

SNAPSHOT

Launched: 2010 - to conclude in 2016

Leadership: Tulaine Montgomery, Partner

Funding Raised to Date: \$20M (+\$25M from SIF*) = \$45M

Funding Goal: \$25M by end of 2015 (+\$25M from SIF) = \$50M



*Social Innovation Fund of The Corporation for National Service

OBJECTIVE

Successful employment in today’s modern workforce demands more formal education and training than ever before. By 2018, two-thirds of all jobs will require a postsecondary degree or certificate. However, while education remains the most direct pathway to economic self-sufficiency, access to the education needed for sustainable employment remains elusive for a critical mass of America’s youth, particularly those from low-income, underrepresented communities. Only 60% of America’s low-income youth graduate from high school. Seventeen percent of 16-24 year olds in the United States, or 6.7 million young adults are “Opportunity Youth” who are not attending school, not working, and have no credential beyond high school. The mission of the Pathways Fund is to to strengthen the bridge between education and workforce development to foster opportunity and access for low-income youth.

New Profit’s Pathways Fund has been part of one of the nation’s foremost social investment experiments – the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) – since July 2010, as one of its inaugural cohort of grant winners. As part of the SIF, the Pathways Fund represents an unprecedented collective effort by a cross-sector network of investors and high performing nonprofit organizations to deliver measurable, sustainable impact for individuals, communities, and education to employment pipelines. Each of the six Pathways Fund subgrantee organizations provides a set of comprehensive, targeted supports for vulnerable, high-risk youth getting them to and through college and into the economic mainstream. New Profit partners closely with each organization to strengthen its operations, improve its programmatic impact, and scale its interventions nationally. Over the course of the five-year initiative, the Pathways Fund anticipates helping over 250,000 people gain the skills, knowledge, and networks needed to lead healthy lives and engage in meaningful work.

PARTICIPANTS

Primary Funders: Corporation for National and Community Service, Blue Ridge

Foundation New York, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Kresge Foundation, Oak Foundation, Robin Hood Foundation, State Street Foundation, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, Open Society Foundations, SeaChange Capital Partners

Current Fund Grantees: College Advising Corps, College Summit, iMentor, Single Stop, Year Up, YouthBuild USA

Key Thought Partners: Greg Darnieder, Senior Advisor to the Secretary on the College Access Initiative, U.S. Department of Education; Shirley Sagawa, Visiting Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress; Hilary Pennington, Vice President, Ford Foundation's Education, Creativity and Free Expression Program; Lee Foley, Managing Partner; Capitol Hill Partners

ACTIVITIES

- **Technical Assistance:** New Profit provides all subgrantees, including those in the Pathways Fund, with extensive technical assistance designed to dramatically enhance their programmatic impact, national scale, and long-term financial sustainability. These interventions and strategic engagements are tailored to each organization's specific needs. Dedicated New Profit "Deal Partners" act as the day-to-day advisor to the social entrepreneur and leadership team on critical strategic issues related to impact, growth, and sustainability.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The SIF and the Pathways Fund have partnered to build the evidence base in the sector by demonstrating the impact of both individual organizations and the collective Pathways network. The Pathways Fund team monitors subgrantee operational effectiveness through quarterly collection and review of collaboratively designed performance metrics. Additionally, each of the six Pathways organizations has launched a rigorous outcome study conducted by a third-party evaluator. Finally, the Pathways Fund is undergoing its own third-party evaluation in order to measure the incremental impact of participation in the Pathways Fund network. The successful execution of these evaluation activities will advance the influence of rigorous evidence of programmatic outcomes on these six interventions and across the education and workforce development fields.
- **Convenings:** New Profit fosters partnerships and shared learning opportunities, and encourages co-location and collaboration where they naturally emerge in the Pathways portfolio. Leaders of Pathways Fund organizations have the opportunity to regularly learn from and work with each other and others across the broader New Profit portfolio through Pathways Convenings and larger New Profit events. Pathways Convenings bring together a diverse group of stakeholders including social entrepreneurs, private funders, and governmental agencies to problem solve and think together about future opportunities.

- **Advocacy:** In addition to helping strengthen and connect individual programs, the Pathways Fund aims to amplify their impact by advancing collective agendas and driving systems change. America Forward, New Profit's national nonpartisan policy and advocacy initiative, serves as a valuable resource and trusted partner in shaping and expanding the Pathways organizations' systems change efforts. All six of the Pathways organizations are part of the America Forward Coalition and are part of America Forward's Workforce Development Taskforce and active contributors to the Workforce Development policy platform.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

- **Expanded Operational and Evaluation Capacity:** Following intensive technical assistance provision, the Pathways organizations have strengthened their grants management, finance, and measurement and evaluation systems. Four of the six portfolio organizations have hired key evaluation staff since the inception of the Pathways Fund.
- **Multi-Year Outcome Studies:** All Pathways organizations are conducting rigorous third-party evaluations. The Pathways Fund will have preliminary outcome evidence from every organization in 2015 and 2016.
- **Collaborations:** Eleven total collaborations existed among subgrantees at the end of the program's first year, including five new collaborations that emerged during that year alone. At the end of Year 2, five of the six Pathways organizations reported formal partnerships with at least one other organization in the network, and four of the six reported partnerships with at least two other organizations.
- **Geographic Reach:** Through Pathways funding, the six grantee organizations are serving young people in 22 states and over 30 cities or regions.
- **Beneficiary Growth:** As of December 2014, the six Pathways organizations had collectively served over 188,000 young people through the Fund, and these organizations are on track to collectively serve over 250,000 over the 5-year initiative.

NEXT MILESTONES

- **New Knowledge:** Evaluations for all six Pathways organizations will be completed by 2017. Final outcomes studies include three randomized control trials (RCTs) and four quasi-experiments, along with supplemental implementation research.
- **Stronger Sector:** Key field learnings gained over the course of the Pathways fund will be widely disseminated to improve the fields of college access/success and workforce development.
- **Field Leadership:** Following their participation in the Pathways Fund, the six organizations will have built a compelling platform of evidence-based programming that can be leveraged nationally. The organizations will have strong evaluation orientation and sustainable infrastructure, serving as examples and resources for the sector.

NEXT CONVENING

Fall 2015