



Scope of Work

Youth Entrepreneurship Fund Consultant

Introduction

The Aspen Forum for Community Solutions (Aspen Forum) Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund (OYIF) is seeking a consultant to perform research, writing, and additional activities on behalf of our program within the Aspen Institute (AI). The consultant will be responsible for conducting a landscape analysis of national and local youth entrepreneurship efforts, developing a white paper to document and disseminate learnings from the landscape analysis, and supporting the Aspen Forum team and partners to identify key learnings and strategies to share with the national OYIF learning network of 23 community grantees.

The length of this contract is six months from start date, with the possibility of further extensions. The Aspen Forum has offices in Washington DC and Seattle, but it is not required that the consultant be located in either city. Occasional travel to DC may be required. The consultant will be expected to attend our twice yearly major events, which are held in May and October.

Resume and materials for this position are due on **August 31, 2018** to Yelena Nemoy, yelena.nemoy@aspeninstitute.org.

Aspen Forum for Community Solutions and Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund

The mission of the Aspen Forum for Community Solutions is to support community collaboration - including collective impact - that enables communities to effectively address their most pressing challenges. The Forum works to accomplish this mission by pursuing four complementary strategies including: 1) building awareness by documenting and lifting up proven strategies and stories of success; 2) mobilizing stakeholders through knowledge and network development; 3) removing barriers by advocating for effective policy; and 4) catalyzing investment by encouraging funder partnerships.

The Aspen Forum and the Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund (OYIF) were launched to leverage the new visibility and momentum of the opportunity youth movement coming out of the White House Council on Community Solutions and its report [*Community Solutions for Opportunity Youth*](#), which called for innovative, place-based, collaborative solutions to reconnect opportunity youth. The OYIF is the first funding collaborative launched by the Aspen Forum with the overall goal of supporting a network of urban, rural, and tribal communities with multi-year grants to design and scale multiple reconnection

pathways that achieve better outcomes in education and employment for opportunity youth. By focusing on the development of educational and career pathways, the OYIF seeks to interrupt the multi-generational cycle of poverty that undermines the vibrancy and economic health of communities.

The goal of the OYIF is two-fold: 1) to build strong evidence of success for utilizing the collective impact community collaboration strategy to build and deepen pathways that achieve better outcomes in education and employment for opportunity youth, and 2) to make the case for increased adoption of collective impact and community collaboration as an effective model for community change. Over the past five years, the OYIF has grown into a large and powerful place-based national network of [23 communities](#) that supports success for opportunity youth through innovative piloting aimed at disrupting generations of siloed systems and programs to integrate systems (K-12, postsecondary, workforce) to enable opportunity youth to learn and earn by achieving postsecondary success and advancing in careers. OYIF continues to evolve into a broader network that connects, manages, and convenes several interrelated efforts that deepen aspects of pathways for opportunity youth.

Background

There are currently 4.9 million opportunity youth – defined as young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither enrolled in school nor participating in the labor market – who represent enormous potential for our nation’s economy, as well as a powerful case and need for the advancement of future generations of low income children and families. The successful reconnection of these young people requires community collaborations that effectively remove barriers, connect the many systems that touch their lives, and build and deepen education and employment pathways.

A recent report by the Association for Enterprise Opportunity (AEO), [Linking Young Adults to Microbusiness – Providing New Pathways to Economic Opportunity](#), found that 45 percent of youth ages 18-24 who were not currently in school or working, were highly interested in starting their own business but lacked the resources and support to do so. At the same time, entrepreneurial training can be highly valuable, not only for launching microbusinesses but also for development of soft skills that increase workforce readiness of young adults. Youth and young adults under 25, particularly youth of color, experience higher unemployment rates than adults. The costs of disconnection from education and the labor market are high, resulting in loss of individual lifetime earnings and costs to taxpayers. There are additional social burdens associated with disconnection, including increased likelihood of negative outcomes (such as incarceration) and reliance on government supports.

Young adults – particularly youth of color, system-involved, low-income youth, and other vulnerable groups – who have experienced prolonged exclusion from the workforce and find themselves on the margins of participation in the economy require different and more intensive supports and training to develop soft and more technical skills required to succeed in the workforce. For many youth, entrepreneurial training can support development of skills attractive to 21st century large and small employers, in addition to providing preparation for launching their own microbusinesses and start-ups.

