



# The National Institute to Unlock Potential

## First Inaugural Annual Convening

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*Opportunity Meets Need: Creating Equitable Pathways for Opportunity Youth*

# The Launch of Unlock Potential

[55\) Unlock Potential \(UP\) Project- National Institute to Unlock Potential \(UP\) - YouTube](#)



**P**ERSEVERE



**Karen Walker**

Persevere, Director,  
National Institute to  
Unlock Potential

**Welcome  
&  
Greetings!**



**Sean Hosman**

Founder & Chief  
Executive Officer of  
Vant4ge, Co-Founder of  
Persevere & President  
of Banyan Labs


**Opening  
Remarks:  
Opportunity  
for Impact**



**Kendrick Davis**

Chief Research Officer;  
Associate Professor of  
Research, University of  
Southern California  
(USC) Race and Equity  
Center

**Prevention as  
Policy:  
Opportunity  
Youth  
Across the  
Federal Policy  
Landscape**



Our mission is to  
**ILLUMINATE,**  
**DISRUPT,** and  
**DISMANTLE** racism  
in all its forms.

## **COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES**

Providing high-quality research, resources, and experiences that help postsecondary institutions and state higher education systems actualize their missions and equity goals.

## **K-12 SCHOOLS & DISTRICTS**

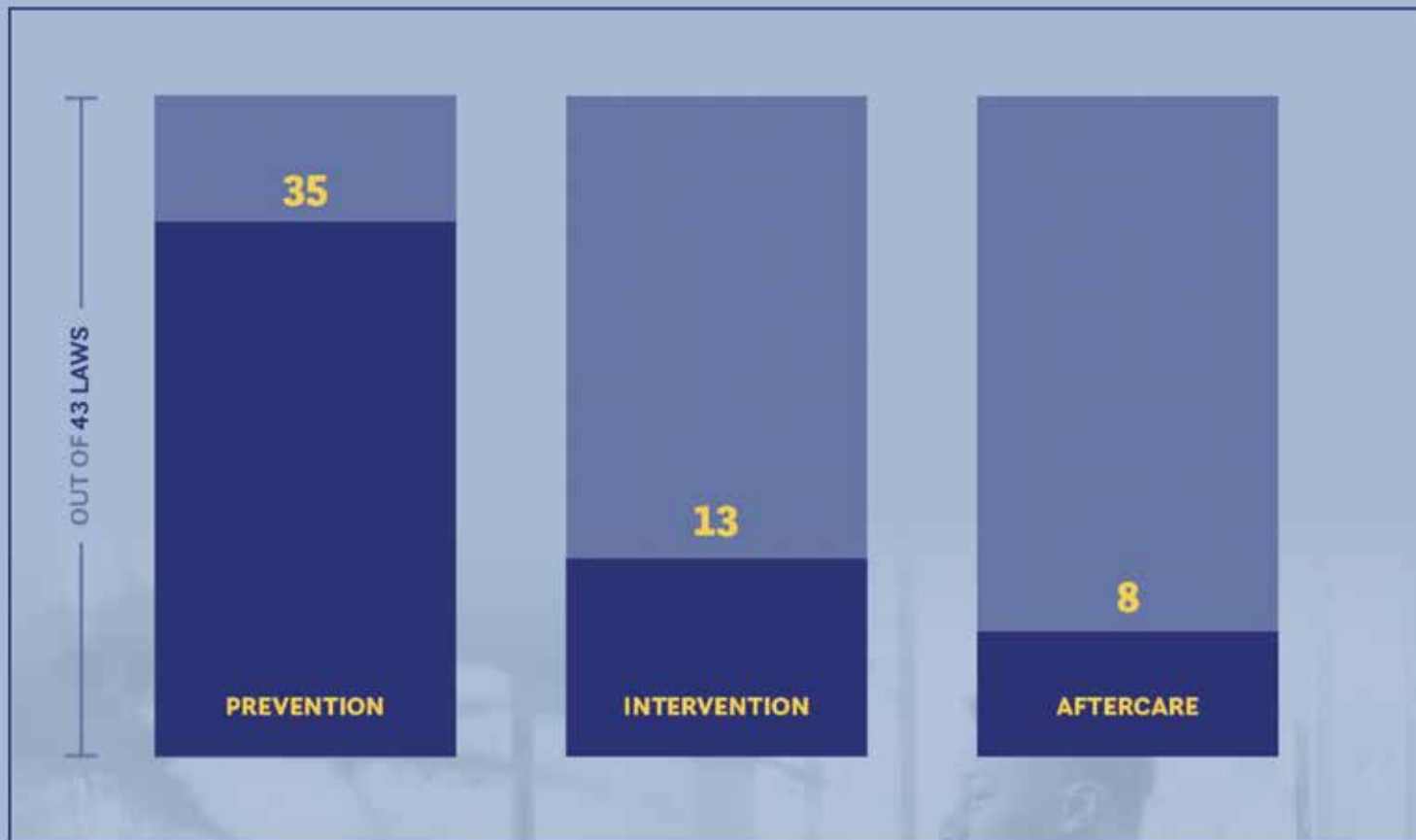
Equipping educators and leaders with practically-useful, evidence-based strategies to effectively serve racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students and families.

## **BUSINESSES & AGENCIES**

Offering rigorous DEI professional learning experiences, pay equity analyses, leadership coaching, and strategy advising to organizations of all sizes, across all industries.

## **RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT**

We conduct rigorous, interdisciplinary qualitative and quantitative research on a vast array of topics pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are especially well known for our assessments of climates in educational and workplace settings, policy and pay equity analyses, and studies of racial and gender gaps on a multitude of metrics. Research conducted by scholars on our full-time staff has been cited in over 20,000 published studies. Atlantic Philanthropies, the U.S. Department of Education, as well as the Bill & Melinda Gates, Lumina, Ford, Kellogg, Sloan, College Futures, Weingart, Kresge, Walmart, and Open Society Foundations are among the funders of our research and partnerships.

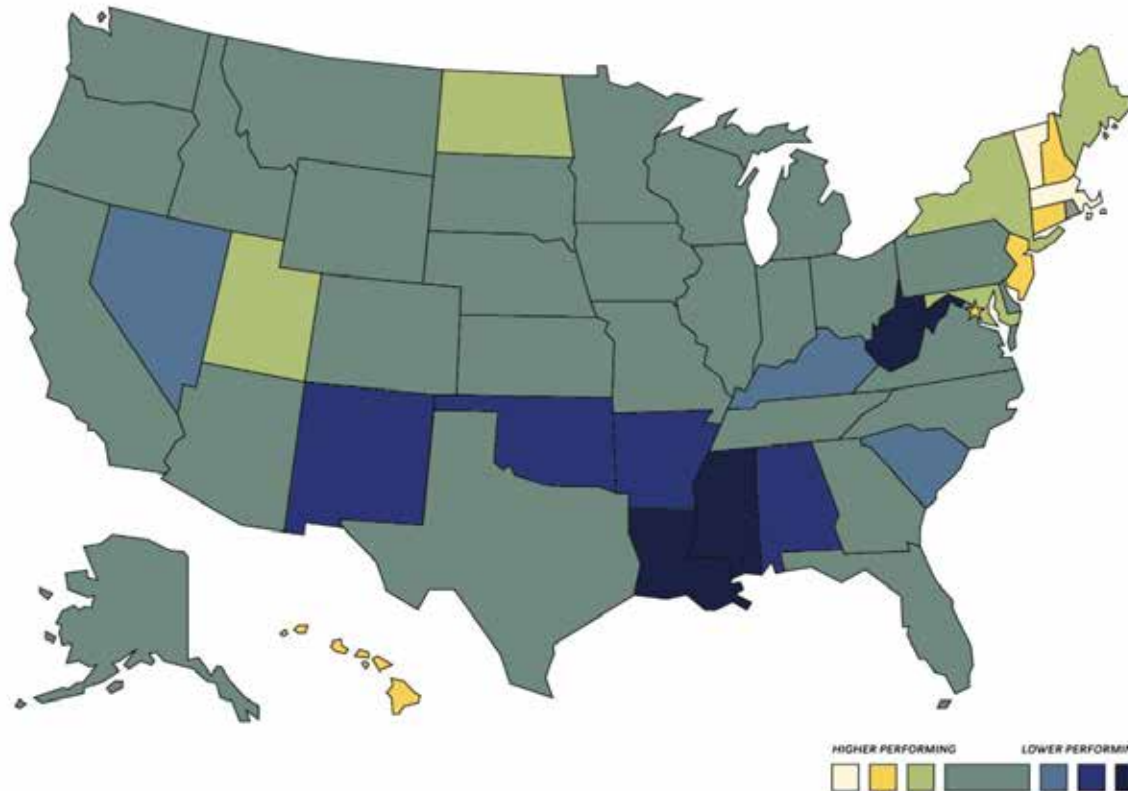




## TAKEAWAYS

- Our analysis is consistent with the reality that greater than 90% of the bills introduced in Congress do NOT become signed into law, clarifying the sometimes inefficient nature of the federal legislative process.
- Of the 43 laws analyzed, the overwhelming majority contain provisions that address areas of prevention before individuals become engaged in the criminal legal system.
- Of the prevention provisions, nearly 1/3 impact areas of elementary, secondary, and higher education, focusing attention on educational environments as spaces of prevention.
- There has been an over 150% increase in aftercare related provisions (since 2012), suggesting increased legislative momentum around supporting returning citizens.
- Additional mixed-methods research will be needed to develop a meaningful and fuller understanding of the contemporary enablers of over-policing and mass incarceration.

