

# Summary of Commission Actions



Champions For Our Children  
www.First5LA.org

## Meeting of March 13, 2014

### New Governance Guidelines Adopted

The First 5 LA Commission last week approved new governance guidelines to promote transparency, consistency, and focus in First 5 LA decision-making, budget development and strategic planning.

The guidelines are one of three important activities taking place this year to support greater focus, sustainability, and accountability for the Commission as it begins to adjust its rate of future spending in the face of continued declining tobacco revenues that First 5 LA faces. The other two Commission actions are a recently approved long term financial projection and the upcoming development of First 5 LA's strategic plan for 2015-20.

At its meeting in February, the First 5 LA Commission unanimously approved a five-year long term financial projection that indicates the agency must adjust its rate of future spending in the face of continued declining tobacco revenues. Since 1998, First 5 LA's annual revenues from the Proposition 10 tax on tobacco products have steadily decreased from an average of approximately \$180 million annually between 1998 and 2000 to about \$90 million for the current year.

The 10 new guidelines address the areas of process, fiscal accountability and strategic planning:

#### Process

- Sequencing of Commission action items
- Staff presentations

#### Fiscal Accountability

- Long term financial projection
- "Paygo"/funding source for new initiatives
- Sustainability
- Leveraging
- Expiring grants

#### Strategic Planning (2015-20)

- Strategic Plan as decision-making document
- Alignment of prior initiatives with new Strategic Plan
- Criteria for new initiatives/programs

The new guidelines establish the Commission's expectations that contractors and grantees not presume First 5 LA funding to be a permanent source of funding and services. For example, the new guidelines clearly state that each First 5 LA contract/grant will have an expiration date and that multi-year

### Highlights

- New Commission governance guidelines approved
- 2014 Legislative Agenda approved
- Strategic planning consultant selected
- State policy and advocacy activities updated

### COMMISSIONERS

Los Angeles County Supervisor  
Don Knabe  
Chair

Nancy Haruye Au  
Vice Chair

Jane Boeckmann

Philip L. Browning

Arturo Delgado, Ed.D.

Duane Dennis

Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D.,  
M.P.H.

Sandra Figueroa-Villa

Neal Kaufman, M.D., M.P.H

### EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Patricia Curry

Karla Pleitéz Howell

Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.

Deanne Tilton



First 5 LA services-related investments will end pursuant to the time stated in the original allocation or grant award. In addition, new sustainability and leveraging guidelines will require future applicants for First 5 LA grant support to demonstrate how they will sustain activity beyond the term of First 5 LA funding and leverage other sources of support.

Under the new procedures, Belshé said the Commission could waive certain guidelines to respond to pressing circumstances and needs; such exceptions would require a minimum of 7 of the 9 voting members of the Commission to agree.

First 5 LA staff will now work with the Board's Executive Committee to incorporate the Governance Guidelines into the appropriate implementation vehicle, such as the Commission bylaws, internal administrative and Board policies, and the 2015-20 strategic plan.

## **2014 Legislative Agenda Approved**

The Commission unanimously approved the criteria for developing First 5 LA's Annual Legislative Agenda as well as First 5 LA's 2014 Legislative Agenda, which is intended to guide First 5 LA's Policy Department's activities during the second half of the 2013-14 legislative session.

Policy Director James Lau received the Commission's approval of the first installment of the 2014 Legislative Agenda, which represents First 5 LA's positions on legislation currently under consideration by the State Legislature.

The second installment of bills will be presented for approval at the April Commission meeting and will include bills that were filed through the February 21 deadline for legislation. The Legislative Agenda is subject to modification as bills are amended or new legislation is introduced.

The seven bills approved for inclusion in the 2014 State Legislative Agenda are described below:

- AB 357 (Pan): Creates the Children's Health Advisory Board by transferring the Healthy Families Advisory Panel (HFAP) from the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board (MRMIB) to the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).
- AB 1174 (Bocanegra): Virtual Dental Health Clinics – Facilitates the Virtual Dental Home model by authorizing new duties of dental assistants and hygienists and authorizes Medi-Cal payments for teledentistry services.
- AB 1454 (Calderon): Care Facilities – Improves the quality of early care programs by requiring the Department of Social Services (DSS) to conduct annual unannounced visits of licensed community care facilities, including family child care homes, child care centers and children's residential facilities.
- SB 593 (Lieu): Social Impact Partnerships – Authorizes the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to administer the Social Impact Partnership Pilot Program until January 1, 2020.
- SB 837 (Steinberg): Transitional Kindergarten – The Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2014 requires each school district or charter school that offers kindergarten to make voluntary transitional kindergarten available for all 4-year-olds.
- SB 899 (Mitchell): CalWORKs Eligibility – Repeals the Maximum Family Grant (MFG) rule in CalWORKS in order to provide for the basic needs of a newborn. The bill would increase parent support during a critical time in the development of a child.

