

A Snapshot of the 2022 Opportunity Youth Forum



ABOUT THE OYF NETWORK

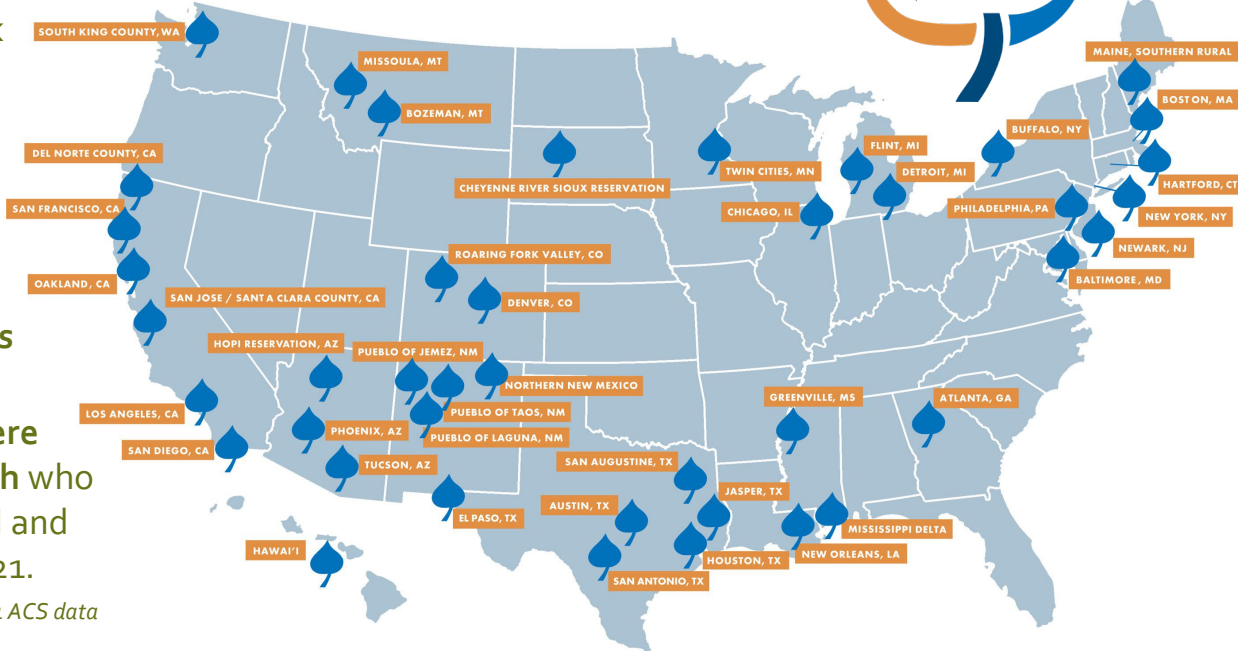
The OYF network is home to

7.5 million

16 to 24-year-olds

970,086 (13%) were opportunity youth who were not in school and not working in 2021.

Based on 2021 ACS data



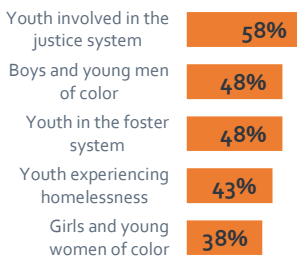
COLLABORATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Collaboratives vary in focus area, size, and experience, adapting to meet the unique needs of their communities.



AREAS OF FOCUS

Collaboratives prioritized the following young people:



SIZE

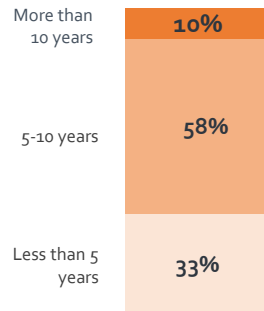
Network median: 16 partners
Range: 5-119 partners

83% of collaboratives included partners from at least three of the following sectors:

- higher-education
- community-based organizations
- government
- K-12 education



TIME FOCUSING ON OPPORTUNITY YOUTH

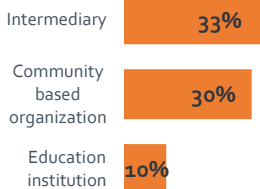


BACKBONE CHARACTERISTICS

Backbone organizations are a critical component of the OYF network, providing a structure and team to coordinate the work of each collaborative.



TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS



Other organizations include:

- Workforce investment board
- Local or tribal government agency



BUDGET

BACKBONE BUDGET

Network median: \$4.2M
Range: \$0 to \$125M

BUDGET DEDICATED TO OY

Network median: \$586,180
Range: \$0 to \$7.3M



STAFF

BACKBONE STAFFING

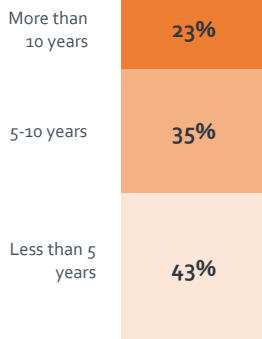
Network median: 13 FTEs
Range: 0 to 220 FTEs

STAFFING DEDICATED TO OY

Network median: 3 FTEs
Range: 0 to 20 FTEs

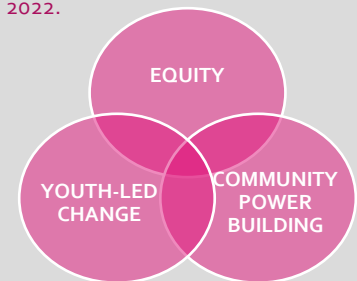


TIME FOCUSING ON OPPORTUNITY YOUTH



CORE VALUES

Equity, youth-led change, and community power building are foundational to OYF. In 2022, collaboratives reported more frequently using equity-centered practices like **explicitly naming racial equity**, **disaggregating data**, and having **collaborative members reflect their communities** than they did in 2019. Reported indicators of youth-led change increased to their highest levels in four years in 2022.



Over the past two years, OYF collaboratives have begun to explore how **belonging, meaning, wellbeing, and purpose** can help counter the impacts of structurally racist systems for youth. In 2022, at least half of all collaboratives:

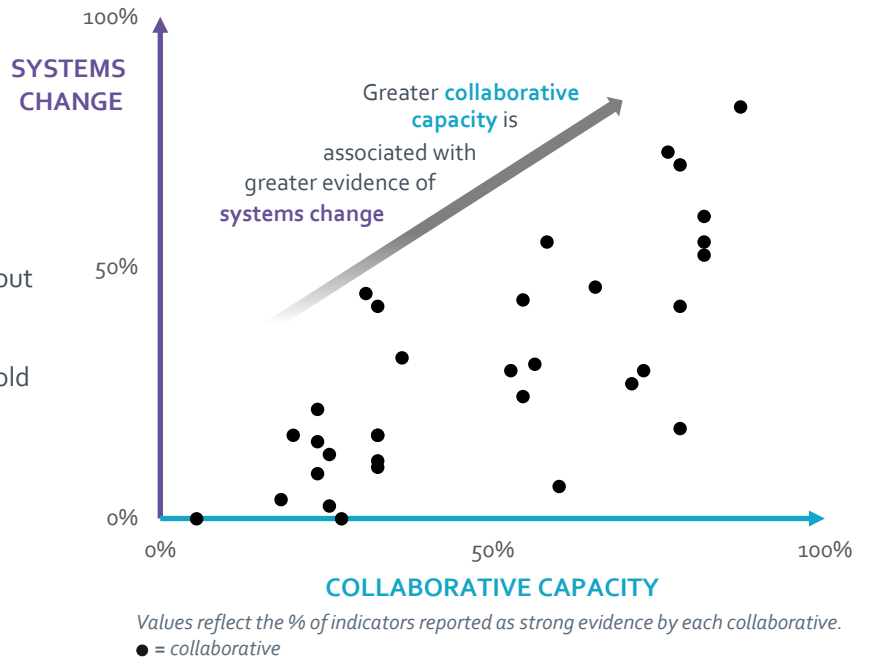
- Explained these concepts to collaborative members
- Discussed with young people strategies to advance belonging, meaning, wellbeing, and purpose
- Supported programmatic improvements to center belonging, meaning, wellbeing, and purpose

ORGANIZING FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

The 2022 evaluation examined two dimensions of communities in the OYF network:

- 1) Collaborative capacity:** the infrastructure and processes necessary for the collaborative to carry out its opportunity youth agenda
- 2) Systems changes:** “shifts to the conditions that hold a problem in place”—in this case, disconnected pathways and inequitable conditions that prevent young people from achieving education and employment outcomes