# STATE PERFORMANCE OVERALL



work experience  
job placement  
entrepreneurship  
residential transition

# ≡ **Priming the Prevention Pump**

employment readiness  
support  
mentorship  
life skills

# Disproportionately Disciplined

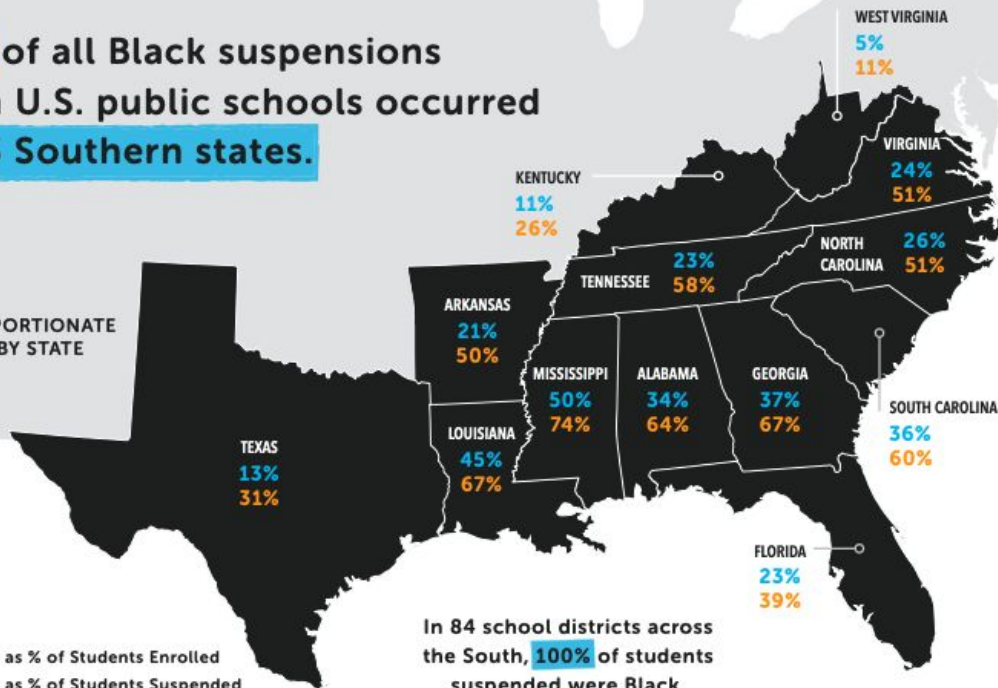
BLACK STUDENT SUSPENSION RATES IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH

BASED ON A REPORT BY EDWARD J. SMITH AND SHAUN R. HARPER

**55%** of all Black suspensions from U.S. public schools occurred in **13 Southern states.**

DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT BY STATE

● Blacks as % of Students Enrolled  
● Blacks as % of Students Suspended



In 84 school districts across the South, **100%** of students suspended were Black.

# Fatal police violence by race and state in the USA, 1980–2019: a network meta-regression

*GBD 2019 Police Violence US Subnational Collaborators\**

## Summary

**Background** The burden of fatal police violence is an urgent public health crisis in the USA. Mounting evidence shows that deaths at the hands of the police disproportionately impact people of certain races and ethnicities, pointing to systemic racism in policing. Recent high-profile killings by police in the USA have prompted calls for more extensive and public data reporting on police violence. This study examines the presence and extent of under-reporting of police violence in US Government-run vital registration data, offers a method for correcting under-reporting in these datasets, and presents revised estimates of deaths due to police violence in the USA.

**Methods** We compared data from the USA National Vital Statistics System (NVSS) to three non-governmental, open-source databases on police violence: Fatal Encounters, Mapping Police Violence, and The Counted. We extracted and standardised the age, sex, US state of death registration, year of death, and race and ethnicity (non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic of other races, and Hispanic of any race) of each decedent for all data sources and used a network meta-regression to quantify the rate of under-reporting within the NVSS. Using these rates to inform correction factors, we provide adjusted estimates of deaths due to police violence for all states, ages, sexes, and racial and ethnic groups from 1980 to 2019 across the USA.

## School Start Times for Adolescents **FREE**

ADOLESCENT SLEEP WORKING GROUP; COMMITTEE ON ADOLESCENCE;  
COUNCIL ON SCHOOL HEALTH; Rhoda Au, PhD; Mary Carskadon, PhD;  
Richard Millman, MD; Amy Wolfson, PhD; Paula K. Braverman, MD;  
William P. Adelman, MD; Cora C. Breuner, MD; David A. Levine, MD; Arik V. Marcell, MD;  
Pamela J. Murray, MD; Rebecca F. O'Brien, MD; Cynthia D. Devore, MD; Mandy Allison, MD;  
Richard Ancona, MD; FAAP Stephen E. Barnett, MD; Robert Gunther, MD;  
Breena Holmes, MD; Jeffrey H. Lamont, MD; Mark Minier, MD; Jeffrey K. Okamoto, MD;  
Lani S.M. Wheeler, MD; Thomas Young, MD

*Pediatrics* (2014) 134 (3): 642–649.

<https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2014-1697>

 Split-Screen  Views  PDF  Share  Tools

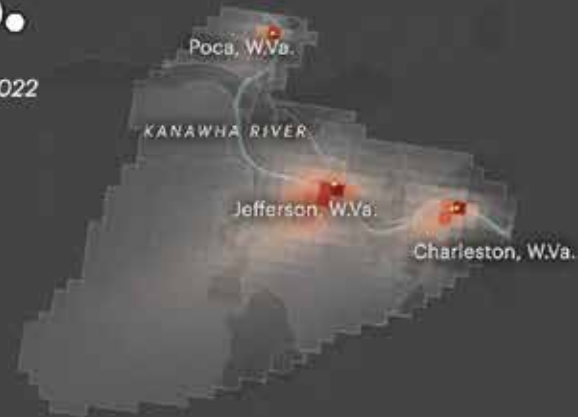
The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes insufficient sleep in adolescents as an important public health issue that significantly affects the health and safety, as well as the academic success, of our nation's middle and high school students. Although a number of factors, including biological changes in sleep associated with puberty, lifestyle choices, and academic demands, negatively affect middle and high school students' ability to obtain

The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes insufficient sleep in adolescents as an important public health issue that significantly affects the health and safety, as well as the academic success, of our nation's middle and high school students. Although a number of factors, including biological changes in sleep associated with puberty, lifestyle choices, and academic demands, negatively affect middle and high school students' ability to obtain sufficient sleep, the evidence strongly implicates earlier school start times (ie, before 8:30 AM) as a key modifiable contributor to insufficient sleep, as well as circadian rhythm disruption, in this population. Furthermore, a substantial body of research has now demonstrated that delaying school start times is an effective countermeasure to chronic sleep loss and has a wide range of potential benefits to students with regard to physical and mental health, safety, and academic achievement. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly supports the efforts of school districts to optimize sleep in students and urges high schools and middle schools to aim for start times that allow students the opportunity to achieve optimal levels of sleep (8.5–9.5 hours) and to improve physical (eg, reduced obesity risk) and mental (eg, lower rates of depression) health, safety (eg, drowsy driving crashes), academic performance, and quality of life.



# The Most Detailed Map of Cancer-Causing Industrial Air Pollution in the U.S.

by [Al Shaw](#) and [Lylla Younes](#), November 2, 2021, Updated March 15, 2022  
Additional reporting by [Ava Kofman](#)







Each grid cell is 810 x 810 meters



Area of industrial cancer risk around  
**York, Pennsylvania**

Pop. in hot spot  
**12K**

Average Risk  
**1 in 21,000,**  
or 51%  
lower than  
the EPA's  
acceptable  
risk.

Highest Risk  
**1 in 710, or**  
**14 times the**  
**EPA's acceptable**  
**risk.**



People living in this area have at least an estimated 1 in 100,000 excess lifetime cancer risk from industrial air pollution based on a ProPublica analysis of five years of EPA modeling.

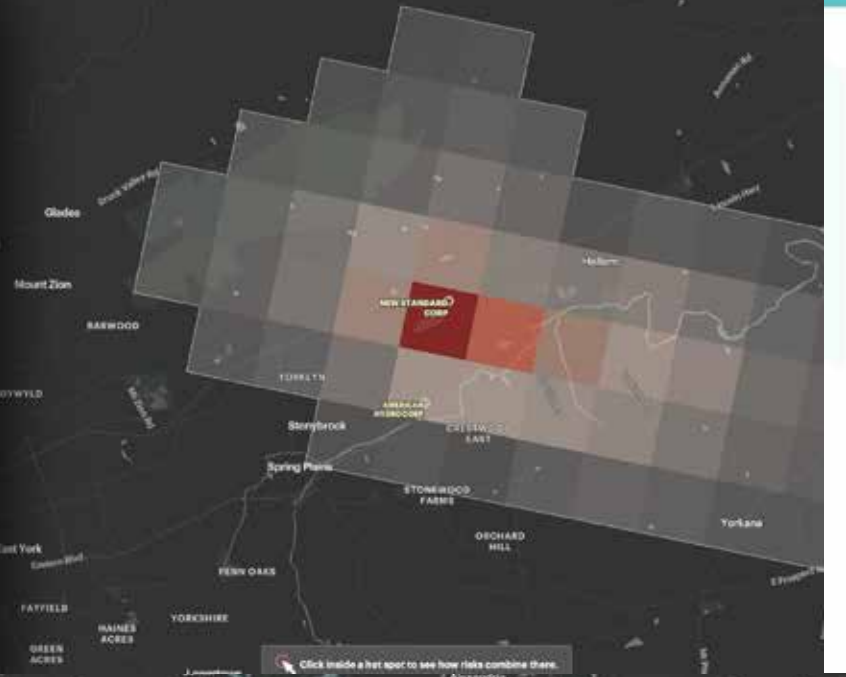
Our map is a screening tool that indicates areas of potential concern. It is not a site-specific risk assessment, and cannot be used to tie individual cancer cases to emissions from specific industrial facilities. [So, what does this mean for me?](#)

Here are some of the top emitters of cancer-causing chemicals in this area:

**NEW STANDARD CORP**

This facility alone is estimated to increase the excess cancer risk for people living within five miles by an average of **1 in 58,000**.

Note: The EPA's reporting system does not allow facilities to distinguish between hexavalent and trivalent chromium. Hexavalent chromium is a known carcinogen, whereas trivalent chromium is not. The cancer risk associated with all facilities that report chromium compounds may be inaccurate. To learn more, read our [methodology](#).



# Moving Forward

- Increased use of advanced and nuanced methods for building the evidence base
- Carefully consider simple – and often uninspiring – solutions to seemingly intractable problems
- Increase industry-cross coordination to complicate the solutions space of available alternatives
- Implement mixed-methods approaches where available and appropriate in ways that enhance vs. reiterate our understanding;
- Lean into targeted approaches and lean away from “a rising tide lifts all boats” models



**Dr. Marvin Carr**  
Director, Center for  
Racial Equity at Walmart

## Imagining a Future: A World Where Young People Thrive

# Walmart Walking in Purpose

<https://vimeo.com/722545874/accc1f84b1>



Walmart  org

# Our Commitment to Advancing Racial Equity

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation established the Walmart.org Center for Racial Equity in June 2020 with a **\$100 million commitment over five years** to advance racial equity through philanthropy and business.

To date, we've awarded over \$35 million in grants to nonprofits to help address racial disparities in the nation's health, education, finance and criminal justice systems.



Walmart.org

# Shared Value Approach

## Creating Value for Business and Society



**TRANSFORM**  
the system



Lead through the  
**BUSINESS**



Complement with  
**PHILANTHROPY**



**COLLABORATE** with  
others

The SVNs guide how Walmart uses its business capabilities to advance change in the following systems:

# Shared Value Networks (SVNs)



## Finance

- Strengthen associate financial capability
- Deepen supplier inclusion work
- Improve economic conditions for communities



## Health

- Access to nutritious food
- Maternal and infant health
- Cardiometabolic health
- Training to prevent bias in health



## Education

- Equitable advancement through upskilling and reskilling
- Increase access & outcomes for pre/post-secondary education
- Skills as talent



## Criminal Justice

- Reduce bias
- Reduce incarceration
- Reduce recidivism

## Criminal Justice

We aim to fill the void in criminal justice prevention initiatives by activating and sustaining five national networks that prevent people from entering the criminal justice system.

This includes investments in initiatives that support the deflection of young people away from CJ involvement through community-based diversion and deflections







Imagine a world where  
all our young people can  
access their full potential

**PERSEVERE**

# Current Criminal Justice Reform Landscape



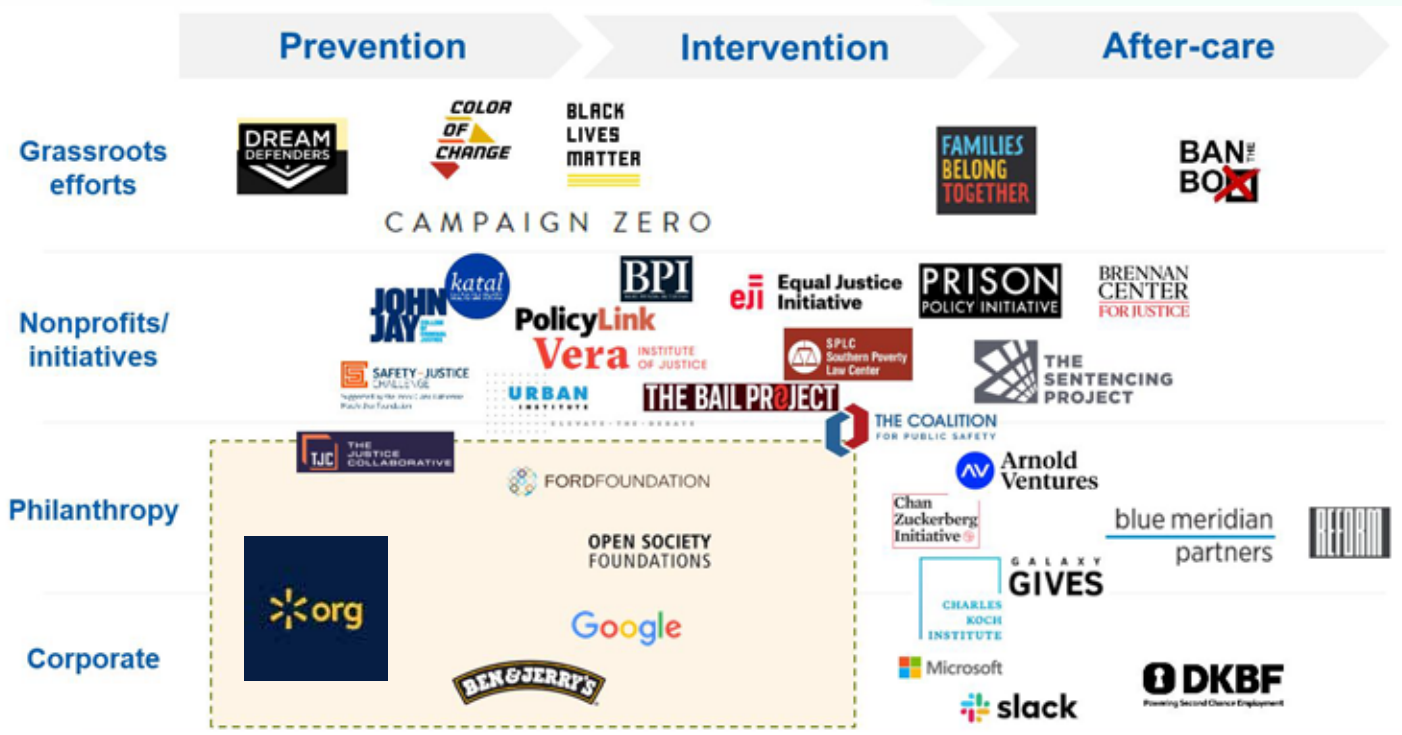
Gaps

- Most actors are supporting **intervention and after-care**
- **Few corporate actors have taken public stances on criminal justice reform**; few of them are focusing on prevention efforts

**“There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in.” — Desmond Tutu.**



# Where does Walmart.Org fit in this Model: A Focus on Prevention?



Activate efforts that systematically divert people from entering the criminal justice system for the first time

\$12 Million invested in last 18 months

- Gaps**
- Most actors are supporting **intervention and after-care**
  - **Few corporate actors have taken public stances on criminal justice reform**; few of them are focusing on prevention efforts

# Defining scope: Walmart.org Criminal Justice grant streams complement Walmart's SVN by focusing on "first-chance" hiring, partnerships and innovations in diversion

## Jobs and hiring

### Walmart Criminal Justice SVN workstreams

- Walmart US Youth Associate support program
- Sam's Club youth internship pilots
- Walmart leadership in BRT 2nd Chance Business Coalition

### Walmart Criminal Justice CRE grantstreams

- Preventing youth involvement in CJ system through Jobs and Education

## Community partnerships

- Partnership w/UALR on relationships with law enforcement, i.e. "Shop with a Cop"

- Strengthening local community involvement in deflecting youth from CJ system and building relationships with local law enforcement

## Diversion and deflection

- Asset Protection analysis of low-level retail theft

- Supporting law enforcement, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and other legal stakeholders working to scale, strengthen, or implement CJ diversion & deflection efforts.

### Desired outcome: A solid infrastructure for prevention

- Additional partnerships between business and communities to hire those at risk of first-time incarceration
- Increased number of partnerships between community organizations, business, & law enforcement to reduce violence and crime
- Increase in number of effective community and prosecutor led diversion and deflection programs

## Defining scope: We will focus on four groups most at risk of incarceration

	Transitioning Foster Youth N=93,000	407,00 foster kids in the system, 23% are black, <b>1/4 will be arrested by their mid-20s.</b> (Juvenile Law Center, 2019)
	Youth with Incarcerated Parents N=910,000	1.3 Million black children have had an incarcerated parent <b>70% will be arrested at some point.</b> (Texas DOC, 2018; Poehlmann, 2020)
	Justice Involved Youth N=35,000	There are 35,000 Black boys jailed each year. <b>53% of them will be incarcerated as adults.</b> (Morsy & Rothstein, 2018)
	Trafficking Involved Youth N=86,000	200,000 minor victims of trafficking, 43% are Black girls or women. <b>60% of them will end up with a criminal record</b> (Page, 2019; Yale University, 2019)

# A Systems Change Approach

**Policy:** Supporting local and national efforts that deflect or divert African Americans away from prosecution and/or incarceration

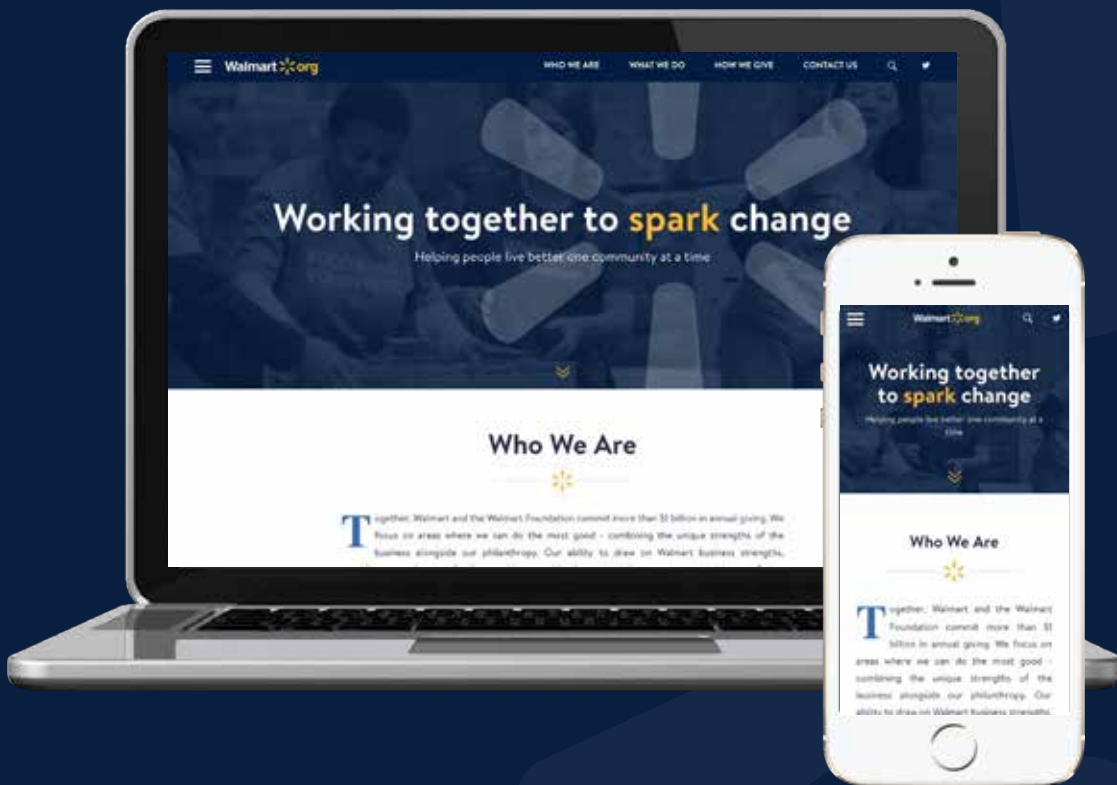
**Practice:** Enhancing active work of CJR practitioners with OY learnings and adding CJ prevention focus of OY NGO

**Resource Flows:** Projects that lead to shifts in financial allocation of large institutions and municipalities towards CJ Prevention Efforts

**Relationship & Connections:**  
Addressing NGO silos separating CJR Focused Funders/NGO and Opportunity Youth Focused Funders/NGO

**Power Dynamics:** Projects that tap into the potential power in youth and communities

**Mental Models:** Shifting beliefs of Policy Makers, Funders and Communities associated with Black Americans and the CJ system toward prevention, diversion, and deflection



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Walmart  org





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**Enter code  
1248 7880**

Recidiv



**Back in 10  
minutes**

Recidiv



**Monique Miles**

Managing Director,  
Aspen Institute Forum  
for Community Solutions

**State of the  
Field:  
An Assessment  
of the  
Opportunity  
Youth  
Movement**

# Brief Overview of AFCS & OYF

## **Our Vision:**

We envision a future where communities create their own vibrant and lasting solutions to the social and economic problems that they face. We believe that if communities have more power to lead change, we will create a more just and equitable society.

## **Our Mission:**

The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions promotes collaborative, community-based efforts that build the power and influence of those with the least access to opportunity. We support communities to come together to expand mobility, eliminate systemic barriers, and create their own solutions to their most pressing challenges.

The Opportunity Youth Forum is comprised of a **network of over three dozen urban, rural, and tribal communities** seeking to scale multiple reconnection pathways that achieve better outcomes in education and employment for opportunity youth.

# Opportunity Youth (OY)

Opportunity Youth are young adults aged 16-24 who are neither:

- Working, nor
- In school (K12 or postsecondary)

**In 2020, the  
estimated number  
of opportunity  
youth in the United  
States**



**4,830,700 or  
12.6 percent of  
youth and young  
adults**

Source: Measure of America

# Opportunity Youth (OY)

- **Gender:**
  - Girls: 12.1 percent
  - Boys: 13.2 percent
    - The size of the gender gap varies by race and ethnicity
- **Race & Ethnicity:**
  - **Native American:**
    - Nearly **1 in 4 Native American young adults are neither working nor in school.**
    - The Native American youth disconnection rate is 23.4 percent
    - This number **is the highest of the United States'** five major racial and ethnic groups.
  - **Black/African-American:**
    - Black young adults have the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest disconnection rate, 19.6 percent, or 982,900 young people.
    - Black young people have the largest gender gap in the youth disconnection rate of any racial or ethnic group—**16.6 percent for Black girls and young women**, compared to **22.5 percent for their male counterparts.**

Source: Measure of America

# Opportunity Youth (OY)

- Race & Ethnicity (continued):
  - **Latino:**
    - The Latino youth disconnection rate is 14.0 percent, or 1,258,700 young people.
    - In past years, Latina girls and young women were slightly more likely than their male counterparts to be disconnected, but **in 2020, the male and female rates were the same, 14.0 percent.**
  - **White:**
    - The disconnection rate for white young adults is 10.6 percent, the second-lowest rate.
  - **Asian:**
    - Asian teens and young adults have the **lowest disconnection rate**, 7.3 percent, or 156,100 young people. Rates vary widely by Asian subgroup and gender, however, from a low of 4.5 percent for Chinese and Japanese boys and young men to a high of **18.8 percent for Cambodian boys and young men.**

Source: Measure of America

# OY experience disadvantages compared to peers



**1 in 9**  
**YOUNG ADULTS**  
**(16-24 year olds)**

are neither enrolled in education  
nor in the workforce

Source: Measure of America

Disconnected young adults are...