- SB 909 (Pavley): Screening – Permits a social worker to authorize an initial medical, dental and mental health screening of a child in temporary custody without parental consent or a court order.

For SB837, First 5 LA adopted a position of “Support, if Amended”. This bill would potentially provide all four-year olds with the opportunity to enroll in high-quality, early learning programs. This goal aligns with First 5 LA’s Policy Agenda.

Lau said that First 5 LA has concerns with this bill and believes that it could be strengthened so that transitional kindergarten helps to improve child outcomes. At this stage of the legislative process, this bill is still a work in progress. First 5 LA will be advocating for linkage of SB 837 with SB 1123, Senator Liu’s bill that doubles the number of 0-3 served. Together, these bills form a package that truly represents a comprehensive 0-5 strategy, Lau said.

## **Strategic Plan Consulting Team Chosen**

Learning For Action (LFA) was awarded a 15 month, \$250,000 contract to provide consultation services and supports to First 5 LA staff and Commission in the development of the First 5 LA FY 2015-2020 Strategic Plan: Focusing for the Future. This includes designing and developing a three phased development process from March 2014 to June 2015. LFA has worked on strategic plans or evaluations with several other First 5 commissions throughout the state. In partnership with First 5 LA staff, LFA will support and facilitate strategic discussions, analyses, decision making and engagement of internal and external stakeholders to develop a plan that will bring greater focus and clarity of the organization’s role and impact. Following approval of the plan in November 2014, LFA will continue to work with staff and the Commission to support initial implementation efforts through the early part of 2015.

## **Executive Director’s Report**

Executive Director Kim Belshé reminded commissioners that there will be a celebration of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of Proposition 10 in the state capitol on March 19<sup>th</sup>. Dozens of the county commissions and First 5 California will be attending. First 5 LA has provided much of the leadership and support for this event. Our own commissioner Karla Pleitéz Howell will be representing First 5 LA. This is an exciting opportunity to shine the light on First 5 county commissions around the state in terms of improving outcomes for children, talk about successes in terms of health, safety and school readiness of children and use it as an opportunity to have meetings with members of legislature about leadership and the board of equalization on the legislative fee associated with managing tobacco revenues, which is a major and growing draw on all county revenues.

Belshé also noted that the state First 5 commission has unveiled a new social marketing campaign targeted at parents and caregivers with information about importance of reading, talking and singing on brain development for infants and toddlers during their pre-kindergarten years.

As for the new strategic plan, Belshé said a subset of commissioners and senior staff will be interviewed by the newly hired consulting staff to identify key issues. This will be followed by a daylong workshop for staff.

This year, First 5 LA will be moving from listening and learning to our third “L” – leading. As Belshé reflects on the last year and the learning from L3, the Best Start inquiry, other inputs as well as her own observations, the following captured her “top ten take-aways”:

1. First 5 LA represents an important part in LA County’s early child development “ecology”, but can contribute to greater impact for children.

2. Our four overarching Strategic Plan 2009-15 goals represent First 5 LA's "North Star", though their number and breadth make it difficult to demonstrate impact, implementation of key strategic plan strategies are only now taking hold, and county-wide augmentations have diffused focus.
3. Focus, alignment of work, and commitment to a clear strategic direction are pre-requisites to impact.
4. We play many roles, but lack clarity and consensus on our primary role(s) beyond funder.
5. Our contribution to impact has been at the participant level, with limited evidence of impact at the County-level.
6. Our portfolio of 58 projects/initiatives is neither strategic relative to impact and role nor sustainable relative to First 5 LA's declining revenues and fund balance. In addition, the numerous projects/initiative First 5 LA supports are diverse and disparate, rather than aligned and coordinated, further contributing to our difficulty in assessing and achieving impact.
7. First 5 LA's declining revenues compel a different approach to our work – one that is less about funding services and more about leading, advocating, partnering, convening around clear priorities.
8. First 5 LA's resources are limited relative to the scope and complexity of need; importance of humility and strategic partnerships with "unusual suspects."
9. We support all 0-5 children via policy, advocacy, communications, and other "systems" investments and invest further in higher-risk communities and families/children.
10. Our impact is the product of internal capacity to execute, in addition to strategic focus, clarity of role, alignment of investments, strategic and diverse partnerships.

---

The First 5 LA Board of Commissioners is comprised of 17 members (nine voting, four ex-officio, four alternates). The board includes voting members appointed by each of the Los Angeles County supervisors and the L.A. County departments of Children and Family Services, Public Health and **Mental Health**. The Chairman of the L.A. County Board of Supervisors also serves as Chairman of the First 5 LA Commission. The Board also includes representatives from other educational, children and families organizations throughout the county. The Board of Commissioners meets on the second Thursday of each month at 1:30 p.m. unless otherwise indicated at the First 5 LA offices. All meetings are open to the public and agendas are posted [here](#) at least 72 hours in advance.