

# Local Dedicated Funds for Children and Youth

*What, Why, Where, When, Who, and How*

## What is a “local dedicated fund for children and youth?”

We use this term to refer to city, county, or school district revenue that has been dedicated to child and youth services beyond the school day in an election by the voters.

### Types of public revenue:

- Sales tax
- Property tax
- General fund set-aside
- Income tax
- Marijuana/soda/alcohol tax
- Other

While we typically refer to these funds as ‘local dedicated funds,’ or **LDFs**, you also might hear them referred to as:

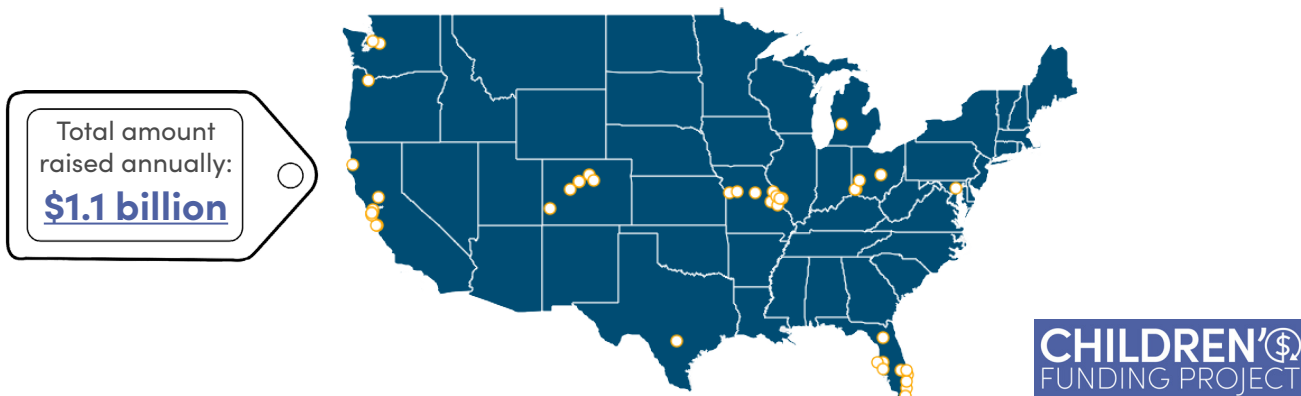
- Children’s Services Councils (in Florida)
- Children’s Services Funds (in Missouri)
- Strong Start (San Miguel County, CO) or Right Start (Summit County, CO)
- Best Starts for Kids (King County, WA)
- Early Childhood Millage (in Kent County, MI)
- Or, simply, Children’s Funds!

## Why local dedicated funding?

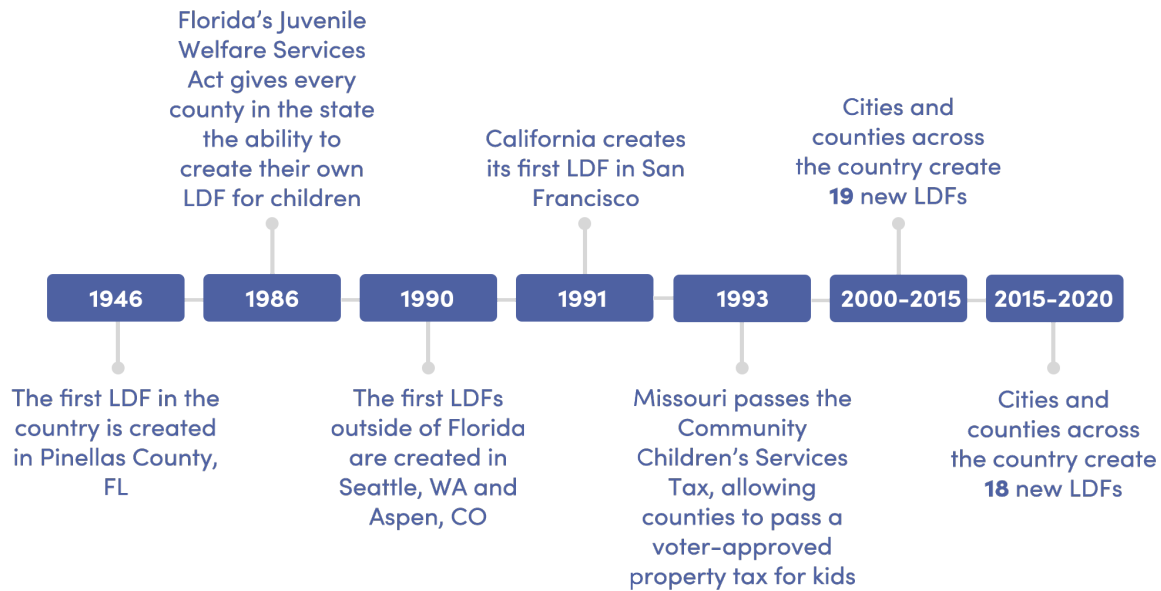
- **Why ‘local’?** Federal and state funding is crucial to many child and youth systems but currently isn’t meeting the specific needs of many communities. Local funding can be tailored to respond to the specific needs and gaps in a community’s critical services while also providing flexibility for innovation.
- **Why ‘dedicated’?** LDFs are by nature dedicated to a specific purpose (in this case, children and youth) and cannot be reallocated or preempted. They are decided upon by the voters themselves and are therefore accountable to the people who live and work in the community served by the fund. This gives them time to make an impact in communities, building support over time and creating interest from other localities who witness their success.
- **Why public?** Filling the opportunity gaps in our child and youth systems will require significant, sustained investments from every level of government. The private sector simply cannot respond at the levels required, and all levels of government must play a role.

## Where are these funds located?

There are over 40 LDFs, located in diverse communities around the country. Explore them all in our interactive map [here](#).



## How has local dedicated funding for children and youth evolved over time?



### Who creates these funds?

Establishing an LDF requires a broad coalition of the below groups. An in-depth look at the roles for each can be found on [our website](#).

- Advocates, e.g. parents and child and youth advocates
- Business leaders, e.g. large employers in the community
- Intermediaries, e.g. existing nonprofit hubs or collaboratives
- Local funders, e.g. foundations or other philanthropy
- Policymakers, e.g. mayors, county commissions, school boards

### How can my community establish an LDF?

Creating an LDF takes between 12-24 months of planning, coalition-building, coordinated decision-making, and campaigning. CFP has broken the process down into 5 key steps:

1. Identify the need, i.e. what purpose will your fund focus on? How much revenue is needed?
2. Create a plan for how the money will be allocated and administered.
3. Identify the funding source and political path for dedicating the revenue.
4. Build a coalition of advocates, policymakers, local funders, business leaders, and intermediaries.
5. Run a winning campaign!

---

**Children's Funding Project** (CFP) was established to help communities with the 'how' of local dedicated funding. CFP and its technical assistance consortium of experts can help communities quantify their funding gap, identify revenue mechanisms, develop effective messaging, conduct polling, build coalitions, and coordinate campaigns. For assistance on starting an LDF in your community, please fill out [this form](#) and we will reach out to you and connect you to one of our staff or a member of our technical assistance consortium.

### CONTACT US:

[www.childrensfundingproject.org](http://www.childrensfundingproject.org)  
[elizabeth@childrensfundingproject.org](mailto:elizabeth@childrensfundingproject.org)

