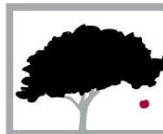


Impact Report

May 2011



NEVADA
PUBLIC
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

READY FOR LIFE®

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Introduction

As a statewide intermediary organization, Nevada Public Education Foundation:

- **Connects** schools, communities, government agencies, workplace partners, non-profits and youth organizations to improve outcomes for youth.
- **Convenes** local, regional and statewide organizations doing similar work to maximize resources and impact.
- **Measures and improves** programs and services.
- **Sustains** work by organizing public and private support and ensuring young people receive the education and resources they need to become productive, contributing members of society.

Our History

The Nevada Public Education Foundation (NPEF) was created in state statute in 1991 and, as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees and funded by grants and donations. In 2003, NPEF gained traction on the high school dropout issue in Nevada. When a statewide education needs assessment was conducted by NPEF in 2004 to determine where to focus efforts, it became clear that too many youth were leaving high school without graduating. In response, the NPEF Board of Trustees committed to focusing on helping youth become “ready for life” through successful transitions at each developmental stage during their educational careers in Nevada and beyond.

After more research and in collaboration with a steering committee of community leaders and stakeholders, NPEF launched Ready for Life™ in 2005, which quickly became a viable movement under NPEF’s visionary leadership. Established first in Southern Nevada, Ready for Life (RFL) expanded statewide in 2007, bolstered by funding allocated by the 2007 Nevada State Legislature. The funding was matched 100 percent by NPEF to build and expand Ready for Life, fund local RFL collaboratives, and develop an online statewide resource map of youth services and programs.

NPEF AT A GLANCE

Our Vision:

- All youth are educated and ready to learn.
- All youth are experienced and ready for careers.
- All youth are connected to adults, peers, and educational services.
- All youth are confident and ready for life.
- A connected, operational infrastructure supports youth success.

Our Mission:

To secure and sustain resources that will assist, support and promote excellence in public education programs in Nevada.

Our Role:

Champion quality education for Nevada’s youth.

NPEF keeps the key issues at the forefront, by connecting educators and service providers to current information, best practices and models for replication.

Be a catalyst for change.

NPEF focuses on results for educating youth, not specific types of services, and is able to leverage resources and partnerships and drive changes in services to create better results.

Facilitate collaboration.

NPEF works across disciplines and acts as the “glue” to convene and connect service providers around the key issues impacting youth.

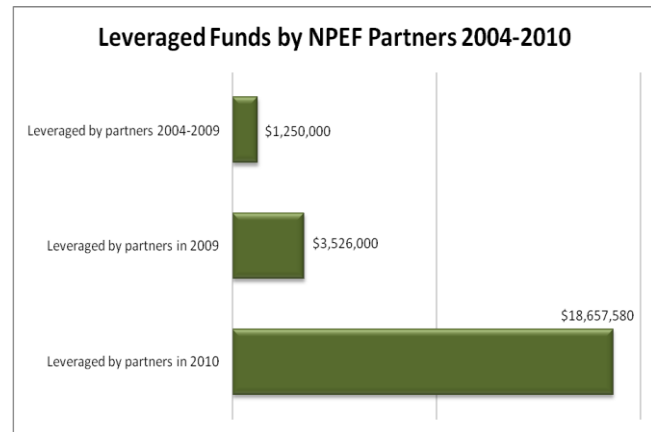
Promote shared accountability.

NPEF collects and measures the results of our work and investments in an effort to track progress, reflect on the direction of priorities and improve programs and services.

