

2017 State Policy Survey: Child and Youth Policy Coordinating Bodies in the U.S.

Summary of Findings

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The Forum for Youth Investment

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Foreword

Effective, coordinated state-level systems to support our most vulnerable children and youth have never been more important, as responsibilities increasingly devolve from the federal government to the states. In managing the Children's Cabinet Network over the last 13 years, I have witnessed and participated in the establishment, growth, development and occasionally demise of many state coordinating bodies for children. We continue to expand the knowledge about what works and share it with children's cabinets and councils through both this report and through regular interaction with coordinating body staff and leadership across the country. These individuals are responsible for holding in place a vision of a more coordinated and aligned system of government supports for children and youth across the nation.

This is the fourth time since 2011 that the Forum for Youth Investment has conducted the biennial State Policy Survey. Over this time, our perspective on the obligation of state children's cabinets and coordinating bodies to improve all of the systems that serve children and youth from birth to young adulthood has not wavered. However, focusing on a spectrum this broad can be daunting and understandably many of the coordinating bodies that we surveyed find themselves picking and choosing specific initiatives of focus despite bold, comprehensive visions.

In previous years we dissuaded coordinating bodies from focusing on narrow initiatives. Children's cabinets are still the only place where siloed state government agencies come together to get smarter, more efficient and more effective in taking a developmental approach to young people. If certain ages and developmental domains are excluded from this work, these efforts will be less successful in impacting children and youth. If you are a parent, all you need to do is imagine what would happen if you did not have time or energy to pay attention to the social development of your middle schooler or the vocational readiness of your high schooler. However, in recent years we have adopted the compromise position that cabinets should set a broad vision, track data on the full spectrum and if they must pick specific initiatives, always present that work as it relates to the broader vision and context. Using narrower initiatives as an opportunity for a cabinet to roll up its sleeves and practice using the muscles that help them coordinate across the entire pipeline from birth to young adulthood is not a bad idea as long as you keep in mind that as you zoom in, you have to occasionally zoom back out.

As the only national network of state policy coordinating bodies for children and youth (i.e., children's cabinets, commissions, P-20 councils and early childhood advisory councils), the Children's Cabinet Network operates on a nonpartisan basis. This is particularly important in such a politically divided time; the well-being of children and youth remains a non-partisan issue, as demonstrated by the number of coordinating bodies in Republican-led (28) and Democratic-led (12) administrations.

One trend we are experiencing is an increasing number of local leaders (mayors and county executives) seeking out children's cabinets as a strategy. Cities and counties are perhaps most directly feeling the effects of devolution of responsibility from the federal government and of the nation's opportunity divide and, as a result, are stepping in to take the lead on a comprehensive approach to promoting equitable opportunities for children and youth. The Forum is beginning to document the work of those local cabinets and will be sharing our learning on those bodies in subsequent reports.

In service with you for better policies for children and youth,

Elizabeth Gaines
Senior Fellow
Forum for Youth Investment

Key Findings

- ***Incorporation of Equity Into Efforts of Coordinating Bodies***

Many coordinating bodies are reporting the use of disaggregated data to understand current challenges and drive future steps to increase equity. Some locations are reporting programs like anti-racism training to promote equity and inclusion. Although only a handful of coordinating bodies have successfully passed policies cementing equitable practices, this update is promising and will be carefully monitored over the next year to identify trends.

- ***Consolidation of Coordinating Bodies***

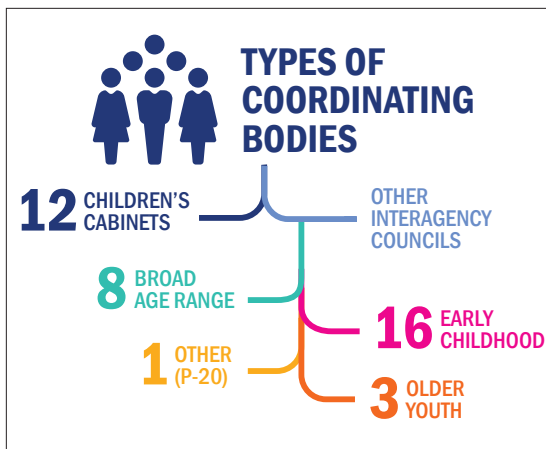
The survey received responses from a wider variety of states but with fewer responses from each state. This suggests that state coordinating bodies have continued to consolidate internally, while simultaneously expanding to more states. This is a departure from the 2015 survey results which recorded an increase in the number of coordinating bodies per state. This trend is hopefully a measure of states improving coordination efforts.

- ***Use of Data and Evidence to Drive Results and Goals***

As reported in previous years, the majority of coordinating bodies continue to use data to drive decisions. However, this year's survey data suggests a more balanced use of both child and youth indicator data and program performance measure data, as compared to a heavy reliance on child and youth indicator data in 2015. Several coordinating bodies also reported a focus on integrating existing data systems in an effort to coordinate and more efficiently utilize existing data, rather than collecting, and then underutilizing, new data.

