



**Elizabeth Gaines**, Program Manager  
[Elizabeth@forumfyi.org](mailto:Elizabeth@forumfyi.org)

Elizabeth Gaines is a Program Manager at the Forum for Youth Investment where she oversees the Forum's work related to state and local policy and manages the partnerships with national membership organizations such as the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Governors Association and KIDS COUNT.

Elizabeth joined the Forum in 2005. In her two years at the Forum Elizabeth has focused on building the Forum's relationships with both executive and legislative policy makers interested in improving youth policy and hopes to mark 2007 as the "Year of the Advocate". She has co-authored the YOUTH COUNT report, the *Adding It Up Guide to Developing a Children, Youth and Families Budget* and has created the Youth Policy Resource Center, an online resource tool.

Elizabeth has made advocating for youth the focus of much of her career, beginning with direct service efforts in community-based youth programs and advocacy work on the state and federal level. Over the years, she has led a diverse array of staff members and mobilized a significant number of volunteers. Her work has often centered on creating effective coalitions to drive change.

Prior to her work at the Forum, Elizabeth served as the volunteer coordinator for America Coming Together in Missouri. Prior to that work, Elizabeth was the youth policy analyst for Citizens for Missouri's Children (CMC), a nonpartisan child and youth advocacy organization. She lobbied extensively and convened a youth development network that made significant headway in creating systems change in the state of Missouri. While at CMC, she also authored the *Missouri Youth Development Policy Handbook* and contributed to an amicus brief, petitioning the U.S. Supreme Court regarding the Juvenile Death Penalty. Elizabeth also led the "Invest in Missouri's Children" Campaign, which secured tobacco settlement dollars for early childhood and youth development. She attributes her advocacy experience and inspiration to seven years living in Madison, Wisconsin, first as an AmeriCorps volunteer and then as the coordinator of a large after-school program.

Additionally, Elizabeth has worked in community development in South Africa and is currently the vice-president of the board of a newly developed nonprofit, One World Family. The organization is dedicated to improving the well-being of South African children affected by HIV/AIDS.

Elizabeth studied political science and African studies at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Committed to increasing the quality and quantity of youth investment and youth involvement in the United States, the Forum supports organizations and communities that invest in young people by promoting a "big picture" approach to planning, research, advocacy and policy development among the broad range of national organizations that help communities invest in children, youth and families. The Forum for Youth Investment is the core operating division of Impact Strategies, Inc. ISI is the legal entity created to house the Forum for Youth Investment, the Cady-Lee Meeting Center and future related endeavors.