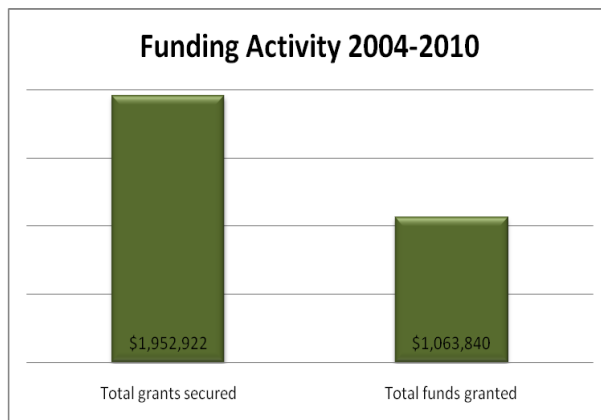
Our Initiatives

Ready for Life™

Ready for Life is a collaborative movement through which public and private organizations serving Nevada's youth can partner to employ concrete strategies that will improve outcomes for youth and increase the likelihood that students are college and career ready. NPEF facilitates RFL efforts in Clark, Churchill, Esmeralda, Lyon, Nye, Storey and Washoe counties. With established RFL efforts, Clark, Churchill and Washoe counties have secured funding by leveraging the knowledge and planning of the larger effort. Between the years 2004-2010, **almost \$23.5 million was leveraged by RFL partners** to serve youth in our communities. In the past year alone, our partners across Nevada leveraged over \$18.65 million to support shared goals, as a result of the connections developed via Ready for Life.



Ready for Life brings together resources to address both academic and non-academic barriers to student success. Since its inception, the momentum surrounding RFL has resulted in a groundswell of support in a variety of sectors across the state for connecting youth to education, to the workforce and to society.



Grant Programs

Over the past six years, NPEF secured nearly \$2 million in grants and donations from public and private sources, awarding more than half of that in grants and seed funding. NPEF partners with Nevada Community Foundation, Wells Fargo, USA Funds, and other private foundations to make grants that support education throughout Nevada, helping students become college and career ready. Since 2005, NPEF has granted out **over \$1 million through the grant programs, impacting more than 105,000 students.**

Advancing Knowledge and Innovation

NPEF translates the resources acquired from our participation in national networks to improve policy and practice in Nevada. In this role, NPEF has been able to contribute to policy that positively impacts multiple systems. For example, RFL partnerships played a key role in getting 2007 Senate Bill 312 introduced and signed into law, providing credit-deficient students with new alternatives to attain the credits necessary for high school graduation.

Issues Facing Our Youth

Education and Graduation

- Nevada ranks last among states for high school graduation rates.
 - In 2008, 34 of the 72 high schools were reported as “dropout factories” – a high school in which less than 60 percent of the students who start as freshmen make it to their senior year.
 - In 2009, Nevada decreased the number of these high schools from 34 to 28.
- In 2010, Nevada’s fourth and eighth graders placed no higher than 43rd in math or reading on any of the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exams.
- In 2010, only 26 percent of high school seniors and 11 percent of high school juniors took the SAT. Of that group, Nevada placed 35th nationally in critical reading, 39th in math and 40th in writing.
- Of the Nevada students who took the ACT in 2010, only 25 percent met all of the benchmark scores, meaning that 75 percent of those who took the ACT are likely to earn a “D” grade or lower in their college level classes of English Composition, Algebra, Social Sciences and Biology.

Employment

- About 63 percent of the 46.8 million job openings created by 2018 will require workers with at least some college education.
- Thirteen percent of Nevada teens are not attending school or working, compared to the national average of eight percent. This is the highest state percentage in the United States.
- Of Nevada’s young people age 18-24, 22 percent are not attending school, not working and have no degree beyond high school, compared to 16 percent nationwide. This state percentage has increased four percent in the past year.

Teen Parenting

- Twenty-seven percent of Nevada females are at risk for becoming teen mothers. In 2010, Nevada had the second highest teenage pregnancy rate in the country, with 90 teenage pregnancies per 1,000 or 7,900 births to teen parents.
- The average annual cost associated with a child born to a mother 17 or younger in Nevada is \$3,040. Included in this cost are: public health care, child welfare, incarceration, lost tax revenue, and decreased earnings and spending capacity. **In 2010, this equated to \$24 million.**

Disconnected Youth

In “*Connected by 25: Improving the Life Chances of the Country’s Most Vulnerable 14-24 Year Olds*,” Wald and Martinez at Stanford University explored the individual, societal and economic costs related to unsuccessful transitions from youth into adulthood. Their research makes the case that, if an individual has not successfully connected to the job market and does not have a strong connection to a social support network by age 25, negative consequences will likely emerge.

According to Wald and Martinez, “disconnected” youth typically fall into one or more of the categories:

1. Youth who do not complete or drop out of high school.
2. Youth deeply involved in the juvenile justice system.
3. Youth who are pregnant or parenting.
4. Youth who have experienced foster care placement.

