



FUNDING THE NEXT GENERATION

NEWSLETTER

GROUNDBREAKING SODA TAX ON SANTA CRUZ BALLOT

**New Opportunities for Revenue
for Kids and Health**

Measure Z, a two cent per ounce tax on sweetened beverages, will be on the November ballot in the City of Santa Cruz. **It will be the first soda tax ballot measure since the California Legislature made soda taxes illegal in 2018.**



Santa Cruz is breaking new ground after a Court of Appeals determined in 2023 that the punishment the legislature had enacted for California cities which passed soda taxes was illegal. Years of effort went into getting this court opinion – efforts by Changelab Solutions, the non-profit Cultiva La Salud, and former Santa Cruz City Council member Martine Watkins, also the crusader for the Santa Cruz children's fund.

Says Martine Watkins, Former Mayor and Councilmember, City of Santa Cruz: *"Measure Z isn't just a win for Santa Cruz—it sets a precedent for all charter cities and counties across California. By passing this measure, we're opening the door for other jurisdictions to pursue their own sugary drink taxes to invest in the health and well-being of children at the local level. We believe that decisions about our community's health should be made by the people who live in it, not by Big Soda or outside interests. This is about democracy prevailing and giving power back to our communities and voters. Support Santa Cruz in leading the way and demonstrating that, when it comes to our children's future, the choice is ours to make."*

Measure Z will raise \$1.3 M and will fund parks, children's programs, youth mental health, safe routes to school, and more. Research shows that the excessive consumption of sugar sweetened beverages disproportionately affects communities of color and young people who can suffer devastating health problems. Soda taxes are a win-win. They create revenue AND they improve health outcomes.

Funding the Next Generation is encouraging charter cities to explore a possible soda tax, and will be convening educational forums to provide technical assistance. Stay tuned.

Links for more info:

- [Flyer for Measure Z](#)
- [Measure Z website](#)
- [Measure Z text](#)
- [FAQ's for Measure Z](#)

UPDATES ON CALIFORNIA CHILDREN'S FUNDING CAMPAIGNS



SONOMA

Pictured to the left: September 13, Campaign kick-off of Our Kids Our Future, a ballot measure creating dedicated funding for childcare and child health for Sonoma County. State Senate President Pro Tem Mike McGuire leads an enthusiastic cheering session to rally the crowd. The measure will generate \$30 M and will be administered through First 5 Sonoma. As a result of amazing outreach and powerful persuasion,

there is no paid opposition to the measure and almost all elected officials have endorsed. The revenue will be raised by a quarter cent sales tax.

[Campaign website.](#)

POMONA

Pictured to the right are young people delivering 13,000 valid signatures to place the **Pomona Kids First** measure on the ballot. They are continuing the tradition started in 1991 in San Francisco of carrying petitions for children's funds in little red wagons.

Pomona Kids First Measure Y will set aside up to 10% of the city's general revenue fund for children and youth. The main argument in the ballot handbook was written by a retired police officer! It's awesome. Check it out:



Don't fall for the lies from status-quo politicians who have made our taxes the highest in the state and let our parks fall apart. Stand with grassroots leaders: Measure Y gives us power over OUR budget without raising taxes!

As an officer of 35 years, I witnessed the benefits of intervening in the lives of at-risk children to show them another path. Quality programs for kids keep them and our community safe. Historically, Pomona hasn't invested in youth; I have seen many programs defunded and stopped. Pomona is compassionate; the people work hard and do their best. But local government must do better; we can correct this historic wrong. **Pomona, we can't allow this transformative opportunity to pass us by!**

No more lies:

- Pomona's budget for kids is a fraction of what politicians say.
- Measure Y sets aside more funds for library and park programs.
- Pomona's General Fund has increased by \$21M in the past 3 years – we have the money!

It is humane and economical to pay now, rather than pay later. Why?

- Everyday we deal with tragic human and fiscal costs of failing to take preventive action to help Pomona's children live safe, honest and productive lives.
- It costs over \$100,000 annually for a youth to be in a correctional facility - ten times the cost of programs that keep kids out of trouble.

[Pomona Kids First website](#)

[Pomona Kids First measure](#)

INTERESTING RESOURCES ON MESSAGING

Note from Margaret Brodtkin, FNG Director and Founder:

We are so often asked about messaging - What is the best way to convince people to fund services and opportunities for children and youth? Of course, there is no one right thing to say. It depends on the audience, the messenger, the context, and much more. But below are three resources on how to frame our issues.

Frameworks Institute and Leading for Kids

New research, the culmination of a four-year project conducted by the **Frameworks Institute** in partnership with **Leading for Kids**, shows how we can expand our thinking about the social conditions and structural supports that children and families depend on to thrive.

Their major recommendations:

1. Frame collective action as a form of caregiving.
2. Emphasize that we owe collective care to children of every race, ethnicity, and identity, and not just "our own" kids.
3. Illustrate how collective caregiving happens everywhere and through every issue.

