



A Discussion Paper from The Children's Funding Project

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## The Forum for Youth Investment

The Forum for Youth Investment is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan “action tank,” combining thought leadership on youth development, youth policy, cross-system/cross-sector partnerships and developmental youth practice with on-the-ground training, technical assistance and supports. A trusted resource for policymakers, advocates, researchers and program professionals, the Forum provides youth and adult leaders with the information, connections and tools they need to create greater opportunities and outcomes for young people. The core work of the Forum is helping leaders, organizations, partnerships and systems – at the local, state and national levels – assess, improve and align their practices and policies.

## The Children’s Funding Project

### FIND. ALIGN. GENERATE. EVALUATE.

The needs of vulnerable families are increasing, opportunity gaps between rich and poor children are widening, and federal and state investments in services for children and youth are declining. These factors increase advocates’, policymakers’ and funders’ need for access to deeper and better information and analysis on the collective investments in the children and youth field. Currently, decision makers spend too much time trying to find and make sense of what funding is available and how it can be used.

The Children’s Funding Project seeks to consolidate and strengthen the guidance, examples, tools and strategic support available to state and local decision makers to analyze funding sources, identify opportunities for better alignment, generate new funding when needed, and measure investments based on evidence of what is working. For more information, contact Elizabeth Gaines, senior fellow, Forum for Youth Investment, [elizabeth@forumfyi.org](mailto:elizabeth@forumfyi.org).

## Acknowledgments

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# The Children's Funding Project

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In his latest book, *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*, Harvard professor Robert Putnam describes the starkly different experiences of kids living in the same community, masterfully outlining the challenges facing lower-income children and families.<sup>i</sup> One might hope that new books like this are not needed. Polling data, after all, indicates that most Americans believe that every child deserves a fair start.<sup>ii</sup> Conditions on the ground, however, don't live up to our aspirations.

The trend toward greater disparity in children's opportunities and outcomes signals that the needs of vulnerable families are growing. Opportunity gaps between rich and poor children are widening.<sup>iii</sup> Federal and state investment in services for children and youth are flattening or declining.<sup>iv</sup> Cities and counties around the country are bearing the brunt of these trends. Increasingly they are taking matters into their own hands: financing children's programs and services locally by finding ways to more effectively capture existing resources or to generate new revenues.

These national trends and local efforts have not gone unnoticed. Over the past decade, several national policy organizations have taken note of shifts in financing for children's programs and services, analyzing both the current state of funding and strategies emerging to address the most persistent gaps between funding and need.

- The Urban Institute produces an annual Kids' Share report which summarizes federal spending and tax expenditures on children. According to the report, spending on children has remained fairly flat over the past four years. The report also predicts that broader budgetary forces will restrict spending on children over the next 10 years, projecting a decline in outlays on children from 10 to 8 percent of the federal budget.<sup>v</sup>
- First Focus has reported for a decade on the federal share of spending dedicated to children. The federal government makes more than 200 distinct investments in children. According to the 2016 report, total spending on children's programs has decreased by 5 percent in the last two years, and more than 7 percent since 2010. Moreover, inflation-adjusted discretionary spending on children dropped more than 11 percent between 2010 and 2015.<sup>vi</sup>
- The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) has produced a series of reports that zoom in on state-level investments in schools, health care, child care, and other services aimed at children and their families. Funding in critical child-related services, including education, is down in many states. Various CBPP reports highlight both strategies that states have adopted to strengthen policies affecting low- and moderate-income families and efforts to make state tax systems fairer and more effective in raising needed resources.<sup>vii</sup>
- The Brookings Institution, over a series of commentaries and reports, has introduced the idea that a "new American localism" has a particular relevance and importance when it comes to financing

children's services.<sup>viii</sup> Within this new localism, there are promising trends suggesting that kids' issues are winnable – as demonstrated by more than 30 localities that have already established a children's fund by referendum, [including 11 out of 14 ballot initiatives that were approved in the November 2016 elections](#) in places as diverse as Baltimore, Maryland; Muskingum County, Ohio; and Boulder, Colorado.

The wave of efforts to shed light on the need for more funding for children that these organizations and others have documented is encouraging. However more support and capacity-building is needed at the local level to enhance and protect children's funding to withstand what may be major cuts at the federal and state levels as a new administration takes control.

Local children's funding efforts in the U.S. have, up to this point, been launched in an ad hoc and isolated manner, with the exception of a few states that have coordinated efforts like Missouri, Florida and California. There is also a need to connect disparate efforts even within a community– a fiscal scan conducted by early childhood advocates, a soda tax to fund afterschool programs, a joint RFP agreement between several municipal departments – into an intentional financing plan that comprehensively addresses priorities for children and youth. Those just starting down this path are looking for efficient ways to get savvy about stabilizing and expanding children's funding.

The range of activities related to successful local children's funding efforts center around four key tasks:

- ✓ **Find:** Cities and localities must develop the capacity to rigorously identify, track, analyze, and forecast funding sources and funding needs for services that support children and youth.
- ✓ **Align:** To address gaps and overlaps in the existing funding landscape, local government must be prepared to make adjustments in how funding is allocated, managed, and accounted for within agencies.
- ✓ **Generate:** Localities must assess need, explore feasibility, facilitate community engagement, launch a campaign, and plan the administration of new locally-generated funds to address gaps in meeting the needs of all children and youth.
- ✓ **Evaluate:** As communities do the hard work to find, align and generate new dedicated funding streams for children and youth services, they must also consider methods to measure the impact of their investments.

These tasks can be thought of as **levers** that localities can pull as opportunities arise. All need not, and perhaps should not, be pulled at once. And they need not be pulled fully. The cities and counties interviewed for this report used these levers at different points in time and with varying levels of effort – there was no set order or timeframe, and few localities have fully tackled them all. Equally important, depending on factors including local capacity, priorities and context, some localities decided to focus broadly on improving overall well-being of all children and youth, while others zoomed in more narrowly on a population, age group, or issue as the target of their children's financing efforts.

Children's funding strategies, as a result, look different in every city and county. Even when individual leaders are in agreement on the need, pulling each of these levers is infinitely more difficult, if not

impossible, without **a shared commitment to a common set of outcomes** and **a stable coordinating structure** to support the shared decision-making needed to make progress. These two elements create a supportive infrastructure for conducting the kind of comprehensive financing approach described in this discussion paper.

For over a decade, the Forum for Youth Investment has supported state and local efforts to build this supportive infrastructure through the Children's Cabinet Network<sup>ix</sup>. Children's cabinets typically bring together the heads of the major public agencies serving children and youth to set common goals and coordinate their work. Over this period, we have seen a growth in the number of localities seeking to create children's councils or cabinets and develop formal child and youth master plans. While these state and local children's cabinets initially focused on planning and capacity-building, their efforts quickly led to an interest in identifying potential sources of funding.

Lately the most frequent requests we receive are for "fiscal mapping" services to identify and analyze available funding streams for children across public and sometimes private funding sources. Such interest is a promising sign that more localities and states are seeking to bolster their commitments with a comprehensive financing strategy. Coordinating councils quickly realize, however, that creating a map of existing funding is a far cry from actually re-aligning funding in ways that do not produce new gaps or generating funding in ways that allow successful programs to go to scale.

We now recommend that any city or county coordinating body exploring how to better finance children's services pause to answer the following questions:

- Do we have the authority to not only identify but modify how funds are used?
- What are our current investments in children and youth? What is the forecast for funding sources in the future?
- Are we in agreement about how we prioritize outcomes in a way that doesn't lead to inadvertent gaps in other areas?
- How well are we aligning all funding for children's services within and across programs and departments? How well are we addressing gaps and duplicative funding within the existing landscape?
- What are our best avenues for generating new revenues? What strategies have been used in other issue areas? How do we generate all we can to cover our highest priorities for children and youth?
- What process will we use to evaluate the impact of our investments?

**The Children's Funding Project** is the Forum's commitment to update, consolidate and strengthen the guidance, examples, tools and strategic supports we provide to state and local decision makers to not only coordinate and set goals but find, align, and generate the resources needed to achieve them, and assess and monitor the value of these investments based on evidence of what has worked nationally and what is working in their communities. This report is the first installment in that commitment.

Our goal is to provide more consistent and proactive research, training and networking support to the growing network of cities and counties interested in building their capacity. Four broad strategies will undergird our efforts:

- **Partner** with national, state and local leaders who have passion for and expertise in the various aspects of finding, aligning, generating, and evaluating investments and are interested in championing the need for this approach.
- **Track and analyze** current financing efforts in communities in order to generate a corpus of examples, and promote a new field of study.
- **Inform and instruct** local government leaders, advocates, and practitioners in the techniques associated with the four funding levers. That is, how to: conduct resource mapping; analyze and align the flow of resources in their community; developing local dedicated funding; and evaluate investments they make.
- **Provide site-level technical assistance**, including developing tools and written materials, to support local teams at all stages of the process.

There is a common denominator across the five communities highlighted in this discussion paper: Each has established one or more voter-approved dedicated children's funds. This is no small feat and clearly it is the most challenging of the levers to pull given the need for public approval. These communities were selected for profiling from the approximately 30 cities and counties that have passed ballot initiatives to establish children's funds.

The lessons learned by and from all of these communities provide robust examples of success in finding, aligning, generating, and evaluating resources. They also, however, affirm the need for easier and more effective ways for local leaders to learn from and share with each other; find tools; review detailed examples; design sequenced, comprehensive strategies; and craft messages that convey urgency and drive success.

We hope that this report strikes a chord with local leaders. To keep the momentum going we've included a set of checklists to help leaders ask where their communities are in implementing the steps needed to identify, secure, or expand funding for children's programs and services.

# Featured Communities

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Discussions with local and national leaders suggest that dozens of localities have taken up at least one major effort within one or more of the four children's funding levers – find, align, generate, and evaluate. These communities range in size, demographic composition, and political leanings.

The most difficult lever to pull, however, is the generate lever because it usually requires some type of policy change. Yet, our research identified approximately 30 cities and counties that have established a voter-approved dedicated children's fund within the last 20 years, with the vast majority having established such funds within the last five years. While the purpose, revenue-generation mechanism, scope, and size of each fund varies, these localities are showing that kids can win on the ballot, and that communities can shape their own funding landscape for supporting children and youth.

We zoom in on five communities here that have moved multiple levers the farthest towards funding children's services. These five have established children's funds, bolstered by early efforts to engage the community, develop common outcomes, and establish a coordinating body to oversee the funds. These communities have also done significant work in one or more of the other levers, representing some of our most compelling and complete examples of what it takes to find, align, generate and evaluate local children's funding.

- **San Francisco, Calif.** has one of the longest-standing dedicated children's funding sources in the country. The ethnically diverse city began its children's funding efforts as a result of advocacy to establish a children's budget and highlight the gaps in the overall funding landscape. Over twenty-five years, efforts around financing children's services have moved from outsider advocacy to established policy. Coleman Advocates led the early work to establish funding for children's programs starting in 1988, and advocated for the establishment of a permanent home for the children's fund. Management of the fund was housed within the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families, which continues to administer the fund today and oversees the city's current strategy to equitably invest in its children and youth. San Francisco voters have since approved multiple funds focused on children since the original fund was created.
- **Broward County, Fla.** sits in the first of two states that has passed state law granting counties the right to generate local children's funds via some form of tax levy. Broward is one of eight counties in the state of Florida that has taken advantage of this legislation to establish an independent taxing authority solely dedicated to improving outcomes for children and youth. This authority, the Children's Services Council, is comprised of five governor appointees and six heads of various departments related to children, youth and families. The Children's Services Council administers the fund and coordinates children's services.



