



# Youth & Young Adult Wellbeing

A YOUTH-LED PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH  
PROJECT TO DEFINE & MEASURE WELLBEING

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## Introduction & Executive Summary

**How do culture, values, and circumstances nurture wellbeing for youth and young adults?**

Too often, adults answer this question with an approach that limits youth leadership and agency in advocating for their own positive human development.

The Youth and Young Adult Wellbeing Project is a collaborative effort undertaken by young people and adult allies from communities and organizations across the United States and Canada. A primary objective of the project is to support young people as they define, collect, and make meaning of data about their wellbeing. They will then use this data to advocate for investment in policies and practices that help young people thrive. As part of the Wellbeing Project, young people are designing three Wellbeing Toolkits that center culture as a behavioral asset. Each toolkit will be designed to help communities understand and support wellbeing by acknowledging American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN), Black, and Latinx cultural practices that can serve as tools for teaching healthy behavior.

At the genesis of the project, three design teams were established: American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN), Latine Bienstar (Bienestar meaning “wellness”) and Black Expressions of Wellbeing. Each design team includes youth and young adults ages 18 to 25 who self-identify with one of these cultural affiliations. Each design team is supported by adult research allies, adult research navigators, and peer research mentors who also self-identify with one of these cultures. Over the past 18 months, design teams have gathered to learn the strategies and techniques of Youth-led Participatory Action Research (YPAR). Each design team developed and conducted research projects that identify key areas of wellbeing within their culture and traditions. They also identified common themes of wellbeing across cultural contexts.

The next phase of the work engages design team members in developing valid, reliable, and culturally-grounded measures of wellbeing. Ultimately, the Youth and Young Adult Wellbeing Project will develop a cloud-based, open access toolkit to help young people advocate for the wellbeing of their communities. The toolkit will center the seven core themes of wellbeing that the young people identified through the YPAR process. These themes amplify and celebrate cultural traditions and their longstanding benefit to health and wellbeing, and provide a roadmap to support the experiences young people in these communities need to thrive.

This report highlights the origin and milestones of Phase One of this project.



## Letter from the Design Teams

**We do this for our communities.**

When we met the other mentors and members of the Design Team, we immediately felt at home. In a Western world where Indigenous and ancestral knowledge from communities of color is not often acknowledged, we felt whole connecting with other young leaders who had similar backgrounds and shared stories not only of trauma, but of joy and resilience.

Communities of color have done science for generations, cataloged through storytelling and transferred through our DNA. Learning the tools of Youth-led Participatory Action Research (YPAR) and investigating wellbeing empowers us to bridge and translate that voice and expertise with the Western scientific world in a way where we can strongly advocate for our communities. It empowers us to be resilient in the Western world, but also to have data and stories that tell people what it means to be from our communities. Working with our fellow young leaders who have a similar mindset and background is inspiring; knowing that we are each taking this tool home and embodying a meaning of wellbeing for our communities. This process can change the way we view social science in our communities.

As you read this report and see our outcomes from Phase One, you may see our definitions of wellbeing as a list of adjectives or nouns—but these themes are not just keywords for a data set. True to our storytelling cultures, they are chapters in the stories of the lives of people—our people. Each story walks hand in hand with another, each chapter intertwines and goes deeper. This is one way our culture continues to inform and update our scientific process.

So far (through Phase One), it has truly been community-centered. Young people, adults, and topical experts have collaborated with each other to design and create processes and refine outcomes. Our learning and research will lead us to the nucleus of the problems in our communities because we are young people, at the table designing the study collecting information from other young people and community members.

Before this process, if we were asked to define wellbeing, we would simply have said nice words and described things that made us or our communities feel good. As we enter into Phase Two of the process, we are starting to find words that describe the application of these wellbeing themes and are focused on implementing the recommendations of our communities. We will be able to create specific programs and policies that foster wellbeing in our communities, backed by our research data.

*Shaquana Boykin,  
Black Expressions Design Team*

*Zenetta Zepeda,  
American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) Design Team*

## Letter from the Founder

Something is missing from the conversation surrounding youth and young adult wellbeing in our country. The voices of those most impacted by a lack of access to resources that support wellbeing are often overshadowed by quantitative data that points towards outcomes, often bypassing the cause.

