youth](#). I believe we also have a separate one on finding funding for rural programs that are probably most relevant to you: [Financing and Sustaining Out-of-School Time Programs in Rural Communities](#).

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We probably have time just for one more question here. This is actually to Carol. Carol, it says, "You talked about Mexico and Austin" – I think they mean New Mexico and Austin – "Texas as examples. Are there any similar current models in New York and Florida that you know about?"

Elizabeth Gaines, Forum for Youth Investment

I think that was meant for me, Torey. ..., Carol.

Torey Silloway, Finance Project

Oh, is this – okay. That's Elizabeth, okay, take it away.

Elizabeth Gaines, Forum for Youth Investment

Yes, and I responded to this one on e-mail as well. But New York and Florida each have Children's Cabinets that are I would say very active and doing good work. They're similar to Maryland and New Mexico's models that I threw up quickly on the screen. Then we also have a number – I think four counties in New York that are doing Ready by 21 approaches. So there is good stuff going on in New York and Florida.

Torey Silloway, The Finance Project

Great. Again, we'll answer those other questions, either we'll send them to the person you asked or we'll respond to them ourselves. So we'll answer those offline, just so people know.

I just wanted to let people know, I don't think I said at the beginning there is a Resources tab at the bottom of your screen that has a lot of resources from all the organizations including The Finance Project and the Forum for Youth Investment, the SUN Service System and Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development. We also have an evaluation form we'd love for people to fill out. It actually should be on your screen right now. Just fill that out and I believe you just hit send, and it goes directly to us.

I want to end with thanking all the speakers for being on the call. This brief that we developed is part of a series of resources that we work on here under the project called Financing and Sustaining Youth Programs, where we provide information and tools on how to finance and sustain effective programs that support positive youth development including the systems as well, to look at how to build, how to finance, and how to support an infrastructure that helps coordinate and guide investments for youth.

We are developing more products as we go along. We received a lot of learning goals from participants on how to finance systems-building efforts. We hope to use these learning goals to guide our work going forward. Obviously all the other speakers on the call have done a lot of interesting work in those areas as well, particularly the Forum for Youth Investment with all their work with Children's Cabinets.

I just want to thank everyone again for being on the call. We apologize for the late start, but I hope you enjoyed the Webinar. Please do take a look at those resources and we look forward to either talking with you all or meeting with you in the near

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future. So thanks again, everyone, thanks to our speakers. The Webinar will end now.

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