- **St. Charles County, Mo.** is a conservative-leaning, suburban/ex-urban county, demonstrating the diversity of places that undertake this challenge. Taking advantage of a provision in state law to grant local communities the right to generate an increase in the sales tax specifically for children's mental health, civic leaders compelled the voters to create a dedicated fund for mental health services in order to reach greater numbers of children, youth and their families. Currently, the Community and Children's Resource Board, comprised of eight members appointed by the county executive and approved by the county council, oversees administration of the fund.
- **Denver, Colo.,** the Mile High City of 650,000 people, has an active history of establishing dedicated funding streams for children and youth. The city and the state of Colorado have been through three separate dedicated children's funding initiatives successfully supporting preschool with a sales tax, supporting education and prevention with a marijuana tax and an unsuccessful bid to support college access and affordability over the course of the last decade. The mayor's office, through its Office of Children's Affairs and Children's Cabinet, has championed such strategies, encouraging collaboration and alignment among the various departments.
- **King County, Wash.** found a champion for a dedicated children's fund in the county executive himself. Seizing on a growing awareness of widening and troubling disparities, the county executive established a task force comprised of a diverse swath of stakeholders and citizens. Over three years, King County has seen the planning, proposal, approval, launching and evaluation of a children's levy all come to fruition to address the growing needs of their diverse population. A task force developed a youth action plan and aligned it to the county's investment strategy for children and youth. Substantive community engagement was central to shaping the plan. The fund was established in 2015. A 42-member advisory board is assisting in the administration of the funds collected from the first-year revenues.

Summary information about the demographics and children's financing stories of each of the localities is offered in the chart on the opposite page. Detailed profiles of each of the localities follow. The profiles, in addition to summarizing progress made towards using each of the four levers, also include sidebars about their supportive infrastructure: the presence of an active coordinating body and a common set of desired outcomes. A local coordinating body provides oversight and an accountability structure for a financing plan. The development of common language and common outcomes provides a framework for analyzing funding commitments and assessing whether investments are effective.

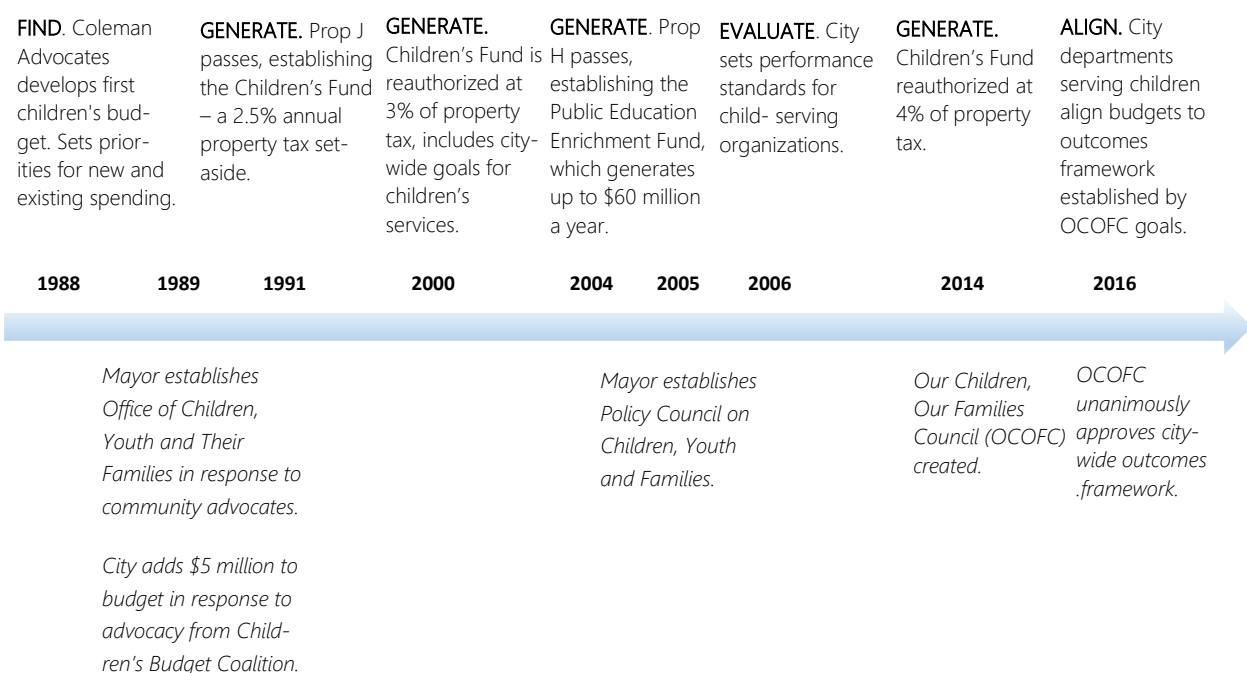
The five localities highlighted provide robust examples of success in using these levers. More communities will need to increase their understanding of the four funding levers, see examples from a diversity of places that have successfully used them, increase their capacity to create a comprehensive strategy for financing children's services, and use new tools like the checklists at the end of this paper to build momentum for a new, more pro-active approach to children's funding.

Overview of Children's Funds in Five Communities <sup>x</sup>					
	San Francisco	Broward County	St. Charles County	Denver	King County
<b>Geographic Type</b>	Urban	Urban/Suburban	Suburban/Exurban	Urban	Urban/Suburban
<b>Overall Population</b>	864,816	1,896,425	385,590	682,545	2,117,125
<b>White/African American/Latino*</b>	53% / 7% / 15%	65% / 29% / 26%	92% / 5% / 3%	78% / 11% / 31%	74% / 8% / 9%
<b>Overall Poverty/ Child Poverty</b>	13% / 13%	15% / 20%	6% / 8%	18% / 28%	12% / 15%
Coordinating Structure, Outcomes Framework, Funding Summary					
<b>Children's Fiscal Map</b>	Y	N	N	Y	Y
<b>Children's Cabinet/ Coordinating body</b>	Our Children, Our Families Council	Children's Services Council	Community and Children's Resource Board	Children's Cabinet	Children and Youth Advisory Board
<b>Fund Name</b>	Children and Youth Fund	Children's Services Council	Children's Community Services Fund	Denver Preschool Program	Best Start for Kids
<b>Type of Political Approval</b>	Voter Approved	Voter Approved	Voter Approved	Voter Approved	Voter Approved
<b>Year Established</b>	1991	2000	2004	2004	2015
<b>Type of Revenue</b>	Property Tax	Property Tax	Sales Tax	Sales Tax	Property Tax
<b>State Enabling Legislation</b>	N	Y	Y	N	N
<b>Annual Revenue</b>	Approximately \$70 million annually	\$76 million to services FY2015-16	Approximately \$5.4 to \$6.3 million for 2015-2016	Approximately \$15 million in 2015	\$65 million expected in 2016
<b>What It Funds</b>	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Children's Mental Health	Early Childhood	Comprehensive
<b>Accountability Structure</b>	City Department	Independent Governing Body	Independent Governing Body	City Department	County Department
<b>Strategic Plan/Clear Outcomes</b>	<a href="#">Outcomes Framework</a>	<a href="#">Strategic Plan</a>	<a href="#">Strategic Plan</a>	<a href="#">Status of Denver's Children</a>	<a href="#">Best Start Implementation Plan</a>
<b>Evaluation Process</b>	<a href="#">DCYF Data, Evaluation &amp; Reports</a>	<a href="#">Annual Program Performance FY14-15</a>	<a href="#">Annual and Outcome Reports</a>	<a href="#">Denver Preschool Program Evaluation</a>	See Implementation plan above on pgs. 87-92.

\*Latino includes Hispanic or Latino origin of any race.

**S**an Francisco, a city governed by a mayor and 11-member Board of Supervisors, has the distinction of being the first city in the country to guarantee comprehensive children and youth funding each year in the city budget. A baseline children's budget was first prepared in 1988 by Coleman Advocates for Children & Youth, a grassroots, membership organization in the city of San Francisco created to address the disparities at the root of the myriad challenges facing many San Francisco children, youth and families. This dedicated funding of approximately \$70 million annually is now administered by the Our Children, Our Families Council, a diverse group of local leaders from within and outside of government.

### San Francisco's Children's Funding Development Timeline



This is the story of how San Francisco leaders laid the groundwork for one of the most successful children's funds in the country by progressively building their coordination and communications horsepower and strategically taking opportunities to *find*, *align*, and *generate* funding. At the same time they put mechanisms in place to *evaluate* and improve effectiveness and make the case for funding sustainability and growth.

## CHILDREN'S FUNDING LEVERS

**Find.** In 1988, Coleman Advocates drafted the [first Children's Budget](#), a document which identified current funding levels, highlighted needs and gaps, and proposed new expenditures and program goals. This was developed through a year of research, coalition meetings, conferences, organizing, outreach and a mayor's speak-out event that drew more than 600 stakeholders and community members.

One action taken by the Board of Supervisors in response to the Children's Budget was passing legislation to require the County Controller to track expenditures on children and youth services. This became the framework for the 1991 legislation which not only created a Children's Fund, but also created a Children's Baseline, a calculation of current expenditures on children's services. The 1991 legislation mandated that the Baseline not be cut, and that new funds not supplant existing funding. This provision was essential, effectively guaranteeing that funding could not be decreased. Advocates have felt over the years that the Baseline was as important as the Children's Fund itself.

In order to effectively analyze and make recommendations for the Children's Budget, [advocates had to become experts in understanding and navigating the budget process](#). In San Francisco, since 1988, advocates have attended budget meetings each year and throughout the year, as each step in the process provides critical opportunities to understand and influence the unfolding budget. This strategy proved challenging but crucial, as Margaret Brodtkin, former Executive Director of Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth, explained: "Most non-profit service providers didn't know how to engage in the budget process, or even that it was legal for them to do so. Yet the people in the best position to advocate for community needs are often community service providers and the participants in their programs. Over the years, they learned to be a political force to be reckoned with."

### Supportive Infrastructure

**Coordinating Bodies.** San Francisco's overall coordination efforts focusing on children and families are currently led by the [Our Children, Our Families Council \(OCOFC\)](#), established by Proposition C as part of the Children and Families First Initiative in 2014. The 42-member council is tasked with aligning efforts across the City/County, the San Francisco Unified School District and the community. It includes a wide breadth of stakeholders from departments that traditionally serve children and youth, to new collaborators within and outside city government (e.g., Planning and Transportation Departments and the Chamber of Commerce.) These non-traditional actors provide fresh perspectives and bring other resources to the table.

They are tasked with developing an outcomes framework and a five year plan; systematically sharing data across siloes; and conducting an inventory of public funding for children, youth and families.

**Common Outcomes.** Stakeholders came together to articulate and agree upon common definitions, goals and an agenda at two key points.

