INVESTING IN

gen z

Community Guide – **2012**

gen z

As we heard at the 27th Annual Emerging Issues Forum, for the one and a half million members of Generation Z in North Carolina, we must make smart investments now for their future success. We asked the more than 1200 Forum participants to submit their ideas for how they can better prepare Gen Z for the years ahead. From that emerged Eight Strategies for Investment, outlined on the next page.

In 2020, Generation Z will be the 18-30 year olds comprising the emerging core of our state's workforce. Gen Z looks and acts differently than past generations. They are the most ethnically diverse and technologically sophisticated generation in our state's history and, to date, they have shown far less inclination than their parents toward the traditional "American Dream" of a family, house and car in the suburbs.

Helping Gen Z realize its full potential is an investment in your community's future. As a group, Gen Z faces significant challenges even as their distinctive interests and youthful optimism create new opportunities for individual and collective progress. If North Carolina can make smart investments now, Generation Z, North Carolina, and its varied communities stand to reap the returns for decades to come.

GEN Z AND THE WORKFORCE

Gen Z should be taught the skills employers need while employers need to consider new ways to recruit and manage Gen Zers and they must create workplace cultures that take full advantage of Gen Z's attributes. In addition, it is clear that this generation is brimming with creative ideas and entrepreneurial ambitions. For many, the dream is to build an enterprise of their own.

GEN Z AND CONNECTIVITY

As the most connected generation yet, connectivity also plays a major role in the way Gen Z relates to its community. Today, communities can be defined more broadly than by physical terms, as technology eases physical barriers. This may impact the level of engagement in local communities, as Gen Z embraces causes abroad. Overall, Gen Z is less civically engaged than previous generations, but their desire to connect to online communities provides an opportunity to improve their social capital.

GEN Z AND WELLBEING

Unfortunately, Gen Z is facing considerable challenges to their overall wellbeing and quality of life. Their plugged-in culture often translates to less time outdoors, which could dampen the environmental preservationist movement if this generation does not value nature in ways previous generations have. Less time outdoors and more time in front of a screen also leads to a more sedentary lifestyle, increased rates of obesity, and early development of chronic diseases.

Strategies for Investment

These strategies are a starting point for what you can do in your community to support Gen Z. We hope this workbook will help you refine which strategies will work best for your community and its unique needs, and offer steps on how to move from strategy to collective action and, ultimately, impact.

1 **Rethink Standardize Testing**

Many assessments test facts and skills without requiring students to apply what they know and can do in real-life situations. We should move from a standardized testing teaching approach to a style that incorporates more creativity and adaptability.

2 **Cultivate Mentorships**

Gen Z comes to the workforce a wide set of new skills. Older employees can benefit from the connectivity, flexibility and creativity that are unique to this generation. We should encourage two-way intergenerational mentorships and interactions.

3 **Emphasize Public Speaking and Conflict Management Skills**

Enterprises around the world are beginning to recognize that they need to make sure their employees have mastered people skills. These skills are increasingly valuable in the workplace and society more broadly. Greater emphasis should be placed on their development.

4 **Invest in Technology**

Technology is integrated in this generation's DNA, yet classrooms are only beginning to understand how to best incorporate technology into education in order to fully embrace its potential. We should use technology in interesting, innovative ways to deliver education curricula.

5 **Entrepreneurial Education**

Generation Z will likely be more entrepreneurial than past generations. We need to include business and entrepreneurial skills in school curricula in order to equip students with a background in that area, making entrepreneurship less of an idea and more of a viable possibility for those students.

6 **Universal Broadband Access**

Broadband allows Gen Z access to distance education, the opportunity to set up entrepreneurial enterprises that can compete alongside large businesses and a way for friends and families to stay in touch with one another. We need to Increase access to affordable broadband across the state.

7 **Promote Service Learning**

Healthy communities depend on residents that participate in civic life. Civic engagement is instrumental in building community awareness, teaching tolerance and cultivating socially conscious young people. Service learning should be integrated into K-20 education.

