

# AGENDA

## MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Chair: Sheila Kuehl

Thursday, October 28, 2021

1:30 PM Click [HERE](#) for Public Zoom, YouTube, and Dial-in Info

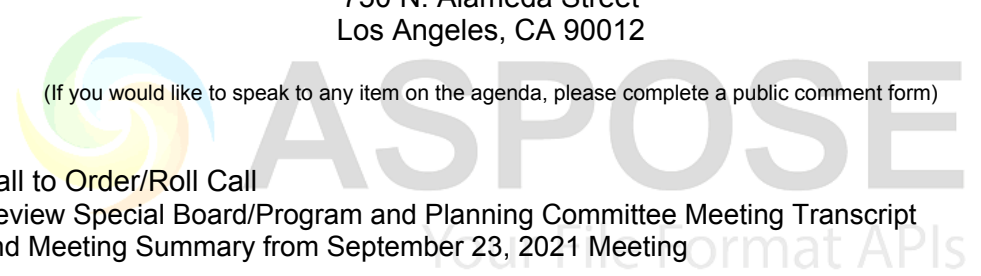
### Meeting Location:

First 5 LA

750 N. Alameda Street

Los Angeles, CA 90012

(If you would like to speak to any item on the agenda, please complete a public comment form)

- 
1. Call to Order/Roll Call
  2. Review Special Board/Program and Planning Committee Meeting Transcript and Meeting Summary from September 23, 2021 Meeting 2
  3. **INFORMATION** 69  
First 5 LA Data Strategy
  4. Break
  5. **INFORMATION** 88  
2021 Policy Review, 2022 Agenda Refinement and Priorities Ahead

**Presenters: Charna Widby, Chief Government Affairs Officer, Office of Government Affairs and Public Policy; Ofelia Medina, Senior Policy Strategist, Office of Government Affairs and Public Policy; and Andrew Olenick, Senior Policy Analyst, Office of**

6. Public Comment (for items not on the agenda)
7. Adjournment

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MEETING OF FIRST 5 LOS ANGELES PROGRAM AND PLANNING  
Thursday, September 23, 2021  
Los Angeles, California 90012

STENOGRAPHICALLY REPORTED BY:  
HEATHERLYNN GONZALEZ  
CSR #13646

1 Thursday, September 23, 2021; Los Angeles, California

2 1:34 p.m.

3 -oOo-

4 MS. BELSHE: And Jamie is going to be our point  
5 person for today. If you're looking for Linda, look for  
6 Jamie.

7 THE SECRETARY: Thank you, Kim.

8 All right. And it does look like we have most if  
9 not all of our commissioners. Would you like me to go  
10 ahead and do the ground rules?

11 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Yes, please.

12 THE SECRETARY: Right. Well, thank you so much  
13 for joining today. And good afternoon, members of the  
14 board and public. My name is Jaimie Knowles for First 5  
15 LA. And before we begin today's meeting, I'll be going  
16 over some important information.

17 Pursuant to Governor Newsom's executive order  
18 N-25-20, members of the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners  
19 or staff may participate in this meeting via  
20 teleconference. In the interest of maintaining  
21 appropriate social distancing, members of the public may  
22 observe this meeting telephonically or otherwise  
23 electronically as posted on our website and this agenda.

24 To provide public comment, you may submit written  
25 public comments by e-mail to LVO@First5LA.org or call

1 213-276-9389. Please indicate the item number your  
2 comment corresponds with. All public comments  
3 corresponding to an agenda item must be received before  
4 1:30 p.m. on the day of the meeting. Any received after  
5 1:30 p.m. will become a part of public record. All public  
6 comments received prior to 1:30 p.m. today will be read  
7 aloud at the end of each item it corresponds with.

8 Before we begin, please note that today's meeting  
9 will include audio and video, allowing all meeting  
10 participants and public members to view presentations via  
11 shared screen.

12 And to minimize background disruptions, all board  
13 members and staff should place themselves on mute until  
14 called upon to speak. To minimize multiple people  
15 speaking at the same time and to ensure for a coherent  
16 dialogue, if there is any agenda item you would like to  
17 speak to or have a question for our Program and Planning  
18 Committee Chair, Marlene Zepeda, please text her with your  
19 name to indicate your interest in speaking. Or if you  
20 prefer, you can direct message me on Zoom's chat box or  
21 raise your hand on Zoom to indicate you'd like to speak  
22 and I will coordinate with Commissioner Zepeda and we will  
23 call on you in the order we do receive those requests.

24 As a reminder, please take yourself off mute  
25 prior to speaking. And, finally, if you do have any

1 technical assistance that you need, please contact me at  
2 213-482-6010 and I'll connect you with our IT team.

3 Commissioner Zepeda?

4 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Thanks Jaimie.

5 Welcome everybody to our meeting today. And I  
6 think we'll start off with our roll call; correct?

7 THE SECRETARY: Correct.

8 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: All right. So let's do  
9 that.

10 THE SECRETARY: Okay. Here we go.

11 Judy Abdo?

12 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Here.

13 THE SECRETARY: Robert Byrd?

14 COMMISSIONER BYRD: Here.

15 THE SECRETARY: Barbara Ferrer? Astrid Heger?

16 COMMISSIONER HEGER: Here.

17 THE SECRETARY: Yvette Martinez? Frank Ramos?  
18 Romalis Taylor?

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Here.

20 THE SECRETARY: Sheila Kuehl? Karla Pleitez  
21 Howell?

22 COMMISSIONER PLEITEZ HOWELL: Here.

23 THE SECRETARY: Jacquelyn McCroskey?

24 COMMISSIONER McCROSKEY: Here.

25 THE SECRETARY: Marcela Ramirez?

1 COMMISSIONER RAMIREZ: Here.

2 THE SECRETARY: Deanne Tilton?

3 COMMISSIONER TILTON: Here.

4 THE SECRETARY: And Marlene Zepeda?

5 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Here.

6 THE SECRETARY: Quorum is present.

7 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Okay. Moving onto Item 2,  
8 the review Program and Planning Committee transcripts from  
9 June the 24th.

10 Are there any comments or suggestions relative to  
11 that transcript from commissioners?

12 Hearing none, I think we'll go ahead and accept  
13 them as is, and we can go from there.

14 Let's go ahead onto our first item of  
15 presentation, which is our annual audit.

16 And this is the comprehensive financial report,  
17 including the independent auditors report. So our  
18 presenters today are Raoul Ortega, Faustino Genio, and  
19 Kinnaly Soukhasseum. I hope I didn't mess up your name  
20 too badly.

21 So you're on. I assume, Raoul?

22 MR. ORTEGA: Good afternoon, and thank you  
23 Commissioner Zepeda. And welcome everyone to the  
24 presentation of the annual comprehensive financial report  
25 for fiscal year 2021.

1           Today, our presentation will be done from  
2   Faustino Genio who is our lead staff accountant who is the  
3   lead manager for the -- for the audit for this year. And  
4   he will be giving you an overall review of the audit and  
5   the audit process and even highlighting some of the awards  
6   that we received for the prior years, comprehensive annual  
7   financial report, also known as the annual comprehensive  
8   financial report -- I apologize. And also towards the  
9   end, we will hear from Kinnaly Soukhaseum who is the  
10   partner from Eide Bailly. And she will be providing you  
11   an update and her overview from the auditor's perspective.  
12   And then we'll be wrapping the presentation up with some  
13   next steps. And then I will close the presentation with  
14   some closing remarks.

15           Tino, take it away.

16           COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Is he on mute, Raoul?

17           MR. GENIO: There you go. Thank you so much. I  
18   finally got it.

19           Thank you, Raoul. Good afternoon, commissioners,  
20   First 5 LA staff, and guests. My presentation today will  
21   include a brief summary and our fiscal '19-'20 award from  
22   GFOA, an overview -- a journey of the annual comprehensive  
23   financial report, and a brief discussion of the  
24   independent auditors report.

25           I will also cover fiscal years' '20-'21

1 highlights as well as three-year comparisons of the trends  
2 we are observing. Before I end my presentation with next  
3 steps, our CPA firm's partner, Kinnaly Soukhasseum, will  
4 say a few words about our audit and then we can take  
5 questions and comments that you may have.

6 The Government Financial Officers Association of  
7 the USA and Canada, also known as GFOA has awarded the  
8 Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial  
9 Reporting to First 5 LA for its annual comprehensive  
10 financial report for the fiscal year ending June 30th,  
11 2020. This report has been judged by an impartial panel  
12 to meet the high standards of the program, which includes  
13 demonstrating a constructive spirit of full disclosure to  
14 clearly communicate its financial story and motivate  
15 potential users and user groups to read the annual report.

16 The Certificate of Achievement is the highest  
17 form of recognition in the area of Governmental Accounting  
18 and Financial Reporting, and its attainment represents a  
19 significant accomplishment by an organization and its  
20 management. And this is the 13th consecutive year that  
21 First 5 LA's Financial Report has received this award.

22 First 5 California requires each County  
23 Commission to prepare audited financial statements in  
24 accordance with generally accepted accounting principals.  
25 This consists of basic financial statements and

1 supplementary statements at the front level.

2 The presentation --

3 MR. ORTEGA: Can you forward the slide, please?

4 MR. GENIO: I think I'm there.

5 MR. ORTEGA: Thank you.

6 MR. GENIO: Okay. Are you seeing annual

7 financial report?

8 MR. ORTEGA: Yes. Yes.

9 MR. GENIO: Okay. Got it. Thank you.

10 The presentation of this draft report presented  
11 as part of the packet is above the normal recording  
12 requirements set by the California Health and Safety Code  
13 and the First 5 California Management Guide. The  
14 financial report goes beyond the scope of basic financial  
15 statements and the State compliance as well as reflects a  
16 detailed review of the Commission's financial position at  
17 a moment in time as of June 30th, 2021.

18 The audit planning and process takes several  
19 months to complete with three phases of interim fieldwork  
20 that happened in May with the entrance entity with an  
21 August and September, completing the final paperwork and  
22 reporting. The audit process impacts the whole  
23 organization, including interviews with directors and  
24 staff as well as confirmation of pending litigation from  
25 our legal counsel as well as diving deep into our accounts

1 payable files to ensure the appropriate internal controls  
2 are in place.

3 As steward of public funds, commissioners have  
4 oversight and must approve this report to be submitted to  
5 the State Controller's Office and First 5 California by  
6 November 1st. This report is being presented today for  
7 your review and will be presented to the Board of  
8 Commissioners meeting in October for approval.

9 Today, I am happy to report that our auditors,  
10 Eide Bailly, LLP, noted that the financial statements are  
11 presented fairly in accordance with generally accepted  
12 accounting principles and unmodified opinion. During Eide  
13 Bailey's normal course of performing their assigned  
14 functions of the audit, no material deficiencies in  
15 material control were identified, there were no added  
16 findings or adjustments made. In other words, they  
17 represent a clean audit.

18 And let's look at the '20-'21 highlights.  
19 Starting with our budget approved by the board in July  
20 2020, the board approved a total budget of 124.3 million.  
21 In March of 2021, the board approved a revised budget of  
22 123.8 million. An overall decrease of approximately  
23 \$500,000 which was related to a few line items in the  
24 operating budget. Total revenue for '20-'21 was roughly  
25 81.9 million, with 60.6 million was for tobacco tax.

1 First 5 LA also received 18.2 million from Proposition 56,  
2 which represents the '19-'20 fiscal year's backfill which  
3 is consistent from prior year when we received the funds  
4 one fiscal year in arrears. Other revenues were 3.1  
5 million which includes the impact program, investment  
6 income, math program, and several grants from First 5  
7 California.

8 So expenditures were 104.3 million with 84.7  
9 million of it related to program expenditures. 7 million  
10 for operating expenditures related to programmatic efforts  
11 and the administrative expenditures of 12.6 million.

12 In the next three slides, I'll briefly talk about  
13 our fund balance.

14 This slide defines the different levels of  
15 constraints that the board has taken in aligning with  
16 accounting principles and our current fund balance policy.  
17 I will not be going over the definitions for each  
18 category. But to remind our commissioners, the different  
19 categories that our funds are assigned to are in alignment  
20 with accounting principles.

21 This pie chart represents our current fund  
22 balance of 316.4 million broken down by the different  
23 constraints that the board has taken action on.

24 On the next three slides, I'll talk about trends  
25 and activities that we are currently observing for the

1 last three fiscal years.

2 This graph reflects our declining fund balance as  
3 we continuously rely on it to offset our revenue being  
4 lower than our expenditures. As presented in the prior  
5 pie chart, our fund balance as of June 30, 2021, is 316.42  
6 million, which decreased 22.26 million from the prior year  
7 balance of 338.68 million.

8 This slide reflects revenue versus expenditures  
9 which continue the pattern of spending in excess of  
10 revenue, which is planned and approved through our  
11 budgeting process. Focusing on 2021 on the right  
12 hand-side of the graph, total revenue decreased from 88.46  
13 million in fiscal year 2020 to roughly 81.16 in 2021.

14 As I mentioned in the prior slides, total  
15 expenditures of 104.33 million for '20-'21 were exceeded  
16 total revenue of 81.16 million by 23.17 million.

17 This last graph represents the program versus  
18 administrative expenditures as a line to First 5  
19 California financial management guide. Looking at the  
20 right-hand side of the graph, for 2021 the administrative  
21 cost of 12.6 million of the total allocated expenditure is  
22 below the spending cap of 13.84 million approved by the  
23 board during mid-year revision.

24 The total program expenditures of 91.73 million  
25 for '20-'21 includes provided grants and allocations as

1 well as operation expenditures in direct support of  
2 programmatic efforts.

3 Before I continue onto next steps, our CPA firm  
4 partners from Eide Bailey, Kinnaly Soukhaseum, would like  
5 to say a few words about this fiscal year's audit  
6 engagement.

7 Kinnaly?

8 MS. SOUKHASEUM: All right. Thank you, Tino.  
9 Good afternoon, everyone. And thank you for having me  
10 participate in this meeting. My name is Kinnaly  
11 Soukhaseum and I'm with Eide Bailey.

12 As far as the audit, we completed our audit for  
13 the fiscal year ending June 30th, 2021. And I just wanted  
14 to take some time to discuss what our response is under  
15 generally accepted auditing standards. And then also to  
16 discuss the results of our audit.

17 So our scope of work was to provide an opinion on  
18 the commission's annual comprehensive financial report for  
19 the fiscal year ending June 30th, 2021. And also to test  
20 for compliance with the standards and procedures for  
21 audits of local entities in administering the California  
22 Children and Families act, issued by the California State  
23 Controller's Office.

24 We plan to issue an unmodified opinion or clean  
25 opinion on the commission's financial statements with this

1 level of assurance over the financial statements. As part  
2 of our financial statement audit, we considered the  
3 commission's internal controls and designed our audit  
4 procedures to gain reasonable but not absolute assurance  
5 over the financial statements. We performed test of  
6 compliance with laws regulation contracts, those of which  
7 could have a direct and material effect on the  
8 determination of the financial statement amounts.

