

ELIZABETH GAINES

Elizabeth Gaines is the Founder and Director of [The Children's Funding Project](#), which aims to close equity and opportunity gaps for children and youth by helping communities employ innovative strategies to effectively leverage existing funding and generate new revenue. She has gleaned these skills and interests over her lifelong career as a direct service provider, an advocate, and a policy analyst. Since 2005 she has led the Children's Cabinet Network and is the nation's leading expert on children's cabinets and councils. While overseeing the Forum for Youth Investment's state and local policy efforts she identified innovations around the country and shared those policy solutions with other local, state and national organizations. From this unique vantage point she helped policy leaders develop tools and techniques to improve their use of data, increase their policy alignment, and more efficiently apply resources toward greater impact.

When she joined the Forum in 2005, Elizabeth had already built a youth advocacy career; her commitment began with seven years leading after-school and community-based youth programs at the Atwood Community Center in Madison, Wis. She later served as youth policy analyst for Citizens for Missouri's Children, where she lobbied state lawmakers, convened a youth development network, and led the "Invest in Missouri's Children" campaign to secure tobacco settlement dollars for child and youth development activities.

A native of St. Louis, Mo., she attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison.