

What Is a Children's Funding Coordinator?

Building Local Capacity for Strategic Public Financing

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It's no secret that the programs and services that help nurture and prepare children and youth—from child care to after-school programs to youth workforce development—are dramatically underfunded and deeply inequitable in our country. To change this status quo, communities must find ways to increase investments in the programs and services that help children thrive. The foundation of a successful effort to raise additional funding for kids requires state and local leaders to answer three critical questions:

1. How much do we currently spend on programs and services for children and youth?
2. How much do we need to spend to achieve our goals?
3. How do we fill the gap between our current funding and needed funding?

We call the process of answering these questions **strategic public financing**. The answers to these questions create a financial picture that can help communities move from planning to action. Building the analyses to answer these questions (**fiscal maps**, **cost models**, and research into potential **sources of funding**) is labor intensive, technical work that requires significant coordination, relationship building, and collaboration. In a field of already overburdened advocates and program providers, this can be a daunting task.

How a Children's Funding Coordinator Can Help Your Community

This is why we believe communities can benefit from having a dedicated person, who wakes up every day thinking about the money that supports the programs and services kids need. We call this person a children's funding coordinator. At Children's Funding Project we support communities in recruiting and training a growing national network of children's funding coordinators. Our goal is to embed strategic public financing knowledge and technical skills within communities so that local leaders and advocates can



lead and sustain their funding efforts locally over time. In service of this, we have developed a job description for children's funding coordinators that includes the following key responsibilities:

- Become an expert on Children's Funding Project's field-tested methodologies for strategic public financing.
- Facilitate collaboration between community partners, local budget holders, and state budget holders.
- Deliver localized fiscal maps, cost models, and analyses on sourcing additional funding.
- Educate others in the community to expand capacity and grow local strategic public financing expertise.
- Participate in cross-learning opportunities within the growing national network of children's funding coordinators.

How We Support Children's Funding Coordinators

To date we have helped establish 12 children's funding coordinators in communities across the country. Children's funding coordinators can be housed within government agencies, in community-based organizations, and in philanthropic foundations. Ultimately, deciding where they fit best is determined by which entity in your community has the desire, relationships, capacity, and resources to lead a strategic public financing plan. Our current children's funding coordinators work in various settings including a community foundation seeking to expand out-of-school time programming, a mayoral administration attempting to implement universal pre-K, a community-based organization advocating for expanding child care subsidies, and a state government office planning to expand place-based cradle-to-career initiatives.

We partner with hiring organizations and funders who are committed to recruiting candidates from their communities who bring deep contextual knowledge and understanding about their local child and youth space. Empowering candidates who have this essential context and credibility within your community is vital to a children's funding coordinator's success. When combined with the knowledge and training we can provide, children's funding coordinators can be dynamic catalysts for coordinated action. We have developed a coaching model that supports coordinators and their hiring organizations in the following key areas:

- **Candidate recruitment:** Hiring support for partner organizations that includes training on equitable hiring practices.
- **Technical skill building:** Professional development resources to assist coordinators in building job essential skills around project management, technical writing, data analysis, and data visualization.
- **Training in strategic public financing:** Comprehensive training and technical assistance from our team of coaches on our field-tested fiscal mapping, cost modeling, and revenue generation methodologies.
- **Community capacity building:** Co-creating action plans with coordinators on how to educate their wider community about the processes and outcomes of their strategic public financing efforts.

Is Your Community Ready for a Children's Funding Coordinator?

While some communities are prepared to tackle all three parts of the strategic public financing process immediately, others may first need to lay important groundwork to set their children's funding coordinator up for success. In assessing your community's readiness, we advise you to consider the following:

Organizational Capacity

- Do you have a lead organization with the time and key relationships to take on and sustain your strategic public financing effort?
- Do you have the resources to hire, sustain, and supervise a new full-time position?

- Do you have relationships with organizations or networks in your community that will allow you to effectively recruit candidates with relevant child- and youth-serving experience?

Clear and Measurable Goals or Policy Priorities

- Do you have an established strategic plan that can clearly answer the question, "What does your community want to fund?"
- Do your goals have clear geographic boundaries?
- Do your goals have a clear focus on the service(s) you want to provide and the age range you will serve?
- Are you pursuing this work with a specific time frame in mind, such as a specific election cycle or time bound funding opportunity?

Access to Relevant Data

- Do you have relationships with local and state budget holders that enable you to access necessary fiscal and budgetary information?
- Do you have relationships with program providers that enable you to access data necessary for cost modeling, such as market rates, overhead costs, and wage scales?

Diverse and Engaged Coalition

- Does your coalition include and have buy-in from key partners, including local and state policymakers, direct service providers, youth, families, business leaders, and philanthropic leaders?

If you can concretely answer these questions, you are well prepared to establish a children's funding coordinator and pursue strategic public financing. No matter where you are on the spectrum of readiness we want to talk with you! If you are interested in establishing a children's funding coordinator position in your community, please fill out our [readiness survey](#). Questions? Contact Kenny Francis, director of coaching and capacity, at kenny@childrensfundingproject.org.

Children's Funding Project is a nonprofit social impact organization that helps communities, states, and Native nations expand equitable opportunities for children and youth through strategic public financing. childrensfundingproject.org

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