



The Ready by 21® Quality Improvement & Asset Building (Q&A) Challenge: An Opportunity for Three Southeast Communities to Take a Big Picture Approach to Tracking Quality in OST Programs

In cities and states throughout the country, dedicated and passionate leaders are seeking practical, evidence-based strategies for improving young peoples' readiness for college, work and life. Leaders are interested in bringing data-driven precision to their passion for improving youth well-being; unfortunately, progress is often hindered by rigid organizational boundaries, lack of coordination across providers, incomplete quality and performance data and limited know-how. This is particularly true in the out-of-school time (OST) sector where historically it has been difficult to measure, modify and manage aspects of youth program quality associated with positive developmental outcomes for youth.

The Ready by 21 National Partnership wants to remove these barriers and help leaders more efficiently and effectively answer key questions: How good are OST programs in my community? Are they efficiently organized to make a positive impact in the lives of the young people they serve? Two national partners and their local affiliates – United Way Worldwide and the National Collaboration for Youth – are intimately involved in OST programming and have a vested interest in building local capacity in this sector.

Thanks to generous support from Philip Morris USA, an Altria Company, the Partnership is pleased to announce the *Quality Improvement & Asset Building (Q&A) Challenge* – a research-based model designed to help communities systematically improve the quality of available OST programming to increase youth access to key developmental and learning experiences that help them build skills and reduce risky behaviors. The Ready by 21 Partnership will make three (3) competitive *Q&A Start-Up* awards available to mid-sized cities in the Southeast that are interested in deploying this intervention across a broad spectrum of youth serving organizations. Each *Q&A* community will receive training and technical assistance from the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, valued at \$15,000-\$20,000, to:

- build momentum and implement the Q&A Intervention in 10 pilot sites that serve youth age 10 and up;
- build capacity in a local intermediary organization to support the work; and
- work with local United Ways, school districts and/or public and private funders to develop a community-level plan to scale and sustain the Q&A Intervention.

Interested communities should visit <http://forumfyi.org/content/ready-21-quality-improvement-asset-building-qa-challenge> to learn more about the challenge and tools and register for one of two informational webinars on June 10th and 11th.

Applications (no more than 5 pages) are due Friday, June 18. Preference will be given to communities that have engaged funders, existing intermediary capacity to provide training and support to a range of providers, and a network of providers interested in quality improvement.

