

FINANCIAL WELL-BEING AND WEALTH-BUILDING FOR OPPORTUNITY YOUTH

Learning from a Survey of the Opportunity Youth Forum

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ABOUT AIFCS AND THE OYF

The Aspen Institute **Forum for Community Solutions** (AIFCS), established in 2012, seeks to highlight and support communities successfully engaging leaders and advocates across multiple sectors — government, nonprofit, business, and philanthropy — to collectively solve our society's toughest social and economic challenges. Believing that when communities have more power to lead change, we will be able to create a more just and equitable society. The AIFCS supports community collaboratives and backbone organizations to build the power and influence of those with the least access to opportunity using a collective impact or community collaboration approach to come together to expand mobility, eliminate systemic barriers, and create their own solutions to their most pressing challenges.

The AIFCS' **Opportunity Youth Forum** (OYF) began as a group of 21 community collaboratives and has grown to a network of 40 urban, rural, and tribal communities seeking to scale reconnection and career pathways for youth and young adults. Roughly one-quarter (about 1.2 million) of all opportunity youth (young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither enrolled in school nor employed) in the United States reside in or near OYF communities.¹ Across the OYF network, communities are engaged in specific efforts to improve education and employment outcomes for opportunity youth. OYF collaboratives bring together multiple stakeholders (e.g., schools, community-based programs, postsecondary institutions, employers, youth leaders, government agencies) to remove barriers and improve the systems that serve opportunity youth.

With a focus on creating integrated education and career pathways to reconnect opportunity youth to school and employment, **OYF collaboratives** are making it possible for young people to get back on track to successful adulthood. In addition to removing barriers and creating pathways of reconnection, OYF collaboratives are seeking to build awareness by identifying and sharing successful strategies, mobilizing stakeholders through knowledge and network development, advocating for effective policy, and catalyzing investments by encouraging funder partnerships. The network of OYF communities seeks to support community collaboratives to design innovative approaches aimed at advancing the most effective solutions for reconnecting opportunity youth.

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INTRODUCTION

Young people have been at the epicenter of the economic turbulence wrought by the pandemic. As Measure of America has documented, a decade of progress in reducing the rate of youth and young adults disconnected from work and school across the United States was reversed with the unprecedented disruption COVID-19 brought in 2020.²

Recovery remains uneven and uncertain. Young people face particular challenges. The economic, social, and emotional toll of the pandemic has exacerbated an existing youth mental health crisis³. Young adults entering the labor market or early in their careers report that they face persistent race and gender-based discrimination in the world of work.⁴ Interruptions to school and postsecondary education risk disrupting positive life trajectories, especially for young people already facing structural barriers.

Yet at the same time, this is a moment of opportunity. Businesses have launched new coalitions focused on racial equity and are more attentive to worker voice than in decades.⁵ Young leaders, like those supported by the [AIFCS Youth-Led Change Fund](#), or advocating for [A New Deal for Youth](#) are bringing forward solutions to tackle the issues that confront their communities.

As we approach **ten years** of the Opportunity Youth Forum (OYF) network and opportunity youth movement, four interrelated concepts – belonging, meaning-making, well-being, and purpose – are emerging as key themes that will ground future strategy for our place-based collaborative solutions. Our goal is to scale reconnection pathways and center young people of color in an equitable, inclusive economic recovery strategy. Culturally affirming identity development is central to this goal, not just at the level of individual youth development programs, but across youth-serving systems and major institutions.

With that broader context in mind, this document, and the new body of work it introduces, addresses one strand of that work: **financial well-being**. In alignment with future AIFCS work connected to these wider topics and all the OYF levers of change⁶, this report:

- 1) Frames our initial learning agenda
- 2) Shares early learnings, primarily from a recent survey of our national network
- 3) Lays out future directions for this initiative and how OYF stakeholders can get involved

THE FIRST YEAR OF THIS INITIATIVE INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

- The launch of an **advisory committee** with leaders representing backbone organizations from OYF collaboratives and national organizations with expertise in the financial security field, including the Aspen Financial Security Program
- Three **focus groups** with **young people** from six OYF communities
- Individual **interviews** and **desk research**
- A **survey** of site leads from the **OYF network**
- A **session** at the May 2022 OYF convening in San Francisco

Over the five-year period from 2021 to 2026, AIFCS is working to integrate the field of financial security, including financial capability, into the OYF and the youth and young adult-serving field through learning and lifting up approaches that integrate a culturally relevant, positive youth development lens.

We seek to:

- Develop a shared vision of what financial well-being for opportunity youth looks like (in the context of holistic well-being more broadly).
- Identify and document promising practices, program models, cross-sector partnerships and opportunities for systems change that advance this vision, and gaps in the field ripe for innovation
- Develop and advance narratives that build support for the above.

As its starting point, our **learning agenda** takes the framework that the **Aspen Financial Security Program (FSP)** developed in summer 2021 with the support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation:

The following elements are necessary for youth and young adults to experience financial well-being and to be set up for success in later life:

1. Financial stability

- o Income exceeding cost of living
- o Access to affordable, quality housing, childcare, healthcare, transportation & other basic needs
- o Financial cushions including savings, good credit & social networks

2. Financial capability

- o Knowledge, skills, habits & confidence to manage day to day finances & navigate age-appropriate & personally relevant financial decisions
- o Self-efficacy and a belief that financial systems will perform for you and meet your needs
- o Financial products and systems designed to support, not harm financial well-being

3. Opportunity pathways

- o Affordable and effective educational and training opportunities and labor market onramps
- o Financial support to be able to devote time to participating in and completing these education, training or personal development activities

4. Support and guidance

- o Personally specific supports such as mental health services, parenting supports, and advising to navigate education, career and benefits systems
- o Developmentally appropriate approaches to learning and developmental opportunities, such as instructional scaffolding, coaching, and low-risk experiential learning

INITIAL LEARNING AGENDA

With the support of the advisory committee, we developed the following initial learning agenda.