9 In addition, we also reviewed the required  
10 supplementary fee information to ensure the amounts  
11 contained within the sections are consistent with the  
12 information presented in the financial statements.

13 The significant accounting policies used by the  
14 commission are disclosed in the financial statements.  
15 There were no significant changes in accounting policies  
16 used in fiscal year 2021.

17 There was one new accounting standard that was  
18 implemented this year, and that's Governmental Accounting  
19 Standards Board's statement Number 84, Fiduciary  
20 Activities; however, this statement did not have a  
21 material impact to the commission's financial statements.

22 Also, I'm happy to report that there were no  
23 difficulties or disagreements with management and staff  
24 during the course of the audit. We also noted no  
25 corrections or uncorrected misstatements during the audit.

1 Also, there were no consultations with any outside  
2 accounting firms during this audit period. An example of  
3 this would be if the commission entered into any unique  
4 financial transactions in which we didn't have the  
5 expertise in-house to test these transactions and had to  
6 consult with an outside firm.

7 And with that, that concludes my little overview.  
8 I just wanted to note that we appreciate the opportunity  
9 of serving as the commission's external auditors, and  
10 would like to thank management and staff for their  
11 cooperation with this audit process.

12 And turning it back to you, Tino.

13 MR. GENIO: Thank you so much, Kinnaly.

14 For next steps for the annual report, the draft  
15 report presented today for your review will be presented  
16 to the Board of Commissioners meeting on October 14th for  
17 approval. Upon approval, the report will be submitted to  
18 the State Controller's Office and First 5 California by  
19 November 1st to complete our reporting requirements. the  
20 financial report information will also be used in form to  
21 update the long-term financial plan.

22 Before I end my presentation, I would like to  
23 thank our senior leadership team and our commissioners for  
24 their leadership and support and also to my colleagues for  
25 their support in completing the clean audit and our team

1 from -- auditors from Eide Bailey for their hard work in  
2 completing the audit timely.

3 I'll pass it back to Raoul before we take your  
4 questions and/or comments. Thank you.

5 Raoul?

6 MR. ORTEGA: Thank you, Tino. Thank you for that  
7 presentation. And thank you, Kinnaly for your assistance  
8 and your partnership in this fiscal year '20-'21s audit.

9 I wanted to close today's presentation -- because  
10 I really wanted to highlight, from my perspective, the  
11 Director of Finance, how proud I am of not only the  
12 organization but of our staff. This completes the first  
13 fiscal year that we completed the whole fiscal year in a  
14 teleworking environment. And with such an environment,  
15 the organization needs to be nimble when it looks at  
16 internal controls, and we have to adjust internal controls  
17 in order to facilitate the appropriate operations,  
18 segregation of duties and authorization of all of our  
19 financials and financial statements.

20 We're working in such an environment. And for  
21 this organization to achieve not only a clean audit, but  
22 to look at the internal controls that we put in place  
23 either temporarily or, moving forward, permanently, I'm  
24 very proud of this organization and the way we have  
25 functioned in this past fiscal year. And I just think

1 it's extremely important for me to acknowledge that -- my  
2 staff and the entire organization and of the support of  
3 the board in this environment and for us to have such a  
4 prosperous year when looking at our financial statement.  
5 With that, I'll pass it on to you, Marlene for any  
6 questions.

7 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Okay. Well, let me just  
8 comment, I commend your team. You had to move on a dime  
9 with the Covid situation. We all had to really make  
10 adjustments very quickly. And then, like you say, we had  
11 to do it over Zoom with the Internet freezing on us all  
12 the time and what have you. So kudos to your team and  
13 appreciate all your hard work and efforts.

14 So I'll open it up for any questions from  
15 commissioners.

16 Jaimie, did you get any questions?

17 THE SECRETARY: I see none right now.

18 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Any comments,  
19 Commissioners? This is the time to praise the team.

20 Commissioner Heger? Go ahead.

21 COMMISSIONER HEGER: I will come-and-go because  
22 I have restless leg syndrome; so I have to stand up; so  
23 it's very difficult for me to be on screen all the time.

24 But I wanted to ask one questions about audits.  
25 In -- in the auditing what -- what First 5 does -- you

1 know, I expect everything to be complete pristine.

2 Is there a role in the audit for those individual  
3 agencies that we fund? Where does their audit come into  
4 play when we audit ourselves? Do we take their audits  
5 into consideration? How does that come into play? I've  
6 never really understood that.

7 MR. ORTEGA: So under the contract agreements  
8 that we have with many of contractors and grantees, there  
9 are provisions where they are required to submit their own  
10 internal audit to the organization. We also have a  
11 independent review process internally within the  
12 organization between the program officers that are  
13 monitoring the contractors independently, and in some  
14 cases will engage with finance and we will do test audits.  
15 So that's how we engage with our partners.

16 COMMISSIONER HEGER: Can I ask a question? If  
17 they -- I mean, if -- are you satisfied with their audits?  
18 And if you're not, are there -- are there -- is there  
19 repercussions for the individuals who received the money  
20 from First 5?

21 MR. ORTEGA: So you'd like me to share from my  
22 personal experience, it works both ways. We are always  
23 working with our partners and our contractors and  
24 grantees. And when a program officer identifies any  
25 issues or concerns related to the financial statements, he

1 will bring us along. And then we will work with those  
2 contractors and grantees and put them in a  
3 work-in-progress process in order for them to be in  
4 compliance. And that's if we consider them out of  
5 compliance.

6 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Thank you, Raoul.

7 Other questions by commissioners? I'm not seeing  
8 any hands.

9 Commissioner Taylor has a comment or question.

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I just wanted to commend  
11 Raoul and his team and the organization as a whole for  
12 getting 13 years of an award that says others are  
13 recognizing your great work. And hopefully we're going to  
14 have a 14th award this year; so we'll see how it all goes.  
15 But I think this is an opportunity to congratulate you on  
16 all your hard work and your continued success in doing the  
17 right things with regards to monitoring and administering  
18 our funds; so keep up the good work. Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Thank you, Commissioner  
20 Taylor.

21 Any other comments or questions from  
22 commissioners?

23 I have a question, Raoul. I don't know -- I  
24 wrote it down in my notes when I was reading the report.  
25 It was on Page 29, because I wrote it down.

1           What does future -- and this is sort of probably  
2 an inconsequential question. But when you mention future  
3 funding commitments from the State, what is that referring  
4 to?

5           MR. ORTEGA: It could refer to many things. It  
6 could -- but most likely when we're referencing future  
7 funding from the State, it's usually related to First 5  
8 California and opportunities for funding through them.

9           COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: So it's just from First 5  
10 California, and not from the tobacco tax part or anything  
11 like that? It's a separate -- separate moneys from First  
12 5 California?

13          MR. ORTEGA: Correct. First 5 California  
14 receives their own allocation. And then each of the  
15 County Commissions receive their own allocations based on  
16 their birth rate.

17          Sometimes First 5 California, like impact  
18 dollars, they award different commissions and they give  
19 opportunities for additional funding; so we will create  
20 partnerships and do the work together.

21          COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Right. You mentioned the  
22 issue of the birthrate. And I think it refers more to the  
23 next presentation, but there needs to be some -- our  
24 birthrate is going down. And we're not -- and you need  
25 to, like, have a cross tab or some kind of way we can

1 predict -- we know our funds are going down. But now our  
2 birthrate is also going down; so people are having less  
3 babies or people that are having babies are moving to  
4 other counties. Or -- and they're smoking less, which is  
5 a good thing, but the birthrate is going to impact our  
6 funding. And -- and I don't know how that's factored into  
7 the prediction model.

8 MR. GENIO: Yes. The way that tobacco tax is  
9 distributed is -- first of all, the revenue is driven by  
10 consumption and the taxes on that consumption. And then  
11 the way it's distributed across the State is based on a  
12 particular county's birth rate from two years prior.

13 And the birth rates are going down. It -- in two  
14 ways, there's a lot of people that are moving out of the  
15 county; so that creates the birthrate to go lower. And in  
16 addition, people are having -- less babies are being born  
17 in LA County.

18 MR. WAGNER: And if I can just jump in on that  
19 point, I think the way the board sees this is -- to get to  
20 your question of projections -- is through the long-term  
21 financial projection.

22 So maybe you could just make that point, Raoul,  
23 about how the board actually sees our latest updated  
24 thinking on these projections.

25 MR. ORTEGA: So -- thank you, John.

1           So every year, the Department of Finance does  
2           update their projections and take the projections out  
3           every five years. We look at those projections, and then  
4           with the actual end-of-fund balance for fiscal year 2021,  
5           we look at that projected revenue, the remaining fund  
6           balance that we have, and then we update our financial,  
7           long-term plan through the budgeting process which you  
8           will start seeing in early April through June when you  
9           approve the budget and the long-term financial plan.

10           COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Thank you, John. Thank  
11           you, O.

12           Commissioner Taylor has another question.

13           Commissioner Taylor?

14           COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yeah. Raoul, I know you've  
15           been working very hard to get the State to fairly  
16           distribute the funding to us. What is the status of your  
17           effort in that area?

18           MR. ORTEGA: So the most recent work we have been  
19           doing with First 5 California and the Association --  
20           really, through the Association, is for us to get a better  
21           understanding on the distribution of Prop 56, the  
22           backfill. We wanted to make sure that the methodology  
23           that they were using really represented what the intent  
24           was for the backfill. And based on that information and  
25           based on the independent auditing firm that we hired --

1 the Association hired, was -- it was found that the  
2 methodology, if they were following the practice of the  
3 methodology, and our Prop 56 revenue is holding stagnant  
4 meaning that it's keeping this whole based on what they  
5 projected was going to be the downward trajectory because  
6 of those new taxes.

7 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: All right.

8 MR. ORTEGA: So I hope that answered your  
9 questions.

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: It did. I just wanted to  
11 get an update. Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Okay. Any other questions  
13 or comments by commissioners? I'm not seeing anything  
14 coming in.

15 If not, Kim, I have on my agenda that we're  
16 scheduled for a break? Is that correct? Or are we going  
17 to just --

18 COMMISSIONER ABDO: I would defer to you on it.  
19 That's when we had a longer agenda; so given the recent  
20 changes, your implicit suggestion that we keep moving is a  
21 good one.

22 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Okay. Thank you. All  
23 right. Folks, no break for you all.

24 Let's go on to Item 5, which is a review for --  
25 oh, thank you, Raoul and your team, Faustino and Kinnaly,

1 for your presentation.

2 So let's go on to Item 5, Review of the First 5  
3 LA Annual Report to First 5 California. And our  
4 presenters are Agnieszka -- and Agnieszka, where are you?  
5 I've been practicing how to pronounce your name.

6 MS. RYKACZEWSKA: Oh, thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: So let me try it, and you  
8 can tell me. Ryka- -- Ryka- --

9 MS. RYKACZEWSKA: Rykaczewska.

10 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Oh, say it again.

11 MS. RYKACZEWSKA: Rykaczewska.

12 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Oh, you roll your Rs. Very  
13 good. Rykaczewska. Okay. I'll practice. Let's -- I'll  
14 let you go and I will practice on my own.

15 So welcome and tell us about the report.

16 MS. RYKACZEWSKA: Thank you so much.

17 Good afternoon, Commissioners. You should be  
18 able to see my slides here. Just checking in. Yes?  
19 Okay. Wonderful.

20 So in adherence to Prop 10 funding requirements,  
21 First 5 LA submits a report to First 5 California on an  
22 annual basis. Today I will be summarizing preliminary  
23 annual report findings in preparation for delivering the  
24 full annual report to the board at the October 14th Board  
25 of Commissioners meeting.

1           So supporting our state annual reporting work and  
2 joining me today are Dr. Gary Resnick as well as  
3 representatives from our State annual reporting team at  
4 Juarez and Associates, Sara Montolla and Cynthia  
5 Benavides.

6           I'm still getting used to the virtual slide  
7 changes. We will begin by providing background on the  
8 state annual reports and then transition to reviewing the  
9 preliminary results. We will then provide a summary of  
10 key take-aways and conclude with an overview of next  
11 steps.

12           So let us begin with an overview of some  
13 background information. As you know, First 5's are funded  
14 through Prop 10, and one of the funding requirements of  
15 this legislation is an Annual State Report. In order to  
16 generate this report, First 5 California collects data  
17 from each First 5 County Commission. There are three  
18 types of data that First 5 California requests from each  
19 commission: Data related to revenue and expenditures,  
20 data on populations reached and their demographics, and a  
21 summary of evaluations conducted and other key highlights  
22 and accomplishments for each County.

23           Once the data from all 58 counties is received,  
24 First 5 California synthesizes this information in a  
25 single report. You may remember that back in May,

1 commissioners approved the receipt and filing of First 5  
2 California's fiscal year '19-'20 annual report. Each  
3 year's report is also available through First 5  
4 California's website.

5 You may be wondering, where does First 5 get the  
6 information we need to submit to First 5 California?  
7 There are three sources of data that are combined to  
8 generate First 5 LA's report to First 5 California.

9 First, we survey our grantees to gather  
10 information on populations they have reached and the  
11 accomplishments for the past year. We also report on data  
12 gathered through our annual financial audit, which you  
13 just heard about from my colleagues on the Finance Team in  
14 the previous agenda item. Finally, we leverage other  
15 First 5 LA internal reports that summarize evaluations of  
16 funded programs, such as the First Connections Evaluation  
17 Report.

18 Now, today, we are going to be focusing on  
19 preliminary results, in particular from our grantees  
20 surveyed. In addition to requesting certain types of  
21 data, First 5 California requires that investments be  
22 categorized using First 5 California's four investment  
23 categories.

24 Based on the definitions provided by First 5  
25 California, child health investments are those that

1 provide services and supports to improve child health.  
2 Investments such as Welcome Baby and select home visiting  
3 programs fit into this investment category.

4 Child development investments are those that  
5 provide funding for and improve early learning programs.  
6 For example, our Quality Start Los Angeles investments  
7 fall in this categories. Family functioning investments  
8 provide either short-term or intensive family supports and  
9 also include literacy programs. The Little By Little  
10 program is an example of a First 5 LA investment that  
11 falls in this category. Finally, systems of pure  
12 investments are those that focus on policy and public  
13 advocacy, as well as other program and system improvement  
14 efforts. Our Help Me Grow LA investment is an example of  
15 this category.

16 It is important to note that the First 5  
17 California investment areas do not align with the  
18 strategies outlined in our current strategic plan  
19 directly, and, therefore, provide an additional  
20 perspective for our -- to our typical approach to telling  
21 First 5 LA's stories.

22 This year, working with the First 5 Association,  
23 staff have shared with First 5 California some of the  
24 approaches we use to measure systems change and to help  
25 inform thinking on how systems change efforts might be

1 measured in the future.