As individuals that are “disconnected” grow older, they will most likely live a significant portion of their life in poverty, either unemployed or marginally employed. (D. Besharov, *America’s Disconnected Youth*, 1999).

Wald and Martinez at Stanford University advocate for a systematic and community-wide response to re-connecting these youth. “There needs to be a system that has responsibility for reaching out to those not making it, with adequate dedicated resources, in the same way that resources are provided for youth attending college.”

Issues Facing Our Youth

WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING... ON THE IDEAL SCHOOL

"The school that I would love to go to is one where when I walk up to the school, I don't see kids hanging out on the corner smoking or ditching. I want to walk into a classroom where we greet the teacher and the teacher is actually willing to help."

"I want the school to be a strict environment but also a learning environment."

"Teachers will tell you that whether you learn or not, they are still getting paid the same. I want teachers to be more like mentors. I want teachers to be there for you."

"It starts with the teachers. I want a safer place, a drug-free place, a gang-free place. If I had gone to a school like that, I would have been more comfortable. And if the teachers had been more motivated, I would have achieved more. I know there are kids that have people at home pushing them, but a lot of us didn't have that. You need somebody to do that for you."

Effect of Dropping Out

- Nevada's estimated 23,900 students that dropped out from the class of 2010 did so at great costs to themselves and to their communities. Cutting that number of dropouts in half for this single high school class could result in tremendous economic benefits to the state. Below are the contributions that these 11,950 "potential graduates" would likely make to Nevada's economy:
 - Earn as much as \$107 million more in an average year compared to their likely earnings without a high school diploma,
 - Spend an additional \$78 million during an average year,
 - Invest an additional \$30 million during an average year,
 - Purchase homes totaling in value as much as \$299 million more than what they otherwise would have spent without a diploma,
 - Spend up to an additional \$13 million in vehicle purchases during an average year,
 - Support as many as 700 new jobs and increase the gross state product by as much as \$131 million through spending,
 - Grow state tax revenues by as much as \$7.8 million during an average year, and
 - Pursue postsecondary education (45 percent).
- Had those who dropped out from the high school classes of 2009 and 2010 instead completed their studies and graduated, this group of students would have contributed to a lifetime of earnings of \$11.6 billion. This figure represents the **lost economic potential of almost \$6 billion with each class of dropouts.**

How We Respond

Acting Locally

To improve Nevada's success at engaging and graduating "ready for life" students and re-engaging those who prematurely left school, NPEF builds collaboratives in communities across Nevada that link:

- Educators,
- Government agencies,
- Non-profits,
- Youth serving organizations,
- Workforce development,
- Policy makers, and
- Business leaders.

"The situation prior to the Ready for Life movement was that the workforce, education, juvenile justice, and social services systems were duplicating services and not coordinating. In addition funds were not being coordinated or fully utilized. Nevada Public Education Foundation has helped to sustain the work, helped coordinate the monies in the systems and everyone is at the table in a holistic way."

- Senator Steven Horsford
Nevada Senate Majority Leader

Leading Statewide

Recognizing that multiple systems play a role in the overall success of our youth, NPEF has taken the lead in promoting a statewide action agenda and establishing a network for problem solving and communication across partners to leverage resources, remove barriers, and share information. NPEF facilitates planning and progress toward shared goals to ensure coordination, collaboration and joint accountability among state and community leaders. This action agenda reflects a unified vision and rallying point for a network of nearly 1,500 stakeholders.

Thinking Systemically

As an intermediary organization, NPEF provides statewide reach, visibility, and access to Nevada's publicly-managed system of education. We serve as a local and statewide facilitator, convener and advocate for promising innovations, help stakeholders navigate bureaucracies, forge partnerships, advance policy reforms and support on-the-ground assistance to seed promising and proven solutions and help them thrive. We coordinate the evaluation needed to identify and support the scaling of innovative, promising ideas that have the potential to transform outcomes in Nevada.

NPEF has the credibility, based on a history of success at achieving results, to catalyze partnerships between the government and nonprofits, businesses and philanthropists. **The Ready for Life: Our Shared Youth Vision statewide collaboration has been highlighted by the United States Department of Labor as one of five best practices nationally.**