



PATHWAYS TO PROGRESS: Setting the Stage for Impact

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About Equal Measure

Headquartered in Philadelphia, PA, Equal Measure provides evaluation and philanthropic services to social sector organizations. Our areas of focus include aligning systems for stronger outcomes, increasing access and opportunity, building human and social capital, strengthening community capacity, and elevating ideas for innovation. For 30 years, our clients have been major private, corporate, and community foundations, government agencies, and national and regional nonprofits. We have deep experience with initiatives that provide pathways for low- to moderate-income young adults to live better economic qualities of life, and have worked on an array of major national and regional programs for organizations such as the Citi Foundation, the Aspen Forum for Community Solutions, the James Irvine Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Lumina Foundation, the California Career Advancement Academies, and U.S. Department of Labor-funded grants in Wisconsin and the Northeast U.S.

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About the Equal Measure Portfolio Review and this Issue Brief

Through this three-year *Pathways to Progress* portfolio review, Equal Measure will provide a comprehensive narrative about the reach the Citi Foundation investment has had on youth, individual programs, and the grantee organizations. We also will examine how this investment fits within, and contributes to, the broader fields of youth-, leadership-, and 21st century workplace skills development.

In this inaugural portfolio review Issue Brief – the first in a series – we describe the Citi Foundation investment in the grantee organizations, early progress, and future areas of inquiry. For more information about this investment and the grantees, please visit:

Citi Foundation:

www.citifoundation.com

Points of Light:

www.pointsoflight.org/serviceworks

Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund:

www.cfefund.org/info/our-projects#summer-jobs-connect

Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship:

www.nfte.com

iMentor:

<https://imentor.org>

Management Leadership for Tomorrow:

www.ml4t.org/ascend

The Pathways to Progress Investment

In 2014, the Citi Foundation embarked on *Pathways to Progress*, a three-year, \$50 million commitment to help 100,000 low-income youth – ages 16 to 24 – develop the workplace skills and leadership experience necessary to compete in a 21st century economy. The Foundation launched the program in 10 U.S. cities: Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, Newark, St. Louis, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.

The Citi Foundation considered a number of factors in selecting grantee organizations. Investing in proven organizations, all of which have established networks of affiliates, partners, and programs across the country, gave the Citi Foundation confidence that they could bring programs to scale and benefit large numbers of youth.

Understanding that unique and customized employability and leadership development strategies work for different youth, the Citi Foundation is investing in four programmatic paths:

- Entrepreneurship
- Service/Leadership
- Mentorship 2.0
- Summer jobs

At the center of this strategy is a deep investment in a portfolio of grantee organizations:

- Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship
- Points of Light
- iMentor
- Management Leadership for Tomorrow
- Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund

To achieve the ambitious goal of reaching 100,000 low-income youth, the Foundation enacted a multi-tiered strategy that includes, in addition to the partners listed above, aligned and complementary national and local investments, including the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, the National Academy Foundation, and the National Association for Urban Debate Leagues.

We describe these pathways and strategies in greater detail, in *Table 1* (page 4).

FACTORS THE CITI FOUNDATION CONSIDERED IN SELECTING GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONS:

- Willingness to partner with the Foundation in developing and learning from the work
- Ability to expand their reach in the 10 cities
- Inclination to innovate
- Potential for national impact

Table 1: The Pathways to Progress Grantees

PATHS	ORGANIZATIONS	PROGRAMS	YOUTH IMPACT STRATEGY
Service/ Leadership	Points of Light	ServiceWorks	Uses community engagement and volunteer service to help underserved young adults (“Service Scholars”) develop the skills to prepare for college and careers
Summer Jobs	Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund	Summer Jobs Connect	Sets young people on the pathway to economic success through summer jobs, while providing them with targeted financial education and access to safe and affordable financial products
Entrepreneurship	Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship	Make Your Job	Empowers low-income youth to develop the entrepreneurial mindset and business skills to make their own job and succeed in the modern workplace
Mentorship 2.0	iMentor	iMentor	Builds mentoring relationships that empower students from low-income communities to graduate high school, succeed in college, and achieve their ambitions
	Management Leadership for Tomorrow	MLT Ascend	Provides comprehensive guidance and support from a network of mentors, all of whom are alumni of MLT programs, and a personalized career readiness roadmap, to ensure that low-income, first-generation minority college students graduate and are prepared for professional careers that lead to long-term employment and financial stability

Scaling Programs, Testing Innovations, and Disseminating Best Practices

The grantees are leveraging the Citi Foundation investment to scale proven program components, test innovative program models, and disseminate lessons to shape the field.