**2x**

more likely to  
live in poverty

**3x**

more likely to  
have a disability

**9x**

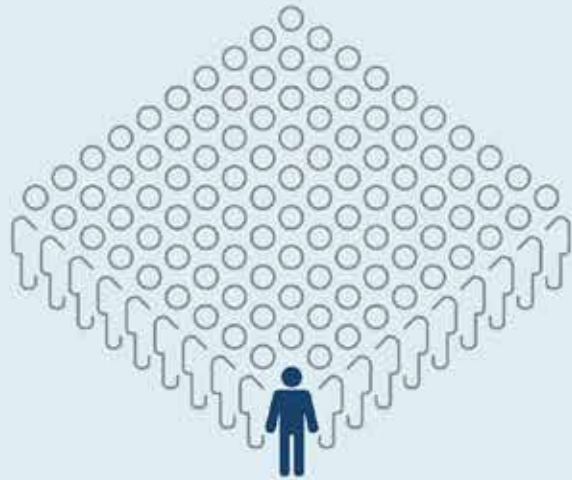
more likely  
not to complete  
high school

**4x**

more likely to become  
young parents  
than their peers



# Long term disadvantages of disconnection



**Only 1%**

of disconnected  
young adults will earn an  
associate's degree or higher

compared  
to



**36%**

of the general population

Source: Jobs For The Future

## Racial equity is at the core of OYF work and we emphasize supports for young adults of color

While **56%** of all OY in the U.S. are people of color...

**77%**

of OY in OYF communities are people of color

**88%**

of those in OYF partner direct services are people of color



# Opportunity Youth Forum Communities

**MORE THAN**

**1,000,000**

**OPPORTUNITY  
YOUTH LIVE IN**

**39**

**OYF  
COMMUNITIES**



# Growing the Network & Deepening Impact - OYF Milestones & Accomplishments

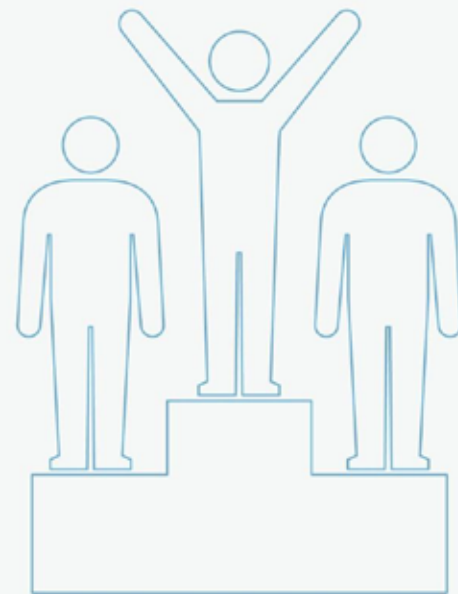


# Participating in OYF makes a difference



2x

OYF collaboratives that have **participated consistently** in the network over the past five years are **twice as likely** to have seen strong evidence of success related to systems-level improvements for youth, when compared to other OYF collaboratives.

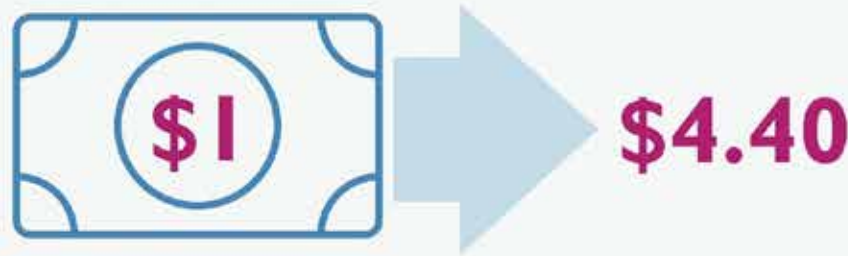


Source: Equal Measure

# OYF collaboratives successfully leverage public resources

OYF collaboratives collectively spent **\$18.7 million** on OY work and leveraged **\$82.3 million** in public and private funding for OY in their communities.

For every \$1 spent on OY work,  
there was a return of \$4.40 to the community.



Source: Equal Measure

# OYF Common Measures

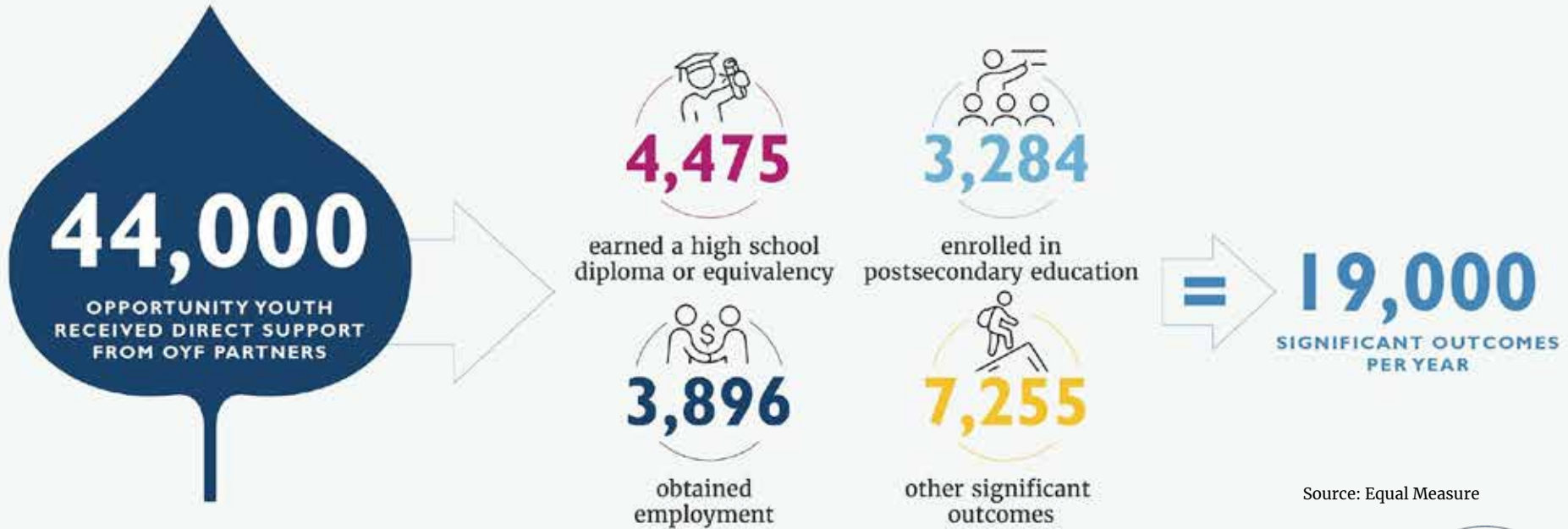
**Overall community disconnection rate:** The rate of young people disconnected from work and school (i.e., opportunity youth).

**High school disconnection rate:** The rate of young people without a high school diploma/GED and not working who are disconnected from high school.

**Postsecondary disconnection rate:** The rate of young people with a high school diploma/GED, without a postsecondary credential who are disconnected from postsecondary education and not working.

**Workforce disconnection rate:** The rate of young people with a postsecondary credential, but not enrolled in postsecondary, who are disconnected from the workforce.