What if we could support a community of youth and young adult leaders as the creators and architects of a research project aimed at identifying and measuring wellbeing? These young people would lead this research project not solely for the sake of finding results, but with the intention that any resulting tools would help overlooked communities advocate and lead data-driven solutions based on their lived experiences. This vision of a new model is central to this project. We must recognize that just as communities have diverse needs, they have diverse definitions of wellbeing—and solutions must reflect that.

In 2019, this group of peers and allies came together to kick off the first of three phases of this research project. Little did we know that a global, priority-shifting pandemic loomed right around the corner. In those early days and months, this community became a place to explore questions surrounding wellbeing within the context of a pandemic. What we found is that meaningful connections to each other, even virtually, offer a space to find healing.

In December of 2021, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy issued an advisory to address the nation's youth mental health crisis. We continue to face unprecedented issues in the mental health of America's youth and families, both stemming from the pandemic as well as long-existing barriers and inequities.



Much has been said about generational trauma and how it can inform solutions to widespread challenges. In that same vein, I would like to call attention to the resilience found within generational joy. Examining our definitions of wellbeing and the role that culture plays in the equation towards a healthy life is one way to address this pressing crisis and to encourage holding generational joy as a part of the solutions being developed by today's youth.

This report shares our findings to date. More importantly, it promotes and encourages us as a community to view young leaders as the experts in their lived experience. As allies, while we may find ourselves wanting to drive our own solutions and ideas forward, it is always best to instead work to ensure that those most impacted by the challenges at hand are empowered to create solutions and supported and resourced in implementing them.

*Juan D. Martinez Pineda  
Senior Program Manager  
Fresh Tracks at the Aspen Institute*

## Project Cycle: Inquire, Understand, Act

The youth and young adults leading this project are supported through learning opportunities, technical assistance, access to experts, and the sharing of knowledge from adults and peers in partnering organizations. Examples of lessons include culturally-grounded ways of knowing from [Network for the Development of Children of African Descent](#) and an introduction to YPAR from Dr. Sarah Zellar-Berkman of the [Intergenerational Change Initiative](#).

This cycle is not sequenced, but a regenerative cycle where participants start and progress from any point.



### INQUIRE

Design Team members for cultural affinity groups build on culturally-grounded ways of knowing to develop Youth-led Participatory Action Research plans, then collect data from peer networks to develop wellness measures.



### UNDERSTAND

Youth and young adults make meaning of the data based on their lived experiences, history, culture, and aspirations. This process includes:

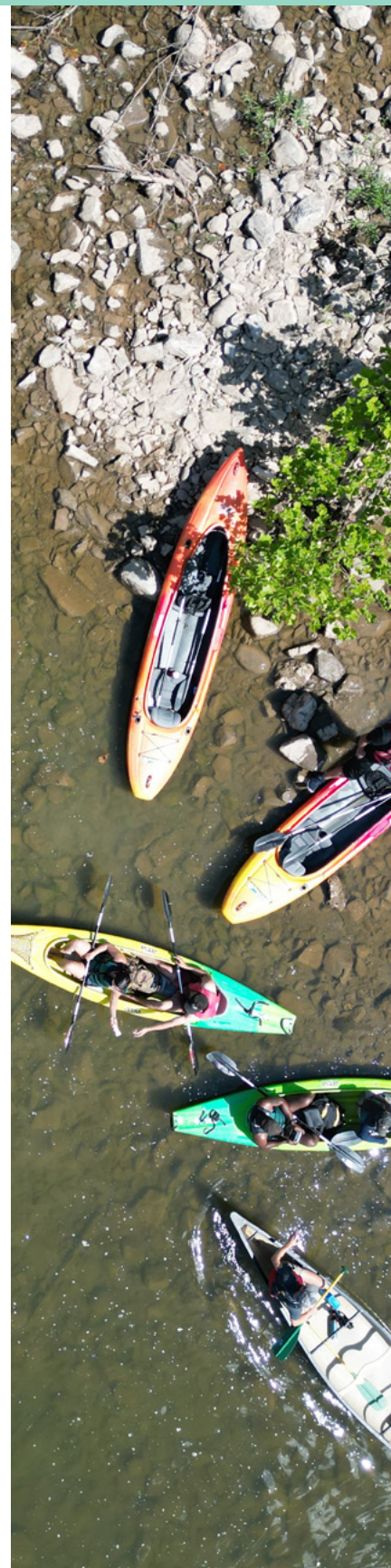
- Dissecting the data within each cultural context
- Identifying key patterns of common wellness measures by the team
- Identifying any cross-team measures



### ACT

Youth and young adults develop practices and policies that help young people thrive, using wellness data to document change over time. This process includes:

- Establishing and disseminating wellness measures
- Data-driven activation of investment in wellbeing and policy changes



This report highlights the work to date as participants finalize Phase One. As the project continues, Design Team members will continue to develop measures of wellbeing in Phase Two.



