

The Children's Funding Project





Fact Sheet for Funders

The Forum for Youth Investment's Children's Funding Project works with communities in their efforts to find, align, generate and evaluate sustainable funding for children and youth and expand investments that meet local needs.

Over the past decade, the sustainability of services and supports for vulnerable children and families in cities and counties nationwide has been challenged by the uncertainty of state and federal grants. Localities are increasingly shouldering the task of ensuring sufficient, well-manage, and sustainable financial support for critical children's programs and services. Local philanthropists are well-positioned to supply the "glue" that deepens and improves existing services for vulnerable children and families and to incubate innovative new, local approaches. They should not, however, be expected to fund direct services on the ground singlehandedly. This is where locally generated dedicated children's funds can reinforce philanthropic investments.

The Children's Funding Project at the Forum for Youth Investment was established to track, document and provide technical assistance to communities employing strategies to more effectively leverage and manage existing local funding sources or to generate new revenues. Through this work the Forum has identified four levers that lead to success in sustaining local children's funding. Below are action steps that funders can take to support localities in pulling each of these key levers

The role of funders – how can you most effectively contribute?

Lever	How funders can support comprehensive financing of children's services
 <p>FIND</p> <p>Develop the capacity to rigorously identify, track, analyze and forecast funding sources and funding needs for services that support children and youth.</p>	<p>Commission a fiscal map to identify and clarify existing public and private funds and their purpose.</p> <p>Convene a budget-holders advisory group to conduct a fiscal map for coordinated decision-making.</p>
 <p>ALIGN</p> <p>Address gaps and overlaps in the existing funding landscape; Local government and private funders must be prepared to make adjustments in how funding is allocated, managed and accounted for within agencies.</p>	<p>Commission the development of a strategic financing plan (guided by the fiscal map) to fill gaps and eliminate redundancies.</p> <p>Convene partnership meetings to align programs and funding and create a master plan for children and youth.</p>
 <p>GENERATE</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Fund the coalition-building, polling, messaging, and public education required to successfully establish a local dedicated children's fund via ballot measure.</p> <p>Convene other funders to support a collective approach to establishing a local dedicated children's fund.</p>
 <p>EVALUATE</p> <p>Adopt methods to measure the impact of local investments.</p>	<p>Support continuous quality improvement efforts to ensure program outcomes.</p> <p>Commission evaluations to study the effectiveness of public investments.</p>

Learn more about supporting new locally generated funds on the flip side of this page!

GENERATE: At the forefront of localities effectively leveraging local children’s funding are jurisdictions that are making the case directly to the voters for generating new funds. Cities and counties across the nation are asking voters to pass ballot initiatives that levy taxes to create dedicated local children’s funds. A dedicated fund is a pool of funds obtained by the government that is intentionally set up to provide funding for a specific purpose; our focus is on funds set up to benefit youth services and programs. These funds provide stable, long-term investments in building strong infrastructure to support children and youth.

Potential for Success

Locally-generated children’s funds have immense potential to provide stable and sustainable financing to children’s programs. Everyone – local funders, policymakers, providers and the public – plays a role in incubating the success of campaigns to establish such a fund, and the payout can be tremendous.



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1 BILLION DOLLARS
of revenue for child-serving
programs generated annually



The same amount as
the federal \$ allocated
to the 21st Century
Community Learning
Centers program -
dollars at risk of being
defunded!



100 IF 100
ADDITIONAL
LOCALITIES
launch similar
successful campaigns

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4 BILLION DOLLARS
IN NEW FUNDS
could be generated



These funds can
then be used to
leverage additional
federal, state and
private dollars.

Local Funder Spotlight: Community Foundation of Broward County

If you are a local private philanthropist, it is important to understand the legalities, regulations and limitations as well as the fiscal return on investment inherent in supporting a children’s fund. The Community Foundation of Broward County (Florida) played a critical role in leveraging philanthropic dollars to support the development of a local dedicated children’s fund.

A public children’s fund affords local philanthropists the opportunity to leverage innovative efforts and invest their dollars into system-, evidence- and capacity-building rather than paying for direct services year after year. After decades of more traditional grant-making, the Community Foundation of Broward County grew increasingly interested in investing more of their dollars into sustainable, capacity-building efforts that would close the growing gap between kids from wealthy and low-income families.

To make this shift in how its dollars were used, the Community Foundation recognized it had to invest in supporting the children’s fund via ballot measure. While foundations cannot earmark grants to directly influence ballot measures, they can pursue a range of activities that support intermediaries and backbone organizations in their efforts to mobilize public will around support for children’s

programs and provide nonpartisan education to the public on key issues. Additionally, the Foundation’s board voted to change its by-laws so that they could more actively engage in building the case for reauthorization of the Children’s Services Council tax levy, which would generate \$70 million annually for Broward County kids.

This ballot initiative received over 76 percent voter support for the locally-controlled, dedicated children’s fund. As a result of this funding effort 150,000 kids receive services and supports to be healthier and more socially connected, and the broader community is equipped with advocacy strategies that are aligned with a forward-thinking investment approach and community-wide vision for Broward County children and youth.

The Children’s Funding Project is the Forum for Youth Investment’s commitment to work with citizens and local policymakers to find, align, generate, and evaluate funding streams in their communities to support dedicated children’s funds. We are able to help communities link to reliable resources and partners; facilitate hard discussions around fiscal maps which illustrate the current fiscal health of a community and contribute years of experience to community discussions around children’s funds.

Interested in championing the development of a dedicated local children’s fund in your community?
Contact Elizabeth Gaines at Elizabeth@forumfyi.org or 202.207.3335