SUBJECT:
Best Start LA Communications Budget

RECOMMENDATION:

The Public Affairs department is requesting a budget of $9,700,000 million over a seven or eight year period from the $125 million Best Start LA budget allocation in order to implement a successful communications and public education campaign for the five Demonstration Communities. The total budget to support education and communications efforts is less than eight percent of Best Start LA’s overall budget, and is less than the percentages allocated by the Commission to the E.C.E. Workforce Development, Oral Health and Nutrition, and the Parent Helpline initiatives.

BACKGROUND:
The implementation of the Best Start LA focus area is taking First 5 LA in a new direction. The Commission has encouraged First 5 LA staff to take a “high engagement” approach in how the various elements of Best Start LA role out, including the consistent and appropriate use of the First 5 LA and Best Start LA brands in all components. To this end, in February 2009, the Commission approved the hiring of a Marketing Coordinator whose primary role and responsibility is coordinating the marketing and communication activities associated with Best Start LA. In addition to approving this position, the Commission had previously allocated, in August 2007, $500,000 from the Best Start LA (then called “P to 3”) allocation to be used for public education. As of June 1, 2009, approximately $350,000 has been spent or committed for Best Start LA public education.

Several contractors are already in place to support Best Start LA’s programmatic efforts, both for Demonstration Community #1 and across all five demonstration communities. Currently the contracts or Scopes of Work for these contractors do not include any dollars for marketing, communications or the creation of any promotional materials.

Per the direction of the Best Start LA liaisons, in order for the creation of any communication materials and the implementation of any social marketing strategies to commence, the Commission must approve an additional allocation from the Best Start LA budget. This document is to serve as the basis for a proposed marketing and communications allocation from the $125 million Best Start LA budget. Once the Commission approves an allocation, a Request for Qualifications will be released for a Best Start LA Marketing and Communications consulting firm.
Reference – Communications Allocations for Other Initiatives

- **Parent Helpline**: As part of the $11 million allocation to implement First 5 LA’s Parent Helpline, $1.1 million, or 10 percent of the total budget, was allocated for public education about the benefits of calling the helpline.
- **ECE Workforce Development**: As part of the $15 million allocation, the Commission agreed to spend $2 million, or 13.5 percent, for public education. Since that initial allocation, the amount has been revised to $1.4 million, approximately 10 percent, and the Commission is currently in contract with VPE Public Relations to implement the marketing and communications efforts associated with this initiative.
- **Oral Health and Nutrition**: As part of the $10 million allocation, the Commission approved $1 million, or 10 percent, on public education, which has been used to implement the “They Do What You Do” media campaign in 2008 (promoting healthy food choices and good oral health) and the production of four *Ready. Set. Grow!* Family Guides, which have promoted oral health, active lifestyles and good eating habits.

**DISCUSSION:**

**Marketing and Communications for Best Start LA**

Best Start LA is a multi-dimensional focus area, which includes a wide range of strategies in various sectors. In order for these strategies to be effectively implemented, each requires a variety of communications efforts — from large events involving the entire Best Start LA community to tailored informational brochures given to each of the 60 providers working within California Hospital explaining the benefits of having their clients participate in the *Welcome Baby!* home engagement program.

This proposal addresses the wide range of public education activities that Best Start LA requires within each demonstration community and the county at large, as well as the communications needs of specific components of the focus area. It articulates what we believe to be the best approach to a marketing and communications plan that promotes Best Start LA’s messages and programmatic goals, and the budget necessary to achieve these goals. It is based upon our initial learnings, thoughts and assumptions about how Best Start LA will roll out in each community and across the county over the next seven or eight years. As the Best Start LA program unfolds, the First 5 LA Public Affairs department, along with our Best Start LA partners, will become more knowledgeable about the tools and techniques that are most effective in building public support around creating communities that are baby and family friendly. Based upon this knowledge, we will adjust the tools, specific budget allocations and the materials needed to best serve the communications needs of each demonstration community.

**Scope and Strategy**

The communications and public education goals for Best Start LA model the Public Affairs department’s goals for all of First 5 LA — a) support specific initiatives and programs with the design and production of informational and collateral material, and b) design and implement targeted or “placed-based” public education campaigns promoting specific information or behavior change. The ultimate goal of this approach is to educate the public about the...
importance of the first five years of life in a way that encourages the community to sustain these programs over time. In addition, the Public Affairs department will seek to include the key messages of Best Start LA in targeted or countywide public education campaigns promoting other First 5 LA programs or initiatives. The success of these materials or campaigns in supporting Best Start LA’s goals will depend upon several definable variables, such as budget, scope or duration, and also upon more ambiguous variables, such as timing and audience resonance.

