

AGENDA

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Chair: Holly J. Mitchell

Thursday, February 12, 2026
1:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Meeting Location:

First 5 LA
750 N. Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

1. **ACTION**
Call to Order / Roll Call
2. **INFORMATION**
AB 2449 Request to Participate Remotely Due to Just Cause or Emergency Circumstances
3. **ACTION**
Election of the Commission Chair
4. **ACTION**
Election of the Commission Vice Chair
5. **ACTION**
Consent
 - A. Approve Commission Meeting Summary Action Minutes — November 13, 2025 4
 - B. Approve the Monthly Financial Statements for the Months Ending October 31 and November 30, 2025 8
 - C. Contract: Approve One (1) New Agreement, One (1) Renewal, and Authorize Staff to Complete the Final Execution of the New Agreement and Renewal Upon Approval from The Board. 17
6. **INFORMATION** 20
Remarks by the Commission Vice Chair of the Board
- Committee Assignments 2026
7. **INFORMATION** 21
President/CEO Report - 2026 Board Meeting Schedule: Aligned with Strategic Plan Initiatives
8. **INFORMATION**

Finance Update (Written Only)

COMMISSIONERS

Los Angeles County Supervisor
Holly J. Mitchell
Chair
Summer McBride
Vice Chair

Robert Byrd, Psy.D.
Alma Cortes, Ed.D.
Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D.
M.P.H., M.Ed.
Astrid Heger, M.D.

Abigail Marquez
Broaden Nichols
Carol Sigala, Ph.D.

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Deanne Tilton Durfee
Jacquelyn McCroskey, DSW
Alejandra Alvarran Moses
Marilyn Ramirez, Ed.D.

PRESIDENT & CEO

Karla Pleitez Howell

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

John A. Wagner

Presenters: JR Nino, Vice President of Operations & Sustainability; Raoul Ortega, Director of Finance; and Daisy Lopez, Financial Planning & Analysis Manager

A.	FY 2025-26 Mid-Year Revised Budget	32
B.	Budget/Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) Calendar for 2026	38
9.	INFORMATION	39
	Authorize First 5 LA to Receive Funds from WestEd for the Building Equitable Early Learning and Care Systems (BEELS) Project, Approve Resolution #2026-01 and Authorize First 5 LA Staff to an Execute Agreement in the Amount of \$100,000 (Written Only)	
10.	INFORMATION	40
	Governor’s January Budget Proposal & Federal Updates	

Presenters: Aurea Montes-Rodriguez, Vice President of Community Engagement and Policy and Ofelia Medina, Senior Policy Strategist

11.	INFORMATION	54
	Home Visiting: First 5 LA Past and Present, Policy Landscape and Sustainability Opportunities	

Presenters: Diana Careaga, Director of Family Supports; Stacy Lee, Chief Learning Officer and Senior Managing Director, Children Now; and Christina Altmayer, Senior Regional Vice President, Health Management Associates

NOTE: There will be a break halfway through this item.

12.	INFORMATION	114
	Best Start: Insights from a 15+ Year Investment in Communities to Inform Future Direction	

Presenters: Aurea Montes-Rodriguez, Vice President of Community Engagement and Policy; Juanita Gallion, Director, Capacity Building & Leadership Development, Center for the Study of Social Policy; and Liz Squibb, Senior Associate, Center for the Study of Social Policy

13.	INFORMATION	
	Public Comment for items not on the agenda	
14.	ACTION	
	Adjournment	

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SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES

**FIRST 5 LA
November 13, 2025
Meeting of the Board of Commissioners
Hybrid of In-Person and Virtual
1:30-4:30 pm**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Commissioners:

Robert Byrd
Alma Cortes
Barbara Ferrer
Astrid Heger
Summer McBride (Vice Chair)
Carol Sigala
Lisa Whitecrow (Alternate)

Ex-Officio Commissioners:

Alejandra Albarran Moses
Jacquelyn McCroskey
Deanne Tilton Durfee

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Brandon Nichols
Abigail Marquez
Holly Mitchell (Chair)
Maricela Ramirez

STAFF PRESENT:

Karla Pleitez Howell, President & CEO
Aurea Montes-Rodriguez, Vice President of
Community Engagement and Policy
JR Nino, Vice President of Operations &
Sustainability
Linda Vo, Board Relations Manager

GENERAL COUNSEL:

Serita Young, Attorney-at-Law

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL:

1. Commission Vice Chair McBride called the meeting to order at 1:32 pm. Quorum was present.

COMMISSION: (Items 2– 11)

2. **AB 2449 Request(s) to Participate Remotely Due to Emergency Circumstances and Notice(s) of Remote Participation for Just Cause**

No Commissioners joined under AB 2449.

3. **CONSENT**

A. Approve Commission Meeting Summary Action Minutes – October 9, 2025

B. Approve the Monthly Financial Statements for the Months Ending July 31, August 31, and September 30, 2025

C. Approve Annual Records Disposition

D. Contract: Approve one (1) renewal, one (1) amendment, and authorize staff to complete the final execution of the renewal and amendment upon approval from the Board

M/S (Heger/Whitecrow)

Robert Byrd – Aye
Alma Cortes – Aye
Barbara Ferrer – Aye
Astrid Heger – Aye
Summer McBride – Aye

SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES

Carol Sigala – Aye
Lisa Whitecrow – Aye

THE ITEMS WERE APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Remarks by the Commission Vice Chair of the Board

Remarks were given by Board Vice Chair McBride.

5. President & CEO’s Report

A report-out was given by Karla Pleitez Howell.

6. Approval of President/CEO’s Employment Agreement effective January 1, 2026

M/S (Sigala/Byrd)

Robert Byrd – Aye
Alma Cortes – Aye
Barbara Ferrer – Aye
Astrid Heger – Aye
Summer McBride – Aye
Carol Sigala – Aye
Lisa Whitecrow – Aye

THE ITEM WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

7. Authorize First 5 LA staff to Receive Funds from LA Health Care to support Welcome Baby services, Approve Resolution # 2025-02 and Authorize First 5 LA Staff to Execute an Agreement in the Anticipated Amount of up to \$900,000 through December 30, 2026. The funding amount is contingent upon final award from LA Health Care (Written Only)

This was a written only Action item – materials were included in the Board Packet for reference. No presentation was given.

M/S (Heger/Byrd)

Robert Byrd – Aye
Alma Cortes – Aye
Barbara Ferrer – Aye
Astrid Heger – Aye
Summer McBride – Aye
Carol Sigala – Aye
Lisa Whitecrow – Aye

THE ITEM WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES

8. Whole Child; Bright Futures Update: Multilingual Learners Part 2

Presenters: Aurea Montes-Rodriguez, Alyssa Guitierrez, Program Officer and Doua Thor, Everyday Consulting Inc.

Staff and consultants provided an update on efforts to expand multilingual Transitional Kindergarten (TK) programming across Los Angeles County. Doua Thor, Everyday Consulting Inc., shared preliminary findings from a field scan highlighting the linguistic diversity of young children in California and the developmental and educational benefits of bilingualism.

The presentation outlined strategies to expand access to multilingual TK programs, including identifying and supporting champions, influencing key systems, and building educator and program capacity. Discussion also addressed implementation challenges such as workforce shortages, curriculum development, and the need for stronger alignment between early childhood education and TK systems.

Commissioners discussed the importance of equity in access to multilingual learning and noted that efforts should prioritize children and communities facing the greatest barriers and vulnerabilities.

There was no further discussion on this item.

9. Federal and State Update: The Health and Wellbeing of Californians

Presenter: Kim Johnson, Secretary, California Health and Human Services Agency

Kim Johnson, Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency, provided an update on California's five core strategic priorities, including advancing health equity, integrating health, housing, and human services, strengthening economic resilience, improving child and youth well-being, and creating a disability-friendly state.

Secretary Johnson highlighted progress in reducing the uninsured rate and addressing prescription drug affordability, while noting ongoing challenges related to reproductive health access and behavioral health system transformation. She emphasized the state's commitment to maintaining an equity agenda and inclusive healthcare access amid fiscal constraints and federal policy shifts.

Federal actions that may impact California's efforts were discussed, including proposed work requirements, restrictions on healthcare access, and expanded data sharing for immigration enforcement. Mitigation strategies include statutory changes, funding adjustments, and enhanced collaboration with community partners.

Board discussion addressed funding challenges for immigrant healthcare and food security efforts, including CalFresh access, nutrition education, and connections to local food resources. Secretary Johnson emphasized the importance of continued partnership to support children and families facing disparities.

There was no further discussion on this item.

10. Break

SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES

11. Public Policy Update: Early Childhood Policy & Advocacy Fund

Presenters: Aurea Montes-Rodriguez; Erika Witt; Alicia Lara; Jackie B. Majors; Janette Robinson Flint; Manjusha Kulkarni

Staff and partners provided an update on the Early Childhood Policy & Advocacy Fund, with an overview presented by Alicia Lara, President and CEO of Community Partners, the intermediary selected in 2022 to support First 5 LA's policy and advocacy investments. The fund integrates multiple funding streams to allow flexibility and responsiveness to changing political and community conditions, while aligning with First 5 LA's strategic plan and equity priorities.

Community Partners described the development of the fund through listening sessions and research, resulting in two funding pools: the Reimagining Systems Fund for multi-year grants and the Community Opportunities Flexible Fund for one-year grants. The approach centers equity, blends funding, and supports both established and emerging organizations engaged in early childhood policy and advocacy.

Grantee partners, including Crystal Stairs, Black Women for Wellness, and AAPI Equity Alliance, shared highlights of their work supporting families, responding to crises, and advancing policy change in high-need communities. Presentations emphasized the importance of investing in trusted community-based organizations, strengthening collaboration, and addressing systemic barriers affecting children and families.

Board discussion underscored the value of these efforts in improving outcomes for young children and families, including addressing child welfare and language access challenges.

There was no further discussion on this item.

12. Public Comment (for items not on the agenda)

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Commission adjourned at 4:19 pm.

NEXT MEETING:

The next Commission meeting will take place on Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 1:30 pm.

Meeting details will be posted per Brown Act Requirements
Meeting minutes were recorded by Linda Vo, Board Relations Manager

FIRST 5 LA

SUBJECT:
Monthly Financial Reports

RECOMMENDATION:
Approval of the monthly financial statements for the months ending October 31, and November 30, 2025.

BACKGROUND:
Staff provides monthly financial reports for the Commission's review and approval to ensure transparency of the financial status of First 5 LA.

DISCUSSION:

October 31, 2025

First 5 LA began the month of October with a cash balance of \$269.6 million. During the month, we received \$10.7 million in revenues. We had \$4.3 million in program expenditures, and \$1.4 million in operating expenditures. As a result, First 5 LA ended the month with a cash balance of \$274.6 million.

November 30, 2025

First 5 LA began the month of November with a cash balance of \$274.6 million. During the month, we received \$825,654 in revenues. We had \$2.4 million in program expenditures, and \$1.2 million in operating expenditures. As a result, First 5 LA ended the month with a cash balance of \$271.9 million.

This report includes detailed financial information for the months ending October 31, and November 30, 2025. The financial statements are unaudited and reported as a "soft close." All materials in this packet and check registers are available online. Statements in this report include the following:

- Revenue and Expense Statement: Summarizes financial statements to highlight the starting cash balance, revenues received, program and operating expenses, and the ending cash balance for the month.
- Balance Sheet: Provides a "snapshot" view of the Commission's assets, liabilities and fund balance as of October 31, and November 30, 2025.
- Detailed operating and program expenditures: Shows expenses against the FY 2025-26 Budget approved on June 12, 2025.

**Los Angeles County Children and Family First -
Proposition 10 Commission (aka) First 5 LA
Revenue and Expense Statement
October 31, 2025, Unaudited**

	REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES	
Net Position as of Net Position September 30, 2025	\$ 269,631,327	
Revenue		
Monthly State Allotments	9,871,961	(1)
State Commission - Other Program Funds	-	
Interest Income - Unreserved	815,403	
Investment Income - Other	-	
Total Revenue	\$ 10,687,365	
Expenses		
Program Budget (Attachment A)		
2024-2029 Strategic Plan	\$ 4,290,860	
Strategic Initiatives Development Fund	-	
Total Initiative/Program Expenses	\$ 4,290,860	
Operation and Administration (Attachment B)		
Personnel	\$ 1,230,191	
General Operating	35,470	
Consultant Services	80,869	
Professional Services	66,673	
Travel Expenses	4,326	
Professional Development	3,800	
Capital Improvements	291	
Total Operation and Administration	\$ 1,421,620	
Total Expenses	\$ 5,712,480	
Variance (Revenue - Expenses)	\$ 4,974,885	
Net Position as of October 31, 2025	\$ 274,606,213	(2)

NOTE:

- 1) Tobacco tax revenue for July, August, and September 2025.
- 2) Net Position excludes fixed assets and liabilities.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY CHILDREN AND FAMILY FIRST - PROPOSITION 10 COMMISSION (AKA FIRST 5 LA)
PROGRAM EXPENDITURES BY FY 2023-24 BUDGET
OCTOBER 31, 2025, UNAUDITED

INITIATIVE/PROGRAM	FY 2025-26 BUDGET	OCTOBER EXPENDITURES	FISCAL YTD EXPENDITURES	BALANCE REMAINING
2024-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN				
Center for Family Systems				
Family Supports	30,699,413	2,773,137	5,506,687	25,192,726
Health Systems	1,156,000	59,259	168,876	987,124
Center Support	175,000	-	50,000	125,000
Center for Community Engagement Policy				
Communities	10,189,050	578,982	976,989	9,212,061
Impact & Accountability	1,414,000	6,600	31,155	1,382,845
Public Policy & Early Care and Education	9,765,000	844,329	3,981,184	5,783,816
Center for Strategy & Culture				
Communications	1,463,500	28,553	101,364	1,362,136
Subtotal 2024-2029 Strategic Plan	54,861,963	4,290,860	10,816,255	44,045,708
Strategic Initiatives Development Fund	4,751,470	-	-	4,751,470
TOTAL	59,613,433	4,290,860	10,816,255	44,045,708

The FY 2025-26 program budget was approved by the Board of Commissioners on June 12, 2025.

NOTES:

Journal entries for FY 2023-24 accrued expenses were reversed in July 2024. The amounts reported are the actual/accrual program expenditures for October 2025.

**Los Angeles County Children and Family First -
Proposition 10 Commission (aka) First 5 LA
Operating & Administrative Budget Update
October 31, 2025, UNAUDITED**

OPERATION AND ADMINISTRATION EXPENSE	OCTOBER ACTUAL	FISCAL YTD ACTUAL	FY 2025-26 BUDGET	FISCAL YTD VARIANCE
Personnel Services				
Salaries & Wages	1,049,911	3,310,828	11,788,254	8,477,426
Fringe Benefits	180,280	895,917	4,583,872	3,687,955
Total Personnel Services	1,230,191	4,206,745	16,372,126	12,165,381
General Operating Expenses				
ADP Payroll Charges	2,465	7,892	40,000	32,108
Workers Compensation Insurance	-	50,528	84,919	34,391
Utilities	-	27,884	185,000	157,116
Corporate Insurance	3,156	127,702	140,800	13,098
Mileage, Parking and Other Transportation	1,023	1,328	22,965	21,637
Telephones	4,011	10,651	53,300	42,649
Cell Phones & Mobile Devices	6,850	27,900	108,300	80,400
Outside Printing & Publishing	-	-	2,300	2,300
Other Supplies	-	2,158	3,000	842
Postage & Delivery	-	95	2,510	2,415
Educational Supplies	-	142	5,000	4,858
Office Supplies	2,122	7,871	34,790	26,919
Subscriptions & Publication	466	966	34,000	33,034
Equipment-Rents & Leases	1,670	5,828	21,000	15,172
Building Repair & Maintenance	275	20,054	170,000	149,946
Equipment Repair & Maintenance	574	574	6,500	5,926
Offsite Storage	232	857	5,200	4,343
Hardware & Software Maintenance	3,666	68,168	404,000	335,832
Miscellaneous/Contingency	6,808	6,886	89,800	82,914
Stipend/Honorarium	-	-	0	-
Internal Meeting	2,152	4,235	89,200	84,965
Divisional Capacity Building	-	1,750	19,000	17,250
Total General Operating Expenses	35,470	373,469	1,521,584	1,148,115
Consultant Services				
Consultant Fees	80,869	192,879	972,000	779,121
Other Professional Fees	-	50,511	311,900	261,389
Total Consultant Services	80,869	243,390	1,283,900	1,040,510
Professional Services				
Audit	46,000	46,000	72,000	26,000
Legal Fees	17,837	30,171	200,000	169,829
Professional Dues	450	8,633	74,250	65,617
Staff Recruitment	988	988	10,000	9,012
Commission Stipends	450	1,200	20,000	18,800
Web-Based Services	948	10,376	70,000	59,624
Bank & Other Service Charges	-	4,343	12,000	7,657
Total Professional Services	66,673	101,711	458,250	356,539
Travel Expenses				
Airfare	1,535	3,686	117,125	113,439
Lodging	363	2,104	115,348	113,244
Per Diem	1,798	2,762	45,270	42,508
Other Travel Expense	630	1,060	18,865	17,805
Total Travel Expenses	4,326	9,612	296,608	286,996
Professional Development				
Training Material & Supplies	-	-	12,100	12,100
In-house Training	-	-	64,300	64,300
Leadership Programs	-	-	135,000	135,000
Conference/Training Registrations	2,700	3,419	89,700	86,281
Outside Training	1,100	1,595	49,500	47,905
Total Professional Development	3,800	5,014	350,600	345,586
Capital Improvements				
Capital Outlay (Equipment Purchases)	291	5,108	103,500	98,392
Total Capital Improvements	291	5,108	103,500	98,392
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	1,421,620	4,945,049	20,386,567	15,441,519

NOTES - OPERATING & ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET UPDATE:

The administrative expenses are within the maximum authorized under the Board policy.

The FY 2025-26 operating budget was approved by the Board of Commissioners on June 12, 2025.

**Los Angeles County Children and Families First -
Proposition 10 Commission
Statement of Net Assets
October 31, 2025 Unaudited**

Current Assets:

Cash	\$	1,306,852
Cash- Morlin Mgmt Corp		243,437
Investment:		
Operating and Allocated funds		261,683,070
Advance - Regional Network (RN)		366,513
Advance - Various		198,650
Other Receivables		815,529
Total Current Assets	\$	<u>264,614,052</u>

Fixed Assets:

Land	\$	2,039,000
Building & Improvements		15,970,799
Furniture & Fixtures		627,671
Computer, Software & Accessories		2,280,106
Office Equipment		346,044
Accumulated Depreciation		(8,388,282)
CIP Phase-II		1,441,837
Total Fixed Assets	\$	<u>14,317,175</u>

Total Assets	\$	<u><u>278,931,226</u></u>
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Liabilities and Net Assets

Current liabilities:

Other Liabilities	\$	250,642 (1)
Total Current Liabilities	\$	<u>250,642</u>

Net Assets:

Investment in capital assets	\$	14,317,175
Restricted		264,360,909
Total Net Assets	\$	<u>278,678,084</u>

Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$	<u><u>278,931,226</u></u>
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NOTES:

(1) Other Liabilities include accounts payable, and other related liabilities.

**Los Angeles County Children and Family First -
Proposition 10 Commission (aka) First 5 LA
Revenue and Expense Statement
November 30, 2025, Unaudited**

	REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES	
Net Position as of Net Position October 31, 2025	\$ 274,606,212	
Revenue		
Monthly State Allotments	-	
CA Electronic Cigarette Excise Tax (CECET) FY2024-25	(93,375)	
State Commission - Other Program Funds	100,000	
Interest Income - Unreserved	819,029	
Investment Income - Other	-	
Total Revenue	\$ 825,654	
Expenses		
Program Budget (Attachment A)		
2024-2029 Strategic Plan	\$ 2,350,506	
Strategic Initiatives Development Fund	27,386	
Total Initiative/Program Expenses	\$ 2,377,892	
Operation and Administration (Attachment B)		
Personnel	\$ 1,050,295	
General Operating	46,930	
Consultant Services	36,460	
Professional Services	11,278	
Travel Expenses	9,788	
Professional Development	9,228	
Capital Improvements	-	
Total Operation and Administration	\$ 1,163,979	
Total Expenses	\$ 3,541,871	
Variance (Revenue - Expenses)	\$ (2,716,217)	
Net Position as of November 30, 2025	\$ 271,889,996	(1)

NOTE:

1) Net Position excludes fixed assets and liabilities.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY CHILDREN AND FAMILY FIRST - PROPOSITION 10 COMMISSION (AKA FIRST 5 LA)
PROGRAM EXPENDITURES BY FY 2023-24 BUDGET
NOVEMBER 30, 2025, UNAUDITED

INITIATIVE/PROGRAM	FY 2025-26 BUDGET	NOVEMBER EXPENDITURES	FISCAL YTD EXPENDITURES	BALANCE REMAINING
2024-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN				
Center for Family Systems				
Family Supports	30,699,413	1,704,392	7,211,079	23,488,334
Health Systems	1,156,000	9,000	177,876	978,124
Center Support	175,000	-	50,000	125,000
Center for Community Engagement Policy				
Communities	10,189,050	218,313	1,195,302	8,993,748
Impact & Accountability	1,414,000	10,530	33,685	1,380,315
Public Policy & Early Care and Education	9,765,000	388,122	4,369,306	5,395,694
Center for Strategy & Culture				
Communications	1,463,500	20,148	121,512	1,341,988
Subtotal 2024-2029 Strategic Plan	54,861,963	2,350,505	13,158,761	41,703,202
Strategic Initiatives Development Fund	4,751,470	27,386	27,386	4,724,084
TOTAL	59,613,433	2,377,891	13,186,147	46,427,286

The FY 2025-26 program budget was approved by the Board of Commissioners on June 12, 2025.

