

Policy Alignment Initiative

It's well known that no single support or program is enough to ensure children and youth are on track developmentally, educationally, socially and emotionally. Unfortunately, the manner in which rules, regulations and government structures are crafted makes it difficult for leaders to create and implement coordinated programs and services that address the comprehensive needs of young people. But there is much that can be done to simplify and untangle the patchwork of rigid policies and funding streams so they are more efficient and effective.

The Policy Alignment Team

The Forum for Youth Investment's policy staff work with federal, state and local leaders to assess and align government policies horizontally (i.e., across systems) and vertically (i.e., between levels of government from local to federal). Over the past 10 years, Thaddeus Ferber and Elizabeth Gaines, joined by Sara Matthew, have increasingly trained their research, facilitation and advocacy skills on one task: promoting the art and science of policy alignment.

Signature Initiative: Performance Partnership Pilots (P3) Launch Project

P3 provides selected local, tribal and state agencies broad flexibility in how they use discretionary federal funds in exchange for improved outcomes for disconnected youth.

In 2011, the Obama administration provided an opportunity to address the policy quagmire when it invited ideas for creating "administrative flexibility." The Policy Alignment team organized comments from state Children's Cabinets on current barriers, ran an unofficial pilot to demonstrate the potential of a pilot waiver program, crafted language for the P3 proposal and advocated for its passage. Once the legislation was approved, the team sought resources to engage localities and states to explain the P3 initiative and ensure there were strong proposals. In partnership with Jobs for the Futures, the Forum is providing technical assistance to the first cohort of sites.

Policy Alignment Resources

Thanks to generous funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Kresge Foundation and others, the Policy Alignment team has been able to create a rich set of resources and supports offered at a low cost to federal, state and local policymakers, program administrators and advocates. The Children's Cabinet Network is one of the oldest and most visible resources this team has created, but not the only one. Others include:

- **Policy Alignment publications** including major reports such as "How Public Policies Can Support Collective Impact" co-authored with FSG; and the "Adding It Up Guide to Mapping Public Resources for Children, Youth and Families", with the Finance Project.
- **Youth Policy News** a monthly e-newsletter highlighting innovative youth-focused policy work across the country and federal opportunities.
- **Webinars and workshops** on topics such as Creating Local Dedicated Funds for Children & Youth and Identifying Policy Barriers & Building Partnership Capacity.
- **Annual Policy Alignment Summits** that bring together federal, state and local policy leaders and administrators to delve into specific alignment issues.
- **Fee-for-Service Technical Assistance** in areas such as developing common goals and shared data, generating comprehensive children and youth action plans, and mapping fiscal resources and policies for young people.



Interested in learning more? Please contact Thaddeus Ferber (thaddeus@forumfyi.org) and, based upon your interest, he'll connect you with the right person on the team.