8 **Teach Risk-Taking**

The economy in which Generation Z finds itself is one of the hardest in many years. We must teach our youth to look for opportunities and that failure in pursuit of them is a learning opportunity and "badge of honor," not a stigma to avoid at all costs.

GENERATION Z

TECH SAVVY

75% of Gen Zers use social media.
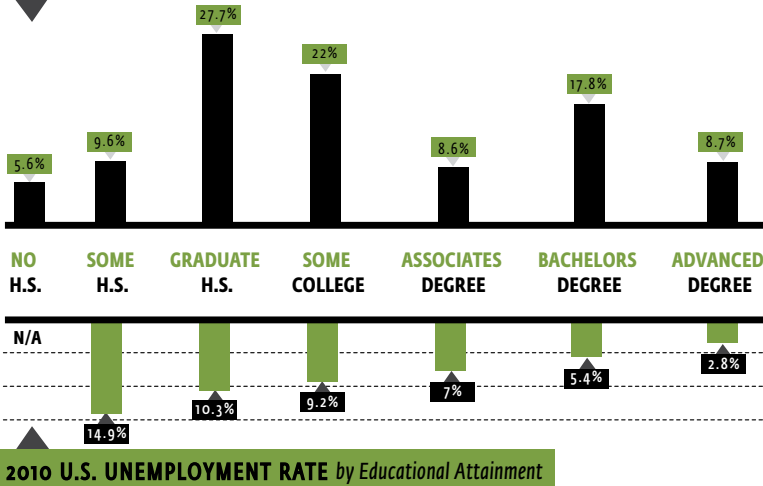
GLOBALLY AWARE

The number of young people that have volunteered abroad **increased 144%** over the past decade.

DIVERSE

Minority youth increased **more than three times** the rate of white youth in NC over the past decade

GENERATION Z IN THE WORKFORCE

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT *in North Carolina*

NO H.S.	SOME H.S.	GRADUATE H.S.	SOME COLLEGE	ASSOCIATES DEGREE	BACHELORS DEGREE	ADVANCED DEGREE
5.6%	9.6%	27.7%	22%	8.6%	17.8%	8.7%

2010 U.S. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE *by Educational Attainment*

N/A

| | 14.9% | 10.3% | 9.2% | 7% | 5.4% | 2.8% |

ASSOCIATES DEGREE
25-34 year olds

38.5%	N. CAROLINA
44%	VIRGINIA
35.7%	S. CAROLINA
35.7%	GEORIGA
39%	UNITED STATES

COMMON US JOBS
without higher education

CUSTOMER SERVICE	$31,685
OFFICE CLERK	$29,410
MAINTENANCE	$27,890
RETAIL SALES	$24,223
HOME HEALTH AIDE	$22,163

GENERATION Z AND CONNECTIVITY
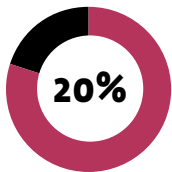
20% POSTED A VIDEO ONLINE
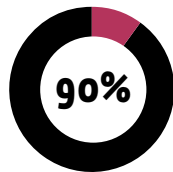
90% USED INTERNET
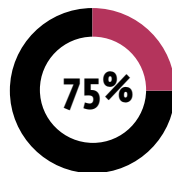
75% USED SOCIAL MEDIA
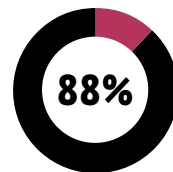
88% USED CELL PHONE TO TEXT

GENERATION Z *Ages 9-21*

GENERATION X *Ages 32-47*

BABY BOOMERS *Ages 48-66*

GEN Z COMPARED TO BABY BOOMERS

Generation Z ▪ Baby Boomers

80% **51%**
TEXTED IN THE PAST 24 HOURS

41% **13%**
HAVE A CELL PHONE WITH NO LANDLINE

20 **5**
AVERAGE TEXTS PER HOUR

55% **37%**
CHECK SOCIAL MEDIA AT LEAST ONCE A DAY

GENERATION Z AND WELL BEING

DO YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE IN GOOD HEALTH?
GEN Z THINKS: 84% YES 16% NO

LIFE EXPECTANCY

77

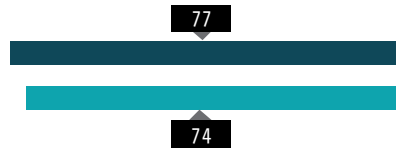**PARENTS**

GEN Z

74

INSURED

76%

92%

52% of Gen Z say that they play video games at least three hours on a Saturday or Sunday.