- 1) **How are supports targeting financial stability and financial capability currently present in youth and young adult-serving ecosystems across the OYF network?**
 - Where they are not present, have they been considered?
 - What barriers do the programs see to adding such elements?
- 2) **What are promising program models and specific practices to integrate such supports into pathways and programs for opportunity youth?**
 - What have been the successes and pain points of different financial capability integration models?
 - What are the barriers to scaling promising models and practices and what systems change would facilitate significantly scaling these models and practices?
- 3) **What major challenges to the financial lives of opportunity youth are not being addressed at all by existing models?**
 - Are there conceptually related models that could be helpful to this but are not currently available to them?
- 4) **What opportunities exist for new/deepened cross-sector partnerships to advance financial well-being and economic mobility for opportunity youth?**
- 5) **What would be the highest priority / biggest impact changes to systems to advance financial stability, well-being, and economic mobility for opportunity youth?**

We asked advisory committee members as well as youth and adult leaders at the May 2022 OYF Convening to envision the future of their communities and the country if this learning agenda were to be dramatically successful in helping drive change over the next decade. Here's what they said:

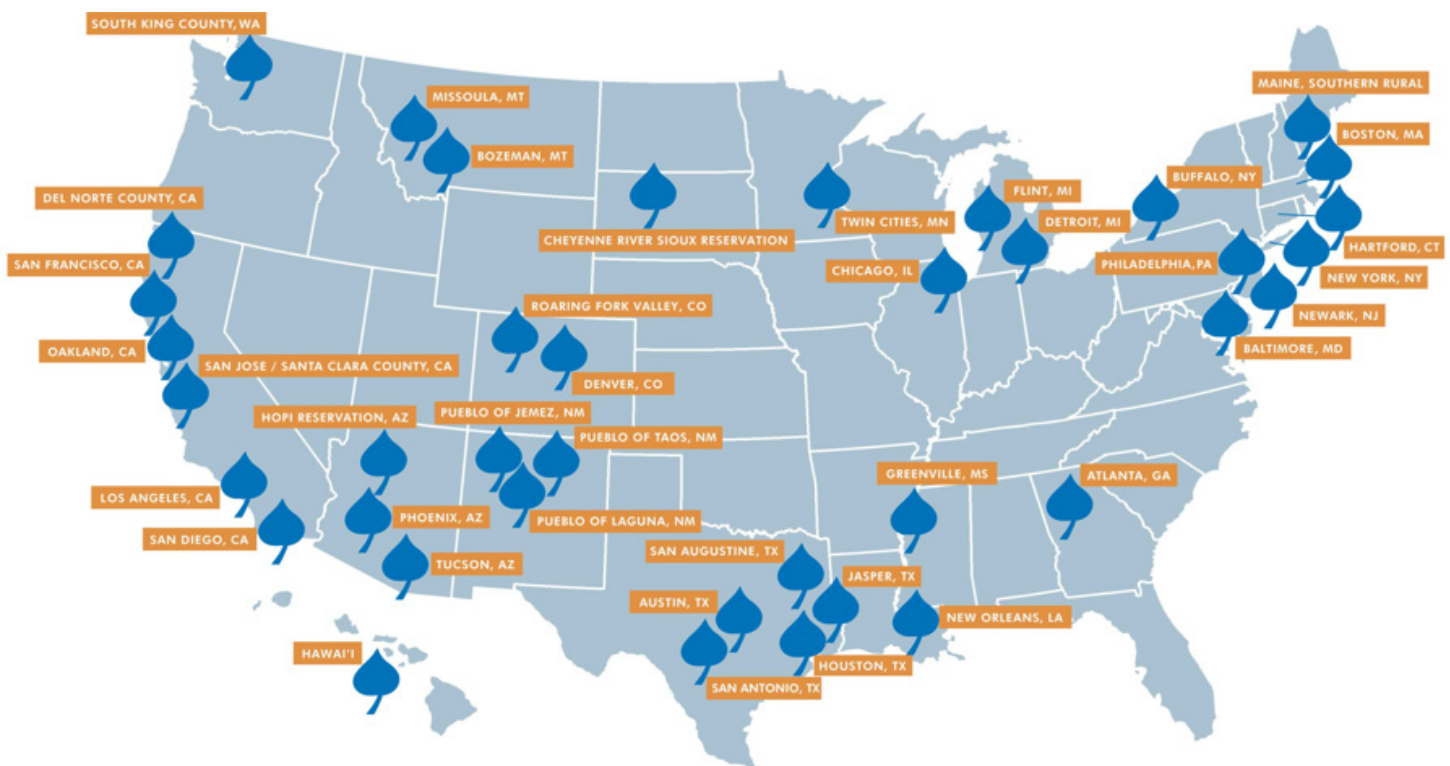
- *"There is **shared language** across the youth-serving field on the importance of financial well-being, and strategies to support it are baked into all youth and young adult programs, education and career pathways."*
- *"The Black/white **home ownership gap** has **shrunk** by 50%."*
- *"Our **city** looks better than pre-pandemic: loud, colorful and **vibrant**."*
- *"Youth in our region are leaders in creating asset-based economies."*

Others expressed longer term visions of success:

- “All young people – regardless of access to private wealth – should have the **freedom** and resources to engage in rigorous, **meaningful** training and education activities by receiving sufficient nonlabor income to cover their basic needs, while operating in a safe financial services marketplace to build their personal financial capability skills.”

For this first year of the initiative, after an initial desktop review, **the major research activity was a survey of the national OYF network.** 35 communities representing 660,000 opportunity youth were part of the network when the survey launched, and the the OYF has since grown to 40 sites.⁷ **We received complete responses from 28 urban, rural, and tribal communities from across the country.** This data presents a valuable starting point to build on. The survey focused primarily on the first set of questions in the learning agenda: understanding how financial stability and capability support are, or might be, incorporated into youth and young adult-serving ecosystems. To a lesser extent it also explored Question 3 (challenges to the financial lives of opportunity youth) as well as a few items addressing Questions 4 and 5.

Further primary research activities including focus groups and interviews inform the interpretation of these survey results.



This report draws on survey data from 28 cross-sector collaboratives across the country.

OYF NETWORK SURVEY RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

28 out of 35 OYF communities completed this survey between April and May 2022.⁸ Respondents were from 15 different states, including 5 communities from Texas and 4 from California. 62% of respondents (17) represented urban communities. 24% represented rural communities (7) and 14% represented Native, Indigenous and Tribal communities (4).⁹ Survey respondents came from long-standing collaboratives, as well as collaboratives that were established more recently: 29% (8) began in 2012 or earlier. 46% (13) began between 2013 and 2017, and 25% (7) launched in 2018 or later.

The results below report responses to quantitative survey items. Qualitative responses shared in the survey, but not detailed here, will inform future study, pilots, and recommendations for both innovation and scale.