- ***Shifts in Challenges Reported by States***

The percent of bodies reporting funding as a major challenge to their work has increased in the past year. This issue will likely be a reoccurring obstacle and therefore warrants focus for solving. Insufficient political support and inability to implement policy based on best practices are also top challenges. Political support was a top concern in 2015, but implementing policy has risen to a top focus.



Children's cabinets are often established by a governor through executive order or legislation. Membership usually consists of the heads of children- and youth-serving departments without significant outside membership in order for state agency leaders to collaborate on policy decision making. Children's cabinets typically focus on a broad set of outcomes and ages.

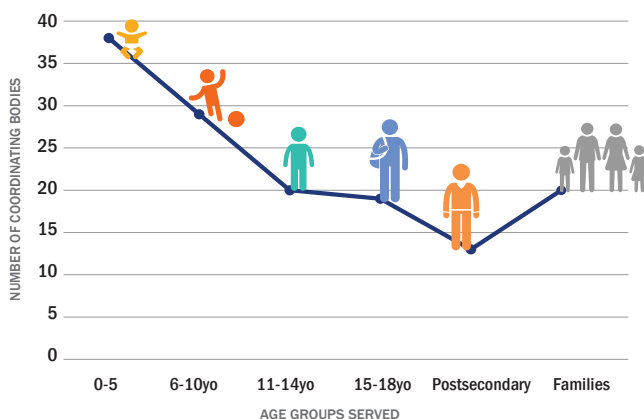
Interagency councils and commissions tend to have the widest range of stakeholder membership, ranging from state agency career staff to community representatives to legislators themselves. These coordinating bodies tend to have a more narrow focus on a specific population, developmental stage or type of service.

Early childhood councils were primarily established to respond to federal legislation calling for early childhood advisory councils. These types of coordinating bodies tend to have a broad spectrum of membership comprised of agency leaders, private service providers and philanthropy, and focus primarily on children aged 0-8 and their families.

Forty coordinating bodies from 32 states completed this year's survey. The majority of respondents were from Early Childhood Councils (16), followed by traditional Children's Cabinets (12), Interagency Councils and Commissions on issues from birth to adulthood (8), Interagency Councils and Commissions focused on older youth (3) and P-20 Councils (1). A quarter of the respondents reported two or more coordinating bodies. The Forum for Youth Investment believes that there is value in aligning the work of multiple coordinating bodies in a given state.

Ages and Outcome Areas

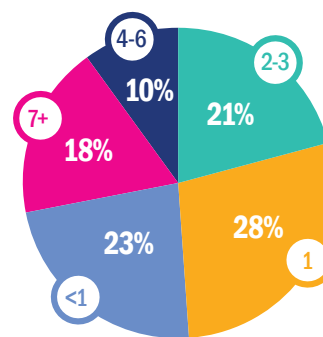
More than 90 percent of coordinating bodies focused on multiple outcome areas, which the Forum commends due to our belief that support systems can have the greatest impact on young people by adopting a blended approach that targets multiple needs. The majority of survey respondents reported **academic** and **social/emotional/behavioral** well-being as the focus of their child and youth coordinating bodies. A smaller number of respondents reported a focus on **vocational** and **cultural/civic development**, both of which tend to be geared specifically towards older youth. Developmental science suggests that we can expect the best results when we focus on children of all ages and attend to all of their developmental needs.



Ages Groups Served: Reported ages served is highest at early childhood, and lowest for high schoolers and postsecondary/work-aged youth.

Staffing

Over time, the Forum has noted a strong correlation between the success of a coordinating body and the stability of its staff support. Having at least one full-time staff member dedicated exclusively to the coordinating body strongly correlates with its longevity. Coordinating bodies with six or more full-time staff are better positioned to support a broader scope of work than just policy alignment and coordination. They are sometimes able to incubate collaborative initiatives and programs that can eventually be housed in a member agency.

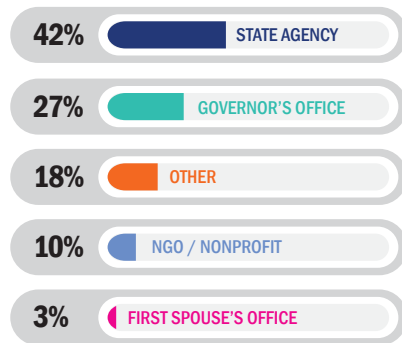


Full-Time Staff: Most coordinating bodies are staffed by one or more full-time employees (FTEs), and one-quarter are staffed by four or more.

Organizational Home

The majority of survey respondents reported that their coordinating bodies are housed in individual agencies. Embedding a coordinating body in an agency outside of the governor's office can be favorable from a sustainability perspective because it provides a layer of protection for the body through gubernatorial transitions. However, a

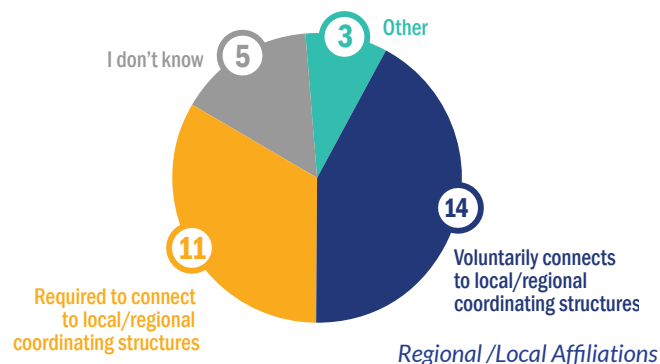
coordinating body housed in an individual agency may find it more difficult to act as a neutral convener, making it more challenging to engage other state agencies in the coordinating body's work. A third group of coordinating bodies are housed in "other" entities, such as quasi-governmental structures. The Forum typically recommends creating a cabinet or council in legislation (to ensure sustainability) and housing it within a governor's office (to ensure neutrality and to benefit from the leadership of the state's highest executive official).



State-to-Local Connections

Rarely do child and youth policy coordinating bodies have the time and energy needed to successfully achieve vertical alignment, i.e., the connection and alignment of work between the federal, state, and local levels. More than half of respondents indicated that they are either mandated or voluntarily connecting to local coordinating bodies in an effort to improve systems of support for children and youth at the most local level.

Requiring states to connect with local/regional coordinating structures can ensure that communication between the state and local levels takes place, but may impose rigid standards that limit flexibility. There are only a handful of states that provide the necessary resources in the state budget to support a formal state-to-local infrastructure. Some states voluntarily coordinate with local/regional bodies because they see the value in having a direct link to what is happening on the ground with children and youth. This approach may provide flexibility but doesn't ensure full engagement of all parts of the state, and so a state may end up with a coalition of only the willing local partners.



Members

As we look back at the 2015 State Children's Cabinet survey responses, two trends emerge. While K-12 education and human services continue to be the most commonly represented groups, fewer coordinating bodies report membership by higher education stakeholders than in previous years. This trend can be explained by the increased prevalence of early learning councils in this year's survey, which is indicative of a national trend of focusing on younger children. Six coordinating bodies reported membership by judiciary stakeholders and 16 reported having legislators as members, but only two coordinating bodies reported membership from both. Official membership is only as effective as the level of member participation. Therefore, staff of coordinating bodies can be most effective by nurturing consistent engagement of the designated members.

TIPS FOR ENGAGING MEMBERS:



TRAVEL:

- Move meeting location to different parts of the state each month
- Confirm attendance ahead and coordinate travel or logistics between members



ASK:

- Ask for feedback about what could improve value of meetings
- Find out why they're not coming
- Try one-on-one conversations and build personal connections



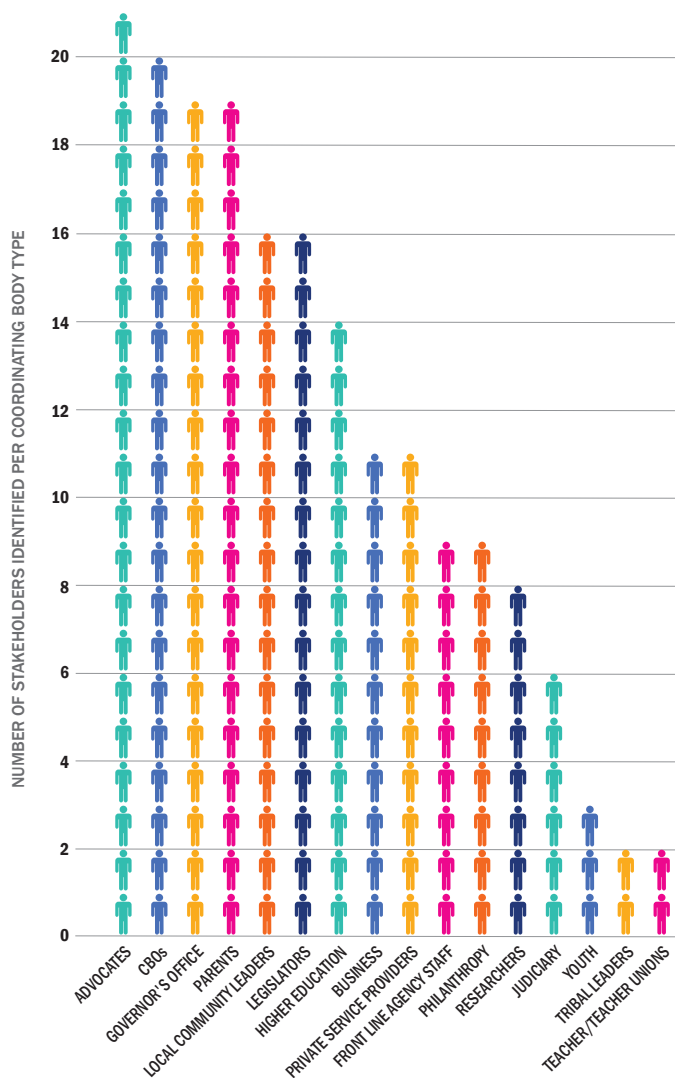
FOOD:

- Surprisingly, sometimes all it takes is a few treats! Food can incentivize attendance and improve attitudes

Other Stakeholders

In addition to the leaders of public agencies or departments, many coordinating bodies engage a broader set of stakeholders. By doing so, more perspectives are represented and the coordinating body may achieve higher levels of cross-

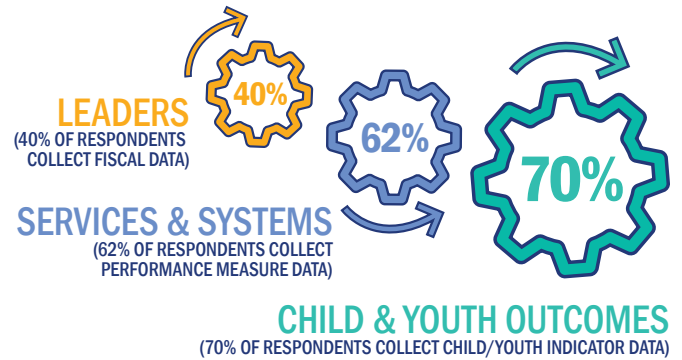
sector support. However, the Forum has observed that the larger the coordinating body becomes the more it can slow progress. Also, if there are too many different types of stakeholders (i.e., policymakers, advocates, business leaders, funders) at the table it can stymie honest conversation, debate and compromise between the leaders of the public agencies. If a coordinating body includes a broad set of stakeholders; the Forum recommends scheduling time among just the agency heads to collaborate and develop engagement opportunities for the broader set of stakeholders through working groups or specific initiatives.



Stakeholders: This graphic represents the number of survey respondents who identified having this type of stakeholder as a member of their coordinating body. For example, 20 respondents have membership from community-based organizations (CBOs) on their coordinating body, while only three have youth representatives.

Data

The Forum's operating theory of change uses the concept of turning gears to illustrate the process of changing outcomes for children and youth in the long term. Each gear represents a critical component that requires coordination, investment and data. Leaders must collaborate, collectively invest and track their own progress; systems and services must be coordinated, well-funded and tracked with metrics; and child and youth outcomes must be comprehensive and ambitious.



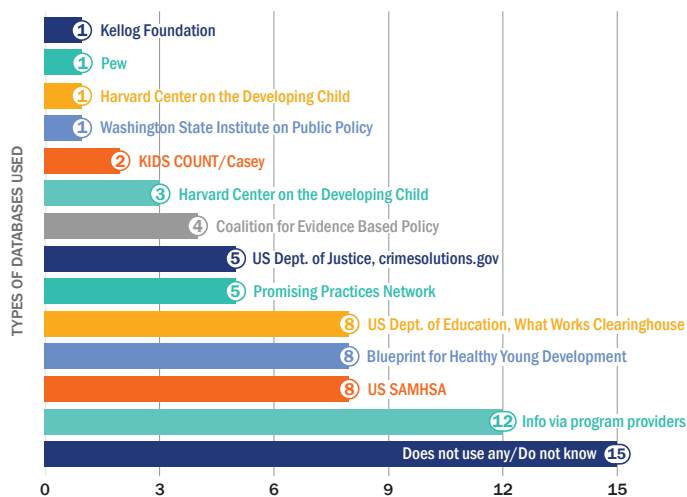
Each of these types of data aligns with a different 'gear' in The Ready by 21 Theory of Change and are important for coordinating bodies to track (pictured above).

A coordinating body can add tremendous value by collecting and organizing agency data and creating an integrated data system with shared language between agencies. While the Forum recommends that all coordinating bodies collect a variety of types of data, specifically fiscal data, performance measure data, and child and youth indicator data, only one-third of respondents reported collecting all three types. Seventy percent of coordinating bodies collect data on child and youth indicators, more than 62 percent collect performance measure data and 40 percent collect fiscal data.