29% of Gen Z get eight or more hours of sleep on an average school night.

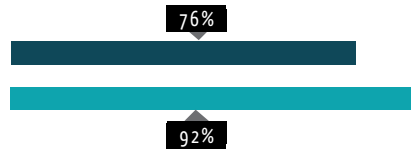## Gen Z in Your Community

Gen Z experts in your community

places that are important to Gen Z

Gen Zers you know in your community

challenges Gen Z faces in your community

Gen Z services and organizations

Gen Z opportunities in your community

community
challenges

Before you can start to work on innovative solutions for your community, first you need to understand the challenges you're up against. You probably have a good idea already about the challenges facing your community, but we encourage you to take a step further. Maybe you will learn of new issues you weren't aware of, or better understand the causes or impact of a challenge that already concerns you. Understanding the challenge, and how it affects the people of your community, will help you arrive at more targeted solutions that more directly address the problem at hand.

Understanding Through Data

The first way to better understand challenges is to look at the facts, or data, for your community. We've included some information on Gen Z in the workforce, their wellbeing, and increased connectivity to get you started, but how are some of these issues playing out in your community? Luckily, there are many resources available to help you, including the IEI website www.emergingissues.org. Here are a few others to get you started:

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- Chamber of Commerce
- County Commissioner's Office
- County Health Department
- Local Newspaper

Understanding Through Stories

Data helps make information clear, but it doesn't always give you the complete picture of what is actually happening, or how the issues is affecting members of your community. One way to fill in the gaps is by listening — listening to your colleagues, friends, neighbors and fellow citizens. They can tell you first hand about how the problem is affecting them, how they see it and how they think you might be able to help. These stories, combined with any data you've collected, will give you a complete picture of your community's challenges.

ORGANIZATIONS

- Organizations
- The Rural Center
- North Carolina 4-H
- Youth Empowered Solutions

FINDING STORIES

- Interview fellow citizens
- Observe Gen Z
- Read the local news

2 *Understanding the Opportunities*

At IEI, we believe that within every emerging issue lies an opportunity. What opportunities does Generation Z offer to your community? Now that you have a better grasp of the challenges before you, now take some time to think how you can build on your community's assets to turn these challenges into opportunities for Gen Z — and your community — to thrive.

INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY ASSETS

skills, talents, experiences, leadership, networking, that you and your team posses

INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNITY ASSETS

churches, colleges, police/fire departments, hospitals, libraries, schools, etc.

GOVERNMENTAL COMMUNITY ASSETS

local government, bureaus, military facilities, small business administrations, etc.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNITY ASSETS

small and large businesses, community centers, clubs, media outlets, non-profits, etc.

PHYSICAL COMMUNITY ASSETS

utility companies, parks and recreational facilities, chamber of commerce, etc.

CULTURAL COMMUNITY ASSETS

historic/arts councils, cultural affair councils, tourism, museums, city council, etc.

3 *Open Your Mind*

You might already have an idea of which of the eight strategies for investment you think your community should focus on, but don't decide quite yet. Take some time to answer the questions below, about how Gen Z is really affecting your community. You might be surprised at your answers, and how they may shift your perspective on the issues at hand.

We are spending quite a bit of time talking about Gen Z, but we're also concerned with how this generation impacts others. *Who are the stakeholders affected by Gen Z, other than youth themselves? How are they affected positively or negatively?*

Gen Z is literally and figuratively the future of our state, and has the power to transform your community. *What are the opportunities for your community to succeed if we adequately prepare Gen Z for their future? What will happen if we fail?*

Sometimes the best answers can come from unlikely places. The health industry turned to designers to find a way to remind people to take their medication, the scientific method has been used to solve problems in all sorts of other fields. *What strategies or innovations related to other issues and disciplines are worth exploring for new solutions?*

Challenge Statement

Now that you have a firm grasp on how the issues related to Generation Z are impacting your community,it is time to focus on what exactly what you would like to tackle. Use the template below to write the challenge statement you want to address through your work.

Members of Generation Z need a way to

_____

_____

_____

Gen Z need or interest

but unfortunately this need is not met because of

_____

_____

_____

challenge insight

SHARE WITH IEI: Send this statement to us, we'd love to know what you're up to!

generating innovative ideas

Now that you are aware of the Gen Z is up against, start to evaluate what actions you can take in your own community to make a difference. You may already belong to an organization that focuses on these issues, or perhaps you are looking to branch out to cover new ground. Your starting point should be the people in your community that are impacted by a challenge. Keeping your work "citizen-centered" will ensure that your solutions, and your work in identifying your challenge, will be working towards one major goal: improving the lives of the people in your community.

1 Generate Ideas

Write down your ideas for addressing the challenges facing Generation Z in your community. Take time to examine the problem and the opportunities from different perspectives. This will allow you to think about the problem in new ways, address different audiences, and arrive at more comprehensive solutions.

ideas that impact business owners

ideas that impact under-served Gen Zers

ideas that will still be relevant in 20 years

ideas that will connect people in my community

ideas that could create a new industry

ideas that could start happening tomorrow

YOUR BEST IDEA

2 *Get Feedback*

It's time to share your best idea and hear what others think of it. This step is important — it allows you to see if you're on the right track, refine your idea, and make it better. Try to get feedback from different sources to gather a wide range of perspectives.

IN SMALL GROUPS

If you are in a community group or organization, get into small groups of 3-5 and go around sharing your ideas. Provide feedback and suggestions on how to improve the idea to make it more innovative. This isn't about getting into details but more about creating an effective and feasible concept.

the pros of this idea

FROM COLLEAGUES

If you are working on this solo, make sure you share your idea in it's infant stages to get insight from colleagues and friends. Send out an e-mail, take an old co-worker to lunch, or even post on Facebook. Make sure you are objective and point out places that you are uncertain or have doubts on. This will be where people can help you the most!

the cons of this idea

YOUR REFINED IDEA

3 *Rate Ideas*

You may or may not think the ideas you come up with are all good and worth pursuing, or you may think they're great and don't know where to start. Use the matrix below to help you start setting your priorities. All things considered, it would be best to focus attention on initiatives that can have a high impact, and are relatively easy to implement.

how feasible is this idea?

1: NOT FEASIBLE   **5: VERY FEASIBLE**

how effective is this idea?

1: NOT EFFECTIVE   **5: VERY EFFECTIVE**

Rating your Group's Ideas

As a group, re-create this chart below on a white board or large sheet of paper. Have everyone write their best idea on a post-it note. As a team, discuss each idea to understand where it falls on this grid.

	HIGH EFFECTIVENESS	**LOW EFFECTIVENESS**
HIGH FEASIBILITY		
LOW FEASIBILITY		

4 *Idea Statement*

Use the template below to articulate your idea. Use the prompts to explain why your idea will achieve the desired results, and why others should support it.

This idea can be summarized as:

_____

_____

This idea will help Generation Z with

_____

Gen Z's needs

It is innovative because

_____

_____

It is effective because

_____

_____

It is feasible because

_____

_____

preparing for success

So many good ideas don't go anywhere, often times because people just don't know where to start. Use the following pages to put together a plan for how you will take action in your community and see your idea through to fruition. It is okay if you don't have all the answers right away, but at least you can start preparing for the future success of your project.

1 *Action Plan*

By now, you have examined the challenge from many sides, thought about what it would take to address the issue, and identified some ways to move forward. Now take think about all the resources — time, money, people — it would take for your idea to come to fruition.

champions

Who are the key partners we need to help champion this idea?

capital

If this requires funding, where might we get it?

threats

What can stop this idea from happening?

IDEA

what else?

What else can you think of that this idea will need in order to be implemented?

existing assets

What assets could we build upon?

success

What would success look like?

