



Directing Resources to “Opportunity Youth”

Helios has invested in a \$150,000 planning grant to help fund an Opportunity Youth initiative in Tucson, Arizona through the Aspen Forum for Community Solutions. The collaborative, led locally by the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona, will help discover best practices of cross-sector collaboration to make substantive progress for opportunity youth, defined as young people ages 16-24 who are disconnected from education and work.

Each year, the overall cost to the United States from opportunity youth is over \$250 billion – including lost revenue, earnings and increased social services. In 2011, the lifetime societal cost of opportunity youth was \$4.75 trillion, according to research conducted by Queens College, City University of New York and Teachers College, Columbia University⁶.

This collaboration will grant second-chance opportunities to vulnerable young adults with the ultimate goal of changing the life trajectory for opportunity youth. By working with K-12 and higher-education leaders, foster-care programs, the justice

system, philanthropy and the private sector, the Aspen Institute builds successful pathways for traditionally forgotten youth.

The Aspen Institute is working with similar collaborations in 21 cities and towns across the nation. Using the collective-impact model, the work will bring stakeholders together from all sectors of the community to improve education and employment outcomes for opportunity youth. Through this process, the collaboration will align priorities and goals, identify gaps in knowledge in areas that have historically proven challenging around reconnecting opportunity youth and minimize duplication of efforts across organizations and sectors focused on this population.

Simultaneously, the Aspen Forum will convene roundtable discussions around the country with mayors, community leaders, philanthropies and businesses to explore successful community collaborations and share best practices.