2 This brings us to our preliminary fiscal year  
3 '20-'21 results. Our first finding is that there was an  
4 increase in the number of systems of care grants in fiscal  
5 year 2020, 2021 compared to the previous fiscal year, with  
6 70 of the 135 grants awarded in fiscal year 2021 falling  
7 in this category. The shift is consistent with our  
8 strategic direction as a systems change agent. I do want  
9 to note that these are preliminary analyses, and they only  
10 look at the number of grants rather than the funding  
11 amounts by investment area. We plan to continue our  
12 analyses to look at these and other questions related to  
13 funding amounts and services.

14 In addition, compared to fiscal year '19-'20,  
15 First 5 LA investments reached twice the number of  
16 children and providers in fiscal year 2020, 2021.  
17 Improvements in the methodology by which investments are  
18 identified as subject to annual reporting requirements  
19 account for part of the increase observed. For example,  
20 the Little by Little investment reached over 36,000  
21 children in fiscal year '20-'21, and was included this  
22 year due to the change in the methodology.

23 An increase in demand for services due to the  
24 Covid 19 pandemic may also have played a role. In terms  
25 of providers served, the investment that reached the most

1 providers in fiscal year '20-'21 was the ECE workforce  
2 registry. Over three -- excuse me. Over 30,000 ECE  
3 providers participated in the registry which is an  
4 increase of more than 13,000 providers compared to fiscal  
5 year '19-'20.

6 Staff credit, the launch of the Workforce Pathway  
7 LA Stipend Program by our partners at the LA County Office  
8 for the Advancement of Early Care and Education, as well  
9 as the transition from in-person to virtual training are  
10 contributing to this increase in providers reach by the  
11 ECE workforce registry.

12 Providers were served primarily through child  
13 development investments such as the ECE workforce  
14 registry, as well as systems of care investments, such as  
15 the Help Me Grow project. While children and caregivers  
16 were primarily served through family functioning  
17 investments, such as the Little by Little program, as well  
18 as child health investments such as our home-visiting  
19 programs.

20 Now, looking at the demographics of children  
21 served, preliminary results indicate that there was an  
22 increase of children ages three to five years old reached  
23 through 2020 investments when compared to fiscal year  
24 '19-'20 investments. Even with this change, the majority  
25 of children served through First 5 LA investments

1 continued to be less than three years old.

2 The race/ethnicity of children and caregivers  
3 served through First 5 LA's investments has remained  
4 consistent with that reported in previous years, with the  
5 overwhelming majority of those served were of Latino and  
6 Hispanic background. Upcoming analyses will be comparing  
7 these race and ethnicity demographics to those of LA  
8 County overall to gain insights into potential  
9 disparities.

10 Similarly consistent with previous years, English  
11 remains the primary language reported as being spoken in  
12 the home for the majority of families reached through  
13 First 5 investments.

14 With that, we'll now summarize the key take-aways  
15 from these preliminary findings and discuss next steps.  
16 In reviewing the preliminary findings, there are three key  
17 take-aways we'd like to highlight. First is that the  
18 number of children and providers reached through First 5  
19 LA investments doubled compared to the numbers reported in  
20 fiscal year '19-'20.

21 Second, preliminary findings indicate that the  
22 demographics of children and families reached have  
23 remained consistent with previous fiscal years.

24 And finally, consistent with our 2020-'28  
25 strategic plan, First 5 LA continues to increase its

1 investments aimed at improving systems of care.

2 Before we transition to our discussion, I'd like  
3 to give an overview of next steps. First, we'll be  
4 finalizing the report content, including incorporating the  
5 revenue expenditure data and finalizing our County  
6 highlights and evaluation summary.

7 Next, we will present the complete report at the  
8 October 14th Board of Commissioners meeting requesting  
9 approval to submit the report to First 5 California. Upon  
10 receipt of the approval from the commissioners, we will  
11 submit the report by the submission deadline for the First  
12 5 California's data system.

13 Now, in the past, submission of the report to  
14 First 5 California was the final step of the annual  
15 reporting process for First 5 LA. This year, however,  
16 based on previous feedback from commissioners and our  
17 staff, we are developing an LA County data brief to  
18 leverage annual reporting data here locally. To this end,  
19 we will be back in January to share additional analyses  
20 with the board that will be summarized in the data brief  
21 and to gather additional insights into critical context we  
22 should consider when interpreting those findings. We plan  
23 to release the LA County data brief in spring of next  
24 year.

25 With that, I would like to open it up for

1 discussion. We're very curious to learn about what  
2 questions have you about the annual report preliminary  
3 findings as well as what are your reactions to these  
4 preliminary findings.

5 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Thank you, Agnieszka, very  
6 much for that presentation.

7 Commissioners, any questions? I'm looking at my  
8 texts. Jaimie's not seeing none.

9 I have a question. Maybe that will give time for  
10 the commissioners to react to the presentation.

11 First of all, thank you for this. I did bring  
12 out this question I think the last time. I'm just puzzled  
13 by the fact that the majority of the children that are  
14 served are English speakers.

15 MS. RYKACZEWSKA: Yes. And I will just quickly  
16 return to that slide as well. It is referring to the  
17 primary language spoken in the home. So that's the  
18 question we ask our families. The majority respond that  
19 they are English speakers with a smaller percentage noting  
20 Spanish.

21 There could be a couple of reasons for this. One  
22 could be just families' comfort with responding to this  
23 question. Certainly, they might feel potentially  
24 pressured to respond English, or they might be choosing  
25 one language among many that they may speak in the home.

1 They might speak multiple languages, and they have to  
2 select one for the question. So that could be part of it.

3 It could just also be reflective of the County as  
4 a whole; so we do plan to see if we can find additional  
5 data to compare trends within the County as well.

6 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: That would be helpful.  
7 I've just been looking at Head Start data for LA County,  
8 and it is -- it -- it -- it's not reflective of what I'm  
9 seeing in the data and other data sets. And that's why I  
10 bring it up.

11 But I think you're right, because we know that  
12 parents don't want to be labeled. And so that's part of  
13 it. And you -- and you're right that -- that the older  
14 sibs might speak English or other people in the family  
15 might speak English. But this has always puzzled me why  
16 that is occurring in the data. So thank you for that.

17 Okay. That -- I'm just looking at the chat.  
18 Commissioner Pleitez Howell has a comment. Karla?

19 COMMISSIONER PLEITEZ HOWELL: Thank you,  
20 Dr. Zepeda.

21 And I will echo what Dr. Zepeda is saying about  
22 language. And just curious on how we're asking the  
23 question -- will be important. And this matters because  
24 it's ultimately what First 5 reports children we're  
25 serving and it ends up making different policy. So just

1 review of that language.

2           You know, but part of that -- a lot of curiosity  
3 about is sort of what narrative we're telling. And  
4 there's a piece where we're saying we serve double the  
5 number of children we have served the year before. And I  
6 think about our home visiting program and how we have sort  
7 of a tier-ing of the light touch and then the more  
8 comprehensive services. And I think we've got to tell  
9 this narrative when we bring this report back to the  
10 State. Because saying we're doubling the number of  
11 children we're serving implies that families got certain  
12 services that we know didn't happen during the pandemic.  
13 So unpacking that and being clear about if it is a  
14 training, it wasn't necessarily serving more children.

15           And I -- I think that's going to matter,  
16 ultimately, because elected officials will look at our  
17 reports and decide whether or not additional funding is  
18 needed for certain things; so that's one sort of curiosity  
19 about what that double number means.

20           And then a question for all of us to consider in  
21 releasing data free, our ultimate purpose/goal/target  
22 audience. I know you just shared that lightly here, but  
23 figuring some of that out so we can all be helpful in  
24 getting it out for the goal, that will help us advance a  
25 certain purpose for this report.

1           So not a question for right now, but something  
2 for us to consider and just think about a little bit more.

3           Thank you, Dr. Zepeda. That was it.

4           COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Thank you, Commissioner.

5           Other questions or comments?

6           Commissioner Taylor has a comment. You're next,  
7 Romalis. You're on.

8           COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Okay. My question deals  
9 with the light touch on the impact of Covid for this last  
10 year. We did a lot of things to reach out to communities  
11 and impacted children around Covid through our  
12 collaborative partnerships, through the different agencies  
13 that worked with us, especially in Best Start and things  
14 of that nature. So that impact that we've gotten and  
15 collect data from our different collaborative partners and  
16 providers, we need to highlight some thing about how this  
17 has impacted the children.

18           The Covid has been devastating. Schools have  
19 been shut down. A lot of these kids are going to face  
20 huge issues as schools open up as far as trying to catch  
21 up and what they're going to be doing to catch up; so  
22 somehow we've got to say that in this year, and highlight  
23 the fact that Covid hit us big time and that the children  
24 have been impacted. And yes, we've reached out, but it's  
25 more of a supportive reach out more than elevating their

1 knowledge and ability to move forward.

2 So I just think we need to come back at that.  
3 That kind of gets back to what I think my colleagues are  
4 talking about with regards to the language and things of  
5 that nature. I think we need to be a little more clear  
6 about that, because we know a lot of our children speak  
7 another language, and so we need to highlight that issue  
8 so that we don't over emphasize the English aspect of it.  
9 I totally agree with them. Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Thank you, Commissioner  
11 Taylor.

12 Commissioner McCroskey has a question or comment.

13 COMMISSIONER McCROSKEY: Yes. So, Agnieszka, I  
14 appreciate your giving us highlights. And there's a full  
15 report behind this. I'm just wondering along the same  
16 lines that other commissioners are talking about, whether  
17 within the report or at least for us in our learning and  
18 the way we talk to our community here in LA, the extent to  
19 which we can sort of disaggregate our programs, even  
20 though they may fall under the same heading.

21 And I'm remembering -- I think you mentioned the  
22 workforce registry as being one of the big contributors to  
23 numbers served. And just, you know, obviously, that's a  
24 different kind of service, and maybe something you're  
25 planning already. But it does feel like even within the

1 headings, understanding the program types and which of our  
2 programs fall under it helps us keep a -- you know, a feel  
3 for, a pulse of where we're touching families, where we're  
4 touching children, where we're touching providers, and  
5 sort of how that combination -- how that -- how that  
6 aggregates and is aligned every time.

7 MS. RYKACZEWSKA: Absolutely. If I could just  
8 respond to one of the questions raised here.

9 So part of the report is organized by those  
10 result areas; so -- and lists the different investments  
11 that we have in there. So certainly that will be included  
12 there.

13 I also wanted to touch back on Commissioner  
14 Taylor's comment regarding Covid-19. I acknowledge that  
15 our report to First 5 California has pretty limited space  
16 for narrative. And this year we are definitely including  
17 within that narrative a lot of, not only our systems  
18 change work, but how that work really works with families  
19 so that it's not just, you know, advocacy but really that  
20 we're engaging families with that. And that the changes  
21 that that generates responds not only to the crisis of  
22 Covid, but it also creates sustainable and more  
23 longer-term change as well.

24 So please do look for that in our County  
25 highlights section when we come back in October.

1 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Okay. Thank you.

2 Kim Hall had her hand up.

3 Kim?

4 MS. HALL: Yeah. Thank you, Commissioner Zepeda.

5 I just want to speak to the same point that Agnieszka just  
6 made, just wanting to inform and kind of remind the  
7 commissioners that the report to First 5 California is  
8 very structured, and we're only able to provide  
9 information in the limited categories that they determine,  
10 which is one of the reasons why we decided for this year  
11 that we want to create a local brief so we can tell the  
12 story from our prospective and we can provide some of  
13 these differentiations in terms of types of services, and  
14 even how things are categorized from the perspective in  
15 which -- the way that we think about our work.

16 And so it's been really helpful to hear some of  
17 your questions and some of the things that come up for  
18 you. So that can help us on how we look at the data and  
19 how we talk about the data in the brief. And so we really  
20 appreciate it. And just know that it is our intention to  
21 sort of look at our work through a First 5 LA lens.

22 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: This is -- Kim, I'm just  
23 thinking about the dual language learner landscape study,  
24 and how we could do some cross tabs with that relative to  
25 this issue of home language in the local report. As you

1 know, I'm very invested in this issue. And so there may  
2 be ways to do that, I don't know. But that's something we  
3 could explore.

4 Okay. Other commissioners or -- have a question  
5 or comment?

6 Okay. We see no more; so thank you very much,  
7 Agnieszka. I'll continue to practice saying your name  
8 correctly. I appreciate your presentation.

9 Commissioners, we do have a number of  
10 written-only items, but before I go to those, we'll just  
11 go through them to see if anybody has any comments.

12 Were there -- I keep forgetting. Jaimie, were  
13 there any requests for public comment on Items 3 or 5?

14 SECRETARY: There were no public comments, but I  
15 did see Commissioner Tilton raise her hand at the very  
16 last second.

17 Did you have a comment, Commissioner Tilton?

18 COMMISSIONER TILTON: I had it up and took it  
19 down and put it back up again; so thank you for paying  
20 attention.

21 Would we be able to go back to the graphs on the  
22 demographics for the last presentation?

23 MS. RYKACZEWSKA: Yes. Just one moment so I can  
24 get the pieces up. Which demographic in particular? Is  
25 there one in particular? The ethnicity? The Spanish?

1           COMMISSIONER TILTON: Yeah. I don't know if  
2 anybody else was struck by this. But it is interesting to  
3 me, the 74 percent Latino/Hispanic compared to the 8 -- 6  
4 to 8 percent black/African American children served. And  
5 I think that you commented that we were going to compare  
6 this to the general population -- I assume the general  
7 child population. We kind of know that, don't we? I  
8 mean, this isn't -- doesn't reflect the overall child  
9 population.

10           And it's also interesting in that most of the  
11 families identify as English speaking. It overall is kind  
12 of surprising to me. If you look at children in the  
13 system, families in the system, it would be very different  
14 from this. So can you just comment on the 74 percent  
15 Latino/Hispanic population as compared to the 6 to 8  
16 percent African American?

17           MS. RYKACZEWSKA: So in terms of the numbers that  
18 have been reported from our grantees, these are the  
19 numbers for families reached. That said, I think the  
20 point that you're raising is a very important one, where  
21 there is the LA County overall, but then there's also  
22 Zooming in to the specific areas, like our Best Start  
23 communities, where a lot of the efforts really focus in.

24           So that is another component where perhaps the  
25 county-wide demographics look different from the specific

1 areas. And that might be a lens we can look through as  
2 well.

3 And -- and I think one of the things that we are  
4 looking at is thinking through from an equity lens, are  
5 there any disparities. And that is one of the reasons we  
6 do collect this data, is so we can start examining these  
7 questions of who are we serving, where are we serving.  
8 And I think that's some of the pieces that we're also  
9 thinking about including in the local brief. Might not be  
10 included as part of the report, beyond just the  
11 demographics. But really taking a deeper look into this  
12 as part of our local analyses.