Financial Well-Being as An Area of Focus for Opportunity Youth (OY) Collaboratives

The survey opened with a question asking about the extent to which **financial stability**, **financial capability**, and **building wealth** are areas of focus and programming in their collaboratives and communities. For the purposes of the survey, these concepts were defined as follows:

Financial stability is characterized by stable, sufficient income, and access to affordable basic needs. It requires:

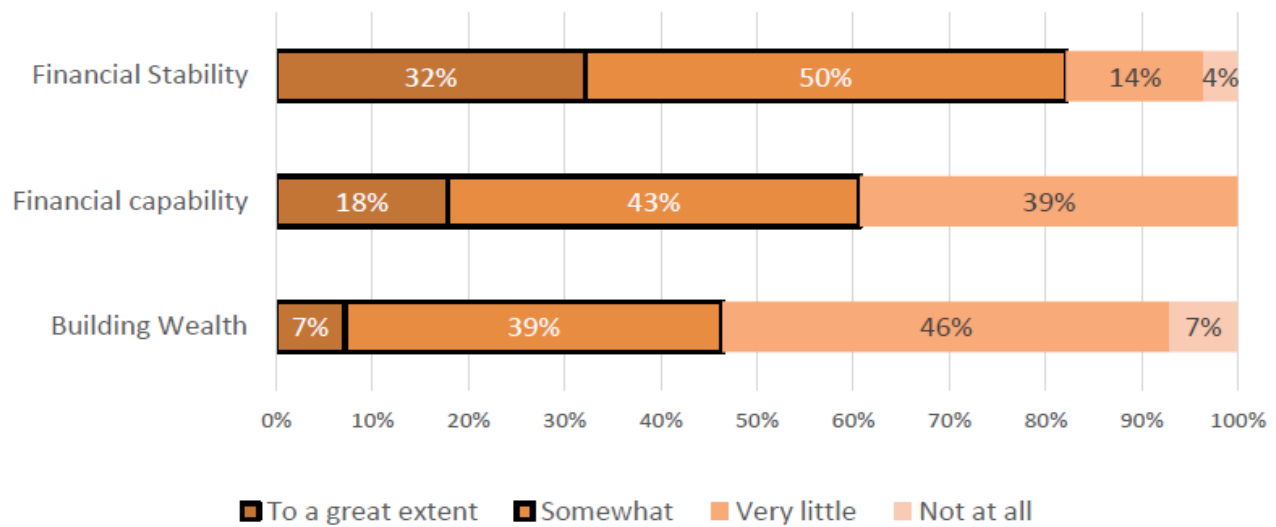
- Income exceeding cost of living
- Access to affordable, quality housing, childcare, healthcare, transportation and other basic needs
- Financial cushions including savings, good credit, and social networks

Financial capability refers to the know-how, confidence, habits, and access to consumer-friendly financial products and services needed to manage day-to-day finances and navigate important financial decisions. It requires:

- Knowledge, skills, and habits to manage day to day finances and navigate age-appropriate & personally relevant financial decisions
- Self-efficacy and a belief that financial systems will perform for you and meet your needs
- Financial products and systems designed to support, not harm financial well-being

Wealth is defined in the narrow economic sense: ownership of financial assets or material possessions with financial value, minus debts.

To what extent are the following areas of focus and programming for young people in your OY collaborative?



- **82%** of respondents reported that ensuring young people's **financial stability** is at least somewhat an area of focus and programming in their collaborative.
 - 100% of rural respondents focus at least somewhat on this, compared to around 3/4 of urban and Native, Indigenous and Tribal communities.
- **61%** said the same regarding helping young people to develop **financial capability**.
 - 71% of rural respondents focus at least somewhat on this, compared to 61% of urban and 50% of Native, Indigenous and Tribal communities.
- **45%** said the same regarding helping young people **build wealth**.
 - 56% of urban respondents focus at least somewhat on this, compared to 29% of rural communities focus and 25% of Native, Indigenous and Tribal communities.

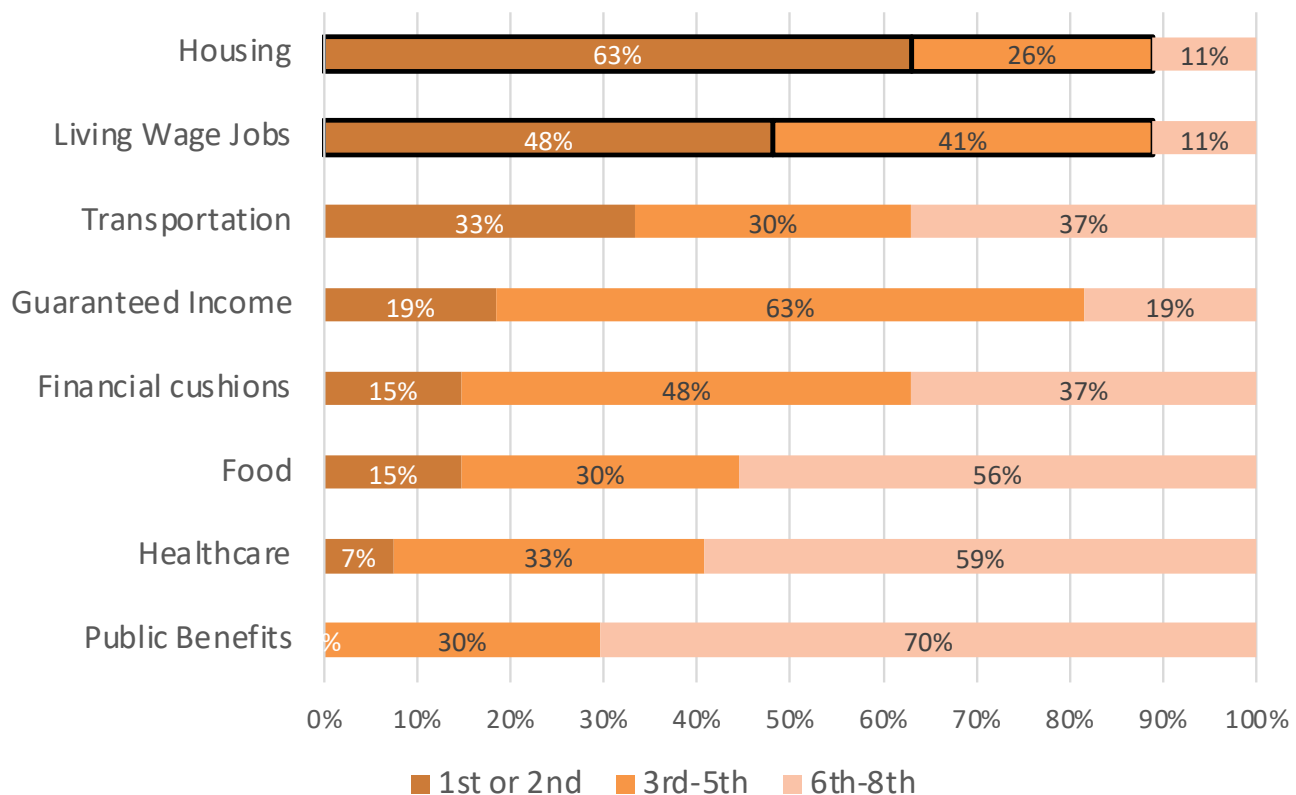
Financial Stability

93% of respondents agree that a **lack of financial stability is a barrier** for young people to successfully participate in **education pathways**, and **82%** feel the same for **employment pathways**. However, only Half of Native, Indigenous and Tribal communities agree with each statement.

72% of respondents agree that **most employment pathways do not offer sufficient financial support** for young people to focus on their participation without the need to prioritize other income-generating activities.