# OYF collaborative partners coordinate and provide services to thousands every year



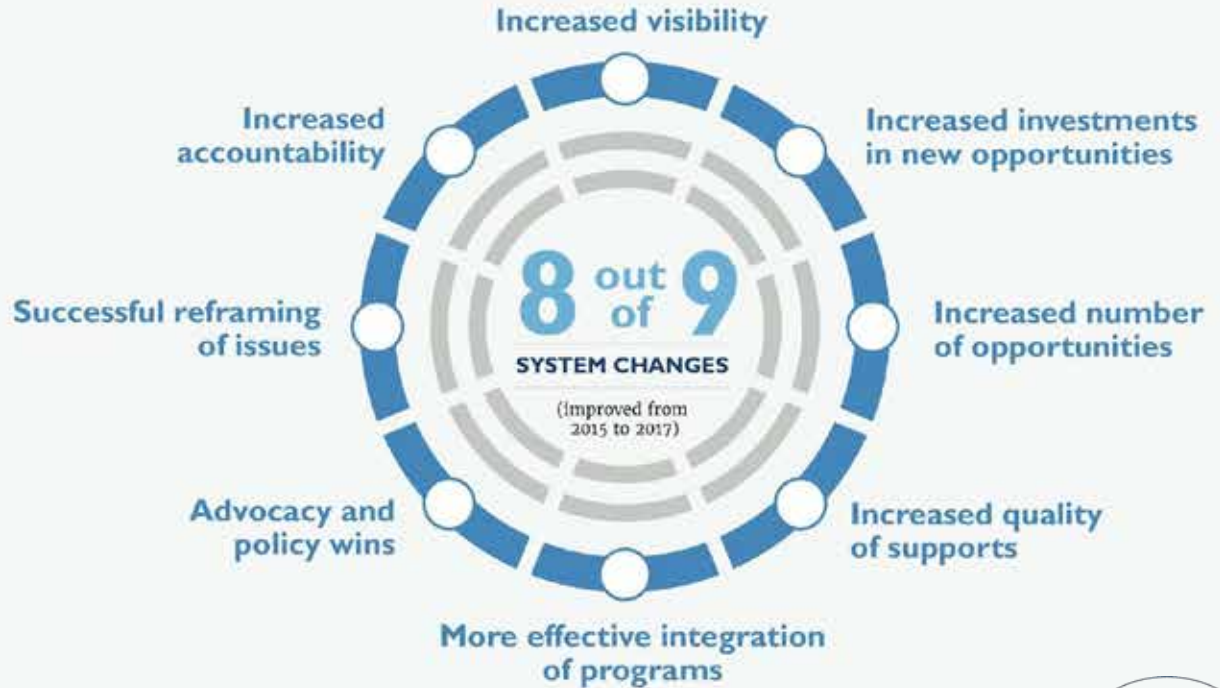
Source: Equal Measure



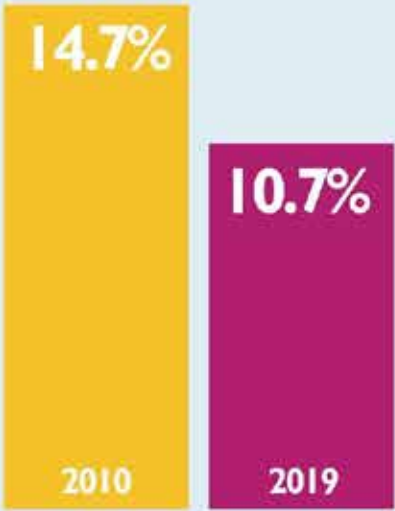
# OYF collaboratives support youth outcomes by changing local systems

OYF collaboratives made changes to the key systems impacting opportunity youth throughout the 2010s, resulting in increased capacity and program improvement

Source: Equal Measure



# Through concerted efforts, numbers of OY have been reduced in the last decade



From 2010 to 2019, the number of opportunity youth in the United States decreased by **more than 1 million** young adults, a reduction of nearly 25%.



Source: Measure of America

# Creating positive outcomes for youth and for society as a whole



Since almost **50%** of opportunity youth in direct services attain significant outcomes, we estimate

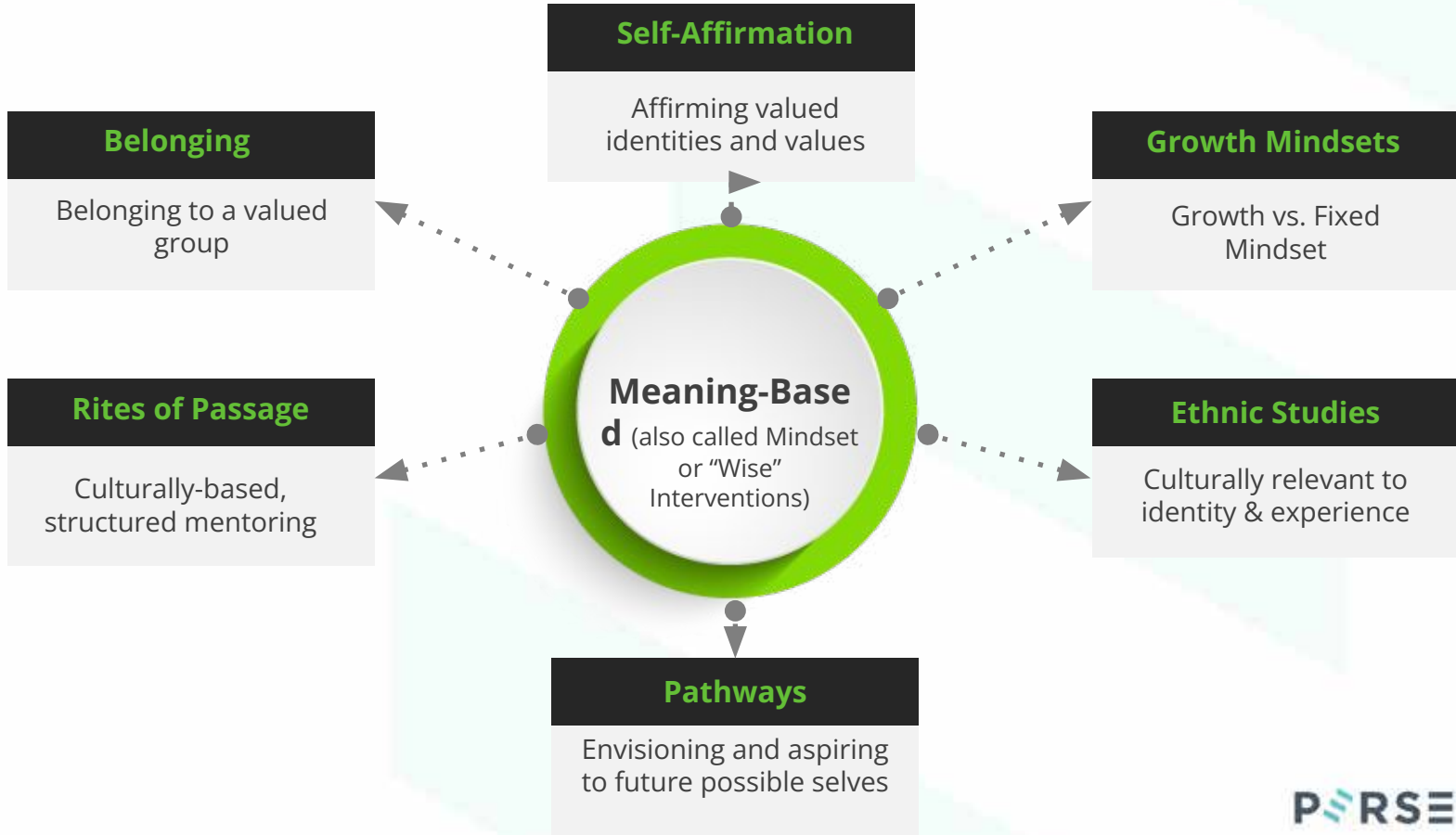
**\$2B** in direct savings to taxpayers over the lifetimes of those young adults (and another \$4 billion in reduced social costs)

Source: based on Civic Enterprises analysis

# Centering Belonging, Meaning, Wellbeing & Purpose - NorthStar

- The next phase of work is aimed at deepening impact across all **four Common Measures**, including advancing system change and influencing narrative change.
- We will invest in **BELONGING, MEANING, WELLBEING, AND PURPOSE (BMWP)** interventions as priorities for the network, youth serving systems and the field.
- We will **infuse BMWP into the pathways, structures, (eco)systems and narratives that serve young people**. We will document and codify pathway innovations and prototypes with potential to scale through public investment. We will develop and implement a robust systems change and narrative change strategy.

# Meaning-Based Intervention Exemplars



# Defining Belonging, Meaning, Wellbeing & Purpose in the Context of Youth and Young Adults

## Definitions:

- **Belonging:** The recognition of our full humanity without having to become something different or pretend we're all the same. Belonging connotes something fundamental about how groups are structurally positioned within society as well as how they are perceived and regarded. Belonging is more than joining a club – it is about co-creating and co-owning structures to belong. (John Powell)
- **Meaning:** Meaning-making interventions, unlike those focused on improving “skills,” are focused on improving the identity-related meaning that youth and children apply to both themselves and the challenging contexts in which they strive to succeed (like schools). (Arnold Chandler)
- **Purpose:** What really, truly matters in the long run; what is important. How what matters impacts choices and how behaviors align with what matters most in the long run. (Whole Health Institute)
- **Wellbeing:** Wellbeing is the journey to achieve balance in everyday life - juggling school and work, family and friends - the wants and needs, amongst financial constraints. Wellbeing is a consideration towards being at peace with the multiple pressures. **Wellbeing is also the presence of intergenerational and individual trauma from racism - recognizing that these factors are at the root cause for the lack of wellbeing.** (Youth & Young Adults for the AEC Wellbeing Project)

## The Aspen Institute | Opportunity Youth Form

# Aligning around a Collective Vision for Belonging, Meaning, Wellbeing, Purpose for Youth & Young Adults

## Belonging, Meaning Making, Well-Being and Purpose: Theory of Change

### The Current Situation

- There are over 6 million disconnected young adults in the United States today, the majority of which are young adults of color.
- It's well established that young adults of color are disproportionately more likely to be disconnected than others.
- The education and employment systems meant to support young people to achieve education and employment success are underperforming in meeting their mission(s).
- Systems involved young people have some of the lowest rates of education and employment success and have less access to "finding their purpose."

### Solutions

- Decades of research have established the importance and impact of initiatives that build Belonging and Purpose in the lives of all young adults.
- Rigorous research in the last few years has established the particular impact of Meaning-Making-based efforts to increase the lifetime Well-Being of young adults of color.
- Research tells us that "purpose" strengthens the well being of young adults, especially those who are overcoming trauma.
- More innovative solutions are needed, especially for young people who have extraordinary barriers to achieving a thriving adulthood.