NOTES:

Journal entries for FY 2023-24 accrued expenses were reversed in July 2024. The amounts reported are the actual/accrual program expenditures for November 2025.

**Los Angeles County Children and Family First -
Proposition 10 Commission (aka) First 5 LA
Operating & Administrative Budget Update
November 30, 2025, UNAUDITED**

OPERATION AND ADMINISTRATION EXPENSE	NOVEMBER ACTUAL	FISCAL YTD ACTUAL	FY 2025-26 BUDGET	FISCAL YTD VARIANCE
Personnel Services				
Salaries & Wages	603,286	3,914,114	11,788,254	7,874,140
Fringe Benefits	447,009	1,342,926	4,583,872	3,240,946
Total Personnel Services	1,050,295	5,257,040	16,372,126	11,115,086
General Operating Expenses				
ADP Payroll Charges	2,327	10,219	40,000	29,781
Workers Compensation Insurance	-	50,528	84,919	34,391
Utilities	14,362	42,246	185,000	142,754
Corporate Insurance	-	127,702	140,800	13,098
Mileage, Parking and Other Transportation	94	1,422	22,965	21,543
Telephones	2,051	12,702	53,300	40,598
Cell Phones & Mobile Devices	6,650	34,550	108,300	73,750
Outside Printing & Publishing	-	-	2,300	2,300
Other Supplies	542	2,700	3,000	300
Postage & Delivery	184	279	2,510	2,231
Educational Supplies	-	142	5,000	4,858
Office Supplies	352	8,223	34,790	26,567
Subscriptions & Publication	152	1,118	34,000	32,882
Equipment-Rents & Leases	1,934	7,762	21,000	13,238
Building Repair & Maintenance	10,937	30,991	170,000	139,009
Equipment Repair & Maintenance	-	574	6,500	5,926
Offsite Storage	136	993	5,200	4,207
Hardware & Software Maintenance	4,757	72,925	404,000	331,075
Miscellaneous/Contingency	-	6,886	89,800	82,914
Stipend/Honorarium	-	-	-	-
Internal Meeting	2,452	6,687	89,200	82,513
Divisional Capacity Building	-	1,750	19,000	17,250
Total General Operating Expenses	46,930	420,399	1,521,584	1,101,185
Consultant Services				
Consultant Fees	10,296	203,175	972,000	768,825
Other Professional Fees	26,164	76,675	311,900	235,225
Total Consultant Services	36,460	279,850	1,283,900	1,004,050
Professional Services				
Audit	-	46,000	72,000	26,000
Legal Fees	-	30,171	200,000	169,829
Professional Dues	7,758	16,391	74,250	57,859
Staff Recruitment	659	1,647	10,000	8,353
Commission Stipends	1,500	2,700	20,000	17,300
Web-Based Services	1,361	11,737	70,000	58,263
Bank & Other Service Charges	-	4,343	12,000	7,657
Total Professional Services	11,278	112,989	458,250	345,261
Travel Expenses				
Airfare	1,729	5,415	117,125	111,710
Lodging	6,855	8,959	115,348	106,389
Per Diem	172	2,934	45,270	42,336
Other Travel Expense	1,032	2,092	18,865	16,773
Total Travel Expenses	9,788	19,400	296,608	277,208
Professional Development				
Training Material & Supplies	-	-	12,100	12,100
In-house Training	-	-	64,300	64,300
Leadership Programs	8,131	8,131	135,000	126,869
Conference/Training Registrations	1,097	4,516	89,700	85,184
Outside Training	-	1,595	49,500	47,905
Total Professional Development	9,228	14,242	350,600	336,358
Capital Improvements				
Capital Outlay (Equipment Purchases)	-	5,108	103,500	98,392
Total Capital Improvements	-	5,108	103,500	98,392
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	1,163,979	6,109,028	20,386,567	14,277,540

NOTES - OPERATING & ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET UPDATE:

The administrative expenses are within the maximum authorized under the Board policy.

The FY 2025-26 operating budget was approved by the Board of Commissioners on June 12, 2025.

**Los Angeles County Children and Families First -
Proposition 10 Commission
Statement of Net Assets
November 30, 2025 Unaudited**

Current Assets:

Cash	\$	7,445,027
Cash- Morlin Mgmt Corp		243,437
Investment:		
Operating and Allocated funds		253,309,935
Advance - Regional Network (RN)		349,298
Advance - Various		198,650
Other Receivables		252,733
Total Current Assets	\$	<u>261,799,080</u>

Fixed Assets:

Land	\$	2,039,000
Building & Improvements		15,970,799
Furniture & Fixtures		627,671
Computer, Software & Accessories		2,280,106
Office Equipment		346,044
Accumulated Depreciation		(8,388,282)
CIP Phase-II		1,441,837
Total Fixed Assets	\$	<u>14,317,175</u>

Total Assets	\$	<u><u>276,116,254</u></u>
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Liabilities and Net Assets

Current liabilities:

Other Liabilities	\$	325,703 (1)
Total Current Liabilities	\$	<u>325,703</u>

Net Assets:

Investment in capital assets	\$	14,317,175
Restricted		261,470,876
Total Net Assets	\$	<u>275,788,051</u>

Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$	<u><u>276,116,254</u></u>
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NOTES:

(1) Other Liabilities include accounts payable, and other related liabilities.

First 5 LA

SUBJECT:

Contracts for approval

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve one (1) new agreement, one (1) renewal, and authorize staff to complete the final execution of the new agreement and renewal upon approval from the Board.

BACKGROUND:

Pursuant to the Procurement Policy adopted on September 9, 2021, contracts and amendments over \$150,000 in the aggregate shall be presented to the Board of Commissioners as an item under Consent for approval prior to execution.

First 5 LA's programmatic budget for FY 2025-26 totals \$67,347,252, and the administrative support budget totals \$12,652,748. Funding for the new agreement and renewal is included in the FY 2025-26 budget approved at the June 12, 2025, Board of Commissioners meeting.

A description of the contractor's project and scope of work for FY 2025-26 and FY 26-27 is provided in Attachment A. Staff analyzed the progress of the contractor and determined whether this contractor is making or will be expected to make satisfactory progress towards completion of the objectives in the current agreement by the contract expiration date. This information can be found in the last column of Attachment A. Contractors and grantees are proposed for renewals to continue services or complete a multiyear project or initiative. Upon approval of the agreement presented below, staff will complete the final execution of the renewal and amendment.

DISCUSSION:

Staff seeks the Commission's approval of the agreement summarized in Attachment A.

Attachment A
February 2026

NEW										
	DEPARTMENT	DEPARTMENT/ INITIATIVE/STRATEGY / PROGRAM	CONTRACT (PROJECT) INFORMATION	PROCUREMENT METHOD	PROJECT LENGTH	ESTIMATED TOTAL PROJECT COST	CONTRACT AMOUNT	ANTICIPATED CONTRACT START DATE	ANTICIPATED CONTRACT END DATE	ANTICIPATED PROJECT END DATE
1	Public Policy & Early Care and Education	Public Policy & Early Care Education/Quality Improvement System/Dual Language Learner	<p><u>SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH ASSOCIATES (10499)</u> The Contractor will evaluate the Dual Language Learner (DLL) Communications Campaign's strategies and activities spanning FY 2022-2026. The Contractor will conduct rigorous, culturally-responsive data collection for target and secondary audiences of the campaign's six (6) languages (Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Khmer, and Armenian) in Los Angeles County, and will use quantitative and qualitative methods to assess campaign reach, resonance and impact of the campaign.</p> <p>Part of the funding for this contract is included in the FY25-26 budget approved at the June 12, 2025, Board of Commissioners meeting. The remaining budget will be included in the FY 26-27 budget which is anticipated to be presented to the Board for approval at the June 11, 2026 Meeting of the Board of Commissioners.</p>	RFP	10 months	\$200,000	<p>\$200,000</p> <p>Estimated FY 25-26 Spending: \$100,000</p> <p>Impact to FY 26-27 Budget: \$100,000</p>	2/13/2026	12/31/2026	18 12/31/2026

*Satisfactory progress is based on whether contractors and grantees are making or will be expected to make satisfactory progress towards completion in the current agreement by the contract expiration date.

RENEWALS											
	DEPARTMENT	DEPARTMENT/ INITIATIVE/STRATEGY / PROGRAM	CONTRACT (PROJECT) INFORMATION	PROCUREMENT METHOD	PROJECT LENGTH	ESTIMATED TOTAL PROJECT COST	CONTRACT AMOUNT	ANTICIPATED CONTRACT START DATE	ANTICIPATED CONTRACT END DATE	ANTICIPATED PROJECT END DATE	*SATISFAC TORY PROGRESS ACHIEVED BY CONTRACT OR?
2	Information Technology	Information Technology/Internal Operations/Hardware & Software Maintenance	<p>BLACKBAUD INC. (05201) First 5 LA currently maintains two separate agreements with the Vendor for its accounting (FENXT) and grant management (BBGM) software application platforms. To improve administrative oversight and financial tracking, the organization has decided to merge these into one co-termed contract. As a result, the cumulative financial obligation exceeds the applicable approval threshold of \$150,000 and therefore requires Board approval.. Agreement #10083 for Blackbaud Grantmaking was closed and the services for Grantmaking were merged with Blackbaud Financial Edge agreement #05021. The Vendor will continue to provide access to Financial Edge (FENXT) and Blackbaud Grantmaking platform (BBGM) retroactively from December 31, 2025 through December 31, 2027 due to Board of Commissioner recess at the time.</p> <p>Part of the funding for this contract is included in the FY 25-26 budget approved at the June 12, 2025, Board of Commissioners meeting. The remaining budget will be included in the FY 26-27 budget which is anticipated to be presented to the Board for approval at the June 11, 2026 Meeting of the Board of Commissioners.</p>	Procurement Exception	2 Years	\$206,999.21	\$206,999.21 Estimated FY 25-26 Spending: \$100,528.88 Impact to FY 26-27 Budget: \$106,470.33	12/31/2025	12/31/2027	12/31/2027	Yes 19

*Satisfactory progress is based on whether contractors and grantees are making or will be expected to make satisfactory progress towards completion in the current agreement by the contract expiration date.

Board of Commissioners Committee Assignments 2026

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Brandon Nichols, Vice Chair

Executive Committee

Brandon Nichols, Chair
Summer McBride, Vice Chair
Maricela Ramirez
Carol Sigala

Program & Planning Committee

Summer McBride, Chair
Carol Sigala, Vice Chair
Barbara Ferrer
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Deanne Tilton

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PRESIDENT & CEO

Karla Pleitéz Howell

VICE PRESIDENTS

Aurea Montes-Rodriguez
JR Nino

Memo

To: Board of Commissioners
From: Karla Pleitéz Howell, President & CEO
Date: February 12, 2026
Subject: **PRESIDENT & CEO'S REPORT**

I. PRESIDENT & CEO HIGHLIGHTS

As we usher in a new year, we welcome back our board of commissioners, First 5 LA staff, partners and community members.

Reflecting on 2025 as a tremendously challenging year for us all. Locally, our Los Angeles and Altadena communities are continuing their road to recovery and rebuilding following the devastating wildfires, while also still coping with the lasting trauma of lost loved ones. Nationwide, threats, and uncertainties that undercut the foundation of this country's democracy, decency, and humanity continue. And, as these challenges persist, the fight gets tougher, but we must remain steadfast in our shared commitment and continue to strengthen our collective response.

In January, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) threatened to freeze access to more than \$10 billion in federal funds to five Democratic-led states, including California, Colorado, Illinois, Minnesota, and New York. California, along with the four other states, sued the federal administration to block the unlawful freeze in child care and family assistance funding. The federal courts granted an emergency order that has blocked the freeze for the time being.

In addition, there have been increased U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids across the country, and tragically in January two U.S. citizens, Alexi Pretti and Renee Good were fatally shot by federal agents in Minneapolis, Minnesota, sparking national controversy over immigration enforcement tactics and the use of force. Nationwide protests in response to the killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti have had communities, neighbors, parents, and children on edge regardless of their immigration status.

In the year ahead, First 5 LA recognizes this moment as a pivotal point – to build resilience, strengthen partnership, and engage in meaningful work and to ensure First 5 LA continues to serve in a role that is most impactful for L.A. County's youngest children and their families.

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PRESIDENT & CEO

Karla Pleitéz Howell

VICE PRESIDENTS

Aurea Montes-Rodriguez
 JR Nino

Given the current, evolving environment, First 5 LA recognizes the need to remain both disciplined and adaptive. As the organization aligns to the board-approved Long-term Financial plan, we are developing investment strategies aimed at creating the greatest impact while maintaining the ability to respond to what's next. As we right-size our organizational resources, we remain committed to providing stability for communities and partners, designing long-term and sustainability solutions, and continuing to be responsive to the evolving needs of children and families.

Meeting this moment requires all our leadership. Let us work together to transform this period of uncertainty into one of hope and progress toward achieving a brighter future for every child.

II. UPDATES FROM THE TEAM – WHAT HAS FIRST 5 LA BEEN UP TO?

Best Start Cross Regional Alignment Update

Regional Network Grantee (RNG) leaders from the five Best Start Regions met on December 8, 2025, to strengthen collaboration with First 5 LA around housing, poverty alleviation, and culturally affirming services. Participants agreed on the need for a unified advocacy approach informed by county, state and federal policy levers, outlining next steps that include developing a shared narrative, coordinating regional analyses, planning targeted briefings, and preparing for the April 2026 Annual Summit. In a subsequent January 12, 2026 meeting, RNG CEOs and leads examined the future of Best Start within current fiscal and strategic realities, endorsed the draft collective story, and discussed integrated advocacy messaging on housing, affirming their role in the upcoming Community Engagement Summit, with next steps focused on finalizing the narrative and advancing briefing plans.

Advancing Maternal and Child Health Priorities Through Administrative Advocacy

Leveraging expertise and resources, the Health Systems and the Public Policy & Early Care and Education (PPECE) Departments have collaborated on administrative advocacy efforts to advance maternal and child health priorities. Staff provided public comment in response to CA Department of Public Health (CDPH) guidance for the implementation of the Behavioral Health Services Act, which shifted provision of prevention and early intervention funding through local county jurisdictions to primarily statewide funding streams. First 5 LA has uplifted the need for stronger accountability measures, increased funding for prevention services to local CBOs, explicit recognition of First 5s as critical partners in implementation and guidance, and intentional focus on maternal and prenatal to five population. Furthermore, staff provided input to inform First 5 Policy Center's public comment submitted in response to the draft Perinatal Omnibus All Plan Letter (APL) released by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). The APL was developed as part of DHCS's Birthing Care Pathway—a Medi-Cal policy and care model roadmap aimed at reducing maternal morbidity and mortality—and intends to streamline Medi-Cal maternity guidance for Managed Care Plans. Specifically, staff emphasized the need for stronger accountability measures for maternal depression screenings and for ensuring an adequate and accessible network of maternal health providers. First 5 LA will continue to monitor implementation of these critical efforts both at the state and local levels.

Advancing First 5 LA's PPECE priorities and building relationship with policymakers

In late November, the second round of the EC PAF Community Opportunities Flexible Fund reopened and accepted applications through January 16. Proposals are currently being reviewed by Community Partners, and recipients will be announced in late February. In addition, First 5 CA released the FY2026-27 IMPACT Legacy RFA. IMPACT Legacy funding, in its fourth and final year, will continue to be used to provide equitable quality early learning and care environments for all children aged 0 to 5 by expanding access to the Quality Counts California (QCC) quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) for priority populations not currently receiving quality support. First 5

LA staff worked with Quality Start Los Angeles (QSLA) to complete the RFA by the February 2 deadline. Also, in December F5LA met with leadership from Food and Research Action Center (FRAC). The conversations focused on opportunities to partner on federal food policy and on the best way to advocate for the Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP) at the federal, state and local county level.

At the state level, the January budget proposal outlined a balanced budget totaling \$348.9 billion, with \$23 billion in reserves. Overall, the proposal reflects a more optimistic outlook than anticipated based on last fall's Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) projections. However, the California Department of Finance (DOF) noted that expenditure growth continues to outpace revenue, suggesting that the May Revision will ultimately serve as the primary framework for the final 2026–2027 California Budget. For more information on the budget and proposals related to First 5 LA's policy agenda, see the January Budget Memo. First 5 LA will now work towards influencing and optimizing the budget's impact on our priorities alongside partners and our state advocates, California Strategies, LLC leading into the May Revision and ultimately the final state budget in June. Finally at the federal level, F5LA drafted and submitted a public comment (<https://www.regulations.gov/comment/USCIS-2025-0304-3830>) in response to the federal proposal to rescind the 2022 Public Charge Grounds of Inadmissibility Rule. If adopted, this rule will result in the denial of adjustment of status based on past use of any benefits not previously included in the longstanding definition of "public charge," impacting working families who accessed safety net benefits intended to support their long-term stability. The final rule is anticipated to go into effect in early 2026.

III. CONTRACTS EXECUTED LEVERAGING PRESIDENT & CEO DELEGATION AUTHORITY

Pursuant to the Procurement Policy adopted on September 9, 2021, "The Executive Director (or designee) may approve any contract or amendment up to and including \$150,000 in the aggregate and will establish appropriate internal policies and controls for those awards. Contracts that are executed under the Executive Director (or designee) between \$10,000-\$150,000 will be presented as information at the next Board of Commissioners meeting."

The following agreements and amendments were executed between October 11, 2025, and January 12, 2026, by President & CEO Karla Pleitéz Howell and her designees.

#10490 The Ollivier Corporation

Contract Amount: \$12,942

Contract Period: 10/15/2025 – 09/30/2030

The Vendor will upgrade First 5 LA's outdated Lenel OnGuard building access system to a cloud-based system, enabling First 5 LA to continue maintaining a safe and secure environment for staff, tenants, and visitors.

#10489 University of Southern California

Contract Amount: \$86,625

Contract Period: 10/24/2025 – 3/15/2026

The Contractor will conduct a housing assessment of families with children ages 0–5 in Los Angeles County. This project will analyze housing cost burdens, evaluate whether affordable housing development meets family needs, identify equity gaps, and convene experts to validate findings. Results will directly inform First 5 LA's housing policy agenda and advocacy efforts to advance housing stability for families with young children.

#10491 The Center for the Study of Social Policy

Contract Amount: \$100,000

Contract Period: 11/3/2025 – 2/27/2026

The Contractor will develop a report that synthesizes documentation from the last eight years of the Best Start investment across 14 communities in five regions of Los Angeles County and distills lessons, outcomes, challenges, and insights for the future.

#10492 HyperTexted, LLC

Contract Amount: \$47,998

Contract Period: 11/12/2025 – 12/31/2026

The Contractor will provide content writing, copyediting and proofreading services for articles, blogs, broadcast emails, electronic newsletters and research-based content aligned to intended audiences, follow First 5 LA and AP Style guides and attend meetings, supporting the Communications Department's goal of demonstrating First 5 LA's 2024-2029 Strategic Plan, and knowledge and expertise on issues that affect early childhood development.

#10493 California Community Foundation

Contract Amount: \$140,000

Contract Period: 11/17/2025 – 6/30/2026

The Contractor will partner with the City of Los Angeles as its intermediary for the Angeleno Card program to support basic humanitarian assistance by providing \$1,000 cash cards to City of Los Angeles residents through nonprofit administrators. Through the LA Neighbors Support Fund, direct cash assistance is provided to families adversely affected by the immigration raids in Los Angeles County. First 5 LA funds will be used exclusively for the Angeleno Card program in the City of Los Angeles for families with children from prenatal through age 5.

#10495 Harder + Company Community Research

Contract Amount: \$111,900

Contract Period: 12/15/2025 – 6/30/2026

The purpose of the Child & Family Progress Project (or CFP Project) is to measure progress on the nine Strategic Plan Objective conditions. The Contractor aims to establish baseline, midline, and endline measurements of the conditions in the nine Strategic Plan Objectives and understand how conditions are changing over time. By systematically tracking changes related to the Objectives, First 5 LA aims to monitor whether conditions for children and families in LA County are improving and ultimately if the desired outcomes in the Strategic Plan Objectives are met.

#10008 California Strategies & Advocacy, LLC

Contract Amount: \$75,000

Contract Period: 12/1/2025 – 11/30/2026

The Contractor will continue to manage and convene the Early Care and Education (ECE) Coalition, expand the impact of and influence of the ECE Coalition, and guide the development of an annual strategic and advocacy plan for the ECE Coalition to follow during the annual state budget process. The ECE Coalition brings ECE advocates together to organize behind unified budget and policy asks. The ECE Coalition has significantly increased the resources going to ECE. The purpose of this project is to continue to build up capacity of the coalition and further expand the state investment in our ECE system.

IV. RECENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS SPONSORED BY FIRST 5 LA

Name: 2nd Annual Conference

Date: November 17, 2025

Amount: \$5,000

We sponsored WIN's 2nd Annual Conference, an inspiring event that brought together leaders and changemakers dedicated to connection, growth, and community impact.

Name: P.E.A.C.E. in the Park

Date: December 13, 2025

Amount: \$2,500

First 5 LA sponsored Project X LB's P.E.A.C.E. in the Park, a meaningful initiative that brought the community together to promote unity, wellness and positive change. The event also provided children and families with resources needed to heal, connect, and thrive.

Name: The Dream Show 2026

Date: January 16, 2026

Amount: \$2,500

We sponsored MLK Community Healthcare's The Dream Show 2026, an inspiring event that celebrated creativity, community, and the enduring legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Attendees gathered to support an initiative that uplifts local voices, fosters connections, and advances the mission of equitable, compassionate care for all.

