

Sacramento Children's Fund Planning and Oversight Commission

Meeting Time: 07-01-24 15:30

eComments Report

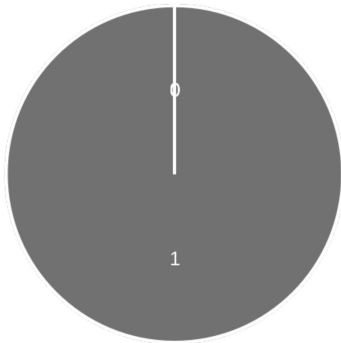
Meetings	Meeting Time	Agenda Items	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Sacramento Children's Fund Planning and Oversight Commission	07-01-24 15:30	9	1	1	0	0

Sentiments for All Meetings

The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

Overall Sentiment

Support (100%) Oppose (0%) Neutral (0%)
No Response (0%)



Sacramento Children's Fund Planning and Oversight Commission

07-01-24 15:30

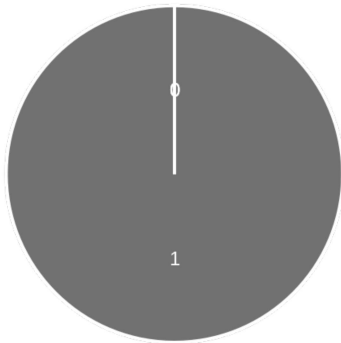
Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
1. Sacramento Children's Fund Strategic Investment Plan Development File ID: 2024-01300	1	1	0	0

Sentiments for All Agenda Items

The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

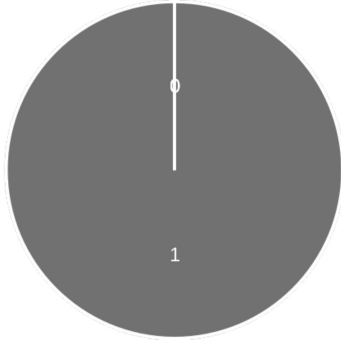
Overall Sentiment

Support (100%) Oppose (0%) Neutral (0%)
No Response (0%)



Overall Sentiment

Support (100%) Oppose (0%) Neutral (0%)
No Response (0%)



Jim Keddy

Location:

Submitted At: 1:02pm 07-01-24

Attached please find a letter to the Commission in which I share my past experience with the question of grant amounts. Thank you for your review.

July 1, 2024

Dear Members of the Children's Fund Commission,

On behalf of Youth Forward, I am writing to offer some thoughts on the material presented to you last week regarding options for grant sizes and funding amounts.

I started working the fields of community organizing and children's advocacy in 1987. Over the years, I have been fortunate to have been involved in numerous social change initiatives, as a practitioner, a funder and as an evaluator.

For several years, I served as a vice president at the California Endowment where I was over learning and evaluation for the ten year Building Healthy Communities initiative, an effort focused on improving the health status of children and youth in 14 local communities across the state. In this role, I worked with evaluators around the county who were also supporting community-based initiatives. For about 18 months, I served as an advisor to the Aspen Institute on a national project focused on complexity and community change. This effort led to the publication of a major national study on community change work, *Complexity and Community Change: Managing Adaptively to Improve Effectiveness*.¹ More recently, my colleagues and I at Youth Forward have helped develop two major state grant programs focused on youth prevention, the Community Reinvestments grants program managed by GOBiz and Elevate Youth California, managed by the Department of Health Care Services.

As you consider a framework for Children's Fund grantmaking, I'd like to lift up two very common mistakes that have been made repeatedly by myself and others. To boil it down, my concern has to do with "too little money, too little time."

Most social change efforts are underfunded and often come to an end right around the time that they have momentum and start making a real difference. Over the years, I've read numerous evaluations of change efforts and many point to these two dynamics as major reasons why the initiatives did not achieve the results people hoped for.

In designing an effort, there is always the pressure to spread money around, to make numerous smaller grants to multiple agencies. While this may seem like the right approach, at times it can result in less impact than if funding were focused on a smaller set of initiatives.

This dynamic is true for both public agencies and nonprofits. Government-led efforts are often underfunded and come to an end too early, often due to a change in the political winds of the moment.

In community health initiatives, the question of funding is often referred to as "dosage." What is the "dosage" necessary to make a real change in reducing violence? Or in improving mental health? How do multiple investments create synergy with one another to increase the overall

dose? How can we leverage other funding streams with the Kids Fund money to increase dosage?

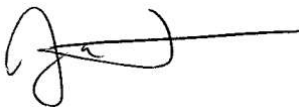
This is not to say that small grants are without value. Small grants can be the missing ingredient in a community effort. For a few years, I served on the national board of Grassroots Grantmakers. I traveled around the county looking at the positive impact of community-driven, small grants. When it comes to grant size, I would take a both/and approach; sometimes a small grant makes sense, sometimes a big grant is needed.

With this in mind, I'd encourage you to consider being open to larger grant amounts and to not set hard limits on dollar amounts. Once an RFP process is started, we will likely see CBO's and public agencies step forward with various proposals, some of which may be small and others may be large. In my view, it's important not to set artificial limits as this early stage of the development of this effort.

And just as a reminder, Youth Forward, where I serve as a director, does not intend to apply for Children's Fund money. We have taken the same approach to the Prop 64 state grant programs we have helped develop; we have not applied for those funds. We are primarily a policy organization, not a direct service provider. We are committed to helping build the overall infrastructure for children and youth in Sacramento and statewide.

Thank you for your consideration and for your leadership on behalf of children and youth in our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Keddy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jim Keddy

¹ <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/complexity-community-change-managing-adaptively-improve-effectiveness/>