13 COMMISSIONER TILTON: I appreciate that response.  
14 My only other comment was in terms of the depth and  
15 breadth of the services we're providing, I appreciated  
16 Karla's comments. I have a particular concern about home  
17 visiting and the -- the families that we're actually  
18 reaching and the level of intervention we're providing.  
19 That is a whole other issue from this report to the State  
20 First 5. So let me just say that I believe we are missing  
21 a great number of families and very young children whose  
22 needs are much broader and deeper than what we're able to  
23 provide overall; so --

24 MS. RYKACZEWSKA: Thank you, Commissioner. And I  
25 do just want to note two things in response to that.

1           In terms of this report to the State, one of the  
2 things we do is differentiate different levels of home  
3 visiting programs when we're reporting on investments that  
4 are related to home visiting; so, for example, we  
5 differentiate whether it's a Parents as Teachers, Healthy  
6 Family America, or Welcome Baby program that that  
7 investment is related to. So at least to give some sense  
8 of that intensity of programming.

9           The other thing I just wanted to note is that we  
10 are doing an implementation and outcome study of virtual  
11 home visits provided through Welcome Baby program to get a  
12 better sense of, since we shifted over to virtual visits,  
13 what do those services look like and what are the outcomes  
14 associated with virtual home visiting in particular

15           COMMISSIONER TILTON: That would be extremely  
16 interesting to hear back about. I just want to say that  
17 in terms of home visiting and I think commissioners and  
18 you, John Wagner, are aware of this, we are working with  
19 Public Health because there's a vast unmet need for home  
20 visiting for high-risk families. Families that -- with  
21 parents who are incarcerated or who are minorities or who  
22 are unemployed who've been known to the child welfare  
23 system, in the 1,000 cases -- 997 cases of child abuse  
24 homicides that we reviewed, 71 percent were under age 3,  
25 and 1,997, only two of these families had received a home

1 visitor.

2 So we're very intensely committed to trying to  
3 span the outreach to families at high risk. So that's it.

4 MR. WAGNER: If I could just respond to that last  
5 point, because I definitely appreciate the point you're  
6 raising. And we to are, as you know, working very closely  
7 with the Department of Public Health. And, quite  
8 honestly, the Department of Children and Family Services  
9 where this was a significant issue on the roll out of the  
10 Families First Prevention Services Act where the State had  
11 a more limited initial interpretation of what we could be  
12 reimbursed for federally when it came to home visiting.

13 And this is an example, we're working with our  
14 County partners, we weighed in and 00 with other  
15 stakeholders including some of the commissioners, weighed  
16 in and were able to get at least in the initial State plan  
17 additional home visiting models acknowledged in the State  
18 plan. Which means eventually, when this is implemented,  
19 hopefully we can be billing through Families First when,  
20 you know, obviously, the eligibility is there.

21 So it's a long way of saying, I think we're all  
22 trying to make sure that the infrastructure in the County  
23 is as responsive to the family's needs as possible in  
24 finding ways to make sure we're building that  
25 infrastructure out along the lines of what you're saying.

1           COMMISSIONER TILTON: Thank you, John.

2           COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Commissioner Taylor has a  
3 question or comment.

4           COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yeah. On -- to follow up  
5 on what Commissioner Tilton is talking about, the issue  
6 around home visitation, the model is designed and as  
7 implemented is a voluntary model, and it doesn't fit the  
8 structure of -- for right now, the structure of child  
9 welfare. Which if they wanted to be done, would be a  
10 nonvoluntary structure; so we would have to partner with  
11 -- a child with child welfare to come up with a model that  
12 fits their structure so that when we engage families that  
13 are high risk, high need, that they would fund that as a  
14 home visitation model with the structure of what they  
15 would require as -- as a nonvoluntary model. Because you  
16 could have a voluntary, but once you get into child  
17 welfare it's not necessarily a voluntary.

18           So the idea is that we would have to collaborate  
19 with them, create a specific home visitation model for  
20 them, and the Welcome Baby model for them, because their  
21 client population is not going to be asking you to do  
22 this. They're going to be ordered to do it either by the  
23 Court or by the Office of Health.

24           So the end result is we need to do it and we need  
25 to do it, like, yesterday. With -- and with the director

1 and with the department around how that could be done and  
2 how they would fund that. Because the issue is that  
3 that's a specific funding model, they have their own  
4 funding to do it. So they need to fund it and say what is  
5 the level of that need within their population, within the  
6 scope of what they're doing.

7 So I just wanted to be clear about that, because  
8 if I'm wrong, somebody tell me right now.

9 COMMISSIONER TILTON: I do have a comment on  
10 that.

11 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Go ahead, Commissioner.

12 COMMISSIONER TILTON: Thank you, Romalis. You  
13 make an excellent point that there are families known to  
14 the child welfare system that should receive home visiting  
15 absolutely, especially when there are very young children,  
16 single parents, multiple young children.

17 I will say that of the families where we find the  
18 worst outcomes, as I was describing, they weren't always  
19 known to child welfare. So the home visiting should have  
20 and could have come in at an earlier time point in time;  
21 so I don't know that we can depend on DCFS to fund all of  
22 the high-risk home visiting programs or services, because  
23 the family where the mother -- we read about recently  
24 killed her three children -- her infant and two-year-old  
25 and four-year-old -- neighbors knew that she was

1 depressed. She did have social stresses. There are other  
2 issues. But DCFS never heard of that family; so they  
3 would not have identified -- they wouldn't have funded  
4 home visiting for a family they didn't know about. That  
5 calls for a whole lot of responses that we talk about  
6 including public awareness of neighbors, support of the  
7 church, support of the, in this case, the birthing  
8 hospital that could have identified perinatal depression  
9 or psychosis or whatever.

10 It's a complicated bag. And it includes this  
11 issue of families known to child welfare and the funding  
12 from DCFS. But it's -- it's broader. It's a much bigger  
13 issue when it comes to identifying high-risk families  
14 including, as I've said, known to mental health or  
15 incarcerated. These aren't child welfare cases.

16 So it's a challenge and one that we're very --  
17 very passionate about, because it is a great hope. It's a  
18 great hope reaching these families.

19 And it could have -- honestly, I'll just throw  
20 this in. In reviewing in detail those horrible  
21 situations, every time I think if there'd been a home  
22 visitor there, this would not have happened. This could  
23 have been avoided. We could have saved this child's life.  
24 We could have saved these three little children's lives,  
25 if somebody had had eyes in that home and provided the

1 support that our home visitation provides.

2 So thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Thank you, Commissioner  
4 Taylor.

5 Commissioner Byrd, you have a question or  
6 comment?

7 COMMISSIONER BYRD: No, I was actually trying to  
8 think how some of the legislation around the Families  
9 First Prevention Services Act might be able to capture  
10 some of this families that don't come into the system.  
11 But I think we're still mapping all of that out.

12 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: All right. Thank you.  
13 Commissioner Heger?

14 COMMISSIONER HEGER: I think there's a little bit  
15 more to what's going on right now in the County than --  
16 and I think that we need to put some pressure on not --  
17 not diluting the criteria -- criteria for calling in  
18 cases, et cetera. There is a movement afoot to reduce the  
19 value placed on reports coming from teachers, whether  
20 they're preschool teachers or kindergarten teachers --  
21 whatever. That because they are unsubstantiated, that  
22 maybe we need to change the reporting structure, which I  
23 think is going to be -- and I think both Robert and Deanne  
24 would agree with me that that's the first call that comes  
25 in where we can go in and do prevention.

1           And I was, you know, appalled to hear that. That  
2 is a certain an issue. I think -- and Romalis can agree  
3 with me on this -- in looking at equity and the idea of  
4 how we respond to African American families, now that is  
5 another issue that needs to be addressed, and that we  
6 don't dilute the reports, but that we respond in a way to  
7 support the family rather than always removing the child  
8 when they're little.

9           I got into some trouble recently because I  
10 pointed out that the highest risk was to kids zero to  
11 five, and I was -- and Deanne was great to give me a lot  
12 of national data on this, and I was basically told that  
13 that data was inaccurate, that it wasn't zero to five --  
14 it is zero to five.

15           And we need to take a stand, you know, not only  
16 readiness for school, but that they survive to go to  
17 school. And then I got a call from somebody in DCFS  
18 basically saying that one way that they're concern is to  
19 decrease the number of black children that are detained is  
20 just not detain them. I think that our goal as  
21 commissioners on this commission is that we create a  
22 safety web around the family rather than -- that that is  
23 the correct way to reduce the number of black children in  
24 foster care.

25           And, I mean, there were a number of things that

1 have come to my attention in the last couple of weeks, you  
2 know, forcing me to write essays on children. But I do  
3 think that we need to take a stand -- yes. Readiness to  
4 go to school. Absolutely. But I think we've got to take  
5 a stand that we want -- that we're committed to children  
6 surviving to go to school, and that they survive -- and  
7 Romalis you can wave at me -- that they survive in their  
8 neighborhood and in their homes, because we've provided  
9 them with adequate support.

10 But I think that's a position that both Deanne  
11 and I have been talking about for a long time. And it's  
12 interesting, Robert, when you talk to all of these  
13 families, they see Mental Health as their primary support  
14 and DMH and finding -- and getting access to the services  
15 they need, not necessarily DCFS. Because there's a  
16 punitive nature oftentimes with DCFS.

17 So I'm a big proponent for kids being ready to go  
18 to school. And I understand that's a big part of our  
19 north star, so to speak, but I'm also a big proponent that  
20 they are alive to go to school. And I think that should  
21 be added onto our north star. And it's been -- it's been  
22 sitting there for some time, but I do think both -- most  
23 of us who deal with child abuse are looking at this right  
24 now.

25 And as you mentioned, Marlene, with the idea of

1 Covid, that these kids are at risk right now. We are  
2 seeing an avalanche of children coming in, and we are  
3 relieved to accept those calls from the teachers, because  
4 we see them as the front line. And we are trying very  
5 desperately to find resources to keep the kids with the  
6 families that they can stay with, rather than removing  
7 them.

8 So maybe we could consider that as something to  
9 discuss with the whole board, that we should be looking at  
10 children surviving.

11 And I'll get down off my soap box now.

12 MS. BELSHE: If I may, Marlene.

13 One comment I would share here, is -- two  
14 comments. Number 1 is your comments are very compelling  
15 and speak to the importance of one of the cornerstones for  
16 children and families that are embedded in the anchor of  
17 our strategic plan, which is that children are free from  
18 abuse, neglect, and other forms of trauma. And one of the  
19 things we are learning in context of some of the work  
20 we've begun is it's been referenced -- at a high level, is  
21 just the extent to which we are doing quite a bit of work  
22 in the context of child welfare.

23 So I think there's some good, good important  
24 issues for us to be delving into together with the board,  
25 likely in the new year.

1           But I -- I really want to make sure we're  
2 reminded that one of our results is about children being  
3 healthy, safe, and -- you know, that is a critical  
4 component of being ready for success in school and life.  
5 And how we articulate and talk about the strategic work  
6 we're doing relating to child welfare is, I think, some of  
7 the important work that we have underway both on the  
8 programmatic side as well as on the policy side.

9           COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Thank you, Kim. I think  
10 that -- I know we -- once we get -- Agnieszka, when do you  
11 think we'll have this local report? Our local report?  
12 When would be the time frame for that?

13           MS. RYKACZEWSKA: We are planning to release the  
14 local reports in likely late spring of 2022.

15           COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: All right. Okay. Because  
16 I was thinking that this conversation we're presently  
17 having may be informative, but I really appreciate  
18 everybody's passion on this issue. We've got to figure  
19 out how to be strategic and figure out where -- where we  
20 can make the most, I think, impact in the work that we do.  
21 And that's why I think this local report is going to be  
22 very important for that.

23           And as Kim said, we do have funding -- or we do  
24 have a focus on intervention and prevention. And, you  
25 know, I -- I get concerned because our moneys are going

1 down, our resources are going down, we have to figure out  
2 where we can really put those efforts to make that  
3 difference and where the priorities are.

4 So I hear commissioners loud and clear on this;  
5 so this something we've got to keep talking about.

6 So thank you for that.

7 And we're going to go ahead and move on to  
8 written comments.

9 Thank you, Agnieszka, on this, and commissioners  
10 for this important conversation.

11 And Item 6 is a written-only on the strategic  
12 partnership with Lifting Communities, on the Cherished  
13 Future. It's written only.

14 Are there any comments or questions from  
15 commissioners on Item 6?

16 Okay. Hearing none, how about Item 7,  
17 written-only on the strategic partnership to receive funds  
18 from LA County Department of Public Health.

19 Okay. I did get a --

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I think I had my hand up.  
21 I also left a text there on Item 6. And the problem will  
22 get into Item 7 as well.

23 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Okay.

24 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I'd like to know whether or  
25 not -- what we have achieved, because we're doing -- it

1 sounds like we're doing a lot of good work. But I'd like  
2 to know what are the outcomes. Our target -- and we've  
3 been working on this since 2013 as well. Have we reduced  
4 the number of maternal and mother's death in the African  
5 American community as a result of our efforts?

6 And that is the question. Have we outreached and  
7 engaged and are we being successful. And all of these  
8 things are good work that they're doing, but I'm not  
9 hearing about the outcomes. So I'd like to know what are  
10 the outcomes? You know, so if we're not hearing about it  
11 then what is the status of that? You know?

12 Also, the effectiveness in Number 7 as well. So  
13 I just want to know how effective we're being with this  
14 outreach in Number 7.

15 So if we could get an answer for that, I would  
16 really appreciate it.

17 MR. WAGNER: Maybe I can start and turn it over  
18 to Tara on 6 and 7 which are related, and then 7 which is  
19 more coming out of our Communities Team regarding parks.

20 On the first two, these are, as I mentioned,  
21 related and all part of our African American infant and  
22 maternal quality work. And the first is really focused on  
23 quality improvement in the hospital system. And we have  
24 rolled out the first tier of it. The board approved  
25 \$250,000 and some hospitals -- I think five have

1 participated.

2 And with that, maybe Tara can speak to some of  
3 the high level highlights of that and how this Item 6  
4 relates to building upon what we have rolled out,  
5 obviously, Covid impacting -- you know, just like we spoke  
6 about earlier, Covid impacting some of our ability to move  
7 this forward.

8 MS. FICEK: Happy to speak to that. Your  
9 question, Commissioner Taylor, I think, is that are we  
10 making progress on our target of reducing the gap in  
11 black/white infant mortality rates by 30 percent by 2023?  
12 And that is something that we put a mark in partnership  
13 with LA County Department of Public Health. That's a part  
14 of the Health Equity Action Plan.

15 And all of these investments, the Cherished  
16 Futures, Item 6, Hospital Quality Improvement Project, the  
17 AAIMM Strategic Communications Initiative, as well as  
18 multiple direct service investments supported primarily by  
19 LA County DPH are all working towards contributing to  
20 that.