The Youth Entrepreneurship Fund (YEF), a new effort under the Aspen Forum for Community Solutions – Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund (OYIF) *Radical Possibilities* portfolio of emerging grants seeks to

document what works in creating pipelines into microbusiness ownership and careers for opportunity youth by infusing entrepreneurial education into existing pathway models that are being implemented in OYIF communities. YEF seeks to support innovative approaches to collaborative solutions to develop and/or deepen pathways into entrepreneurship for opportunity youth.

This effort aligns with the OYIF vision of building out an eco-system of multiple reconnection pathways with diverse on-ramps leading to economic success and stability for opportunity youth. YEF seeks to support the OYIF goal of promoting racial, gender, and economic equity and justice by ensuring that youth who are experiencing barriers to participation in the economy – including youth of color, low-income, immigrant, system-involved, and LGBTQ youth – are provided with the full range of opportunities to develop the entrepreneurial mindset and skillset, as well as a set of tools and supports they need to thrive in today's economy.

Responsibilities

The key duties for this role will be as follows:

- Within the first three to four months:
 - Conduct a literature review of current research on youth entrepreneurship
 - Conduct a landscape analysis of 1) national efforts, curriculum, and programs to identify and share best practices from nationally recognized organizations and networks that focus on teaching youth entrepreneurship and 2) promising youth entrepreneurship efforts that are currently taking place in the OYIF communities.
- Within the first five to six months:
 - Develop a white paper that will be based on the results of national and local entrepreneurship landscape. The paper will explore existing efforts to infuse entrepreneurship into reconnection pathways for opportunity youth, and include: 1) a literature review of current research on youth entrepreneurship; 2) examples of best-in-class national providers (e.g. the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship); and 3) “deep dives” into OYIF communities to identify current promising local efforts, especially efforts focusing on underserved populations such as youth of color and youth residing in rural and tribal communities. The paper should also articulate national and local gaps in the youth entrepreneurship field and identify specific strategies and recommendations on closing these gaps so as to improve the quality of entrepreneurship programs and increase access to entrepreneurship pathways for opportunity youth.
- Ongoing duties will include working with the Aspen Forum Opportunity Youth team, including Jamiel Alexander, fellow, and Yelena Nemoy, senior program manager for OYIF to:
 - Identify key learnings from the mapping effort to lift-up at Aspen OYIF convenings. Assist with designing sessions to share strategies in designing pathways into entrepreneurship for opportunity youth.
 - Support the Youth Entrepreneurship Fund grantee Community of Practice (COP), the broader OYIF learning community, and the field nationally by lifting up early learnings, best practices and processes, and challenges in this work.

Specific Duties Include:

- Research
 - Conduct a literature review and national and local scan/mapping of entrepreneurship efforts, programs, and networks.
- Writing/Editing:
 - Develop a white paper on youth entrepreneurship.
- Project Management/Other:
 - Engage with many Aspen Forum partners and grantees to identify learnings to share with the OYIF network at two convenings a year, as well as webinars and calls.
 - Support Aspen Forum staff in convening Youth Entrepreneurship Grantee Community of Practice (COP).

Qualifications

- Deep expertise and understanding of entrepreneurship education and resources/tools, best practices in teaching entrepreneurship, and nationally recognized networks and providers.
- Exceptional writing, editing, research, and verbal skills. Ability to write effectively for a variety of different formats and for different intended audiences.
- Project management skills: ability to work with a wide range of people on the Aspen Forum staff and at our partner and grantee organizations, to keep them focused on learning needs and tasks and on time.
- Creative problem solver
- Flexible work schedule
- Self-starter and self-managing
- Sense of humor

While not required, preference will be given to candidates who demonstrate an understanding of the opportunity youth field and issues faced by opportunity youth; are knowledgeable about the youth entrepreneurship field; and demonstrate an understanding of principles of positive youth development and youth leadership development.

Submission:

To be considered please submit the following to Yelena.Nemoy@aspeninst.org no later than **August 31, 2017**:

- Your resume (or link to online resume or portfolio)
- A narrative, that does not exceed two pages, that highlights:
 - Experience in performing the required activities
 - Knowledge and/or experience with the core areas of focus of the Aspen Forum and this position (i.e. entrepreneurship; equity; social, racial, economic justice; advocacy; opportunity youth; education and workforce issues, collective impact; community engagement; etc.)
 - What interests you about this consulting project in particular

- Confirmation of your available start date, your bid for the work, and any other important considerations
- At least one example each of:
 - Writing
 - Panel or breakout session presentation

NOTE: Attachments over 8 MB are too large to be delivered through the Aspen Institute's e-mail system. Please use a service like Dropbox or Google Docs to deliver large files, or send links to specific items from an online portfolio.

About the Aspen Institute

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