The survey asked about barriers to achieving financial stability.¹⁰ Access to **affordable housing** and **living wage jobs** were reported as the **biggest barriers** across communities.

Rank order the biggest access barriers to young people achieving and maintaining financial stability in your community



71% of rural communities reported that **access to living wage jobs** were their first or second top barrier, compared to **48%** of urban and **25%** of Native, Indigenous and Tribal communities.

0% of **rural** communities reported **transportation** was the first or second top barrier, compared to **50%** of **Native, Indigenous and Tribal** and **41%** of **urban** communities.

25% of Native, Indigenous and Tribal communities reported food was their top barrier, compared to 12% of urban and 0% of rural. 25% of Native, Indigenous and Tribal communities reported health care was the top barrier, compared to 0% of urban and 14% of rural respondents.

Guaranteed Income – An Emerging Strategy for Financial Stability

A guaranteed income program is a policy or social intervention where a steady, predictable, and unrestricted amount of money is provided to recipients. The level does not necessarily meet basic need. It can either be unconditional or contingent on certain requirements but does not refer to wages or other compensation for labor.¹¹ Guaranteed income programs for youth and young adults are emerging nationally as a new model for providing young people with foundational financial stability during a transitional and high potential time of life.¹²

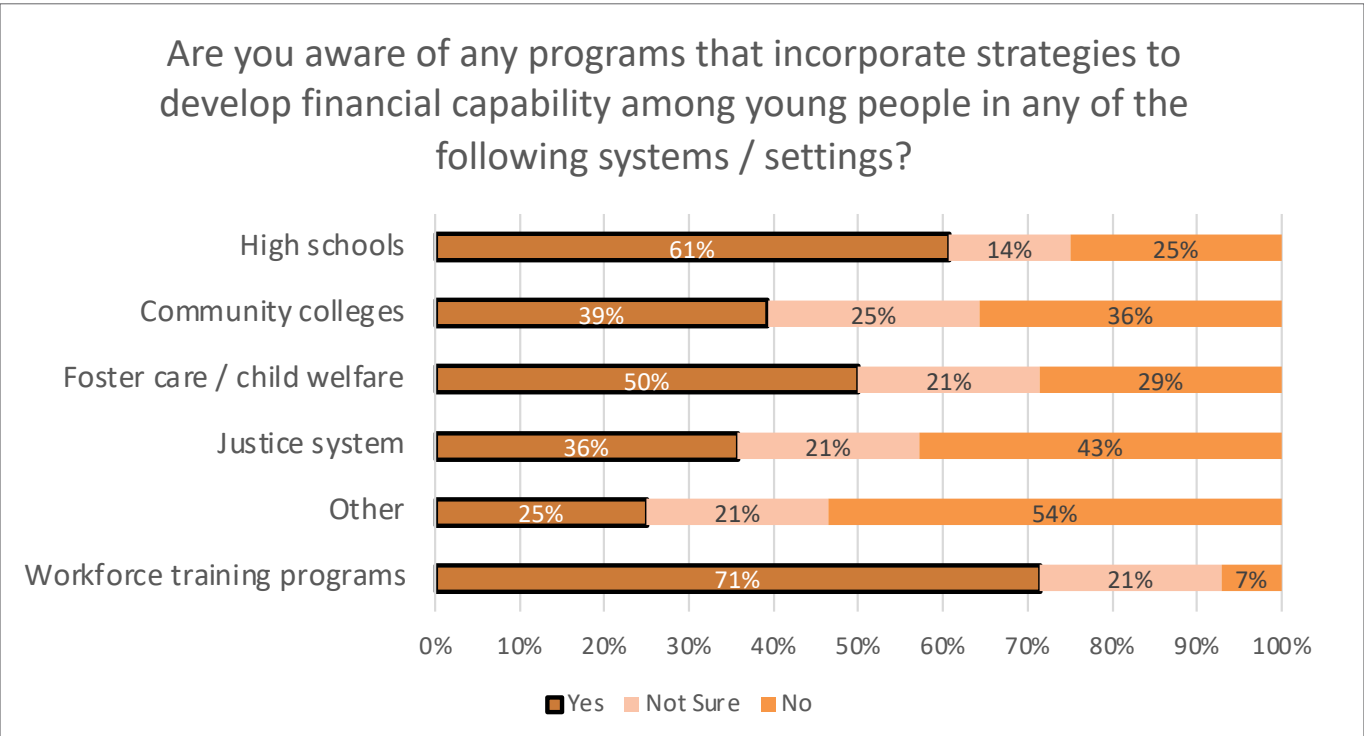
Interest in guaranteed income pilots open to youth and young adults is high among the two-thirds of respondents who are not aware of any such programs in their communities. **94%** of such collaboratives **would be excited to help launch a guaranteed income pilot for opportunity youth** if resources were available (including 50% who were strongly interested).

29% of all respondents (8) are aware of **guaranteed income pilots** in their communities that serve youth and young adults. Seven of these eight communities are urban. Among these eight programs, only 22% agreed that youth-serving organizations have a strong awareness of these programs. We are also aware of additional guaranteed income pilots focused on young people in two of the seven (29%) OYF communities who are part of the network but did not complete this survey.

Financial Capability

Most respondents are aware of programs that support young people to develop financial capability in workforce settings (71%), high school settings (61%) or child welfare settings (50%).

Most respondents are *not* aware of such programs in community college or justice system settings.



All respondents except one (96%) are aware of at least one program in their community that offers financial capability supports for young people. Urban communities were more likely to report that such supports are available across numerous systems. 61% of urban communities are aware of such supports in three or more systems, compared in 14% of rural and 0% of tribal communities.

Only 25% of all respondents report that there is **sufficient funding** to deliver high-quality financial capability supports for young people. **0% of rural** and **0% of Native, Indigenous and Tribal** communities reported sufficient funding.

