



2025 Impact Report

OUR FELLOWS IN ACTION

The Issues



10 states focused on pre-K policies and funding: AZ, CO, LA, MD, NC, NM, NY, OR, PA, VA



13 states focused on child care policies and funding: AZ, CO, LA, MD, NC, NM, NY, OH, OR, PA, TN, VA, VT



8 states focused on health/mental health policies and funding: AZ, CO, LA, MN, NM, OH, TN, VA



7 states focused on paid leave policies and funding: AZ, CO, LA, MD, MN, NM, TN

Areas of Impact

- 1. More Pro-Young Child and Family Advocates, Voters, Candidates, and Winning Candidates**
- 2. More Pro-Child and Family Legislation and Funding**
- 3. More Capacity for Legislative and Electoral Advocacy for Young Children and Families**





Victories for Young Children and Families

Despite a challenging landscape, support from Impact Fellows Action Fund made a meaningful difference for young children and families in 2025. By strategically funding state-level 501(c)(4) advocacy, Impact Fellows Action Fund helped partners protect progress, advance critical policy priorities, and keep the needs of families front and center.

- ✦ Fellows in 16 states received grants totaling \$3.7 million, technical support from IFAF, peer exchange among Fellows, and legal support as needed: AZ, CO, KY, LA, MD, MN, NM, NY, NC, OH, OR, PA, SC, TN, VT, VA.
- ✦ Our Fellows protected \$9.9 billion and added \$1.6 billion totaling \$11.5 billion in funding for young children and families.
- ✦ That's an ROI of 310,900%! For every \$1 invested by IFAF, states got \$3,109 of public funds in return.
- ✦ Fellows leveraged IFAF funding in their states to raise an additional \$2.7 million for 501(c)(4) political advocacy across 16 states.
- ✦ Four of our sixteen Fellows organizations are led by people of color.
- ✦ Fellows secured 70 policies and protected \$5.4 billion for programs that specifically and positively affect racially and ethnically diverse young children and their families.
- ✦ They engaged with nearly 800,000 voters and over 6,000 advocates through activities such as community events, canvassing, trainings, and social media.

AREA OF IMPACT #1

More Pro-Young Child and Family Advocates, Voters, Candidates, and Winning Candidates

Fellows activated over 6,000 people in electoral advocacy (in mostly a non-election year) and lobbied to reach 2.3 million voters. More than 200 pro-early childhood legislators were identified as being on the record in support of pro-young child and family policies. In 2025, Virginia and Louisiana had wins with other states gearing up for elections in 2026.

INDIVIDUAL STATE HIGHLIGHTS

Children First Action Fund helped elect child care champion James Malone to the **Pennsylvania** Senate in a key special election. He was the only candidate that completed the survey from their Child Care Voter campaign, pledging to support affordable, accessible child care if elected. Children First highlighted Malone's support via digital media and noted his opponent's silence on the issue when asked. The Child Care Voter campaign reached 43,000 voters, deployed more than 2,000 new advocates, and activated 1,270 voters with high "care support" scores in a race determined by a narrow margin. Malone's upset victory in a district historically viewed as noncompetitive resulted in a new, outspoken, and effective champion on child care issues in the Senate where one vote can swing legislation and funding.

After mobilizing 45,000 pro-young child and family voters to elect 19 endorsed legislative office-holders at the end of 2024, **Family Forward Action of Oregon** deployed more than 450 grassroots advocates for young kids to participate in one or more engaged actions in 2025, triple the number activated in 2024. Through Days of Action, campaign schools, and legislative advocacy, they secured new public commitments from 10 key legislators, including some endorsed in 2024, as well as the governor, to prioritize child care infrastructure funding in 2026. They also recruited and trained 32 new advocates and potential candidates, while adding more than 1,000 Oregon voters to their contact list, 200 of whom engaged in legislative or electoral advocacy in 2025.

