



Merita Irby, Managing Director
Vice President, Impact Strategies, Inc.
Merita@forumfyi.org

Merita Irby is the Managing Director of the Forum for Youth Investment, which she co-founded in 1998 with Karen Pittman.

As Managing Director of the Forum, Merita is the leader of strategic planning and serves as a lead facilitator of Ready by 21 activities, from workshops and symposiums to ongoing learning groups. As a coach for Ready by 21 change makers, Merita works with key leaders from school districts, governmental departments, community collaboratives, and NGO's nationwide.

Merita began her career as a classroom teacher in Central America and inner-city schools in the United States. As a senior research associate at Stanford University, she worked on a five-year study of community-based urban youth organizations and co-authored *Urban Sanctuaries: Neighborhood Organizations in the Lives and Futures of Inner-City Youth*. Teaming up with Karen at the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, Merita directed a multi-site study on school collaboration with youth organizations. In 1995, she joined Karen in starting the President's Crime Prevention Council, chaired by Vice President Al Gore. Following the Prevention Council, Karen and Merita joined the International Youth Foundation charged with creating their Learning Department, facilitating learning among IYF's Global Partner Network and developing a U.S. strategy, which later gave rise to the Forum.

During her time at the Forum, Merita has also served on the boards and advisory committees for various organizations, including the American Camp Association and the Civic Mission of Schools.

Merita earned a Master in Public Policy from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

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.