Name: 2nd Annual Policy Conference, "Securing the Future for California Families"

Date: January 21-22, 2026

Amount: \$2,500

The Public Policy & Early Care and Education Department attended CCRC's 2nd Annual Policy Conference with critical and motivating discussions about early learning and childcare issues concerning children and families across California.



CALIFORNIA STRATEGIES
& ADVOCACY, LLC

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 15, 2026

To: Public Policy & Early Care and Education (PPECE) | First 5 Los Angeles

From: Monique Ramos, John Benton, Lily MacKay, and Jonathan Muñoz | California Strategies & Advocacy, LLC

Subject: 2026-27 Governor's Budget Proposal

Overview

The [2026-27 Governor's Budget](#) (Budget) proposes a balanced budget of \$348.9 billion which includes \$248.3 billion General Fund (GF). The Budget also includes a total reserves balance of \$23 billion - \$14.4 billion in the Budget Stabilization Account or the "Rainy Day Fund," \$4.5 billion in the Special Fund for Economic Uncertainties (SFEU), and \$4.1 billion the Public School System Stabilization Account or the "Public School Rainy Day Fund." To balance the budget from the previous two years, \$12.2 billion has been drawn from reserve accounts. As a result, the required 1.5% GF contribution was delayed in those budget years. While the Governor has "trued up" a portion of those past obligations, it is not a total "true up" in this budget proposal.

According to the Department of Finance (DOF), the state's revenues are up by \$42.3 billion for FYs 2024-25 to 2026-27, largely driven by personal income tax. Prior to the Governor's Budget, the Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) projected a deficit of roughly \$18 billion for 2026-27 with multi-year deficits ranging from \$20-30 billion for Fiscal Years (FY) 2027-28 and 2028-2029. However, the DOF's forecast of the "Big 3" budget forecast indicators – cash receipts, stock market levels, and economic outlook – assume the state will experience modest revenue growth and only a minor budget shortfall of \$2.9 billion. The fiscal differences between the DOF and LAO total to roughly \$14.7 billion.

Moving forward, the DOF noted that adjustments to the Budget will be made at May Revision with the expectation that they should have a better understanding of the state's finances. Even with this mind, Governor Gavin Newsom's outlook on the state's economic and fiscal outlook is positive and optimistic – an outlier amongst most.

Children prenatal to age 5 and their families have their basic needs met.

H.R. 1 Impacts: The DOF noted that they are updating their H.R. 1 cost estimates based upon guidance from the federal government and an assumption that the MCO tax approval will be extended from June 2026 to December 2026, based upon others state's approvals;

however, the May Revise should provide more accurate cost impacts of H.R. 1. Below is a breakdown of current investments and programs impacted by the federal changes:

- **Work and Community Engagement Requirements:** \$373 million reduction (2025-26) and \$13.1 billion by 2029-30.
- **Emergency Services Federal Share:** Reduction from 90% to 50% for Unsatisfactory Immigration Status (UIS) population seeking hospital services – \$653 million increase GF in 2026-27 and \$872 million increase GF by 2029-30.
- **Restrictions on Immigrant Eligibility (Redefining UIS):** Effective October 1, 2026, federal policy will exclude individuals with certain immigration statuses from federal eligibility for full-scope Medi-Cal, which significantly reduces federal funding for this population – \$786 million GF in 2026-27 and \$1.1 billion ongoing GF.
- **Affordable Care Act (ACA) Adult Expansion 6-Month Redeterminations:** \$463 million reduction in 2026-27 and \$3 billion by 2029-30.
- **Retroactive Medi-Cal Coverage Changes:** \$23 million reduction in 2026-27 and \$48 million ongoing.
- **MCO Tax Transition:** \$4.5 billion revenues in 2025-26 and \$2.5 billion in 2026-27. Plus, \$1.6 billion for certain 2024 domains.
- **Hospital Quality Assurance Fee:** \$1.3 billion to support children’s coverage but decrease of \$652 million for 2026-27 because of Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) disapproval of California waiver request.
- **CalFresh:** \$382.9 million increase in GF because of H.R. 1 reduction from 50% to 25% in administration costs. \$39.9 million increase to mitigate “payment error” issues. \$66.2 million reduction in GF because of more restrictive federal eligibility requirements.

Medi-Cal: The Budget includes total spending of \$196.7 billion (\$46.4 billion GF) in 2025-26 and \$222.4 billion (\$48.8 billion GF) in 2026-27. The \$25.7 billion (13.1%) Increase in spending reflects some of the following:

- MCO Tax Adjustments – \$1.1 billion
- H.R. 1 Impacts (2026-27) – \$471.9 million
- Unsatisfactory Immigration Status (UIS) cost increases – \$658 million
- Managed Care Plan Base Rate and Enrollment Growth – \$2.7 billion
- Pharmacy Rate Growth – \$897.8 million
- Seniors (Dual Eligibles) – \$648.3 million

The Managed Care Organization (MCO) Tax brings in \$4.5 billion in 2025-26 and \$2.5 billion in 2026-27. Under H.R. 1, the MCO Tax sunsets on December 31, 2026.

Rural Health Transformation Program: California received \$233.6 million for Calendar Year 2026 to support rural health improvement projects, pursuant to HCAI’s proposal.

Reproductive Health Grant Program: Increase of \$60 million in 2025-26 budget for HCAI grant program.

Perinatal Services: \$515,000 to begin 10-Year SB 669 (McGuire, 2025) pilot program to develop and oversee eligibility requirements for five critical access hospitals to [develop Standby Perinatal Services](#), including Obstetric and Neonatal Medical services.

Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Housing: The Budget advances the Administration’s efforts to modernize and streamline housing programs by shifting up to \$560 million annually in Cap-and-Invest proceeds to the Housing and Development Financing Committee (HDFC) to administer affordable housing programs under a restructured Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) framework. This realignment is intended to improve coordination across housing programs, better leverage complementary funding sources, and accelerate the delivery of climate-aligned affordable

Behavioral Health Services Fund – Housing: In addition, the state has allocated \$636 million to support 1,818 housing units through Prop 1 to date, with \$1.6 billion expected to be available over the coming year to further expand housing and supportive services for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Beginning in July 2026, implementation of the Behavioral Health Services Act will strengthen this continuum by establishing a dedicated, ongoing 30% allocation for housing intervention programs. This funding will provide counties with sustained resources to support housing stability for individuals experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness, who also have behavioral health needs—reinforcing the state’s approach of aligning housing and behavioral health systems with accountability and scale. The Administration also acknowledges that recent federal actions have introduced increased volatility and uncertainty in the housing and homelessness landscape. In response, the state will continue exploring programmatic flexibility to mitigate risks to housing stability for Californians who rely on federal housing assistance

Children prenatal to age 5 have nurturing relationships and environments.

Behavioral Health Workforce: Proposed \$150 million from Behavioral Health Services Fund (Prop.1) to support Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) workforce and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) prevention programs.

MCO Tax Behavioral Health: The Budget reflects \$95.5 million in MCO tax revenue for qualifying *community-based mobile crisis services*, transitional rent, and behavioral health rates from the calendar year 2025 behavioral health facility throughputs domain allocation. To date, the state has invested \$1.4 billion in total funds for Mobile Crisis Response.

Behavioral Health Services Act (Prop. 1): For 2026-27, counties are estimated to receive over \$4 billion in Behavioral Health Services for behavioral health treatment and supports.

Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI): During his State of the State Address, Governor Newsom noted that 2026 would be the final year of the CYBHI as it transitions into being folded into the Behavioral Health Services Act (Prop. 1). To date, the state has invested \$4.2 billion total funds for the CYBHI.

Parks and Outdoor Access: California’s commitment to Outdoors for All remains a priority in Proposition 4 (2024) rollout. The Governor’s January Budget proposes \$35 million to

expand and enhance parks and outdoor access statewide, with a focus on disadvantaged communities and vulnerable populations.

California State Parks Library Pass Program: The Budget includes an investment of \$6.8 million in ongoing GF support for the California State Parks Library Pass Program, which allows library cardholders to borrow passes from local libraries to access select state parks, beaches, and monuments at no cost with the goal of removing financial barriers to outdoor recreation.

CalFresh and Nutrition Programs: The Budget includes \$17.2 billion in total spending – a \$1 billion reduction, primarily due to the impacts of H.R. 1.

School Nutrition Programs: The Budget includes an ongoing decrease of \$67.9 million Prop. 98 GF to support the Universal School Meals program.

Children prenatal to age 5 have a solid foundation for well-being, lifelong learning and success.

CalWORKs Home Visiting Program: The Budget includes [full restoration](#) of funding for the Home Visiting Program, honoring the 2024 budget agreement with the Legislature, an increase of \$26 million. This restoration protects and expands service delivery and workforce capacity and helps ensure families continue to receive trusted, relationship-based support without disruption.

Child Care: The Budget includes an increase of \$89.1 million ongoing GF for a cost-of-living adjustment for DSS administered child care programs. This reflects a reduction of \$86 million in federal funds due to formula change, and \$21 million reduction from Proposition 64 funding.

Additionally, the Budget proposes an increase of \$11.5 million one-time Proposition 64 funding for child care infrastructure, specifically targeted toward communities impacted by recent fires.

Finally, Attorney General Rob Bonta was [successful](#) in securing a temporary restraining order against the Trump Administration’s attempt to freeze \$10 billion in federal funding – \$5 billion of which was designated for California – for child care and family assistance program such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the Child Care and Development Fund, and the Social Services Block Grant.

Proposition 98: The revised estimates of General Fund (GF) revenues result in notable adjustments to Proposition 98 (Prop. 98). For 2026-27, the guarantee is calculated at \$125.5 billion. These revised Prop. 98 levels represent an increase of approximately \$21.7 billion over the three-year period relative to the 2025 Budget Act.

For the past three budget years, the Prop. 98 included a maintenance factor balance of \$8.3 billion – for 2026-27, the remaining maintenance factor balance totals \$584.6 million.

Due to uncertainty in revenue projections, the 2026-27 Budget (Budget) proposes creating \$5.6 billion in settle-up in 2025-26. This means that the funded level of the guarantee in 2025-26 is \$115.9 billion, instead of the calculated amount of \$121.4 billion. This is intended to mitigate the risk of potentially appropriating more resources to the guarantee than are ultimately available in the final calculation for 2025-26.

The Budget includes total funding of \$149.1 billion (\$88.7 billion GF and \$60.4 billion other funds) for all TK-12 education programs. TK-12 per pupil funding totals \$20,427 Prop. 98 General Fund, a 74.6 percent increase over 2018-19, and \$27,418 per pupil when accounting for all funding sources, a 60.8 percent increase over 2018-19 – both per pupil amounts are the highest level ever for California schools.

State Education Governance: Through the Budget, the Governor proposes to shift the oversight of the California Department of Education (CDE) under the State Board of Education (SBE) and shift the focus of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to early learning through college. The Governor cites the Legislature’s 2002 Master Plan for Education and a report from the Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) [report](#) from the fall of 2025. No additional details were provided in the A-pages; we will inquire during Tuesday’s DOF Education briefing about the timing of the trailer bill language (TBL). It is our understanding that little to no thought was put into the impact of child care or preschool programs.

Community Schools: The Budget proposes \$1 billion ongoing Prop. 98 GF to expand the community school model to more school sites. To date, the state has invested roughly \$4 billion to the California Community Schools Partnership Program to schools that have large concentrations of students from low-income families, English learners, and youth in foster care. This new funding would provide ongoing resources for these grantees and expand access to the model to thousands of additional high-need schools.

Reading Difficulties Risk Screening: The Budget includes \$40 million one-time Prop. 98 GF to support continued implementation of student reading difficulties screenings. Additionally, the Budget proposes statutory changes to clarify the appropriate administration of the screeners to ensure consistency and quality of results.

L.A. County School Wildfire Recovery: Included in the Budget is \$22.9 million one-time Prop. 98 GF to support LEAs that are continuing to recover from the January 2025 Los Angeles County wildfires.

Other Investments

Federal Accountability: The Budget includes an additional \$10 million to be distributed to the Department of Justice (DOJ) in 2025-26 from the one-time funds appropriated in the 2024 Budget Act. The Budget also includes \$10 million new GF annually in 2026-27 through 2028-29.

Board Meeting Schedule 2026			
Date	Meeting Type	Time	Strategic Plan Initiative Focus
No Meetings in January			
February 12, 2026	Board of Commissioners	1:30-4:30 pm	Maternal and Child Health
March 12, 2026	Board of Commissioners (Closed)	12:15-1:15 pm	
	Board of Commissioners	1:30-4:30 pm	Prevention First/Maternal & Child Health
April 16, 2026	Executive Committee (Closed Session)	12:15-1:15 pm	
	Program and Planning Committee	1:30-4:30 pm	Maternal & Child Health
May 14, 2026	Executive Committee (Closed Session)	12:15-1:15 pm	
	Board of Commissioners	1:30-4:30 pm	Budget
June 11, 2026	Board of Commissioners (Closed)	11:15-1:15 pm	
	Board of Commissioners	1:30-4:30 pm	Budget
No meetings in July and August -Summer Break-			
September 24, 2026	Program and Planning Committee	1:30-4:30 pm	Maternal and Child Health/Vibrant Environments
October 8, 2026	Board of Commissioners (Closed)	12:15-1:15 pm	
	Board of Commissioners	1:30-4:30 pm	Vibrant Environments/Whole Child
November 12, 2026	Board of Commissioners (Closed)	12:15-1:15 pm	
	Board of Commissioners	1:30-4:30 pm	Whole Child
No meeting in December -Winter break-			

NOTE: The Combined Meeting of the Executive and Budget & Finance Committees is anticipated to take place in early May. Executive and Budget & Finance Committee members will be informed once the date is confirmed.

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JR Nino

FIRST 5 LA

SUBJECT:

Mid-Year Adjustments to the FY 2025-26 Budget

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve mid-year adjustments to the FY 2025-26 Budget as detailed in Attachment 1 (Program Budget) and Attachment 2 (Operating Budget).

BACKGROUND:

The \$80.0 million FY 2025–26 Budget, approved by the Board of Commissioners on June 12, 2025, reflects staff’s best estimate of the resources needed to advance First 5 LA’s strategic priorities and includes approximately \$67.3 million in programmatic costs and \$12.7 million in administrative costs. The proposed mid-year budget adjustments are net cost neutral and do not change the overall approved budget level. Adjustments are limited to shifts among existing line items to align projected spending with actual needs identified during the first half of the fiscal year, with no movement between programmatic and operating budgets.

As a reminder, as of FY 2025-26, First 5 LA has shifted from reporting total internal operation costs to separately reflecting program support (operational costs needed to advance programmatic work) and administrative support (operational costs needed to advance the administrative work). This change is intended to more accurately represent the true cost of the programs. Initial budget requests were estimated using the information available at the time of budget development and were based on spending projections—rather than final negotiated contract amounts—so staff would have the flexibility to manage contracts within a budget unit without having to return to the Board. Based on updated information, there is no proposed change to the FY 2025-26 Program Budget, including Program Support, of \$67.3 million. Adjustments in administrative support line-item costs resulted in a cost neutral adjustment to the \$12.7 million Administrative Support budget. These administrative operational cost adjustments are detailed at an organization-wide summary level in Attachment 2.

The result is a cost neutral adjustment to the approved FY 2025-26 Budget of \$80.0 million, as illustrated in the high-level table below.

Budget Component	Approved FY 2025-26 Budget	Proposed Adjustments	Revised FY 2025-26 Budget	% Change
Program	\$ 67,347,252	\$ -	\$ 67,347,252	0.0%
Administrative Support	12,652,748	-	12,652,748	0.0%
Total Revised FY 2025-26 Budget	\$ 80,000,000	\$ -	\$ 80,000,000	0.0%

DISCUSSION:

The mid-year adjustments reflect cost-neutral shifts related to conference and training registrations, leadership programs, outside/external education, internal meetings, and related travel expenses within and across departments and Centers. Decreases in Health Systems Department (\$1,600) and Contract Administration & Purchasing Department (CAP) (\$2,900) are offset by corresponding increases in the Center for Family Systems & Human Resources Department (\$1,600) and the Center for Operations & Sustainability (COS) (\$2,900) to centralize conference, leadership, and

education costs based on updated spending projections. Consistent with First 5 LA's budget policy, these adjustments do not exceed \$25,000 and therefore fall within the Executive Director's authority and are exempt from formal Board approval.

Administrative Cost:

Though it does not set or mandate a limit, Proposition 10 does require all First 5 commissions to establish an administrative cost cap. As part of the approval of the annual fiscal year budget, First 5 LA approves an annual limit on the organization's administrative spending. While this administrative cost limit represents a percentage of the overall fiscal year budget, the Commission approves the limit at the dollar amount level. This is because administrative costs are generally not as fluid as other types of costs and cannot adapt quickly to respond to changes in actual spending levels.

The administrative cost limit approved in June 2025 as part of the FY 2025-26 Budget was approximately \$12.7 million. Based on the mid-year budget revisions discussed above and detailed in Attachment 1 and Attachment 2, there was no change to the total administrative cost of \$12.7 million.

NEXT STEPS:

Pursuant to the parameters of the First 5 LA Budget Policy, the adjustments to the FY 2025-26 Budget are exempt from formal approval by the Board of Commissioners. However, to maintain transparency the FY 2025-26 Mid-Year Revised Budget materials will be shared with the Board of Commissioners in February 2026 for information only.

First 5 LA's approach to budgeting will continue to evolve – informed by experience and the long-term financial plan - to achieve greater clarity and transparency. We will continue to use any learnings derived from the mid-year budget adjustment process, as well as the Strategic Plan implementation, to inform the FY 2026-27 Budget development process and greater alignment to our fiscal reality. The proposed FY 2026-27 Budget is expected to be presented to the Board of Commissioners for discussion in May 2026 and approval in June 2026.

CENTER/DEPARTMENT	PROJECT NAME	APPROVED FY 2025-26 BUDGET	PROPOSED ADJUSTMENTS	REVISED FY 2025-26 BUDGET	VARIANCE
					% CHANGE
2024-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN					
Center for Family Systems & Human Resources					
FAMILY SUPPORTS	Welcome Baby Hospitals	\$ 16,990,000		\$ 16,990,000	0.0%
	Select Home Visiting Programs	9,630,000		9,630,000	0.0%
	Family Strengthening Oversight Entity	3,415,113		3,415,113	0.0%
	F5CA Home Visiting Coordination Project	-		-	N/A
	Stronger Families Database	664,300		664,300	0.0%
	Welcome Baby Impact Study	-		-	N/A
Sub-total Family Supports		\$ 30,699,413	\$ -	\$ 30,699,413	0.0%
HEALTH SYSTEMS	Help Me Grow	\$ 60,000		\$ 60,000	0.0%
	Infrastructure Support for Sustainability and Health Planning	170,000		170,000	0.0%
	AAIMM Birth Outcomes and Disparities – Policy and Systems Change	926,000		926,000	0.0%
Sub-total Health Systems		\$ 1,156,000	\$ -	\$ 1,156,000	0.0%
CENTER SUPPORT	Center for Strategic Partnerships	\$ 50,000		\$ 50,000	0.0%
	County Partnership Fund	125,000		125,000	0.0%
Sub-total Center Support		\$ 175,000	\$ -	\$ 175,000	0.0%
Sub-Total: Center for Family Systems & Human Resources		\$ 32,030,413	\$ -	\$ 32,030,413	0.0%
Center for Community Engagement & Policy					
COMMUNITIES	Region 1: Central-East Regional Network	\$ 2,582,580		\$ 2,582,580	0.0%
	Region 2: SLA Regional Network	2,948,080		2,948,080	0.0%
	Region 3: SFV Regional Network	1,377,210		1,377,210	0.0%
	Region 4: Port Cities Regional Network	1,554,880		1,554,880	0.0%
	Region 5: AV Regional Network	1,296,300		1,296,300	0.0%
	Cross Regional Alignment	95,000		95,000	0.0%
	Best Start Learning Agenda	-		-	N/A
	Activating Network Partners	300,000		300,000	0.0%
	Expand Regional Influence and Impact with Data Learning Dialogues	-		-	N/A
	Learning Dialogues	35,000		35,000	0.0%
Sub-total Communities		\$ 10,189,050	\$ -	\$ 10,189,050	0.0%
IMPACT & ACCOUNTABILITY	Annual Reporting	\$ 41,000		\$ 41,000	0.0%
	Data Requests	5,000		5,000	0.0%
	Children's Data Network (CDN)	530,000		530,000	0.0%
	WIC Data Mining Research Partnership	266,000		266,000	0.0%
	Data Agenda	-		-	N/A
	Impact Framework	272,000		272,000	0.0%
	Equity Index	300,000		300,000	0.0%
Sub-total impact & Accountability		\$ 1,414,000	\$ -	\$ 1,414,000	0.0%
PUBLIC POLICY & EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION	County ECE Infrastructure Support	\$ 200,000		\$ 200,000	0.0%
	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment	-		-	N/A
	Provider Advisory Group	250,000		250,000	0.0%
	Universal Preschool	75,000		75,000	0.0%
	Dual Language Learner	400,000		400,000	0.0%
	Home-Based Child Care Strategy	600,000		600,000	0.0%
	IMPACT Legacy	2,600,000		2,600,000	0.0%
	QSLA Facilitation and Communications	250,000		250,000	0.0%
	Early Childhood Policy and Advocacy Fund	3,610,000		3,610,000	0.0%
	Policy Advocacy Fund Technical Assistance Provider	525,000		525,000	0.0%
	Organization-Wide Sponsorships	240,000		240,000	0.0%
	Organizational Memberships	170,000		170,000	0.0%
	Organization-Wide Partnerships	140,000		140,000	0.0%
	Policy & Advocacy Stakeholder Engagement	125,000		125,000	0.0%
State Policy and Sustainability Advocate	205,000		205,000	0.0%	
	Strategic Plan Advocacy Strategies	34 375,000		375,000	0.0%
Sub-total Public Policy & Early Care Education		9,765,000	-	9,765,000	0.0%
Sub-Total: Center for Community Engagement & Policy		\$ 21,368,050	\$ -	\$ 21,368,050	0.0%