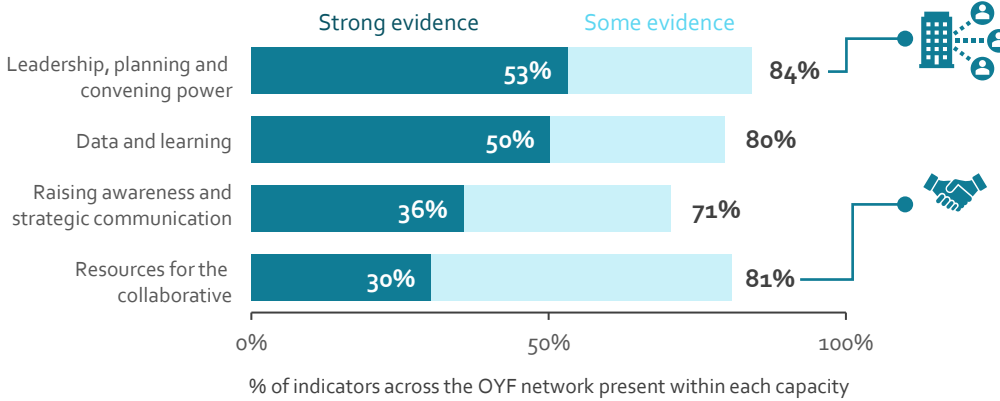
*FSG, *Water of Systems Change*: https://www.fsg.org/publications/water_of_systems_change



COLLABORATIVE CAPACITY

After dipping in 2020 and rebounding in 2021, in 2022 collaborative capacity remained steady.

Collaborative’s leadership capacities grew in 2022, re-emerging as the most present capacity – though data also remained high.



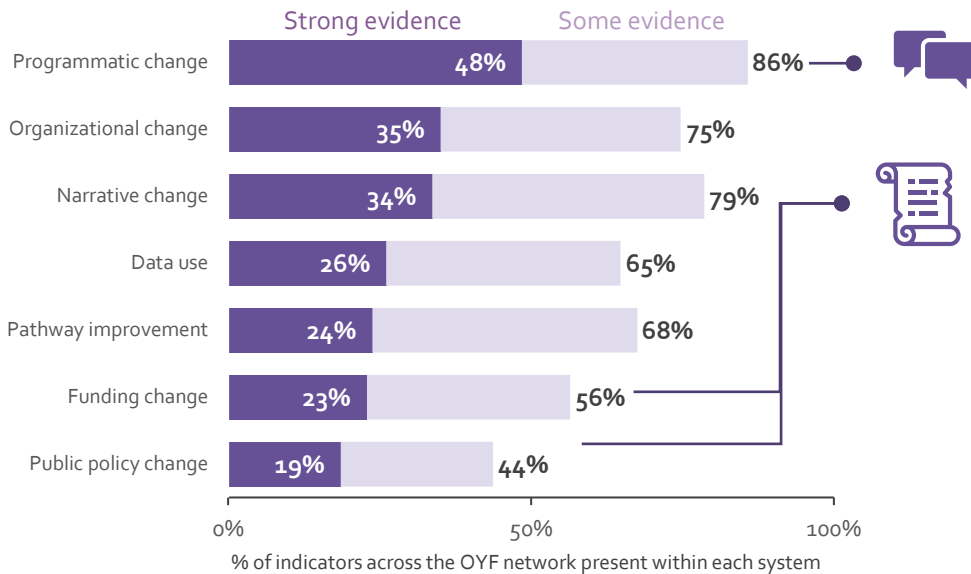
97% of collaboratives included representatives from the sectors and systems necessary to achieve their goals and had active involvement of members from across organizational roles.

Partners support grew in 2022, through in-kind and financial support for collaboratives and backbones.

- 87% of collaboratives reported that partners committed in-kind supports to the backbone
- 92% reported that partners dedicated personnel to support the collaborative’s goals

SYSTEMS CHANGES

From 2019 to 2022, systems change in the OYF network has held steady, even as new collaboratives joined the network. Programmatic change has remained the most prominent type of change collaboratives report.



91% of collaboratives solicited opportunity youth’s recommendations to inform program and pathway design.

Over the past few years, collaboratives reported advancing policies that:

- Removed barriers to educational attainment
- Improved coordination across systems
- Created funding streams for pilots and established programs
- Increased funding for jobs, education, childcare, and housing support

Methods. Findings come from the 2022 OYF Self-Assessment. Forty collaboratives answered questions about their collaborative capacity and systems changes. The Assessment included indicators grouped into four types of capacities and seven types of systems changes, assessed on a four-point scale.

For more information about the Aspen Institute’s OYF network: <https://www.aspencommunitysolutions.org/opportunity-youth-forum/>