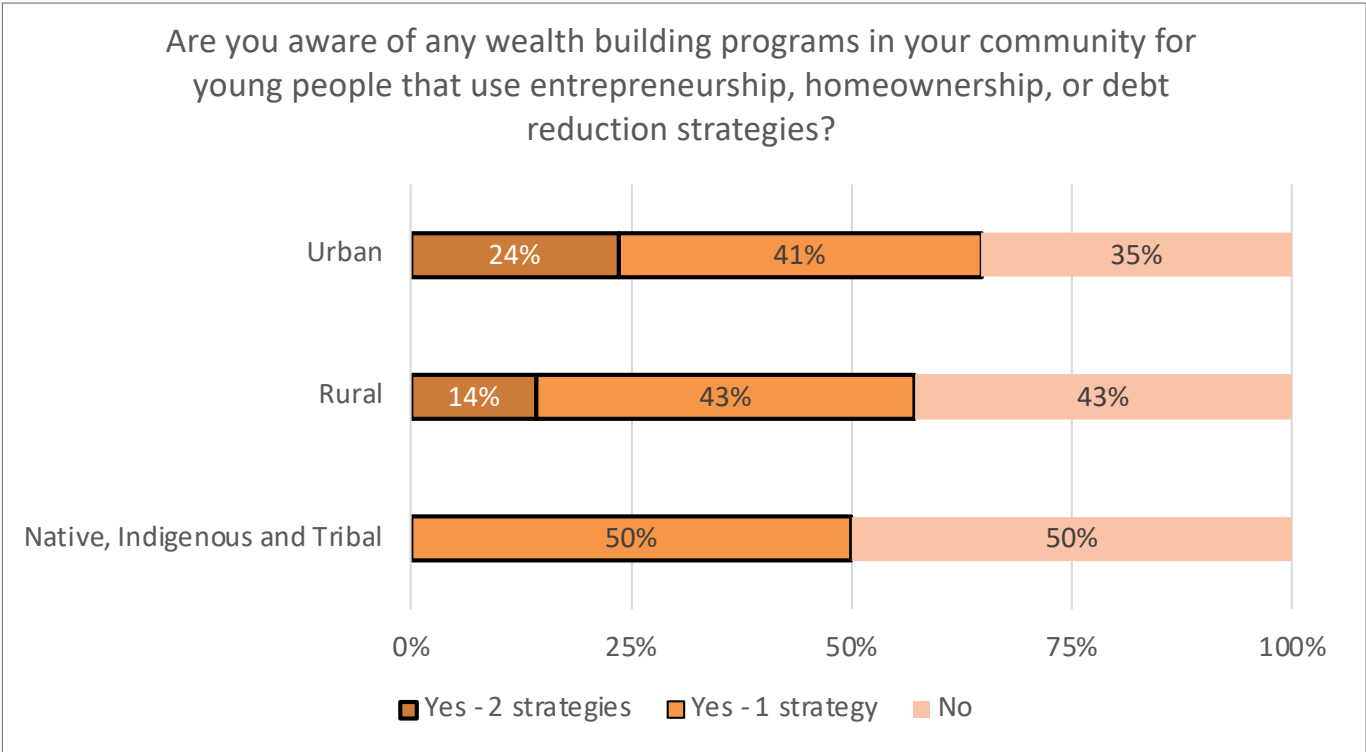
Only 36% of communities report there are **sufficient nonfinancial resources** (e.g. technical assistance, curriculum professional development, trained staff) to deliver quality financial capability supports for young people. **0% of rural** communities and only **25% of Native, Indigenous and Tribal** communities report sufficient nonfinancial resources.

Only 21% of respondents agree that there is a **shared understanding** of what **quality financial capability supports** for young people look like in their community.

Wealth Building Strategies

The survey asked whether opportunity youth collaboratives were aware of programs in their community that support opportunity youth to build wealth. For this specific purpose, we defined wealth in the narrow economic sense: ownership of financial assets or material possessions with financial value, minus debts. We discuss more expansive definitions of wealth at the end of this report. The questions drilled into whether these programs apply three specific wealth building strategies relevant to low-income populations: 1) **entrepreneurship**, 2) **homeownership** and 3) **debt reduction**.

Overall, **59%** of OYF communities reported that they **are aware of wealth-building programs** serving opportunity youth. No respondents were aware of programs employing all three strategies in their community. Urban communities were more likely to report such programs than rural or Native, Indigenous and Tribal communities.

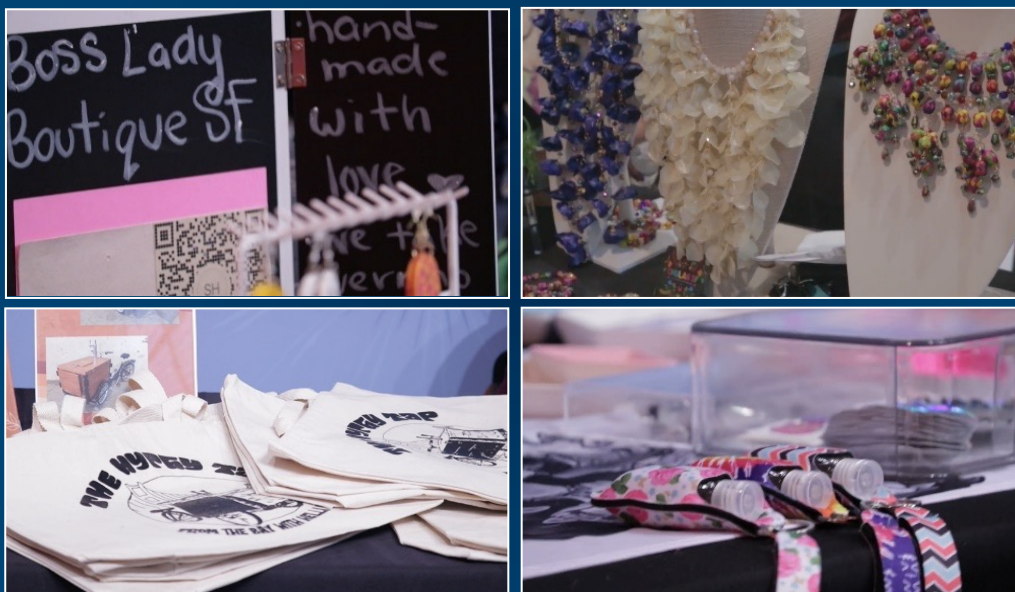


Entrepreneurship was the **most common** wealth building strategy reported, overall with **46% of respondents** overall, including 59% of urban communities, compared to 29% of rural and 25% of Native, Indigenous and Tribal communities.

Homeownership was the most common strategy reported in **rural communities**, at **43%**, compared to 29% of urban and 25% of Native, Indigenous and Tribal Communities.

29% of **urban** and **rural** communities alike reported awareness of **debt reduction** programs serving opportunity youth, compared to 0% for Native, Indigenous and Tribal Communities.

Young entrepreneurs held a pop-up market at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts at the May 2022 OYF Convening in San Francisco.



Top row: Susanna Hernandez, @bossladyboutiquesfw

Bottom row: Luis Cubas, @thehyphytap (left) and Claudia Garcia, @chula_SF (right)

Financial Products and Institutions

The survey asked a handful of questions about how financial products and services and financial institutions themselves are connected to opportunity youth collaboratives.

56% of respondents agreed that **safe, affordable, and useful financial products and services** (e.g. bank accounts, credit cards, loans) **are available** to young people in their community. These answers were similar across community types.

54% of respondents reported that **financial institutions are active in their collaboratives**. Roles vary widely. The most common role was as a programmatic partner: 33% overall, and 50% for Native, Indigenous and Tribal communities. 21% overall (29% urban, 14% rural, and 0% Native, Indigenous and Tribal) reported that financial institutions are active funders for their collaborative.