CENTER/DEPARTMENT	PROJECT NAME	APPROVED FY 2025-26 BUDGET	PROPOSED ADJUSTMENTS	REVISED FY 2025-26 BUDGET	VARIANCE
					% CHANGE
<i>Center for Strategy & Culture</i>					
COMMUNICATIONS	Strategic Communications	\$ 557,500		\$ 557,500	0.0%
	Strategic Communications Partnerships	150,000		150,000	0.0%
	Strategic Marketing	756,000		756,000	0.0%
Sub-total Communications		1,463,500	-	1,463,500	0.0%
<i>Sub-Total: Strategy & Culture</i>		\$ 1,463,500	\$ -	\$ 1,463,500	0.0%
TOTAL 2024-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN		\$ 54,861,963	\$ -	\$ 54,861,963	0.0%
	Strategic Initiatives Development Fund	\$ 4,751,470		\$ 4,751,470	0.0%
	Program Support	\$ 7,733,819		\$ 7,733,819	0.0%
TOTAL FIRST 5 LA PROGRAM BUDGET		\$ 67,347,252	\$ -	\$ 67,347,252	0.0%
Administrative Cost					
	Administrative Support	\$ 12,652,748		\$ 12,652,748	0.0%
TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE Support		\$ 12,652,748	\$ -	\$ 12,652,748	0.0%
TOTAL FIRST 5 LA BUDGET		\$ 80,000,000	\$ -	\$ 80,000,000	0.0%

NON- F5LA PROPOSITION 10 REVENUES					
	F5CA IMPACT	\$ 3,375,531		\$ 3,375,531	0%
	Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan	250,000		250,000	0%
	SHV: DMH Application for funding	4,016,581		4,016,581	0%
	F5CA QSLA Facilitation & Comms	-		-	N/A
TOTAL NON-F5LA PROPOSITION 10 REVENUES		\$ 7,642,112	\$ -	\$ 7,642,112	0.0%

TOTAL DEMAND ON F5LA RESOURCES		\$ 72,357,888	\$ -	\$ 72,357,888	0.0%
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OPERATING COSTS SUMMARY

BUDGET FY25-26

CENTER/OFFICE/TEAM: First 5 LA



Description	FY2026 BUDGET	FY2026 MID-YEAR	Proposed Adjustment	% Variance
Total Operating Expenses	20,386,568	20,386,568	0	0.0%
Total Salaries & Wages	11,788,254	11,788,254	0	0.0%
6040 Social Security Tax	681,226	681,226	0	0.0%
6215 Utilities	185,000	185,000	0	0.0%
6225 Mileage, Parking and Other Transportation	22,965	22,965	0	0.0%
6230 Telephones	53,300	53,300	0	0.0%
6235 Cell Phone & Mobile Devices	108,300	108,300	0	0.0%
6240 Outside Printing & Publications	2,300	2,300	0	0.0%
6245 Other Supplies	3,000	3,000	0	0.0%
6250 Postage & Delivery	2,510	2,510	0	0.0%
6255 Educational Supplies	5,000	5,000	0	0.0%
6260 Office Supplies	34,790	34,790	0	0.0%
6265 Subscriptions & Publications	34,000	33,800	(200)	0.6%
6270 Capital Outlay	103,500	103,500	0	0.0%
6275 Equipment-Rents & Leases	21,000	21,000	0	0.0%
6280 Building Repair & Maintenance	170,000	170,000	0	0.0%
6285 Equipment Repairs &	6,500	6,500	0	0.0%
6290 Offsite Storage	5,200	5,200	0	0.0%
6295 Hardware & Software	404,000	404,000	0	0.0%
6300 Miscellaneous/Contingency	89,800	89,800	0	0.0%
6310 Internal Meetings	89,200	87,100	(2,100)	2.4%
6315 Divisional Capacity Building	19,000	19,000	0	0.0%
6410 Consultant Fees	972,000	972,000	0	0.0%
6420 Other Professional Fees	311,900	311,900	0	0.0%
6510 Audit	72,000	72,000	0	0.0%
6520 Legal Fees	200,000	200,000	0	0.0%
6540 Professional Dues	74,250	73,850	(400)	0.5%
6550 Staff Recruitment	10,000	10,000	0	0.0%
6560 Commissioners Stipends	20,000	20,000	0	0.0%
6570 Web-Based Services	70,000	70,000	0	0.0%
6580 Bank & Other Service Charges	12,000	12,000	0	0.0%
6610 Airfare	117,125	117,125	0	0.0%
6620 Lodging	115,348	113,948	(1,400)	1.2%

OPERATING COSTS SUMMARY

BUDGET FY25-26

CENTER/OFFICE/TEAM: First 5 LA



Description	FY2026 BUDGET	FY2026 MID-YEAR	Proposed Adjustment	% Variance
6640 Per Diem	45,270	44,870	(400)	0.9%
6650 Other Travel Expense	18,865	18,865	0	0.0%
6810 Training Materials & Supplies	12,100	12,100	0	0.0%
6820 In-house Training	64,300	64,300	0	0.0%
6830 Leadership Programs	135,000	138,100	3,100	(2.2%)
6840 Conference/Training Registrations	89,700	90,000	300	(0.3%)
6850 Outside Education	49,500	50,600	1,100	(2.2%)

FY 2025-26 BUDGET CALENDAR

DATE	ACTIVITY	VENUE
	<i>FY 2025-26 Mid-Year Revised Budget</i>	
February 2026	Share the FY 2025-26 Mid-Year Revised Budget materials with the Commission, information only	Commission Meeting
	<i>FY 2026-27 Budget Development</i>	
January 2026	Provide training to First 5 LA staff on budget process and development	Internal Staff Training
February - April 2026	Development of FY 2026-27 Budget and updates to LTFP	Internal Staff Process
May 2026	Present FY 2026-27 Proposed Budget and Updated LTFP to the joint Budget and Finance/Executive Committees	Budget & Finance/Executive Committee Meeting
May 2026	Present FY 2026-27 Proposed Budget and Updated LTFP to the Commission (Information)	Commission Meeting
May 2026	Modify the FY 2026-27 Proposed Budget, as needed	Internal Staff Process
June 2026	Request Commission adoption of the proposed FY 2026-27 Budget and updated LTFP (Approval)	Commission Meeting

FIRST 5 LA

SUBJECT:

Authorize First 5 LA to Receive Funds from WestEd for the Building Equitable Early Learning and Care Systems (BEELS) Project, Approve Resolution # 2026-01 and Authorize First 5 LA Staff to Execute an Agreement in the Amount of up to \$100,000. The funding amount is contingent upon the final award from WestEd.

RECOMMENDATION:

The following recommendations are being presented as written information for the Board's consideration at the February 12, 2026 Commission meeting. First 5 LA staff recommends that at the March 12, 2026 Commission meeting, the Board approve the following action related to the Building Equitable Early Learning and Care Systems (BEELS) Project:

1. Approve a Budget Resolution # 2026-01 to approve receipt of funds in the amount of \$100,000 for a project period of March 12, 2026 to September 27, 2027 from WestEd to implement BEELS.
2. Authorize the President/CEO, or Designee, to complete execution of agreement with WestEd upon approval from the Board at the March 12, 2026 Commission Meeting to receive funds through September 27, 2027.
3. Authorize the President/CEO or Designee, on behalf of First 5 LA, to accept additional funding from WestEd and to execute agreements should additional funding to BEELS arise.

BACKGROUND:

WestEd is collaborating with regions across the state to elevate California's efforts through the Building Equitable Early Learning and Care Systems (BEELS) project. BEELS, which is funded by First 5 California (F5CA), is designed to augment and expand local equity efforts and utilize these experiences to inform the development of a statewide equitable early learning system.

WestEd has funding through December 2027 to lead this historical opportunity and to equip local communities to identify, refine, and/or sustain equitable systems that support the whole child/whole family, prioritizing children and families who are historically and presently underserved and marginalized. BEELS strives to capture what counties want and know to be important for the children, families, and providers who serve them and the costs, while centering equity and a data-driven story that focuses on sustainability.

Funds will be used to support the implementation of the regional action plan developed by First 5 LA and the BEELS team, and approved by the BEELS team and First 5 CA, which includes: contracting with a facilitator who will manage and facilitate a Community of Practice for Early Learning and Care (ELC) providers to share and learn innovative practices from one another, and to plan and implement a collaborative space (i.e., convening) that brings quality improvement (QI) implementers together to coordinate strategies and maximize resources. This will prompt opportunities to better do systems work, which will ultimately lead to a more equitable system.

NEXT STEPS:

Staff will return to the next scheduled Board of Commissioners meeting on March 12, 2026 to request approval of a budget resolution to accept receipt of funds in the amount of \$100,000 for the project period of March 12, 2026 to September 27, 2027 from WestEd to implement the BEELS project and authorize the President/CEO, or Designee, to complete execution of agreement with WestEd.



Governor's January Budget Proposal & Federal Updates

Aurea Montes-Rodriguez, VP of
Community Engagement & Policy
Ofelia Medina, Senior Policy Strategist

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February 12, 2026

2025-2029 Policy Agenda

Children prenatal to age 5 and their families have their basic needs met.

- Support policies to address the access, sustainability, and accountability of perinatal care systems to reduce maternal and infant mortality and ensure healthy and joyous births.
- Strengthen safety net policies that provide long-term support to reduce poverty and promote economic stability.
- Promote comprehensive housing policies and systems to ensure access to stable homes.

Children prenatal to age 5 have nurturing relationships and environments.

- Ensure policy efforts increase mental health screening, treatment, and accountability to address challenges faced by birthing and postpartum people.
- Promote policies and practices that increase access to healthy food options and food security.
- Elevate policies aimed at enhancing and funding access to safe parks and open spaces.

Children prenatal to age 5 have a solid foundation for well-being, lifelong learning and success.

- Advance policies, practices, and public investment to strengthen the mixed-delivery system and increase family ⁴¹ choice.
- Amplify policies that ensure health systems are robust and coordinated, and accountable for delivering early intervention services.
- Advocate for policies that support culturally affirming care, services, and supports that meet diverse needs.

2026 Policy Context

State Context

- Higher than expected revenue, but volatility of the economy poses threats
- Implementation of H.R.1 provisions.
- Preserving programs and "use it or lose it."

Federal Context

- Targeted attacks on immigrant communities and family-serving programs in Democrat-led states.
- Narrowing GOP House majority.
- MAHA initiatives take form.

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January Budget Proposal Overview

- Budget of **\$348.9 billion** (\$248.3 billion General Fund & \$23 billion in reserves). Budget includes an additional \$1 billion in reserves.
- **\$14.4B Rainy Day Fund; \$4.5B Special Fund for Economic Uncertainties; \$4.1B Public Schools Rainy Day Fund.**
- Prior to the Governor's Budget, the Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) **projected a deficit** of roughly \$18 billion for 2026-27.
- In the last two budget years, \$12.2 billion has been drawn from reserve accounts. The required 1.5% General Fund contribution has been delayed in those budget years.



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January Budget Proposal Highlights

Children prenatal to age 5 and their families have their basic needs met.

- **Housing and Development Financing Committee (HDFC)**- Funding to improve coordination to administer affordable housing programs.
- **H.R. 1 Impacts:** DOF updating H.R. 1 cost estimates based upon guidance from the federal government and MCO tax expiration extended from June 2026 to December 2026.

Children prenatal to age 5 have nurturing relationships and environments.

- **CalFresh**- Increase of \$382.9 million GF to reflect the federal share of CalFresh administrative cost reductions. \$66.2 million GF reduction due to federal policy, resulting in fewer individuals remaining eligible.
- Continued funding to ensure two high-quality, free meals per school day for every TK–12 student.
- **Parks and Open Spaces:** \$35 million to expand and enhance **parks and outdoor access** statewide, with a focus on disadvantaged communities and vulnerable populations.

Children prenatal to age 5 have a solid foundation for well-being, lifelong learning and success.

- **CalWORKs Home Visiting Program:** The Budget includes full restoration of funding for the HV Program. 44
- **Child Care Cost-of-Living (COLA) Adjustment** – an increase of \$89.1 million ongoing GF for DSS-administered early learning programs .

January Budget Proposal Highlights

Other

- **Wildfires:** Increase of \$11.5 million one-time Proposition 64 funding for childcare infrastructure, specifically targeted toward communities impacted by recent fires.
- **California Department of Education (CDE):** The Governor proposes to shift the oversight of CDE under the State Board of Education (SBE) and shift the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) focus to Early Learning – College
- **Department of Justice (DOJ):** additional \$10 million to be distributed to DOJ in 2025-26 from the one-time funds appropriated in the 2024 Budget Act. The Budget also includes \$10 million new GF annually in 2026-27 through 2028-29.

State Legislative Policy Updates

- Legislators from both chambers introduced 2,397 measures in 2025, including policy bills, resolutions and budget bills.
 - 917 measures were successful in making their way through the legislative process. 794 were signed by Governor Newsom (veto rate of 13.4%).
 - 266 bills were referred to Assembly & Senate Health Committees.
- 2-year bills had until 1/31 to be passed out of their house of origin.
- 2/20 is the last day for bills to be introduced.

California Gubernatorial Election

Candidates

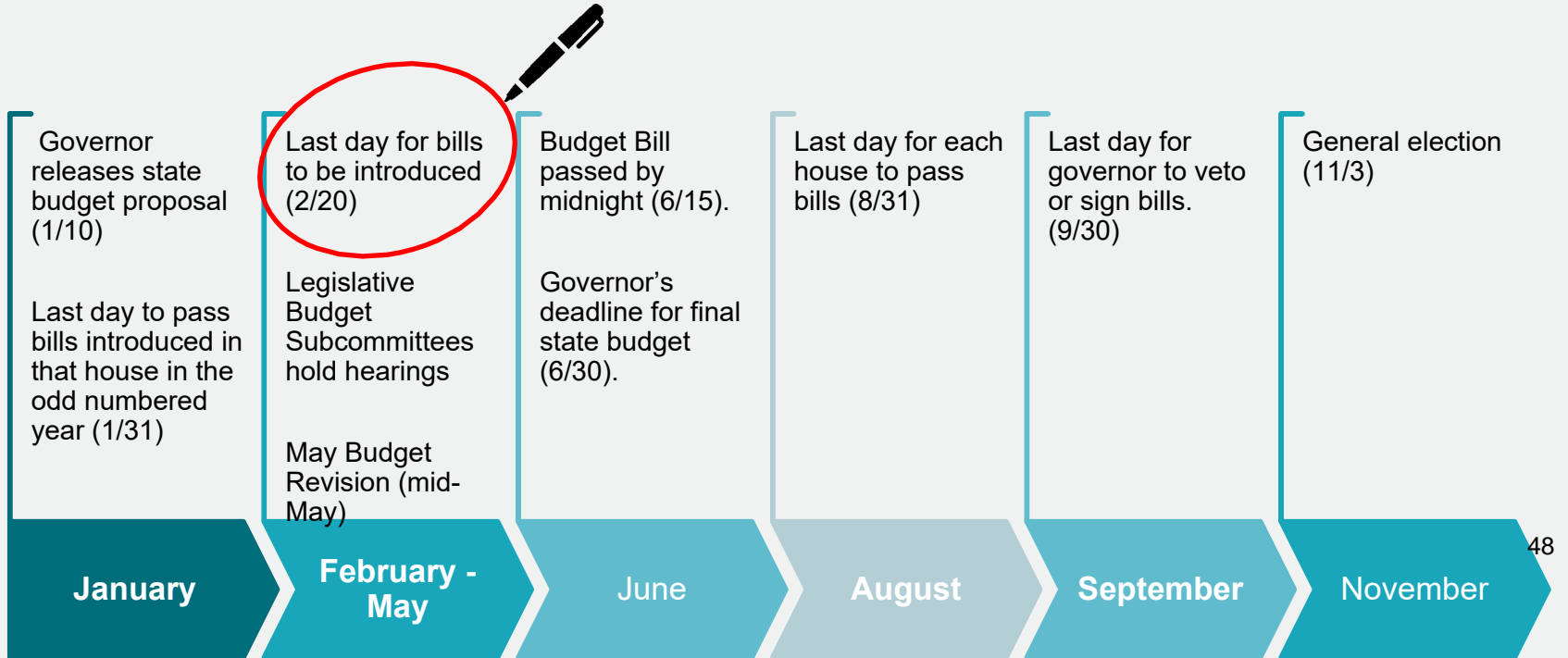
- Xavier Becerra (D)
- Chad Bianco (R)
- Ian Calderon (D)
- Steve Hilton (R)
- Matt Mahan (D)
- Katie Porter (D)
- Tom Steyer (D)
- Eric Swalwell (D)
- Tony Thurmond (D)
- Antonio Villaraigosa (D)
- Betty Yee (D)
- and more

EC PAF

- Coalition engagement candidate education efforts
- Early childhood efforts
- EC Policy Advocacy Fund grantees include-
 - AAPI Equity Alliance, Black Women for Wellness, Catalyst California, Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles, California Coalition for Black Birth Justice, California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, Crystal Stairs, The Children's Partnership

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Looking Ahead: 2026 State Budget & Legislative Calendar





Federal Updates

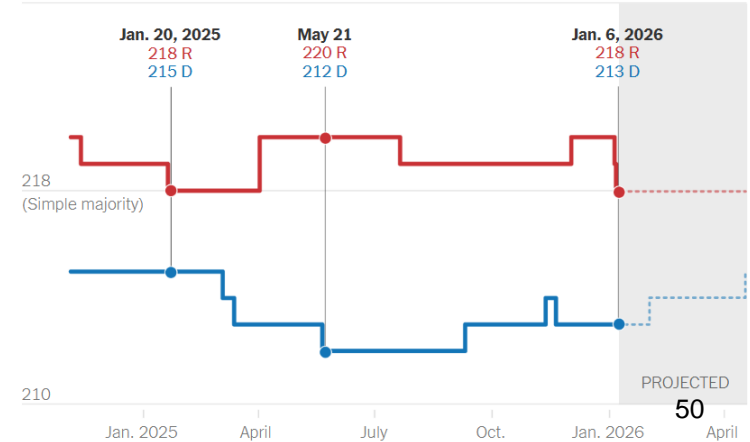
Key Federal Updates

- Republican house majority narrows.
- Continued (and escalating) ICE Activity.
- The U.S. House passed a set of spending bills on Feb. 3, ending the partial government shutdown.
 - By Feb. 14, Republicans and Democrats must agree on policy changes regarding how Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents operate to avert partial shutdown.

How the balance of power has changed since the 2024 election

— House Republicans — House Democrats

225 members



Notes: Dotted lines show a projected outlook if no other departures happen and Democrats gain two seats, as expected, after special elections in Texas (Jan. 31) and New Jersey (April 16). It is uncertain when incoming members will be sworn in. Source: U.S. House of Representatives The New York Times

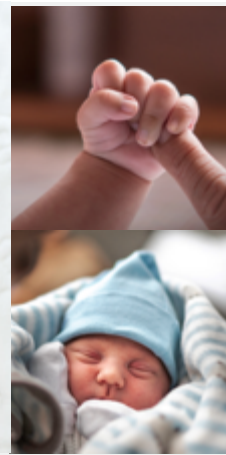
Key Federal Updates

- **HHS freeze** (due to concerns about widespread fraud and misuse of state-administered funds)
 - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) froze access to more than **\$10 billion in federal funds** for California, Colorado, Illinois, Minnesota, and New York.
 - Includes **Child Care and Development Fund(CCDF), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Social Services Block Grant(SSBG)**.
 - California, along with the other four states, sued the Trump administration on Friday, January 6th, and on Friday, January 16th, a federal judge blocked the freeze.
- ACA premium tax credits **expired at the end of 2025**, leading to **higher premiums**..
 - Nationally, enrollment in ACA plans declined by ~800,000 people in early 2026.
 - The **U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation to reinstate or extend ACA premium tax credits** (a three-year extension), however, the final spending bill passed on Feb. 3 did not include funding to revive the ACA enhanced premium tax credits.

Federal Budget Review

- Changes to the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** - estimated 3.1 million California families will lose at least some of their food assistance.
- **Child Tax Credit Expansion** to \$2500 leaves out ~17 million children in families with low-incomes.
- **Medicaid eligibility changes** - work requirements; redeterminations every 6 months; cost-sharing (\$35/service) for individuals ages 19-64 on working or participating in qualifying activities for at least 80 hours per month.
- Removes Medicaid and CHIP eligibility for several groups defined in the **Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)**
- Moratorium on the creation or expansion of provider and **Managed Care Organization (MCO) taxes.**
- The FY2026 package (passed Feb. 3) includes \$8.831 billion for the **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)** program, an increase of \$85 million; \$12.357 billion for **Head Start**, an increase of \$85million; and \$315 million for **Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five (PDG B-5).**

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Questions

Memo

To: First 5 LA Leadership

From: Family Supports Department

Date: February 12, 2026

Subject: DEVELOPING THE FIRST 5 LA HOME VISITING LONG-TERM VISION: FIRST 5 LA PAST AND PRESENT, POLICY AND SUSTAINABILITY OPPORTUNITIES

Overview

First 5 LA (F5LA) has invested in home visiting for over seventeen years, reaching over 153,700 families since 2009 with the expansion from one program model to three involving up to 14 hospitals and 19 community-based organizations at its height. Home visiting is a successful and proven prevention strategy used to support pregnant moms and new parents to promote infant and child health, foster educational development and school readiness, and help prevent child abuse and neglect. Home visiting continues to be in alignment with the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan, specifically within the Maternal and Child Well-Being Initiative. This Initiative targets efforts to improve access to health care services, mental health support and early developmental screenings, focusing on the strengths and unique needs of families most impacted by systemic barriers to resources. Families can voluntarily participate in regular screenings that help identify needs, including mental health, anxiety and age-appropriate developmental screenings and receive support to facilitate access to needed services, including early intervention, mental health and basic needs. The F5LA investment provides families not only with a valuable service that improves outcomes but also leverages a highly trained workforce of 215 staff, which represents 48% of the home visiting workforce across three models in LA County, many with over a decade of experience within the home visiting network. The investment provides extensive data – projected to serve over 12,500 in FY 25-26 - on family needs and services gaps that help inform countywide prevention efforts.

