



Fiscal Data Trend Profile Template Guidance

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Overview of the Fiscal Data Trend Profile Template

This trend data template is an extension of the original Fiscal Data Profile Template, which displays fiscal data at a specific point in time. This template allows trend data on budget source and expenses data to be visualized over multiple years. For information about the importance of fiscal profiles and original point-in-time template, please see the original guidance located here: <https://dasycenter.org/fiscal-data-profile-template/>.

Purpose

The DaSy Fiscal Data Trend Profile Template is an easy-to-use Excel tool for displaying select fiscal data for the state Part C system, over time. The Excel template converts raw fiscal data of each local program that a state enters or imports into two engaging and informative graphical displays (i.e., profiles) and analytical statements, specifically on budget by fund source, and total expenses by type.

The template will simplify the process of accessing, creating, and sharing key fiscal data about fund sources and total expenses by type for local programs in a way that is uniform and consistent by:

- Populating and formatting each local program profile automatically based on the entity-specific data entered.
- Displaying each local program profile and its data individually when a user selects a local program from a drop-down list or exports all available local program profiles at once as individual two-page PDF files with one click.
- Creating prespecified graphs and information that are important for the fiscal management of all Part C local programs.
- Generating statewide averages for local program comparison automatically based on the raw data entered.

The profiles generated by the template are just the start. The graphs and information generated can be used for multiple purposes and in multiple presentation formats. Profiles can also be saved and reviewed over time to track long term changes in local program fiscal data and statewide averages.

This guide will provide instructions for using the template and thus facilitate an increased proficiency with data analysis and overall fiscal accountability. The guide also provides additional considerations specific to each chart, such as key questions and important findings to consider when reviewing the charts and information in the profiles.

Limitations

- States should be cautious in reporting data for local programs where the sample size is very small and individual children might be unintentionally disclosed. When numbers are small, we recommend that data be aggregated over enough years to exceed five as this protects the identity of participants and supports the analysis of data trends over time.
- The number and types of graphs displayed on the profiles are fixed.

- The template does not generate profiles that compare data with other individual local programs’ data (i.e., each graph is unique to a local program). In the *Expenses by Fund Source* graph, however, the local program data are compared with the statewide average, which is calculated from data from all local programs.
- Statewide averages, percentages, and the like reflect only the data that were entered. Therefore, the quality of the graphs depends on the quality and completeness of the data for each of the variables and local programs.