- In the early years advocates organized the Children's Baseline with input from agencies, parents, and youth to develop an outcomes platform for their budget advocacy: a supportive neighborhood, a stable home, a healthy life, and a future.
- In 2014, the OCOFC built on the city's service expansion efforts by establishing a city-wide outcomes framework or vision for services across the city, aligning efforts between city departments, the school district and community. The framework has five goals for children, youth and families, with a consistent focus on equity that all children and youth:
  - Live in safe and nurturing environments,
  - Attain economic security and housing stability,
  - Are physically, emotionally and mentally healthy,
  - Thrive in a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment, and
  - Succeed in post-secondary and/or career paths.

Overall, by 2018, San Francisco will have \$400 million annually locked into the city budget for children, youth and families – between the baseline budget, the Children’s Fund, and the Public Education Enrichment Fund.

**Align.** Creating increased alignment among programs has been a gradual process, starting with the first Children’s Fund RFP which required collaboration among providers. City-wide planning and coordination was required in each successive reauthorization of the Children’s Fund. By 2006, the Children’s Fund was used to connect the work of 13 different city departments.

In recent years, the annual budget process has been tied to the Our Children, Our Families Council (OCOFC) city-wide [outcomes framework](#) that guides both existing and future work. Departments use this framework when submitting their budgets and five-year plans to the mayor. The city will conduct an analysis of how well the work outlined in these plans aligns with the outcomes framework and priorities set by the OCOFC. The goal of the city’s move to realign its funding streams against the OCOFC framework is increased budget transparency and a greater balance of trust, accountability, and flexibility across stakeholders as the city works to braid and blend funding streams over time.

San Francisco’s alignment efforts do not stop at individual agency budget accounting toward city-wide goals. Alignment has also meant increased capacity to demonstrate where more funding is needed, and to leverage the city’s most flexible dollars – often from locally-generated revenues – to cover these most critical areas.

Maria Su, Executive Director of San Francisco’s Department of Children, Youth and Their Families explained, “Our local dollars are the connective tissue for the other funding streams that don’t necessarily meet all of the local needs. Many funding streams have very narrow allowable uses. To address the gaps between desired outcomes and funded areas, we use local dollars to make sure that kids get the services they need because we can use these the most flexibly.”

Further illustrating the importance of using flexible, local dollars to braid funding for children and youth services and address service gaps, Su continued, “We have used our local funds to pay for the pre-meetings and collateral meetings needed to coordinate services in the mental health system that can’t be paid for with Medicaid. Doing that leverages each dollar we put into the system 1:1. We use local dollars to fund undocumented children. We use them to compensate young people for work experience and career exposure.”

**Generate.** Flexible, locally-generated dollars did not come overnight. The coalition that developed around the Children’s Budget – more than fifty organizations – spent four years on vigorous budget advocacy before turning to a ballot campaign to create an ongoing dedicated fund in 1991. In 1990, when the Children’s Baseline had been drafted for the third year, the coalition boldly moved to create an initiative that would be placed on the ballot the following year.

In 1991, Coleman Advocates organized the effort to advance Proposition J – a ballot proposal to establish the [Children’s Fund](#). According to Margaret Brodtkin, this was initially a controversial idea and had to be placed on the ballot by petition of the voters – the result of gathering 68,000 signatures. The Children’s Fund initially created a 2.5% set-aside on local property tax revenues each year for services for children, youth and their families, eventually growing to \$70 million by 2016. The Children’s Fund will grow to \$93 million by 2018. The early advocacy for a Children’s Budget led to the creation of a Mayor’s Office of Children, Youth and Their Families, which in 2000 was turned into a city department ([DCYF](#)).

Advocates have twice launched successful campaigns to reauthorize – in 2000, and then to [expand funding in 2014](#) – both in landslide victories. The 25-year old initiative has garnered the support of the city’s mayor and elected officials. The existence of the Fund has allowed the city to leverage additional dollars, both public and private, which has contributed to growing DCYF’s budget to more than \$150 million today.<sup>xi</sup> In addition to this leveraging, the success of these initiatives has paved the way for other funds to be approved by the voters. In 2004, voters in San Francisco approved Proposition H to establish the [Public Education Enrichment Fund \(PEEF\)](#), a fund generating more than \$60 million a year. One-third of these revenues support First 5 San Francisco’s Preschool for All initiative; another third supports libraries, sports, the arts and music; and finally, a third is allocated to other general uses. In the past, the last third has gone to fund programs including Wellness Centers, Family Support, and Safe and Clean Schools.

**Evaluate.** Over time, the city has refined the way they evaluate whether funds are being used effectively. Early on in the establishment of the Children’s Fund, DCYF required a wide range of data from providers, but found it was overwhelming to effectively manage for both the department and providers. The department found that if they tracked fewer measures, enhancing those with data from national data collection efforts, they were more successful in analyzing data and using the analyses to inform priorities. To hold community programs accountable, they moved to requiring agency standards based on a review of evidence-based and best practices, and local knowledge of effective approaches. “We found that we couldn’t track outcomes with so many variables, but we could set standards. We brought all of the community partners together around best practices, and collaboratively wrote the standards that would determine program effectiveness,” Brodtkin recounted of the early years of the Children’s Fund.

These standards are used to assess the quality of youth programs funded by DCYF. DCYF staff conduct site visits to observe agency practices. Rather than take funding away from lower quality programs, DCYF works with organizations on improvement. “It is much easier to support a non-profit agency to improve rather than to shut down programs and start over,” Su explained.

As for the return on the investment, this developmental approach to agency capacity-building appears to be working. Su continued, “Our secret sauce is continuous quality improvement.” The technical supports for agencies range from professional development workshops to one-on-one executive coaching. This investment in capacity-building and assessment has also provided DCYF with the data needed to begin to communicate the connection between access to programs, quality of programs and program outcomes. While causal links are difficult to prove, the city has seen upward trends for child and youth across the

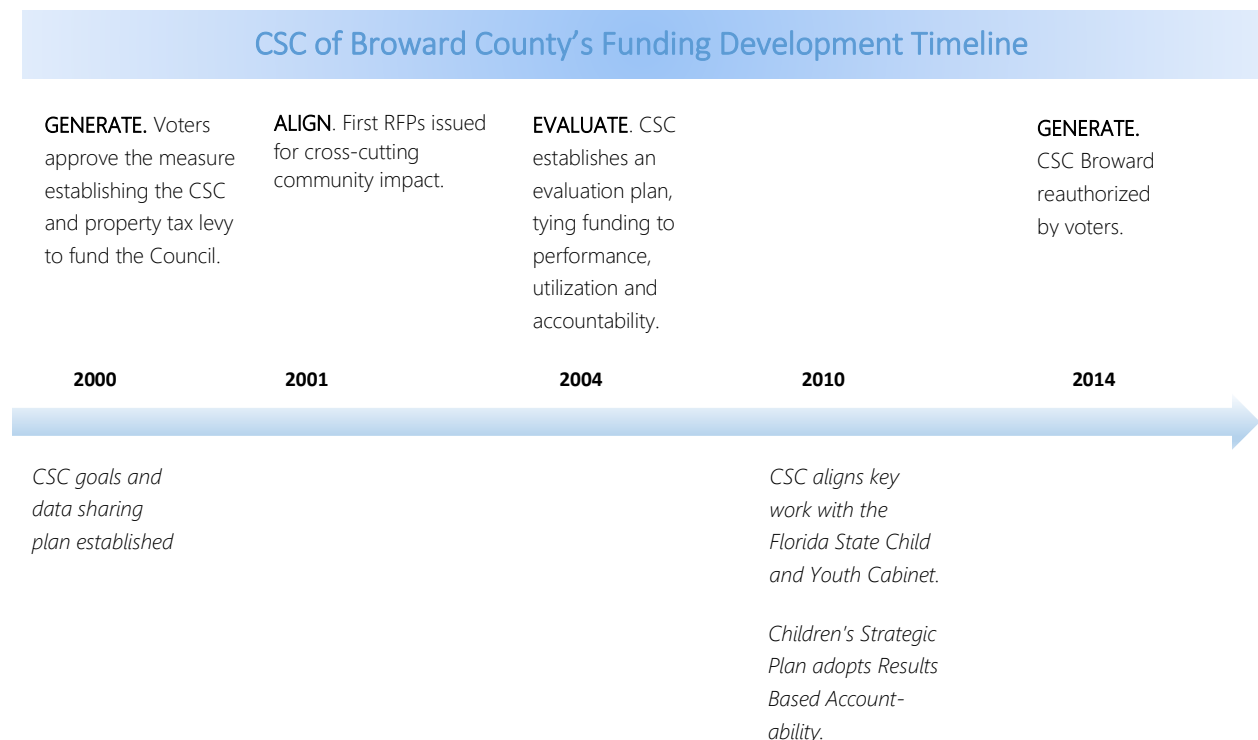
developmental pipeline. In 2015, 88 percent of children completed preschool; more than 80 percent of 10<sup>th</sup> graders are on-track academically; and 77 percent of San Francisco high school graduates enroll in college.<sup>xii</sup> The city is deepening its evaluation work to better understand the connection between its investments and outcomes.

The quality assessment work is augmented by deep evaluation of programs in service areas such as workforce development, juvenile justice or family support. Equity has been a critically important component to the evaluation approach. San Francisco's equity framework is focused on populations at higher risk due to racial and socio-economic status, legal status, sexual orientation, neighborhood, trauma exposure, justice involvement and other statuses. The city is conducting a baseline equity analysis to determine how many San Francisco children (disaggregated by key demographic categories including neighborhood) are succeeding. These data will help the city refine its funding targets in future years, including putting more resources toward specific populations – areas in which stakeholders suspect the greatest outcome gaps exist.

Building a data infrastructure to support investments has not been without significant challenges. It has been difficult to build a data infrastructure that can be sustained beyond a four-year political cycle. For example, the various city attorneys have, at times, come to conflicting interpretations of confidentiality laws. These varied interpretations have slowed the progress of sharing data between departments, an essential element for moving from a department-centered to a youth-centered accountability approach. Current data agreements between the Departments of Public Health, Juvenile Probation, and Child Welfare, and the school district demonstrate progress toward a shared ability to understand service reach and quality.

San Francisco's story is long and evolving, and provides a great window into what is possible with an intentional and collective local effort to invest resources in children, youth and families.

**B**roward County, Florida established its [Children's Services Council \(CSC\)](#) after voters approved the creation of an independent taxing authority in 2000 dedicated solely to improving outcomes for children and youth in Broward County. The CSC board is composed of 11 members – five governor appointees and a county commissioner, a school board member, a judge hearing juvenile cases, the superintendent of schools, the local heads of the State Department of Children & Families and the State Department of Health. Established by "The Children's Services Act of 2000" and approved by referendum in September of the same year, the CSC is a vehicle for increasing the coordination of children's services through strategic planning, generation of dedicated funds, and evaluation.



The story of the Children's Services Council of Broward County demonstrates the power that can be harnessed when the state allows counties to create a dedicated funding stream and governing body to support children. The ability to focus only on children and families eliminates the usual competition for scarce resources that occurs when the responsibility is housed in a larger government agency and it provides a locus for analysis of community needs, coordinated planning, community engagement, funding and evaluation.