While home visiting is an effective, evidence-based prevention strategy, the fiscal reality dictates that F5LA cannot be an agent of scale and must align the investment to the Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP). The Board-approved LTFP established spending limits leading toward a stable budget of \$60 million over eight years, effective FY 2027-28. Home visiting continues as the largest direct service investment for F5LA, representing 38% of the total budget in FY 25-26. In the past few years, strategies to continue alignment of the investment to the LTFP have been taken, bringing the current number of participating home visiting grantees to 9 hospitals and 10 community-based organizations. As part of the ongoing alignment, F5LA has engaged in extensive exploration of sustainability strategies and

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worked in partnership with County partners and Managed Care Plans to diversify funding sources and support the offset and reduction of F5LA funds.

A series of home visiting focused presentations in 2026 will support the Board into a deeper dive into F5LA's home visiting investment, current system wide challenges and strengths, policy and funding landscape, and sustainability strategy opportunities. The presentations and input will help inform and shape the home visiting long-term vision, which will align the investment to the LTFP and facilitate Board endorsement at the October 2026 Commission meeting.

Home Visiting in LA County

F5LA is just one part of the larger home visiting system in LA County working in partnership with others to ensure access and support for families. Once the largest home visiting funder, the expansion of diverse California state and local funding sources in 2018 extended a variety of program models and diversified funding sources to provide families with a range of options to best meet their needs. F5LA plays a key role in the LA County home visiting system not just as a funder, but also as a connector, thought partner and advocate. F5LA funds key infrastructure that provides a platform across multiple program models and funding streams countywide, including a shared database, a Family Strengthening Oversight Entity that provides quality workforce supports and technical assistance, and the Los Angeles Perinatal and Early Childhood Home Visitation Consortium. F5LA is also integral to the Collaborative Leadership Council (CLC), which is chaired by the Department of Public Health. The CLC's goal is to support the ongoing coordination and advocacy for the home visiting system in LA County. The partnerships across funders, providers and multiple County Departments support intentional and strategic coordination to maximize both utilization of capacity and available funding streams. F5LA's home visiting long-term vision is not a stand-alone plan, but a part of this complex and dynamic system that will involve coordination with multiple partners, ranging from the County, Managed Care Plans, and providers.

In addition to fluctuating funding levels across funding sources, as a complex system home visiting efforts faces its own challenges in various areas. Recruitment and enrollment into home visiting has been a shared challenge across funding sources for a myriad of reasons. Recruitment into programs requires resources and effort that varies by program model, and can be better leveraged. For example, the Welcome Baby hospital visit represents a unique niche in the system, as over 98% of births in LA County continue to occur in hospitals. A hospital visit following birth serves as a critical touchpoint for outreach and enrollment, allowing access to families in participating Welcome Baby hospitals that may otherwise not be identified or approached in general community outreach efforts to be triaged and connected to the right level of postpartum supports for their needs. Each home visiting model also has its own enrollment eligibility requirements based on factors such as funding source, geography, age, and family needs. The development of a Unified Central Billing System, a project led by the Department of Public Health (DPH), is one step under development that will help address this challenge and help coordinate enrollment. Strengthening linkages to services is also critical. Across the three F5LA program models, home visitors provide over 18,000 referrals every year, with follow-up to ensure linkage to services. Efforts are underway to explore how to strengthen both navigation and linkage to services. Welcome Baby has the highest capacity for enrollment, with over 11,500 slots, and represents an opportunity to link a high number of families to needed services. Efforts to examine and refine the Welcome Baby model are also underway, including enhanced service navigation and reduced scope, with a focus on preserving the components with outcomes of interest to potential payors, such as managed care plans. Improved integration of the Welcome Baby referrals to the evidence-based models across funding sources is also a needed area of improvement. Finally, addressing disparities and access to home visiting remains paramount to supporting improved outcomes for specific groups, such as African Americans and Asian/Pacific Islanders and families at risk of child welfare involvement.

While home visiting system efforts face inherent complexities when having diverse funding sources and program models, there are many existing strengths in LA County that are being leveraged to advance efforts. These include strong partnerships and relationships across funders, County Departments and providers; existing formal coordination and planning efforts; and a high-quality workforce. The forthcoming F5LA Equity Index will also inform how shifts in level of family needs geographically may influence the F5LA home visiting investment. Significant efforts have also been made to explore sustainability strategies. F5LA's exploration of sustainability strategies, which included a Fiscal Mapping Project in 2021, has focused on leveraging two potential strategies: Medi-Cal strategies and Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). F5LA has undertaken multiple pilots and supported FFPSA pilot efforts, acknowledging there is no one single strategy that will achieve sustainability targets; rather, it will require a combination of fiscal strategies as part of the long-term vision.

Home Visiting Policy Landscape and System Elements

Understanding the home visiting policy and funding landscape in California and LA County helps identify opportunities to strengthen coordination efforts that maximize utilization of capacity and available funding sources. Children Now, a nonprofit researching and advocating for children's health and education, led a project that resulted in a report, "A Statewide Approach to Strengthen Home Visiting in California." The report sought to capture the experience of home visiting program entities and partners to identify challenges and essential system building components. The components undergird successful home visiting implementation at a systems level to effectively reach and serve families. Home visiting efforts in Los Angeles County already include key elements of the components identified in the report: planning, relationships and partnerships, coordinated outreach, workforce support development, and shared data and measurement. These elements are assets that influence the approach and deployment of sustainability strategies underpinning the F5LA long-term vision.

Medi-Cal Sustainability Strategies

F5LA has partnered with Health Management Associates (HMA) to inform and develop the long-term vision with stakeholder engagement and input. The approach will also include creation of a tool to model different scenarios related to revenue and cost reduction based on the most feasible sustainability strategies for F5LA. The evolving national and state funding landscape provides opportunities to inform the potential scenarios and long-term vision, as well as Medi-Cal funding opportunities available due to CalAIM, which represents the transformation of Medi-Cal into a more coordinated system focused on whole-person care. Other local efforts are also continuing to inform the long-term vision. For example, the Department of Public Health partnered with HMA to design and develop the Unified Home Visiting Billing System (UHVB), which will coordinate intake and referral processes and maximize available revenue. The system may support screening clients for enrollment starting with the most restrictive eligibility requirements before flowing down to the least restrictive, and help prioritize State funding sources before local sources, such as F5LA. The UHVB offers improvements to address eligibility and enrollment challenges. Other First 5's are also providing lessons learned in their efforts with Managed Care Plans and usage of Medi-Cal benefits to draw down funding to offset declining revenue. After a successful Community Health Worker Pilot in 2025, F5LA will enter into this innovative approach in FY 26-27 with Welcome Baby providers to leverage the alignment between the Community Health Worker benefit and the program. Finally, Managed Care Plans must enter into Memorandums of Understandings with First 5's across the state, presenting an opportunity to define partnerships to improve outcomes and inform community investment strategies.

Next Steps

Home visiting programs play a vital role in advancing key Strategic Plan objectives, including maternal depression and anxiety screenings and linkages to services. Given its reach to families, the home visiting investment provides unique opportunities to advance maternal and child outcomes, as well as provide key data and learnings to inform countywide system gaps and challenges. Opportunities to leverage learnings and stakeholder engagement will continue to inform the long-term vision, informed by collaboration with partners and the current assets within the LA County home visiting system. The goal of the series of Board presentations focused on home visiting in 2026 is to deepen understanding of the current system, including challenges and opportunities, as well as sustainability approaches, and seek Board input and guidance culminating in the F5LA home visiting long-term vision that will align the home visiting investment to the LTFP.



Developing the F5LA Home Visiting Long-Term Vision

*First 5 LA Past & Present,
Policy and Sustainability
Opportunities*

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February 12, 2026

AGENDA

- F5LA Home Visiting: Past & Present
- Policy Landscape and System Elements
- Medi-Cal Sustainability Opportunities

First 5 LA Strategic Plan



1. Children prenatal to age 5 and their families have their basic needs met: Healthy food, secure housing and economic security are the essential cornerstones needed for all young children to reach their full developmental potential.

2. Children prenatal to age 5 have nurturing relationships and environments: Young children's interactions in both social environments — with their families, caregivers and communities — and physical ones — the spaces where they live, play and explore — have lasting effects on their health and well-being.

3. Children prenatal to age 5 have a solid foundation for well-being, lifelong learning and success: Access to resources such as early care and education, early identification and intervention services, and culturally affirming services and supports are crucial in ensuring children reach their full potential.

Home Visiting supports attainment of the First 5 LA goals, from connecting families to services that meet basic needs to nurturing relationships and a solid foundation for well-being.

Vision: We envision a future where every child is born healthy and thrives in a nurturing, safe and loving community.

Mission: We advocate for children and their families, amplify community voice and partner for collective impact so that every child in Los Angeles County reaches their full developmental potential throughout the critical years of prenatal to age 5.



Home Visiting

- F5LA has invested in home visiting for over 17 years:
 - Welcome Baby (WB) began as a pilot in 2009 and expanded to 13 additional sites in FY 2012-2013, aligned to our Best Start locations
 - Addition of the Select Home Visitation (SHV) models launched in 2014 and include evidence-based models Healthy Families America (HFA) and Parents As Teachers (PAT)
- F5LA funds key infrastructure elements supporting countywide efforts:
 - Family Strengthening Oversight Entity: quality workforce supports, database development, programmatic technical assistance and Home Visitation Consortium
 - Stronger Families Database: utilized across multiple program models and funding streams
- Collectively the program models represent a **network with a high-quality workforce** coordinating **across funding sources and program models** to identify and connect families to the right program and level of support to meet their unique needs

Home Visiting

- Home visiting is an effective, prevention-based strategy for families and children
- Partnership and collaboration has been a critical component of countywide system efforts to support high quality, accessible home visiting services centered on family choice
 - F5LA has played a key role in the development of not only a network approach, but a platform with critical, backbone infrastructure
 - Over time, partnerships have deepened and continue through exploration of sustainability strategies

Home Visiting

- Home visiting remains F5LA's most significant and long-standing direct services investment, representing in FY 25-26:
 - 38% of the organizational budget
 - 56% of the programmatic budget
- In past few years F5LA has undertaken strategic approaches to implementing and learning from sustainability pilots, as well as specific reductions informed by stakeholder input to continue alignment to the LTFP
- Home visiting will continue as a F5LA investment, but given fiscal reality unable to do so at the historic levels

First 5 LA: LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

- F5LA's October Board 2024 meeting approved a tiered approach to reach a \$60M organizational budget (F5LA funding) by FY 27-28

FISCAL YEAR	F5LA Organizational Budget
FY 24-25	\$91.7M
FY 25-26	\$80M
FY 26-27	\$70M
FY 27-28	\$60M

Home Visiting

- Big picture – where are we in this moment?
 - State funding commitment to home visiting continues but local, one-time sources have fluctuated and now in the midst of uncertainty and reductions in safety net services
 - Level of need and where families live in Los Angeles County has changed in past ten years – Equity Index will be able to tell us more in near future
 - Network of seasoned providers across multiple models and highly qualified workforce that allowed for leveraging of new funding sources
 - Braiding of funding for multiple funding streams, varying eligibility criteria and reporting requirements carried by limited universe of same set of providers
 - There is no one magical funding source for home visiting – it will take braided approach countywide to support home visiting, which adds to complexity – but also opportunities!

Home Visiting

- Will have various touchpoints with Commission this year in laying groundwork for learning and questions to reach endorsement in Fall 2026 of a home visiting long-term vision that is aligned with the LTFP:
 - February Board: Home Visiting Overview in LA County, Policy Sustainability Opportunities
 - April PPC: Home Visiting Deep Dive and Long-Term Planning
 - September Board: Seek endorsement of home visiting long-term vision
 - October Board: Presentation of home visiting long-term vision

Home Visiting: Policy Landscape and System Elements



**Children
Now[®]**

Strengthening Home Visiting in LA County & California

**Thursday, February 12, 2026
First 5 Los Angeles**

Commission Meeting

Resilience in Collaboration

Resilience:
Ability of a system –
like a network of
community partners –
to withstand and
adapt to challenges
while maintaining its
core purpose.



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A Statewide Approach to Strengthen Home Visiting in California



Home Visiting

Purpose of Project

1

Understand barriers to outreach and enrollment

2

Understand opportunities to improve outreach and enrollment

3

Elevate Key Findings

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Interview Partners



California
Department of
Social
Services



California
Department of
Public
Health



National
Home
Visiting
Models

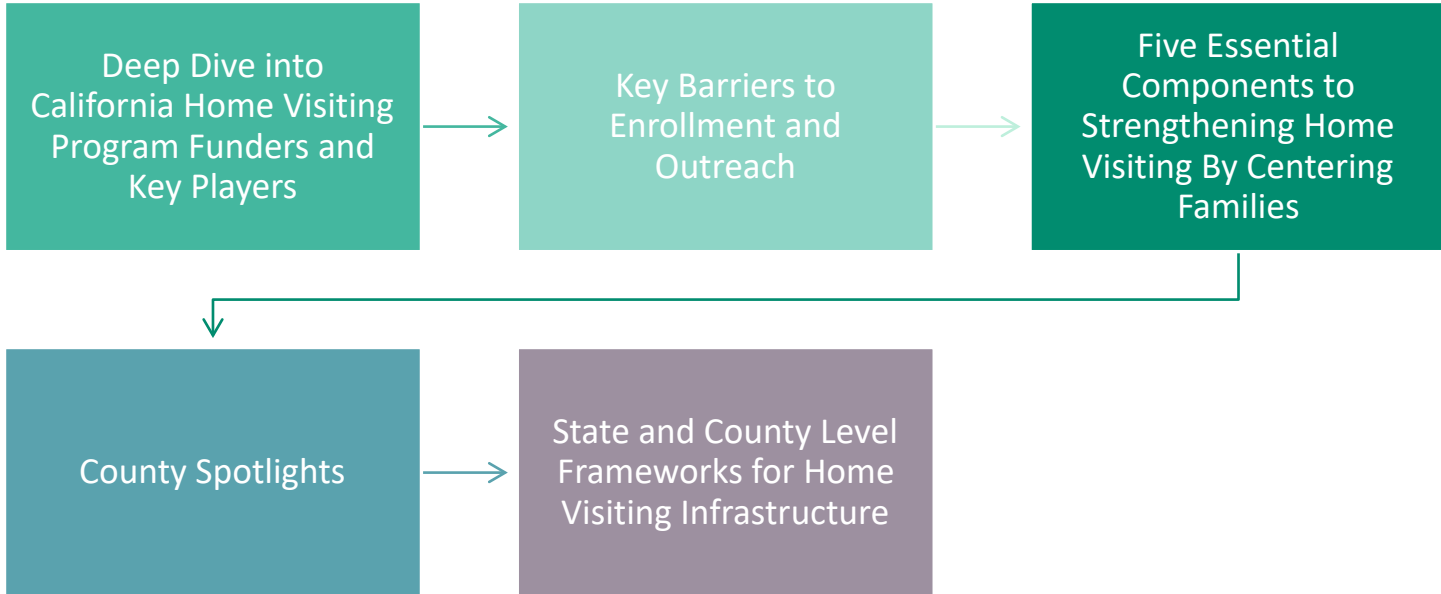


Local
Providers



First 5s

Breakdown of Report



Roles and Functions of Home Visiting Entities in California

State

- CA Dept. of Public Health
- CA Dept. of Social Services
- First 5 California
- First 5 Association
- First 5 Center for Children's Policy

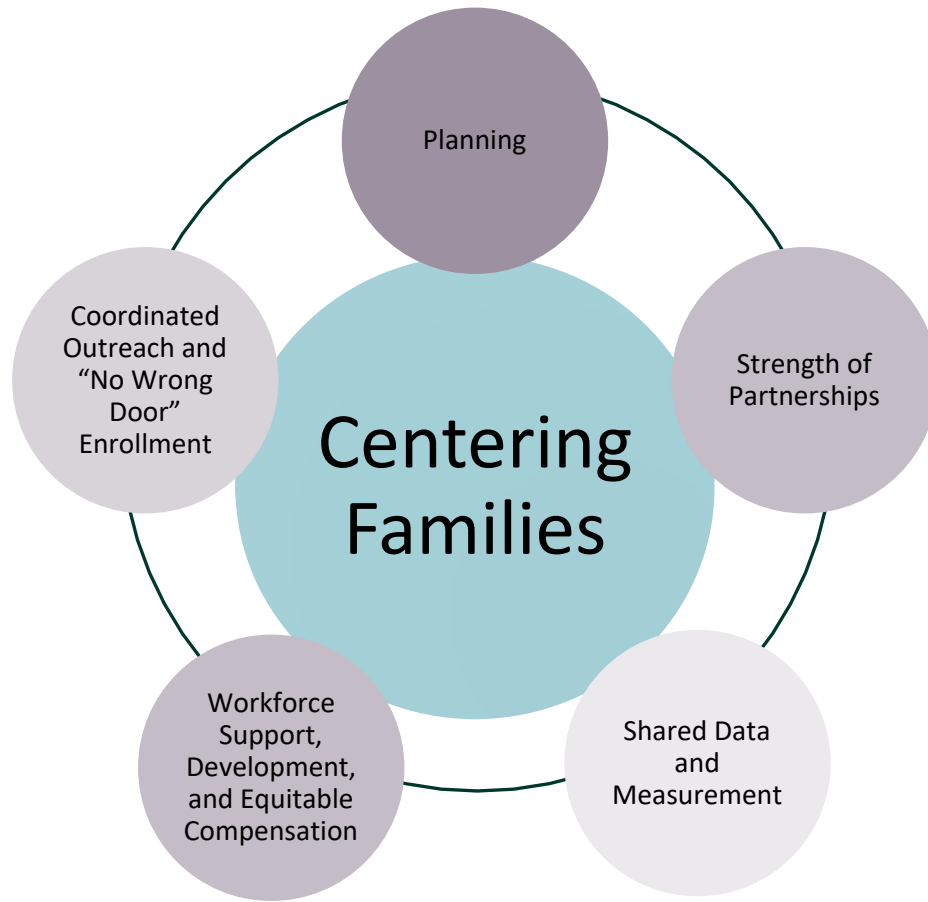
County/Local

- County Public Health Jurisdiction
- County Human Services Agency
- County First 5 Commissions
- Local Providers

National Program Models

- Parents as Teachers (PAT)
- Nurse Family Partnership (NFP)
- Healthy Families America (HFA)
- Early Head Start (EHS)
- Home Instruction for Parents and Preschool Youngers (HIPPY)

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Framework for Home Visiting Infrastructure: Strengthening State and Countywide Infrastructure to Maximize Home Visiting Resources

State Level Framework



Planning

Recommended Activities (Non-exhaustive list)

- Establish a 10-year state plan for expansion of home visiting services to serve all eligible families.
- Establish streamlined funding requirements, including flexibilities to meet county or program needs.
- CDSS and CDPH, along with their state partners, and national models, can provide collective guidance and technical assistance support to home visiting implementation efforts through a more coordinated approach that filters into local counties and provide a framework for providers and funding that is equitable, allows for incentives, and promotes salary equity.
- Develop model program guides that leverage the various funding streams and identify local infrastructure supports for successful implementation or strengthened program growth.
- Establish equitable home visiting financing and availability of incentives or material goods is equitably financed.

Coordinated Outreach & No Wrong Door Enrollment

Recommended Activities (Non-exhaustive list)

- Establish streamlined program eligibility and enrollment requirements that allow for referrals from various stakeholders, including self-referrals.
- Implement a multi-pronged statewide marketing and outreach campaign to increase awareness of and enrollment in home visiting programs.
- Identify and address barriers to family enrollment and local program implementation

Shared Data & Measurement

Recommended Activities (Non-exhaustive list)

- Establish streamlined data collection and reporting requirements that minimize duplication.
- Provide streamlined, publicly available program data and evaluations

State Framework

Part 2

Strength of Relationships & Partnerships

Recommended Activities (Non-exhaustive list)

- CDPH, CDSS, and First 5's collaborate and coordinate to support local counties in the successful implementation of voluntary home visiting evidence-based programs with a clear, consistent point of contact for counties.
- Collaborate and partner with the state health care system to identify additional funding opportunities and strategize population health initiatives to support outcomes for pregnant people, infants, and toddlers.
- Develop relationships and collaborate with county entities to design and plan: disbursement of funding, data collection and reporting metrics, model selection, program eligibility and enrollment requirements, salary requirements of HV staff that is equitable and compensates the home visitor to grow in the field, workforce training, and technical assistance and quality improvement efforts.
- Approve and recommend discretionary use of funds to allow programs to pay for family incentives and/or meet family needs (e.g., rental support, grocery gift cards, etc.)
- State departments strengthen relationships and collaboration with the national home visiting models operating within California (HFA, PAT, EHS-HBO, and NFP) to plan implementation, data requirements, eligibility, and reporting requirements.
- Conduct unduplicated training, quality improvement and problem-solving state calls that are inclusive of topics that are of interest to providers at all levels.
- National program models play a stronger role in aligning data, providing data systems, and common outcomes.
- Create a training and curriculum to support state staff and local county agencies on strength-based approaches and early childhood development.
- State departments create a unified home visiting program that is easy to implement at the county level with national models and input for model selection by local counties.