“Our elders directed us, but they let us have the floor in [making meaning] and putting the presentation together.”

*Desiree Armas,  
Latine Bienestar Design Team*

# Methods

## Introduction to Youth Participatory Action Research

“Youth-led Participatory Action Research is an innovative approach to positive youth and community development in which young people are trained to conduct systematic research to improve their lives, their communities, and the institutions intended to serve them.” ([YPAR Hub, Berkeley](#)) YPAR is a cyclical process of learning and action – research is done not just for its own sake, but to inform solutions to problems that young people themselves care about.

### THE LOOK AND FEEL OF YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP IN OUR WORK

At the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions and Fresh Tracks, our goal is to support the development of innovative wellbeing and healing measures by youth and young adults of color that incorporate their lived experiences through a participatory action research process.

We strive to ensure that youth and young adults are leading the research and direction of the project. The allyship of adult members of the team requires intentional structure and an adjustment in typical mindsets and practices.

To fully support and follow the youth leadership of the project, adult allies have committed to:

- Explicitly address ageism by naming the symptoms and acknowledging that the value young people bring is not based on number of years on the planet
- Share decision-making power and employ a trust-based distribution of funds (specifically The Aspen Institute as the organizing body)
- Practice active listening
- Compromise by adjusting timelines and expectations as needed
- Build on the strengths and experiences young people bring to the table
- Hold space for anyone who has knowledge and expertise to share and teach others on the research team



## Project & Teams Overview

Each cultural affinity group in the project consists of four types of members:

### YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT RESEARCH DESIGN TEAM MEMBERS

Young leaders who self identify with one or more of the project's cultural identity groups

- Kimberly Pikok (AIAN Affinity Group)
- Lara Jewell No Braid (AIAN Affinity Group)
- Shanoa Shandiin Nez (AIAN Affinity Group)
- Cierra Gunderson-Knox (Black Expressions Affinity Group)
- Devin Edwards (Black Expressions Affinity Group)
- Jaren Savage (Black Expressions Affinity Group)
- Nyah Saleem (Black Expressions Affinity Group)
- Shaquana D Boykin (Black Expressions Affinity Group)
- Keya Meggett (Black Expressions Affinity Group)
- Alexia Estrada (Latine Bienestar Affinity Group)
- Israel Juarez (Latine Bienestar Affinity Group)
- Katalina Macedonia Garcia (Latine Bienestar Affinity Group)

### RESEARCH NAVIGATORS

Individuals with complementary experience, including: credible experience in the current, Western dominant research paradigm, credible messenger influence, and knowledge of culture-centered ways of knowing and healing.

- Jerreed Ivanich (AIAN Affinity Group)
- Sierra Quintana (AIAN Affinity Group)
- James King Jr. (Black Expressions Affinity Group)
- Sefanit Habtom (Black Expressions Affinity Group)
- Jennifer Ayala (Latine Bienestar Affinity Group)
- Jose Dobles (Latine Bienestar Affinity Group)



## PEER RESEARCH MENTORS

Young leaders who self identify with the cultural identity group, who hold experience participating or leading youth participatory action research.

- Zenetta Zepeda (AIAN Affinity Group)
- Milen Negash (Black Expressions Affinity Group)
- Niara Frankson (Black Expressions Affinity Group)
- Desiree Armas (Latine Bienestar Affinity Group)

## ADVISORS & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PARTNERS

Since it began in 2020, this project has benefited from technical assistance, training, and general mentorship from adult partners and allies from partner organizations.

