

**Funding the Next Generation Webinar**  
**“What City Government Can Do to Prioritize Youth”**  
**March 1, 2024**

**Background**

This presentation is based on a series of interviews conducted with 12 current and former elected officials across the State between April – June 2023. The purpose of the interviews was to assess the political landscape around youth issues.

**Current Climate**

There's nuance that needs to be acknowledged in the overall climate. Kids are still a priority; it's just that kids are not at the top of the list. Other priorities are currently more important to elected officials: homelessness, housing, economic development, and climate change.

**What You Can Do**

**Find a nexus with the issues higher on the priority list.**

- The “moral argument” for investing in kids (i.e., “It’s the right thing to do.”) is no longer enough. You simply can’t make it all about kids.
- For homeless, consider adding to the conversation what homeless kids need. As an upstream strategy, argue that youth workforce development programs can help prevent homelessness as youth are often contributing to their family’s household expenses.
- Talk about how climate change is impacting youth mental health and what kids’ mental health needs are.

**Create a larger narrative around youth so that you begin shifting the culture around youth.**

- Push back on the mindset that supporting children and youth is the responsibility of a county or school district and not the responsibility of a city.
- Advocate for policies that can help children and youth, but do not necessarily require a large investment of funds.
- Show up during all the budget hearings and request more investments in youth (that tie to the current priorities).

**Partner with aligned beneficiaries.**

- Work with parks and open space advocates to press for more green space for kids and talk about the benefits the outdoors has on children and youth.
- Consider working with hospitals as another aligned beneficiary.

**Implement an inside-outside strategy.**

- Inside government, find one or more elected officials who will champion youth issues.
- Outside government, mobilize the community-based organizations serving youth. Ensure that the non-profits are educated around what they can and cannot do around advocacy.

**Widen your coalition.**

- Turn your enemies into “frenemies.” Speak with the police and fire unions during a less contentious time (not during budget season) in order to understand their potential opposition to what you may request in the future (both investments and policies).
- Talk to the business community including chambers of commerce particularly around childcare and youth workforce development programs.

**Believe: It’s always the right time to be talking about kids.**