



The Forum for Youth Investment
Chief Executive Officer
Washington, D.C.

THE SEARCH

The Forum for Youth Investment (Forum) invites applications and nominations for its next CEO. Founded in 1998, the Forum is a nationally recognized nonprofit dedicated to improving opportunities and outcomes for young people. The Forum is focused on advancing equity, research, policy, and practices across all systems and settings that shape young people's lives. Supported by a team of 35 full-time staff, the Forum partners with national, state, and local leaders across the country, connecting them with the ideas, tools, and networks they need to make intentional decisions that benefit youth. The Forum has consistently taken a youth-centered approach and successfully expanded into various areas, building a strong national reputation and lasting partnerships.

This leadership transition comes at a time of significant opportunity for the Forum as the need and demand for the organization's work are greater than ever. Systemic inequities that limit opportunities for many young people persist. The rapidly changing nature of the workforce, advancements in technology, and evolving expectations demand that youth be equipped with a broader set of skills. The challenges young people face today are not confined to a single area but span multiple systems like education, mental health, and workforce development. The Forum's holistic approach is essential for addressing these complex, interconnected issues in a comprehensive way.

As the organization moves forward, it seeks an inclusive and entrepreneurial CEO to center the Forum's work around a clear mission and strategic plan that knits together its streams of work and talented staff. This CEO will be an exceptional keeper of the organization's financial and cultural health; a passionate advocate who can advance its reputation and influence in the field; and a strategic thinker who will set new goals for long-term growth and impact. Assessing the Forum's activities and operations in a new political and social environment, this leader will be visionary and experienced, oriented to the future while building on the past. They will naturally engage with young people and be deeply passionate about positive youth development in policy and practice. The CEO will serve as a thoughtful leader, with demonstrated effectiveness in organizational development, advancing equity, and building positive relationships with staff and boards. The CEO will be a highly effective communicator, skilled at securing

resources and establishing partnerships across a broad range of constituencies. They will be a strong and accountable financial and people manager who inspires and empowers those they work with.

The Forum has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national search firm, to assist in the recruitment of its CEO. Please direct all nominations, inquiries, and application materials in confidence to the search firm, as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT THE FORUM

The Forum helps leaders think differently about what it takes to manage and sustain change so that they are motivated to act differently and, ultimately, act together as a part of an allied youth field. Three strategic approaches have guided the Forum's work:

- **[Strengthening Practices & Programs](#)**: The Forum empowers youth development, education, and human service system leaders to adopt, implement, and scale management, staff policies, and practices that ensure young people have access to high quality, coordinated supports they need to succeed.
- **[Planning & Partnering for Impact](#)**: The Forum supports boundary-spanning leaders charged with creating or implementing plans that require a focus on the bigger picture. The Forum helps leaders connect the dots across complex and sometimes competing systems, goals, services, plans, and partners.
- **[Improving & Aligning Policies](#)**: The Forum helps policymakers, funders, advocates, and rising leaders increase their capacity by aligning with other advocates, departments, sectors, and levels of government to use data and evidence to advance policies that support the whole child and pursue racial and social equity.

To further these three strategic approaches, the Forum is the organizational home to:

Technical Assistance & Action Centers

- **[The David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality](#)** builds the capacity of public and private agencies to implement quality improvement and performance systems that simultaneously foster professional learning and whole-child development with the purpose of improving social sector outcomes. The Weikart Center's research-based core products and services are currently used in over 4,800 out-of-school time settings nationally and form the basis for quality improvement systems in over 140 publicly and privately funded systems. Supporting over 408,000 children and youth, the Weikart Center empowers education and human service leaders to adapt, implement, and scale best-in-class, research-validated quality-improvement systems to advance child and youth development.
- **[Cross-Systems Consulting](#)** provides consultation, training, and technical assistance to systems leaders using a Positive Youth Development approach to systems change to co-design innovation

solutions for scale. Serving as a strategic thought partner, Cross-Systems Consulting engages state systems leaders to shape and strengthen youth development ecosystems to improve outcomes for children and youth. It hones systems leaders' ability to use data and gain insights across all outcomes, all systems, and all leaders, and then creates a strategy and roadmap for integrating solutions to maximize impact. Cross System Consulting leaders are innovative system leaders, helping public systems build broader partnerships, set bigger goals, use data better, and implement bolder strategies. They include:

- Public systems, multi-service agencies, and youth-serving organizations at the state level
- State governmental coordinating bodies
- Cross-sector partnerships, coalitions, and networks that support them

A notable initiative of the Forum's Cross-Systems Consulting is the [Building Ecosystems Statewide for Thriving Youth initiative](#) (BEST). Launched in Spring of 2024, BEST is a three-year, state-based cross-sector effort to facilitate cross-system collaboration to improve youth outcomes and build a more effective and nimble youth development ecosystem that provides opportunities for youth to thrive. Designed to engage and amplify the voices of people with lived experience, the initiative enables environments for true system alignment that comprehensively and equitably meets the needs of youth and their families.

Networks & Initiatives

- [Children's Cabinet Networks](#) bring together federal, state, and local leaders to assess and align government policies horizontally (across systems) and vertically (across levels of government). The Networks consist of the Local Children's Cabinet Network (in partnership with the Education Redesign Lab at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Children's Funding Project) and the State Children's Cabinet Network (in partnership with the National Governors Association). The Forum also works to support policy alignment at the federal level, for example, by partnering with the American Institutes for Research to provide technical assistance to the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (the federal government's current closest equivalent to a children's cabinet). Members of these networks share best practices and learn more about tools that focus on bringing efficiency and effectiveness to their efforts to improve outcomes for young people.
- [Opportunity Index](#) addresses and assists in distributing social and racial inequity in America, using equitable data to shift the narrative of opportunity and to reimagine the American Dream for all people, no matter their ZIP codes. The Opportunity Index measures opportunity across four different dimensions – economy, education, health, and community – and 20 different indicators that foster mobility at both the county and state levels, with PUMA data available.

For more information, please visit <http://www.forumfyi.org>.

LEADERSHIP

When the former CEO of the Forum departed from the organization in October 2024, previous Board member, [Judy Seltz](#), assumed the role of Interim President and CEO. Since that time, Judy and key members of the Board of Directors have played an active and strategic role in providing support for the organization and senior leadership team until a permanent CEO is named.

THE ROLE

The CEO provides overall leadership for the Forum and collaborates with its Board of Directors to establish strategic priorities. The CEO will work in partnership with the Board and the executive leadership team to set and execute long-range goals, strategic initiatives, plans, policies, and procedures that advance the Forum's mission.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CEO

Substantial opportunities await the new CEO. Specific opportunities and challenges include the following:

Center the Forum around its mission and strategic plan

In 2023 the Forum launched its strategic plan, [Stronger Systems. Stronger Youth](#). With recent changes in leadership and the organizational landscape, the next CEO will work with the Board and staff to evaluate the Forum's current strategic plan and ensure its goals align with the future direction of the organization. The plan will be deeply tied to a clear mission and vision for the Forum; it will be actionable, with specific metrics, and linked to resources; it will promote collaboration across programmatic units; and it will solidify a cohesive internal and external identity for the Forum. This planning and revisioning process will provide the opportunity for transparent communication, deep engagement, and relationship building that can have a lasting positive impact on the Forum.

Effectively build, support, and nurture a high-performing, collaborative, and diverse organization

The Forum has historically grown organically, encompassing a range of mission-focused activities that operated relatively independently. There have been recent efforts to unify these units and Forum staff seek greater opportunities to collaborate across the organization. The next CEO will continue efforts to bring together the Forum's staff, systems, and processes and ensure that the organization's internal culture is rooted in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging for all staff. As part of this process and ongoing organizational development, the next CEO will thoughtfully review the current organizational structure, staffing, and resources to identify opportunities for strengthening support for the organization.

Articulate clearly and persuasively the Forum’s work and value proposition

The Forum is a complex organization that includes a variety of technical assistance and action centers, networks, and initiatives. With multiple programmatic units, each with distinct goals and target audiences, a cohesive narrative that resonates across diverse stakeholder groups is vital to the organization’s success. The CEO will work to develop a compelling narrative that highlights the organization’s mission, vision, and impact on youth development while using clear and accessible language – ensuring consistent messaging across the organization and reinforcing the Forum’s identity.

Develop an effective and comprehensive strategy for sustainable resource development

The Forum’s \$8 million budget currently includes a mix of foundation and corporate grants, with most of the organization’s revenue derived from fee-for-service contracts. The breadth of the organization’s work provides a host of opportunities to secure additional resources. The next CEO will work to expand the organizations fee-for-service contracts, while strengthening philanthropic partnerships, and pursuing new funding sources. To be successful the CEO will rely on their strong business skills, an entrepreneurial approach, and the ability to set out a successful strategy to diversify revenue streams. Moreover, they will be a wise steward of organizational resources and be facile with budgeting, forecasting, and cash-flow analysis. The Forum boasts an incredibly strong and dedicated Board who will be excellent collaborators related to these efforts.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Forum seeks a passionate, collaborative, and accomplished leader as its next CEO—someone who is a dedicated advocate for young people and a driving force in advancing youth development. They will ensure that the Forum thrives and that all facets of the organization are well aligned with the Forum’s mission, overarching strategic direction, and organizational goals. While no one candidate will embody every quality, the Forum seeks candidates with many of the following qualifications and attributes:

- A strong commitment to preparing all children and youth for success in college, work, and life, coupled with the ability to clearly communicate the Forum’s unique value proposition.
- Proven senior-level/executive experience in areas such as youth development, education leadership, philanthropy, non-profit management, business, educational technology, public policy, workforce development, or other fields aligned with the Forum’s mission.
- Demonstrated evidence of inspirational and strategic leadership, with ability to inspire teams of subject matter experts and capability to drive effective change management in organizations of comparable complexity and scale.
- A track record of building, cultivating, and sustaining strong relationships with funders, partners, and other key external constituents.

- Experience developing and/or managing diverse revenue streams, including grants, donations, and fee-for-service income, to support organizational sustainability and growth.
- Extensive experience in fiscal, business, and operational management, with a history of responsible and effective financial oversight.
- Proficiency in leveraging data, benchmarking, and assessments to measure and enhance progress and impact.
- Demonstrated commitment to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion and integrating these principles into organizational culture, strategy, and operations; the ability to champion equity in today's dynamic environment by addressing systemic inequities and fostering an inclusive atmosphere that empowers diverse stakeholders.
- Outstanding written and oral communication skills, with the ability to foster excellent relationships, collaborations, and partnerships across diverse groups and constituencies.
- Proven expertise in leading teams and working effectively with a Board of Directors, including experience in recruiting, supporting, managing, and retaining a diverse and talented workforce.
- A thoughtful and supportive manager, coach, mentor, and collaborator.
- High emotional intelligence and the ability to connect authentically with a wide range of individuals, including young people.
- A confident, innovative, and entrepreneurial thinker with political savvy, creativity, and intellectual curiosity.

LOCATION

Exceptional candidates from all locations will be considered with a preference for having the CEO based in or actively available in Washington, DC.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, and applications (resume and cover letter) should be sent in confidence via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/forum-youth-investment/chief-executive-officer>.

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The Forum for Youth Investment is committed to creating a diverse work environment and is proud to be an Equal Opportunity Employer and drug-free workplace, and to comply with ADA regulations as applicable. All applicants are considered for all positions without regard to race, religion, color, sex, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, physical/mental disability, severe/morbid obesity, medical condition, military/veteran status, genetic information, marital status, ethnicity, alienage, or any other protected classification, in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws. We encourage individuals of all backgrounds to apply.

Isaacson, Miller and the Forum for Youth Investment are committed to creating an inclusive environment and welcome applications from candidates with disabilities. If you have any accommodation or access needs, we are happy to provide reasonable accommodations.