21 We do not -- I don't have outcome data that I can  
22 share at this moment. I would be happy -- and I think we  
23 will be bringing that back to the board. We just launched  
24 a comprehensive AAIMM evaluation that we funded in  
25 partnership with LA County DPH. That work just launched

1 this month. We're bringing on UCLA to complete that  
2 evaluation.

3 They're not only looking at the effectiveness of  
4 the distinct areas of work, the project -- specific  
5 projects of AAIMM but also comprehensively what are we  
6 achieving related to AAIMM work and getting at our 30  
7 percent reduction which I noted at the beginning.

8 So yes, we are interested in outcomes. Yes we  
9 have invested resources to evaluate the work again by  
10 project, comprehensively. And I anticipate that's a  
11 two-year effort by UCLA; so it's looking like that 2023  
12 time line, we're hoping to get information out by then and  
13 to bring that back to the board.

14 But all of that is underway; so if you have -- if  
15 that didn't answer your question, let me know. But that's  
16 something we're hoping to report out in the future.

17 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Well, while I have you  
18 here, Tara, thank you for all your hard work and your  
19 team. But also -- we can also give up anecdotal  
20 information. How is the doula working? What is the  
21 client saying about that? Are they feeling they're being  
22 heard? You know, for those women to go there and not be  
23 heard is the issue.

24 MS. FICEK: Yes. We do have process evaluation,  
25 and we can certainly speak to that or bring that to you.

1 Not only number served, participation, engagement --

2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yes.

3 MS. FICEK: -- focus groups that we do -- that  
4 are ongoing as part of the AAIMM communications to better  
5 understand, yes, are their voices being heard? Are  
6 programmatic changes, clinical practices, changes within  
7 various institutions -- they adjusted to be responsive to  
8 that insight and perspective. So there is an ongoing  
9 effort as part of -- across the AAIMM initiative that  
10 collects that data and then uses it to adjust and improve  
11 the programmatic efforts as we go. So we can certainly  
12 share that info too.

13 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: What is -- you know, just  
14 give us an update of whether or not -- what is -- what is  
15 saying -- what is being heard. How's the doula effort  
16 working? Is it improving and enhancing the experience of  
17 the mother in the environment as she goes through having a  
18 child. And things of that nature. And then -- then the  
19 after care for the -- for the baby to enhance that child  
20 survives more than a year of life. And so I really want  
21 to hear what is going on and what is the outcomes. And it  
22 can be both anecdotal as well as hard data.

23 MS. FICEK: Okay. I mean, I can spotlight just a  
24 really quick example, as a part of the Cherish Futures  
25 which is Item 6, they conduct sister circles or listening

1 sessions with community members. And they have a  
2 community liaison advisor that is a part of their  
3 leadership committee at each hospital that's selected.  
4 And it's a partnership between the community and the  
5 hospital. And the hospital know that this stepping into  
6 the project. But there will be these listening sessions,  
7 but there will be ongoing conversations with community  
8 members -- black birthing -- black women, black birthing  
9 people that have experienced their birth at that hospital  
10 for feedback. How did it go? What was their experience?  
11 What worked? What didn't? How can it be improved?

12 So that's a part of -- that's a component of the  
13 Cherished futures model or framework. And so it's  
14 embedded as part of the work where they're -- they're  
15 expected to hold these sessions with their community  
16 members to learn, kind of, where and how they're doing  
17 their work and where they can improve.

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Well, the question is, is  
19 the system changing --

20 MS. FICEK: Yeah.

21 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: -- based on that input from  
22 these circles? And is it changing the practice in a  
23 positive way both for the mother and the child.

24 So that kind of information is what I want to  
25 know about or hear so that I can understand that.

1           And the -- also, is there more resources that  
2 need to be generated in order to enhance that in -- and to  
3 move that forward faster. So that's what I want know as  
4 input to us, especially to me. Because I want to know  
5 what we're doing about this.

6           COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: You know, Commissioner  
7 Taylor, this suggests to me that -- Tara, are we going to  
8 have a formal presentation on these programs to the PPC or  
9 -- in the next meeting? Or is it on the agenda?

10          MS. BELSHE: It's not the intent to, since this  
11 is effectively a continuation of system change work  
12 underway, which we know is work that takes time and  
13 effort. We had not planned on it coming back to the  
14 committee or full board for presentation, but we can  
15 certainly revisit that if there's an eagerness among the  
16 board members.

17          COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Okay. All right.

18          COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And I hear there is an  
19 eagerness for this from me from my perspective, from my  
20 communities perspective to know what's going on and  
21 whether we are being effective about it.

22          MS. BELSHE: And, Romalis, if I may,  
23 Commissioner, we absolutely share that eagerness. And  
24 part of my take-away from this is in terms of the  
25 materials we're providing, we clearly need to be lifting

1 up a little bit more intentionally some of the process  
2 milestones or indicators of progress that are being made,  
3 notwithstanding the fact that this is work that is very  
4 long-term in nature, and notwithstanding the fact that  
5 evaluators -- evaluation that Tara just spoke to is in its  
6 early stages.

7 So I know commissioners appreciate our efforts to  
8 balance a lot of really rich and substantive and full  
9 work, and we try to find that balance between written only  
10 with an emphasis on work that is continuing versus using  
11 board time to either meet statutory obligations such as  
12 the annual report and the annual audit, as well as for  
13 strategic discussions about new and evolving work. That's  
14 the balance we try to strike.

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And my thing is not to  
16 prohibit it -- prohibit this moving forward as much as  
17 give us an update on the status of this and what  
18 information.

19 So nothing wrong with what I'm hearing and what  
20 I'm seeing. I just want know what the outcomes are.

21 MS. BELSHE: Yup. Yup. Fair enough.

22 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Okay. Thank you,  
23 Commissioner Taylor.

24 Commissioner Abdo has their hand up.

25 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Yes. I just -- I want to say

1 I think it's just absolutely amazing how much work has  
2 been done during this very bizarre year. That -- that you  
3 all deserve a giant pat on the back at least for -- for  
4 what you're doing.

5 And then I want to acknowledge that, for all the  
6 families that we serve, they have had to pivot also to a  
7 new reality. And what I'm wondering is whether sometime  
8 in the future, not next -- this month, we could look at  
9 what we have learned as an organization about relating to  
10 the people that we are here to serve, and what -- what do  
11 we think they have learned and what will be different in  
12 the future when we're -- let's hope, when we're out of a  
13 pandemic. But still we've all learned many, many things.  
14 And how are they going to impact the work of First 5 LA.

15 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Thank you, Commissioner  
16 Abdo.

17 Yeah. I think you're absolutely right. I think  
18 the home visiting virtual evaluation is going to be very  
19 interesting. The fact that numbers went up on the  
20 registry when it went virtual was also very interesting to  
21 me. That shows you that the virtual environment can  
22 create opportunities as well as challenges, obviously.

23 So you're right. I think that's important for  
24 every -- all of us going forward.

25 Do I have -- okay. John, you wanted to make a

1 comment?

2 MR. WAGNER: Yeah. Maybe just on Commissioner  
3 Abdo's question. And just to also reflect on, I think the  
4 conversation we had in our last board meeting around  
5 home-based care definitely reflected the experience of  
6 families experiencing the home-based care and system upon  
7 which they relied heavily during Covid. And which was  
8 there more in many respects than some of the center-based  
9 care which historically we've focused on.

10 So that's an example how Covid has continued to  
11 inform our thinking on where families are receiving  
12 services. And I'd also point the learning panels and  
13 discussions we had with Best Start communities, where the  
14 communities brought forward their original thinking on  
15 priorities. And each of those panels addressed how Covid  
16 shaped their thinking. And in many cases, communities  
17 were energized and mobilized to tap into some of the  
18 Covid-related funding going to the communities in  
19 response.

20 So I think you're absolutely right how everyone  
21 is experiencing this should inform and shape how we think  
22 about what we can do. And I think those are two more  
23 recent examples and great conversations we've had with the  
24 board.

25 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Thank you, John.

1 MS. BELSHE: Final comment. I know we're out of  
2 time, but I just -- I want to -- you know, sitting here  
3 and reflecting on Commissioner Taylor and Commissioner  
4 Abdo's comments and John's reference to our previous board  
5 topics, I think what I'm taking here is just a really  
6 helpful reminder from commissioners about the importance  
7 of our proactively finding opportunities to bring more  
8 community-impact voice into -- whether it be a written  
9 memo, whether it be a board presentation. So much of our  
10 work is long term in nature, but it's -- it's work that is  
11 also -- has -- has elements that are in community and on  
12 the ground. And are helping to inform broader systems  
13 work, such as Tara's reference to the ongoing focus groups  
14 with African American moms.

15 I'm hearing -- I know the board appreciates the  
16 long-term nature and complexity of systems change, and  
17 you're reminding us of let's make sure we're bringing  
18 current voice and experience as appropriate into our  
19 updates and recommendations, even though it may well be  
20 very qualitative, even anecdotal, it just reminds us of  
21 who is at the center of our work. So I appreciate that,  
22 Romalis and Judy.

23 COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Thank you, Kim.

24 Qualitative is not a bad thing. Qualitative  
25 methodology.

1           So let's just move on to Item 8 if there's no  
2 more discussion of 6 and 7, which is -- does anyone have a  
3 question or comment on the strategic partnership with the  
4 Legacy Fund? And this has to do with open space, with the  
5 green spaces.

6           Okay. All right. Hearing none, is there any  
7 public comment on any of these items, Jaimie?

8           THE SECRETARY: There is no public comment on any  
9 of those items.

10          COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Okay. So there's no public  
11 comments on anything on the agenda, then?

12          THE SECRETARY: Nope. No public comment  
13 whatsoever.

14          COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: Okay. All right. Well, I  
15 think that's concludes our meeting for today,  
16 commissioners and audience. I appreciate your  
17 participation. I really appreciate the vigorous  
18 conversation, the rich conversation we had.

19          Looking forward, Agnieszka, to that local report  
20 going forward and to our next meeting together. And I  
21 think you all got the message from Linda that we will  
22 continue to be virtual until the end of the year. I was  
23 kind of disappointed to hear that. But -- but --

24          MS. BELSHE: Safety first, Marlene.

25          COMMISSIONER ZEPEDA: I know. I know. It's nice

1 to get out, though.

2           Anyway, all right. I wish you a good rest of the  
3 week, and I'll see you at the next meeting. Thank you so  
4 much.

5                           (At 3:02 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Heatherlynn Gonzalez, a Certified Shorthand Reporter for the State of California, License Number 13646, do hereby attest that:

The preceding is a true and accurate transcription of the meeting of the organization named herein;

The meeting was taken down stenographically and transcribed into English under my supervision and authority;

I have no interest, financial or otherwise, in any of the parties, issues, or individuals who are involved in this organization.

Attested to on this 10th day of October 2021.

DocuSigned by:  
*Heatherlynn Gonzalez*  
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## SUMMARY MEETING NOTES

**FIRST 5 LA**  
**September 23, 2021**  
**Special Board/Program & Planning Committee Meeting (VIRTUAL)**  
**1:30-3:30 pm**

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

Robert Byrd (Alternate)  
Astrid Heger  
Jacquelyn McCroskey  
Karla Pleitez Howell (Committee Vice Chair)  
Maricela Ramirez (Alternate)  
Romalis Taylor  
Deanne Tilton  
Marlene Zepeda (Committee Chair)

### **NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

Judy Abdo  
Yvette Martinez

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Jonathan Sherin [Excused]  
Keesha Woods [Excused]

### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Peter Barth, Chief of Staff  
Kim Belshé, Executive Director  
Jaimie Knowles, Acting Board Secretary  
John Wagner, Executive Vice President, Center for Child and Family Impact

#### **1. Call to Order / Roll Call**

Committee Chair Zepeda called the meeting to order at 1:34 pm. Quorum was present.

#### **2. Review Special Board/Program and Planning Committee Transcript from June 24, 2021 Meeting**

Notes were received and filed with no deletions/additions or changes.

#### **3. Annual Audit - Draft of the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, including the Independent Auditor's Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2021**

Tino F. and our auditor Kinnaly S. provided the board with First 5 LA's annual audit report for the year ending June 30, 2021. Highlights included:

- Clean audition - The CPA firm of Eide Bailly LLP, noted that the financial statements are presented fairly
- Unmodified opinion
- No findings or adjustments

This item will go for action at the October Board meeting. Once approved by the Board, the Annual audition report would be submitted to the State Controller's officer and First 5 CA by November 11, 2021.

#### **4. Break**

#### **5. Review of First 5 LA Annual Report to First 5 CA**

Neszka A. presented First 5 LA's data/report that would be submitted to be a part of First 5 CA's Annual Report. The report highlighted is broken into three sections:

- **Section 1: Revenue and Expenditure Summary**

## SUMMARY MEETING NOTES

- This section captures First 5 LA's fiscal data showing the relationship between financial resources and services.
- **Section 2: Demographic Worksheet**
  - This section captures demographic information about the populations served by First 5 LA at the county level.
- **Section 3: Evaluation Summary/County Highlights**
  - This section provides information about completed evaluations focused on improved family functioning, child development, child health, and systems of care. County highlights describing accomplishments during the fiscal year are also reported in this section.

Neszka also highlighted to the Board that as part of the data submission requirement, staff had to map out First 5 LA programmatic efforts to the following investment areas defined by First 5 California:

- **Improved Child Health:** Investments in this area include general health education and promotion programs, perinatal and early childhood home visiting services, prenatal and infant/toddler pediatric supports, and early intervention services.
- **Improved Child Development:** Investments in this area include quality early learning supports and early learning program direct costs.
- **Improved Family Functioning:** Investments in this area include short-term non-intensive general family support programs, targeted intensive family support services, and family literacy and book programs.
- **Improved Systems of Care:** Investments in this area include policy and public advocacy as well as program and systems improvement efforts.

She also called out that First 5 California investment areas do not always align with the strategies outlined in our current strategic plan so this reporting structure looks different from what we internally report out as an organization to Board members on a regular basis.

6. **Establish a Strategic Partnership with Communities Lifting Communities, Fiscal Sponsor for Cherished Futures for Black Moms and Babies, in the Amount of \$500,000 to Provide a Hospital Quality Improvement Initiative to Reduce Birth Disparities for the Period of 24 Months (Written Only)**

This item was a written only item and scheduled for action on Consent for the October Board meeting.

7. **Authorize First 5 LA to Receive Funds from Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH) for African American Infant and Maternal Mortality (AAIMM) Strategic Communications, Approve Resolution # 2021-07, and Authorize First 5 LA Staff to Execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in the Amount of \$385,000 (Written Only)**

This item was a written only item and scheduled for action on Consent for the October Board meeting.

8. **Amend a Strategic Partnership with Resources Legacy Fund in the Amount of \$150,000 for a Total of \$750,000 Through October 29, 2022 to Manage the Pooled Fund for Link Advocates Governments Families and Parks (LINK), a Parks and Open Space Advocacy Program in the Best Start Communities (Written Only)**

## SUMMARY MEETING NOTES

This item was a written only item and scheduled for action on Consent for the October Board meeting.

