Memo

To: Kim Belshé, Executive Director
From: Antonio J. Gallardo, Chief Program Officer
Date: June 11, 2013
Copies To: Elizabeth Iida, Director, Program Development
Lee Werbel, Senior Program Officer, Program Development
Raoul Ortega, Interim Director of Finance
Yolanda Bosch, Esq., Chief Administrative Officer
John A. Wagner, Chief Operating Officer

Subject: AB 109 EXCEPTION REQUEST TO CONTRACT WITH ZERO TO THREE FOR EXPANSION OF FIRST 5 LA’s WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION:
Approve to contract with ZERO TO THREE (ZTT) for the expansion of the Best Start LA Prenatal to Three Workforce Development (WFD) Project in the amount of up to $2.6 million for up to five years.

BACKGROUND:
Best Start LA Prenatal to Three (P-3) Workforce Development Project: At the November 13, 2003 meeting, the Commission approved $105 million for the development of the Prenatal through Three Focus Area Investment. Also, at the November 10, 2005 meeting, the Commission approved an additional allocation of $20 million dollars raising the total focus area funding to $125 million. At the same time, the Commission approved its Revised Programmatic and Fiscal Policies of the Next Five Strategic Plan. These revised policies increased the Commission’s emphasis on the P-3 population, influencing the allocations for the Capacity Building, Systems Improvement, Data and Policy investments, as well as other initiatives. During the May 11, 2006 meeting, the Commission approved the two-pronged Baby Zone (Demonstration Community) and Policy Agenda approaches. This two-pronged approach integrated the four components, while outlining both countywide and place-based strategies for investment in the desired results and outcomes for this population. In designing the focus area approach, workforce development was identified as a necessary area to address in order to achieve the focus area’s desired results.

The Best Start LA P-3 WFD Project aimed to: 1) develop a set of core competencies for professionals working with pregnant women, infants and toddlers; 2) create and field-test training approaches to support the set of recommended core competencies; and 3) test strategies for integrating and sustaining the core competencies. Approved at the September 20, 2007 Commission meeting with a five-year, $2.8 million contract, the Best Start LA
P-3 WFD Project has been implemented by ZTT with the work to be completed in June 2013.

The project’s objectives are being accomplished by convening more than 60 Los Angeles County experts and stakeholders from the prenatal and early childhood field to establish three workgroups: 1) **Core Competencies Workgroup**, which identified a set of Core Competencies to implement for five broad sectors of the workforce (early care and education, early intervention, mental health, physical health and social services/child welfare); 2) **Training Workgroup**, composed of ten cross-sector professional trainers that further developed and tested strategies for integrating and sustaining the Core Competencies; and 3) **Sustainability Workgroup**, which developed an implementation plan to sustain the improved quality of the P-3 workforce that resulted from the Project.

**Prenatal to Five (P-5) Workforce Development Project:**
On June 10, 2010, the Commission approved $3 million for Workforce Development as part of its FY 2009-2015 Strategic Plan’s Countywide Approach. The Workforce Development strategy in the Strategic Plan seeks to build on the information and resources developed to date through many of First 5 LA’s workforce development investments, including the Best Start LA P-3 WFD Project, and align them with First 5 LA’s Strategic Plan goals and outcomes.

As outlined in the FY 2009-2015 Strategic Plan, the P-5 workforce is a critical foundation to improving outcomes for children, although it is also vast in size and complexity. The workforce is primarily comprised of five sectors, each of which impacts the care and education of young children and their families – physical health, mental health, early care and education, child welfare/social services, and early intervention. Given the magnitude of the workforce and the diverse and complex issues it faces, First 5 LA identified, as a common thread across the sectors, the need to ensure that providers who contribute to the care and support of the P-5 population have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet children’s developmental needs.

First 5 LA determined to strengthen its workforce investments through the two main objectives:

- **Refine core competencies to strengthen knowledge and practice of the P-5 workforce to better support their work with children and families.** This effort would include further development and vetting of the core competencies and accompanying curriculum created under the Best Start LA P-3 WFD Project.

- **Integrate and embed core competencies** within the County health and human service delivery system and community-based organizations to ensure that the workforce has the information and tools needed to effectively interact with children, prenatal through five, and families and link them to appropriate services and supports.