Just 14% of respondents reported that financial institutions serve as employer partners. These were all urban communities, where 24% reported this type of partnership, compared to 0% of rural communities and 0% of Native, Indigenous, and Tribal communities.

CONCLUSIONS

AIFCS is still early in our learning journey on this topic, but this data suggests several takeaways. We consider these observations through the lens of the wider knowledge base of our network.

- 1) **The moment is right to develop a shared understanding across youth and young adult serving ecosystems of what quality financial capability development supports look like.** Three out of four communities surveyed reported this shared understanding does not exist today. Yet 61% state that financial capability is at least somewhat an area of focus for their collaborative, especially in high school and workforce training settings.

Several recent resources offer immediate support for this challenge.

- In December 2021, leaders from **Oklahoma Native Assets Coalition Inc. (ONAC)**, **Change Machine**, **MyPath**, **Inclusiv** and **Washington University in St. Louis** published a [practice note](#) on financial capability and asset building with a racial and gender equity lens, with a section focused on youth transitioning to adulthood.
- In April 2022, **YouthBuild USA** released [two new resources](#) for practitioners and partners on building financial capability with opportunity youth.

More such resources, wider and deeper partnerships, and ongoing technical assistance to build the capacity of programs will all be needed to develop the field in this way.

- 2) **Equity demands national funders prioritize investment in this work in Native, Indigenous and Tribal and rural communities. Strategies to advance financial well-being and build wealth in these places must be tailored to their contexts.** The stark disparities throughout the statistics presented above reflect the inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities across the United States. For example, as a recent Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) report described, rural communities have higher poverty rates and lower incomes than the rest of the country and are more likely to be in “banking deserts” even as their residents are more likely to rely on physical bank branches than urban and suburban communities.¹³ For Native, Indigenous and Tribal communities, these disparities are rooted in a history of racist policies. Profound [racial wealth gaps](#) exist between communities of color and white Americans because of exclusionary, exploitative, and controlling policies by state and federal governments and private financial institutions. These include, for example, land theft (like the [Dawes General Allotment Act of 1887](#)) the extraction of natural resources from tribes, enslavement, Jim Crow, redlining, and predatory lending and banking policies.¹⁴

Native, Indigenous and Tribal communities and rural America nonetheless have incredible assets. For example, Del Norte County and Tribal Lands (DNATL) is home to an OYF collaborative that includes both vast rural territory and tribal nations. In September 2021, the Yurok Tribe was awarded a five-year \$30 million federal Promise Neighborhood grant to develop a regional cradle to career pathway

project.¹⁵ This 2020 [case study](#) by AIFCS and the Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program describes efforts there to develop entrepreneurial pathways using culturally responsive human-centered design. It will be essential to incorporate Native understandings of “wealth” beyond the financial definition going forward. AIFCS looks forward to engaging the OYF Native, Indigenous and Tribal community of practice and Rural community of practice to advance this work.¹⁶

- 3) **There is keen interest in guaranteed income programs open to or targeting young people. However, local youth-serving organizations lack consistent understanding of such strategies.** Guaranteed income pilots – many connected to [Mayors for A Guaranteed Income](#) – continue to proliferate.¹⁷ While most pilot projects have relied on philanthropic dollars, there is an increase in public funding. In summer 2022, the cities of [Chicago](#) and [Los Angeles](#) launched prominent publicly funded programs. As new pilots launch and existing programs sustain, replicate or scale, it will be important to connect to opportunity youth collaboratives. Local coordinating bodies can connect participants appropriately, and align interventions, learning, and resource development across their ecosystems.

This represents a major opportunity for place-based coordination and collaboration. Given the evaluation efforts connected to these pilots, it also represents a possibility for shared learning.¹⁸

- 4) **Entrepreneurship is the most common wealth-building strategy across the OYF network, although it is not yet widespread.** Young leaders in the opportunity youth movement often express interest in the self-determination, creativity and flexibility associated with entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurial programs develop skills and experience that contribute to success in the working world whether as entrepreneurs or employees, such as persistence, creativity and resilience.¹⁹



Yet it will be important to consider what this means in communities of color, where entrepreneurs face limited access to capital and other barriers to success.²⁰ Advancing entrepreneurial pathways might require new and deeper partnership among opportunity youth collaboratives, economic justice advocates, and financial institutions.

- 5) **Housing and living wage jobs are perceived as the biggest barriers to financial stability.** This stands out from the survey even though overall responses were highly varied, which is unsurprising given distinct local context across a national network.

Many opportunity youth programs offer supports to young people experiencing homelessness, but interventions may be limited in scope and availability due to resource constraints. 63% of the OYF network reports housing is the first or second barrier to financial stability. **How might opportunity youth collaboratives more deeply engage housing advocates (particularly those rooted in racial justice), public planners and the private sector to tackle this urgent challenge with new partnerships and strategies?**

The fact that nearly half of OYF collaboratives list access to living wage jobs as a top barrier to financial stability is unsurprising. Many high wage jobs are accessible only to those with postsecondary degrees. People of color are disproportionately represented among low wage workers because of historical exploitation and exclusion. We call out this result because it resonates differently in the current economic and social moment where young workers are leading high profile unionization efforts.²¹ **How might the opportunity youth movement and labor organizers build connections to advance the power of young workers to achieve financial well-being and build wealth?**

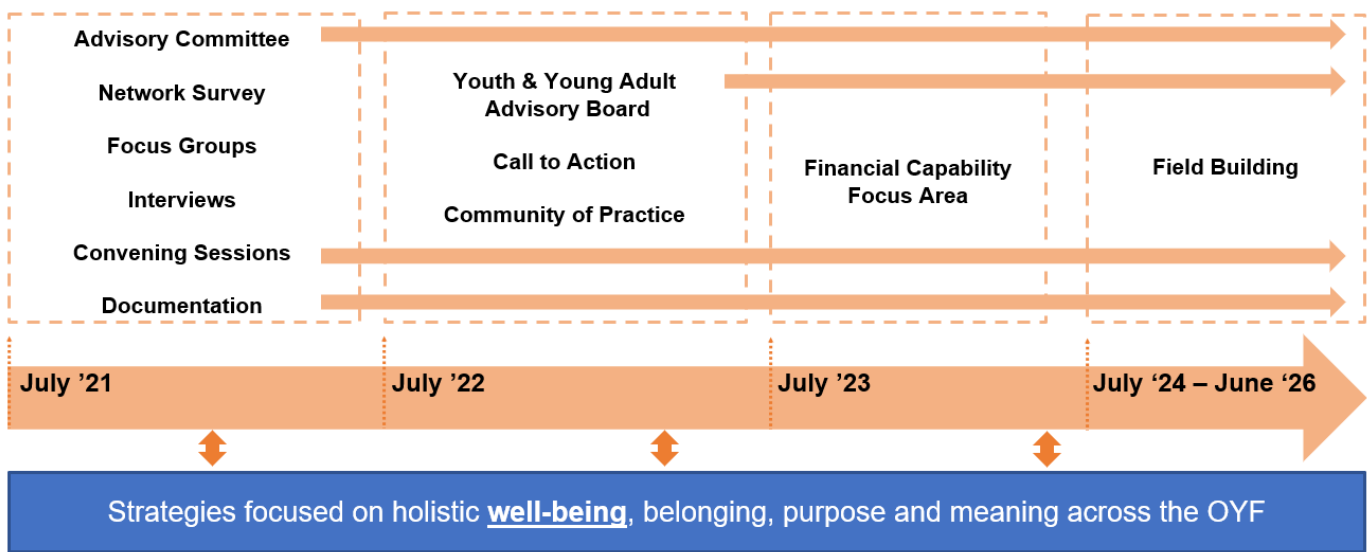
Each of these topics offer potential directions for future focus at the OYF network level or community level.

