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Nashville After Zone Alliance Wins National ‘How Learning Happens’ Grant

*Community convening will focus on engaging youth, promoting equity, and inspiring action*

NASHVILLE, TENN.—The Nashville Public Library Foundation today announced that it has won a $30,000 grant from [America’s Promise Alliance](https://www.americaspromise.org), a national organization, to support a community convening by the Nashville After Zone Alliance to advance young people’s social, emotional, and cognitive development.

A nationally recognized partnership with Metro Nashville Public Schools, the mayor’s office, and more than 20 other youth-serving organizations, the Nashville After Zone Alliance (NAZA) is housed in the Nashville Public Library and supported by the Nashville Public Library Foundation.

In partnership with a Vanderbilt research team and community stakeholders, NAZA is developing a framework that will capture outcomes at the youth level to help the broader community cultivate opportunities for young people to develop skills in out-of-school settings, with tools, support services, and professional development.

The framework will be presented at the convening, and youth, families, and youth-serving professionals will recommend pathways for future action. The convening will focus on the conditions that need to be in place for young people to thrive and will launch a community effort designed to foster those conditions.

“The evidence base on how learning happens released lately further deepened our belief in our philosophy, and we are thrilled to be selected as one of the five conveners nationwide to facilitate a community dialogue about innovation in learning and active youth participation in shaping outcomes,” said Anna Harutyunyan, the chief executive of Nashville After Zone Alliance and the Nashville Public Library.

Based in Washington, America’s Promise Alliance awarded the grants to five organizations as part of its [How Learning Happens](https://www.americaspromise.org/howlearninghappens) work, which builds on multiple national and community-level efforts, including those of the Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development. The other winners are in Boston; Rochester, N.Y.; San Francisco; and Spartanburg, S.C.

“We are proud to lift up the work of these diverse organizations to advance our collective understanding about how learning happens and identify what is needed to help young people thrive in all areas of their lives,” said John Gomperts, president and CEO of America’s Promise Alliance. “The convenings are an intentional step to take these communities’ efforts to the next level and inspire connection among local partners while responding to their distinct equity needs and authentically engaging young people.”

America’s Promise will work closely with NAZA to provide connections to speakers, research, data, and examples and strategies that reflect a diverse body of knowledge and are matched to local interests and needs. America’s Promise also will prepare an after-action report that summarizes what was learned from the convenings. The Alliance received more than 150 applications for the grants, which will support the planning and execution of convenings through April 2020.

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**About the Nashville After Zone Alliance (NAZA)**

NAZA’s mission is to expand youth learning opportunities in out-of-school time to help them develop holistically, to reach their potential and to thrive in education, future career and life.

The Nashville Zone Alliance (NAZA) was established in 2009 by Nashville Mayor Karl Dean as a citywide out-of-school time (OST) system and part of Metro Government to increase equitable access to year-round out-of-school time (OST) learning opportunities for middle school youth by funding afterschool and summer programs and by providing capacity-building support through professional development, quality assurance, and technical assistance. NAZA is a partnership between the Nashville Public Library, Metro Nashville Public Schools, Mayor’s Office, and more than 20 youth-serving organizations that work collaboratively to provide engaging spaces where youth can cultivate positive relationships, develop life skills, inspire a love for learning, and feel empowered.