## CHILDREN'S FUNDING LEVERS

**Find.** Broward County began with a community resource inventory and the knowledge that gaps existed in resources for serving young people in the areas of child welfare, juvenile justice, child care and special needs. In particular, a community crisis in the foster care system provided the impetus for sustained awareness-building to educate the business community on the critical needs of the county's children. Raising community awareness led to the first community needs assessment. This assessment helped advocates marshal the public will to maximize existing resources and seek ways to find new ones.

2016 has brought on a renewed interest in the task of mapping the fiscal landscape. As CSC and the community's planning efforts have matured over the years, new tools are being explored and employed.

**Align.** One of the early benefits of establishing the Children's Services Council was the mechanism it created for bringing system leaders and community stakeholder groups together to align their work. Working collaboratively within the framework of the CSC led Children's Strategic Plan and a partnership of local funders, CSC works to ensure that local investments – both public and private – are focused toward the same overall goals.

This consolidated approach to ensuring that existing dollars could be leveraged to match, blend, braid, and generate additional resources has given Broward County service providers an advantage in providing more comprehensive services to children and families. The benefits of this kind of coordination have become apparent at various times in the 16 years that the CSC has been in existence. For example:

### Supportive Infrastructure

**Coordinating Bodies.** Prior to the creation of the [Children's Services Council \(CSC\)](#), State and County agencies and non-profit organizations operated as siloed entities, each administering its programs in parallel to other departments. With dozens of committees and state or locally created planning groups meeting on issues related to children and families, Cindy Arenberg Seltzer, President/CEO of the CSC observed, "As I'd attend various planning group meetings during our funding cycle, I realized that in all of the different planning groups there was a lot of overlap with groups doing a lot of the same work."

The CSC provided the structure for coordinating the work across planning groups, agencies and organizations. An immediate focus of the CSC was to move from siloed departments to a consolidated children's council with common outcomes, Broward Children's Strategic Plan, a dedicated fund, and evaluative practices.

The CSC board establishes the annual goals and budget based on a county-wide needs assessment in children's services and public hearings. This body oversees evaluation on outcomes and performance improvement for county agencies.

**Common Outcomes.** Before establishing the CSC, local stakeholders convened a Children's Summit in 1999. Seltzer recalled, "I made the recommendation that a children's strategic plan be created. I saw the duplication of efforts in multiple committees addressing the same issue, a lack of coherence in data collection and reporting; agencies that were completely unaware of other agencies doing similar or complementary services." The first children's strategic plan was designed to create a common set of data reference sources.

The summit was a first step in organizing the community to assess service needs and benchmark areas included in the strategic plan. The county used the information from the strategic plan to identify gaps and opportunities which formed the basis for the CSC's goals and objectives. These goals were used to organize funding priorities that could significantly move outcomes.

Sixteen years later, an evolving and community driven document, the Broward [Children's Strategic Plan](#) is anchored by five goal statements, addressing family stability, physical and mental health, school success, community conditions, and successful transitions to adulthood.

- Early on, in addition to the property tax revenue, CSC managed funding from regional private philanthropic organizations – specifically the Jim Moran and AD Henderson Foundations – to address the areas of transitional independent living, kinship care and early childhood education initiatives, building on their knowledge of the funding landscape, evidence-based practices and commitment to outcomes and accountability.
- CSC grants have been helpful to non-profit agencies seeking to draw down additional foundation, federal, and other governmental grants thus maximizing the amount of available funds for vital services in the county.
- In 2014, Broward County became part of the first cohort of places that received waivers for the federal [Performance Partnership Pilots \(P3\) for Disconnected Youth](#), a federal initiative that gives communities greater flexibility to use the federal dollars they already have more effectively, with agreements that communities will be more accountable for concrete outcomes. With CSC serving as the lead for the P3 pilot, the county is serving 420 at-risk youth in six high schools using their own local dollars plus funds from the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.
- In recent years, CSC has braided their dollars with Broward County government funding to increase programs for children with special needs, and they have blended funds with the Community Foundation of Broward for non-profit capacity-building efforts.
- CSC's 2015-2016 Children's Strategic Plan pulls together the various initiatives across the county as part of one collective plan to get to the outcomes, and the annual program budget analysis then includes the estimated budgets for any additional funding streams that are braided to reach these outcomes.

**Generate.** The first dedicated local tax for children in the nation occurred in Pinellas County, Florida, 70 years ago. A local attorney, tired of witnessing at-risk youth landing in jail, pushed for legislation that would allow voters to create an independent body of community members and levy a tax to focus on the welfare of children in the county. The Pinellas County Juvenile Welfare Board was created with an 80-20 margin by the voters in 1946. Fast forward 40 years and Florida's enabling legislation, [Chapter 125.901 of Florida Statutes](#), set in motion a path for counties to create and administer their own independent taxing authority with the sole purpose of investing in the well-being of children. With this legislation, Florida counties have the authority to take the creation of these councils and special tax levies to the voters for their approval. Today there are eight Children's Services Councils in Florida, including the CSC of Broward County.

The original campaign to establish a special taxing authority in Broward County began in the late 1990s. The emerging foster care crisis garnered the attention of business leaders, creating an opening for building awareness about the critical needs of children. Children's Services Council CEO Cindy Arenberg Seltzer recalled, "The foster care crisis had gotten the attention of some key business leaders. Child advocates joined forces, with the business leaders taking the visible leadership role in advocating. They raised a small amount of money for polling and some outreach. Because the county commission would not put the item on the ballot, then-state representative Debbie Wasserman-Schultz introduced state legislation which became the

[Children's Services Act of Broward County](#) which, in part, provided for the referendum to be held on September 5, 2000."

Polling is an important tool to test public support for a dedicated fund. Broward County conducted polling to identify top priorities related to children, youth and families. The poll revealed youth crime as a leading concern for the community. Using key take-aways from the poll, community advocates successfully messaged and made the case for funds that eventually secured the establishment of the Children's Services Council followed by passage of the Children's Services Levy in 2000. It established a millage rate not to exceed 50 cents for each \$1,000 of assessed valuation of all properties within the County which are subject to County taxes. This levy generates more than \$65 million a year for the County.

This process reveals the multi-step nature of any effort to generate dedicated funds. Concerned community members started through one door (i.e., concerns about foster care); garnered the support of powerful but "unusual allies" in local business champions; researched their options for getting a tax levy proposal to the public (they had more than one); and tested public support through polling (which revealed the strongest public support around the issue of youth crime), before making a successful play for a dedicated fund.

Because CSC was established as an autonomous taxing district, it also required legal and organizational start-up assistance. The county commission did three things to facilitate this. First, the commission set up a \$500,000 line of credit to cover the set-up and legal costs. Second, they loaned legal counsel to help with establishing the required documents to set up the taxing authority. Finally, they loaned county staff to get the entity off the ground.

The Children's Services Council was required by state legislation to go back to the voters to be reauthorized. The CSC was able to communicate the value and results they were achieving and again gained the support of the business community, local foundations and advocates. In November 2014 it was overwhelmingly reauthorized with support from 76 percent of the voters.

**Evaluate.** Broward County, through the Children's Services Council, has been a leader among local governments using [Results-Based Accountability](#) to measure their work in areas such as reducing youth crime, teen pregnancy, and abuse and neglect and increasing graduation rates. Nearly 50 committees involving several hundred participants participate in the ongoing evaluation process which informs the budget, and informs how the county blends and braids funding streams to address the issues raised. All the participants have been trained in results based accountability and each committee uses Turn the Curve reports to guide their work. Roughly every 5 years they bring together a broad swath of the community to review progress and set the direction for the next 5 years.

Funding is tied to indicator trends and common performance measures related to those goals. The work that the CSC has done to intentionally define and connect goals, outcomes, and indicators has been important for effectively evaluating the impact of investments. To validate performance data, the CSC has brokered access to existing external databases that can provide data about educational outcomes, child

welfare, and juvenile crime. The CSC has data-sharing agreements with the juvenile courts, the schools, and other county departments.

Given the number of variables at play, it can be hard to attribute program inputs to outcomes and outcomes to investments, as CSC administrators have suggested: “We are not talking about widgets, we are talking about people. This is not a perfect system of measured inputs (services) that will draw out an exact standard for effectiveness. Also, inputs vary – I won’t count an individual as being served unless they’ve received enough of the service to make a difference. For example, if you show up to an afterschool program once, that is not counted. But trying to figure out how much *is enough* to count as having been served is a challenge.”

As the CSC has continued to evaluate the effectiveness of its investments, it has paid particular attention to engaging in an ongoing dialogue with agencies serving some of the highest need communities. Its aim is to ensure that the CSC funding criteria and policies do not unduly disadvantage less-resourced organizations in the competitive grant-seeking process but instead focus on continuous quality improvement of grantees as part of an active network. In addition, their recent federal Performance Partnership Pilot is being heavily evaluated and will serve as a model for the country on how funding flexibility can improve outcome accountability locally.

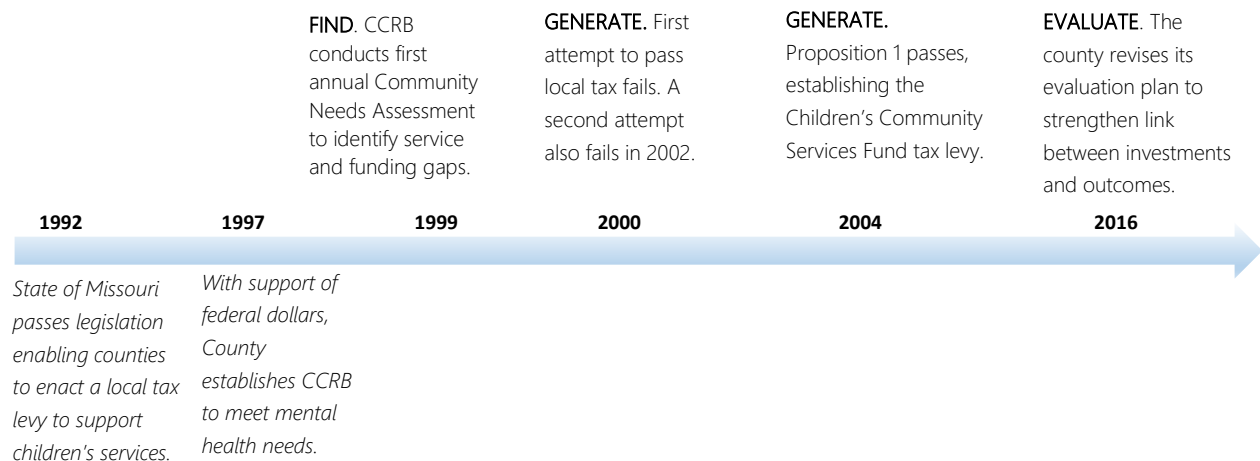
The Florida model for generating local, dedicated dollars offers a unique window into the role of state enabling legislation in supporting children’s funding initiatives locally. The Broward story is a good reminder that understanding the fiscal policy rules in one’s state is a necessary first step as communities look to pursue new revenue at the local level.