- 6) **Possibilities exist for new and deeper partnership with local financial institutions and opportunity youth collaboratives.** While more than half of collaboratives report the engagement of one or more financial institutions in some capacity, only one third of collaboratives are leveraging financial institutions to support financial capability building strategies.

As described in the YouthBuild [resources](#) highlighted above, local Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) are generally a good place for collaboratives to start when seeking new partners. It is worth noting that opportunity youth collaboratives in Native, Indigenous and Tribal communities and rural communities reported partnering with CDFIs to deliver financial capability supports more frequently than urban collaboratives.

WHAT'S NEXT

As a learning network, we continue to explore this data through our in-person convenings, virtual communities of practice, and a new youth and young adult advisory council. That group, in partnership with the existing advisory committee, will help craft the **next phase of the learning agenda** and develop a **call to action** for the field. This will focus on **systems and practice change**, specific examples of **innovative programs**, and strategies to build toward a **shared understanding** as a field of how to **integrate strategies** to develop financial capability and build wealth into programs serving opportunity youth.

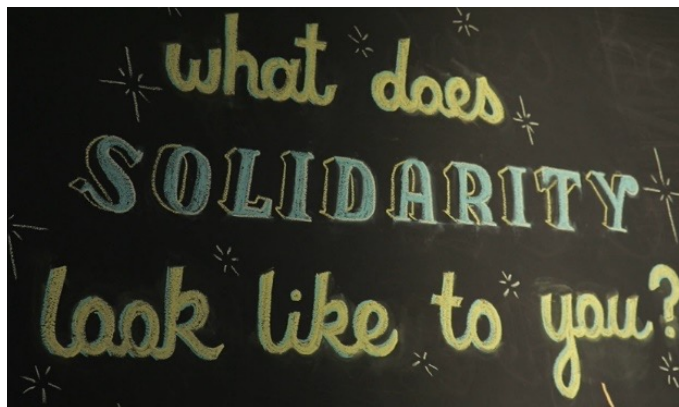


This body of work sits in the context of an overall focus on belonging, meaning, holistic well-being and purpose across the Opportunity Youth Forum, and will mutually inform other strategies across the network. One such initiative is the **Youth & Young Adult (YYA) Wellbeing Measures Project**.²² In this youth participatory action research (YPAR) project, anchored with the support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, youth and young adult design teams are working with assistance from adult and peer research allies to develop holistic measures of well-being. These metrics build on culturally grounded ways of knowing, are informed by the lived experiences, history, culture, and aspirations of the research team, and will support the development of practices and policies that help young people thrive, documenting change over time. Early learning from this work suggests that financial stability is one among seven key overall well-being themes.

Young people and adult leaders in some communities in the OYF network have bold momentum organizing around expansive visions of financial well-being and wealth building that involve more expansive definitions of wealth than the traditional, narrow meaning used for the survey. For example, in San Francisco, the HOPE SF Wealth Building Planning and Design Team and Insight Center for Community Economic Development developed a place-based Wealth Building Framework through a process where young leaders and adult

researchers collaborated to center the perspectives of residents of HOPE SF nearby neighborhoods.²³ They developed the following **holistic vision of wealth**:

“Wealth is traditionally known as the value of what you own minus what you owe. A holistic definition of wealth expands beyond just financial benefits. Wealth allows us to live with greater dignity, power, freedom and peace of mind. Wealth allows us to provide future generations with the freedom to dream big and become all they truly can be. It also means being healthy, having a thriving neighborhood and to know that your family and community are healthy, spiritually whole and contributing. People of color have a longstanding and strong history of economic cooperation and thus, wealth for them includes providing mutual aid, building human and social capital, as well as seeking economic independence as a source of freedom from oppression.”



The domains that intersect with this topic are expansive and present an opportunity to make new connections across sectors and fields that impact young people. **AIFCS is eager to evolve and align the learning agenda laid out here with others who see themselves, their assets and their aspirations in this work.** In anticipation of a more specific call to action in the months ahead, we invite you to join us by contacting us at mike.swigert@aspeninstitute.org and monique.miles@aspeninstitute.org.

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REFERENCES

- ¹ See <https://www.aspencommunitysolutions.org/impact>.
- ² As of publication, Measure of America has produced three reports on youth disconnection in the pandemic era. All are available here: <https://measureofamerica.org/youth-disconnection-landing>.
- ³ Murthy, Vivek. "Protecting Youth Mental Health – The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory." December 2021. <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-youth-mental-health-advisory.pdf>.
- ⁴ Flanagan, Sean K., et al. "The State of Youth Employment- Navigating the World of Work During COVID-19." America's Promise Alliance. May 2021. <https://www.americaspromise.org/resource/state-youth-employment>.
- ⁵ Examples of coalitions focused on racial equity in business include [OneTen](#), the [Corporate Racial Equity Alliance](#) and [Chicago Corporate Coalition](#). The [Economic Opportunities Program](#) at the Aspen Institute has long championed worker voice and has many recent resources on this topic, as does the [Aspen Business and Society Program](#).
- ⁶ The seven levers of change that OYF communities focus on are as follows: 1) **Collaborating** for impact; 2) Building effective **programs** and **pathways**; 3) Using **data** to guide decision and assess impact; 4) Leveraging **funding** to support and sustain innovation; 5) Developing supportive **policies**; 6) **Youth leadership** and engagement; 7) **Equity** (cultural equity, racial equity and gender justice).
- ⁷ Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions. "Opportunity Youth Forum Impact Infographic." December 2021. <https://www.aspencommunitysolutions.org/report/opportunity-youth-forum-infographic>.
- ⁸ View the survey instrument [here](#).
- ⁹ While most Native, Indigenous and Tribal communities in the network are also rural, they are distinguished in this analysis from non-Tribal rural communities to provide more insight into the distinct contexts of this nuanced topic. However, one community is categorized as both Native, Indigenous and Tribal, and rural, because the geography represented by their opportunity youth collaborative include both vast rural counties and several tribal lands. Figures below reflect that respondents' data in each category but note that where counts are provided in addition to percentages, this leads to a total of 29, rather than the actual total of 28. For this reason, comparing percentages disaggregated by community type versus grand total throughout this document may yield totals slightly below or above 100%.
- ¹⁰ In addition, in a few instances, individual stacked bars for charts reporting the full data set sum to 99% or 101% rather than 100% because of fractional values.
- ¹¹ This definition is adapted from the following report: Aspen Financial Security Program & Sheida Isabel. "Guaranteed Income and Cash Infusions: A Three-Part Series." April 2020. <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/guaranteedincome>.
- ¹² Dvorkin, Eli and Mo Russell Leed. "Basic Income for Transition-Age Foster Youth: Adopting California's Approach." Center for an Urban Future. February 2022. <https://nycfuture.org/research/basic-income-for-transition-age-foster-youth>.
- ¹³ Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. "Data Spotlight: Challenges in Rural Banking Access." April 2022. https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_data-spotlight_challenges-in-rural-banking_2022-04.pdf.
- ¹⁴ A full survey of these topics is beyond the scope of this report. The following two examples at the state and community level, respectively, are illustrative of this history:

