

Understanding Fiscal Maps

Funding Our Kids 101

May 2023 | Children and Youth

What Is a Child and Youth Fiscal Map?

A fiscal map documents and analyzes the various sources of funding that support programs and services for children and youth in a state, city, or county. The map can include public dollars from federal, state, and local sources and sometimes private dollars from foundations and other philanthropies if appropriate. It answers a fundamental question: WHO invests HOW MUCH money and in WHAT?

Why Should a State or Community Create a Fiscal Map?

At its core, a fiscal map shows states and communities how much money goes to a specific type of services or a specific age range. It also identifies the sources for that funding. Once state and local leaders understand what funding is available, they can

- align their existing financial resources with their goals for kids;
- coordinate support and services across program areas;
- identify critical areas for attention, efficiency, and innovation; and
- maximize new funding opportunities.

A thorough fiscal map enables leaders to look at a budget from a *child-centered* perspective instead of from the traditional *department-centered* perspective. That means the map groups budget expenditures together based on the desired outcomes for children and families they support rather than simply listing budget allocations for individual offices. This child-centered perspective also allows states and communities to pull together the multiple funding streams that support kids from federal, state, and local sources.



Additionally, a fiscal map can help community and state leaders determine how economic trends and changes in federal support have impacted (or continue to affect) their budgets and plan how to [use federal relief dollars](#) to support the equitable recovery of local programs and services.

Who Develops the Fiscal Map?

Anyone who wants better information about the funding streams that support children and youth—and clarity about where that money goes—may have interest in supporting and using a fiscal map. State and local government agencies that manage comprehensive programs and services for children may lead the fiscal mapping process. In other cases, an [intermediary organization](#), like a state- or community-based nonprofit that advocates on behalf of kids, initiates and leads the process. A [children's cabinet](#) that includes the heads of relevant government agencies could oversee the fiscal mapping work as well. The lead organization also may collaborate with an outside financing expert like [Children's Funding Project](#) for training, guidance, and support when creating a fiscal map.

Regardless of who initiates the process, this type of detailed budget analysis should be a part of how state and local governments transparently share information with the public. Additionally, a successful fiscal map requires collaboration and input from multiple groups and individuals that may include the following:

- municipal or state departments that serve children and youth, such as departments of human services, health, parks and recreation, and other social services;

- municipal or state budget office;
- state and local nonprofits that advocate for programs and services for kids;
- intermediary organizations that represent networks of providers that offer children- and youth-serving programs; and
- foundations and other philanthropies that fund programs for children and youth.

Get Started

To learn more, contact Children’s Funding Project at childrensfundingproject.org/contact-us to find out how we can help your community or state develop a strategic financing plan to fund children and youth services.

Fiscal Map Examples and Resources

- [State and Local Fiscal Maps](#)
- [New Orleans Inventory of Public Investments in Children and Youth - 2022](#)
- [2020 Inventory of Investments in Children and Youth \(Denver, CO\)](#)
- [2017-2018 Fiscal Map of Children’s Supports in Virginia](#)
- [Pre-K 4 SA \(San Antonio, TX\)](#)



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



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