ASO Communications

Many child advocates met Anat Shenker Osario (ASO) 7 years ago when she presented her ideas about the need to change our narrative about children. ([Great 4-page guide by Anat](#) on words to use.)

Anat has become a leading communication strategist for the progressive movement and the Democratic Party. Her materials continue to be VERY RELEVANT to our work for children and youth - see overall advice summarized below and the links to her major resources.

CONSTRUCTING A NARRATIVE - by ASO Communications

Sounds simple and obvious. It's not.

[Here is their short practical example guide.](#)

[Full report](#) - "A New Framing Strategy for Thinking About Kids and Families"

[REGISTER HERE FOR A WEBINAR ON THE RESULTS OF THE NEW RESEARCH ON FRAMING THE MESSAGING ABOUT CHILDREN AND YOUTH. September 27, 9am PT](#)

THINK ABOUT A "CARE AGENDA"

As we contemplate ballot measures to create dedicated funding streams, let's consider a local intergenerational strategy. Caring policies for all ages are similar. An alliance between children and elders could be potentially powerful. Interested? Contact [Margaret Brodkin](#).

Resources:

[Website of Care Can't Wait](#) - a coalition of organizations, stakeholders and advocates committed to building a comprehensive, 21st century care infrastructure. They fight for robust investments to expand access to childcare, paid family and medical leave (PFML), and home- and community-based services (HCBS), and ensure good jobs for the care workforce.

[Care Voter Guide](#)

[Basic Care Agenda - From 2020 Vision for Children](#)

LEAD with shared values — community, safety, prosperity — in a way that names race and class while bringing people together.

FOCUS on the tangible good we are delivering — things like jobs, healthcare, and funding for roads, schools, bridges, families and communities — rather than the amelioration of harm (e.g., “fix our broken tax system”). Lift up how certain bills and policies are good for people as opposed to personifying “the economy” as a stand-alone entity.

CAST ‘we the people’ as protagonists: we turned out in record numbers to elect leaders to care for us and act in our interests. We – working people, families, and small businesses – are pulling together to fund our communities.

DEFINE our opposition as wealthy corporations, billionaires and certain politicians who put themselves ahead of everyone else, and make a comprehensive critique that encompasses taxes and wages.

- “Too often, wealthy corporations refuse to pay people the true value of our work and refuse to pay our country what they truly owe”

DEMAND that we rewrite the rules, messaging from inevitability. Our families *will* have what we need *when* we make billionaires and wealthy corporations contribute as much as they take from our communities.

DELIVER a positive vision for the future we will create together, with quality schools for our kids, healthcare for our families and communities where we all can thrive.

AVOID the opposition frame and DO NOT REPEAT accusations, even to refute. Instead, expose how certain politicians and billionaires try to undermine social services by shaming and blaming the people who use them.

Other Resources with lots of examples related to children and youth:



Top 10 Election Strategies for Advocates

Never let an election season pass you by without capturing this unique opportunity to get commitments from candidates, attention from the media, and a better-informed public about the unmet needs of kids.

1. Create and disseminate bumper stickers and signs.
2. Get involved in November 2024 campaigns.
3. Create a Children and Youth Agenda for the campaign season.
4. Organize meetings with candidates.
5. Meet with media to prep them for their election interviews.
6. Attend candidate forums and ask questions.
7. Request candidate platforms for children and youth.
8. Mount a public education campaign: Urge voters to vote with kids in mind.
9. Create and publish a candidate questionnaire.
10. Have the biggest and best candidate forum of the election season.

HINT: Let others do the work and spend the money – piggyback on other election activities.

HINT 2: Have fun. This is infectious.

Developed by Funding the Next Generation; contact margaret@fundingthenextgeneration.org



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WAYS TO AMPLIFY YOUR GOALS AND AGENDA FOR KIDS DURING ELECTION SEASON

[Link to recording](#) of Funding the Next Generation webinar on How Child Advocates Can Use the Election Season to Build Political Support and the Capacity of Your Network.

[Power point from webinar](#)

CONSIDER JOINING OUR BALLOT FORWARD GROUP for community leaders and coalitions considering a ballot measure for funding for kids. The Ballot Forward group meets regularly to learn and share information about preparing for the ballot. Contact Margaret Brodtkin if you are interested in joining and getting on the mailing list. [Here is the powerpoint](#) on early steps for a campaign, presented at a previous meeting. Most current members are considering a campaign for 2026.



Funding the Next Generation has now officially merged its work with and become an arm of the [Children's Funding Project](#), our fiscal sponsor and

longtime partner. Its website is chocked full of useful information about what is happening around the country. We are delighted build a stronger movement to fund opportunities for children and youth, in California and nationally.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions, ideas or requests for support - no matter how big or small. With a team of some of the best experts in the country, we provide free technical assistance on everything related to local revenue measures for kids and budget advocacy with your city or county.

Margaret Brodtkin, Founder Director, Funding the Next Generation

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[Check out our website full of information.](#)

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