2 *Your Team*

You're probably not thinking you're doing all this work on your own! Have each team member share their contact information, so you can stay connected throughout this process. Talk about how you will communicate: strictly by email? regular in person meetings? Using a project software like Basecamp?

NAME	TITLE & ORGANIZATION	CONTACT INFO

WHERE'S GEN Z? Make sure to include some Gen Zers on your team, even just as consultants so that they can give you feedback on your ideas and provide inspiration.

3 Goal Setting

It's easy to say something should be done, but it's a lot harder to actually do it. Take a moment to outline your goals for this project, to help keep you focused and committed. This workbook was your starting place, but it's up to you to see it through.

TEAM GOALS

In the next week....

In the next month.....

In the next three months....

In the next year.....

INDIVIDUAL GOALS

In the next week....

In the next month.....

In the next three months....

In the next year.....

4 *Getting Support*

It isn't easy to get a new project off the ground, sometimes you need a little help. This can be financial support, or offering additional resources you might not have at your disposal.

Funding Ideas

CROWD FUNDING WEBSITES

There are many websites now that allow you to post your idea and for others to donate to your cause. Depending on the project, one website may suit your needs over another. Here are few to look into:

Kickstarter - one of the most well-known crowd funding sites, but only accepts creative projects

Indiegogo - accepts any idea, but you have to compete against thousands of others. Be sure your project stands out from the rest.

Start Some Good - focuses on social entrepreneurship, and creating a network of supporters for an idea

GRANTS

Consider applying for a grant. If you look through the pages of this workbook, you already have a head start on filling out the application. Organizations like Greenleaf and BCBSNC often fund community projects. Be sure to look for organization whose mission most closely aligns with the goals of your project.

SPONSORS

Local business often benefit from projects that enhance a community. Consider approaching businesses in your area to sponsor your initiative or donate items that could help.

How IEI Can Help

The Institute for Emerging Issues is here to help your project succeed. Please contact us at emergingissues@ncsu.edu or 919-515-7741 and let us know what has you stuck, or how we might be able to help. Here are a few ways that we can help move your project along:

- **PUBLICITY**
  Let us know about what you're working on, and we're happy to share it. We may include your work in our newsletter, on our website, or on our Facebook and Twitter pages.

- **CONNECTIONS**
  As you work on your project, we'll be hearing from others across the state who may be working in similar fields. Or, we may know someone who can offer you insight or support and would be happy to connect you to a wider network.

Sharing your Success

Your work isn't done yet! We want you to share what you've been working on with people in your community and around the state. This can help you can additional support for your project, or encourage other communities to start their own initiative.

Learning From Each Other

Information is everywhere these days, it's easy to share and receive it. But sometimes it's hard to find the right avenues to reach the audience you want to listen to you. There are two main ways you can share your story: through more traditional media and marketing strategies, and harnessing the power of social media.

TRADITIONAL MARKETING

There are lots of ways you can help spread the word. Consider inviting a local newspaper to one of your meetings, or sending them an e-mail about what you've been working on. See if your local Chamber of Commerce, government, or school system distributes a newsletter that might run a piece about your work. Put up fliers in an area that gets a lot of traffic in your community, like the local coffee shop.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Consider starting a Twitter account or Facebook page for your project. Follow other organizations or people you think might be interested in your project. Post regularly as you move through the pages of the workbook, and plan for action. You can even start a simple blog on a service like Tumblr to document your success.

Sharing with IEI

You probably know best about how to reach out to members of your community, but we want to help you connect with other communities and individuals across the state. And of course, we want to hear how you're doing and how we can help. Send us e-mail updates at emergingissues@ncsu.edu as you move through this process. Below are a few ways we can help share your story.

NEWSLETTER AND SOCIAL MEDIA

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NETWORKING

IEI brings people together around the biggest challenges facing North Carolina. In any given year, this means thousands of people are engaged in our work. There might be a great opportunity for you to attend one of our events, or even present at one. Often, this leads to new connections that can give you a different perspective on your work or can help you with implementation of your project.