### **9. Public Comment (for items not on the agenda)**

There were no public comments.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 3:02 pm.

### **NEXT MEETING:**

The next Special Board/Program & Planning Committee meeting will take place on Thursday, October 28, 2021 at 1:30 pm.

### VIRTUAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting details will be posted per Brown Act Requirements

Meeting minutes were recorded by Jaimie Knowles, Acting Board Secretary

**FIRST 5 LA**

**SUBJECT:**

First 5 LA Data Strategy

**BACKGROUND:**

Guided by Strategic Priority 3 of the 2020-2028 Strategic Plan, First 5 LA seeks to leverage data as a strategic asset in service of system change. To this end, we will develop a Data Strategy that provides a vision and roadmap for using data to achieve our system change goals. The First 5 LA Data Strategy will be grounded in the 2020-2028 Strategic Plan and serve as the foundation for our data related work. The work of gaining clarity about the Data Strategy concept and how we will approach the development of First 5 LA's first formal Data Strategy has been led by the Office of Data for Action (ODFA) and informed by staff across the organization. ODFA is pleased to present the product of this work to the Program and Planning Committee (PPC).

**DISCUSSION:**

The purpose of the conversation at the October PPC meeting is three-fold. We will introduce our current thinking about the Data Strategy to the Commission by answering basic questions that speak to what a data strategy is, why we need one, what we will do differently, what kind of data might we prioritize, who will be involved and what we aim to accomplish. Informed by the information we share in response to these questions we will engage in a conversation with Commissioners in order to obtain input. Insight and understanding of considerations gained from this discussion will influence how we think about the data strategy concept, the content and scope of the strategy we develop and how we approach its development. During the presentation we will also share how a contractor is expected to support the development and implementation of the Data Strategy.

**NEXT STEPS:**

Following the discussion with the PPC, approval of the Data Strategy contract will be requested at the November 10 meeting of the Board of Commissioners. Once the contract is approved the work will commence with an initial focus on gathering information to inform the Data Strategy Framework and development process. Information gathering activities will include onboarding and orienting the contractor to the context and current data related efforts of First 5 LA and our partners, engaging key internal and external stakeholders and identifying how other First 5 County Commissions and early childhood advocacy organizations have approached elevating their data priorities and using data to advance their agendas.

We also anticipate opportunities to continue to engage board members and to enlist their support as this work unfolds. It is expected that we will engage board members and request support when appropriate. Examples of the types of support we may request from Commissioners include: (a) facilitating connections to relevant organizations and key stakeholders, (b) contributing to the identification and prioritization of data needs, (c) sharing information about efforts related to our data priorities, (d) helping determine approach to addressing data priorities and (e) supporting efforts to address data priorities once solutions have been identified.



# FIRST 5 LA DATA STRATEGY

## Presentation to the Program and Planning Committee

Kimberly Hall, PhD  
Office of Data For Action (ODFA)

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1. Introduce current thinking about the Data Strategy
2. Get input and feedback from Commissioners
3. Share how we will approach Data Strategy development and implementation

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A photograph of two women and a child sitting on a blue and white patterned blanket on a lawn. The woman on the left is holding a young child. The woman on the right is smiling and gesturing with her hands. In the background, there are palm trees and a building. A large pink circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text 'Basics of the Data Strategy'.

# Basics of the Data Strategy

1. What is it?
2. Why do we need one?
3. What kind of data might we prioritize?
4. Who will be involved?
5. What do we hope to accomplish?

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# What is a Data Strategy?



The vision for using data to advance policy change, practice change and will building



Data priorities



Infrastructure needs



Plan



**Vision:** Use data to advocate for public policy change



**Data priority:** Elevate community experience as proof of concept



**Infrastructure needs:** Tools for sharing data and learnings



**Plan:** 1) Best Start Learning Agenda 2) Knowledge Management System

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# Why do we need a Data Strategy?

To ensure data is **accessible** and **used** to advance our Strategic Plan priorities.



Drive Systems Change  
Strategic Priorities 1, 2, 3



Measure Outcomes  
Strategic Priority 3 &  
Impact Framework



Optimize Organizational  
Effectiveness and Culture  
Strategic Priority 4

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# What will we do differently?

1

Identify our  
data priorities

2

Align  
resources with  
data priorities

3

Leverage  
available data

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# What kind of data might we prioritize?

## Drive Systems Change

- Target population characteristics
- Family and community preferences and priorities
- Service delivery system characteristics
- Policy and funding landscape

## Measure Outcomes

- System changes/improvements
- Policy implementation
- Child, family and community experiences and outcomes

## Optimize Organizational Effectiveness and Culture

- Funding
- Grantmaking
- Grantee and stakeholder perceptions
- Employee sense of belonging

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# What kind of solutions might be included?

## Existing



- Impact Framework – Result Indicators
- Welcome Baby Evaluation
- AAIMM Evaluation
- Best Start Learning Agenda
- Home-Based Childcare Landscape
- Children’s Data Network

## New



- Impact Framework – LTSO Indicators\*
- L.A. Care Evaluation (HMG)
- Advocacy for disaggregated data
- Data Dashboard
- Knowledge Management System
- DEI Metrics

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\*LTSO or Long-Term System Outcome Indicators

# Who might will be involved?

**First 5 LA Project Team**

**Data Strategy Contractor**

**Advisory Group**

**First 5 LA Centers/Teams/Offices**

**First 5 LA Leadership**

**First 5 LA Commissioners**

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**County Agencies**

**System/Advocacy/Data Partners**

**Grantees and Contractors**

# What do we hope to accomplish?

The First 5 LA Data Strategy will **inspire** and **enable**...

Shared commitment to data priorities

Increased collaboration within F5LA and with partners

Maximize available resources

Use data to drive system change and decision-making <sup>81</sup>



# Data Strategy Approach

# Support Data Strategy Contractor

Thought partnership

Process design and implementation

Stakeholder engagement and communication

Deliverable and dissemination product development

Project management

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## Process & Framework Development

- Gather information
- Engage stakeholders
- Develop guiding principles and prioritization criteria
- Finalize project plan

## Data Strategy Development

- Convene advisory group
- Engage stakeholders
- Develop Data Strategy

## Implementation Support 84

- Determine organizational needs
- Co-design approach and plan to build capacity
- Provide support

A photograph of two women and a child sitting on a blue and white patterned blanket on a lawn. The woman on the left is holding a young child in a blue t-shirt. The woman on the right is wearing a colorful patterned cardigan over a white top. They are all smiling and looking towards each other. In the background, there are palm trees and a building. A large pink circle is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# Next Steps

- Facilitate connections to relevant organizations and key stakeholders
- Contribute to the identification and prioritization of data needs
- Share information about efforts related to our data priorities
- Help determine approaches to addressing data priorities
- Support efforts to address priorities/needs once solutions have been identified

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**Thank You**



**FIRST 5 LA**

**Subject**

2022 Policy Agenda refinement

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**BACKGROUND:**

This memorandum provides an overview of on-going Policy Agenda refinement efforts, which the Office of Government Affairs and Public Policy (OGAPP) will speak to at the October Program & Planning Committee (PPC) meeting.

**Overview of California's 2021 policymaking context**

Throughout 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to significantly impact children and families across California. The state received a brief reprieve from COVID-19 in the spring and early summer, as residents across the state received vaccinations and Governor Gavin Newsom lifted all pandemic-related restrictions. However, starting in July, the Delta variant's rapid spread led to another surge in new cases, hospitalizations and deaths. It also renewed the hardships facing families and created an acute sense of danger, especially because the Delta variant of COVID-19 is much more contagious than previous variants of the virus, and young children remain ineligible for vaccination. Overall, the need for on-going supports remains high for families, particularly as several important federal pandemic-era initiatives, including a moratorium on evictions and enhanced unemployment benefits, have now lapsed.

COVID-19's health and economic consequences continue to most impact low-income and communities of color, just as they have since the virus first reached Los Angeles County more than 19-months ago. Low-income and families of color will continue to face heightened economic instability and housing and food insecurities from the on-going crisis, as well as an uneven economic recovery without focused supports. Pre-existing discrimination and racism woven within institutions and structures across society only compound these challenges. This context continues to elevate the importance of First 5 LA's work, especially as we seek to embed an equity-focused frame throughout all our policy priorities.

**Overview of California's 2021 legislative session**

The California legislative session ended on September 10 and Governor Newsom had until October 10 to either sign into law or veto bills that state lawmakers passed. An increased reliance on the budget process to make policy, especially as the state saw a record surplus, characterized the 2021 Legislative session (*please see below for more information on the state budget*). As such, the administration played a much larger role in setting the policymaking agenda, and legislators continued to express frustration with the governor's pandemic-era emergency powers and what they believed was insufficient consultation with the Legislature. Legislators also continued a self-imposed limit on bills they carried and moved forward, requiring prioritization that resulted in less legislation advancing. Furthermore, in several instances policy that started the year as legislation became incorporated in the state budget, leading those bills to not advance in the Legislature.

The pandemic also affected day-to-day work in Sacramento, as the Legislature, like much of the rest of California, relaxed precautions in the spring only to reinstitute a mask mandate for members and staff as the Delta variant emerged. Capacity restrictions remained mostly in place inside the state Capitol, and advocates have relied on virtual mediums to lobby and otherwise influence policymaking. How lawmakers will conduct the business of government in the coming year is not

fully clear as of now but will likely reflect the course of the pandemic. Furthermore, in the second year of the legislative two-year session, bills that failed to advance this year may have the opportunity to advance in 2022. Finally, as the COVID-19 crisis disproportionately impacts communities of color, powerfully highlights the pernicious effects of structural racism and widens already existing disparities, lawmakers and the administration placed a much greater focus on issues of diversity and inclusion, with debates over how to promote equity in California permeating discussions across a wide array of policy areas. For a complete, high-level summation of key state administrative, legislative, and budgetary policy updates related to First 5 LA strategic priorities, please see Attachment A.

### **Overview of California's 2021 budget session**

Even as the COVID-19 crisis shattered household economic security for many California families, and the state's unemployment rate remains among the highest in the nation, revenue flowed to Sacramento in unprecedented amounts. Primarily due to the stock market's strength, greater than expected tax revenue from the state's highest income residents, and lower than expected enrollment in certain state-funded programs, particularly Medi-Cal, California not only avoided early predictions of financial disaster, but entered 2021 with record budget surpluses. Ultimately, Governor Newsom and state lawmakers agreed to a \$262.6 billion state budget plan that included \$196 billion in general funds and featured \$25.2 billion in total reserves, as well as utilized a total surplus of \$75.7 billion. Additionally, the state's surplus combined with roughly \$26 billion in federal funds provided to California through the American Rescue Plan to create almost \$110 billion in discretionary funding for the administration and Legislature to spend. Contentious negotiations between the two bodies over funding priorities helped delay ratification of the final state budget beyond the Constitutionally mandated June 30 deadline, the first time in more than 10 years this occurred.

The 2021 budget appropriated significant funds to COVID-19 response and relief, including money for the state's vaccination campaign and direct financial support, in the form \$600 checks, for most Californians, including those filing with Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs), often undocumented residents. The record state budget surplus in 2021 also allowed for significant structural investments in child- and family-serving systems, including those related First 5 LA strategic priorities such as early learning, early intervention, and health equity. Early revenue forecasts for fiscal year 2022 look strong, indicating the potential for another robust budget year. However, California is unlikely to duplicate the total level of surplus it experienced this year, especially because the state will not again receive large scale federal funding as it did through the American Rescue Plan. Regardless, First 5 LA, with OGAPP as the lead, will continue to help policymakers connect the dots between disparate funding streams and priorities, and in the process, help build more seamless and integrated care infrastructure that holistically supports children and families.

### **Policy Agenda refinement**

Last year, OGAPP launched the first iteration of an annual Policy Agenda refinement effort, partnering with offices and teams from across the organization to ensure fuller alignment of First 5 LA's Policy Agenda with the adopted 2020-2028 Strategic Plan. Prior to this, the Policy Agenda had remained unchanged since its adoption in 2017. As reorientation, OGAPP uses the Policy Agenda to inform and prioritize administrative, budget and legislative work to align with First 5 LA's strategic priorities, and to clarify the federal, state and policy priorities First 5 LA engages in. OGAPP also uses the Policy Agenda as the guide for our formal analysis of policy proposals and as our blueprint to develop policy recommendations. Now, the 2022 refinement process has focused on incorporating learnings and best practices from the past year, all to further improve, focus and clarify First 5 LA's high-level policy related goals. To view the DRAFT 2022 First 5 LA Policy Agenda as a stand-alone document, please refer to Attachment B.

2022 Policy Agenda refinement has continued to work toward imbedding both equity and the need to support children holistically in the context of their families and communities, referred to as the “Whole Child and Whole Family” systems framework, across every First 5 LA policy priority. In practice, the 2022 agenda will reflect this by seeking to close race-based disparities in health, well-being and opportunity; utilizing full, complete and disaggregated data, where available, to understand which communities face the most significant barriers to resources, and so have the greatest opportunity to benefit from First 5 LA policy and systems change efforts; and promoting a holistic system of supports that is language- and culturally- responsive.

As with both the 2017-2020 and 2021 iterations of this document, the draft 2022 Policy Agenda is organized around four major policy priority areas, and we have continued to more clearly define First 5 LA’s perspective and expertise within these spaces. The draft priority areas are:

- **Promote a comprehensive system of family supports to advance positive outcomes for the whole child and whole family.**
  - Build systems that connect families to effective evidence-based, innovative, and community-responsive resources, prioritizing home visiting and early intervention services.
  - Advance and protect family supports to ensure families with young children and pregnant people are economically secure.
  - Reduce barriers so children prenatal to 5-years old receive supports and services that promote healthy development at the earliest opportunities.
- **Improve systems to promote the optimal development of children through early identification and supports.**
  - Promote alignment and integration throughout early identification, early intervention and family strengthening systems.
  - Ensure children receive early and periodic validated developmental, health and behavioral screenings, and appropriate trauma-informed interventions.
  - Incentivize preventative care to close maternal and pediatric health disparities.
- **Expand access to affordable, quality early care and education.**
  - Increase public investment in early learning prioritizing family choice and infants and toddlers.
  - Ensure an equitable early learning quality support structure that responds to the diverse cultural and linguistic assets of all children and providers.
  - Require benefits and fair pay for all early learning providers that reflect the critical roles they play.
- **Ensure communities have the resources and environment that supports optimal development of children prenatal to age 5.**
  - Advocate for communities’ increased opportunities to shape resources, services and social conditions to protect the wellbeing of young children and families.
  - Promote local flexibility in policies and systems that directly impact families and neighborhoods.
  - Elevate and utilize disaggregated data on the conditions of children and families to inform efforts in reducing barriers to access and improving the quality of service delivery systems.