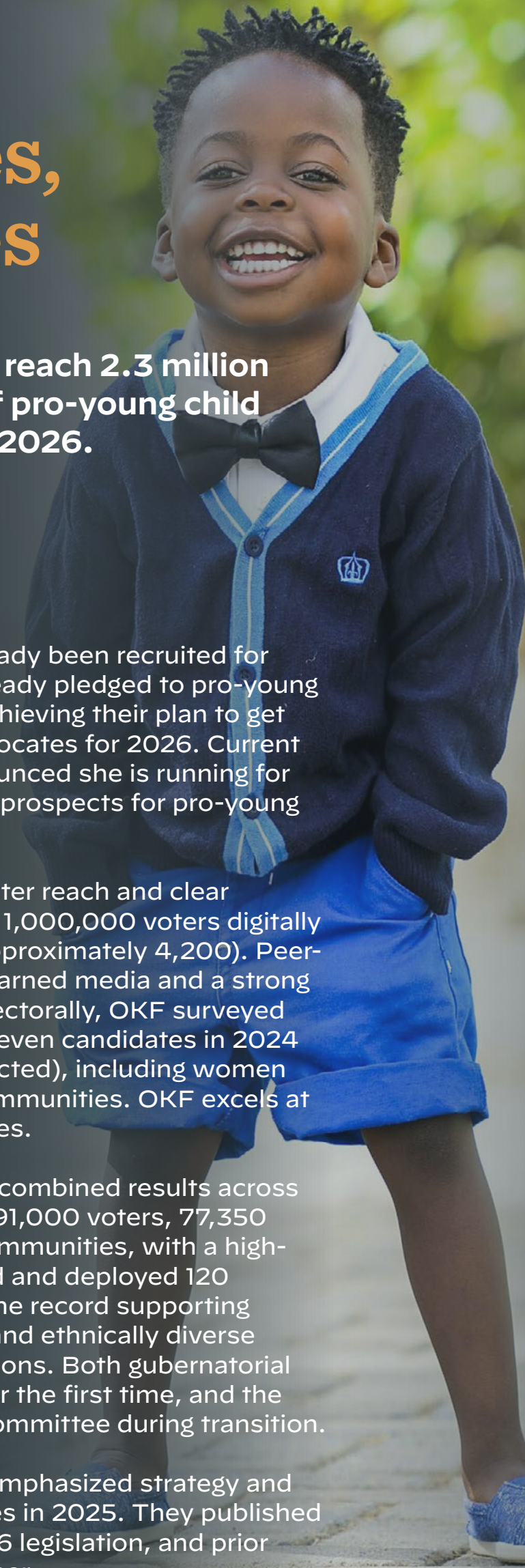
TakeAction in Minnesota organized parents in 2025 to build a strong voting base for child care champions in two key legislative swing districts, which will be key to 2026 elections. The state legislature is so closely contested (one-seat Democratic majority in the Senate; tie in the House) that just a few House and Senate races will determine whether new, pro-young child and family agenda items can be enacted. Take Action has activated parents to get more of their peers to join in, growing a bigger and more powerful group of pro-young children and family advocates and voters: in 2025 they activated more than 7,000 voters dedicated to ongoing electoral advocacy, following 21,000

field contacts. Seventeen new advocates have already been recruited for 2026, while 15 candidates or office-holders are already pledged to pro-young child and family policies. They are on the way to achieving their plan to get 5,000 new voters and deploy over 300 parent-advocates for 2026. Current Democratic U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar has announced she is running for governor and is expected to win, further improving prospects for pro-young child and family policies moving forward.

Ohio Kids First (OKF) achieved outstanding raw voter reach and clear candidate impact in 2025. OKF reached more than 1,000,000 voters digitally and built a 5,000-person supporter list (up from approximately 4,200). Peer-to-peer texting reached 16,000 residents to drive earned media and a strong turnout of 250 attendees for a Statehouse rally. Electorally, OKF surveyed candidates, identified champions, and supported seven candidates in 2024 (four elected) plus 18 champions from 2022 (all elected), including women and winners from racially and ethnically diverse communities. OKF excels at making early childhood "vote-moving" across parties.

Virginia Promise in Action (VPiA) delivered strong combined results across voters, advocates, and candidates. VPiA reached 191,000 voters, 77,350 of whom are from racially and ethnically diverse communities, with a high-frequency communications campaign. They trained and deployed 120 advocates and put 86 candidates/incumbents on the record supporting child care—74 won, including leaders from racially and ethnically diverse communities, in top statewide and legislative positions. Both gubernatorial candidates made public child care commitments for the first time, and the Governor-elect created an early childhood policy committee during transition.

Kentucky State Chamber of Commerce's efforts emphasized strategy and alignment over quantified voter/candidate outcomes in 2025. They published a statewide roadmap to unify stakeholders for 2026 legislation, and prior biennium budget wins continued into the current year.