**S**t. Charles County, Missouri created the [Community and Children's Resource Board \(CCRB\)](#) in 1997 in order to position the County to pursue federal System of Care funding through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Created through [County Ordinance 97-15](#), the CCRB replaced the St. Charles County Community Mental Health Board of Trustees. This change helped secure \$8.6 million over seven years to provide mental health services to children and youth with a serious emotional disturbance, making St. Charles County the first System of Care site within Missouri.

In late 1999, this ex-urban community northwest of St. Louis was finding that state funding for mental health services was decreasing while the population of the County was continuing to grow at a rapid pace. A needs assessment conducted at the time demonstrated a high demand for the expansion of traditional types of mental health and substance abuse treatment services. In addition, the federal grant was requiring a sustainability plan, so a group of community leaders determined that they would try to utilize a state statute that had been passed in 1992, allowing counties to pass local taxes to support funds for children's mental health services.

After two failed attempts in 2000 and 2002, the voters approved a 1/8 cent sales tax in 2004, making St. Charles County along with Jefferson County and the City of St. Louis the first counties to pass such a measure.

### St. Charles County Children's Funding Development Timeline



## CHILDREN'S FUNDING LEVERS

**Find.** In 2000, a community needs assessment was conducted in St. Charles County to address what was perceived as a growing gap between available funding and the mental health needs of children and families. The assessment indicated that service capacity had remained relatively flat due to economic conditions, and reductions in state funding and private giving. At the same time, the St. Charles County population had been growing at a steady pace, ranking as one of the fastest growing counties in the state, with an increasing percentage of families experiencing economic distress. The rapidly increasing demand was straining existing resources to respond to community needs around mental illness, drug and alcohol usage and violence.

Specifically, the needs assessment surveyed agencies with eligible programs to determine:

- The number and type of services and programs available to children and youth
- Number of St. Charles County children and youth served
- Number of requests for service
- Number of children and youth placed on waiting lists
- Number of children and youth referred to agencies outside the county
- Strengths of programs
- Cost of services

### Supportive Infrastructure

**Coordinating Bodies.** The Community and Children's Resource Board (CCRB) was established in 1997 to help the county more effectively administer a multi-year federal grant to improve services to children with serious emotional disorders. The board is composed of nine community members appointed by the County Executive and approved by the County Council, serving three-year terms. They have reorganized and aligned the administration of mental health prevention and intervention services in the county around the ten service areas allowable by state statute.

**Common Outcomes.** The CCRB sets a budget, administers funding and oversees evaluation of county programs working within these ten service areas:

- Counseling
- Crisis Intervention
- Temporary Shelter
- Respite Care
- Outpatient Psychiatry
- Outpatient Substance Abuse Treatment
- School Based Prevention Services
- Services to Teen Moms/Parents
- Transitional Living Services
- Home and Community Based Services

Rather than a common outcomes framework that all agencies adhere to, outcomes are organized around the specific programs that are funded. However, the county has also promoted and required that all agencies participate in a common evaluative process. More than ten years of data collection has allowed the county to report on the collective work of county stakeholders and note positive data trends.

The Community and Children's Resource Board (CCRB) has conducted a needs assessment every other year since the first assessment in 2000. In each assessment, a table summarizing the needed funding level, a proposed amount for the coming fiscal year, and an estimate of individuals and families impacted are included. This needs assessment was first used to make the case for establishing a dedicated fund for children's mental health services. Over the years, this biennial exercise has allowed the CCRB to clearly communicate to residents the magnitude of the need and the projected shortfalls in funding from state and federal sources, not only advocating for the continuation of the fund, but also leveraging this fund to attract dollars from other sources.

**Align.** Providing comprehensive mental health services to children and families has always been an exercise in braiding and blending a variety of funding sources, public and private, in order to meet such diverse needs as mental health therapeutic services, counseling, crisis intervention, family supports, prevention programs, homelessness assistance and temporary shelter.

The [community needs assessment process](#) has allowed the community to name assets and gaps, to understand how best to fund existing programs and where additional funding is needed. Having this needs assessment data has allowed the county to align its priorities with [Ready by 21 St. Louis](#) a regional collective impact effort, and coordinate services and funding to address the portion of the child and youth population that moves fluidly between different jurisdictions throughout the large and structurally complicated St. Louis Metropolitan region.

**Generate.** The first opportunity to infuse funds into the local children's mental health system occurred when St. Charles County was awarded a 6-year, \$7.1 million federal grant to serve children with serious emotional disorders and their families. Later, the county received an additional \$1.5 million for a seventh year. This funding afforded the county time to plan for the replacement of those funds and to establish a dedicated local fund. In order to accept and properly administer the fund, the county decided to dissolve an old structure, a general county health board, and erect a new oversight body in its place – focused on children's mental health needs. The Community and Children's Resource Board (CCRB) was established by county ordinance.

The local fund that St. Charles County pursued, via Proposition 1, was passed in the fall of 2004 just as the federal award was winding down. This passage created the Community Children's Services Fund, derived from county local tax revenues. The State of Missouri facilitated the creation of such funds by passing state legislation in 1992 to make it possible for local counties to enact sales tax levies not to exceed one-quarter of a cent for the purpose of providing services to persons nineteen years of age or less. In 2000, this legislation was expanded to allow counties to pursue either a property tax or sales tax vehicle. They could set aside existing revenue for children's services or could generate new taxes to support those purposes.

It is important to note that the above ballot initiative failed to pass in its first two attempts (2000 and 2002). In the third attempt –in 2004 – stakeholders had made a case that would speak to voters. "This is a very conservative area, not quick to generate new taxes. But they care for those in the community that are in need. We were able to make the case in three parts: 1) our county was the fastest growing county in the state; 2) we have the highest percentage of the population under 18; and 3) recent cuts to the Department of Mental Health have strained our local budget for mental health services," Bruce Sowatsky, Executive Director of CCRB explained. Sowatsky continued, "We then framed our message around the increase in needy kids, and the reduction of mental health monies as outlined in the community needs assessment." Framing support came from Todd Patterson, a political consultant that specializes in how to make the case around special tax levies.

St. Charles's efforts have garnered the attention of other Missouri counties looking to replicate their success. Patterson observed, "Missouri counties that had yet to establish a Children's Services Fund were clamoring. Given the continual reduction in resources provided by the state legislature, communities were turning to local generation. Further, the results that were being produced by CSF-established counties were impressive. These results, too, encouraged other counties to act. Voters are increasingly attracted by the notion of producing local revenue for local concerns."

**Evaluate.** The county has committed to tracking service quality and community outcomes and conducting annual reports which analyze the impact of investments. To measure the impact of services on children, youth and families, the CCRB requires that each agency select three measurable outcomes to report on. Each agency was allowed to select their own outcomes based on the evaluation tools they were already using. In parallel, the county also began measuring themselves against statewide data on how it is doing on a wide range of general indicators.

The county also produced a [community impact document](#) that summarizes the end-results of a multi-focused strategic funding and intervention effort. This document tracks the county's return on investment by reviewing each agency's percentages of children and youth who reach various outcomes. The CCRB has seen significant returns on investment as collectively, well over 90% of partner agency outcomes are met or exceeded on an annual basis.

This recent community impact study of child well-being was commissioned by the CCRB, reviewing data going back to 2004. This study demonstrated significant trends including: a 25.8 percent drop in infant mortality, a 34.6 percent drop in violent deaths to teenagers, a 37.9 percent drop in child deaths, a 49.5 percent drop in teen births, a 50 percent drop in the high school dropout rate and out-of-school suspensions and a 58 percent drop in juvenile justice involvement.<sup>xiii</sup> The aim of the funding evaluation system is to track and improve the accessibility of services provided throughout the county, emphasizing geographic equity. The goal is to increase the amount of funding available within each of ten service areas allowable by state statute for services that include early identification, prevention and intensive treatment.

While it is difficult to establish a causal relationship between program investments and community-level outcomes, the county has completed more than fifteen years of assessments that demonstrate correlation between investments and child well-being outcomes. To strengthen their ability to make causal claims, the county will hire a local researcher in 2017 to conduct a literature review on factor analysis and an analysis of how programs and investments influence those outcomes.

The story of St. Charles County, a bedroom community of the St. Louis region, highlights the observation that communities taking on the creation and maintenance of locally-dedicated funding come in all stripes, and that there is no one-size-fits-all model for approaching and growing children's funding.



**D**enver has worked for the past four years to elevate its commitment to making the Mile-High City an exemplary city for nurturing and raising children and youth. To guide that vision, the city established the [Denver Children's Cabinet](#) in 2012 by executive order to create opportunities for Denver's children and youth to succeed. Denver's path to financing children's and youth programs is not a straightforward one: it is characterized by multiple efforts to communicate and frame children's issues to the public, resulting in both successful and failed campaigns to establish dedicated funding streams over the years.

Denver has learned from both its successes and failures, having launched a variety of campaigns to generate population-specific funds. The insight from these experiences has resulted in Denver having one of the most compelling stories in the country about how to bring together various pieces of the four funding levers to address funding for children and youth comprehensively.



Denver's story starts with a successful effort in 2006 to generate funds to expand programs for children, specifically expanding access to preschool programs. To build on that early win, Denver needed to strengthen its infrastructure for children. An [Office of Children's Affairs](#) was established in 1995, and the mayor established the Children's Cabinet in 2012 to improve the way his agencies work together. One of the key tasks of the Cabinet was to develop a common framework for child well-being, a framework that would be used to track well-being data and later to organize a fiscal mapping effort.

This supportive infrastructure has helped Denver to target emerging opportunities quickly, learn collectively from setbacks, and move forward as one of the few cities that has developed a plan to link neighborhood data on child and youth outcomes to budgetary decisions.

## CHILDREN'S FUNDING LEVERS

**Find.** One of the key directives in the 2012 executive order establishing the Denver Children's Cabinet was to map city spending on children and youth. In 2015, the cabinet undertook this effort, supported by the mayor's budget office staff. The mapping was done with the intent that the children's budget analysis would be used by the cabinet during the next budget cycle to determine future spending for programs.

Denver's fiscal mapping effort engaged the Children's Cabinet agencies and others in a review of their budgets that contribute to the Cabinet's goals. The review was focused on funds that the city has the responsibility and/or discretion to administer, including pass-through dollars for youth programming or services.

The process of analyzing the budget required that each city department report its budget line information against a common framework. Departments were asked to gather and report on information about funding streams including intended outcomes, ages for services, flexibility, intervention approach, and funding type. These data were placed into a digital report allowing the city to identify collective investments related to the Children's Cabinet goals, with particular emphasis placed on evaluating investments by city geography and other key demographic categories.

Gathering this information from 22 municipal departments was not without challenge. It is difficult to garner consistent participation across departments. But, overall, the exercise was useful in moving city agencies to think about the outcomes of their investments in children and youth. Developing a trustful relationship between the departments and the Children's Cabinet was very important in growing the agencies' understanding of the mapping process and creating effective collaboration.

### Supportive Infrastructure

**Coordinating Bodies.** The mayor of Denver established a Children's Cabinet by executive order in 2012. Managed by the Office of Children's Affairs, the cabinet brings together more than 20 municipal units and departments, including: Human Services, Parks and Recreation, Safety, Police, Economic Development, Strategic Partnerships, Housing, Library Services, and the school district, among others.

