

Resource Mapping



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Tennessee Case Study of Spending for Children and Youth

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March 2011

Ensuring young people are prepared for college, work and life involves many areas of state government. Youth policy includes various topics covering school curriculum requirements and after-school learning opportunities, child welfare programs and substance abuse prevention services. Mapping state resources for children and youth is one way to see the overall picture of how the state supports its youth and ensures their future success. This report discusses the main steps Tennessee took to complete its mapping project and provides key lessons learned for other states that may want to implement a similar approach. The report does not focus on the results of the Tennessee study, however; instead it provides an overview of the process.

Identifying the Problem: How Much Does Tennessee Spend on Its Children?

In 2005, key stakeholders from Tennessee attended a Youth Policy Institute in Chicago, Ill., along with representatives from 12 other states. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) cosponsored the meeting with the National Governors Association and the Forum for Youth Investment as part of a joint project to help states strengthen youth policies and programs. The Tennessee delegation consisted of members of the legislative Select Committee on Children and Youth, the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, and the state Department of Children's Services. The institute focused on state strategies to align youth-oriented programs and policies and initiatives to more effectively deliver services to young people. The meeting goal was for states to identify actions to take to strengthen policies and programs.

One workshop focused on innovative financing strategies for youth programs. Speakers discussed efforts to

take stock of existing investments in children, youth and families through policy and program inventories and youth budgets. The Tennessee team realized the state had many programs and initiatives for children and youth, but did not fully understand all the services available or what funding sources were used. They also could not identify and address gaps or duplicated services between agencies, community providers and other government entities.

Establishing the Solution: Resource Mapping

The Tennessee team gave priority to answering these questions. Members returned to Nashville and began working to obtain the necessary information to gain a better understanding of the broad range of programs and services available in Tennessee, the amount of money dedicated to these programs, and gaps or duplication in services. After many conversations with departments and other entities, the legislators realized that encouraging state agencies to share this information through a resolution or other informal directive would not provide the necessary comprehensive information and collaboration. The recession and budget cuts created a new sense of urgency to know where state funds are spent and the outcomes of these programs. The legislators and participants from the Chicago meeting continued to encourage mapping the resources spent on children and youth and building momentum and support to implement the process.

Ultimately, the legislature passed SB 4012 in 2008, which required the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (commission) to oversee mapping of federal and state funding for programs that support the health, safety, permanence, growth, development and education of children in the state. The purpose stated in the legislation was threefold:

- Identify available funding streams;
- Determine overlap and possible duplication of services across agencies; and
- Identify gaps and administrative inefficiencies.

The statute required a description of the intended outcomes and any performance measures in place to assess the use of funds.

Agencies also must report on untapped resources—funds for which the state may be eligible but is not receiving—and an explanation of why that money is not accessed. The legislation included an appropriation for one staff person to coordinate the process.

The legislation required state and federal money be categorized by program, target population, geographical region, state agency and other categories identified by the commission. The commission established an advisory group to help determine the structure of the report and the details of data collection. The group consisted of fiscal and program analysts from the agencies included in the inventory. According to Melissa Staley, resource mapping coordinator, this advisory group was “the linchpin of the entire project.” They were responsible for reaching consensus on service category definitions, the age groups and outcomes. Many programs used unique service terms and age groups and based performance measures on the funding source. Departments also use different data software and tracking mechanisms.

The advisory group identified commonalities and ways to define the process so it applied to a broad cross-section of agencies. Bill sponsors—Representative Sherry Jones and Senator Diane Black—

I attended the meetings because I was interested in the process and to let the agencies know that I (the legislature) was paying attention.

—Representative Sherry Jones

attended these meetings when possible. This legislative presence communicated the importance of the project and the legislature’s commitment. Legislators were interested in helping to define and shape the process so it could be used to help make policy and budget decisions.

The commission organized data by agency, age range, outcomes, service location and program focus (see Table 1).

The commission created a common template each department was required to use to report program and fiscal information. The template included key data points that are not captured in the normal departmental budget system. Each department had to report on the number of children served by age range, outcomes, service location and program type. This provided an overview of how much the state spends on children in a certain age range and how much is spent on outcomes such as the safety and education of young people. This offered a new way to evaluate budgets and provide context to the line items and department expenditures legislators normally see. (See the appendix for summary data on Tennessee spending on children by state agency and result.)