- Andrea Wagner (Fresh Tracks at Aspen Forum For Community Solutions)
- Juan D. Martinez Pineda (Fresh Tracks at Aspen Forum For Community Solutions)
- Steve Patrick (Aspen Forum for Community Solutions)
- Angelique Kadeem (The Annie E. Casey Foundation)
- Bonnie Howard (The Annie E. Casey Foundation)
- Cynthia Weaver (The Annie E. Casey Foundation)
- Erik Stegman (Native Americans in Philanthropy)
- Gevonee Ford (Network for Development of Children of African Descent)
- Jamiel Alexander (Opportunity Youth Forum at Aspen Forum For Community Solutions)
- Kim Flores (Algorhythm/Hello Insight)
- Sally Munemitsu (Algorhythm/Hello Insight)
- Martin LeBlanc (LBC Action)
- Martin Valadez (Heritage University)
- Sarah Zeller-Berkman (CUNY Intergenerational Change Initiative)
- Sharoni Little (University of Southern California)
- Emily E. Haroz, PhD (Center for Indigenous Health at Johns Hopkins University)
- Joshuaa Allison-Burbank PhD (Center for Indigenous Health at Johns Hopkins University)



## Project & Team Methods

The Wellbeing Project went through various stages of development and growth that supported the individual learning of the leaders, the understanding of YPAR, and the construction of the wellbeing framework before getting into the process.

### STEP 1: CATALYZE THREE RESEARCH DESIGN TEAMS AND YPAR PROJECTS

Research Design Teams: American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN), Black Expressions of Wellbeing, and Latine Bienestar

Each affinity group included the following team members:

- 3-6 Youth and Young Adults making up the Design Team
- 3-5 Research Allies
- 2-3 Adult Research Navigators
- 1-2 Peer Research Mentors

### STEP 2: CULTURAL GROUNDING

Each research Design Team participated in cultural grounding workshops to help them re-ground themselves in the possibilities of research in their cultural contexts.

In the workshop led by Network for the Development of Children of African Descent, the Design Teams explored how culture and Indigenous knowledge inform wellness, and drew connections to how YPAR can be used to unearth notions of wellness in culturally-specific contexts and lived experiences of youth today.

These workshops introduced cultural knowledge systems as the foundation of generative inquiry and as a tool to question generally accepted assumptions. A greater sense of cultural heritage strengthens the capability of the research Design Teams to employ their self-knowledge for healing, creating and self-determination.



*On lived experience and gaining expertise in research:*

**“I know how to read through things and collect data. I’ve grown in understanding where I’m coming from so when I’m listening or reading over information, I clearly see how to separate my experience from making meaning with the stories we collect. Learning these tools and sifting through data helped me realize when it’s necessary to apply my lived experience. Once we learned how to use Dedoose (platform for data management, excerpting, coding, and analysis) and code, and learning the technology made me realize that I have another tool for community work under my belt.”**

*Shaquana Boykin,  
Black Expressions Design Team*

### STEP 3: INTRODUCTION TO YPAR

In the workshop facilitated by Sarah Zeller-Berkman from Intergenerational Change Initiative, Design Team members developed a shared knowledge base about the research and thinking already created relating to wellbeing and young people. They practiced various research methods and learned a foundational understanding of Youth-led Participatory Action Research that could be combined with the cultural grounding for implementation. At the conclusion of the YPAR workshops series, they developed a draft research design to lead them into the first stage of gathering data.

### STEP 4: TEAM METHODS

#### PAR Methods and Strategies in Action

Next, the young leaders put this knowledge into action, developing and conducting unique YPAR projects that leveraged the following methods: surveying, interviews, artistic visualization, and Nominal Group Technique. To date, more than 250 youth and young adults who identify as Latinx, American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) and Black have participated and defined wellbeing in their own words, voices and expressions.

**The AIAN Design Team** collected data from 72 AIAN young adults ages 18 - 26 years from Canada and the United States using Nominal Group Technique, qualitative interviews, and an original, quantitative survey.

Nominal Group Technique and the quantitative survey gave the Design Team ranked elements of wellbeing that they were able to compare side by side.

These methods also brought out the importance of nature, subsistence living, and traditional practices as critical components of wellbeing in a way that was not amplified in other groups.