AREA OF IMPACT #2

More Pro-Child and Family Legislation and Funding

Fellows lobbied and leveraged lawmaking champions to protect \$9.9 billion and add \$1.6 billion in funding for a total of \$11.5 billion for young children and their families. Fellows also helped secure 70 policy wins in the areas of pre-K, child care, wellbeing (health/mental health), and paid leave. At least 6.2 million young children and families will benefit from these policies and funding.

INDIVIDUAL STATE HIGHLIGHTS

Healthier Colorado's direct lobbying efforts in 2025 scored legislative wins on three priority bills during regular session, all passed and signed into law by mid-year: 1) ensuring timely developmental health screenings to target effective care from ages zero to three; 2) requiring mental and behavioral health parity from insurance companies for kids; and 3) boosting emergency stabilization funding for kids' clinics and behavioral health providers. These bills protected or added \$25 million in state funding for the benefit of 620,000 young Colorado children and their families. Further, when the legislature re-convened for a special summer session in August to address likely harms created by the passage of federal H.R. 1, Healthier Colorado helped to pass three new bills to improve the lives of young children and their families through funding for pre-natal health, subsidized healthy school meals, and assistance for affordability of health insurance for families with kids, which benefited an additional 390,000 young children with \$198 million in new funding while protecting another \$4 million.

Lobbying and electoral action by **NMVC Action Fund** and its allies culminated in Governor Lujan Grisham's historic announcement in September 2025 that **New Mexico** will be the first state in the nation to offer free child care to every family that wants it. Positioning New Mexico at the forefront of transforming child care in America, the state will spend about \$600 million per year on universal child care, saving families \$12,000 per year per child. Funding sources include revenue and interest from oil and gas trust funds, the state's Land Grant Permanent Fund, and an expected \$120 million in future appropriations that all come from hard-earned legislative and electoral wins by NMVC Action and their movement colleagues. The governor's announcement does not yet make the transformation of child care in New Mexico a fact, but NMVC Action plans a fierce direct and grassroots lobbying campaign combined with sustained electoral activism to ensure Lujan Grisham's successor is also a child care champion who will make the dream of universal child care a reality for New Mexican families.

Maryland Rise overcame a harsh state budget landscape for 2025's short legislative session, facing a \$3 billion deficit, as well as a statutory requirement to balance the budget by session's end. Maryland Rise lobbied successfully as part of a coalition to raise taxes on capital gains and create

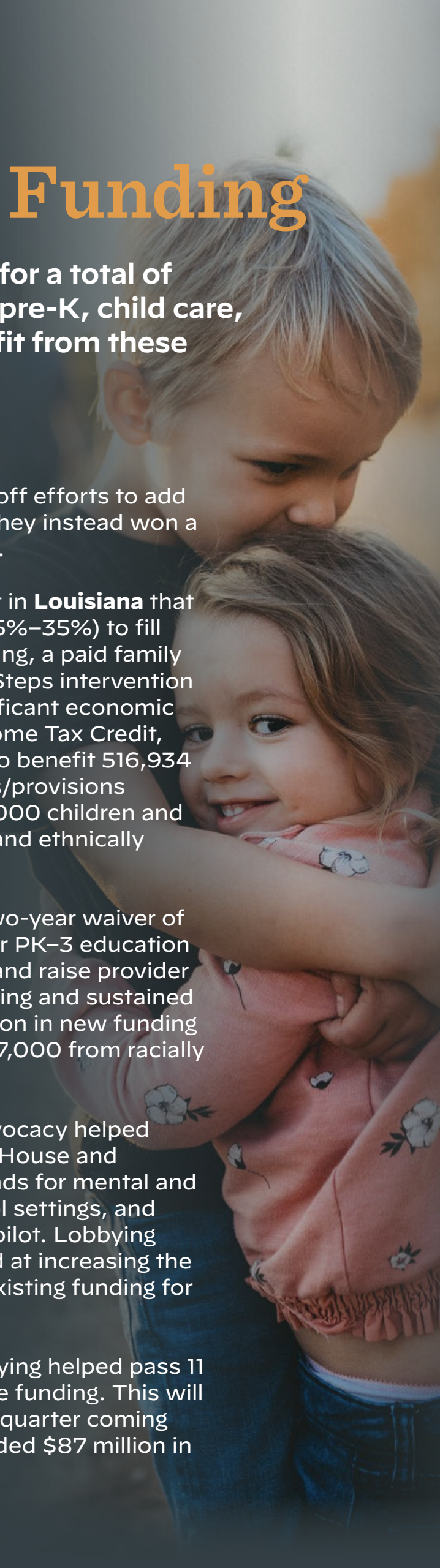
new upper-income brackets, allowing advocates to fight off efforts to add co-pays for Maryland's child care scholarship program. They instead won a slight increase in funding for the program to \$500 million.