Analyzing the Results

The resource mapping coordinator facilitated the data collection process and compiled overall results. The first full report, submitted to the General Assembly in April 2010, with a revised version posted Jan. 28, 2011, showed a total of just over \$8.1 billion spent on children and youth services by the 25 state departments in fiscal year 2007-2008.

Agencies reported more than 20 million services to children in the state.

The data collection and reporting methods make it difficult to determine how many of the 1.47

Agency	Age Range	Outcomes	Service Delivery Location	Program Focus
25 Total: Seven main child-serving departments and 18 other agencies	0-5 6-13 14-17 18+ All children Families	Safe Healthy Educated Supported and nurtured Engaged	Home Community School Provider office Residential placement Continuum	General services Universal prevention Targeted prevention Early intervention Moderate intervention Intensive intervention

million children in the state received the 20 million services. It is reasonable and expected for children to receive more than one service and therefore be counted more than once. For example, a child may participate in more than one program offered by the Department of Education, including after-school programs, school lunch services or reading programs. Low-income children who meet eligibility guidelines also should receive various services from various agencies, including medical care through the TennCare program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (formerly known as food stamps) and child care

Main Findings of the Commission

- The Basic Education Program (BEP) supporting local education agencies across the state is the largest expenditure. These services accounted for 42 percent of all spending on children.
- TennCare (Medicaid) is the second largest agency expenditure. More than 19 percent of expenditures were for TennCare services, followed by programs other than BEP provided by the Department of Education (12.6 percent) and the Department of Human Services (11.5 percent).
- The state spends the most on education and the least on youth engagement. The largest expenditure was on basic education services; this is not surprising given the large amount spent on schools. Health care spending was second.
- Excluding basic education services, \$2 of every \$3 spent comes from the federal government. Most federal funds are entitlements that include programs such as Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as food stamps), block grants and other grant programs.
- Prevention and early intervention services cost less per child. The cost per child by program focus ranges from \$21 for universal prevention services up to \$6,259 for intensive intervention.
- Most funds are spent on services to all children rather than targeted populations or at-risk groups. Seventy-six percent of all funds are used for general services, which include the basic education program, other education, immunizations and health services for all children. Less than 21 percent is for targeted prevention and intervention services.

services, among others. It was important that the commission clarify and explain that providing several services is not the same as duplicating them. In fact, commission director Linda O'Neal pointed out that one finding indicated little duplication occurs in the state. The commission did not find that various departments were providing the same service to the same people. More often, they uncovered programs and services across various agencies targeted a similar population group.

Learning from the Process

Tennessee policymakers quickly learned that mapping all state and federal resources dedicated to children and youth is a challenging task. "It required a complete paradigm shift and a new culture," stated Representative John DeBerry. The first hurdle was explaining the value and importance of the project. The purpose of the report was not to lay blame or single out particular programs or departments. Rather the goal was to help policymakers make decisions that would most benefit the state's children. The objective was to determine whether public resources were spent to most effectively ensure that all children in the state are safe, healthy, educated, supported and engaged. Legislators and key officials from the select committee and the commission spoke with staff and agency personnel to ease any fears, overcome territorial issues and stress the importance of the project for improving services for children statewide.

The objective was to determine whether public resources were spent to most effectively ensure that all children in the state are safe, healthy, educated, supported and engaged.

The second major hurdle was determining common definitions and categories that could be used by various agencies such as Health and Transportation. State agencies and legislators were not accustomed to reporting or analyzing the data in this manner. The commission had to define categories that could be applied across the various departments and create a user-friendly entry system. Because data often is collected in different formats the systems are not

compatible across different agencies, making it difficult to group by required categories. The advisory group played a key role in overcoming these two major hurdles.

The team ultimately identified key components that facilitated its success and will be integral to maintaining the momentum so the project becomes part of the regular budget and program review process.