Workforce Support Development & Equitable Compensation

Recommended Activities (Non-exhaustive list)

- Provide consistent training requirements outside of requirements established by models and support other trainings to better support specific populations.
- Provide coordinated workforce training, technical assistance, and quality improvement efforts to local county agencies where possible (e.g., partnering with national models funded by both state departments rather than engaging and paying for these efforts separately).
- Coordinate with local counties to ensure equitable salaries for home visitors.

County Framework

Part 1

Planning

Recommended Activities (Non-exhaustive list)

- Create a collaborative table for entities implementing home visiting such as providers, funders, and key collaborators to share information and resources, opportunities to co-create or share training and data, and problem solve local issues. In some instances, a multi-county collaborative may make sense to share resources, ideas, and opportunities.
- Establish a county-wide, ten-year long-term vision for home visiting in the county or region and develop five-year strategic plans to implement activities toward that ten-year period.
- Implement eligibility requirements, as designated by the state entity(ies).
- Collaborate and partner with providers to support the blending and federal, state, county and philanthropic funding.
- Collaborate with state departments and providers to advocate for and implement equitable salaries and compensation for home visitors.
- Utilize data to inform and drive outreach including Women Infants and Children (WIC), CalFresh, and Medi-Cal enrollment data to identify and understand higher need populations or communities, monitor home visiting program capacity for program delivery and help inform plans should additional funding become available to expand.
- Create cross-sector networks to triage enrollment and create cross-program referral pathways in a timely manner and share information about community-based referrals for family support services across multiple programs and geographic regions that include warm hand-offs.
- Provide technical assistance and quality improvement support across all providers to strengthen the field as a whole and eliminate redundant efforts.
- National program models play a stronger role in aligning data, providing data systems, and common outcomes.

Coordinated Outreach & No Wrong Door Enrollment

Recommended Activities (Non-exhaustive list)

- Create a centralized or common pathway for intake and eligibility determinations to refer families to program best suited to meet their needs for the county or region.
- Work closely with Medi-Cal coverage and managed care plans and health providers (OB/GYN, hospital, birthing centers, etc.) to leverage outreach and enrollment.
- Implement referrals from and paid partnerships with current families, past program graduates, and trusted community members and partners to leverage their expertise and networks to successful outreach and enroll more families.

County Framework

Part 2

Strength of Relationships & Partnerships

Recommended Activities (Non-exhaustive list)

- County agency staff and those implementing home visiting establish strong relationships with providers in the field that are beyond transaction and compliance, but nurture strengthening program implementation and opportunities to expedite and streamline enrollment of families and maximize funding.
- Plan family engagement strategies to help program design, implementation, and quality improvement across the county and not by funding source.
- Participate and coordinate with partners on regular meetings to discuss home visiting efforts in the county (unduplicated).
- Strengthen community partnerships and relationships with other child serving agencies, like child welfare, WIC, health plans, community-based organizations and clinics, parents/caregivers.
- Establish a collaborative strategy and process to maximize home visiting efforts and referrals to local resources.
- Collaborate with other funding entities to reduce/eliminate competition between providers by developing shared understanding of the various home visiting offerings in the county.

Workforce Support Development & Equitable Compensation

Recommended Activities (Non-exhaustive list)

- Provide essential training, like home visitor safety, child development, domestic violence, fatherhood engagement, implicit bias, etc. for all home visiting providers across the county or region.
- Coordinate with state partners to support equitable salaries for home visitors.

Shared Data & Measurement

Recommended Activities (Non-exhaustive list)

- Create a centralized dashboard with data on program enrollment, families, gaps, and vacancies, etc. to identify case load capacity.
- Create coherent outcome measurements for families that are not duplicative.

**What we have
seen as a
result of
implementing
this approach**

County Leaders are Engaged and Improving Practice:

- **Counties have clearer LT goals and different entities have clearer understanding of roles in strengthening HV**
- **Partnerships and collaboration have strengthened**
- **People are positively motivated to goals focused on serving families vs upset/frustrated with barriers or inter-personal/org conflicts**

Engagement in Advocacy is Stronger:

- **We mobilized effectively to push back against state budget cuts to preserve capacity**
- **We passed AB 607 to extend duration for families**
- **In 2025 – we saw an increase of nearly 2,000 more children served**
- **LA County received \$2 million more in an adjustment due to increased enrollment in 2025**
- **Governor's 2026 January proposed budget includes full restoration of CalWORKs HVP budget, a \$26 million increase from 2025**

Sustainability Reflection Questions

01

Best First Steps:

What questions must we answer now, while we have these resources?

- Do we have clear, shared goals?
- Do we have clear, shared priorities?
- Have we engaged and integrated community and parent partners at each step?
- Do we know where highest need is and how we define that?
- Where are we strong, where are there gaps?

02

Growing from Strengths:

What strengths do we have as a county/region/collaborative that we can leverage to continue this effort beyond the current grant?

- What existing efforts can you leverage?
- What skills (facilitators, planners, program expertise, community services, county data) can you leverage?
- What assets can you leverage (meeting space, note takers, other grants/funding)

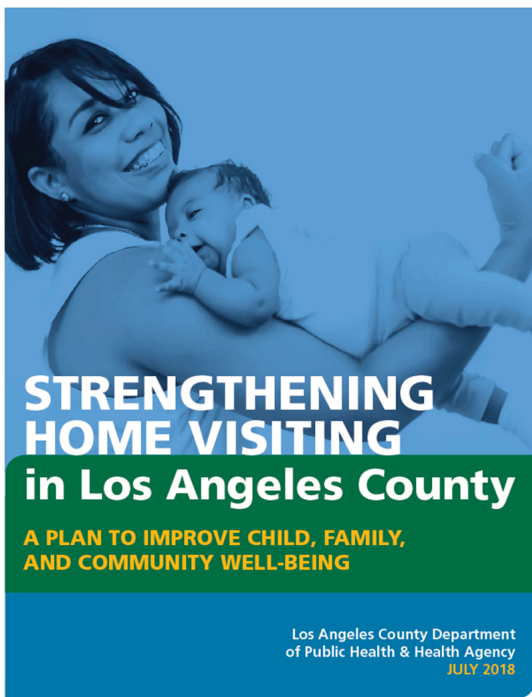
03

Beginning with the End in Mind:

What will we want to have built that will move our goals forward?

- A county/regional plan
- Common agreements on priorities for expansion
- Clarity on who/what/where is prioritized and why
- Clarity on what you need as a county/region and what to advocate for

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Children Now Contacts

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Learn more about Children Now:
www.childrennow.org

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Home Visiting: Los Angeles County

Home Visiting

- Dynamic and complex system with multiple funding streams, varied program models and providers, ranging from hospitals to community-based organizations
- F5LA plays key role not just as a funder, but also as a connector, thought partner and advocate
 - 9 Welcome Baby providers
 - 10 Select Home Visiting providers (Healthy Families America, Parents As Teachers)
 - Key Infrastructure providing support countywide across program models and funding sources and a critical platform:
 - Los Angeles Best Babies Network – provide quality workforce training and development, technical assistance and database oversight
 - Stronger Families Database – used across 3 program models

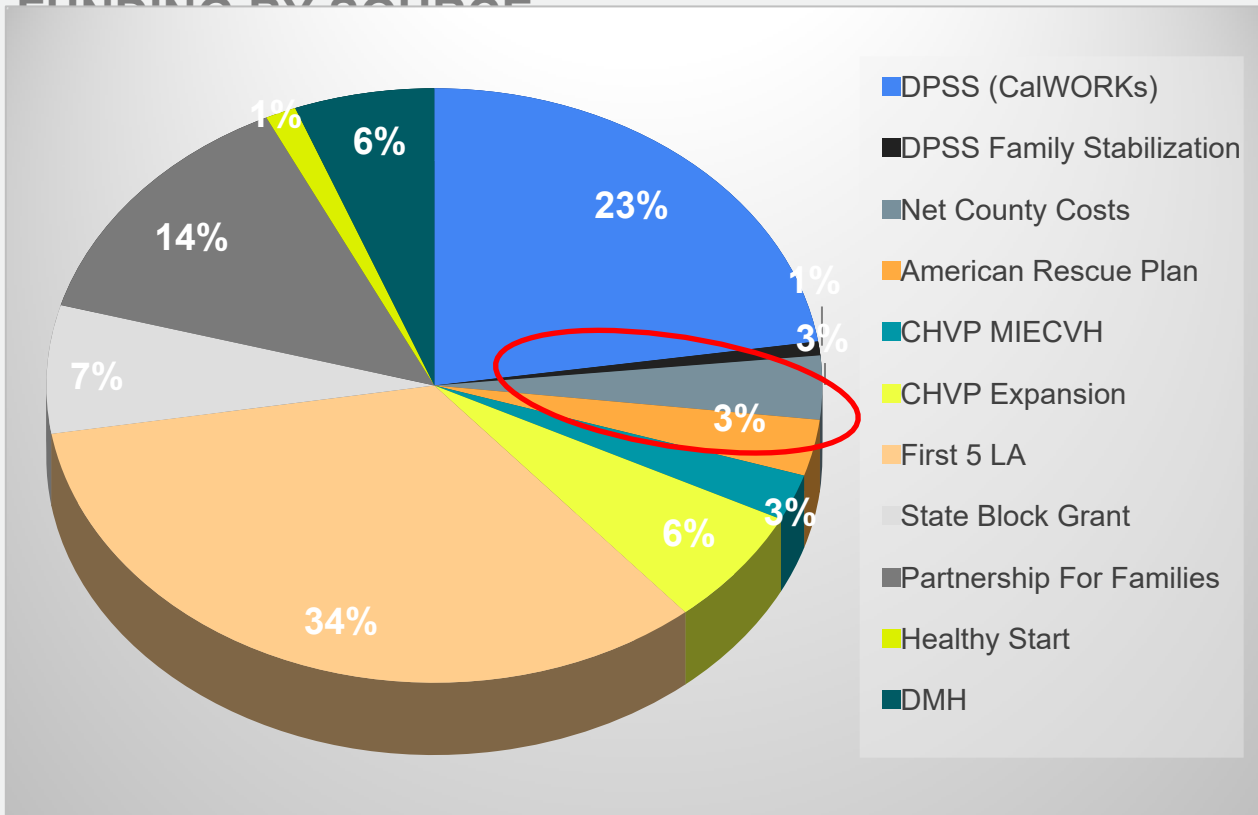
Home Visiting

- Key System Partners:
 - Department of Public Health – administrator for State and local home visiting funding sources and key county lead
 - Los Angeles Best Babies Network (Oversight Entity)
 - LA County Perinatal and Early Childhood Home Visitation Consortium
 - Collaborative Leadership Council
 - Home Visiting Providers
 - Home Visiting families/participants
 - Policy/Advocates
 - Philanthropy
 - Managed Care Plans

- F5LA's home visiting long-term vision is not a stand-alone plan, but a part of this complex and dynamic system that will involve coordination with multiple partners

LA County Home Visiting System

FUNDING BY SOURCE



*Total FY 24-25
Countywide Direct Service
Investment: **\$78,443,349**

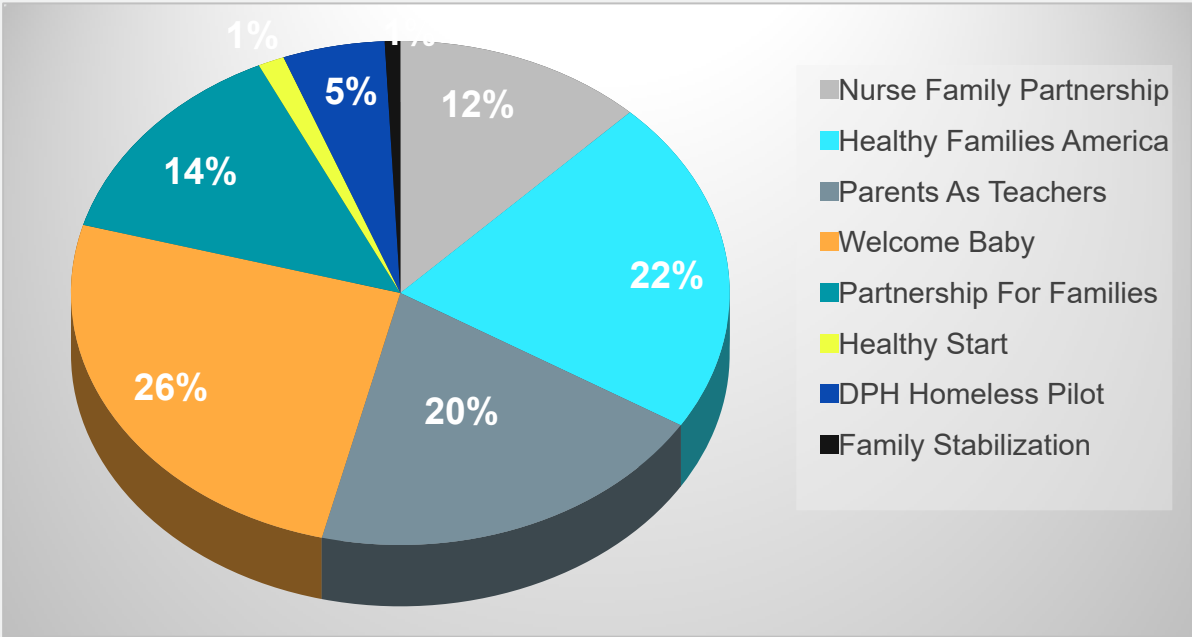
- DPH Administered funds: 46%
- First 5 LA: 34%
- Other County Departments (DCFS, DMH): 19%
- Healthy Start: 1%

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*Does not reflect funding in FY 25-26

LA County Home Visiting System

FUNDING BY PROGRAM MODEL



Funding levels in order of highest to lowest by program model in FY 24-25:

1. Welcome Baby (26%)
2. Healthy Families America (22%)
3. Parents As Teachers (20%)
4. Partnership for Families (14%)
5. Nurse Family Partnership (13%)
6. DPH Homeless Pilot (5%)
7. Healthy Start (1%)
8. Family Stabilization (1%)

Home Visiting

The home visiting system has **challenges** that are under continual assessment and improvement efforts:

- Recruitment and Enrollment
 - Leveraging the unique opportunity of a hospital touch point
 - Varied eligibility requirements by program model based on factors such as funding source, geography, age, and/or family needs
- Referrals and Linkages
 - Improved integration of the Welcome Baby postpartum referrals to evidence-based models
 - How to strengthen both navigation and linkage to services
- Addressing disparities in access
 - Increasing participation and cultural competency of approaches in working with groups with disparities in outcomes, such as African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders and families at risk of child welfare involvement

Home Visiting

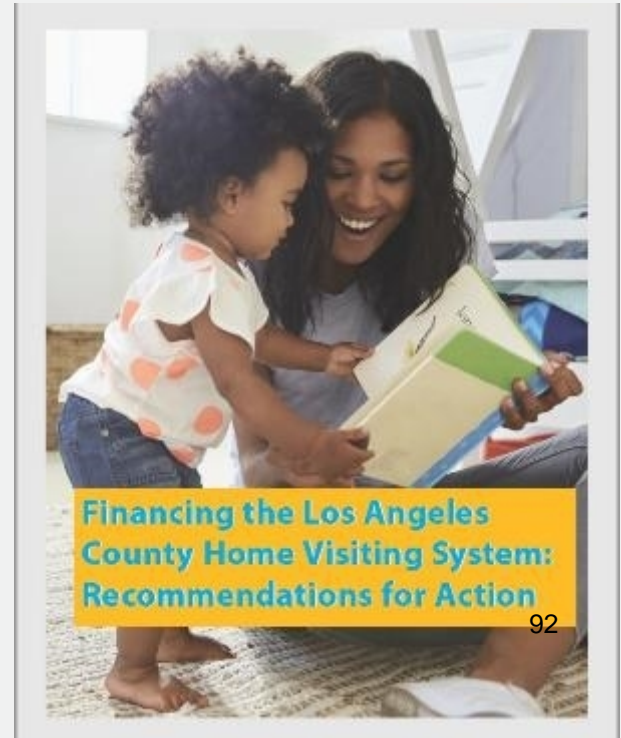
The home visiting system also has many **strengths**, including:

- Strong partnerships across funders, County Departments and providers
 - Example: On-going coordination and collaboration on piloting sustainability strategies between DCFS, DPH, providers and others for Families First Prevention Services Act funding
- Existing formal coordination and planning efforts
 - Collaborative Leadership Council - performs ongoing monitoring, adjustment, coordination, and advocacy for the expanded system of home visiting
 - LA County Perinatal and Early Childhood Home Visitation Consortium - over 60 member organizations
- High quality Workforce
 - Over 450 across system with 48% under F5LA program models
 - Backgrounds ranging from majority bachelor's level degrees to Master's level clinical staff and RN's, many with over a decade within the network

EXPLORATION OF OPPORTUNITIES

What sustainability strategies and approaches is F5LA exploring as part of the long-term vision?

- Fiscal Mapping Project in 2021 recommended exploration of two key opportunities:
 - Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)
 - Managed Care Plans and Medi-Cal changes



**Financing the Los Angeles
County Home Visiting System:
Recommendations for Action**

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EXPLORATION OF OPPORTUNITIES

Medi-Cal

- Intersections between new provider populations (e.g., Community Health Workers) and home visitors
- Home visiting outcomes align with Medi-Cal accountability measures

FFPSA

- State allows reimbursement for:
 - Three home visiting models, two of which F5LA funds (HFA, PAT)
 - Motivational Interviewing, which Welcome Baby providers utilize
- State definition of “imminent risk” likely to include majority of home visiting clients⁹³

Medi-Cal Sustainability Opportunities



Home Visiting Landscape

Presentation to the First 5 LA
Commission

February 12, 2026

HMA'S WORK WITH FIRST 5 LA

HMA

- HMA is a national health and human services consulting firm focused on improving the safety net
- HMA is working with First 5 LA's home visiting team to support the development of a long-term sustainability plan; this includes
 - Engaging stakeholders to inform First 5 LA's near-term funding strategy
 - Modeling different planning scenarios related to revenue and cost reduction for sustaining home visiting

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PRESENTATION TOPICS

- » Evolving National and State Funding Landscape
- » Medi-Cal Funding Opportunities
- » Update on DPH's Effort to Create a Unified Home Visiting Billing System
- » Sustainability Strategies from other First 5 Commissions

NATIONAL INVESTMENTS IN HOME VISITING

- » In 2010, the federal government recognized the value of home visiting services and created the first federal funding for home visiting through the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (known as MIECHV)
- » MIECHV provides funding for states and communities and **sets the standard of evidenced-based models** for funding which has rippled into other funding sources ([HomVEE](#))
- » CA received approximately \$19.6 million in federal MIECHV; LA County's share is \$1.9 million in state fiscal year 2024-25

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SINCE 2019, NEW AND EXPANDED FUNDING HAS CREATED PATHWAYS FOR FAMILIES TO ACCESS HOME VISITING SERVICES

Source	Description
CA Home Visiting Program (CHVP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In 2019, CA augmented the federal MIECHV program ▪ FY 2024-25, \$54.6 million in State HV funding, including \$6.9 in state innovation funds.
CalWORKs HV Program (CA HVP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective 2019 ▪ Mirrors the federal MIECHV list of eligible models ▪ Operates in 41 counties in FY 25/26 with total statewide funding of \$73.3 million; LA County is allocated \$24 million
Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FFPSA provides funding to prevent entry into the child welfare system ▪ Three home visiting models are included in the county's Plan (Nurse Family Partnership, Healthy Families America, Parent as Teachers),

Sources: [CDPH/CHVP Memo #: 24-03 Notice of Intent to Award for CHVP SGF Evidence-Based Home Visiting \(EBHV\) And Innovation \(INNV\) Funding for State Fiscal Year \(SFY\) 2024-2025 CFL 25/26-24 FISCAL YEAR 2025-26 CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO KIDS HOME VISITING PROGRAM ALLOCATION](#)

BENEFITS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT HOME VISITING

Enhanced Care Management (ECM) and Community Supports (CS)	Addresses the complex health and social outcomes for the highest risk enrollees, including the birth equity population, children and youth experiencing homelessness, and child welfare populations
Community Health Worker (CHW)	CHWs can bill for health promotion, prevention, education, and navigation services for Medi-Cal beneficiaries
Other Plan Requirements (e.g., Population Health Management and Community Reinvestment)	A contractual requirement of managed care plans to dedicate a portion of annual net income in the community they serve. As part of population management, managed care plans can make ¹⁰⁰ discretionary investments in interventions to improve health outcomes. Examples: First 5 LA Blue Shield partnership, pending partnership with LA Care.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH MCPS

MCP Contract Provision Deeper Dive: MOUs

1. MOUs	<p>MCPs must build partnerships through MOUs (starting 2024) with third-party entities, including community-based local health departments, county behavioral health departments, and county child welfare departments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">These MOUs support <i>whole-person care</i> for members by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Clarifying respective entities' roles and responsibilities.Facilitating care coordination and access to community-based resources;Promoting data sharing; andTo date, DHCS developed and published ten new MOU templates to facilitate relationships between and among MCPs and their partners.Since January 2024, MCPs have submitted over 300 executed MOUs to DHCS. MCPs continue to submit executed MOUs on a rolling basis as they are negotiated and executed.For more details, see APL 23-029.
2. CAC	
3. LHJ CHA/CHIP Alignment	
4. Community Reinvestment	

The required MOUs provide the basis for defining partnerships to improve outcomes and should inform community reinvestment strategies



MCP Contract Provision Deeper Dive: Community Reinvestment

1. MOUs	<p>MCPs must reinvest a minimum percentage of annual net income to the communities they serve (starting 2026)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">MCPs that do not meet specified quality thresholds are required to make additional investments that are focused on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Addressing social drivers of healthSupporting DHCS priorities for whole-person care <p>More details provided later in this presentation (Pillar 3) and APL 25-004.</p>
2. CAC	
3. LHJ CHA/CHIP Alignment	
4. Community Reinvestment	

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WITH NEW FUNDING COMES NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Opportunities

- + New funding to expand access to families that have not had an opportunity participate
- + Potential for new partners to provide services in culturally competent ways

Challenges

- x Administrative challenges of managing multiple similar, but distinct funding sources
- x Maximizing all available funding sources
- x Program administrative complexities

OTHER EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY WITHIN LA COUNTY TO ALIGN HOME VISITING INVESTMENTS COUNTYWIDE

Alignment involves....