In addition to collecting multiple types of data, the Forum recommends that agencies develop shared data language and a way for data to flow from one agency to the other to improve services. Facilitating access to information across agencies is an underutilized strategy that is necessary to effectively serve children and youth. At least 16 state child and youth policy coordinating bodies have reported efforts to integrate data systems with child and youth information across agencies as a strategy to increase youth well-being in the past year.






Use of Evidence

Survey results show that only half of respondents use databases of evidence-based programs to identify promising practices despite the importance of using evidence to drive policy. One explanation of this could be that many coordinating bodies does not focus on programmatic interventions and so have no need to review these databases. Another explanation may be that there is not awareness of the available databases and/or an interest in using them. Though if a coordinating body is going to embed an initiative into the fabric of its systems, it is crucial that the initiative is somehow rooted in evidence-based practices.



Databases Used to Identify Proven or Promising Programs: This graphic illustrates the number of respondents who report utilizing each of the databases listed to identify proven or promising evidence-based programs and practices.

WHAT KIND OF DATA IS USED? (OUT OF 39 SURVEY RESPONDENTS)

-  Child and Youth Indicator Data: 28
-  Performance Measure Data: 25
-  Fiscal Data: 16
-  Other: 1
-  None/Didn't Know: 4

“EQUITY IS ACHIEVED WHEN ALL KIDS HAVE A SHOT AT GETTING THE ESSENTIALS THEY NEED TO SUCCEED BECAUSE 1) THE DIFFERENCES IN THEIR STARTING POINTS HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, AND 2) THE SYSTEMIC OR INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS TO THEIR SUCCESS HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED.” – KAREN PITTMAN

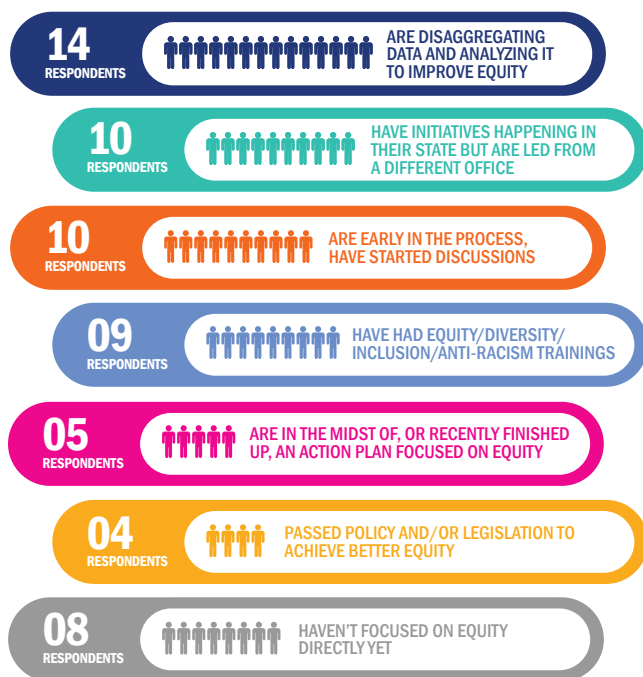
The Forum makes a clear distinction between evidence-based programs and evidence-based practices. Based on their local environment and its conditions, existing evidence-based programs may not always be a practical fit for a community. An evidence-based program might target a population with different characteristics, for example. Focusing on practices allows policy makers to encourage the use of evidence to create effective interventions that fit local needs. The first step to implementing evidence-based practices is to identify the individual aspects of programs that are working in general and for targeted populations. Officials can then transform these aspects into specific data driven tools, processes or systems. This empowers practitioners to use evidence for program evaluation and continuous quality improvement while still focusing on the local context and target population.¹

Equity

This year, a question was added to this survey to probe how coordinating bodies are approaching equity. Karen Pittman, CEO and co-founder of the Forum for Youth Investment, believes that shifting the field’s focus from equality to equity is critical to changing the odds for youth.

Several coordinating bodies report utilizing specific tactics to address inequity, such as disaggregating data or holding equity/diversity/inclusion/anti-racism trainings. A larger group of coordinating bodies appear to be preparing to introduce policies and legislation aimed at improving equity, but have not yet taken action. For example, only one state’s children’s commission reported that their recommendations related to race, culture, and equity were incorporated into state-level legislation in 2017. The Forum encourages all states to disaggregate data, hold equity-related trainings and embed policies aimed at improving equity into state legislation in order to more quickly advance equitable policies for all children and youth across the country.

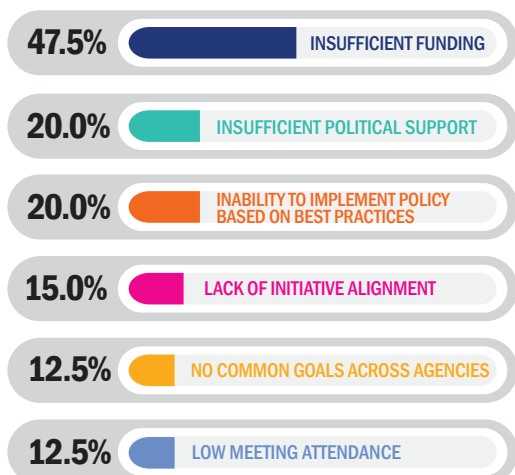
¹ <http://www.readyby21.org/moving-evidence-based-programs-evidence-based-practices>



Ways Children's Cabinets Are Embedding Equitable Practices

Challenges

The collaborative work done by coordinating bodies is inherently challenging, and many of these collaborative bodies run into similar challenges. Due to an increasing devolution of funding responsibility from the federal level to the state and local levels it is no surprise that insufficient funding was cited by almost half of respondents as a persistent challenge. Twenty percent of respondents indicated that their coordinating body lacks political support, and 12.5 percent cited low meeting attendance as a problem.



Challenges Reported

Insufficient funding has been a top cited challenge for many survey respondents in previous years as well. Partly in response to this persistent challenge, the Forum developed the Children's Funding Project. This project assists stakeholders at the state and local levels with finding, aligning, generating, and evaluating the use of funding for children and youth. Since funding for children and youth programs and services at the state level is stagnating or decreasing across the country, localities must look elsewhere for funding for child and youth systems and services. Many states are actively preempting localities within their borders from making local decisions about funding, yet are also unwilling to raise revenue for critical services statewide. The Forum believes states must decide whether they wish to devolve responsibility and ability to raise funds to the local level, as supported by the Children's Funding Project, or take more significant responsibility for funding at the state level.

Insufficient political support was another challenge cited by many respondents. The creation of children's coordinating bodies is a nonpartisan issue and both Republican- and Democrat-led states have children's cabinets and commissions. Rather than a product of partisanship, we believe the lack of political support is a product of the competing demands faced by governors. Despite ranking as one of the highest priorities of the public, children's issues do not seem to take priority in most governors' offices. The Forum believes that simply making government systems more effective and efficient through coordinating bodies can produce better results and outcomes for kids, and that collaborative bodies are a worthwhile investment for governors' offices. Keeping the highest level leadership focused on these goals is the challenge.

In past years, survey respondents reported a lack of alignment between initiatives and an inability to implement best practices as the most common difficulties. This year's survey showed a shift in common difficulties, with lower percentages of cabinets reporting alignment difficulties, but an increase in reported inability to implement best practices. Both of these could be directly related to the funding challenges expressed - state agencies have no choice but to align, yet when it comes to best practices there are no new resources to support their use.

Accomplishments

Many children's cabinets have experienced success across numerous dimensions. Some states have created legislation and additional policies to provide better opportunities for

youth. Some respondents cited promotion of information-sharing across agencies, which allowed for efficient and higher quality coordination around data. One state described a new policy that expanded child care licensing, allowing for improved access across race and class. A few coordinating bodies have successfully completed fiscal maps, which identified funding streams for youth programs and services and their gaps and overlaps. Other states have seen expanded access to high quality programs and have been able to support workforce development. Often the most important coordinating body accomplishments are hidden, and can include strengthened collaborative relationships across previously combative departments, or shared language and population-level goals. As a children's cabinet once said, we used to refer to "our juvenile-justice involved youth or our foster care youth or our students but now we talk about our state's youth."

States have reported great accomplishments in the past year:

45.0%
DEVELOPMENT OF A
STRATEGIC PLAN/ACTION
AGENDA/WORK PLAN

37.5%
STREAMLINED
DUPLICATIVE EFFORTS

35.0%
PROGRAM QUALITY
IMPROVEMENT

32.5%
NEW COLLABORATIVE
INITIATIVE

30.0%
SHARED COSTS
ACROSS PROGRAMS

17.5%
CREATED SYSTEM TO SHARE
AGGREGATE DATA FOR
ANALYSIS PURPOSE

12.5%
CREATED A POINT OF SERVICE
SHARED DATA SYSTEM

12.5%
FUNDED EXPANSION OF
SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS

Accomplishments Reported

Only 12.5% of participants reported funding of successful programs. Over the past decade, the Children's Cabinet Network has seen funding plateau or diminish, which suggests the need for a more proactive approach.

Sustainability

It is never too soon for a coordinating body to cultivate sustainability by engaging critical external stakeholders. By engaging the legislature, local communities, advocates and foundations, a sense of shared values emerges and reinforces the idea of the coordinating body being a part of the fabric of a state, not owned by a particular governor, allowing for continuity of momentum as administrations change. To drive authentic engagement, it is important to share successes broadly, develop good messaging and communicate honestly about opportunities for growth and self-assessment. As administrations change, it is crucial to provide substantial transition plans. Coordinating bodies established by statute are better protected from changes in administration or staff turnover, but these statutes are by no means a failsafe that eliminates the need for transition planning.

Although children's cabinets, commissions and councils often face challenges regarding the sustainability of their work over time amidst ever-changing elected leadership, there are bodies working to address these challenges. The Forum has seen successful coordinating bodies weather many different types of political turnover and use those opportunities to continue to streamline their efforts and evolve to meet changing needs and contexts. One state has put in place community-based initiatives and is utilizing the resource of graduate student fellows to advance work during the transition from one governor to the next.

State Profile: Virginia Governor's Children's Cabinet

Logistics

Administrative Home: The Cabinet sits within the executive branch of state government, and its chairperson is designated by the governor.

Staffing: The staff is composed of one full-time Executive Director who partners with Cabinet members' staff and deputies. When available, fellows and interns provide additional human capital. Staff is funded by a state agency.

Membership: The Cabinet is composed of the following members: Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Secretary of Education, First Spouse of Virginia, Lt. Governor of Virginia, Secretary of Commerce and Trade, and Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security.

Structure

Children's Cabinet meetings: The Cabinet meets monthly.

Staff meetings: The staff meet monthly and work together in between Children's Cabinet meetings through interagency teams to achieve the goals.

Agency head meetings: In addition to the members above, the Children's Cabinet includes specific agency heads at their meetings on a quarterly basis.

Stakeholder meetings: The Children's Cabinet hosts an annual Stakeholder Forum to share information between state and local agencies, the faith communities, families, universities, and nonprofit organizations.

History

Year & Method of Establishment: Established in 2014 under the Governor's Executive Order 21.

Duties/Responsibilities/Goals: The Children's Cabinet was established to develop and implement a comprehensive policy agenda related to the wellbeing of youth from birth to age 21 throughout the Commonwealth. It evaluates and recommends strategies to optimize and align local, state, and federal public resources, along with public-

private partnerships, to enhance current and prospective programs and services for Virginia's children and their families, particularly those at high risk.

Priority Initiatives

Classrooms Not Courtrooms Initiative: Coordinated a group of representatives from the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), and Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). The group's goal is to provide recommendations to reduce student suspensions, expulsions, referrals to law enforcement, and the disparate impact of these practices on minorities and students with disabilities.

Challenged Schools Initiative: The Cabinet is working to enhance educational outcomes and workforce readiness in Petersburg, Norfolk, and Richmond by facilitating a replicable model to improve student achievement through high quality partnerships, including wraparound services. This is being done by enhancing coordination between local and state child-serving entities.

Accomplishments

The Virginia Governor's Children's Cabinet enables greater access to prevention services, high quality physical and behavioral health, nutrition, early childhood programs, stable housing, workforce training, social services, and community supports through schools and other convenient points of service. To do this, the children's cabinet leadership coordinates with state agencies, local agencies, and community stakeholders. Together they have:

- Formed stronger and sustained relationships horizontally across state agency leadership.
- Strengthened trust and vertical relationships between state and local agencies.
- Developed and signed a model Memorandum of Understanding between school administrators and law enforcement to reduce disproportionate discipline for students of color and students with disabilities.
- Improved outcomes around attendance, suspension rates, nutrition, student outcomes, and school accreditation in priority communities.
- Completed a fiscal map to identify funding for youth from ages 0-21

Participating Coordinating Bodies

Alabama
Children's Cabinet

California
Interagency Coordinating Council on
Early Prevention

Colorado
9to25
Early Childhood Leadership Commission

Connecticut
Commission on Women, Children and
Seniors

Florida
Children and Youth Cabinet

Georgia
Children's Cabinet

Illinois
Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth

Indiana
Commission on Improving the Status of
Children

Iowa
Collaboration for Youth Development
Council
Early Childhood State Board

Kansas
Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund

Kentucky
Early Childhood Advisory Council

Louisiana
Early Childhood and Education Advisory
Council
Children's Cabinet

Maryland
Children's Cabinet

Minnesota
Children's Cabinet

Mississippi
Early Childhood Advisory Council

Missouri
Coordinating Board for Early Childhood

Nebraska
Children's Commission
Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating
Council

New Hampshire
Spark NH Early Childhood Advisory
Council

New York
Council on Children and Families
Early Childhood Advisory Council

New Jersey
Council for Young Children

Ohio
Family and Children First Cabinet Council

Oklahoma
Early Childhood Advisory Council
Commission on Children and Youth Smart
Start