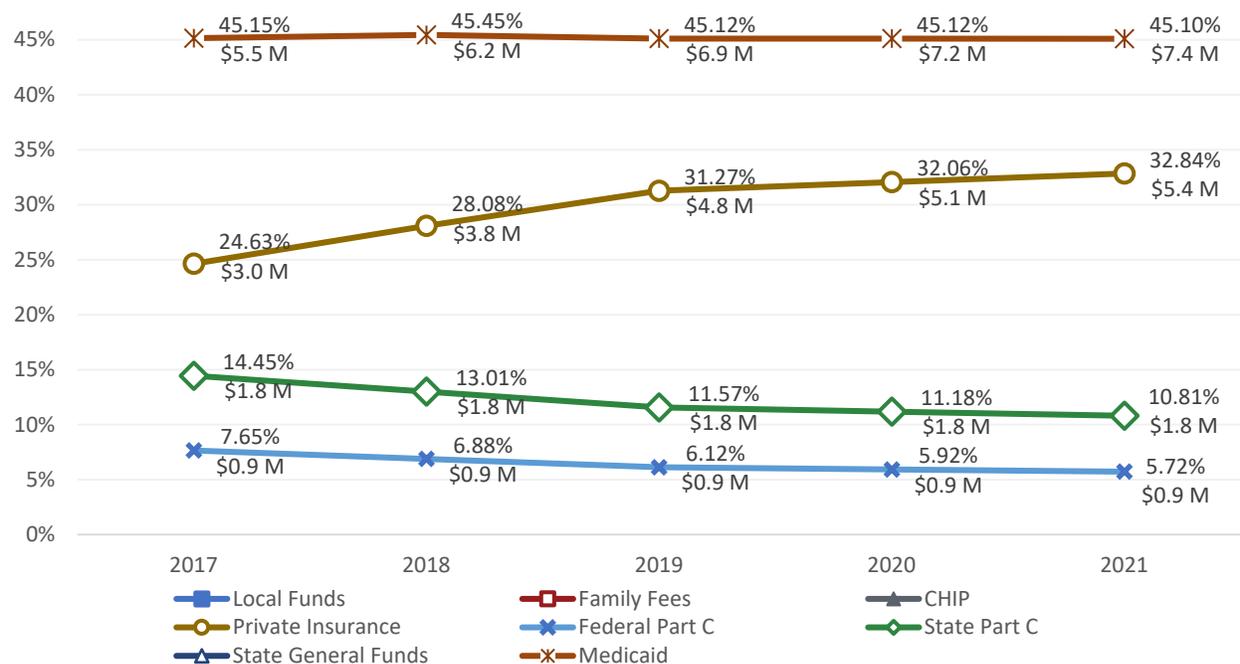


Staff members from ECTA and DaSy are available to help states with using the Fiscal Trend Data Profile Template. They can answer questions about how to work with the template, assist with planning for use by local programs, discuss how the data can be displayed or analyzed in informative and useful ways, and assist in other ways as needed.

Detailed Chart Information

There is an example of each of the two charts generated by the Fiscal Data Trend Profile Template, below. These samples include a description of the data contained in it, and why the data are important. The data needed to create each chart are listed, as are potential questions to ask about the data, and important findings to consider in reviewing each chart.

Chart 1: Budget by Funding Source Over Time for [LOCAL PROGRAM]

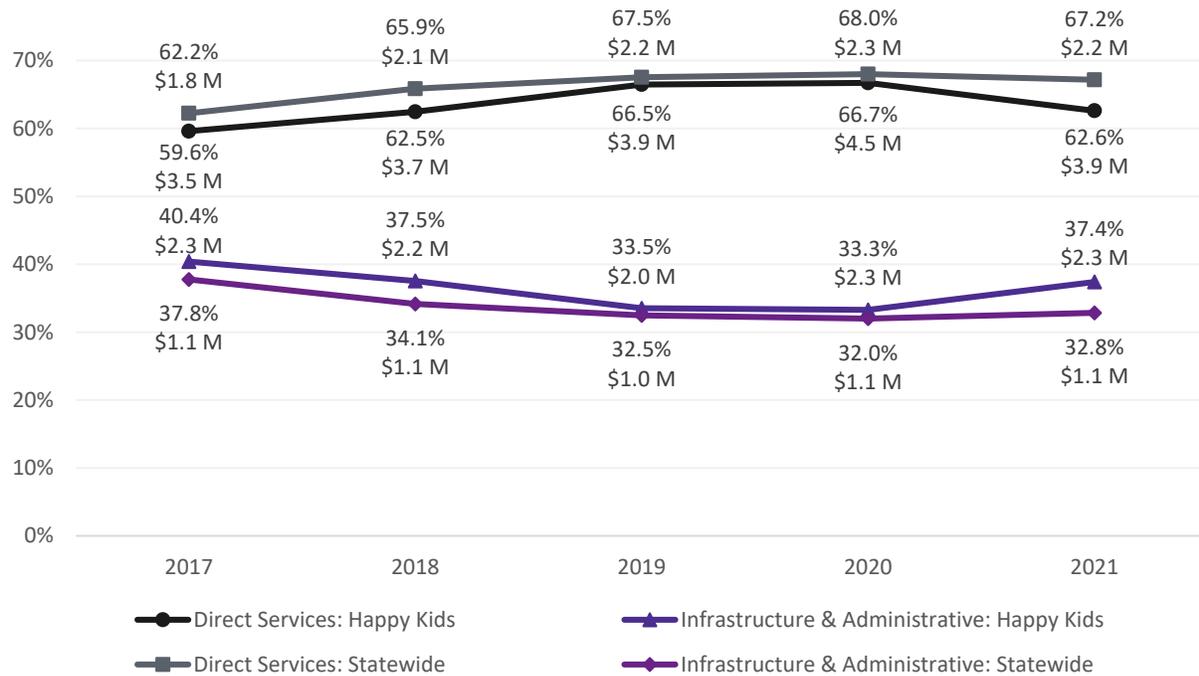


a. What is this chart about, and why are these data important?

This chart shows data for a local program’s budget by all the available funding sources, over time. This information illustrates the diversification (or lack thereof) of a local program’s funding sources and how those amounts have changed over time. Review of these data can uncover whether all available funding sources are being maximized or underutilized and how these contributions have been changing.

- b. What data are needed to create this chart?
 - Data on total amount of revenue received by local program, by revenue source, within a 12- month date range over multiple years. Sources may include:
 - Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
 - Family fees
 - Federal Part C
 - Local public funds (e.g., county tax levy, local education agency)
 - Medicaid
 - Private insurance
 - State general funds
 - State Part C allocated
- c. What might you interpret from these data?
 - What are the main funding sources for the local program?
 - Would we expect any of the funding sources to be higher? If so, what may be causing underutilization? What could be done to maximize use of this funding source?
 - How have the contributions from the various fund sources changed over time? What might we attribute to the spikes and/or dips?
 - Are any potential funding sources missing?