Going forward, OGAPP will prioritize the development of joint problem statements that reflect the thinking and experiences of the entire organization, in order to more effectively and precisely hone our policy recommendations. Understanding the specific problem First 5 LA is working to solve is critical to implementing a coherent organization-wide strategy for improving child- and family-outcomes. This will also help sharpen the local learnings and policy responses OGAPP prioritizes and can elevate to state and federal policymakers. Finally, OGAPP will be leading the creation of issue briefs and advocacy strategies that create greater understanding of First 5 LA’s policy priorities, in order to drive momentum toward action.

Finally, 2022 Policy Agenda development is informed by First 5 LA's overarching goals, potential policy changes that will help achieve those goals, and the current policy environment. As such, understanding the prevailing policymaking context is crucial to successfully revising the Policy Agenda, as that external context helps First 5 LA determine where to engage, how to best maximize impact, and what opportunities for advocacy exist looking ahead.

### Looking ahead

Examples of identified opportunities related to advocacy as we move toward and into 2022 include:

- First 5 LA will focus on ensuring successful **implementation of the new Doula covered benefit** in Medi-Cal.
  - *Access:* With adoption of the 2021-2022 California state budget, Doula services became an entitlement through Medi-Cal, meaning anyone who receives health care through that state program can receive care from a Doula. Even though not every Medi-Cal pregnancy would benefit from a Doula, access issues remain a concern due to the relatively limited population of Doulas currently available both locally and statewide. Demand may be low initially and is likely to grow slowly, but First 5 LA will work with Medi-Cal health plans to monitor implementation and advocate for flexibilities or incentives so that families that want to receive care from Doulas are able to access services.
  - *Oversight:* First 5 LA state advocacy will focus on ensuring strong oversight of the Doula benefit and sufficient data collection on utilization.
  - *Beneficiary awareness:* State regulations require that the Department of Health Care Services and local health plans communicate that Doula services are now a covered benefit, available through referral to anyone served by Medi-Cal. In practice this communication will likely be a letter that beneficiaries may not see or be aware of. First 5 LA advocacy will focus on sharing best practices for effective awareness building to promote utilization.
- The Department of Health Care Services has begun soliciting feedback related to defining the scope of **Community Health Workers (CHWs)** in Medi-Cal. Specifically, the state is convening a stakeholder workgroup to inform development of the new Medi-Cal benefit, including qualifications and development of covered services. As CHWs deploy in a multitude of situations and provide a variety of health services, this work is vital, and First 5 LA will monitor and engage with the workgroup throughout this process, as well as provide feedback on its findings once recommendations move toward finalization.
- First 5 LA will continue calling on policymakers at all levels to prioritize and identify **children ages prenatal to 5-years old as a special population**. Brain development during this period occurs more rapidly than at any other time, thus providing a unique opportunity to ensure children have the best start to life. An important component of this designation is presumptive and automatic eligibility for vital supports, such as early intervention and learning opportunities that promote optimal development and lifelong success. This type of upstream approach emphasizes prevention and moves away from a model in which families must wait for their young child to reach a certain deficit threshold, for example a specific number of adverse experiences or level of developmental delay, before they are able to access care.
- First 5 LA will monitor the **implementation of Universal Transitional Kindergarten**, as it offers an opportunity to rethink how early learning services are provided and accessed by families. Some stakeholders have shared concerns over potential unintended consequences of expanded TK, such as lower enrollment in child care centers and home-based child care, and the need for full-day options rather than half-day services for parents who work nontraditional hours.
- While state lawmakers and the legislature have made their commitment to early learning clear through significant investments in the 2021-2022 state budget, there is still more to be

done. California, and Los Angeles County particularly, continues to face a crisis in meeting the **needs of infants and toddlers**. For example, one of the potential unintended consequences of UTK is low enrollment of 4-year-olds in child care centers and home-based care, which leaves these providers to care for more infants and toddlers, who require a higher ratio of adults to children, and have different developmentally appropriate accommodations. Fulfilling these requirements can prove costly and require special training. With the leadership of the Early Care and Education (ECE) Team and support of OGAPP, First 5 LA is elevating and prioritizing this crisis point. Currently, the ECE Team is conducting a landscape analysis on home-based care in LA County to better understand the challenges and barriers faced by family child care homes and family friends and neighbor providers.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

The purpose of the conversation at the October PPC meeting is three-fold. OGAPP will: (1) review the 2021 California Legislative session, including an overview of the policy context and relevant case studies; (2) reorient Commissioners to the First 5 LA Policy Agenda; and (3) provide an update on 2022 Policy Agenda refinement efforts.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

Following the discussion at the October PPC meeting, OGAPP will review Commissioner feedback on the draft 2022 Policy Agenda and finalize revisions. We anticipate returning to the full Board of Commissioners meeting in November to ask for formal approval and adoption of the 2022 Policy Agenda.

The 2021 California legislative session has now concluded, and the following Attachment provides an update on policy developments that occurred over the previous year that First 5 LA's Office of Government Affairs and Public Policy (OGAPP) has identified as priorities. The Attachment also includes a brief look at federal policy updates.

The following bills are those identified by OGAPP as most impacting First 5 LA's strategic priorities:

Bills related to Health and Family Supports:

- SB 316, **Medi-Cal: Federally qualified health centers and rural health clinics** (First 5 LA support position): **Failed to advance**. Would allow Medi-Cal to reimburse Federally Qualified Health Clinics (FQHCs) and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) for two services when a patient receives a medical visit and mental health or dental visit on the same day at the same clinic location.
- AB 123, **Paid family leave: Weekly benefit amount** (First 5 LA support position) **Vetoed by the governor**. Would have, for leave periods commencing on January 1, 2022, increased weekly benefit amounts through the state's Paid Family Leave (PFL) program to 90 percent of the wages the individual taking leave earned during their highest earning quarter over the past 18-months. As such, this bill would have helped more parents be able to take advantage of the state's PFL program, and thus promote positive parent-child bonding, as well as the physical and mental health of mothers. In his veto message, Gov. Newsom said that while he supports policies that ensure better access to family leave, "[AB 123] would create significant new costs not included in the 2021 Budget Act."
- SB 682, **Childhood chronic health conditions: racial disparities** (First 5 LA watch position) **Vetoed by the governor**. Would have required the California Health and Human Services (CHHS) agency to convene the End Racial Inequities in Children's Health in California Initiative (EnRICH CA), to develop and implement a plan to reduce racial disparities in child and youth chronic diseases by at least 50 percent by December 31, 2030. In his veto message, Gov. Newsom said the bill's requirements were duplicative of efforts already being undertaken at DHCS.
- SB 17, **Office of Racial Equity** (First 5 LA watch position) **Failed to advance**. Would have established a state Office of Racial Equity, an independent public entity governed by a Racial Equity Advisory and Accountability Council, to lead coordination, analysis, development, evaluation, and recommendation of strategies for advancing racial equity across state agencies, departments, and the Governor's office.
- AB 65, **California Universal Basic Income Program: Personal income tax** (First 5 LA watch position) **Failed to advance**. Would have created the California Universal Basic Income (Cal UBI) program, providing residents who have lived in the state for three consecutive years and whose income does not exceed 200 percent of the median per capita income for that individual's county of residents, with unconditional payments of \$1,000 a month. The state budget, however, provided \$35 million on a one-time basis to pilot a UBI program, with money specifically intended to support foster youth.
- AB 32, **Telehealth** (First 5 LA watch position) **Failed to advance**. Would have required that health care services furnished by a Medi-Cal enrolled clinic through telehealth be reimbursed by Medi-Cal at the same payment rate as in-person services, as well as required the state to indefinitely continue the telehealth flexibilities put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic state of emergency. While this bill did not advance in the Legislature, policy related to telehealth became incorporated into the state budget, with the state temporarily extending pandemic-era related flexibilities through next year. The Department of Health Care Services is also currently convening a work group to recommend a long-term approach.

- Bills related to Early Learning:
- SB 246, **Early childhood education: Reimbursement rates** (First 5 LA support position) ***Failed to advance***. Would have replaced the current unaligned reimbursement system with the Child Care Stabilization Formula, a single, regionalized state reimbursement rate for child care, preschool, and early learning services, as well as added adjustment factors to scenarios such as a county experiencing a state of emergency.
- AB 92, **Preschool and childcare and development services: Family fees** (First 5 LA support position) ***Failed to advance***. Would have established a more equitable sliding scale for family fees to alleviate the financial burden of early learning and care services for low-income families.
- AB 22, **Transitional kindergarten: Enrollment: Funding: Planning workgroups** (First 5 LA watch position) ***Failed to advance***. Would have expanded preschool and transitional kindergarten (TK) to all 4-year-olds, low-income 3-year-olds, and children with disabilities at no-cost to families, while also phasing in a full-day program. The bill also sought to implement quality improvements to address social emotional and academic needs, standardizing curriculum to bridge the gap to kindergarten, and reduce classroom ratios to support meaningful interaction between educators and students.
- AB 321, **Childcare services: Eligibility** (First 5 LA watch position) ***Failed to advance***. Would have expanded eligibility for state subsidized child care and preschool programs to include 3- and 4-year-old children from families whose income is above the income eligibility threshold if those children had a primary home language that is a language other than English.
- AB 1363, **Childcare: dual language learners** (First 5 LA watch position) ***Signed into law***. Requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish a definition of dual language learners (DLL), develop a standardized process for California State Preschool Program providers to identify DLLs, and require providers to report key aggregated information about DLLs to the state.

Bills related to Community Identified priorities:

- AB 221, **Emergency Food Assistance** (First 5 LA watch position), ***Failed to advance***. Would have required the California Department of Social Services to provide a food assistance benefit program statewide to low-income California residents, regardless of their immigration status.
- SB 108, **State Healthy Food Access Policy** (First 5 LA watch position), ***Failed to advance***. Would have established as state policy that every human being has the right to access sufficient, affordable, and healthy food, and also required all relevant state agencies to consider this policy when revising, adopting, or establishing policies, regulations, and grant criteria.
- SB 4: **Communications: California Advanced Services Fund**. (First 5 LA watch position) ***Signed into law***. Approves funding for infrastructure projects that will provide broadband access to no less than 98 percent of California households.
- AB 339: **Local government: Open and public meetings**. (First 5 LA watch position) ***Vetoed by the governor***. Would have require public meetings to allow the public to attend meetings and provide public comment via telephone or an internet-based service option.
- SB 274: **Local government meetings: Agenda and documents**. (First 5 LA watch position) ***Signed into law***. Requires local agencies to provide local agency meeting materials by email to persons who request it, if technologically feasible.
- The following budget and administrative items are those identified by OGAPP as most impacting First 5 LA's strategic priorities.

**Children have high quality early care and education experiences before kindergarten**

- To meet the early learning needs of young learners and families, the state budget made significant investments to implement **Universal Transitional Kindergarten (UTK)** across California. Rollout of UTK will begin in 2022-2023, with full implementation occurring by 2025-2026. Estimates of the anticipated cost for statewide UTK are approximately \$600 million General Fund in 2022-2023, and \$2.7 billion by 2025-2026. The budget also included \$200 million one-time Proposition 98 General Fund for planning and implementation grants for all local educational agencies, and \$100 million one-time Proposition 98 General Fund for local educational agencies to train and increase the number of early childhood educators. First 5 LA recognizes that this is a monumental moment for California’s early learning system, and will continue to monitor the implementation process, prioritizing equity and family choice within the mixed delivery system.
- After more than a year of planning, **the transfer of early learning and child care programs**, with the exception of state preschool, from the California Department of Education (CDE) to the Department of Social Services (DSS) officially began on July 1. The state provided over \$48 million in both General Fund and federal funds to support this transition. First 5 LA monitored transition conversations and, along with the First 5 Association, provided written feedback to DSS’ transition plan.
- **Provider rate increases and rate reform** became critical points of negotiation during budget development, especially as child care providers continued to care for children amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Reimbursement rate increases for early learning providers was a major hurdle for lawmakers and the administration towards achieving an agreement on the final budget. Ultimately, the budget provided significant investments to implement Child Care Rate Reform for child care and state preschool programs along with several changes regarding reimbursement rates, including:
  - Increasing all child care and preschool program rates to the 75th percentile of their county 2018 Regional Market Rate (RMR);
  - Raising all school-based preschool program rates to the 75th percentile of their county 2018 RMR (supported by \$234 million in Proposition 98 General Fund in 2021-22 and \$468 million on-going); and
  - Providing \$289 million federal funds, \$289 million General Fund, and \$67.7 million Proposition 98 one-time funding as supplemental rate payments to all child care and preschool providers.
- The 2021 state budget also ratified the Child Care Providers United contracts, which includes, among other provisions, rate increases, provider stipends and supplemental payments, pandemic flexibilities, and mental health supports for the workforce. Work to increase reimbursement rates was a key advocacy priority for First 5 LA. OGAPP will continue to monitor and play an active role in conversations on child care rate reform that would lead the state towards greater pay equity across the state’s mixed delivery system and adequate compensation that reflects the true cost of care for infants and toddlers.
- The budget included a significant **increase in child care seats**. This included 200,000 new child care spaces in Alternative Payment, General Child Care, Migrant Child Care, and bridge program for foster children, and also prioritized on-going vouchers for essential workers. Through a phase-in approach, the early learning system will see 145,000 new child care spaces over the next two years, with the remaining 55,000 opening by 2025-2026. While this number of seats is an important development, First 5 LA, in close partnership with the Early Care and Education (ECE) Coalition, will continue to prioritize increasing child care spaces in order to fully meet the needs of all families across the state.
- With California still enduring the COVID-19 pandemic, **COVID supports for providers and families** continue to be an important priority in California. State and federal funds have provided the early learning field with some stability, by continuing to provide grants to providers

to cover costs associated with operating during the pandemic, as well as by extending hold harmless policies to ensure providers receive pay based on contract enrollment and not attendance. Likewise, the state budget also directly supported families by continuing to waive family fees through June 2022. Moving forward, California will also develop an equitable fee schedule to make child care more affordable for low-income and working families.