Oregon
Youth Development Council

Rhode Island
Children's Cabinet
Early Learning Council

Texas
Policy Council for Children and Families

Tennessee
Governor's Children's Cabinet
Commission on Children and Youth

Vermont
Building Bright Futures State Advisory
Council

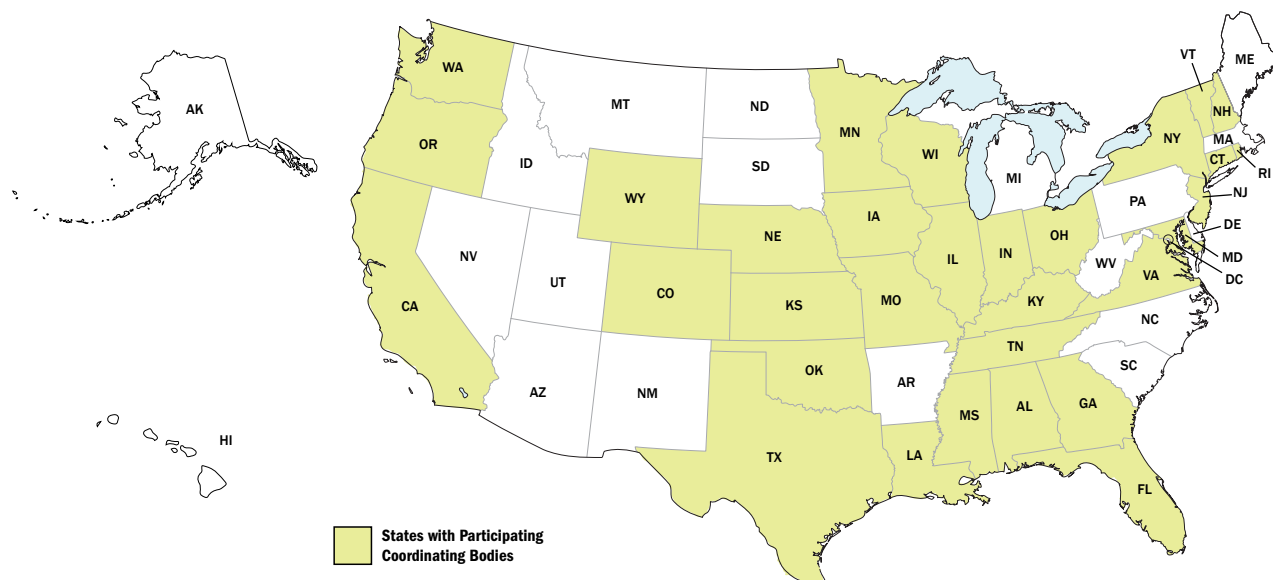
Virginia
Governor's Children's Cabinet

Washington
Graduation: A Team Effort
The Early Learning Advisory Council

Wisconsin
Early Childhood Advisory Council

West Virginia
Early Childhood Advisory Council
Commission to Study Residential
Placement of Children

Wyoming
Early Childhood Advisory Council



*Alaska and Hawaii not to scale

Conclusion

We hope that you will see this report as not only a snapshot of the national landscape of child and youth policy coordinating bodies, but as a source of inspiration to continue to innovate in your work to improve outcomes for children and youth. The work done by state child and youth policy coordinating bodies changes and shifts focus constantly as these bodies evolve and lead the charge toward better and more aligned systems and services. The changing results of our survey every two years reflect this progress and can be used by coordinating bodies as a source of ideas for new practices, examples from peers and a windsock for the direction in which coordinating bodies are headed.

As the Forum evolves our work to the changing landscape, we are taking action to support not only the state children's cabinets but a growing number of local city- or county-level policy coordinating bodies for youth. As the devolution of responsibility from the federal government funnels down to state government and in turn to local government, they are responding by creating coordinating bodies of their own. The issues and considerations that come with local-level collaboration are often different from those at the state level, but there will be chances for cross-level learning and strategizing around vertical alignment. What we know is that there is an increased urgency to coordinate people, data and resources at both the local and state levels to protect and nurture our nation's greatest asset, its children.

About Us

Children's Cabinet Network

The Children's Cabinet Network, managed by the Forum for Youth Investment for over a decade, is the only national network of state policy coordinating bodies for children and youth (e.g., children's cabinets, commissions, P-20 councils and early childhood advisory councils). Thanks to the generous support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Forum is able to offer the network:

- Regular peer-to-peer conference calls on topics identified by network members
- Monthly updates on federal opportunities and state and local success stories
- Publications on topics of interest to children's cabinets, including this survey
- Roundtable discussions, trainings and meetings with federal policymakers

In addition, the Forum provides technical assistance to children's cabinets and related state policy coordinating bodies on a range of issues. The Forum's areas of expertise include helping states to: create a children's cabinet, develop common goals and shared data, generate a statewide plan for all children and youth, and map fiscal resources for young people.

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.

In addition to the Children's Cabinet Network, the Forum is the proud organizational home of the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, Big Picture Approach Consulting, SparkAction, the Opportunity Youth Network, and a variety of other projects and initiatives designed to help leaders get young people ready by 21 – ready for college, work and life.

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