All grantees are implementing programs in multiple locations by leveraging existing networks of local affiliates and by building new partnerships to scale programs. All grantees are also testing new approaches and augmentations to programming, including adding online components, developing new curricula, and designing highly structured volunteer engagement initiatives with coaches and mentors. All are evaluating these efforts regularly to drive programmatic improvements and to capture lessons that can inform the field. For example, the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) is developing an Entrepreneurial Mindset Index to assess changes in students' non-cognitive abilities as they relate to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial behavior. This is an important index to inform their programming, but also has field-level implications. Similarly, iMentor has expanded its core metrics and associated youth and mentor surveys, which other mentoring stakeholders can adopt.

Management Leadership for Tomorrow (MLT) has developed the MLT Ascend Scholar Roadmap, identifying key success factors at critical stages of the undergraduate years to assist mentors ("coaches") in guiding students toward college graduation. Finally, Points of Light has implemented Efforts to Outcomes software across its ServiceWorks network, with the dual purpose of building internal capacity and increasing the rigor of research and evaluation to make the case for volunteerism and service in building 21st century skills.

Valuing innovation and learning, the Citi Foundation provides the grantees with opportunities to reshape and adjust their initiatives, applying lessons from the first year of implementation to shape their programs' subsequent years. The Foundation staff serves as thought partners in co-creating and shaping the grantees' strategies and programs, and engages in an "investment plus" approach to its investment.

INVESTMENT PLUS

The Citi Foundation investment moves well beyond simply contributing financial resources. The Citi Foundation encourages its employees to serve as volunteers for these grantee initiatives. Citi Foundation employees volunteered for 6,195 hours in 2014. In addition, the Foundation provides a significant communications platform – augmenting grantee organizations' efforts to share their impact with the field.

The Impact on Youth, Programs, Organizations, and the Field

The Citi Foundation has set explicit goals for this initiative, the foremost of which is to provide 21st century workplace and leadership development opportunities to 100,000 low-income youth.

In addition to directly impacting young people, the Foundation expects this investment to result in strengthened programs and organizational models for scaling and replicating promising strategies, and sharing solutions with the field.

Three Levels of Impact

1. YOUTH

Increased numbers of youth with 21st century workplace and leadership skills and experiences. Youth program experiences contribute to workplace success and leadership development by developing project management and non-cognitive skill development, building networks and social connections, connecting to the mainstream financial system, strengthening educational attitudes, goals and college aspirations and improving academic performance.

2. PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS

Improved program design and delivery, including strengthened curricula and continuous improvement processes; increased staff and training capacity; improved youth, mentor, and volunteer recruitment; strengthened partnerships; and expansion and replication of innovative practices.

3. SHARING PRACTICES AND SOLUTIONS

Increased spread, adoption, and adaptation of best practices and innovation programming; strengthened research and evidence of impact; shifts in organizational and public policies; and reallocation of public and private resources in support of emerging best and innovative practices.

All five *Pathways to Progress* grantees aim to achieve impact across these three levels, with differing levels of emphasis. For example:

- Beyond youth and volunteer impact, Points of Light's ServiceWorks initiative will test the ability of its 10-module curriculum to transfer 21st century leadership and workplace skills to youth across multiple sites and cities. The effort will continually consider curriculum and programmatic refinements to replicate the successful transfer of skills to youth on a large scale.
- iMentor is using an extensive set of core metrics it has developed to assess and inform its performance in four areas: 1) program execution, including mentor recruitment and retention, relationships with school partners, engagement with the iMentor curriculum, pair support, promoting enrichment opportunities, and facilitating academic goal setting; 2) short-term outcomes, including establishing mentee-mentor relationships, non-cognitive skill development, college aspirations and college knowledge; 3) long-term outcomes for high school graduation, college enrollment, and college persistence; and 4) college completion as a means to a job.
- The Cities for Financial Empowerment (CFE) Fund is developing a national summer youth employment model, Summer Jobs Connect (SJC), to provide financial empowerment programs to low-income young adults. The CFE Fund is using SJC to test options for guiding youth to safe and affordable banking services, and to receive pay by direct deposit, and for integrating financial education into summer youth employment programs. The CFE Fund also is using SJC to demonstrate larger, field-level opportunities for building financial empowerment into municipal systems to increase efficiencies.

