



## FUNDING THE NEXT GENERATION

The Nation's First Initiative to Promote Local Dedicated Funding  
for Children, Youth & Families

### What is Funding the Next Generation?

- This initiative provides technical support to cities and counties working to promote the well-being of children, youth and families through an increased distribution of public resources for needed services.
- Project strategies include conferences and learning communities, as well as site-level technical assistance aimed at strengthening coalitions and community leadership. The initiative has also developed tools for communities to utilize as they begin the process of developing a local funding stream, including a 65-page how-to manual.
- Funding the Next Generation was founded and is directed by Margaret Brodtkin, “mother” of San Francisco’s ground-breaking Children’s Fund, and a nationally-recognized advocate and policy leader with 40 years of experience. (See [www.margaretbrodtkin.com](http://www.margaretbrodtkin.com) for more information.)

### What are local dedicated funding streams and what can they accomplish?

- Dedicated funding streams are public funds that must be spent on a specified purpose (services for children, youth and families), and are created through ballot measures that either mandate a “carve out” of dollars from existing budgets or enhance revenue specifically for children’s services (e.g. sales taxes, parcel and property taxes, soda taxes, and a wide range of fees).
- Dedicated revenue streams provide flexible, sustainable funding for high priority needs of children, youth and families – such as preschool and early care, after-school, health, family support, youth development, and career preparation. They allow communities to focus on prevention and fill gaps that are not covered by state and federal funds.
- Local dedicated funding streams create opportunities for innovation, leveraging resources, and improved coordination, accountability and planning by local governments.
- San Francisco’s Children’s Fund, the nation’s largest fund, is now \$75 million annually, serves half of the city’s children, and has transformed the service delivery system. The services funded improve school readiness, increase school attendance, increase community safety, reduce family violence, and promote civic engagement of young people and parents.
- A growing number of communities are creating local dedicated funding streams for children, including 8 counties in Missouri which have special funds for children’s mental health; 8 counties in Florida which have independent Children’s Services Councils supported through local property taxes; Denver and San Antonio which have passed preschool measures through the ballot; and Oakland, Portland and most recently King County in Washington State which have also created special funding streams through the electoral process.

### Why do our country’s challenges and opportunities make now the right time?

- America’s children face a crisis – child poverty is increasing and the United States lags far behind its counterparts in the western industrialized world in the well-being of our children.
- The economy is recovering and local communities will have more resources, creating an imperative to distribute resources in a way that benefits all members of the next generation.



- The local level provides the brightest hope for new resources as federal and state options dwindle and the public is more supportive of expanding resources over which they have local control.
- There is increasing recognition of the importance of investing in children – from economists, demographers, experts in brain development, the military and many others.
- The public supports increased investments in children, as demonstrated by numerous polls that show that children are one of few issues that receive strong support across the political spectrum and have the potential to reduce polarization.

## What is the process of creating a local fund to support children’s services?

Funding the Next Generation was initiated in California and is based on experiences there, as well as observations and research throughout the country. The initiative has created a “roadmap” for developing local dedicated funds for services for children, youth and families. Recognizing that every city and county is different, and that there is no one-size-fits-all approach, key steps that are common to most communities are:

- **Building and Making the Case**  
This includes assessing and documenting needs, identifying gaps in services, and developing a resource map of current investments in children. This work can be stimulated by local legislation, and done as a collaborative effort between government and community advocates and experts.
- **Establishing Priorities**  
This can be a creative mix of data, opportunity and political assessments. Polling can help facilitate this process. A local children’s Bill of Rights or Children’s Agenda can lay the groundwork for determining what should be funded through a new funding stream.
- **Crafting a Measure**  
This includes identifying the funding source – considering feasible options such as a carve-out, or new taxes or fees. It also includes developing a plan for the implementation of the fund, including governance and administration, methods to ensure accountability and evaluation, eligible services for funding, and methods to prevent supplantation of the fund
- **Expanding the Support**  
This entails going beyond the “usual suspects” who support children’s issues, to include labor, the faith community, business leaders, senior citizen groups, law enforcement and neighborhood associations. It also means developing a compelling public education campaign – with strong messengers such as pediatricians, teachers, law enforcement and parents.
- **Creating a Campaign**  
Some communities place a children’s fund on the ballot through petition of the voters. Others do it through a vote of the county or city legislative body. A political campaign for kids is very powerful. It engages people across the political spectrum and creates an ongoing constituency for your community’s children.

**Contact Funding the Next Generation for more information and technical assistance.**