Chart 2: Total Expenses Over Time by Type for [LOCAL PROGRAM] vs. Statewide Average



a. What is this chart about, and why are these data important?

This chart shows data for infrastructure and administrative expenses combined and for all direct services expenses combined, over time. These data allow a state lead agency and local program to monitor the expense categories for a given local program and identify variance between the local program and the statewide average. This comparison may prompt questions about the reason for any variance.

b. What data are needed to create this chart?

- Data for each category by local program within a designated 12-month date range and over multiple years:

- Infrastructure and administrative expenses combined
- Direct services expenses combined

(See [Understanding and Using Fiscal Data](#) for more details with examples for each of these data categories.)

c. What might you interpret from these data?

- How do a local program’s infrastructure and administrative expenses and direct services expenses compare with the statewide average?
- High or low infrastructure and administrative expenses as well as high or low direct service expenses for a local program may prompt additional exploration of what cost categories are included in these expenses. Which categories are particularly high? What might we attribute to the spikes and/or dips?
- How have these expenses changed over time in relation to the statewide average?

Instructions for Using the Fiscal Data Trend Profile Template

- **Enable macros.** For this template to work as intended, you must select the **Enable Content** (i.e., macros) button that appears at the top center of the page when you first open the Excel template workbook file.
- **Import/Enter local program data.** You may import the data from up to five previously saved fiscal profiles from the **Control Panel** sheet. Starting with the oldest file, select the “File 1” button and select the appropriate file using the pop-up window that appears. Repeat this step for each file you wish to upload (e.g., one file for each of the past five years, using the corresponding file number button with each subsequent year). Once the data are imported, they can be viewed in the corresponding worksheets to the file number designated in the control panel. The dashboard will automatically populate once data are entered. Alternatively, you can copy and paste the data for columns H through Q for each local program (i.e., one program per row) for the first time period (e.g., year) in the **File 1** worksheet. Continue this process for each time period you wish to capture in the trend.
 - You should also designate the time period for each of the files/datasets in column “M” on the **Control Panel** sheet regardless of your entry method (i.e., import or copy/paste). The labels you enter here will appear along the time (i.e., horizontal or x-axis) on the data display.
 - If you have successfully imported data into an available sheet and wish to change the source or decide to copy/paste that dataset instead, then you must first select the “Clear Data” button in column “N” of the **Control Panel** worksheet.
- **Customize the Budget by Fund Source Figure**
 - The fund sources in the first figure, Budget by Fund Source, can be modified to reflect the fund sources that are relevant for your system (e.g., recategorizing local funds to local public funds or other funds). These labels can be modified manually by changing the label names in the **File 1** sheet. If you import a fiscal template that contains a modified list of fund sources, then the labels will be imported and updated automatically based on the labels imported in **File 1**. The templates are designed to analyze up to eight fund sources where the number of sources cannot be modified.
- **Customize the Dashboard Figures.** All colored boxes in the top five rows of the **Dashboard** are interactive. Using the different filtering button options available (e.g., Private Insurance, Show/Hide %) you can show or hide particular elements to emphasize certain data or decompress certain trend lines. Note that the axis will be adjusted automatically to provide the best scale for visualizing the differences between the trend lines.
- **Create/display/print a *single* local program’s profile.** Select the **Dashboard** tab. Select the shaded cell in the third row beneath **Select a program**. A drop-down arrow will appear allowing you to choose the local program profile that will be displayed. All titles, graphs, “notes” text, etc., in the profile sheet will be updated automatically to reflect the selected local program’s data. To print the selected local program profile, use the **File** menu in the Excel toolbar and select **Print**. The print boundaries are predefined to capture all the profile content on two letter-sized pages.
- **Create/print *all* local program profiles.**
 - Create a folder to save the set of PDF files (one PDF file for each local program appearing in the **Control Panel** sheet). An example of a folder name might be **Fiscal DataTrends_2021-10-11**, where the date of download is part of the folder name.

Note: Having the date as part of the folder name is important if you plan to download a later set of profiles and do not want to overwrite the older set.

- In the Fiscal Data Trends Profiles workbook, click the **Dashboard** tab. Click the **Create PDFs of all programs** button in column “J”.
- On the Browse pop-up window, choose the folder (created in step 1) for saving all the individual profile PDF files. Once you click **OK**, the template will begin creating the individual files. Depending on your computer and the number of local programs, this could take a few moments.



If you save a new set of trend profiles to the same folder as a previous set, the original profiles will be overwritten without a warning prompt. To avoid this, save new profiles to a new folder. We suggest using the current date in the new folder name.

About Us

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