

The Future of Thriving

The New Commitment Our Country Needs

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[Project Overview](#)

What is our responsibility to the next generation, and to the future of our country? Whatever our differences, we want young people to thrive: to build good lives, support their families, and contribute to something larger than themselves. Decades of research - and common sense - tell us that to get there, young people need experiences that help them discover who they are and what they can do.

We see it in the everyday moments that shape a young person's life: the teacher who sees potential in a child who has stopped seeing it in herself, helping her imagine what she might become; the coach who gives a struggling player a role his teammates depend on, and he discovers that he matters; the first boss who hands a sixteen-year-old the keys and says, *I'm counting on you*, and she discovers she can carry real responsibility; or the faith leader who brings two teenagers who see the world differently together to serve their neighbors, and they discover what they can build together.

These are the very capacities our country needs from the next generation, and the very experiences too many young people are missing. At a time when trust in institutions is eroding, communities are losing the connections that hold them together, and young people themselves are losing faith in their ability to make a difference, we need young people who can build relationships, navigate differences, solve problems, and contribute to something larger than themselves.

Yet too many are struggling with mental health and finding good jobs, just as AI transforms how they will work, live, and relate to one another. We are asking a generation to inherit enormous challenges without making sure they have what it takes to meet them, much less shape what comes next.

A century ago, we made a bold commitment to prepare young people to thrive in a new industrial economy. Public education became central to that promise, and test scores and diplomas became our measures of success. But the world has changed beyond recognition. It's time for a commitment just as ambitious: one that prepares young people to thrive in work, life, and community, and gives them the capacity to shape the future rather than simply respond to it.

We already know what it takes to fulfill that promise. Across America, communities are creating the experiences that help young people thrive. But those experiences are not yet something every young person can count on, wherever they grow up. More than 1,000 conversations across geographies and ideologies have reinforced our conviction: we need to make thriving our shared definition of success.



THE FUTURE OF THRIVING

The New Commitment Our Country Needs

Preparing every young person to thrive and shape a stronger, more just, and more united future.



The capacity to create new opportunities in a rapidly changing world.



The capacity to build stronger communities across difference.



The capacity to work together to solve problems we cannot yet imagine.

A commitment this ambitious demands that we change, too. Admit what isn't working. Challenge our assumptions. Question the ideas we've spent our careers defending. Agree on a shared vision of success that reflects what our country's future demands. We know change on this scale is possible. Seatbelt use and tobacco reform showed how public expectations and institutions can adapt together. This movement will take a change just as ambitious, with these pieces working together:

- **Narrative Change:** Shift the public definition of success from test scores and diplomas to thriving.
- **Common Ground:** Establish a shared understanding of thriving from birth to 25, specific enough to measure and promote together, flexible enough to support existing frameworks and models.
- **Training + Practice:** Work with the organizations that shape professions to embed the shared science into professional preparation, standards, continuing education, and everyday practice.
- **Funding + Policy Alignment:** Work with the people who make the rules and control resources to embed the same science into funding requirements, program standards, and public policy.
- **Pilots + Learning:** Test what happens when these changes come together in communities. Measure adult practice, young people's experiences, and developmental progress.
- **Leadership + Long-Term Capacity:** Build a lasting home for the movement, with the leadership, partnerships, and funding to sustain and spread it for decades.

The time for incremental change is over. We need funders and partners willing to look beyond their own lanes, challenge what we've long called success, and help build a movement bigger than any one institution or sector. This is our chance to make a new commitment to the future of our country.

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