Health and Social Behavior Change and Public Education

Many of the goals of Best Start LA seek to change the behavior of members of the community, and the communications efforts associated with Best Start LA will support these endeavors. The Public Affairs department and the Best Start LA Communications Task Force will look to draw knowledge and insight from social and health marketing efforts that have proven successful in the past. Some of these include the following:

- **Back to Sleep**: In 1995 the American Academy of Pediatrics released its first policy statement recommending that parents place babies on their back to sleep to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Shortly afterwards several national organizations concerned with children’s health launched the “Back to Sleep” social marketing campaign. The campaign has been widely credited for reducing rates of SIDS deaths by more than 50 percent.

- **Slip-Slop-Slap**: In 1980 a nonprofit organization in Australia launched a local social marketing campaign to reduce the high incidence of skin cancer in the area. The campaign exhorted people to "slip on a shirt, slop on sunscreen, and slap on a hat" when they go out into the sun. Funding for the campaign was eventually picked up by government agencies and expanded throughout the country. A range of studies on the effect of this campaign have found that school children’s knowledge of sunlight, skin cancer and sun protective behaviors has increased; use of hats, clothing and sunscreen to reduce exposure to sun has increased; sale of sunscreens has increased exponentially; and prevalence of sunburn has decreased.

- **VERB**: From 2002 to 2006 the CDC coordinated a national social marketing campaign designed to increase and maintain physical activity among children age 9 to 13. The campaign utilized paid advertising, marketing strategies and partnerships. Research shows that after just one year, VERB resulted in a 34 percent increase in weekly free-time physical activity sessions among 8.6 million children ages 9 to 10 in the U.S. In communities that received higher levels of VERB interventions, the increases in physical activity were more dramatic.
Best Start LA Communications Efforts by Programmatic Area

Given the breadth of the Best Start LA focus area, and that the program efforts are still taking shape, it is difficult to anticipate the support that every element will require. For budgeting purposes we have broken Best Start LA into the following focus areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welcome Baby!</strong></td>
<td>Recruitment materials (both for providers and families) and education and support materials for new parents for five years for five demonstration communities</td>
<td>$5,700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communications support for lead entity</strong></td>
<td>Outreach and governance efforts for five years in five demonstration communities. Could include promotional materials, Web sites, newsletters, communications training, policy and sustainability endeavors and other efforts to be determined.</td>
<td>$1,250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational and communications support for county-wide building blocks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best Start LA Public Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$9,850,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minus budget remaining from August 2007 allocation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allocation Request</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$9,700,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focus Area I: Home Visitation, aka Welcome Baby!

The goal for the number of home visitation interactions for the Welcome Baby! component of Best Start LA is ambitious. Using Demonstration Community #1 as an example, about 5,000 babies are born each year at the site’s partner hospital, California Hospital. The Best Start LA team has come up with the following matrix for registration and retention goals for three Welcome Baby! engagement points (California Hospital numbers in parenthesis):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement Point</th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Years 2–5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prenatal engagement point</td>
<td>40% (2,000)</td>
<td>60% (3,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital engagement point</td>
<td>50% (2,500)</td>
<td>90% (4,500)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Visit 1 and beyond</td>
<td>40% (2,000)</td>
<td>80% (4,000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On average the goal is to reach 80 percent of all expectant and new mothers each year in each demonstration community. At five years, that extrapolates to contact with about 20,000 new mothers in Demonstration Community #1. While the percentage goal for the other four communities will remain the same, the actual number of interactions will be based upon the number of new births in each of the demonstration communities.

Working in partnership with the Welcome Baby! lead agency, First 5 LA will produce educational and supportive collateral materials to be used in each of the five demonstration communities. The home visitation workers will use these materials as they educate and survey expectant and new mothers as well as reach out to providers in their efforts to recruit new participants. In addition, these materials will serve as aids in retaining families over the course of the seven scheduled Welcome Baby! visits.
In partnership with our Research and Evaluation team, the First 5 LA Public Affairs department will investigate the types of educational and support materials that are most effective in engaging, informing and retaining the families who participate in Welcome Baby! Based upon these investigations, the materials distributed by the home visitation workers may be revised.