### OYF Theory of Action

- Given our network of national partners, system leaders and over 40 communities working to improve outcomes for OY, **if** we invest in a diverse portfolio(s) of proximate organization/institutions working within the different systems that serve young people to implement BMWP approaches, **then** we will document the impact, learning, culture and narrative changes necessary to address inequity and engender deep belonging, meaning, well-being and purpose in those broader systems and in communities, especially if we include young people in the design of solutions.

### Intermediate Impacts

- From this learning, we will codify principles and calls to action that can change the field, systems and structures that hold young people back from success.
- Codification of effective pathways and bottoms up development of systems change, policy priorities, and narrative change strategies, will stimulate, deepen, and further public and private investment and the scaling of BMWP-focused approaches, pathways, and policies.

### Ultimate Impacts

- In the long term, as more BMWP interventions and approaches are adopted and scaled, millions more young people, particularly but not exclusively young people of color, will achieve a healthy, purposeful adulthood and thrive.
- The core metrics of the Aspen OYF will reflect significant reductions in disconnection rates.

# Aligning around a Collective Vision for Belonging, Meaning, Wellbeing, Purpose for Youth & Young Adults

## Definitions:

- **System Change Definition:** Systems change is the process of making positive adjustments to system components which, taken together, result in significant improvements not just for young people, but for everyone. (International Youth Foundation)
- **Narrative Change Definition:** A narrative reflects a shared interpretation of how the world works. Who holds power and how they use it is both embedded in and supported by dominant narratives. Successful narrative change shifts power as well as dominant narratives. (Narrative Initiative)



# Accelerating Big Narrative & System Shifts to Improve Youth Outcomes – Framing the Next 5-10 Years

The future requires clear understanding of the challenges youth and young adults of color face, coupled with a strategy designed to change and shift narratives and transform systems. A few necessary shifts include:

- A shift from zero sum to abundance
- A shift from othering to belonging
- A shift from “skills only” to skills *and* interventions that foster belonging, meaning, well-being and purpose
- A shift from understanding history as a deficit to understanding history as an asset

# Bringing It All Together: A Call to Action





## **Kia Jarmon**

Director of MEPR Agency, Director, Founder of Nonprofit Equity Collaborative, Founding Director, and Founder of Black Philanthropy Initiative

**Brilliance of  
Our Youth:  
Youth Lead  
Systems  
Change**

# ≡ Indigenous and Black People Land Acknowledgement

I invite you to acknowledge that we are currently on Indigenous land worked by Black people.

I want to express gratitude for the opportunity to work on the land of the Shawnee and Cherokee communities who lived here, and continue to live here, and have historically and systematically been erased by policies and practices.

I must also honor the Black people – enslaved and freed - who built the wealth and foundation of our country.

Let us recognize the painful history of racism that our country has been complicit in that has specifically harmed Black and Indigenous communities, in the past and currently.

Though an acknowledgement is not enough, people should be repaired and land should be restored, this is where we will start.

May my work demonstrate a commitment to justice, racial equity, truth, and liberation by upholding history and the rituals of my ancestors.

If you would like to do your own acknowledgement, I encourage you to visit:  
<https://native-land.ca/> or your local Historically Black College / University.



Do you remember?

A young boy, Michael Platt, stands on a stage during a TEDx event. He is wearing a light-colored shirt and a grey cardigan. Behind him is a large screen displaying his name and the event's theme. To the left, a large red 'X' is visible on the wall. To the right, a quote is displayed in white text on a dark background. The stage is lit with warm tones, and the audience is visible in the foreground.

MICHAEL PLATT

BAKING A BETTER SOCIETY

**“Adults think that kids don’t have anything meaningful to contribute. Kids think there aren’t opportunities for them to contribute anything meaningful.”**

TEDx Jacksonville

**MICHAEL PLATT**  
KIDS CAN SOLVE BIG PROBLEMS

TEDx

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o14-3SFZYPY> - From beginning & stop at 2:02

PERSEVERE



**Adults spend a lot of time focusing on solutions, but young people are constantly living in the problem.**

“Youth can be leaders in their own liberation.”

Kia Jarmon



**P=RS=EVERE**



**Adjust Your Vision.**

Source:

[https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.leadertreks.org%2Fsticky-vision%2F&psig=AOvWaw0sTVbkFbQKKWxAUTsxTo2Z&ust=1666103615053000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CA0QjhqxqFwoTCJjm\\_ua95\\_oCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAD](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.leadertreks.org%2Fsticky-vision%2F&psig=AOvWaw0sTVbkFbQKKWxAUTsxTo2Z&ust=1666103615053000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CA0QjhqxqFwoTCJjm_ua95_oCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAD)

**PERSEVERE**



# YOUTH AS EXPERTS.

It's been said that a child can ask a thousand questions that a wise person can never answer. Yet how often do we ever look to children for the answers? Why do we admire children for their curiosity but overlook their knowledge and experience?

# Youth as Researchers.

## YPAR Can:

### (Youth Participatory Action Research)

- **Redefine** who has the expertise to produce knowledge to our world — not just professional adult researchers but young people who are living the issues they are studying.
- **Provide** skills in inquiry, evidence, and presentation that are important to young people's development as students and agents of positive change in schools and communities.
- **Generate** findings that provides insights into issues faced by young people that they themselves experience, as well as the resources that matter in helping solve those issues.
- **Promote** young people's sociopolitical development and psychological empowerment such that they understand the roots of problems facing their communities and have the skills and motivation to take action.
- **Evaluate** programs, policies, and practices that affect young people.

# Youth as Dreamers. *"Goals without a dream are like arrows without a target." – Dr. Julie Conner*

Research looked at the effects of three parenting practices\* that grow in importance during adolescence, as young people assume greater control over their own development:

- **autonomy support** (providing opportunities for young people to make choices, make decisions, and develop solutions to problems independently);
- **monitoring** (providing clear and consistent guidelines and knowing where kids are, what they're doing, and who their friends are);
- and **warmth** (a supportive relationship between parent and child).

These parenting practices, Hill and other researchers have found, are related to outcomes in adolescence and early adulthood, as well as more directly to school engagement and achievement.

\*consider parents as meaningful adults

Source: <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/15/03/teenage-dreams>

# Youth as Dreamers.

## Key findings:

- Aspirations are key to engagement; when connected to aspirations, engagement in school becomes self-motivating.
- The connection between aspiration and school engagement is also important for students who are already high achievers.
- Parents remain a significant influence through adolescence and early adulthood by promoting aspirations, helping their kids find meaning and purpose in their schoolwork, and showing them how their current endeavors fit their longer-term goals and identities.
- Parental warmth matters broadly. Warmth was directly related to aspirations, school engagement, and GPA, and through these factors was related to college enrollment.

*"Parental warmth, including trust and connectedness, provides the emotional security and foundation young people need to explore their ideas and interests," Hill says. "It enables parents to both affirm and shape who adolescents will become."*

\*consider parents as meaningful adults

Source: <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/15/03/teenage-dreams>

# Youth as Innovators.

- **BluPower** (India) is a Micro Hydro solution providing reliable and resilient hydropower that is compact and easy to install in rivers and canal sites currently unfit for electrification. Their mission is to produce 8000 GW of energy annually by 2030 to impact 20 million lives in grid deficient communities globally.
- **Chloride Free Foundation** (Brazil) is an international non-profit organization that addresses carbon sequestration in soil and is looking to expand beyond Brazil and the US. The Foundation aims to create a prosperous and equitable future for all people and the environment through raising awareness about the importance of soil biodiversity and promoting sustainable, chloride-free agriculture practices among farmers.
- **Eco Smart Farming (Eco Warriors)** (Ghana) is a digital Farming solution that offers climate-smart agricultural practices to farmers in local languages. This scalable tech-based solution targets farmers in the Fodoo community who are losing their rice crops due to climate change and need to learn new climate-smart methods of rice farming.
- **HamsaRecycling** (Azerbaijan) is a social start-up that uses textile and plastic waste to create shoes and clothing. They aim to create products designed specifically for people with disabilities from recycled materials. As people with disabilities have been underrepresented in the fashion industry, HamsaRecycling is contributing to sustainability and inclusiveness.

**MAA'VA™** (United States of America) is developing a proprietary sustainable carbon sequestering construction material, turning plastic and non-plastic waste into eco-concrete that can be used for conventional and 3D-printing construction. By optimizing 3D-printing technology, MAA'VA can build environmentally friendly low-cost housing with eco-concrete in one day for 1/10th of the construction cost and half of the construction waste.