- Coordinating on contracting approaches
- Sharing learnings and best practices
- Supporting revenue maximization, including drawing down the most restrictive funding dollars first and preserving more flexible funding for other elements that are not otherwise funded

LA COUNTY IS INVESTING TO CREATE A UNIFIED HOME VISITING BILLING SYSTEM TO FACILITATE COORDINATED INTAKE AND REFERRAL PROCESSES AND MAXIMIZE AVAILABLE REVENUE

The solution will **capture necessary information** to determine the funding source for HFA, PAT, and NFP



Assignments should **honor family preference/choice** of provider (so long as the family meets the eligibility criteria for the model)

Consistent with family choice, the assignment process will seek to **draw down the most restrictive dollars first**

The solution will support the current invoicing process and have the capacity to **support a future state of braided funding and service-based billing**

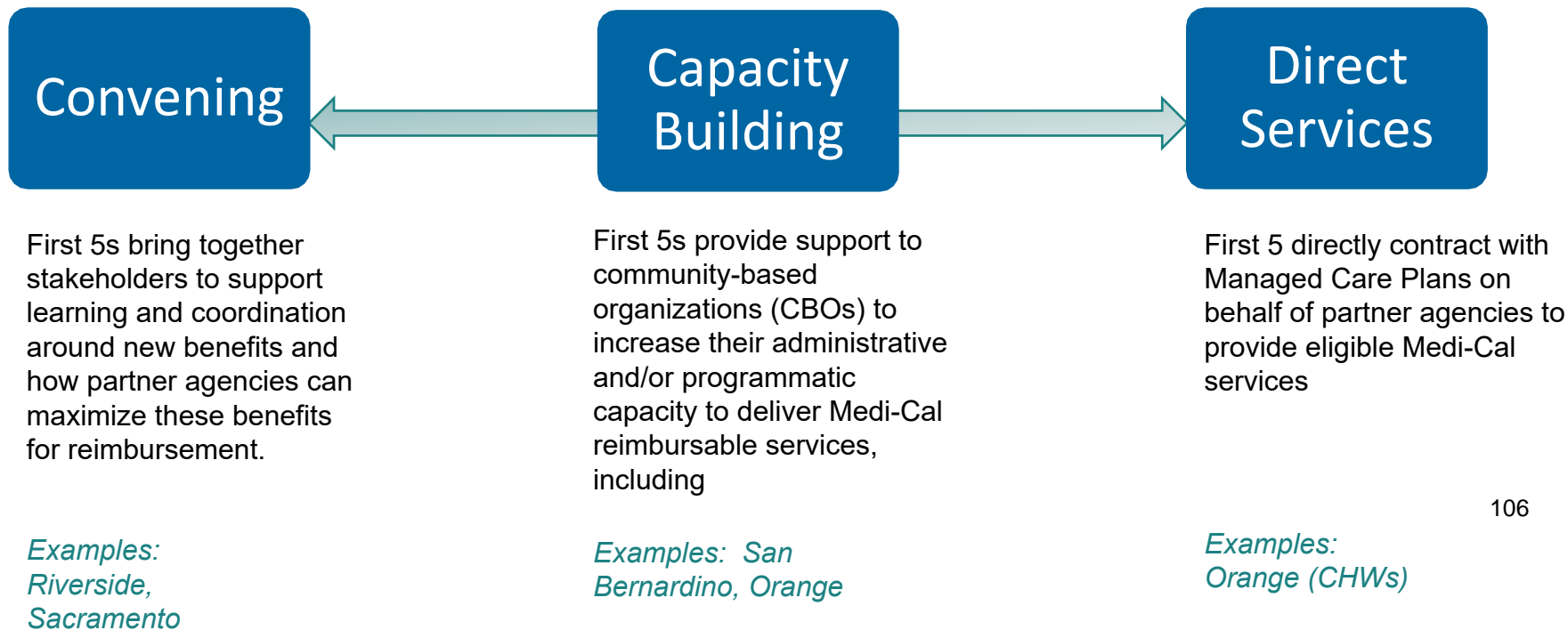
HOW HAVE OTHER FIRST 5'S ADDRESSED THE HOME VISITING SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE?

Lessons Learned

- » Home visiting should not be viewed as a program, but rather part of a county system to improve maternal/child health outcomes
- » Sustainability is a multi-pronged challenge with multiple strategies
- » Counties are developing integrated screening and referral protocols to maximize funding capacity
- » Foundational question – What role(s) does the First 5 want to assume in the system:
 - » Convener/coordinator?
 - » Capacity builder?
 - » Funding administrator or “hub entity”?

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HOW ARE FIRST 5S SUPPORTING THIS WORK?



HOW ARE FIRST 5S ENGAGING IN SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES?

Direct Provider

- Providers contract directly with MCP to deliver new benefit(s)
- Employ and manage colleagues responsible for service delivery
- Evaluate and confirm beneficiary eligible for services
- Ensure provider licensure and other requirements

Hub or Network Model



- Intermediary contracts directly with MCP for services
- Intermediary administers or hold agreements with MCPs *on behalf of providers for delivery of eligible benefits*
- Direct service provider employed by agency
- Shared responsibilities to (complete sentence)

Focus
for
F5LA

FIRST 5 LA: PROPOSED APPROACH

- » Maximize opportunities for partner agencies to leverage HVs and Community Health Workers (CHWs)
- » The CHW pilot in 2025 demonstrated that there was a high degree of alignment between Welcome Baby home visits and CHW services (i.e., Screening and Assessment, Health Education, Individual Support or Advocacy, and Health Navigation)
- » Financial modeling demonstrated that a considerable portion of the cost of a Parent Coach (up to 70%) can be offset through Medi-Cal billing using the CHW budget.
- » First 5 LA would support sites via TA, and bringing them together for CQI, standardizing approaches, etc.

HMA'S PROPOSED SUPPORT FOR HOME VISITING SUSTAINABILITY

- » Develop a tool that will enable First 5 LA to model different planning scenarios related to revenue and cost reduction for sustaining HV
- » Key Assumptions
 - » No single strategy will achieve sustainability targets; recommended pathway will likely be a combination of strategies
 - » All scenarios will likely require a change in First 5 LA's:
 - » Existing provider contracts
 - » Program protocols and processes
 - » Partner relationships

Home Visiting

Sustainability approaches, questions and exploration continue for development of long-term vision:

- Welcome Baby model adjustments to narrow scope and strengthen navigation support
- Continued collaboration with DPH to leverage the Unified Central Billing System and prioritize utilization of State funding sources
- Exploration of transition from Department of Mental Health's Maternal Health Services Act to Behavioral Health Services Act funding for Select Home Visiting
- Medi-Cal Strategies
 - LA Care grant supporting exploration of integrating CHW and/or Enhanced Care Management into Welcome Baby
- Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)
 - Pending DCFS home visiting reimbursement rates for FFPSA and Motivational Interviewing, as local counties set the rate
 - FFPSA launch anticipated for Fall 2026
 - Motivational Interviewing piloted with Welcome Baby

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The answers to the strategy opportunities above will inform the potential scenarios and fiscal approach of F5LA's home visiting long-term vision

IN CLOSING...

- The home visiting long-term vision is not a single strategy; rather, it is a combination of fiscal and programmatic approaches
- The forthcoming Equity Index will inform and shape the home visiting long-term vision
- Working in partnership will be critical – with County Departments, Managed Care Plans, and providers
- On-going stakeholder engagement and input is essential

Home Visiting

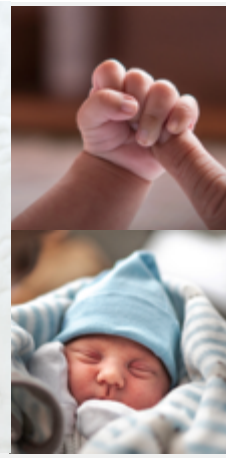
QUESTIONS

1. What additional information would you need to make an informed decision on the long-term vision?
2. What challenges and opportunities do you foresee as F5LA develops the home visiting long-term vision?



QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

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Best Start: Insights from a 15+ Year Investment in Communities to Inform Future Direction

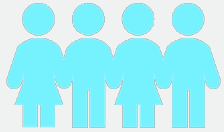


Today's Presentation and Conversation

1. Why First 5 LA commissioned an assessment of Best Start Communities
2. The broader context shaping this work
3. Center for the Study of Social Policy Presentation on Report
4. Key considerations for the future of the Community Investment
5. Discussion

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Why Assess the Best Start Communities Initiative?



Changing Communities

Fewer young children,
shifting services, changing
neighborhoods



Resource Reality

Shrinking resources
for children and
families



Equity Lens

Target greatest need,
guided by equity

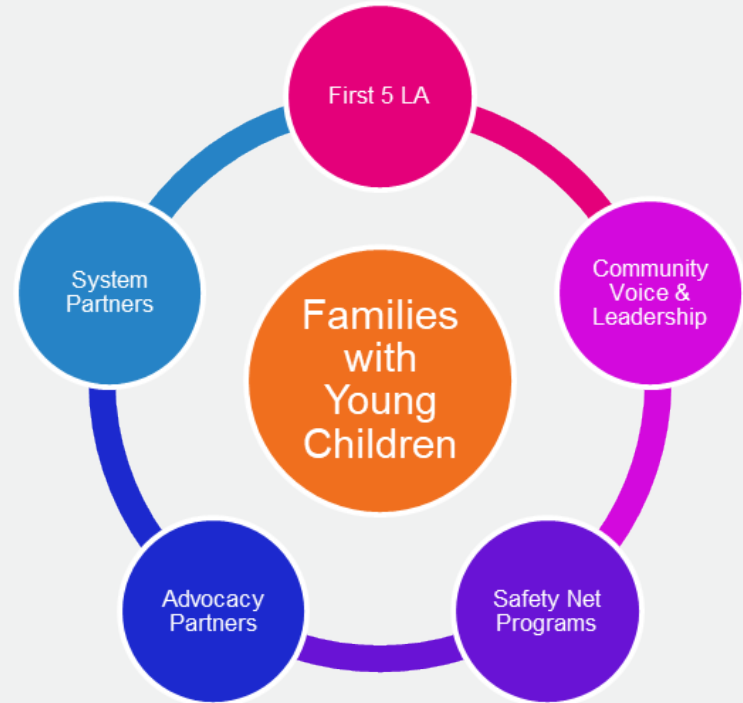


Strategic Alignment

Align limited resources
with strategic priorities

The Next Phase of Our Work

- Guided by the Equity Index
- Building community-rooted hubs
- Aligning investments for impact
- Strengthening connections and partnerships



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A Reflections and Findings Report from
the Center for the Study of Social Policy

Best Start: Insights from a 15+ Year Investment in Communities to Inform Future Direction

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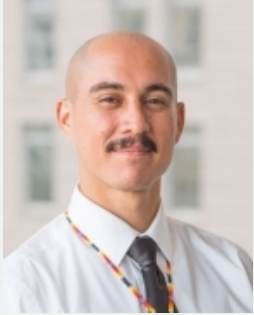
About the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSSP)

CSSSP is a national, non-profit policy organization that connects community action, public system reform, and policy change to create a fair and just society in which all children and families thrive.



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About Our Team



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Background and Overview

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Why Place-Based Matters

- Place-based efforts address poverty and inequity through community-driven action.
- Best Start learned from major national models.
- Success = evolving with community needs, strong partnerships and systems change focus.

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Best Start's Origin & Evolution

- Launched in 2010, focused on 14 high-need LA County areas (19% of young children).
- Four priority outcomes: Healthy births, healthy weight, safety from abuse, and school readiness.
- Two-pronged strategy: Family strengthening (direct supports) + capacity building (community-led action).

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Best Start's Origin & Evolution (Continued)

- 2014 learning: Needed greater focus and coordination, clarity of goals, and shift from direct services to systems change.
- 2018: Transitioned to five Regional Network Grantees (RNGs) to drive regional engagement and systems change.
- Recent shifts: Greater emphasis on equity, basic needs (housing, food, transportation), and strategic response to shifting areas of highest need.
- 2024–2029 plan: Center equity, reduce poverty, address housing insecurity for children prenatal to five.

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Best Start's Unique Contributions

- Community Capacity Building as Infrastructure
- Learning While Doing
- Transition to Regional Scale
- National model demonstrating that sustainable progress depends on equitable, community-driven ecosystems where residents have power and voice

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Key Findings and Reflections

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Key Findings

- Place-based focus on equity works
- Importance of supporting leadership and capacity building
- Crisis responsiveness with systemic lens matters
- Cross-sector collaboration advances systems change

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Successes

- Strong local and regional partnerships can advance equity
- Investing in regional capacity and connections can move towards cross-sector systems change
- Place-based strategies aligned with policy and systems change and community voice are effective
- Trust and relationship building leads to partnerships that reflect diverse communities ¹²⁸





Challenges

- Addressing basic needs requires concentrated investments
- Need for ongoing capacity building with declining revenue
- Focus on addressing both basic needs and advancing systems change at the same time

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Some Challenges Still Exist

- Advancing equity and achieving population-level change requires intentionally shifting power, building trust and changing how institutions and communities work together.
- Ongoing investment in capacity building, attention to power dynamics, and strong coordination are essential for any place-based initiative aiming for real, lasting impact.

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Considerations

- Invest in Capacity and Network Support to Advance Systems Change
- Establish Clear Metrics for Success
- Focus on Systems Change

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Questions?



Given the persistent challenges, fiscal reality, and Strategic Plan objectives, we must make difficult decisions regarding long-term investments in the community place-based initiative. As we shift toward a cross-regional Hubs framework, what additional considerations or untapped opportunities should we prioritize to ensure a sustainable transition?



Best Start: Insights from a 15+ Year Investment in Communities to Inform Future Direction



**Center for the
Study of
Social Policy**
Ideas into Action

February 2026

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Best Start: Insights from a 15+ Year Investment in Communities to Inform Future Direction

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Background

In November 2025, First 5 LA contracted the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) to produce this report on the Best Start Communities place-based initiative. While the review considered the evolution of Best Start since its inception, this report focuses primarily on 2018-2025, capturing the period following the shift to a regional network grantee approach across Los Angeles County.

The report is intentionally limited in scope to the objectives set by First 5 LA. CSSP was engaged to conduct a review of over 400 written documents and 10 key stakeholder interviews¹, however this was not intended to be a comprehensive assessment. Rather it is a summary synthesizing eight years of documentation and perspectives related to the Best Start investment. While a broader review and additional data might offer further insights, this report was designed to address the specific questions and purpose established by First 5 LA for strategic planning and considerations for future investment decisions.

Overview

INTRODUCTION

The First 5 Los Angeles (LA) Commission was formed as a public entity in 1998, after California passed Proposition 10. First 5 LA was charged with developing and overseeing

¹ Interviewees included representatives from the five Regional Neighborhood Grantees, current and former First 5 LA staff, and the First 5 LA Commission.

early childhood focused initiatives and managing investments from the California Proposition 10 tax revenues. First 5 LA's mission is to advocate for children and their families, amplify community voice and partner for collective impact so that every child in Los Angeles County reaches their full developmental potential throughout the critical years of prenatal to age 5. In 2010, First 5 LA launched Best Start, its signature long-term, place-based initiative aimed at partnering with high-need communities to strengthen local systems and improve conditions for children from prenatal to five and their families.

By highlighting lessons learned, successes, and challenges from First 5 LA's Best Start initiative implementation from 2018-2025, these findings are intended to support First 5 LA's ongoing decision-making and strategic planning as it advances its 2024-2029 Strategic Plan, offering perspectives and additional considerations to help strengthen future investments in communities, children, and families across Los Angeles County.

WHY A PLACED-BASED APPROACH MATTERS

Place-based community change efforts in the United States over the past 30 years have focused on transforming neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and inequitable outcomes through comprehensive, long-term, and community-driven strategies. Generally, these initiatives integrate education, health, housing, and social services, grounded in the belief that children thrive when their families and broader environments are stable, supportive, and responsive.ⁱ

Best Start learned from and alongside other well-known local, national and statewide efforts including the Harlem Children's Zone, the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Making Connections Initiative, the California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities, and the Obama Administration's Revitalizing Communities initiatives, which included the Promise Neighborhoods, Choice Neighborhoods and Building Neighborhood Capacity grant programs. Major lessons from these and other place-based efforts include the importance of supporting communities as needs and priorities evolve over time, continuously connecting to a broad range of stakeholders and partners, addressing racial inequity, and reorienting local institutions to be responsive to community needs.^{ii iii iv} A recent report noted that among six emergent philanthropic funded place-based models, including Building Healthy Communities, the Clinton Health Matters Initiative, Community Partnerships for Health Equity, and Rural Community Building, there was a shared set of outcomes that included activating new work in communities that would not have happened without the initiative, a clear systems change focus and strategies, shifts in community context, service availability and partnerships, and capacity building among those who participated.^v Best Start's evolution and impact is clearly aligned with what is emerging more broadly in the field and can be seen as another example of how place-based efforts can have a deep and lasting impact in communities.

BEST START'S ORIGIN, EVOLUTION AND UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO PLACE-BASED APPROACHES

Origin and Evolution

From its launch in 2010, the Best Start initiative targeted 14 geographic areas in LA County, home to 19% (roughly 163,000) of the county's young child population. These areas were selected based on data related to child vulnerability, poverty, and other indicators of need.^{vi} Best Start focused on four priority outcomes: **1. Children are born healthy; 2. Children maintain a healthy weight; 3. Children are safe from abuse and neglect; and 4. Children are ready for kindergarten.**^{vii} To achieve these outcomes, First 5 LA initially adopted a two-pronged strategy: strengthening families directly through support services while simultaneously building the capacity of communities and strengthening local systems to create the conditions necessary for young children to thrive.

- **Family Strengthening** - Ensures families can access high-quality supports – a coordinated set of direct services in select LA County communities beginning in pregnancy and continuing through age five, aimed at strengthening families and supporting optimal child development.^{viii}
- **Capacity Building** - A collaborative, community-driven approach that connects and strengthens local assets—among families, informal networks, and formal organizations—and leverages them toward shared goals. Its purpose is to foster stronger and new relationships that enable communities to take collective action on behalf of children prenatal to five and their families. First 5 LA's model requires leaders across multiple sectors within a geographic area to collaborate with residents to design and implement strategies that improve community conditions.^{ix}

By 2014, as First 5 LA's first strategic plan was concluding, the organization engaged in a deep learning process to maximize impact amid demographic shifts and declining Prop 10 revenues. In that learning process with partners, they shared:

- **Investments were spread too thinly** to produce sustained impact;
- **Systems change activities**, such as public education, technical assistance, capacity building, and innovation grants, were **highly diverse, insufficiently coordinated, and lacked a unified, outcome-oriented framework**;
- **There was limited clarity**, internally and externally, about First 5 LA's goals and its specific role in driving improvements for children from prenatal to age five; and
- Because revenues were declining, **First 5 LA needed to shift from funding direct services to prioritizing systems-level change** to achieve long-term impact.^x

Building on these insights, First 5 LA moved toward a new phase in Best Start's evolution, marked by significant shifts in the initiative's design and in First 5 LA's approach, leading to the **regional grantee model**.^{xi} In 2018, the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners approved five

Regional Network Grantees (RNGs), marking a move toward a regional model for community engagement and systems change.

Each RNG convenes partners to collaborate, learn, and take collective action, oversees the progress of local networks, and coordinates with contracted partners to advance broader policy and systems change outcomes.^{xii xiii xiv} This model recognized and built on the assets already present in communities, including strong relationships and deep local knowledge, while creating new opportunities for organizational network building, cross-community learning, and collective advocacy.

Building on the transition to a regional approach and the expanded focus on systems change, First 5 LA's work continued to evolve toward addressing the deeper, systemic factors influencing child and family well-being, recognizing that improving outcomes for children and families requires more than enhancing individual service systems. It demands addressing systemic root causes and transforming the underlying conditions—policies, practices, relationships, and mindsets—that shape community life. Driven by the changing fiscal landscape and ongoing learning and feedback from communities, RNG's became more focused on developing regional strategies to address families' basic needs, such as housing, food, and transportation, as well as foundational supports to child and family well-being. This change is also driven by what First 5 LA saw in the data that areas of highest needs are shifting across the region.

