Transition to Adulthood: Roundtable Discussions on Practice and Policy

June 21, 2011
9:00am – 3:30pm
Capitol Hill Holiday Inn
550 C Street, SW
Washington, DC

This event will feature four sessions regarding different aspects of the transition to adulthood. Each session will begin with brief opening remarks from panelists, followed by a moderated conversation among the panelists, and then the floor will be open to questions from the audience.

9:00am  Welcome and Introduction
Betsy Brand, American Youth Policy Forum
Lauren Moore, The Future of Children

9:15-10:30am  The Changing Nature of Young Adulthood
Panelists: Frank Furstenberg, University of Pennsylvania; Gordon Berlin, MDRC; Simran Sidhu, YouthBuild Philadelphia
Moderator: Betsy Brand, AYPF

This session will provide an introduction to the Transition to Adulthood Network and explanation of the changes in how young people are transitioning to adulthood. The process of becoming an adult is more gradual and varied than it was a half a century ago, and the policies, programs, and institutions that served young adults then are no longer effective. The new schedule of adulthood has complicated family formation itself, particularly for the less-advantaged, and there are significant differences between income levels in how the transition occurs.

10:30am  Break

10:45am-12:00pm  Programs and Policies to Assist High School Dropouts in the Transition to Adulthood
Panelists: Dan Bloom, MDRC; Jack Wuest, Alternative Schools Network; Linda Harris, Center for Law and Social Policy
Moderator: Jean Rhodes, University of Massachusetts

This session will present an overview of the research-supported best practices in programs to reconnect high school dropouts to education and employment training opportunities. It will also allow panelists to discuss the roles that federal, state, and local governments can play in supporting the creation and expansion of successful programs.

12noon  Networking Lunch

Seated Lunch. Vegetarian options are available upon request.
12:45- 2:00pm  Young Adults and Higher Education: Barriers and Breakthroughs to Success
Panelists: Tom Brock, MDRC; George Gabriel, Northern Virginia Community College; Vivian Vazquez, Youth Development Institute
Moderator: Mary Waters, Harvard University

Although access to higher education has increased over the past forty years, student success in college as measured by persistence and degree attainment has not improved. Research has pointed us to areas of high impact, including remedial education, student support services, and financial aid. Presentations and discussion will discuss the effectiveness of these interventions and their implications for the federal government’s investment in higher education.

2:00pm  Break

2:15- 3:30pm  Vulnerable Populations and the Transition to Adulthood
Mark Courtney, University of Chicago; Molly Baldwin, ROCA, Inc.; Leslie Boissiere, White House Council on Community Solutions
Moderator: Jennifer Lerner, AYPF

The final session will focus on vulnerable populations (i.e. youth in the criminal justice, juvenile justice, social service, mental health, health care, and special education systems) and the necessary reforms to serve these populations. It will also explore how these reforms can benefit all youth-serving systems through an emphasis on coordination of services and systems.

3:30pm  Closing Remarks
Jennifer Lerner, AYPF

A webcast of this event will be available online at:

This event is sponsored by The Future of Children, a collaboration of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and the Brookings Institution.

Support for this event also provided by the Youth Transition Funders Group, a network of grantmakers whose mission is to help all youth make a successful transition to adulthood by age 25.

The American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF), a nonprofit, nonpartisan professional development organization based in Washington, DC, provides learning opportunities for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers working on youth and education issues at the national, state, and local levels.