

2023 Children's Funding Institute

April 2023 | Children and Youth

About the 2023 Children's Funding Institute

The Children's Funding Institute, presented by Children's Funding Project and Funding the Next Generation, is our biennial training event for communities interested in securing local dedicated funding for kids. Through three days of intensive workshops, working sessions, and dedicated planning time, teams of community leaders gain the tools and expertise they need to win a ballot campaign for a [voter-approved children's fund](#). Since 2019, nearly 400 people have attended our institute. Among our past attendees, eight community teams have successfully created voter-approved children's funds that collectively generate approximately \$313 million annually for kids.

What Is a Voter-Approved Children's Fund?

Children and youth spend 80% of their time outside of school. Yet the public services that help nurture and prepare them remain dramatically underfunded and deeply inequitable. While federal and state funding is crucial to support programs and services for kids, it currently is not sufficient to meet the specific needs of many communities. When a community creates a voter-approved children's fund it can tailor funding to respond to local needs and support critical services. Additionally, since voters elect to dedicate revenue in the fund specifically to programs for kids, that funding cannot be cut or reassigned to another use. This allows children's funds to focus on long-term impacts and to build a resilient and diverse network of programs and service providers. Currently, there are [52 voter-approved children's funds](#) across 12 states that collectively generate \$1.6 billion annually for kids.

Why Should Your Community Attend the Children's Funding Institute?

Creating a voter-approved children's fund requires months of preparation. The Children's Funding Institute helps communities kick-start the planning process. Our expert faculty teach community leaders how to define their fund's purpose, define how their



2023 Children's Funding Institute

Dates: October 3–5, 2023

Location: The University of Texas at San Antonio
Downtown Campus, San Antonio, TX

Cost: Free*

Contact: Daniel Whitaker, senior policy associate, institute@childrensfundingproject.org

Complete our general interest form to receive additional information.

*Admission to the Children's Funding Institute is free; however, attendees will need to pay for their travel and lodging expenses. Discounted hotel room rates will be available. We will provide additional lodging information at the time of registration.

community will administer the funding, place their measure on the ballot, fundraise, manage a campaign, and mobilize voters. At the end of the institute, attendees have an action plan that will move their community's effort from an idea to an Election Day success.

Who Should Attend the 2023 Children's Funding Institute?

This year's institute is ideal for communities interested in pursuing a local ballot measure campaign over the next two years. To succeed, these types of campaigns require a broad coalition and collaboration from multiple members of the community. Consequently, interested communities must assemble a team of



community leaders and advocates who attend the institute together. Teams should include three to five people who serve in the following types of community roles:

- Representative from an [intermediary organization](#), such as an existing nonprofit hub, early childhood collaborative, or organization that supports direct-service providers.
- [Local policymaker](#)—such as a mayor, county commissioner, school board member, or other government official—or a staff member representing one of these elected or appointed leaders.
- [Local funder](#), including representatives from foundations or other philanthropic groups.
- Individual who represents families.
- Direct-service provider or individual who represents providers.
- Other community organizer or advocate for children and youth.

What Can Attendees Expect at This Year's Institute?

The Children's Funding Institute serves as an active working session for community teams combined with engaging panel discussions, presentations, and break-out learning sessions. With coaching and support from local and national experts, community teams develop their action plans for creating a voter-approved children's fund during the three-day event. Specifically, the institute provides

- dedicated time for teams to collaborate and develop their action plans;
- strategies for building a coalition with new partners and organizing supporters;
- guidance on messaging and political strategy;
- information about polling, public opinion research, and voter trends;
- success stories and lessons learned from past campaigns;
- opportunities to network and share ideas with other community leaders; and
- access to expert faculty to answer individual questions.

Are You Ready to Attend the 2023 Children's Funding Institute?

Community teams interested in attending this year's institute should complete our [general interest form](#). After we review the initial round of submissions, we will follow up with teams directly with additional information about registering for the institute. Please contact Daniel Whitaker, senior policy associate, at institute@childrensfundingproject.org for answers to specific questions.

"I thought it was a well thought out event with tons of great information and examples of how to act upon the information. This was one of the best conferences I've been to in YEARS."

— **Elizabeth Garbe**, United Way of Salt Lake; Salt Lake County, UT; 2022 institute attendee



Success Stories: Campaign Wins from Past Institute Attendees

In November 2022, voters in [Whatcom County, WA](#), approved a ballot measure to fund high-quality child care by slightly increasing property taxes for the next 10 years. The fund will raise about \$10 million annually and help lower costs for high-quality child care and increase the wages of child care workers. The fund also will help support new families and expand mental health services for pregnant parents and new parents. The Whatcom County Healthy Children's Fund will be the first children's fund in the state of Washington outside of the Seattle area.

Voters in [New Orleans, LA](#), approved a ballot measure in April 2022 that will dedicate approximately \$21 million annually in property tax revenue to new, high-quality, full-time early care and education. The new fund will provide opportunities for more than 1,000 infants, toddlers, and 3-year-olds. The measure also will support wraparound services for families including mental health consultation, social work, teacher professional development, and health and developmental screenings.

[Escambia County, FL](#), successfully passed a measure in November 2020 to establish a Children's Services Council that will raise more than \$10 million annually for children and youth in the county through a 0.5 mill property tax increase.

In November 2020, voters in [Multnomah County, OR](#), approved a ballot measure to create the Multnomah County Preschool for All program funded by a new high-income earners' tax. The tax currently is projected to raise \$160 million annually by 2026.

St. Louis, MO, successfully placed a measure on the November 2020 ballot that will raise \$2.3 million annually in property tax levies for the city's Community Children's Services fund.

Alameda County, CA, successfully passed a 0.5% sales tax in November 2020 that will raise an estimated \$120 million annually to improve quality, provider wages, and access to early care and education.

“So much information! I feel like I just graduated a certification program in 3 days!”

– **Cat Leonard**, Preferred Family Healthcare; St. Francois County, MO; 2022 institute attendee

“Very knowledgeable faculty. The content was excellent, and the skilled presenters made everything very understandable. The balance of real-life stories with technical guidance was spot on. The offers of support and advice from everyone were so generous and reassuring!”

– **Sandy Malecha**, Northfield Promise; Northfield, MN; 2022 institute attendee



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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