Sponsorship of Incentives for Welcome Baby!

It is all too common for new parents to receive a gift of baby formula when they leave the hospital after delivery. While the negative aspect of this gift is that it implicitly discourages breastfeeding, from the manufacturer’s standpoint it is an effective marketing technique to advertise and promote their product to a new audience.

With Welcome Baby!, First 5 LA has the opportunity of partnering with appropriate businesses to provide incentives to expectant and new mothers as a way to encourage their participation in the program, to promote desirable behaviors as well as a way of reducing costs. Potential partners include:

- Manufacturers of breast pumps, car seats, diapers, children’s clothing and other businesses associated with new mothers and babies.
- Local businesses and service operators in each of the Best Start LA demonstration communities as a way to promote and support area resources.

Currently the First 5 LA Public Affairs department has a partnership policy in place as part of our Ready. Set. Grow! parent education marketing program. Our policy is to work with corporations or other entities that share a belief in our mission and objectives, and who do not participate in activities that act in conflict with First 5 LA’s values. Each partnership has its own Memorandum of Understanding, and First 5 LA can terminate the relationship at any time should new information arise about the partner that would in some way damage or harm First 5 LA’s good reputation and/or standing in the community.

It is the recommendation of the First 5 LA Public Affairs department to pursue sponsorship of Welcome Baby! supporting materials as a way of reducing implementation costs, thereby increasing the likelihood of program sustainability. It should be noted that some public agencies choose not to participate in these types of partnerships. As a reference, UCLA has the following policy, “Investigators should not provide subjects with private industry sponsor’s advertising materials (i.e., items containing the sponsor’s name, logo, commercially identifiable marking or drug name) as a method of payment.”

The Use of Incentives for Educational and Retention Purposes

Research shows that incentives are widely used to increase participation in home visitation programs and surveys, and to encourage improved health-related behaviors. Empirical evidence suggests that they are effective for achieving those goals. The incentives used by pre- and postnatal visitation programs are commonly in-kind gifts that would be useful to the parent and/or child, and are nominal in nature.

Randomized control studies in survey research find that incentives are effective for increasing survey participation and completion. Similarly, research shows that incentives are moderately effective in leading to desired positive changes in health-related behaviors.
Most programs that provided incentives offered in-kind gifts rather than cash. Incentives used included all of the following:

- Meals or food
- Modest household goods
- Clothing
- Transportation services or vouchers
- Gift certificates
- Safety items (e.g., smoke detectors)
- Developmentally appropriate toys and gifts for children
- Cash

Locally the L.A. County Nurse Family Partnership utilizes incentive supplies for infant support (snugglies, parenting books), developmentally “age-appropriate” toys (sound devices, books), and safety items (safety gates, car seats). The Los Angeles Mommy and Baby (LAMB) survey provides a $20 grocery gift card with limits on types of food to each participant. In the First 5 Santa Barbara-supported “Welcome Every Baby” program, families who participate received books and educational handouts as well as toys for their child (teething beads and stacking cups) that create opportunities for the home visitation worker to educate the family about their newborn’s development.

**Welcome Baby! Budget Estimate**

A total of $5.7 million to be used for *Welcome Baby!* recruitment materials (both for providers and families) and education and support materials in each of the five demonstration communities for five years. Using Demonstration Community #1 as a model, the cost for the engagement over the course of seven meetings comes to $57 per mother. Materials will likely need to be revised based upon process evaluation data and to accommodate specific needs within different demonstration communities.

This estimate does not include any cost savings associated with sponsorship of materials. These partnerships will take time to develop, and the results are uncertain. It is the recommendation of the First 5 LA Public Affairs department to allocate the entire proposed amount, with the caveat that the budget would be revised should the sponsorship program prove effective.
Focus Area II: Best Start LA Lead Entity Communications Support

In each Best Start LA demonstration community, First 5 LA will partner with a local agency or organization to function as the lead entity within each community. These agencies will direct every community-focused element of Best Start LA with the exception of Welcome Baby!, and will work with the First 5 LA Public Affairs department to create the tools they need to educate and inform the community and to forward Best Start LA’s goals. Elements of this effort include the following:

**Community Mobilizing**
- This strategy involves the implementation of some or all of the following efforts in each Best Start LA community: a) improving the level of resources within a community, b) increasing the usage of community resources, c) strengthening local organizations, and/or d) improving the physical environment in a way that supports child development. Through a Community Based Action Research (CBAR) process, the Best Start LA team will engage stakeholders in each of the five demonstration communities to uncover local issues and define the community needs.