"In 1850, California passed a law called the "Act for the Government and Protection of Indians," which facilitated removing California Native Americans from their traditional lands, separating children and adults from their families, languages and culture, and creating a system of indentured servitude as punishment for minor crimes such as loitering. . . .between 1850 and 1859, governors of California called for private and militia campaigns against Native peoples in the state. . . .subsequently, the state authorized \$1.29 million in 1850's dollars to subsidize these militia campaigns."

Office of Governor Gavin Newsome. "Governor Newsom Issues Apology to Native Americans for State's Historical Wrongdoings, Establishes Truth and Healing Council." June 2019. <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2019/06/18/governor-newsom-issues-apology-to-native-americans-for-states-historical-wrongdoings-establishes-truth-and-healing-council>.

"2021 marks 100 years since the infamous 1921 massacre in Tulsa, in which white mobs unleashed violence against the city's Black people, Black institutions, and Black wealth....In the aftermath....state and federal policymakers and the private sector were quick to describe the events as a "race riot," which enabled them to avoid responsibility to help rebuild the district. Indeed, the Tulsa Historical Society and Museum explains that calling the massacre a "riot" was likely the pretext that insurance companies used to avoid paying out the compensation that property owners were otherwise due. The Greenwood Cultural Center notes that in

addition to insurance claims being denied, the district did not receive any restitution or rebuilding money from the local, state, or federal government. ...A 2018 article in the American Journal of Economics and Sociology estimates the direct financial impact of the massacre at \$200 million.”

Perry, Andre M., Anthony Barr, and Carl Romer. “The True Costs of the Tulsa Race Massacre – 100 Years Later.” The Brookings Institution. May 2021. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-true-costs-of-the-tulsa-race-massacre-100-years-later>.

- ¹⁵ This article highlights the collaboration among tribal, local, state and national governments that led to this funding: Cejnar Andrews, Jessica. “\$30 Million Promise Neighborhood Grant Will Create Opportunities for Del Norte Kids, Education, Tribal Officials Say.” Wild Rivers Outpost. October 2021 <https://wildrivers.lostcoastoutpost.com/2021/oct/12/nice-ring-it-del-norte-organizations-agencies-cele>.

The full proposal is available here: <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/09/Project-Narrative-Yurok-Tribe.pdf>.

- ¹⁶ In April 2022, the Aspen Institute Financial Security Program, Oklahoma Native Assets Coalition, Inc. (ONAC) and the Aspen Institute Center for Native American Youth partnered to host Native leaders in the asset-building field and beyond to discuss how to better support tribal governments and Native-led nonprofits in their work building financial security in communities across the country. The recording and a recap blog are available here: <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/events/wealth-financial-health-and-the-state-of-the-native-asset-building-field>.

See also Finsel, Christy, and Karen Edwards. “Wealth Building for Native Families and Communities.” In *The Future of Building Wealth: Brief Essays on the Best Ideas to Build Wealth – For Everyone*. <https://futureofwealth.org/the-book>.

- ¹⁷ “Guaranteed Income – A Primer for Funders,” a May 2022 brief by Asset Funders Network, is an excellent recent resource: <https://assetfunders.org/resource/guaranteed-income-a-primer-for-funders>. So are the tools produced by the Stanford Basic Income Lab, which tracks guaranteed income pilots across the United States: <https://basicincome.stanford.edu/experiments-map>.

- ¹⁸ In July 2020, the Stanford Basic Income Lab published an “umbrella review” of the evidence on universal basic income-type programs: <https://basicincome.stanford.edu/research/papers/what-we-know-about-universal-basic-income>. Many evaluations are also currently underway. For example, the University of Pennsylvania Center for Guaranteed Income Research is the research partner for the Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED), the country’s first mayor-led guaranteed income project, as well as projects in cities and one rural area: <https://www.penncgir.org/research>.

- ¹⁹ For example, see Opportunity Youth United’s Town Hall series focused on Social Entrepreneurship for Opportunity Youth, especially the January 2022 session, “Get to the Bag II: Credit, Homeownership and Real Estate,” <https://oyunited.org/townhalls>.

See also: Klein, Joyce, and Yelena Nemoy. “Creating Entrepreneurship Pathways for Opportunity Youth: Early Experiences from the Youth Entrepreneurship Fund Grantees.” Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions and Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program. January 2019. <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/creating-entrepreneurship-pathways-for-opportunity-youth>.

- ²⁰ Racism in financial policy is not limited to history. An NBER study of the first year of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) which provided loans to small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic found that “Black-owned firms disproportionately obtained their PPP loans from fintech lenders, especially in areas with high racial animus. after traditional banks automate their loan application processes, their PPP lending to Black-owned businesses increases.”

Howell, Sabrina, et al. “Automation and Racial Disparities in Small Business Lending: Evidence from the Paycheck Protection Program.” NBER Working Paper 29364. October 2021. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w29364>.

- ²¹ See, for example, “‘We obviously need change’: Young workers flock to labor unions.” Associated Press for Christian Science Monitor. February 14, 2022. <https://www.csmonitor.com/Business/2022/0214/We-obviously-need-change-Young-workers-flock-to-labor-unions>.

- ²² The first public report on the Youth and Young Adult Well-Being project will be published later this year. In the meantime, background on the project, including the many partners involved from inception, is available here: <https://sites.google.com/view/freshtracks-wellbeing>.

- ²³ Hope SF and Insight Center for Community Economic Development. “Hope SF Wealth Building Framework,” September 2021. https://www.hope-sf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/HOPE_SF_Wealth_Framework-2021.pdf.