Allons Babies helped defeat a constitutional amendment in **Louisiana** that would have diverted a dedicated early childhood fund (65%–35%) to fill budget holes. They also protected funding for home visiting, a paid family leave executive order for state employees, and the EarlySteps intervention system for children 0-3 with disabilities. Their most significant economic win was preventing elimination of the state's Earned Income Tax Credit, ensuring \$1.22 billion in refundable credits will continue to benefit 516,934 working families. In summary, 23 early childhood policies/provisions passed, \$1.35 billion was protected, and more than 280,000 children and families will benefit, 70–80% of whom are from racially and ethnically diverse communities.

Stand for Children (Stand) in **Arizona** helped secure a two-year waiver of the Aggregate Expenditure Limit, protecting \$1.1 billion for PK–3 education and \$45 million to reduce the child care subsidy waitlist and raise provider rates to stabilize the workforce. Stand's grassroots lobbying and sustained bipartisan legislator engagement helped secure \$125 million in new funding that will benefit 9,000 children and families, with nearly 7,000 from racially and ethnically diverse communities.

In **North Carolina**, **Smart Start's** sustained legislative advocacy helped advance two major funding priorities into North Carolina House and Senate budget proposals: \$7.5 million in nonrecurring funds for mental and behavioral health supports in child care and out-of-school settings, and \$738,000 to launch a Child Care Workforce Academies pilot. Lobbying efforts helped secure child care regulatory reforms aimed at increasing the child care supply, as well as maintaining \$164 million in existing funding for the Smart Start program.

Tennesseans for Quality Early Education's (TQEE) lobbying helped pass 11 policies or provisions and secure \$512 million in new state funding. This will benefit about 385,000 young children, with more than a quarter coming from racially and ethnically diverse families. TQEE defended \$87 million in pre-K funding that had been on the chopping block.



AREA OF IMPACT #3

More Capacity for Legislative and Electoral Advocacy for Young Children and Families

Fellows collectively raised \$2.7 million for legislative and electoral advocacy beyond their IFAF grants. In addition to the biannual IFAF Fellows Forum, Fellows made 35 connections with each other to share strategies in a variety of areas, including digital media, fundraising, and policy development.