Progress to Date: Grantees Hit the Ground Running

The grantees ramped up quickly in 2014, serving more students, launching new sites, and developing and testing new programming models.

YOUTH IMPACT

In 2014, the overall investment provided nearly 25,000 youth with opportunities to develop their leadership and 21st century skills, and is on track to meet its stated goal of 100,000 youth by 2017. Several organizations used their first-year engagement opportunities to solicit youth input into program design and delivery. For example, the CFE Fund's Summer Jobs Connect program collected baseline information from youth participants about their banking experience, knowledge, and interests. SJC plans to use this data to inform its financial education programs in the subsequent grant year.

PROGRAM AND ORGANIZATION IMPACT

All grantees have applied implementation lessons from this first year to refine programming. These alterations include curriculum revisions, additional training and support for mentors and coaches, and strategies for taking advantage of intervention opportunities with the youth. For instance, MLT identified a need for more consistent training of, and support to, its coaches, who are located across the country. The MLT Ascend Coach Resource Center was developed as an online hub for curriculum updates, monthly coach guides, and a host of academic, financial aid, and career development resources available at nearly 100 colleges.

Grantees also learned from implementation challenges, as they launched or expanded programs. The CFE Fund and iMentor experienced the challenges of operating within large infrastructures that have their own cultures and processes, such as municipal governments and schools.

The grantees learned some important lessons about scaling their programs and working with local sites. As a result, the grantees are developing strategies to:

- Assess site capacity, and provide appropriate training and technical assistance, and
- Facilitate more effective and efficient communication across local sites (e.g., sharing best practices).

For example, NFTE introduced a new component for 2015, the Citi Foundation Entrepreneurship Fellows Program (CFEP), which provides a paid work experience for NFTE alumni, while meeting capacity support needs across the NFTE summer sites with standardized program management, logistics, and mentoring support.

SHARING PRACTICES AND SOLUTIONS

The Citi Foundation and its grantees are sharing this knowledge with targeted audiences within their fields. The Citi Foundation, along with Opportunity Nation and Measure of America, recently published *Connecting Youth and Strengthening Communities*, which explores the data behind civic engagement and economic opportunity. NFTE, the CFE Fund, and Points of Light participated at the National Opportunity Nation Summit and presented on their respective programs. Additionally an MLT Ascend Program coach and Career Prep program alumnus spoke at one of the plenary sessions. Following the summit, the CFE Fund released a White Paper on the first year of the Summer Jobs Connect Program at the President's Advisory Council on Financial Capability for Young Americans meeting hosted at the White House. iMentor presented lessons about mentor recruitment and retention at the National Mentor Summit, and is presenting on evaluation strategies for college access and success organizations at the National College Access Network conference in spring 2015.

The Future: Pathways to Progress in Year 2

In Year 2, the grantees plan to draw from their Year 1 experiences to make changes to service design and delivery, improve local site management, increase the scale of youth served, and continue to evaluate and communicate the lessons learned through this investment.

As these grantees continue to innovate, test, grow, and evaluate their programming, we will examine and share the story of their impact – on the youth served, on their program models, on their organizational ability to scale and spread their impact, and on the broader youth development field.

To do so, we will focus the next two years of our portfolio review on the following questions:

AREAS OF IMPACT	FUTURE AREAS OF INQUIRY
YOUTH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 How has this investment provided pathways for youth to develop workplace skills, leadership experience, and financial empowerment behavior change (e.g., volume of programs/local sites providing opportunities, diversity of models)?
PROGRAM AND ORGANIZATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 How has this investment affected the design and implementation of the programs to strengthen organizations’ abilities to affect more youth? 2 What can be learned from this investment about the design and scaling of programs to provide low-income youth opportunities to develop workforce skills and leadership experience?
SHARING PRACTICES AND SOLUTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 What influence is this investment having on the field (e.g., how has it influenced Citi Foundation peers and other philanthropies in terms of investing in scaling? What is the take-up and spread of some of the programmatic lessons within the field? Any policy impacts?)