For the qualitative interviews, the Design Team created care packages to show gratitude for participation in the process, including:

- Blanket from Eighth Generation
- Earrings and throw blanket
- Ulu (an all-purpose knife traditionally used by Inuit, Iñupiat, Yupik, and Aleut people) and stand
- Native bags, artwork & jewelry





### **The Black Expressions Design Team**

conducted 16 remote interviews with Black youth and young adults across the diaspora (ie. African American & Puerto Rican, Haitian, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Afro-Colombian/Panamanian, etc.) ages 15 - 28 years from the United States and Canada and created an original survey that received more than 200 unique responses.

Sample interview questions included:

- How do you define wellbeing?
- Where did you learn about wellness or wellbeing? Where or from whom?
- What are ways that you see people in your neighborhood/ community practicing wellbeing?
- What kind of support do you need to improve your wellbeing?

### **The Latine Bienestar Design Team**

conducted 19 remote interviews and arts-based expression methods with Latinx youth ages 19 - 24 years from New Jersey, Colorado, and Washington. Artistic expression was included as both a component of wellbeing and a medium for communication of the findings. Art supplies were sent to the interviewees, who created artwork to represent the themes of the conversations. One member of the Design Team, Israel Juarez, produced a song that incorporated themes and participant interview responses.

Each interviewee received a gift bag and small stipend for participating in the interview.

# Introduction to Findings:

## Our Story of Wellness



**How do young people from diverse cultural backgrounds define their wellbeing?**

All of the Design Teams agreed that wellbeing was about achieving balance in their everyday lives: juggling school and work, family and friends, wants and needs, as well as financial responsibilities and constraints. They defined wellbeing as being at peace with the multiple pressures in their lives. Community health and connection was another central pillar to the developed definition of wellbeing.

**“I think it really comes from those people around you kind of supporting you and encouraging you and then checking in on you. I think for me, I think the support comes from my friends and family and people who actually know me.”**

*Black Expressions interviewee*

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**“I think that’s a big way we practice our wellness, togetherness, I guess, that’s the one way to put it. Connectedness [...] I think we’re a community that calls each other regularly. We talk to each other. We’re always needing to be together...So that’s a big part of it.”**

*Black Expressions interviewee*

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**“Many of the recommendations and solutions that came up through the interviews were indirect. It made me think about how inherently, Black Americans specifically, have this inherent knowledge and wisdom. Because we’ve always had to find ways of joy and rest and use it as an act of resistance in a way in order to just survive in this country. We already know what we need, we just have to tap into it.”**

*Keya Meggett, Black Expressions Design Team*

All teams situated wellbeing in the context of intergenerational and individual trauma from racism, recognizing that these factors were at the root of their lack of wellbeing. However, that was not the end of the story. Returning to traditional and cultural roots showed up as a beacon of resistance and resilience in the journey to wellbeing.

The YPAR Design Teams identified seven common and interconnected themes of wellbeing. In coming to these themes, each group used different indicators, expressions and language, especially in the area of inclusion and safety.

**Common Themes of Wellbeing Across Affinity Groups**



**Israel Juarez**, who performs under the name ISREAL THEVI\$IONARY, and is a member of the Latine Bienestar Design Team, created a song as an embodiment of the discussions around these themes of wellbeing.

*“I been thinking ‘bout my mental health, to find some joy before my mental melts...”*

One of the strengths of YPAR and the researchers being youth leaders rooted in their communities is that they are directly connected to their findings and the recommended support for wellbeing. Israel shared,

*“I feel like I’ve been having a lot of anxiety lately [and] a lot of weight was lifted off my chest writing [this song], surprisingly.”*

# Definition of Wellbeing

In defining wellbeing, design teams identified both current, existing barriers and proposed recommendations to improve wellbeing. Young leaders also emphasized that researching wellbeing for their communities became a support for their personal wellbeing.

## Definition of Core Themes:

### HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

- Described as living with nature, considering nature as wellness, and having access to nature and healthy foods.
- While all groups lifted up nature as a key component of a healthy environment, only the Black Expressions group highlighted food insecurity in their definition.

### CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

- Described as grounded in faith and spirituality, participating in traditional cultural practices, and seeking cultural refuge to promote their wellbeing.
- While all groups highlighted connections with their unique cultures, the Latine Bienestar and Black Expressions groups specifically emphasized spirituality as critical to culture.