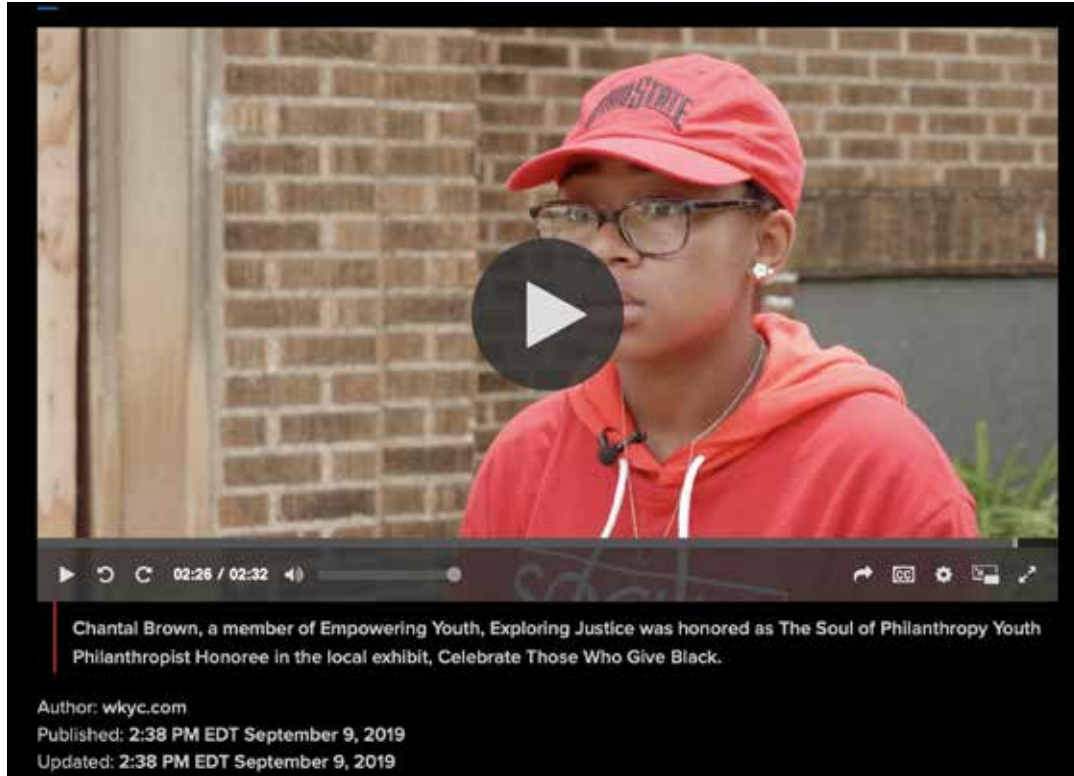
**Mudatuga** (Portugal) is a start-up creating domestic and community compost solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prevent the disposal of organic waste in landfills. Its leading product is Compostuga, an eco-friendly Bokashi bin made with cork residues that allows consumers to compost anything at home. Mudatuga addresses Portugal's growing urban waste problem while aiming to become a catalyst of circular waste management in the Iberian Peninsula.

**Nossa Horta** (Brazil) is a grassroots movement in Rio de Janeiro city promoting urban agriculture through community gardens primarily in low-income neighbourhoods. Each garden fits the needs of the local community and teaches adults and children about climate change, medicinal plants, unconventional foods.

**Subjee-Cooler** (India) is a portable zero-energy cooling chamber that keeps vegetables fresh for five days without energy input. The Subjee-Cooler has been instrumental in improving farmers' income and decreasing food waste throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Tree Square** (Philippines) is a scalable model for urban reforestation supported by the Philippines Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The project combats climate change one square meter at a time through collective and individual action to re-green cities. Tree Square's goal is to achieve 10,000 square meters of urban tree coverage across 100 cities in the Philippines, with the potential to scale to other countries in Southeast Asia.

# Youth as Philanthropists.

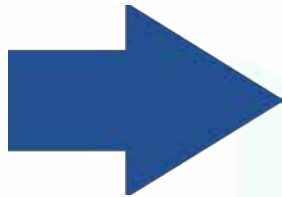


Source:

<https://www.wky.com/video/news/local/cleveland/celebrate-those-who-give-back-the-story-of-the-soul-of-philanthropy-you>

# Youth as Policymakers.

Rather than standing or speaking for children, we need to stand with children speaking for themselves. We don't need a political movement for children... We need to build environments and policies for our collective future. — Sandra Meucci



**Youth On Boards** — Youth engagement on boards should be identical to adults. There should be equal numbers of youth and adults on every board affecting young people and the larger communities they are part of. They should have full rights, including the abilities to raise issues, to vote, to hire and fire executives, to be responsible for finances, and all other duties of regular board members. Nonprofit organizations, international NGOs, municipal (village/town/city/county) boards, school boards, and other boards should all do this.



# Youth Need Guidance; Not Gatekeeping.

Recidiv



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BAKING A BETTER SOCIETY



TEDx Jacksonville

# MICHAEL PLATT

## KIDS CAN SOLVE BIG PROBLEMS

TEDx

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o14-3SFZYPY> - from 4:57 to the end

PERSEVERE



**Caz Walcott**

Senior Project Manager  
Responsible Business  
Initiative for Justice

**Value of  
Meaningful  
Career  
Pathways for  
Youth People**

you can take  
action.

you  
can take  
action.

with 

you  
can take  
action.

you

## Who We Are RBIJ



## Why Unlock Potential?

- Meaningful career pathways – with real opportunities for advancement – are one of the best ways to prevent incarceration.
- Young adults need both employment and the wraparound services to be successful.
- Unlock Potential will help businesses advance economic mobility and racial equity across the country.

## The Business Case

- Companies are seeking to fill more than 11 million open jobs in light of the Great Resignation.
- Consumers expect businesses to take action on social justice – but companies also have to meet their bottom line.
- Through UP, businesses can walk their talk on social justice while tapping into a new, diverse talent pool.



# The UP Businesses



**GREYSTON  
BAKERY**





## **Breakout Question:**

What steps can businesses take to drive justice reform that are both ambitious and realistic? What have you seen companies do successfully? What is the next step for corporate culture change?



**Kendall Taylor**

Founder & Chief  
Executive Officer,  
Salute 1st, LLC

**Restacking the  
Odds to Give  
Young People  
the Best Start**

# SALUTE FIRST

## **E1 Leadership Development Program for Men**

24 Virtual / Visual Training Lessons

200+ Page Workbook Curriculum

Bonus: The Faith of a Felon Series  
(containing 5 in-depth interviews  
with previously incarcerated  
individuals who've since  
experienced individual success & 1  
Faith of a Father session with CEO  
& his Son.)



"As gold is tried in the  
fire, so are acceptable  
Men in the furnace of  
adversity!"  
-Ecclesiasticus



### **TRAINING FOCUS:**

Building a core competency in  
psychosocial awareness &  
management skills.

### **ADDITIONAL BENEFITS:**

Cognitive Reconditioning

Reconstruction of Criminogenic  
Behavior Patterns

Ego Focused Training to Reduce  
Social Negligence & Recidivism



### **In development of E8 Training for Men**

- Workplace Etiquette & Navigation
- Investment Principles & Strategies
- Methods of Building & Sustaining the Family Dynamic
- Networking & Relationship Management Mastery
- Behind the scenes access with business owners in industries of logistics, music & entertainment, real estate, trusts & life insurance, fashion & apparel, food & hospitality and more.



### **Notable**

#### **Accomplishments:**

SCDC Book Drive; Exceeded the 20k  
Collection Goal of providing new reading  
material to inmates during the pandemic.

Partnered with Prison Fellowship from  
2018-2021 to provide Keynote Speakers  
at numerous Hope Events in both North  
& South Carolina prisons.

CEO Provided Keynote address for the  
first Maximum Security Re-Entry  
Program at Lieber Correctional, SC.

Currently facilitating a Prevention  
focused Pilot Program at four high  
schools in St. James Parish of  
New Orleans.

Currently hosting a pilot program for  
Re-Entry at Trenton Correctional  
Institute SC that is experiencing 17%  
enrollment growth weekly.



# SALUTE FIRST LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

## E1 TRAINING & CURRICULUM



# Salute First Reel Time



[https://www.dropbox.com/s/a9m8rjpusmwee5q/SizzleReelCurriculum\\_1.mp4?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/a9m8rjpusmwee5q/SizzleReelCurriculum_1.mp4?dl=0)



"IT'S HARD TO CREATE  
AND CHASE A VISION,  
WHEN ALL YOU'VE EVER  
KNOWN IS SURVIVAL!

#SALUTE1ST #SALUTE1ST



**Alisa Malone**

Chief Executive Officer,  
Persevere

**National  
Institute  
Call to  
Action**

**PERSEVERE**



# Call to Action:

*Let us not be addicted to education  
but allergic to execution!*

# National Institute Survey and Registration



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NIUPsurvey>



**P=RS=VERE**

**THANK YOU**