Keys to Success

- **Relationships matter.** The project represents a new process, and building relationships helped facilitate the change. The existing relationships among legislators, the Select Committee on Children and Youth and staff at the commission made it easier to involve more people. It was necessary to create a sense of ownership and understanding of the mutual benefits to all stakeholders in order to gain the trust and cooperation of staff and departments.
- **Legislative leadership was critical.** The legislative mandate and further participation and monitoring of the process by bill sponsors and key committee staff clearly communicated the importance of the project and emphasized their interest. The state departments and commission staff realized that the report would be used to make policy and budget decisions. The bipartisan effort appealed to all.
- **Staffing is essential.** Hiring at least one person dedicated to the project who had data expertise and also could build relationships helped move this project forward. Staff support and cooperation at the department level are necessary.
- **Communicating the goals and purpose of the project is imperative.** Agencies and programs have a tendency to protect their programs and budgets. It was critical that legislators and staff communicate the message that the project was not an attempt to identify cuts, but to ensure Tennessee is providing needed services for children and youth and spending resources on successful programs.

- **Language matters.** Defining common terms, standardizing data collection and entry and categorizing age groups and outcomes were challenging but necessary in order to compare and analyze data across the different departments. Staff also were careful to put the information into context and explain the report's findings.
- **The advisory group was key to project success.** It played an important role in creating ownership, finding consensus and working through the complex details of the project.

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

The legislature intends that this process be routinely used to analyze program budget and service information in order to identify gaps in service and use the data to improve results for children. The project continues to evolve as stakeholders gain a better understanding of available data and identify ways to analyze the information. Some key lessons learned include the following.

- The state's children and youth service programs rely heavily on federal funds. After factoring in the match or maintenance of effort requirements for state dollars, excluding the BEP, nearly \$4 of every \$5 spent on children is tied to the federal government, excluding basic education.
- The data collection and analysis process can be improved. Service categories and age groups may need to be revised to allow more comparisons across departments. In addition to continuing to refine and standardize the process it also is important to be flexible to meet unique department needs. For example, TennCare services were not categorized by age, making it difficult to determine how funds are used across age groups.
- Staffing and resource support goes beyond the coordinator position. The effort required collaboration and cooperation among multiple staff from all agencies involved, and required extensive TCCY staff time in addition to that of the resource mapping director.

- It is important to involve more legislators and communicate the results and value of this report to a broader group of policymakers.
- The Select Committee on Children and Youth and the commission provide a unique structure that can help ensure continuity of the project, which spans legislative and executive careers.

Reasons to Consider Mapping Resources Spent on Children

Taking an inventory of state programs and funding streams dedicated to children and youth offers a unique opportunity to examine funding priorities and program results. Data generally is presented either strictly from the service and program angle— discussing the numbers served and the results achieved—or legislators hear from budget analysts about how much money a department spends. Rarely are both presented together. The Tennessee approach attempts to merge the two to provide a more complete picture. Using it can provide answers to many questions, including the following.

1. Do funding levels reflect the state’s priorities for children and youth? Are enough resources dedicated to these results?
2. Is the state spending equitably or adequately to address the needs across age groups, programs or geographic areas?

3. Is the state spending resources on effective programs that offer quality and cost-effective interventions?
4. What kind of duplication exists? Are there ways to streamline services, pool resources, and align eligibility and program requirements across departments?
5. Is the state taking full advantage of federal and other external resources?

Mapping state programs and resources for children and youth is one way to obtain an overview of how the state supports children and youth and ensures their future success. Although it is not an easy task, NCSL and other organizations can help states identify the questions to which they want answers and determine how to obtain the necessary information to make sound policy decisions.

The resource mapping project will help me be more accountable to the people. I can show them how we’re using state resources to deliver on what we promise to provide.

Representative John DeBerry

The National Conference of State Legislatures’ Youth Policy Project provides legislators with the latest research on positive youth development, offering tools and support to improve results for youth. For more information, contact youthproject@ncsl.org or (303) 364-7700.

