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**A Project to Promote Local Revenue Streams for California’s Children, Youth and Families**

**GOALS**

* Strengthen and leverage local capacity and commitment for investing in children, youth and families so that the next generation becomes an ongoing community priority.
* Develop new dedicated revenue streams to fund effective services for children, youth and families in cities and counties throughout California.

**NEED**

Once a leader in caring for its children, California is now 41st in the country in child well-being.[[1]](#footnote-1) Safeguarding the future of our state will require increased and stable funding for services that support families; ensure health and safety for all children; prepare children for success in school and career; promote wholesome social development; and foster youth leadership, creativity and civic engagement. And yet, California’s investment in its children, youth and families continues to decline.[[2]](#footnote-2) With child poverty rising, and deep disparities in the well-being of children and youth based on income, race, geography and family status, it has never been more important to invest in services and opportunities that support the next generation.

**OPPORTUNITIES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL** - There are many reasons to look to the local level for new, sustainable funding opportunities for services to children, youth and families.

* Local funding is required to complement state and federal resources, which are not sufficient to address community needs.
* Realignment and devolution of policy from the federal and state level require that many needs now be met through actions at the local level.
* Local funding streams offer greater flexibility, creativity and targeting of priority needs.
* Diverse sectors of local communities are often willing to come together to invest in their children when support for other policies may be more polarized. For instance, there have been many successes in all areas of the state in passing measures that support education.
* Increasingly, members of the public want local control over their resources, and are more likely to support measures where they can see how funds will be spent.
* The local level is where most policy effecting children is implemented and where the building blocks of a state and national movement are created.

**BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY -** Many communities have not fully explored local revenue options for children and youth services. Advocates, service providers and others have not always had the information, skills, organizational structure, and mobilized constituency to promote successful strategies. This project will assist interested communities in developing these assets, while recognizing that the cities and counties of California have very different civic cultures, political landscapes, social problems, and economic and fiscal realities. Support and technical assistance will be tailored to the unique dynamics of each interested community.

**METHODOLOGY**

Phase one – May, 2013 – December, 2013

Objective - Determine the feasibility of creating new dedicated funding measures for children, youth and families in various communities in the state:

* Research and assess local funding options and best practices in the state and country.
* Develop materials to educate communities about revenue strategies.
* Outreach to children’s service providers, advocates, community activists, policy-makers and other groups about their interest in new local funding possibilities and strategies.
* Develop and share tools to support self-assessments of capacity and readiness
* Provide information and preliminary technical assistance to interested communities and organizations in developing a long and short-term approach to getting needed revenue.
* Host convenings of community networks interested in dedicated local funding options.
* Analyze and report to stakeholders on the potential for local funding measures in communities throughout the state.
* Identify potential leaders, communities and organizations throughout the state that are interested and ready to plan for local dedicated revenue measures.

Phase Two

The second phase of this project will be based on the outcomes and conclusions of Phase One. The current aim is to organize a cohort of interested communities that have both the motivation and the foundational elements of community commitment and leadership in place. The cohort would function as a learning community - sharing successes, ideas and challenges. The participating communities would be supported in the development of revenue proposals, as well as in coalition building, messaging, polling, technology, fundraising, and ultimately the implementation of successful campaigns.

**SUPPORTERS**

The **First 5 Association of California,** the membership organization of the 58 county commissions funded under Proposition 10, the tobacco tax initiative, is sponsoring this project. **Margaret Brodkin and Associates** is the lead organization implementing the work. We are working in collaboration with statewide organizations, including Children Now, California Network of Family Strengthening Networks, California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, California Coverage and Health Initiatives, Prevent Child Abuse California, The Children’s Partnership and the Youth Leadership Institute.

Brodkin is recognized as a national expert and pioneer in local funding streams and budget advocacy for children. Her leadership over three decades has resulted in over a billion dollars added to the San Francisco budget for children. She has inspired advocates around the country to undertake creative and bold strategies to increase funding for children, youth and families.

The first phase of this work is being supported by the Sierra Health Foundation and the Rosenberg Foundation, with in-kind support from the California First 5 Association.

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1. 2012 Kids County Data Book, Annie E. Casey Foundation, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/DataBook/2012/OnlineBooks/KIDSCOUNT2012DataBookFullReport.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Children’s Defense Fund – California, “Slashing Children from the Budget: California Budget Cuts to Children Over the Past Five Years,” May, 2013. <http://www.cdfca.org/policy-priorities/childrens-state-budget-watch/past-updates/slashing-children-from-the-budget.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)