### FINANCIAL STABILITY

- Described as being free from the pressures of growing up in a capitalistic society, under constant stress to be productive, “hustle,” “be on the grind,” because it is “all about the peso.”
- Described as having access to services such as health care.

### INCLUSION AND SAFETY

- Described as the need for inclusion and safety, which intersected with gender identity, “machismo and other isms,” and included the need to have physically safe spaces, freedom to be in spaces, and recognition of rootedness but also movement across countries because of family connections.

### COMMUNITY SELF EFFICACY

- Described as the support received from community members to feel well, “living with convivencia,” and the association between individual and community health.

### HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

- Described as healthy relationships, especially with family members, friends and mentors, and a feeling of togetherness.

### MENTAL HEALTH

- Described as being mentally healthy, happy, healing and joy, and the ability to recognize and deal with emotions, like “sad boi vibes” (feeling sad and anxious).
- There was great consistency across groups in their definitions.

## Barriers to Wellbeing

- Time
- Hustle Culture (capitalist society)
- Lack of access to wellbeing resources and natural spaces



## Recommendations to Improve Wellbeing

### From Latine Bienestar Design Team:

- Intergenerational conversations around wellness
- Policy changes that support financial stability and freedom of movement
- Investment in community spaces\*
- Access to mental health support that is culturally grounded\*

### From Black Expressions Design Team:

- Access to therapy and counseling services\*
- Investment in community and community spaces\*
- Development of policy, resources, and opportunities to further learn about and practice wellness
- Centering of non-Western education and knowledge
- Reduction of stress in our hyper-capitalist, anti-Black society

### From American Indian & Alaska Native Design Team:

- An understanding that Indigenous culture and its influence is the framework uniquely essential to the wellbeing of AIAN youth across different residential settings
- Honoring culture by incorporating cohesive and interdependent families, traditional culture practices such as powwows and ceremonies, and intergenerational experiences
- Centering family and surrounding communities as origins of wellbeing
- Access to mentorship and community away from their primary home communities
- Awareness of the fact that wellbeing for AIAN youth differs from Western values in the fact that the foundation of wellbeing is holistic to themselves, others, and the environment around them (emphasis on the inclusion of others and the environment)



*\*consistent across Design Teams*



# Project Timeline and Milestones To Date

## PHASE ONE MILESTONES AND PROGRESS

During Phase One, Design Team members have accomplished the following:

- Learned methods of research grounded in cultural contexts
- Learned YPAR methods and strategies
- Put this knowledge into action and conducted their own unique YPAR projects that leveraged the following methods:
  - Surveying
  - Interviews
  - Artistic visualization
  - Nominal Group Technique
- To date, more than 250 youth and young adults who identify as Latinx, American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) and Black have participated and defined wellbeing in their own words, voices and expressions.

**“Across all three groups, I noticed there is so much knowledge and power that young people have. As a young person myself, I related a lot to what my other young people were saying. You can just sense the urgency in what our interviewees said. It’s like crying out for help. Because, one thing is like talking about it, but we want to see things actually happen. So, I’m just excited to see how our work is used. Because obviously we are not okay. And we are so powerful. I mean we have already come up with so many powerful solutions just in this group alone with limited resources.”**

*Latine Bienestar Design Team Member*

# Next Steps

## Project Timeline 2022-24

The Youth and Young Adult Wellbeing Measure will be a platform of methods aimed at identifying core themes of wellbeing as influenced by cultural affinity. When this project is completed, these methods will be compiled into an adaptive and interactive framework of wellbeing within each community to identify the wellbeing narrative, core values, and advocate for concrete support and solutions to increase wellbeing.

This will be an online platform/tool that is responsive and adaptive to community input via assessments that will determine cultural affinity as well as individual/community needs.

This report highlights the work of participants in Phase One. The next phase of the work engages Design Team members in developing valid and reliable measures of wellbeing. Phase Two is inherently more cyclical, with each step repeated for continued validation throughout the year. Other youth serving networks, cultural communities, and community partners will join this data and validation cycle over time.