**Appendix. Summary Charts of Tennessee Resource Mapping
Fiscal Year 2007-2008**

Table 1. Tennessee State and Federal Resources by Category and Rank

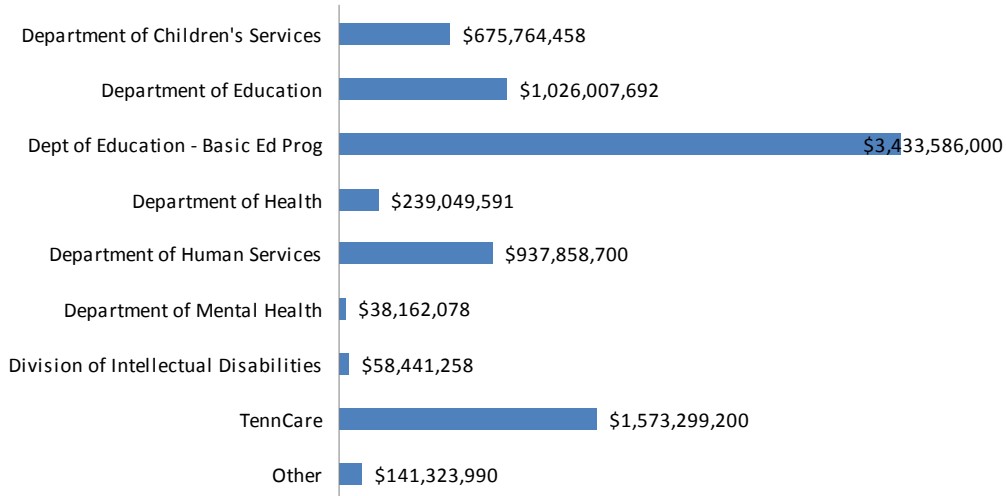
Category	Subcategories	Rank by Expenditure
Agency	<p>25 agencies total</p> <p>Seven main child-serving departments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children's Services - Education - Health - Human Services - Mental Health - Division of Intellectual Disabilities - TennCare (Medicaid) <p>18 other agencies</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education 2. TennCare 3. Human Services 4. Children's Services 5. Health 6. Other 7. Division of Intellectual Disabilities 8. Mental Health
Age Range	<p>0-5</p> <p>6-13</p> <p>14-17</p> <p>18+</p> <p>All children</p> <p>Families</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All children¹ 2. 5-18² 3. Families
Outcomes	<p>Safe</p> <p>Healthy</p> <p>Educated</p> <p>Supported and nurtured</p> <p>Engaged</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educated 2. Healthy 3. Supported and nurtured 4. Safe 5. Engaged
Service Delivery Location	<p>Home</p> <p>Community</p> <p>School</p> <p>Provider office</p> <p>Residential placement</p> <p>Continuum</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School 2. Home 3. Provider's office 4. Residential placement 5. Community
Program Focus	<p>General services</p> <p>Universal prevention</p> <p>Targeted prevention</p> <p>Early intervention</p> <p>Moderate intervention</p> <p>Intensive intervention</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General services 2. Targeted prevention 3. Moderate intervention 4. Intensive intervention 5. Early intervention 6. Administration 7. Universal prevention 8. Multiple focus

Notes:

1. TennCare services were categorized under All Children and not separated by age group.
2. Age range of 5 to 18 is specified to the Basic Education Program.

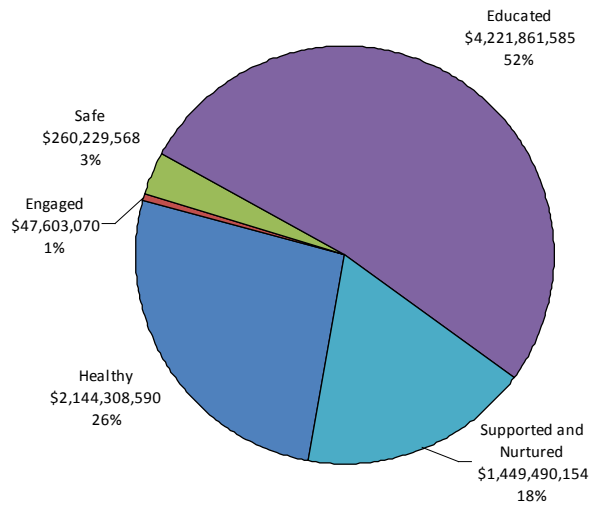
Source: Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, *Resource Map of Expenditures for Tennessee Children: Annual Report, April 2010* (Nashville: Commission on Children and Youth, 2010).

Figure 1. Expenditures by Leading Child-Serving Agencies, Fiscal Year 2007-2008



Source: Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, *Resource Map of Expenditures for Tennessee Children: Annual Report, April 2010* (Nashville: Commission on Children and Youth, 2010).

Figure 2. Total Expenditures by Primary Outcomes, Fiscal Year 2007-2008



Source: Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, *Resource Map of Expenditures for Tennessee Children: Annual Report, April 2010* (Nashville: Commission on Children and Youth, 2010).



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ISBN 978-1-58024-624-8