The Cabinet is charged with improving communication among agencies to coordinate and align programs and services, and develop strategies to address gaps and remove barriers to opportunity. The body provides policy guidance as the city pursues comprehensive strategies and improves programs.

#### Common Outcomes

A key accomplishment of the Cabinet was the creation of an overarching framework that articulated six goals that would "drive the alignment of all city services dedicated to children and youth, strengthen community partnerships and provide a focal point to measure successes." The goals under this framework include:

- Increase the number of children who have access to high-quality early childhood experiences
- Increase the number of Denver third grade students who can read at grade level
- Decrease the number of disconnected youth
- Increase the number of students who complete a postsecondary pathway and obtain a job
- Reduce the number of children who are overweight and obese.

The Office of Children's Affairs uses this framework to prioritize the list of proposals it receives for funding children and youth services each year. In their allocation decision-making process, the office considers how the work proposed aligns with the mayor's goals for Denver's young people. In 2016, these goals were used to organize findings from the fiscal mapping effort and, going forward, will be used in the city's budgeting process for children and youth services.

It is important to note that Denver undertook an effort to map resources *after* two successful attempts and one failed attempt at generating new resources. Armed with a more detailed understanding of the city's investments in children and youth, Denver's leaders are better positioned to make the case for future investments, both targeted and universal.

**Align.** Since its establishment in 1995, the Denver Office of Children's Affairs has played an increasing role in aligning the work and investments of the city's departments that are focused on children, youth and families. Currently, the Office of Children's Affairs, which also staffs the Children's Cabinet, manages \$1.5 million of the local funds derived from the recently-approved [state tax revenues on legal marijuana](#). These funds are aligned to the priorities outlined in Denver's common framework for child well-being.

The Children's Cabinet, established in 2012, has made alignment a priority in its strategic planning for future investments. The work of the cabinet has resulted in increased alignment among municipal departments. For example, the Office of Children's Affairs, Department of Human Services and the Office of Economic Development are aligning their spending within specific areas of the city to better address disparities that exist between neighborhoods. The Offices of Behavioral Health, Children's Affairs, and the Police Department are reevaluating the way they collectively invest in disconnected youth – prioritizing already-disconnected youth and services to reengage them in school and/or employment, rather than focusing only on prevention. This strategy has required the braiding of funding from each of these units to provide a coordinated set of services to this vulnerable population.

**Generate.** Between 2006 and 2015, Denver launched or supported three campaigns intended to generate new dedicated funds to support children and youth. Two of these initiatives passed. The first – a 2006 [early childhood initiative](#) to raise funds to broaden access to preschool – actually failed in two prior attempts in 2000 and 2001. The second, a state-led initiative, involved taxing the revenues from the voter-approved legalization of marijuana. One-third of these revenues, totaling more than \$70 million in 2015, goes to support regulation, enforcement and education statewide. Of that, \$1.5 million goes to the city of Denver to be used for youth programs. In 2015, a [third ballot initiative](#) focused on increasing college access and affordability narrowly failed by 48.1 to 51.9 percent of the vote.

The varied success in efforts to generate funds through ballot initiatives is instructive. After the two failed attempts to pass a sales tax to support preschool programs in 2000 and 2001, advocates regrouped to understand voter perceptions of the need for expanded preschool access. Through polling, they found that the statement “all kids deserve an equal start in life” resonated. Then they shored up support from both public and private leadership, and they raised money to launch a television campaign about the importance of preschool. The campaign had a measurable positive impact on the percentage of the public who believed both that preschool was important and that access was a problem. The campaign for dedicated funding, dubbed Preschool Matters, sought to establish the Denver Preschool Program, funded through a fraction of one percent increase (0.12 percent) to the sales tax. The proposal was narrowly approved by voters in 2006 and was reauthorized by voters in 2015 (54 percent approval), increasing the sales tax increase to 0.15 percent.

Denver's path to generating local, dedicated funds sheds light on the intervening steps that might need to occur before local voters are primed for supporting an initiative. Laying the groundwork for the messaging and framing of children's issues is not necessarily easy or straightforward. For the Denver Preschool Program, it took multiple iterations and years of work before getting it to the ballot and successfully passed.

**Evaluate.** As it evaluates spending, the city of Denver has made a commitment to conducting targeted geographic analysis on where investments will make the most significant difference. A significant number of Denver youth live in limited opportunity neighborhoods – communities that lack the educational, employment, and social infrastructure to provide for the full range of physical and developmental needs for children and youth.<sup>xiv</sup> The city is piloting this analysis with three agencies – the Office of Children's Affairs, the Office of Economic Development, and the Department of Human Services. The analysis will help the city understand whether their collective investments are targeting the city's priorities for addressing high-need neighborhoods and zip codes.

The evaluation system that has been put in place helps to anchor future plans for data collection and analysis, particularly as it relates to the city's most vulnerable populations. These elements make Denver a strong candidate for testing out more innovative funding strategies. Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) are one such strategy. These are funding strategies involving private stakeholders assuming the risk of upfront investment in promising social interventions that have great potential for improving social outcomes. Interventions are designed with the potential for public sector savings in mind. Public dollars kick in upon evidence of success. SIBs, also called "pay for success", may be a particularly fruitful strategy for the city.

Denver has already piloted a [Social Impact Bond](#) in a critical area of social intervention – providing permanent housing and supportive services to the chronically homeless. As the city launches that effort, stakeholders in the child and youth services arena can learn from its implementation while building on the infrastructure they already have to launch a similar pay for success effort. An engaged, local private business and/or philanthropic community makes such an initiative actionable. The city has already identified several evidence-based, high-promise interventions for potential investment that align with the overarching strategic plan for children and youth. Issuing a social impact bond, that this time addresses innovative services for parents and children, holds immediate potential for generating funds for Denver children and youth in the future.

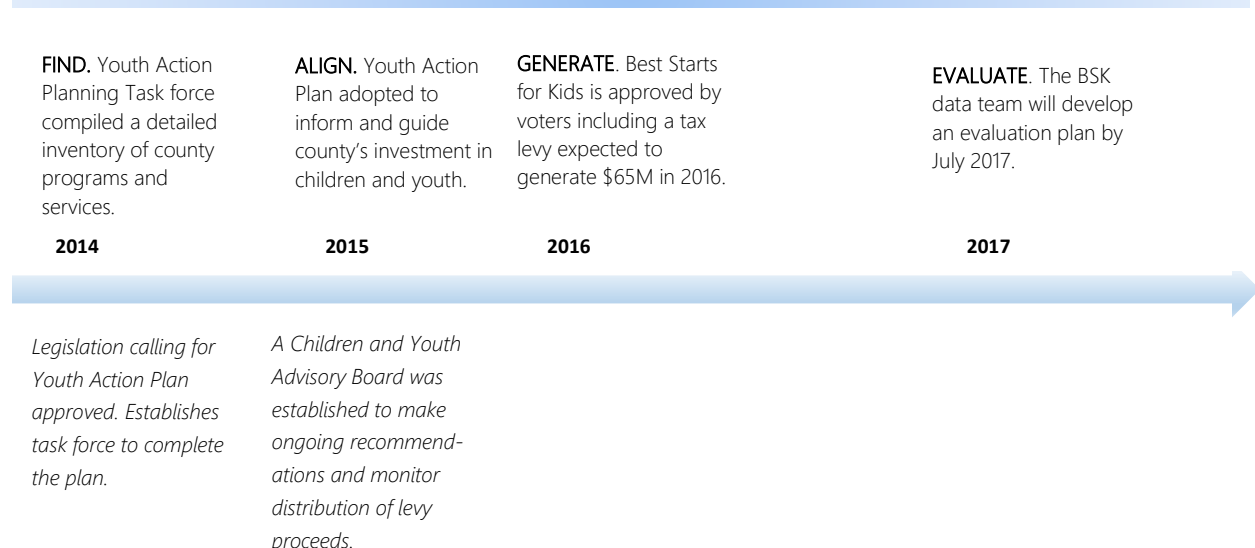
Denver is one of the most promising examples of connecting city priorities to data on child well-being and investments. This makes it a city to watch as more cities proactively address the need to grow local resources for child and youth services.

**K**ing County, Washington’s Executive Dow Constantine set out to tackle this challenge of funding children and youth services by championing [Best Starts for Kids](#), an initiative to invest in promotion, prevention and early intervention. With economically booming Seattle as its county seat, King County is doing well by many measures – health indicators are positive and unemployment is among the lowest in the nation. Yet there are some widening and troubling disparities in the county by race and neighborhood. Health outcomes vary widely by race and across communities in King County, as does high school graduation and income. Of the more than 80,000 net new households added in King County from 2000 to 2012, 96 percent have been from either the top or the bottom of the income spectrum, with only 4 percent of net new households earning between \$35K and \$125K annually.<sup>xv</sup> Moreover, King County historically has spent the majority of its funds on downstream interventions, through the justice, mental health and substance abuse systems.

It was against this backdrop that Executive Constantine proposed the Best Starts for Kids (BSK) initiative, as an opportunity to intentionally shift the way in which resources are allocated for children and youth and support the County’s ambitious equity and social justice goals. The King County Council adopted legislation to place Best Starts for Kids on the ballot and it was approved by voters in 2015. The ballot initiative authorizes a property tax levy for six years, starting at 14 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value increasing by up to 3 percent in the five succeeding years, for the purpose of funding prevention strategies to improve the health and well-being of children.

More than doubling the County’s investment in children and youth, the BSK fund will provide one of the most comprehensive approaches to childhood development in the nation, starting with prenatal support, sustaining support through the teenage years, and investing in safe, healthy communities for children, youth and families.

### King County’s Children’s Funding Development Timeline



Although the tasks in the find, align, generate, and evaluate framework can occur in any order, the story of King County's intentional collaboration to increase coordination of funds and improve effectiveness most closely follows this basic framework in that sequential order. Seizing several political opportunities – the reelection of an effective county executive, a thriving local economy, and a growing awareness of disparities – King County has used their recently-approved dedicated fund as an opportunity to transition more local efforts to upstream, prevention-focused solutions.

## CHILDREN'S FUNDING LEVERS

**Find.** In 2014, the King County Council commissioned a task force to develop a [comprehensive child and youth plan](#) for the county. One of the first tasks of the Youth Action Planning Task Force was to conduct a fiscal map mandated by the legislation. At the request of the Task Force, King County staff gathered information from all King County departments and agencies that might serve children, youth and their families. Departments and agencies were requested to submit a detailed inventory of programs and services for the 2013 year.

Data for over 300 programs were collected from nine of the county's departments and agencies. The Task Force collected a range of information on programs and services including funding sources, location and type of services, number of children and youth served, and performance metrics. Performance metrics and program type were used to get a baseline sense of how effectively investments were being allocated under a set of outcome areas.

Finding more than \$162 million for children and youth flowing within and through King County government in 2013, county officials assessed that 72 percent of these dollars came from federal, state, municipal or private sources and school districts rather than the county itself. This complex array of investment sources highlighted the importance of coordination and collaboration with a variety of implementation partners.