The next steps in the process include:

- Determining how the three cultural affinity groups align with one another
- Identifying and drafting items for a draft tool
- Testing the validity of the tool items
- Disseminating the tool to youth and young adult networks and community partners through snowball data collection methods across the country (integrating platforms like Amplify)
- Analyzing and sharing the data for advocacy and action

AUG-NOV 2022

### Align Vision and Affinity Groups

Based on individual and shared affinity group wellbeing focus areas and review of recent research, Design Teams drafted vision of toolkit(s) and field guide(s)

FEB 2023

### DC Wellbeing Convening

In-person gathering to learn about existing research and measures, begin prioritizing measures and plan for testing of measures and toolkit development

MAR-JUN 2023

### Develop YPAR Part II

Prioritizing and drafting measures and methods to test the survey with cultural communities

JUN-AUG 2023

### Implement YPAR Part II

Campaign to distribute measures widely for testing

AUG-OCT 2023

### Analyze Initial Results and Begin Validation

With support from Algorithim, YPAR survey data already collected will begin the cyclical process of analysis, validation, and meaning making

NOV 2023-FEB 2024

### Make Meaning of Results

Youth and young adult researchers will use initial analysis to make meaning of incoming data from researchers and partners to update the toolkits

FEB 2024-APR 2024

### Plan Next Steps

Wellbeing Project team will update toolkits, plans, and next steps for 2024

**“The future of wellbeing coming out of this process is that we will be able to create policy that supports wellbeing for our communities, and have the data to back it up. We will be able to implement more specific programs that foster wellbeing.”**

*Shaquana Boykin,  
Black Expressions Design Team*



## Acknowledgments

Since time immemorial, Native communities across the Americas have demonstrated resilience and resistance in the face of violent efforts to separate them from their land, culture, and each other. Indigenous people remain at the forefront of movements for justice, equity, the protection of nature and the life it sustains. Fresh Tracks is aware that we walk, support, and work on Native land. Native American communities continue to thrive and lead the movements for human rights today. The Fresh Tracks team acknowledges the critical and necessary step to honor Native communities and their leadership to build an equitable future for all. Fresh Tracks encourages all to uncover truths of the original inhabitants of the land we all walk on.

This work is made possible by a collaboration between the The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions, the Center for Indigenous Health at Johns Hopkins University, the Centers for American Indian and Alaska Native Health at Colorado School of Public Health, CUNY School of Professional Studies Youth Studies Programs, Fresh Tracks, Hello Insight, Intergenerational Change Initiative, LBC Action, National Recreation Foundation, Native Americans in Philanthropy, Network for the Development of Children of African Descent, REI Cooperative Action Fund, Treeline Foundation, The Tides Foundation, Andrus Family Fund, the Schmidt Family Foundation and the leadership of young diverse leaders rooted in community action and the healing power of the outdoors.

Funding for this project is provided by The Annie E. Casey Foundation. The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private philanthropy that creates a brighter future for the nation’s children and youth by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. Learn more at [aecf.org](https://www.aecf.org).

## 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 Forum for Community Solutions is one of the policy and program areas of The Aspen Institute.

## ABOUT THE FORUM FOR COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS AND FRESH TRACKS:

### FORUM FOR COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS



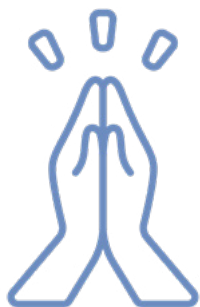
The [Forum for Community Solutions](#) (FCS) promotes collaborative, community-based efforts that build the power and influence of those with the least access to opportunity. We support communities to come together to expand mobility, eliminate systemic barriers, and create their own solutions to their most pressing challenges. FCS works to accomplish this mission by

pursuing four strategies: 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.

### **FRESH TRACKS**

Fresh Tracks envisions a world where all people are working to advance social and environmental justice and overcome hate and racism. Fresh Tracks provides young Indigenous, rural, and urban leaders with cross-cultural community building skills, leadership development training, civic engagement opportunities, and resources for innovative youth and community-led action. Our movement is grounded in the healing power of nature and culture. Fresh Tracks is a lifelong journey of leadership, growth, and community action. Elevating youth narratives, power, and vision is at the core of our work.

To learn more about this project, contact Juan D. Martinez Pineda at [juan.martinez@aspeninstitute.org](mailto:juan.martinez@aspeninstitute.org).



#### **Social Media:**

Instagram: @freshtracks\_

Twitter: @FreshTracks\_

#aspeninstitute

#freshtracksaction



 **FRESH TRACKS**