Consequently, around 2020, equity was embraced as a core organizational value and formally adopted by the Commissioners as one of the agency's investment guidelines. Additionally, First 5 LA's current strategic plan (2024–2029) established a primary goal focused on ensuring that children prenatal to age five and their families have their basic needs met, along with objectives aimed at reducing poverty, advancing equity by reducing racial, economic and geographic disparities, and addressing housing insecurity.^{xv}

Unique Contribution to Place Based Approaches

Best Start's influence spans efforts to improve policies and practices, deepen cross-sector collaboration to strengthen public systems, and partner with communities to improve the environments where young children live, learn, and play.^{xvi} Additionally, Best Start's substantial investment, over fifteen years, is unique in that they not only have continued to focus on community-based efforts, they have evolved their approach in response to what they have learned in partnership with communities, all while navigating changing demographic conditions, and declining revenue. Concrete examples of its unique contributions include:

Intentional Community Capacity Building as Infrastructure: The focus on community capacity building was intentionally designed to fill a gap in other place-based efforts that tended to focus more on programmatic and population level outcomes from the start, rather than recognizing that communities often need more time and support to build the infrastructure to do work differently. That intentionality on building community capacity at

the same time that efforts were being made to improve service coordination, built trust with residents and local organizations, and the deep partnership from a funder like First 5 LA was a thoughtful approach that centered community need and priorities at the outset.

Learning While Doing—Embedding Continuous Improvement: Another important aspect of this was the investment into learning while doing that has been a key part of Best Start throughout its evolution. The documentation of lessons learned, investments in a community of practice and development of a learning agenda allowed for transparency in real time of what was working and what could be improved, allowing First 5 LA to adjust the strategy and their support as the work evolved. Embedded learning is a rare but critical feature that sets Best Start apart, offering a model of how place-based initiatives can remain responsive in complex environments.

Managing the Complex Transition from Local to Regional Scale: Finally, the move from community-based work to a more regional approach is not without challenges and many place-based efforts have not survived this transition. Best Start has documented these challenges, and the lessons learned from these provide invaluable insights for the field. The work to improve population level-outcomes is critical for any community, yet the cross-sector, systems change, advocacy and mobilization that it requires can only move at the speed of trust and partnership, something that Best Start has deeply invested in over the years. That investment is a critical lesson for other initiatives contemplating similar transitions and underscores the importance of patience, transparency, and relationship building for sustainable impact.

These learnings offer a roadmap for place-based and systems change efforts nationally. Best Start’s approach demonstrates that lasting change depends on more than just programmatic success or policy shifts alone. It requires cultivating equitable community ecosystems where residents share power and shape the very systems that affect their lives. As First 5 LA moves forward, centering these principles will continue to advance equity and improved outcomes for children and families in LA County and as a model for the broader field.

Key Findings and Reflections

First 5 LA’s move to fund local RNG’s to support the five regions enabled cross-community learning, resource mobilization, and unified advocacy agendas, positioning Best Start to address inequity at scale. This transition reflects a recognition that systemic change requires not only strong local leadership but also regional alignment to influence policy, institutional practices, and funding priorities countywide. The regional approach delivered measurable progress and surfaced critical insights for future work. However, declining revenues will necessitate shifts in how First 5 LA’s investment into Best Start evolves and is built upon to continue to drive towards systems change and contribute to improvements in population level outcomes for LA County’s youngest children. The following findings highlight both the progress made and the ongoing challenges, illustrating the initiative’s resilience and adaptability as it continued to evolve.

- **Place-Based Focus on Equity Works:** Regions embedded equity principles into governance, piloting participatory grantmaking, and advocacy agendas—moving from representation to structural reforms such as housing justice, food sovereignty, and maternal health equity.
- **Supporting Leadership and Capacity Building:** Regions also addressed development for the early care and education workforce through funding the training, recruitment, and retention of childcare workers and building policy agendas to support the workforce.
- **Crisis Responsiveness with a Systemic Lens Matters:** During COVID-19, ongoing targeting of immigrant communities, and the aftermath from intense fires ravaging Los Angeles communities, regions pivoted rapidly to provide food, PPE, and emergency relief while maintaining momentum on long-term systems change goals—demonstrating resilience and adaptability. This was possible with the support and flexibility of First 5 LA as a funder to support RNGs in meeting the needs of the community over strictly adhering to measurables within existing contracts.
- **Cross-Sector Collaboration Advances Systems Change:** Partnerships bridged community-led initiatives with institutional actors, influencing practices in healthcare, housing, education, and local government, and modeling authentic inclusion strategies to address racial and cultural divides. This requires transparent communication and a commitment to partnerships with a shared vision towards improving outcomes for young children.

SUCCESSES

The successes highlighted here are just a sample of the achievements and cumulative results produced by Best Start during its 15+ years of investment and support from First 5 LA.

Strong Local and Regional Partnerships Can Advance Equity

First 5 LA's investments in RNG's across five regions enabled targeted efforts to develop processes to address racial, economic, and regional inequities while building leadership capacity and strengthening partnerships across sectors and communities. These investments empowered communities to identify their unique demographic needs and support initiatives that addressed both shared challenges and distinct concerns within each region. Across the regions, this commitment translated into identifying diverse leaders, the development of authentic community leadership and decision-making, and ensuring that systems change remained rooted in communities' direct expressed needs.

Across the five regions, Best Start demonstrated a commitment to racial equity by recruiting diverse local leaders from the community and by supporting them through addressing cultural barriers and power imbalances. Best Start sites recognized that to properly represent community interests in the different regions, explicit attention needed to be given to ensuring that a diversity of families were at the table and could effectively participate in decision-making, grantmaking, and advocacy efforts.

Critically, Best Start's work in the five regions did not merely engage parents and residents as consultants, but also as decision-makers. In adopting governance philosophies that further codified transparent communication, equal and equitable voice, trauma-informed approaches, cultural responsiveness, and participatory planning processes the Best Start regions framed equity as something they practiced everyday not just an intended value.^{xvii} A key example of how RNG's operationalized shared decision-making was through their approach to engaging community members in deciding the communities' priorities.

Across regions, efforts to develop diverse leadership and address systemic barriers were paired with the recognition that meeting families' basic needs is critical. Direct service providers are essential contributors to the broader ecosystem of organizations working toward systems change at both regional and county levels.^{xviii} Their work not only meets immediate needs but also creates the stability necessary for families to participate meaningfully in longer-term systems change efforts. This understanding is reflected in First 5 LA's 2024–2029 strategic plan, which established a primary goal focused on ensuring that children prenatal to age five and their families have their basic needs met, along with objectives aimed at reducing poverty and addressing housing insecurity.^{xix} The strategic plan also reflects the need for, and a commitment to, addressing racial, economic, and regional disparities.

Investing in Regional Capacity and Connections Can Move Towards Systemic Change

First 5 LA's investments in RNG's across five regions also created new opportunities to connect community priorities with systems leaders who can advance change, build organizational networks, and pair direct service with collective advocacy. This fostered collaboration, cross-community learning, and resource sharing critical to sustaining long-term change.

Regions opened new learning and networking spaces that had not previously existed, offering partners valuable opportunities for collaboration and shared growth. These spaces allowed partners to exchange critical information, learn from one another, and better understand how to deploy their resources in ways that strengthened their own work and the regional network as a whole.

A key element of this approach was the development of a core community leadership body, which allowed community residents to stay central to the initiative instead of as a peripheral or token group. Furthermore, the various approaches RNGs took to share decision-making—participatory budgeting, developing the community change agendas, pursuing the agendas in regional meetings with external stakeholders—all aimed to ensure that Best Start's community members were not just informers or advisors, but partners with skills that will persist separately from First 5 LA and continue to have a lasting ripple effect in local early childhood efforts. Best Start's approach to leadership development of parents and other

community members did not just benefit the initiative itself; it also built the capacity of community members to share their knowledge throughout their respective regions.

Adopting a regional network structure fostered cross-community learning and resource mobilization that moved community priorities forward and supported the health of organizations in the regions. By aligning local partnerships under a shared philosophy, Best Start streamlined resources and coordination while honoring local context—a critical insight for scaling place-based work without diluting community ownership.^{xx}

Beyond progressing the Best Start community agendas, the regional structure also strengthened partner organizations in the regions through critical professional development and technical assistance, which was vital for smaller organizations with fewer resources. This significantly helped smaller community organizations remain stable and participate effectively, reducing competitive barriers and ensuring those closest to the community could lead.^{xxi}

CHALLENGES

Many of the challenges that surfaced during the transition from 14 communities to the RNG model remain relevant and should be considered when shaping the next phase of work. The challenges uncovered during the Best Start initiative highlight a fundamental truth: advancing equity through systems change demands far more than programmatic tweaks—it requires transforming the deep, interconnected conditions that sustain inequities.

Need for Ongoing Capacity Building With Declining Revenue

Sustainable transformation requires intentional, simultaneous shifts focused not just on the RNGs and Best Start communities, but also on the public systems and funded entities. These shifts must occur internally (e.g., how RNGs and public systems operate as distinct entities) and externally (e.g., how RNGs and public systems operate together as collaborators). It also requires attentiveness to power dynamics involved when larger institutional actors pursue change in community conditions and outcomes. In many instances, the intention is there to do equitable work, but less attention is paid to the power dynamics at play, particularly with philanthropic, local government and systems leaders leading collective impact work, and only marginally allowing for community residents to be at decision-making tables. Participants in the RNG Community of Practice noted how challenging it can be to maintain a sense of ownership as the work expands to an even larger regional scale. They elevated concerns about power dynamics—specifically, how to preserve the autonomy communities have built, and how to ensure parent and family voice remains centered when the shift towards population-level outcomes and systems change can feel distant from immediate neighborhood priorities.

Addressing Basic Needs While Advancing Systems Change

Shifting population level outcomes for families and children requires addressing multiple systemic factors, something place-based initiatives, even working across sectors, find

challenging to do. First 5 LA's Best Start Learning Agenda, an effort focused on documenting and communicating the initiative-level results emerging from the Best Start effort, revealed the challenge of pivoting to systems change through entities that did not all have prior experience with such an approach. Early findings of the Learning Agenda revealed a recurring theme across all regions: partners described a persistent tension between meeting immediate community needs, such as housing, food security, childcare access, and transportation, and advancing long-term systems change work.^{xxii} While every region reported engaging in systems change activities, some RNGs with longstanding direct-service backgrounds acknowledged that shifting toward systems change work was challenging.^{xxiii}

Although Best Start was designed to reduce silos, regions continued to experience difficulty moving fully into advocacy and systems change work, especially implementing practice-level changes aimed at strengthening social conditions, when local partners themselves felt unable to advance systems change or felt fragmented and disconnected. Challenges to systems work also applied to the funded entities and public systems, with the Best Start communities having to contend with developing relationships with systems leaders and pushing against mental models in which community members are passive residents instead of leaders and decision-makers themselves.

Best Start partners were ultimately able to work intentionally to blend these approaches, addressing basic needs through direct services while simultaneously using advocacy and political education to influence policy and systems change over time.^{xxiv} However, these initial struggles highlight the importance of coordination in a place-based initiative focused on systems change to ensure that all partners are able to do the work that entails, and why the capacity-building efforts Best Start provided were so critical. The inclusion of systems change work would not be possible without dedicated resources and time spent working with partners to build the skills needed for advocacy.

Considerations

As First 5 LA looks ahead to achieve the goals outlined in its 2024-2029 strategic plan, it is clear that the Best Start model will need to continue to evolve. First 5 LA's declining revenues present a salient constraint that requires judicious identification of what aspects of this Best Start work can best inform future efforts. The next phase and any future investments made by First 5 LA should build on the trust, hard work, and capacity cultivated within local communities and RNGs. These relationships are the foundation of authentic engagement and durable systems change. At the same time, it is important to consider how best to support existing RNGs in the near term, focusing on sustaining their current work and preserving the trusting relationships they have built with communities, while also planning for a longer term- strategy that does not require ongoing or indefinite organizational support. This is important to preserve the infrastructure of community leadership and advocacy as well as ensure equity remains at the heart of this work. By continuing to invest in regional

communities and honoring the lessons learned, First 5 LA can contribute to a more just, inclusive, and resilient LA County.

Invest in Capacity and Network Support to Advance Systems Change

First 5 LA has a legacy of investing directly in communities for the past fifteen years through Best Start. As they continue to develop the next funding approach, identifying high need areas within LA County and continuing to support local communities, it will have to make tough decisions based on funding constraints and declining revenue. Whatever direction First 5 LA goes next must be clearly communicated, so that current grantees understand the decisions and what factors were considered, including how lessons learned from the current investments have informed future efforts. This approach helps to preserve trust with communities by reinforcing local and regional partners' agency in the work.

First 5 LA has invested much in community capacity and network building, resulting in demonstrated trust built with organizations and communities in each of the RNG areas. Yet challenges with trust and communication remain. The findings from the RNG community of practice demonstrate that RNG's still struggle to feel deeply connected with each other and to maximize their efforts to do systems change and advocacy work, yet they agree it is critical to continue to work together to ensure broader impact for children and families across LA County. As First 5 LA considers how to approach future investments in communities, these considerations will be important. The successes of the current relationship infrastructure should be considered in any future design – whether that be a community of practice, the RNG cross-regional alignment group, or others that foster a sense of community, ensure transparency of decision-making, and facilitate information sharing. This not only helps to retain and build trust, but it can also allow grantees to better align their efforts to address shared priorities, collaborate across regions, and work together on approaches to address systemic level issues, like housing, poverty alleviation, and culturally affirming services.

Establish Clear Metrics for Success

As First 5 LA moves forward with the 2024–2029 Strategic Plan having a strong understanding of how future investments are expected to contribute to population level outcomes will be important for credibility and sustainability. Using frameworks like the Results-Based Accountability framework, First 5 LA can work with grantees to develop measures of progress that show the difference these investments are making, and how they are contributing to improved child well-being outcomes across LA County, and in particular high-need regions. This will be important for documenting the success of any systems change and advocacy related efforts, demonstrating the ability to influence change at scale across LA County. Strategies and evaluation efforts should be considered alongside neighborhood and demographic trends in Los Angeles County, including a sustained decline in the child population. Between 2018 and 2025, the number of children ages 0–17 declined from 2.64 million to 1.89 million (a 28.5% reduction), and the population of children ages 0–5 decreased from 731,363 to 524,600 (a 28.3% reduction).^{xxv xxvi}

Focus on Systems Change

Achieving population level change in a county the size of Los Angeles is difficult, yet Best Start has demonstrated that a regional approach can result in clear systems change efforts, based on years of relationship building, trust, and partnership. While there may not be a “one size fits all” approach to this work, or one type of organization that can lead it, a closer look at the key components of RNG’s successes could offer insights for future funding approaches. One organization may be best positioned to support and lift up the voices of community members, while another might be better positioned to convene cross-sector partners and sway local government through policy advocacy. As First 5 LA looks ahead, preserving these core strengths will be essential.

No one organization can carry the weight for systemic change alone. That is where First 5 LA’s role as a funder and convener becomes vital, bringing the range of partners together that can work across regions to collaborate on a greater scale. This will be critically important as they seek to improve population level outcomes, and working across sectors, with partners involved in the design of a new approach, will be key to ensuring a focus on identifying the systemic drivers of inequities are being addressed.

As noted earlier, a key lesson learned is balancing immediate community needs, such as housing, food security, childcare access, and transportation, with the long game of systems change. Encouragingly, with support from First 5 LA, Best Start partners are working intentionally to blend these approaches, addressing basic needs through direct services while simultaneously using advocacy and political education to influence policy and systems change over time.

Moving forward, continuing to support regional approaches that can address both urgent needs and systemic transformation will be important for First 5 LA’s future funding decisions.

Closing Summary

This report is intended to inform First 5 LA’s decision-making as it charts its path ahead ensuring the at future efforts respond to evolving challenges and build on the successes and lessons of Best Start to create a more equitable and resilient Los Angeles County for children and families. First 5 LA has an incredible opportunity to build on the strong foundation of community investment and systems change through its work with Best Start. This report distills valuable lessons from their fifteen-year investment, highlighting the power of regional collaboration, authentic community leadership, and sustained partnerships in advancing equity and improving outcomes for young children and families. These findings underscore the importance of preserving and strengthening the trust, relationships, and leadership capacity that have been cultivated across communities and regions. These elements are essential as First 5 LA considers how to align its future investments with goals outlined in its 2024-2029 Strategic Plan. At the same time, the fiscal reality of declining revenue, and the data that shows that disparities in outcomes for young children across LA County continues to persist. First 5 LA should consider what is feasible, and what elements of the existing

model should continue. It is clear that a continued focus on equity, capacity building, and supporting organizations to address basic needs while tackling the systemic drivers of inequity remain critical aspects of this approach. Thinking about what organizations will need to succeed in an ever-shifting political environment will also be important. Moving forward, balancing immediate community needs with long-term systems transformation will be critical. Transparent communication, shared decision-making, and clear roles will help maintain the momentum and trust necessary for meaningful change.

ENDNOTES

- ⁱ Emergent Models of Place-Based Philanthropy: A Review of Six Foundations' Initiatives. The Foundation Review, Easterling, D., 2025
- ⁱⁱ Emergent Models of Place-Based Philanthropy: A Review of Six Foundations' Initiatives. The Foundation Review, Easterling, D., 2025
- ⁱⁱⁱ A Blueprint for the Next Generation of Federal Place-Based Policy. Urban Institute, Turner, et al., 2021
- ^{iv} What makes place-based partnerships work: Insights from the field. Bellwether, Miller, et al., 2025
- ^v Emergent Models of Place-Based Philanthropy: A Review of Six Foundations' Initiatives. The Foundation Review, Easterling, D., 2025
- ^{vi} 2009-2015 First 5 LA Strategic Plan: Implementation Plan
- ^{vii} 2009-2015 First 5 LA Strategic Plan: Implementation Plan
- ^{viii} 2009-2015 First 5 LA Strategic Plan: Implementation Plan
- ^{ix} 2009-2015 First 5 LA Strategic Plan: Implementation Plan
- ^x 2014 First 5 LA Strategic Plan
- ^{xi} Regional Support Network Request for Proposals Memo to First 5 LA Executive Director, 2017
- ^{xii} Rooted in Community: Cultivating and Ecosystem of Care for Young Children and Families, 2025
- ^{xiii} Regional Support Network Request for Proposals Memo to First 5 LA Executive Director, 2017
- ^{xiv} Best Start Learnings Memo to Board, 2021
- ^{xv} 2024-2029 First 5 LA Strategic Plan
- ^{xvi} Rooted in Community: Cultivating and Ecosystem of Care for Young Children and Families, 2025
- ^{xvii} Compton/East Compton Community Identified Project Funds, Proposed Funding Priorities, 2018; Region 2 Regional and Local Network Partner Organizations, 2021; Findings from Interviews with Best Start Region 2, 2025
- ^{xviii} Key Learnings from the Best Start LA Discovery Phase, Best Start Learning Agenda Research Team, 2022
- ^{xix} 2024-2029 First 5 LA Strategic Plan
- ^{xx} Best Start Region 1, Para los Ninos Annual Report, Quarter 4, 2019
- ^{xxi} Best Start Region 2, Community Health Councils, Budget Narrative, 2019; 2022-2023 Semi-Annual Progress Interview Report for Grantees, Region 2, Community Health Councils, Inc.,
- ^{xxii} Best Start Learnings Memo to Board, 2021
- ^{xxiii} Key Learnings from the Best Start LA Discovery Phase, Best Start Learning Agenda Research Team, 2022
- ^{xxiv} Rooted in Community: Cultivating and Ecosystem of Care for Young Children and Families, 2025
- ^{xxv} Kidsdata.org, data source includes California Department of Finance and the U.S. Census Bureau
- ^{xxvi} California Department of Finance, 2022 Projections

FIRST 5 LA

SUBJECT:

First 5 LA Best Start Reflections and Findings Report

BACKGROUND

First 5 LA engaged the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) to complete a Reflections and Findings Report of the Best Start Communities model as it undergoes a process to evolve the model in response to fiscal reality and in alignment with the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan. This memo provides a high-level summary of the Best Start Reflections and Findings Report and February board presentation. The report synthesizes documentation and stakeholder interviews to examine the evolution of the place-based initiative, highlight its unique contributions, successes, and challenges, and outlines key considerations for First 5 LA's long-term community initiative.

While Best Start began as a community-specific effort launched in 2009–2010 across 14 Best Start Communities, it evolved significantly after 2018 when First 5 LA shifted to a Regional Network Grantee (RNG) model across five regions within LA County. The analysis is intended to support Board discussions regarding the future of community investments in alignment with First 5 LA's long-term financial plan (LTFP) and the 2024–2029 Strategic Plan.

DISCUSSION

During the February Board of Commissioners meeting, CSSP and staff will provide an overview of Best Start's 15-year evolution and impact, including evidence of regional capacity, community leadership development, and contributions to systems change. The presentation will also highlight key challenges and lessons learned throughout the transition from 14 Best Start Communities to a regional model, as well as considerations for future investment strategies aligned with the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan goals and the nine objectives with particular focus on meeting families' basic needs, including housing, and early care education culturally affirming services, and catalyzing systems change for the benefit of all children in the county.

The presentation will outline considerations for First 5 LA's future work by providing an overview of Best Start's evolution toward a cross-regional, systems-focused strategy and highlighting both progress made and ongoing challenges. It will underscore the need to continue evolving the model while ensuring transparent communication, sustained investment in relationships and connections, establishing clear metrics for success, and a sharpened role for First 5 LA as a funder, connector, and advocate.

Looking ahead, the 2024–2029 Strategic Plan requires First 5 LA to expand access to prevention services that can effectively address the basic needs of families through a more integrated and adaptive approach that includes population-level outcomes. To meet these expectations, we will evolve the Communities model to integrate basic needs within a Hubs framework, while simultaneously leveraging community engagement, education and advocacy, and systems-change efforts to support both immediate needs and long-term solutions.

NEXT STEPS

Staff's next steps include developing clear messaging for grantees and communities about future direction including the following: applying First 5 LA's equity index; determining which elements of the current Best Start should be preserved or adapted; defining evaluation metrics that more accurately reflect systems-level impact and population-level outcomes; and developing a plan to

support transitions that safeguard community trust and honor the leadership structures and capacity built over the past 15 years.