**Placed-Based Activities**
- This strategy involves identifying and developing local activities for families, including Family Place Libraries, Baby-Friendly Hospitals and other places designed for playing, learning and coming together.

**Best Start LA Inter-organizational Web sites**
- To facilitate the communications efforts between partner organizations and the various Task Forces involved in the execution of each Best Start LA demonstration community, a password-protected Web site will be created in each demonstration community.

**Lead Entity Communications Support Budget Estimate**
A total of $1.25 million to cover the costs associated with the communications support needed for all five demonstration communities lead entity’s outreach and governance efforts for five years. This informational and promotional support could include partnership packets, newsletters, brochures, facts sheets, posters, communications training, technical assistance and other efforts to be determined by each lead entity and First 5 LA.
Focus Area III: Countywide Strategies Communications Support

In addition to the efforts that will take place in each of the five Best Start LA demonstration communities, First 5 LA will work in partnership with Best Start LA consultants to create countywide systems changes to support the goals and vision of Best Start LA. These efforts include the following:

**Policy and Sustainability**
- First 5 LA’s investment in each demonstration community will only last five years, but it is a primary goal of Best Start LA to continue the partnerships that have been formed. The Policy and Sustainability Task Forces and their consultants are charged with ensuring that the goals of Best Start LA, and the progress each community has made, continue after First 5 LA’s investment ends. This will entail outreach to foundations, organizations, legislators and other stakeholders in the community.

**Data Infrastructure**
- The data infrastructure to support the Best Start LA outcomes is expected to accomplish three objectives, a) help inform ongoing development of the Best Start LA model; b) support the identification, prioritization and advocacy of policy solutions; and c) support the evaluation of the Best Start LA model.

**Best Start LA Workforce Development Project**
- The Best Start LA Workforce Development Project will identify and develop core competencies for the early care and education, health, mental health, social services, and early intervention workforce in L.A. County that works with expectant parents, parents of young children, and young children themselves. This component will include the creation of three workgroups to ensure that this workforce has the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the developmental needs of young children.

**Countywide Strategies Communications Support Budget Estimate**
A total of $400,000 to cover the costs associated with the communications support needed to implement these strategies over the course of five years. This support could include the design and production of materials associated with Workforce Development curriculum and/or testing, and/or the production of information packets, brochures and other communications tools to assist these efforts.
Focus Area IV: Best Start LA Public Education

In addition to the specific communications requirements around the above strategies, it is vital that residents and businesses in each Best Start LA community understand the benefits of a “Best Start” approach to child development and family support, and to be encouraged to participate in the many Best Start LA resources in their community. This effort will involve targeted public education campaigns in each of the five Best Start LA demonstration communities. Efforts may include outdoor signage, community events, a Best Start LA community Web site, business and community partnerships, media campaigns and other types of outreach and promotion. First 5 LA will work in partnership with the lead entities in each of the five Best Start LA communities to utilize the most appropriate communications techniques. In addition, it is crucial for the sustainability of the goals and key messages of Best Start LA that other communities learn how First 5 LA is helping to creating communities that are baby and family friendly. To this end some of the public education and public relations efforts associated with Best Start LA will target areas outside of the five demonstration communities.

Budget Estimate for Best Start LA Public Education
A total of $2.5 million for five years for five demonstration communities. Includes the cost of design, production, project management, media buys and evaluation.

Total Best Start LA Communications Budget Request
Given the extensive opportunities for public education that Best Start LA affords First 5 LA, and the wide range of audiences that will need tailored informational materials, the Public Affairs department is requesting a budget of $9,700,000 million (total budget of $9,850,000 minus the remaining $150,000) over a seven or eight year period in order to implement a successful communications and public education campaign for the five demonstration communities. The total budget is less than eight percent of Best Start LA’s total budget, and is less than the percentages allocated by the Commission to the Workforce Development, Oral Health and Nutrition, and the Parent Helpline initiatives.

For Office Use
Board Action Taken:

Approved: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Further Discussion

Referred to Committee/Work Group: ______________________