**DISCUSSION:**
The intent of the P-5 WFD Project is to enhance the knowledge and practice of the prenatal to age 5 workforce to better support their work with children and families by refining, integrating, and embedding the developed Core Competencies and accompanying Curriculum within and across sectors, the Los Angeles County health and human service delivery system, and community-based organizations. This project builds on the Best Start LA P-3 WFD Project as it completes its final year and focuses on developing a coordinated system to provide quality and efficient services provided by the five workforce sectors with the following sets of primary tasks over the five-year project period:
Adapt first 5 LA’s P-3 core competencies for professionals serving 4-5 year olds by:

1. Building upon the established Best Start LA P-3 WFD project partnerships to convene professionals and stakeholders as appropriate to develop P-5 core competency standards and P-5 core competency curriculum to support the core competencies for the P-5 workforce;
2. Utilizing the developed P-5 core competency standards and P-5 core competency curriculum with sector-specific modules to standardize, field test, and implement training and/or technical assistance platform(s); and
3. Embedding the P-5 core competency standard curriculum in the Los Angeles county health and human service delivery system and in community-based organizations.

Integrate the P-5 core competencies, curriculum and training by:

1. Analyzing findings from the Best Start LA P-3 WFD Project reports—core competencies, training, and sustainability—to align with other First 5 LA workforce development investments and conducting an assessment of core competency knowledge and practice needs of Los Angeles County provider workforce serving 4-5 year olds;
2. Developing integration and dissemination strategies, along with messaging for adoption by the five work sectors, for the P-5 core competencies, curriculum and trainings; and
3. Identifying implementation steps for countywide scalability and developing workforce implementation and oversight plans for Los Angeles County community-based organizations, service systems, schools and faith—based organizations who provide service to the targeted population.

Recommendation:
Staff believes ZERO TO THREE is uniquely qualified to expand the Best Start LA P-3 WFD Project to P-5:

- ZTT developed P-3 core competencies to be refined to include 4-5 year olds and is currently implementing the Best Start LA P-3 WFD Project with First 5 LA funds from May 2008 through June 30, 2013:

ZTT has worked with First 5 LA for the past five years implementing, and developing all related materials for, the Best Start LA P-3 WFD Project. The P-5 WFD Project is an expansion and extension of the Best Start LA P-3 WFD Project.

Through the contract with First 5 LA, ZTT created and field-tested what we have learned is the nation’s first P-3 Cross-Sector Core Competencies for professionals working in five different service sectors: early care and education, early intervention, child welfare/social services, physical health, and mental health. The core competencies document is online and ready for implementation.

During the five-year contract period, ZTT developed and field-tested approaches for competency-based training and sustainability approaches in selected Los Angeles communities. The work was piloted in Long Beach (place based approach) and LA County (countywide approach). The organization also developed detailed recommendations for agencies, workforce development providers, public and private sector funders, and systems that serve the P-3 population. These recommendations will be used to inform next steps for the P-5 WFD Project.

In November 2012, ZTT hosted the National Training Institute in Los Angeles at which they publically highlighted and shared the developed P-3 Cross-Sector Core
Competencies. Also, on April 30, 2013 seventy five early childhood leaders from across Los Angeles County came together for the organization’s annual Summit to plan next steps on the P-3 cross sector professional development. The participants represented the leadership from physical health, early care and education, infant mental health, child welfare, early intervention, higher education and philanthropy.

Finally, with the convening of more than 60 Los Angeles County experts and stakeholders from the prenatal and early childhood field to establish the three workgroups described on page two of this memo, ZTT is poised to call on the established partnerships and continue the work.

- **ZTT has the necessary infrastructure and resources to expand Workforce Development Project to P-5:**

Having implemented the $2.8 million five-year P-3 WFD Project, ZTT has the necessary infrastructure and resources in place to continue implementation including the P-5 population as soon as the current project is completed (June 30, 2013). ZTT has an operational Los Angeles-based office with staff experienced in developing, planning, implementing and evaluating the P-3 WFD Project, along with other workforce projects.

Founded in 1977, ZTT is a nationally recognized non-profit organization that helps professionals, policy makers and parents promote the healthy development of infants and toddlers. ZTT brought its expertise in early childhood development, workforce and professional development, system building, and workgroup facilitation to their work with First 5 LA.

**CONCLUSION:**
Staff requests an exception to Section 5.5 of the Procurement Policy as the services provided by ZERO TO THREE are unique as reflected in the above described experience, scope, capacity and knowledge. Additionally, Staff requests to make an award to ZERO TO THREE for an amount not to exceed $2,600,000 for up to five years beginning July 1, 2013 and staff will return to the Commission on an annual basis with the appropriate contract amount. This Workforce Development Project is part of the Zero-Based Platform as adopted in the FY 2009-2015 Strategic Plan.

**Approval:**

1. Signatures:
   - Genie Chough, Director of Finance
   - Yolanda Busch, Esq., Chief Administrative Officer
   - John A. Wagner, Chief Operating Officer
   - Kim Belshé, Executive Director

2. Dates:
   - 7/3/13
   - 7/3/13
   - 7/3/13
   - 9/5/13