INDIVIDUAL STATE HIGHLIGHTS

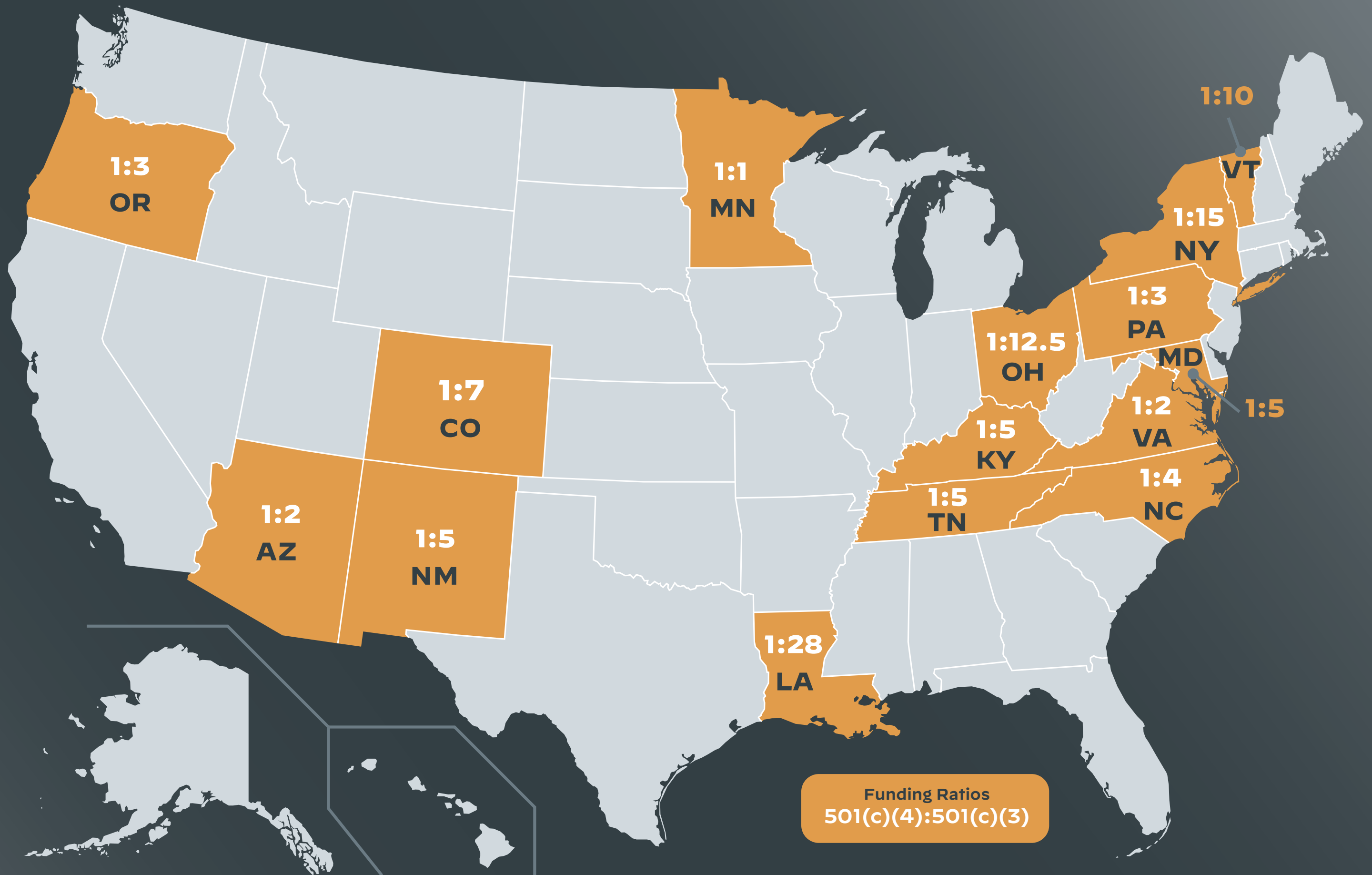
Let's Grow Kids Action Network (LGKAN) in **Vermont** raised \$370,000 in 2025 beyond their IFAF grant and has received an additional \$800,000 for 2026-28. They are increasing staff and consultant capacity to expand the organization's role in the state's early childhood ecosystem to become the primary protector of transformative child care in Vermont. With long-time 501(c)(3) sister organization Let's Grow Kids sunsetting in October 2026, LGKAN is boosting their legislative and electoral advocacy to ensure ongoing funding for the groundbreaking universal child care legislation they helped pass, preventing diversion to other purposes. LGKAN's continued 501(c)(4) advocacy is essential, as evidenced by a past gubernatorial veto of path-breaking child care legislation which required a successful vote to overturn in the legislature. LGKAN will continue to be a leader in the national field through peer-to-peer technical assistance efforts, building on 2025 experiences with groups in Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Minnesota, Colorado, and elsewhere.

Alliance for Quality Education (AQE) in **New York** added \$125,000 from an additional 501(c)(4) source in 2025. This investment allowed the organization to hire a development director to support long-term sustainability; grow advocacy capacity; and strengthen its 501(c)(4) infrastructure to build a leadership pipeline to oversee campaigns, influence policy, and mobilize communities in support of early childhood justice. A further \$325,000 has already been promised to AQE for 2026. AQE is actively pursuing a substantial expansion to support transformational progress in the state's child care system from recent and anticipated electoral successes.

In 2025, **South Carolinians for Common Sense** raised \$110,000 and built year-round infrastructure in communications, policy, electoral and legislative advocacy, and coalition management. They also secured five GOP co-sponsors for upcoming child care professional benefit legislation.



The Funding Gap



Our Fellows report 501(c)(4) legislative and electoral advocacy is consistently underfunded compared to traditional 501(c)(3) advocacy. By closing the 501(c)(3) funding gap with more 501(c)(4) investments, organizations across the nation can affect even greater change to benefit young children and families. On average, states have over six times more money for traditional advocacy than for legislative and electoral advocacy.



IF **IMPACT**
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