

Action Greensboro
Attraction and Retention of Young Professionals Task Force
Action Plan

The Action Greensboro/Attraction and Retention of Young Professionals Task Force (ARYP) was formed to address the declining population and presence of young professionals in our community and the perception that Greensboro is not an enticing place for young professionals to begin their careers, as outlined in the McKinsey Report. The ARYP Task Force believes that talented young professionals are not only vital because they represent the future leadership of Greensboro, but also because they bring energy, enthusiasm and new ideas to our companies, organizations and communities. Young professionals must be attracted to the community and their skills must be developed and enhanced so they are equipped to lead the community successfully in the future. The loss of talented young people to rival communities does not bode well for Greensboro's future, and reversing this trend is an essential component of Action Greensboro's overarching goal of revitalizing our local economy and improving our community.

The ARYP Task Force solicited membership from across the community, including our universities, large corporations, governments, small businesses, and nonprofit and charitable organizations. Multiple public forums were held in an effort to capture the viewpoints and contributions of all aspects of our diverse community, including the diversity within the young professional population itself, and to obtain proposals for creating a more dynamic environment for young professionals. The Task Force hosted public forums specifically for young professionals to understand the issues that young professionals themselves deemed most significant, and met with the senior human resources managers of local corporations to understand what obstacles exist for those recruiting young professionals to Greensboro.

After compiling all of this information and hosting brainstorming sessions with the members of the full Task Force, several core themes emerged as those of central importance to young professionals. These themes include: (1) the creation of attractive employment opportunities; (2) the revitalization of downtown including the creation of an entertainment district; (3) the need to foster connectivity among young professionals and between young professionals and the Greensboro community; (4) the need to more fully integrate our universities and college students into the community; and (5) the need to improve our public education system. To address these core themes and to try to foster a community dynamic more attractive to young professionals, the Task Force proposes the following Action Plan.

I. Best Practices Research

A reporter/researcher was retained by the ARYP Task Force Steering Committee to begin studying the existing young professional groups and initiatives in other cities. The reporter identified some of the practices in cities that have been successful, but more research is needed. A written summary of the findings was provided to the Steering Committee, and was considered in connection with the initial research conducted by the 2000-2001 Leadership Greensboro class. All of this information will be provided to Action Greensboro for use in implementing initiatives.

II. Web site

The Depot and a Young Professionals group that originated at the Chamber are creating and maintaining Web sites that include information of interest to young professionals. The Web sites will include a thorough calendar of events to address the widely recognized need for a central source of activities information, and will include links to other Web sites of interest to young professionals.

III. Placement of ARYP Task Force Members on Other Action Greensboro Task Forces

In an effort to make sure all of the input collected by the ARYP Task Force during the public forums and brainstorming sessions is available to the five other Action Greensboro Task Forces, the ARYP Task Force has appointed a committee member to each of the other five Task Forces.

IV. Support for a Young Professionals Council

The ARYP Task Force convened a Young Professionals Council that is comprised of leaders of the various community organizations that target the 21-39 demographic group and provided this group with initial leadership to move forward successfully. To assure viability and to capitalize on the work that has been started by the young professionals group at the Chamber of Commerce, the ARYP Task Force recommends the following:

A. Young Professionals Council. The ARYP Task Force initially offered assistance to the Council as it seeks to forward the goals of young professionals in the community and assist new young professionals in connecting with the community. This Council will give members a chance to hear what services are available, where the gaps are, and will afford the opportunity to collaborate when there is duplication. After reviewing and assessing the best practices research and soliciting the input of members, the Council will decide which groups among its membership will:

- Sponsor and coordinate social activities for young professionals;
- Seek to further connections between young professionals and the greater Greensboro community;
- Recruit and include members of diverse backgrounds in Council organizations and implement initiatives that appeal to all members;
- Offer job prospecting and networking opportunities for young professionals;
- Establish and build upon relationships with the local universities and seek to integrate talented students into the Greensboro community prior to their graduation. The Council will encourage and recruit graduates to start their careers in the area and assist graduates in the job prospecting process. It will also help foster ties between Greensboro companies and the universities and help corporate recruiters identify suitable candidates;
- Host a back-to-school party for college students to integrate them into the young professionals community and to help promote Greensboro as a community that welcomes young people;
- Offer social and informational events for summer interns at local companies considering full-time positions in Greensboro;
- Continually monitor the changing needs of young professionals going forward and ensure that the strategies implemented to meet those needs remain current; and
- Develop other programs and events as determined by its membership to make the city more attractive to young professionals.

B. Full-Time Administrator. A full-time administrator should be hired to direct and coordinate the Council's activities, with initial funding for this position provided by Action Greensboro. Ideally, the administrator will direct the Council from an office at Action Greensboro, where the Council will continue its meetings and activities.

C. Business Plan. The ARYP Task Force will assist the groups represented on the Council as needed in developing and improving its business plan and model, and will assist with the formation of an advisory board composed of seasoned executives to offer guidance to the Council going forward. The goal will be for the Council to become a self-supporting organization funded through membership fees, grants and fund raising endeavors.

D. Business Round Tables. The ARYP Task Force, in an effort to integrate young professionals into the business community, foster entrepreneurship, and create mentoring relationships, will assist the Council in forming business round tables. In these round tables, seasoned executives, entrepreneurs and young professionals will meet periodically to discuss

business issues, career decisions and other issues of interest. The format for these round tables will be determined by those agreeing to participate, and will include persons of diverse backgrounds. The Council will oversee the implementation of these round tables, and the Task Force will assist with soliciting the commitment of executive participation.

V. Community Involvement.

In an effort to develop connectedness between young professionals and the Greensboro community and to ensure that the young professional perspective is being considered, the ARYP Task Force will assist the Council in the creation of a resource bank that collects and maintains skills and interests information about young professionals. This resource bank will be available to assist community leaders in finding young professionals when forming leadership boards and when seeking the young professional viewpoint. The Task Force will also solicit commitments from municipal and charitable boards and organizations to include young professionals in their membership.

VI. Downtown Entertainment District

The ARYP Task Force is strongly committed to supporting an initiative to help develop or contribute to the development of a downtown entertainment area or district. As the Action Greensboro Downtown Task Force moves forward with its initiatives, the ARYP Task Force will offer support and assistance as needed.

VII. Key Initiative

The ARYP Task Force would like to create or expand a particular event or idea with the goal of making the event or idea world class. The Task Force believes it is important that such an initiative is selected with care, with significant input from young professionals themselves. The Task Force is currently soliciting suggestions for such an event and is forming a committee that will explore ideas. Possibilities include making the Jazz Festival or Eastern Music Festival world class, offering support to the International Civil Rights Museum or Triad Stage, or hosting a specific athletic event that draws the world's most talented athletes. The newly formed Council would be an ideal think tank for such an initiative.