



## Our Mission

Our mission is to make **civil dialogue, civic engagement, and leadership development** a predictable part of growing up for all young people ages 14 to 24.

## Who We Are

The **Center for Rising Generations (CRG)** at the Aspen Institute works to build opportunities for connection, learning, leading and impact, for young people ages 14 to 24.

Walk into any classroom, athletics team, or community meeting and you'll find young people already leading. The CRG works to ensure that leadership is recognized, resources, and built permanently into the institutions around them.

## Our Vision

A world where **youth leadership is built into the systems young people grow through, from schools to workplaces and civic life**, so every generation inherits more opportunity to lead than the one before it.

## Who We Serve

**Young people ages 14-24** across geography, race, ideology, and lived experience. We're committed to reaching young people who too often lack access to leadership opportunities.

The Center also works as a co-creator and collaborative partner to organizations and institutions building youth leadership into their own structures and systems.

## Our Role

Act as a catalyst for young people to lead. We build the connective tissue that makes opportunity, mentorship, networks, and resources findable and usable, and we stay alongside young people while they do the work of leading.

The CRG stands on the Aspen Institute's 75 year history of convening people across sectors, perspectives, and generations to wrestle with the biggest questions of the day. We're proving that this convening power works best when the people closest to today's challenges, the young people living them and building solutions are elevated and integrated directly into the conversation. That means bringing young people together with institutions, organizations, and seasoned leaders for real dialogue, collaboration, and shared creation.

Each year, that work comes to life through the CRG's two signature events: Aspen Ideas: Rising Generations and the Rising Generations Summit. Both are shaped by what young people say they want and need, and both are built to produce measurable action and impact, and commitments to carry back into their own communities.

We provide direct leadership opportunities of our own, through events and convenings like the Rising Generations Summit for 14 to 17 year olds and Aspen Ideas: Rising

Generations for 18 to 24 year olds and through the CRG Associates program, a one-year leadership program for early-career professionals. We also support partners and programs that run alongside groups like schools, teams, organizations, and institutions.

At the same time, we work inside systems so youth leadership becomes standard practice rather than a program that depends on the Center's continued presence.

- **Expand access:** Open real leadership opportunities to more young people, across geography, background, beliefs, and circumstances.
- **Institutionalize the model:** Embed youth leadership into the policies, practices, and infrastructure of the institutions young people already move through, so it outlasts any single program.

## Our Approach

Work across three interconnected pillars, each built to move youth leadership from a one-time experience, into embedded, institutional practice. That same connective work carries through all three, weaving in the relationships and support young people want.

### Civil Dialogue

The Center creates spaces where young people build the skills to listen, across differences in journeys and experiences, and articulate their own points of view. These conversations work best when they build a foundation of trust and respect. From there, people can truly hear and understand each other and find ways to work together toward positive impact in the world.

- **CONFUTURO**, Colombia. The Center partnered with Aspen Institute Colombia to pilot CONFUTURO, a three-day residential seminar outside Bogotá where adolescents explore autonomy, interdependence, and responsibility through Socratic dialogue and experiential learning.
- **Aspen Institute Seminars, Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center.** In partnership with Campaign Zero, the Center brought Socrates seminars to incarcerated youth, ages 13-20, at the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center. Grounded in a case study on leadership, participants stepped into the roles of characters facing a high stakes decision, wrestling with trust, courage, and what it means to lead as they prepared to return to their own communities.

### Civic Engagement

The Center for Rising Generations connects young people directly to the civic institutions and decisions that shape their lives, and works to build youth voice into how those systems operate. That means real seats at real decision making tables, with structures other institutions can study and model themselves.

- **BUILD WITH:** Organizations bring CRG a real problem they haven't been able to solve FOR young people, and we spend 12 weeks helping them to solve it WITH young people. Each engagement closes with a public showcase where the young people and the organization present what they built, and commit to what comes next.
- **The CRG Youth Advisory Council (YAC):** A standing body of young leaders who advise the Center's strategy directly, creating a blueprint for youth-informed leadership that institutions beyond the CRG can adopt as standard practice.

### Leadership Development

The Center for Rising Generations builds transformative experiences where young people gain the skills, networks, and momentum to lead now. The strongest of these work through networks young people already belong to, turning existing communities into engines for leadership.

- **Captains Leadership Academy:** In partnership with the Aspen Institute's Sports & Society Program, the Heisman Foundation, and IMG Academy, the Center launched the Captains Leadership Academy to develop high school team captains as community leaders. It activates one of the most influential youth networks in America from the inside.
- **Airplane Mode:** A series of in-person gatherings, designed by young people in third space community spaces like libraries and cafes to rooftops and parks. Young people curate a phones-away environment so participants can focus on real conversations about the topics their own communities are grappling with.

**CRG Programs:** CRG works across Aspen Institute youth-facing programs, including:



Let's rise together.

## How to Get Involved

CRG's work moves forward through partnership. You can get involved by:

- Partnering with us on programs, research, or convenings
- Investing in youth leadership through funding and collaboration.
- Opening doors for young people through opportunities, mentorship, and hiring.
- Amplifying youth voice and our work across your own networks.

If you believe young people are essential to shaping a stronger future, there is a place for you in this work.