

Meeting of April 11, 2013

Los Angeles County CARES Plus Program Receives up to \$4.8 Million in Additional Funding

The First 5 LA Commission voted unanimously to provide up to \$4.8 million in funds to continue the Los Angeles County implementation of the enhanced version of First 5 California's Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES Plus) for three years. CARES Plus is one of the investments that First 5 LA is making to support the development of a better qualified Early Care and Education (ECE) workforce. The program serves an important target population of licensed providers that currently work in the field and are taking college coursework, encouraging ECE providers to complete three to six units of coursework at an accredited institution, complete the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS™) online training, and receive educational/career advisement sessions by awarding them stipends of at least \$1,000 each.

Commission Approves Federal Early Head Start Matching Funds for Three School Readiness Initiative Grantees

The Commission unanimously supported staff's recommendation to fund three grantees' current non-federal matching funds share for their participation in the federal Early Head Start program. The three grantees, Dignity Health, the Los Angeles Education Partnership and Vista del Mar Child and Family Services, are all current First 5 LA School Readiness Initiative (SRI) participants that had been using some or all of the funding for that program as a match for additional federal Early Head Start program funds. Early Head Start (EHS) is an evidence-based early education model that serves children ages 0 to 3. Amounts will match each grantee's current non-federal EHS share or their current level of First 5 LA funding, whichever is lower.

Highlights

- \$4.8 million in Funding for CARES Plus Approved
- Contracts Extended for 7 Baby Friendly Hospitals
- Early Head Start Program Matching Funds Authorized

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Seven Baby Friendly Hospital Project Participants Receive Contract Extensions

First 5 LA Commissioners unanimously approved contract extensions of up to six months for seven Los Angeles area hospitals participating in First 5 LA's important \$10.5 million Baby Friendly Hospital Project. The project, improves the initiation and duration of exclusive breastfeeding by improving breastfeeding policies and procedures in birthing hospitals. It supports the Commission's strategic goals of helping children maintain a healthy weight and keeping children safe from abuse and neglect. To date, 16 hospitals have been selected for funding through this project with seven selected for the first funding cycle.

Challenges including delays in administration of assessments by Baby Friendly USA will prevent these seven hospitals from meeting their June 30, 2013 contractual deadline. The Commission extended contracts for the following hospitals for up to six months at a maximum cost of \$500,000.

- East LA Doctors Hospital
- Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center
- Monterey Park Hospital
- Pomona Valley Hospital
- San Gabriel Valley Medical Center
- St. Mary Medical Center
- White Memorial Medical Center

Strategic Partnership for Countywide Health Survey Authorized

The Commission approved a strategic partnership with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LADPH) to conduct an important countywide survey of young children's health status.

The partnership with LADPH would provide the Department with \$995,830 in funding to again administer the child survey component of the LA County Health Survey (LACHS). The results of the LACHS provide updates on key health indicators and identify emerging public health issues among children residing in the County's eight service planning areas (SPAs) and 26 health districts. Importantly, the survey provides the opportunity to track health issues over time.

Staff presented details on two other proposed strategic partnerships for consideration, one with the Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles (Alliance) and the Los Angeles County Office of Child Care (OCC) and another with Public Health Foundation Enterprises - Women, Infants and Children Program, but after discussion, the Commission deferred acting on them until a future meeting.

Authorized Items – New Contracts, Contract Renewals and/or Amendments to Existing Contracts

The following items totaling \$3,002,499 were authorized by the Commission (all amounts are for FY 2012-13 and all are new agreements unless indicated otherwise. Items are listed according to their alignment with First 5 LA's strategic goal areas.)

- **Children are Safe from Abuse and Neglect - \$2,888,546**
 - Family Strengthening Best Start Oversight Entity
 - California Hospital Medical Center – LA Best Babies Network – \$1,600,000
 - Welcome Baby/Universal Assessment of Newborns
 - Citrus Valley Health Partners - \$1,288,546

- **Children are Ready for Kindergarten - \$43,510**
 - ECE Career Development Policy Project
 - LA County Office of Education - \$43,510*

- **Other Investments – \$70,443**
 - FY 12/13 Audit
 - Vavrinek, Trine and Day & Co., LLP - \$70,443*

*Indicates contract amendment or renewal. Amount indicated is only amended amount, not new total contract amount. (Contract amendments that are less than \$25,000 but cause the total contract amount to increase beyond \$25,000 will be listed for Board consideration.)

Executive Director's Report

Best Start

The Commission met last April 3, 2013 in the second of a series of special meetings designed to review and assess the status of implementation of Best Start with the goal of identifying, discussing and resolving the critical issues that are crucial to First 5 LA's place-based effort. The focus of the discussion at last week's meeting was on the "anchor" issue – bringing some clarity to the specific kinds of changes First 5 LA is looking to advance in partnership with the Best Start communities.

- While there was general agreement that long term indicators of changes were important and necessary, some shortcomings were discussed. Gaps in indicators for kindergarten readiness and abuse and neglect were raised and a desire for positioning them in a positive way was discussed.
- A second area of discussion was the need expressed by some Commissioners to understand the complete picture of Best Start. This includes the relationship between long term

indicators/change statements and intermediate outcomes, between intermediate and long term outcomes and between activities and strategies.

- Staff plans to return with a Best Start strategic framework – a theory of change and a logic model for Commission consideration. Work on a Best Start logic model has already begun. A research based model has already been previewed for the Commission and serves as a good jumping off point. A final consideration is the realization that to adequately address all of these issues requires a longer period of focused discussion in a several hour long retreat format.

LA Chamber of Commerce/LA Compact

On the topic of early childhood education, First 5 LA has been working with the LA Chamber of Commerce to ensure that the LA Compact – version 2.0 – includes a more explicit acknowledgement of the importance of the early years. The LA Compact represents an effort by more than a dozen major LA institutions to support significant improvements in our community’s public school system. First 5 LA has engaged very collaboratively with the Chamber and is pleased to see a number of important modifications to the LA Compact 2.0 that recognize the importance of a “cradle to career” approach to ensure that LA County children are prepared for kindergarten, high school, college and career success. First 5 LA will be an active partner in this collaborative effort, which provides the opportunity for the Commission to broaden its partnerships with those who share the same aspirations for the success of children – beginning at the earliest of ages. This work takes added importance with President Obama’s early childhood initiative recently proposed in the next federal budget.

L3 Initiative

The Listening, Learning, and Leading (L3) initiative will shortly be reaching out to current and former First 5 LA grantees and contractors. Executive Director Kim Belshé will soon be sending out an email to external stakeholders that will provide them context for the survey and its intended use, with a focus on the importance of their participation and providing honest, candid feedback to inform and improve our work. In addition, L3 will soon be moving forward with focus groups of First 5 LA staff. These discussions will be organized around three or four principal themes or issues that emerge from the L3 internal staff survey.

Public Policy

First 5 LA recently executed its contract with the agency’s new Sacramento advocate, California Strategies, and began a series of meetings and discussions to help familiarize them with First 5 LA’s work and inform their input on First 5 LA’s policy work in Sacramento.

Other Actions

The Commission also took the following action:

- Increased the total contract authority for the Universal Assessment Initiative from \$884,868 to \$1,826,922 (an increase of \$942,054) to accommodate projected costs for one participating hospital whose contract will have a total length that will extend over two fiscal years. Funds for this action are projected to be available from the overall Universal Assessment line item in the FY 2012-13 Programmatic Budget.

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 17-member 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.