The fiscal scan showed that the remaining 28 percent of funding (\$45.5 million) included county-generated revenue from property taxes, sales taxes, and fees. The majority of these county-generated dollars were aimed at keeping

### Supportive Infrastructure

**Coordinating Bodies.** The Best Starts for Kids (BSK) plan included provisions for establishing a [Children and Youth Advisory Board](#) to make recommendations and monitor distribution of levy proceeds. The County Executive appointed 35 experts, researchers, and community leaders to this board. These individuals were selected based on their professionally, geographically, and culturally diverse perspectives. The Children and Youth Advisory Board provides oversight as the BSK fund grows and will provide data-informed direction to the county's future investments.

**Common Outcomes.** The King County Youth Action Planning Task Force outlined recommendations for data use in the [Youth Action Plan](#) after it noted that the county did not have commonly identified outcomes or outcome measures for children and youth. The Task Force brought together all County departments and agencies serving children, youth and families, and young adult population(s) to collectively:

- Identify and agree upon outcomes and indicators for populations served
- Collect data against identified outcomes and track and review outcomes, program measures, and quality improvement
- Work to obtain data for the 0-24 age range
- Shift to more robust performance measures.

Recognizing that its efforts to make effective investments that move outcomes would be hampered without a comprehensive, county-wide approach to data and outcome metrics for children and youth, the Task Force identified a common outcomes framework as a top priority. A full evaluation plan, in which common outcomes will be fully articulated, is forthcoming in 2017.

children and youth healthy and safe. The Task Force specifically found that 73 percent of the County's 2013 General Fund was allocated to support criminal justice activities, while only 4 percent supported health and human services functions. The fiscal scan further revealed that many of these funds had narrowly prescribed purposes, resulting in funding constraints and a lack of flexibility.

King County's fiscal mapping effort was a necessary step toward determining whether and how the county would shift its most flexible dollars – and, ultimately, how to build the case for a new source of dedicated funding.

**Align.** The Task Force developed a Youth Action Plan that outlined the key priorities of the county and action steps for coordinating county-wide activities to improve services and programs for children and youth. Immediately, the Task Force recognized that its many community efforts and initiatives were operating largely in siloes. The Youth Action Plan emerged out of a process to organize those programs, initiatives and goals into a collective impact approach.

The Youth Action Plan provided both internal recommendations for the county government and broader community recommendations for all actors to align their investments and their work. King County's commitment to invest in all of its young residents was reinforced by the work going on concurrently to develop an [Equity & Social Justice \(ESJ\) Strategic Plan](#), a guiding document to inform all of the county's strategic efforts. Championed by the County Executive, the county used the ESJ Strategic Plan to revisit funding allocations with the aim of repurposing dollars toward a greater range of services for children, youth and young adults. The reallocations would require changes to county-operated programs and community partner contracts. To garner buy-in and approval of the changes triggered by funding reallocations, the Task Force additionally engaged citizen oversight boards in each locality.

The county also focused on planning for the new, flexible funds being generated through Best Starts for Kids. New investments will be directed toward ensuring that King County can target priority outcome areas focused on reducing disparities. The new funding will be blended with existing funding and used to increase capacity across the county to serve more individuals and families.

King County is continuing to shift institutional practice and culture, collaboratively and transparently examining its practices, investments, and outcomes so that children, youth and families are served in the most effective and efficient ways possible. The county is also building on the work of existing coalitions, such as the [Road Map Project](#), [Eastside Pathways](#), and the [County's Community of Opportunity](#) initiative administered by the Department of Health and Human Services. King County has been working specifically on a plan to braid the newly-approved Best Starts for Kids property tax revenues with the newly-renewed [Mental Illness and Drug Dependency](#) sales tax revenues (which generate more than \$50 million) to fund holistic, intentional supports for children, youth and their families.

**Generate.** Approved by voters in 2015, the Best Starts for Kids fund is fueled by a six-year tax levy of 14 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value, which at an average cost of \$56 per year for homeowners is estimated to raise \$65 million in 2016 and nearly \$400 million over the six-year period. The revenue raised



from the fund is slated to provide screening to children to prevent potential problems, intervene early, and effectively link children and families to treatment. Additionally, the BSK funds will support caregivers and high-quality child care. A significant portion of the fund will target older youth as well, focusing on prevention programs that provide healthy and safe environments for youth and keep them connected to their communities and families.

Extensive community engagement was an essential component to successful passage of the BSK fund. The committee engaged a diverse range of stakeholders in the 39 cities within the county boundaries. Deep conversations about equity in this economically and racially diverse county preceded the vote along with robust engagement with the business community. The buy-in and alignment – around outcomes, equity, and use of data – achieved by the time this initiative came up for a vote helped to assure BSK’s passage.

BSK demonstrates the critical role that executive leadership plays both before and after the passage of a dedicated fund. BSK was developed under county leadership and was the result of thousands of hours of consultation with researchers and experts, as well as extensive engagement with community partners before the county was able to launch a successful campaign for a new, local dedicated fund.

The goals of the fund reflect those in the legislatively-enacted Youth Action Plan (2015), a data- and community stakeholder-driven comprehensive plan to improve child and youth outcomes in the county. This Youth Action Plan is the latest in a series of planning and improvement efforts aimed at assisting children and youth that King County has funded and participated in since the 1960s.

The Children and Youth Advisory Board was appointed to guide the direction and growth of the fund over time. The Board, composed of 35 appointed experts, researchers and community leaders, will make recommendations on allocations for the fund and monitor distribution of levy revenues.

**Evaluate.** A detailed BSK Evaluation and Performance Measurement Plan (outlined in the [Implementation Plan](#)) will be completed by July 2017 and transmitted to the King County Council, with updates as needed thereafter. The primary aim of evaluation and performance management will be to inform strategic learning and accountability so that the county can understand which strategies are effective and why, and hold providers accountable for the activities they were given funding to implement.

An evaluation advisory group, composed of the Children and Youth Advisory Board, a Science and Research Panel, and BSK partners and stakeholders, will enhance performance monitoring and evaluation. The evaluation advisory group will:

- Prioritize evaluation questions within allocated resources
- Develop logic models, indicators, performance measures and/or data collection protocols
- Review findings
- Develop dissemination materials.



The BSK evaluation will answer process and impact questions at three levels: population-level indicators of health and well-being; system-level improvement metrics; and program-level indicators of how many individuals were served and how well.

In developing the evaluation plan, key stakeholders identified a gap in existing measures. While strong data sources on children around the time of birth and in middle and high school are available, there were no existing population-level data sources for children in-between those ages. King County also began implementation of a new BSK Health Survey in the fall of 2016, and will repeat it every two years. Data from this survey will cover demographics, health status, access to preventative health care, family/community supports, childcare arrangements, as well as physical and emotional development.

King County serves as one of the best examples of a county fully embracing its role in a new American localism, and proactively taking action to meet the needs of its population. The county's intentionally-crafted, comprehensive strategy to generating funding for children and youth, championed by executive leadership, has been a catalyst for changing business as usual with services for children and youth.

# A Call to Action

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As the nation resets with a dramatic change in the direction of the federal government, local governments are rethinking their role in supporting their most vulnerable constituents. Now is the perfect time for children's advocates to mature from the "kids' table" to the "grown-up table" when it comes to negotiating budget fairness and opportunities for our children and youth to thrive and succeed. It is not enough to mean well in providing services and programs to children and youth – we know what works and should find ways to invest in it. Community leaders have to get savvy about the challenges and opportunities in the economic and political landscape, and it is our hope that the lessons from these five communities gives hope that this kind of intentional budget awareness and advocacy can pay off. As a field, we must all double down in our collective understanding of, and facility with, the tools and mechanisms available to support the financing of children and youth services – budget processes, tax law, polling, coalition-building, advocacy, campaigning, and evaluation strategies.

It can be a heavy lift for a community to make a significant shift in the way resources for children and youth are assessed, allocated, and created. However, one by one, communities around the country are engaging in this "new localism" – to sustain and expand funding for their youngest citizens. Today's challenges demand the most creative, innovative approaches, rooted in local communities, to help all children, youth and families thrive.

## FIND. ALIGN. GENERATE. EVALUATE: Checklists to Organize Your Work

**Find.** *The task of finding resources requires the capacity to identify, track, analyze, and forecast funding sources and funding needs for services that support children and youth. Two of the most common tools developed – children's budgets and fiscal maps – are effective for translating and communicating spending on children and youth by populations, services, and outcomes, rather than by siloes of individual department's budgets. Below we list key action steps and strategies for effectively finding funding.*

Action	Key Questions	Status
Convene and/or engage key budget holders	Have you gathered multiple agencies with key responsibilities for the well-being of children, youth and families? Have you consulted and engaged top agency budget holders to inform the task of identifying the relevant <i>existing</i> funds?	
Create a uniform reporting process	Have you developed a common framework based on child and youth outcomes for reporting budget information that can be used across departments? Have you addressed how you will address variation in how different departments organize, report and present their budgets as it relates to investments in children, youth and families?	
Define the parameters and scope of the effort	Have you determined the scope of your effort to identify and assess investments in children, youth and families? Have you determined whether this effort will be broadly focused on all youth, or limited to fewer populations of focus? Have you determined what kind of information you want to know about relevant funding streams – e.g., flexibility, change in funding amounts over time, purpose?	
Identify relevant budget lines	Have you identified which budget lines in each department fit the parameters of your current resource finding effort? Have you identified and developed relationships with insiders that can help navigate and interpret budget lines?	
Assess local capacity to manage the effort	Have you identified an entity or individual (often a consultant) that has the time and expertise to conduct an investigation of the budgets under review?	
Cultivate a broad coalition for children and youth	Have you engaged a coalition to look at existing resources together? Have you identified and reached out to new partners not traditionally associated with issues related to children and youth? Have you brought together the various coalitions working on children and youth issues?	
Build understanding of the budget process	Have you developed strategies and tools for increasing various stakeholders' understanding of the budget process, and where the opportunities for influencing the process exist?	
Determine how information will be shared	Do you have a plan for how and with whom you want to share information? Do you know how you want the information to be used? Have you determined which formats for presenting information best suit your goals?	
Make a plan for updates	Have you determined your plans, if any, for updating this information? Has an entity with the capacity to maintain and update information been identified? Has local government institutionalized the children's budget analysis?	

For further guidance in helping your community effectively **find resources**, we recommend:

- *Adding It Up: A Guide for Mapping Public Resources for Children, Youth and Families*, designed to clarify the process of creating and implementing an effective resource map for children, youth and families. The guide and related materials are available on the [Forum's website](#).
- Forum for Youth Investment and Child Trends created this guide to help leaders develop common language, outcomes and indicators. [Developing Outcomes and Indicators Guide](#)

**Align.** Localities are finding that in order to address gaps and overlaps in investments in child and youth services, agencies and advocates must be prepared to make adjustments in how funding is allocated, managed, and accounted for within and across programs and systems. Blending, braiding, flexibility and waivers describe the types of decisions or requests that could be made to allow for the better alignment and use of current resources to achieve better results.

