



## FUNDING THE NEXT GENERATION

### **FUNDING THE NEXT GENERATION:**

Securing resources for our children and youth today to ensure a healthy, vibrant future for our communities tomorrow.

**Mission:** Funding the Next Generation is a growing network of city and county-based coalitions committed to meeting the needs of California's children, youth, families and communities through the creation of dedicated local funding streams that provide future generations with the resources they need to thrive and succeed.

**Why Fund the Next Generation:** It has never been more important for those who care about the future of their cities and counties, California, our country and our world to work together to ensure that all of our children have the opportunity to flourish, develop to their full capacity and become the adults we need to lead us into the future.

As the state with the 6<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world, California has the highest number of children in the country living in poverty – a full quarter of our diverse child population, with the gaps between rich and poor growing. With poverty as a key indicator of negative long term outcomes for children, the time is now to address our growing opportunity gap. As families find themselves unable to meet the most basic needs, their ability to meet the needs of their children fades away and their dreams of providing them with a better future disappears.

There is much known about how to provide equal opportunity for children and youth. The benefits of access to quality child care and education, health and mental health services, career preparation for youth and much more are well documented. What is lacking are the resources and political will to invest in these pathways to successful adulthood. Child, youth and family programs and services are all too often at the bottom of the list when it comes to local funding priorities. Yet investing in children is the most effective and cost-effective way to secure not only a productive future for our children, but a safe, culturally relevant and vibrant future for our communities.

“The New Localism,” a term recently coined at the Brookings Institution, is the recognition that creative problem-solving must occur at the local governmental level, particularly in this new political era. This is where we will build a stronger constituency committed to equal opportunity and social justice. Rallying a community around its children is one way to overcome the polarization that is plaguing our country. Furthermore, pollsters point out unequivocally that the electorate is more likely to support expanding resources for services close to home, as opposed to sending money to Sacramento or Washington, DC. This new push for work at the local level supports a basic tenant of Funding the Next Generation.

**Our Collective Efforts:** We work to pass local measures, partner with local governments or use other means to ensure local budgets include adequate funding be directed specifically for children. Inspired by the successes of the San Francisco and Oakland Children's Funds, which together have raised more than \$600 million for children since their inception, we as a group are working on local revenue options ranging from taxes for children's services, to carve-outs of local budgets, to the reallocation of local resources, to fees that can support children's services. We are exploring taxes on soda and marijuana as well as more traditional taxes, such as sales, parcel and hotel. We are advocating at the state level for policies that will enable greater flexibility in raising revenue that is supported by our own local electorates.

Committed to building local coalitions of diverse stakeholders, we bring together children's service providers, parents, youth; the labor, faith and business communities; civic organizations and elected officials who are champions for children to achieve a common goal.

While local coalitions work to fund the next generation in our cities and counties, we as a network will use our collective energy, wisdom and skills to strengthen and amplify our local efforts in order to:

- Learn together and share best practices in public policy, strategy, youth engagement and community organizing
- Develop and disseminate the most effective and compelling messages to policy-makers and the public
- Reach out to potential allies and supporters, as well as opponents to create a shared vision and goals
- Work with state policymakers to develop policies which can facilitate our local goals
- Document our work collectively to build a field of knowledge about successfully accessing funding for children's services.

**Working together for the future:** Funding the Next Generation has created a learning community where child advocates and representatives from cities and counties throughout California participate in trainings, information exchanges, peer support, and through which we receive expert technical help that is designed to address the specific needs of our communities.

We believe that how our communities allocate resources is a moral reflection of their commitment to equity, social justice and the future of our cities, counties, state and country. California's diverse population of children and youth represent 22% of our population but 100% of our future. In this political environment, taking care of our young people is one of the things that can bring us together with hope for the future. The Funding the Next Generation Network is committed to capturing our shared concern about the next generation in order to ensure that our resources follow our values and allow our communities to succeed and thrive.

**Network includes:** Leaders from Sonoma, Solano, Napa, Yolo, San Diego, Alameda, and San Joaquin Counties; and Cities of Oakland, Richmond, and Vallejo.