**Children receive early developmental supports and services, and are safe from abuse, neglect, and other trauma**

- The 2021 state budget provided \$800 million to support the addition of **dyadic care services** as a Medi-Cal benefit. This new benefit will help provide integrated physical and behavioral health screening and services to the whole family, and as a model, has been shown to increase access to preventive care and rates of immunizations for children; improve the coordination of care and maternal mental health; and strengthen child social-emotional health and safety.
- The state budget also eliminated a previously proposed suspension of **Proposition 56 supplemental payments**. As a result, this funding will continue to support incentive payments to providers for **conducting development screens and screenings for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**, for example. Also related to preventing ACEs, the budget provided \$25 million in one-time funding to support All Children Thrive, a statewide program that intends to help mitigate the effects of childhood adversity.
- Early implementation of **California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (Cal AIM)** reforms began this year. In response to proposals for Cal AIM Enhanced Care Management (ECM) and In-Lieu of Services (ILOS) programs that the state Department of Health Care Services released, First 5 LA advocated that young children and pregnant and post-partum women be included as populations of focus within the Enhanced Care Management benefit, and that evidence-based home visiting be added as one of the In-Lieu of Services health plans must provide. Now that the department has finalized its guidelines for ECM and ILOS, First 5 LA's focus will shift to ensuring successful implementation in Los Angeles County. Internally, OGAPP is coordinating with both the Health Systems and Families Supports teams to engage with local health plans and uplift best practices to state policymakers. Finally, First 5 LA is continuing to monitor and respond both in writing and through public comment to Cal AIM's Foster Care Model of Care workgroup, which has continued to meet virtually during the pandemic. There, First 5 LA has advocated for an approach that focuses on prevention, especially through the statewide adoption of evidence-based prevention models for pregnant women and families with young children.
- With California's current state **Medi-Cal waivers** expiring, the state is seeking federal approval for updated waivers, in order to implement and operate aspects of Cal AIM. First 5 LA used this opportunity to advocate that the Medi-Cal system directly prioritize young children and families, including by acknowledging children ages prenatal to 5-years old as a special population, even within the cohort of childhood more broadly defined.
- The Department of Health Care Services is continuing the process of **reprocuring contracts for commercial managed care plans that provide Medi-Cal services**. After the department released a draft Request for Proposal, through which it laid out new plan responsibilities, including those related to health equity and children's health, First 5 LA advocated that the state to prioritize awarding Medi-Cal contracts to managed care organizations that have strong records on, and existing commitments to improving, child and maternal health.
- Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Solis and Mitchell made a motion related to local **home visiting** efforts, and First 5 LA worked closely with Supervisor Mitchell's staff to craft the language for it. Specifically, the supervisors will continue developing plans to utilize Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) funds to expand home visiting programs to families at risk of child welfare involvement, as well as to stabilize funding to ensure high risk

populations are eligible for home visiting supports. This includes prioritizing pregnant and new moms as populations of focus for the Enhanced Care Management benefit.

### Families optimize their child's development

- The state budget provided annual funding to add **Doula services** as a covered benefit in the Medi-Cal program, as well as to add **Community Health Workers** to the class of health workers who are able to provide benefits and services to Medi-Cal beneficiaries, both effective January 1, 2022. These providers are important toward making language- and culturally responsive care available to families served by Medi-Cal, and First 5 LA advocacy has regularly promoted the need for greater family access to them.
- The state budget also ensured that families participating in California's **Paid Family Leave (PFL)** Program will continue to receive 60 to 70 of the wages they earn when they take time off from work to care for a new child. That level of wage replacement was otherwise set to decrease to 55 percent due to the expiration of previously passed legislation. Absent further action, this extension will last for one year. However, the Legislature passed AB 123 (*see the above legislation section of this memo*), a bill supported by First 5 LA that would raise the level of wage replacement featured in the state's PFL program to 90 percent of wages earned. AB 123 now awaits either Governor Newsom's signature or veto, so the future of wage replacement through the PFL remains in flux.
- After months of debate over the future of **telehealth** policies in California, negotiations between the Newsom Administration and Legislature could not find a permanent path forward. Instead, policymakers extended pandemic related telehealth flexibilities through December 31, 2022, and required the Department of Health Care Services to convene an advisory group that will provide recommendations for establishing and adopting telehealth policies that increase access and reduce disparities.
- The Biden Administration and U.S. Department of Agriculture announced a permanent increase in **Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits**. Families will see their food supports benefits increase by approximately 25 percent above pre-pandemic levels, the largest benefits increase in SNAP program history. Also related to food security, the California state budget expanded **eligibility for state-funded nutritional benefits to undocumented residents**, with focused enrollment beginning in 2023-2024.

### Priorities aligned with First 5 LA's long-term systems outcomes, LA County regional priorities, and Best Start Community Change agendas

- The state budget provided a \$6 billion investment to support expansion of California's **broadband infrastructure**. The new California Broadband Program will be administered by the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy within the Department of Technology and will lead the disbursement of \$3.25 billion for a state-owned open-access middle-mile broadband network. The program also set aside \$2 billion for the construction of broadband last-mile infrastructure, with an additional \$1 billion allocated for rural areas.
- California communities, including Los Angeles County, continue to deal with the complex issue of housing their **homeless** populations. The state budget included \$12 billion to protect and house California's most vulnerable, including seniors in poverty at risk of abuse and neglect, families with children, and children and guardians in the child welfare system. The first allocations will go towards supporting oversight and accountability of the funds, with several billion dollars going to support several programs administered by the Department of Social Services.

### **Federal policy updates**

With the COVID-19 pandemic continuing to disrupt the health and financial well-being of Americans, in March Congress passed, President Biden signed into law the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan

Act (ARPA), which focused on investing in families, boosting the American economy recovery, and providing direct financial relief in the form of \$1,400 checks. Now, the administration and lawmakers are working on developing a “human” infrastructure package that would significantly strengthen the nation’s social safety net and promote achievement of important First 5 LA priorities.

- The **American Rescue Plan** featured several provisions that directly supporting American families. This included a historic increase in the Child Tax Credit, with benefits rising from \$2,000 to \$3,600 per child for children under the age of 6-years old, through the end of this year. Qualifying families may also, for the first time, receive credits via advance payments, and overall, the increased benefit level is projected to cut child poverty in half this year. Advocating for this expansion to become permanent has been a focus of First 5 LA federal advocacy efforts throughout 2021. In addition, ARPA allocated \$39 billion in child care relief funding, including \$24 billion for stabilization grants to help programs remain open or reopen, and \$15 billion to spend on allowable Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) activities to make child care more affordable and accessible. Finally, it provided \$250 million for Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) to expand access to early intervention services to infants and toddlers.
- The **Build Back Better Act** is currently being written by multiple committees across the U.S. House and Senate. This “human” infrastructure bill would invest anywhere from between \$1.5 and \$2 trillion over 10-years, depending on the course of continuing negotiations, into social supports, services and programs. While members are still writing and debating the bill’s specific provisions, the Build Back Better Act intends to provide funding to expand the Child Tax Credit, increase nutritional assistance, expand pregnancy and postpartum coverage through Medicaid, and provide additional financial assistance for purchasing health insurance through state health care exchanges, among other possible measures. Furthermore:
  - The House Education and Labor Committee has included funding to make child care more affordable for families with children from birth to 5-years old, using a sliding scale for copayments in which families earning less than 75 percent of state median income would pay nothing, and all families pay no more than 7 percent of their income. Education and Labor has also crafted language that would guarantee access to high-quality, free, inclusive, and mixed-delivery preschool services for all three- and four-year-old children on a voluntary basis.
  - The House Ways and Means Committee is finalizing their portions of the bill, which includes \$15 billion for child care facilities, funding to establish a Child Care information Network for parents to have up-to-date information on available child care options, the establishment of a Child Care Wage Grant program to increase wages for child care providers, and an extension of the Child Tax Credit expansion through January 2023.
- **Public Charge:** The Biden Administration and U.S Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recently published an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) to solicit feedback and data on new proposed public charge regulation. The Biden Administration is attempting invalidate the Trump Administration’s expanded public charge criteria that could have impacted the ability of immigrants to apply for permanent legal residency in the U.S., if they accessed certain public benefits. The rule had already been struck down by several courts, and the Trump Administration stopped defending its implementation in March 2021. However, the Biden Administration is still looking to reform the public charge process and chart a different regulatory policy moving forward. Since 2018, First 5 LA has actively opposed the expansion of the public charge, especially due to the “chilling effect” it had on families seeking to access early childhood supports, out of concern that doing so would adversely impact immigration status. First 5 LA submitted public comments for the ANPR, which documented the importance of removing barriers for immigrant families to access public benefits that contribute



to the healthy development of their children. Once the ANPR is completed, DHS will draft a new proposed regulation.



### **2022 First 5 LA Policy Agenda: DRAFT**

In alignment with First 5 LA's 2020-2028 Strategic Plan, the Policy Agenda is the authorizing document for First 5 LA's policy and advocacy work, clarifying the federal, state, and local policy priorities that the organization can engage with. The Office of Government Affairs and Public Policy (OGAPP) also uses the Policy Agenda as the guide for formal analysis of policy proposals and as a blueprint to develop policy recommendations and to inform priorities. First 5 LA revises the Policy Agenda annually. Doing so allows for the incorporation of best practices from the preceding year, makes the agenda more focused, actionable, and reflective of opportunities ahead, and accounts for the prevailing policymaking context.

Included below is a DRAFT version of the 2022 First 5 LA Policy Agenda:

The 2022 First 5 LA Policy Agenda is grounded in learnings from First 5 LA investments and community experiences, and recognizes children ages 5-years and younger as a truly "special population," due to the rapid pace of brain development that occurs during this period. To direct advocacy efforts supporting achievement of the 2020-2028 Strategic Plan's Results for Children and Families, the 2022 Policy Agenda aims to reduce barriers to care and ensure our youngest children receive health and learning supports as early as possible to promote lifelong success. The experience of structural racism, woven throughout many of the systems and institutions families interact with, also powerfully disrupts optimal child development and family stability. As such, all priorities with the 2022 Policy agenda will:

- Work to close race-based disparities across health, well-being, and opportunity.
- Utilize the best available data and advocate for the availability of full, complete and disaggregated data.
- Promote a holistic system of supports that is linguistically and culturally responsive.

First 5 LA, in partnership with others, helps to strengthen families, communities, and systems of services and supports so that by 2028 all children in Los Angeles County enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life. To achieve this, First 5 LA advances the following community-informed priority areas:

#### **Promote a comprehensive system of family supports to advance positive outcomes for the whole child and whole family.**

- Build systems that connect families to effective evidence-based, innovative, and community-responsive resources, prioritizing home visiting and early intervention services.
- Advance and protect family supports to ensure families with young children and pregnant people are economically secure.
- Reduce barriers so children prenatal to 5 years old receive supports and services that promote healthy development at the earliest opportunities.

#### **Improve systems to promote the optimal development of children through early identification and supports.**

- Promote alignment and integration throughout early identification, early intervention and family strengthening systems.
- Ensure children receive early and periodic validated developmental, health and behavioral screenings, and appropriate trauma-informed interventions.
- Incentivize preventative care to close maternal and pediatric health disparities.

#### **Expand access to affordable, quality early care and education.**

- Increase public investment in early learning prioritizing family choice and infants and toddlers.
- Ensure an equitable early learning quality support structure that responds to the diverse cultural and linguistic assets of all children and providers.



- Require benefits and fair pay for all early learning providers that reflect the critical roles they play.

**Ensure communities have the resources and environment that supports optimal development of children prenatal to age 5.**

- Advocate for communities' increased opportunities to shape resources, services and social conditions to protect the wellbeing of young children and families.
- Promote local flexibility in policies and systems that directly impact families and neighborhoods.
- Elevate and utilize disaggregated data on the conditions of children and families to inform efforts in reducing barriers to access and improving the quality of service delivery systems.

# 2021 Policy Year in Review and Opportunities Ahead

Charna Widby, Chief Government Affairs Officer

Ofelia Medina, Senior Policy Strategist

Andrew Olenick, Senior Policy Analyst

October 28, 2021



# Discussion overview

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- 2021 Policy and Advocacy Highlights.
- First 5 LA Policy Agenda reorientation.
- 2022 Policy Agenda Refinement.
- Preview of 2022 Policy opportunities.

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# 2021 Policy context and lessons going forward

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## External policymaking context at the state level:

- Record budget surplus and investment.
- Policy change through budget and administrative action.
- Introduction of new Medi-Cal benefits.
- Implementation of flexibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## External policymaking context at the federal level:

- New landscape and opportunities.

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# 2021 Policy case studies

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- New Medi-Cal Benefits.
- Managed Care Plan Reprourement.
- California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (Cal AIM).
- Universal Transitional Kindergarten.
- Guaranteed Basic Income pilots.

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# First 5 LA Policy Agenda

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## High-level policy goals that align with and advance the 2020-2028 Strategic Plan.

- Authorizes First 5 LA's policy and advocacy work, informing where First 5 LA leads, supports or does not engage on a policy issue.
- Recognizes the full range of policy changes necessary to achieve desired outcomes, including budget items, legislation and administrative change.
- Guides First 5 LA public policy analysis and policy proposal development.
- Supports efforts to both advance long-term policy change and respond to short-term needs, issues and opportunities.

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# 2022 Policy Agenda Refinement

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Review by the Office of Government Affairs and Public Policy (OGAPP).	August
Organization-wide joint review and refinement, including Offices, Centers and key partners.	August - September
Present draft 2022 Policy Agenda to the Program & Planning Committee (PPC) meeting.	October
Finalize internal revisions informed by PPC feedback.	October
Present to the full Board of Commissioners for 2022 Policy Agenda approval and adoption.	November

# 2022 Policy Agenda: Commitment to Equity

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- Work to close race-based disparities across health, well-being, and opportunity.
- Utilize the best available data and advocate for the availability of full, complete and disaggregated data.
- Promote a holistic system of supports that is linguistically and culturally responsive.

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## Promote a comprehensive system of family supports to advance positive outcomes for the whole child and whole family.

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- Build systems that connect families to effective evidence-based, innovative, and community-responsive resources, prioritizing home visiting and early intervention services.
- Advance and protect family supports to ensure families with young children and pregnant people are economically secure.
- Reduce barriers so children prenatal to 5 years old receive supports and services that promote healthy development at the earliest opportunities.

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# Improve systems to promote the optimal development of children through early identification and supports.

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- Promote alignment and integration throughout early identification, early intervention and family strengthening systems.
- Ensure children receive early and periodic validated developmental, health and behavioral screenings, and appropriate trauma-informed interventions.
- Incentivize preventative care to close maternal and pediatric health disparities.

## Expand access to affordable, quality early care and education.

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- Increase public investment in early learning, prioritizing family choice and infants and toddlers.
- Ensure an equitable early learning quality support structure that responds to the diverse cultural and linguistic assets of all children and providers.
- Require benefits and fair pay for all early learning providers that reflect the critical roles they play.

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## Ensure communities have the resources and environment that supports optimal development of children prenatal to age 5.

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- Advocate for communities' increased opportunities to shape resources, services and social conditions to protect the well-being of young children and families.
- Promote local flexibility in policies and systems that directly impact families and neighborhoods.
- Elevate and utilize disaggregated data on the conditions of children and families to inform efforts in reducing barriers to access and improving the quality of service of delivery systems.

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# Examples of State Policy Opportunities in 2022

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- State budget implementation: Dyadic Care benefit, Doula benefit utilization; Community Health Workers benefit; Universal Transitional Kindergarten implementation.
- Administrative opportunities: Population Health; Managed Care Organization priorities; Defining mixed delivery; Reimbursement Rate Reform.
- Legislative priorities: SB 316: Same Day Billing for Federally Qualified Health Centers.

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# Questions?