



Children's Cabinet Network and Children's Funding Project

When budgets are tight, families count on leaders to make smart decisions that will be more efficient while also improving outcomes for children and youth. Governors and mayors across the country utilize cross-agency coordinating bodies, often called Children's Cabinets, to help meet this growing demand and change the fragmented ways that states typically do business. Currently, dozens of localities and more than 40 states have a children's cabinet of some kind.

Successful Children's Cabinets bring efficiency and effectiveness to state and city government efforts to improve child and youth outcomes. The Forum for Youth Investment is the only organization dedicated to helping the staff that lead these efforts connect with their peers and get tailored supports.

Over the past two years, interest in creating local and county level Children's Cabinets has grown, in part because local leaders are motivated not just by the value of creating shared agendas and coordinating efforts across agencies, but because they are looking for ways to stabilize funding for children's services in what most perceive to be challenging times. The Forum has done two things in response to this push:

- Stepped up our capacity to find and support local Children's Cabinets.
- Developed a framework, tools and supports for the growing number of cities looking to find ways to effectively leverage existing resources or to generate new revenues. This new project, the Children's Funding Project, builds directly on the work the Forum has been doing to help local governments create strong coordinating structures and rally their communities around shared goals for children, youth and their families.

Join the Network

Funding from the Annie E. Casey, Kresge and Doris Duke Charitable Foundations allows us to manage the Children's Cabinet Network, the only national network of policy coordinating bodies for children and youth. 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.

Network Supports Include:

- Regular peer-to-peer conference calls on topics members identify
- The Youth Policy News newsletter with updates on federal opportunities, and peer success stories
- A biennial issues and capacities survey that lets them compare their approaches with peers
- Publications on topics of interest to Children's Cabinets
- Invitations to roundtable discussions, trainings and meetings with federal policymakers
- Q & A coaching to cabinets in formation or transition

Stabilize Local Funding

The Forum has developed a series of materials and opportunities, to help local leaders find, align, generate, and evaluate strategic funding sources. "Funding Brighter Futures: How Local Governments are Enhancing Investments in Kids," was released at a December 2016 convening of thought leaders hosted by the Forum and the Brookings Institution. These resources are all now available on our website at www.forumfyi.org/CFP.

Get Strategic Support

Many Children's Cabinets find that they need assistance as their efforts get started and staff gets up to speed, or realize that they are stuck on an issue and need neutral outside facilitation from someone who understands how to strengthen partnerships within the complex realities of public policy and agencies. Elizabeth Gaines, senior fellow with the Forum, co-founded the Children's Cabinet Network and has more than a decade of experience working with cabinet members and staff. With the support of a growing team, Gaines helps Children's Cabinets solve thorny problems and develop big visions. Services most in demand include:

- » New staff orientations and facilitated planning retreats
- » Ongoing coaching
- » Cross-agency policy scans
- » Population- or issue focused fiscal mapping
- » Development of comprehensive finance plans
- » Guidance on effective ballot measures and polling



If you are interested in learning more, please contact Elizabeth Gaines at elizabeth@forumfyi.org



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