APPENDIX G

THE COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES FUND BACKGROUND

First 5 LA’s Community Opportunities Fund (COF) established a new funding mechanism for the Commission. COF reflected a focus on funding sustainable change within both organizations and communities. A total of $13 million was allocated to COF with $3.25 million available for each of four funding cycles. The final RFP was released and awarded in 2008-2010 and there will not be any future cycles or new funding for COF specifically. All of the intended funds are now committed.

Types of Grants

Because COF was intended to initiate sustainable and systematic change at the organizational and community levels, COF was not designed to fund direct services. Two specific types of support were funded: (1) organizational capacity building and (2) policy and advocacy grants.

Cycles One and Two funded both organizational capacity building and policy and advocacy projects. Policy and advocacy grants were to address goals of the 2007-2009 First 5 LA Policy Agenda.

Cycle Three funded only policy and advocacy, and was designed to support policy change related to the following priority outcomes as outlined in the 2009-2015 Strategic Plan:

- Babies are born healthy
- Children maintain a healthy weight
- Children are safe from abuse and neglect
- Children are ready for kindergarten

Policy and Advocacy projects were approved to include policy activities, advocacy activities, or both, in an effort to achieve systems change.

For the purposes of COF, policy was defined as: rules, standards, guidelines or laws enacted by government, organizations or communities to influence the behavior of systems, communities or individuals and/or to direct resources to lead to long-term sustainable impact on one of the First 5 LA policy goals.

For the purposes of COF, advocacy was defined as the effort to raise public or policymaker awareness in order to achieve one of the policy goals at the organizational, community, city, county, state, or federal level. Selected applicants were awarded a maximum of $500,000 to be distributed over no more than five years.

Cycle Four funded only organizational capacity building projects.