Action	Key Questions	Status
Communicate broadly about opportunities and gaps in existing resources	Have you communicated budget information, by outcome, to a broad range of stakeholders? Has the community weighed in on the gaps and opportunities they see based on shared information about investments?	
Reconcile different reporting processes between departments	How will you address variation in the way different departments organize, procure, report and present their budgets as it relates to investments in children, youth and families?	
Engage non-traditional departments	Have you looked at opportunities to align areas of work with funding streams administered by non-traditional departments (e.g., transportation, security)?	
Blend or braid multiple funding sources	Have you determined where there may be opportunities to blend funding from multiple sources into one pot? Or at least braid funding from different sources together for a common purpose to address specific gaps and overlaps?	
Build transparency, accountability and trust	Have you identified areas for improving transparency, accountability and trust across departments that have different priorities and cultures? Do you have agreements in place that address transparency and accountability?	
Use community needs assessments	Have you used existing community needs assessments to identify potential areas for funding alignment?	
Use local dollars as flexibly as possible	Have you assessed the flexibility of your locally-generated revenue streams to use for a range of purposes as the community determines?	
Assess feasibility of applying for and/or creating flexibility waivers	Have you assessed the feasibility of applying for state or federal flexibility waivers and/or creating flexibility waivers at the local level in exchange for performance?	
Create agreements to enhance coordination between funding streams	Do agencies use MOUs or create joint RFPs that help make better sense of funding between them and to assist local providers to do the same?	
Plan for how new funds will be aligned with existing funding	Do you intentionally align new funding brought into the community with the larger goals and outcomes that have been set?	
Establish technical assistance to help providers leverage, blend, and braid funding	Is there a technical assistance entity that can help providers navigate opportunities to blend, braid and leverage existing and new potential sources of funding?	
Invest in public/private partnerships that help maximize and leverage dollars	Are private funders engaged in local conversations about financing children's services? If so, has the community identified specific areas in which public/private partnerships can help increase the community's collective ability to maximize existing funding streams and garner additional ones?	

For additional information on better **alignment of existing resources** to improve results, we recommend:

- The State Children's Cabinets and Councils series, published by the Forum for Youth Investment, captures and organizes the decisions and experiences of children's cabinets and councils and provides an emerging set of expectations for these bodies. This series is available on the [Forum's website](#).
- The Spark Policy Institute's guide on blending and braiding funding provides step-by-step instructions on this complicated topic. [This guide](#) can be retrieved through Coact Colorado, an initiative of the Colorado Department of Human Services.

**Generate.** Resource mapping and alignment can create efficiencies but can also shine a light on deep gaps. In response, local governments can create a locally-raised, dedicated public funding stream, typically via a ballot initiative. This can be an effective way to raise awareness and support for child and youth services as well as generate new revenue to fund these services. Between \$15 and \$100 million annually have been generated by each of the five localities highlighted in this report through small increases in sales, property, and other taxes. This approach has three strong advantages when implemented thoughtfully: security, stability and flexibility.

Action	Key Questions	Status
Staff and fund the campaign	Have you engaged local funders, businesses and large non-profits to fund a coordinating position and provide startup up resources to develop the campaign?	
Research the history of local ballot measures	Do you know and understand the history of local ballot measures, and the current political landscape?	
Know what's needed	Have you assessed how many kids need services and what it would cost to serve them?	
Determine where there are existing allies and build on it	Have you determined where there is already strong support for a local dedicated fund for children and youth? Do you know where other partners might exist? Have you reached out to them to understand their interests and motivations?	
Determine the public will	Have you conducted a poll of the broader public to determine the level of public interest and will behind a local dedicated fund? Do you know which are the preferred issues, preferred types of tax and particular political challenges?	
Understand the limitations and opportunities in state law	Do you know how state law might impact what's possible? Are there restrictions on the kind or amount of revenue that can be generated by localities for your intended purposes?	
Align dedicated funding campaign to community priorities	Have you reached out to various constituencies to determine the biggest priorities for supporting children and youth?	
Determine which specific revenue generation options are feasible	Have you determined or narrowed down the options for generating local dedicated funds? Have you fully laid out how specific revenue generation options would work?	
Plan for the accountability structure	Do you know what accountability structure will work best in your local context? Is it inside a department, a separate appointed board, a children's cabinet? Have you communicated this to the public?	
Develop targeted messages to raise awareness and support	Have you developed a targeted messaging strategy to educate the public about the need for a local dedicated fund? Are you clear about what that messaging needs to be?	
Cultivate champions	Have you cultivated champions – both within executive leadership positions and among advocates – who can carry the message and support effective implementation of the fund?	
Create a baseline budget for children and youth	Sustaining and protecting children's funding over time is an important long-term strategy – have you developed a baseline budget for children and youth that cannot be supplanted or decreased?	
Develop a plan for continued public engagement	Have you developed a plan to continue to engage the public on the issues that the fund was intended to address? Is that communication plan tied to a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the investment?	

For additional guidance on strategies to **generate new dollars** for local programs and services for children, youth and families, we recommend two resources:

- The Forum hosted a [webinar](#) in September 2015 on *Developing a Public Local Dedicated Funding Stream for Children and Youth* featuring Margaret Brodtkin and Elizabeth Gaines.
- Funding the Next Generation, a California-based group focused on helping localities launch campaigns to generate dedicated funding for children, youth and families, created a guide, *Creating Local Dedicated Funding Streams for Kids*, which offers practical guidance to help local communities create stable funding through a local ballot measure. The [guide](#) can be downloaded from the Funding the Next Generation website.

**Evaluate.** Communities have multiple opportunities to increase the return on investment in children and youth programs. Those include: reallocation of existing investments toward evidence-based programs, supporting continuous quality improvement of home grown approaches, building effective cross-agency data tracking systems and over time rigorously evaluating programs. Dedicated funding streams often require reauthorization – evaluation of the effectiveness of those funds provide leverage in reauthorization campaigns.

Action	Key Questions	Status
Tie investments to clear, long-term goals	Have you articulated the goals for child and youth outcomes that you want a coordinated funding approach to improve? Have you established basic connections – via the way you approach public messaging, data-tracking, and/or evaluation – between investments and long-range goals?	
Establish a system for tracking short-term outcomes	Have you established a system for tracking short-term outcomes that you believe will ultimately get you to the long range goals??	
Engage community stakeholders in informing accountability mechanisms	Have you engaged the community in informing the focus of evaluation and the accountability mechanisms for reporting over time? Have you established rules or guidelines for program providers on when and how accountability mechanisms kick in?	
Build and use evidence	Are you building local evidence by evaluating programs? Are you funding already proven evidence based programs in your work?	
Develop a manageable system for reporting and tracking performance	Have you established a sustainable system for reporting and tracking performance? Do you have entities or systems that have the capacity to collect and analyze these data?	
Track how well investments are reaching highest need populations	Do you have sophisticated enough tracking mechanisms to be able to discern where investments can make the most difference? Can you disaggregate data by sub-group, by neighborhood to analyze investments and their impact on outcomes?	
Establish technical assistance to help providers serving the most vulnerable gain access to funding sources	Have you identified technical assistance partners with the expertise to help ensure that providers serving the most vulnerable populations have fair and equitable access to available funding sources?	
Consider opportunities for Pay for Success initiatives	Pay for Success initiatives present an opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of innovative approaches. Are you collecting data in such a way to capitalize on potential opportunities that require evidence of success in order to activate them?	

For additional information on **evaluating your community's efforts to invest** in children, youth and families, we recommend the following resources:

- The Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County has published a book *The Journey to Evidence-Based Programming: Changing the Face of Social Services* summarizing the link between program effectiveness and a community's investments. A PDF version of the book is available [online](#).
- Results for America's report, *Local Governments' Use of Evidence in Policymaking*, outlines what local governments can do to use data and evidence to understand which policies and programs are working and whether public resources are being spent effectively and efficiently. The guide is available on the [Results for America website](#).
- Social Finance US has developed a report [New Tools to Amplify Impact](#) that outlines how Pay for Success can help build nonprofit capacity and then lays out steps to beginning a feasibility study.

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- <sup>i</sup> Putnam, Robert. (2015). *Our kids: the American dream in crisis*. New York, NY: Simon & Shuster.
- <sup>ii</sup> For example, see: Gallup Organization. (2014, September 8). In U.S., 70% favor federal funds to expand pre-K education. Washington, DC: Gallup. Retrieved at: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/175646/favor-federal-funds-expand-pre-education.aspx>
- <sup>iii</sup> Carter, P. & Welner, K. (2013). *Closing the opportunity gap: what America must do to give every child an even chance*. New York: NY, Oxford University Press.
- <sup>iv</sup> Edelstein, S., Hahn, H., Isaacs, J., Steele, E., & Steuerle, E. (2016). *Kids' share 2016: federal expenditures on children through 2015 and future projections*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.
- <sup>v</sup> Edelstein, S., Hahn, H., Isaacs, J., Steele, E., & Steuerle, E. (2016). *Kids' share 2016: federal expenditures on children through 2015 and future projections*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.
- <sup>vi</sup> First Focus (2016). *Children's Budget 2016*. Washington, DC: First Focus. Retrieved at: <https://firstfocus.org/resources/report/childrens-budget-2016/>
- <sup>vii</sup> For example, see: Leachman, M., Masterson, K., & Wallace, M. (2016, October 20). *After nearly a decade, school investments still way down in some states*. Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Retrieved at: <http://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/after-nearly-a-decade-school-investments-still-way-down-in-some-states>
- <sup>viii</sup> For example, see: Katz, B. & Jones, A. (2016, June 14). *How "new localism" is democratizing urban growth*. Washington, DC: Brookings. Retrieved at: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/metropolitan-revolution/2016/06/14/how-new-localism-is-democratizing-urban-growth/>
- <sup>ix</sup> The Children's Cabinet Network, managed by the Forum for Youth Investment, is the only national network of policy coordinating bodies for children and youth (Children's Cabinets, P-20 Councils, Early Childhood Advisory Councils). Members of the Network share best practices and learn more about tools that focus on bringing efficiency and effectiveness to their efforts to improve outcomes for young people.
- <sup>x</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2015). *2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.
- <sup>xi</sup> Information about the Children's Budget can be found on pages 150 - 156 in the San Francisco Proposed Budget for 2016-2017 & 2017-2018. Retrieved at: [http://sfmayor.org/ftp/Budget2016/CSF\\_Budget\\_Book\\_2016\\_FINAL\\_WEB\\_with%20cover%20page.pdf](http://sfmayor.org/ftp/Budget2016/CSF_Budget_Book_2016_FINAL_WEB_with%20cover%20page.pdf)
- <sup>xii</sup> San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families. (2016). *2016 community needs assessment: a snapshot of San Francisco's children and families*. San Francisco: DCYF. Retrieved at: <http://dcyf.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=4470>
- <sup>xiii</sup> For more about these data, see the St. Charles Community Impact reports. These can be retrieved at: <http://www.stcharlescountykids.org/community-impact/>
- <sup>xiv</sup> For more information about the status of Denver children and youth, including neighborhood characteristics, see the Denver Office of Children's Affairs Facts and Statistics retrieved at: <https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/office-of-childrens-affairs/resources/maps-and-data.html>
- <sup>xv</sup> Capestany, S. & Gaines, E. (2016, October 3). *Investing in kids: a winning proposition*. Washington, DC: National Association of Counties. Retrieved at: <http://www.naco.org/articles/investing-kids-winning-proposition>