

Summary of Commission Actions



Champions For Our Children
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Meeting of September 12, 2013

Investment Increased in Permanent Supportive Housing for Homeless Families Program

The Commission unanimously supported a motion by Chairman Mark Ridley-Thomas to approve an additional \$10 million allocation to provide short term rental subsidies with supportive services to homeless families and families at risk of being homeless with children aged prenatal to five. A connection with the child welfare system will not be a condition of eligibility.

The new allocation follows the \$25 million allocated by the First 5 LA Commission in July, 2012 to provide permanent supportive housing for homeless families with children ages 0-5. First 5 LA's existing Strategic Partnership with the Los Angeles County Community Development Commission (CDC) will be augmented by the additional \$10 million, which will be expended over a 2-year period.

First 5 LA's initial \$25 million investment focused on children who were homeless or at risk of homelessness and either previously or currently involved in the child welfare system. The funded agencies are on track to serve the currently targeted 340 to 350 families a year.

Many more families in the region, however, would benefit from these critical housing resources. According to the Los Angeles County Community Development Commission (CDC), as of June 2013 and after only a little more than two months of operation, First 5 rental assistance agencies arranged for 245 families to be screened by the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and 233 families were deemed eligible. During this same period, 151 families with children 0 to 5 were screened by the Family Solutions Center and 139 families were not served by First 5 funding. This appears to demonstrate that the vast majority of vulnerable families with children 0-5 are being turned away due to a complete lack of involvement with DCFS.

Highlights

- Additional \$10 Million Authorized for Permanent Supportive Housing for Homeless Families Program
- Hospital Implementation of Welcome Baby/Home Visitation Program Expanded

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Commission Chairman Ridley-Thomas commented that his motion was designed to augment the work already undertaken and to do more to serve a particularly vulnerable population.

Implementation Expanded For Welcome Baby Hospitals

The Commission unanimously voted to enter into contracts with four new hospitals as part of the Welcome Baby/Home Visitation program, as well as continue implementation of the program at California Hospital Medical Center (CHMC) and add Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital to the list of hospitals eligible for strategic partnerships to implement Welcome Baby. Through the Welcome Baby program, First 5 LA offers hospital and home-based services for pregnant women and mothers who have just given birth. The main goal of Welcome Baby is to work with families to enhance the parent-child relationship and the health, safety and security of the baby, and to make it easier for families to access support services when needed. The Welcome Baby program includes prenatal and postpartum home-based visits, as well as a hospital visit at the time of the child's birth.

Centinela Memorial Medical Center, Kaiser Hospital: Baldwin Park, Torrance Memorial Medical Center and Valley Presbyterian Hospital will join the existing hospitals currently participating in Welcome Baby. These four hospitals responded in May 2013 to the Welcome Baby Letter of Intent issued by First 5 LA.

The measure also authorizes the CHMC pilot program to continue implementation of the Welcome Baby program beyond the initial grant, which is slated to end on June 30, 2014.

Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital is scheduled to open in early 2015. The addition of this hospital to the list of those eligible to participate in Welcome Baby provides an opportunity to work with one of the few hospitals that is located in a Best Start Community and which is likely to deliver a significant number of Best Start births.

As of July 1, there are ten providers participating in the Welcome Baby program. These providers deliver 50% of Best Start births and 28% of births countywide. Annual peak costs for the ten currently contracted hospitals are estimated at \$34 million through 2020. The Commission would fully cover the costs of program implementation over the next three years and expects hospital and/or other contributions to program cost in years four and five. This will provide time for the implementation of policy and advocacy strategies to cultivate support from other stakeholders to help sustain Welcome Baby/Home Visitation.

The Commission also voted to suspend a second Welcome Baby Letter of Intent solicitation until further information is secured related to implementation of the program with the currently contracted hospitals, more progress is made in execution of First 5 LA's Policy and Advocacy Agenda, and there is further development of potential alternative funding sources. Staff was directed to return to the Commission in November with a plan for how First 5 LA could approach reopening the Welcome Baby/Home Visitation Program Letter of Intent solicitation to include additional interested hospitals.

Best Start/Building Stronger Families Framework Implementation

The Commission unanimously voted to approve the use of \$326,115 in unexpended funds for Best Start community partnerships and an additional \$510,000 as “bridge” funding through December 31, 2013 to continue the implementation of the Building Stronger Families Framework (BSFF). An amendment to the fiscal year 2013-14 Program Budget to accommodate the additional \$510,000 in funds was also approved. The BSFF reflects First 5 LA’s belief that if families are strong and communities family-supporting, then the health, safety and school readiness of children will improve over the long term. Informed by a rich evidence base, the framework reflects six core family- and community-level results. The BSFF was endorsed at a special Commission meeting in late June.

Prior to the staff presentation, Executive Director Belshé highlighted the significant amount of work that has taken place to date to implement the new Building Stronger Families Framework. She stated that good progress has been made since the June Commission meeting, but that the transition of Best Start from where it has been to date to the new results-focused framework and results-focused Community Partnerships will take time. She recognized that it will be important for First 5 LA to continue to work collaboratively with First 5 LA’s community partners throughout this transition. Finally, she noted that to achieve meaningful and sustainable change in strengthening families and family-supporting communities, First 5 LA will need to more closely align its place-based work and county wide activity.

The staff presentation provided a recap of Best Start related Commission actions since the June 26, 2013 Board retreat, an update on work taking place currently, the results of First 5 LA staff’s initial review of Partnership capacity, a description of the proposed “Learning by Doing” approach, proposed options for a funding approach for Best Start and a draft implementation timeline.

Since the endorsement by the Commission of the Building Stronger Families Framework in June, seven interdepartmental teams have been formed and have been working together to develop a more detailed implementation plan. In addition, internal staff knowledge and capacity is being enhanced through a series of “learning institutes”. Work is also underway to analyze and review opportunities to incorporate the Building Stronger Families Framework’s core results intentionally into current and future First 5 LA grant making.

Partnership Capacities to Advance Results

In this part of the presentation, staff described how the partnerships themselves are an important part of First 5 LA’s overall community capacity building strategy. Following an initial capacity review that assessed partnerships against 3 of 6 capacities found to be key to results-focused Community Partnerships, Best Start community partnerships were found to demonstrate many of the characteristics of those foundational capacities.

“Learning by Doing” Approach

Staff also presented to the Commission an approach to implementation characterized as “Learning by Doing”. This approach reflects each partnership’s assessment of community needs and priorities relative to the BSFF core results and emphasizes learning and capacity building in the context of “doing” or taking action on behalf of the community. Community Partnerships will focus initially on one of the Building Stronger Families Framework core family results and identify and prioritize activities that reflect targeted populations, community –level data, and community change activities anchored in the core result for families selected.

Funding Approach

Staff presented three possible options for long-term funding for Best Start Community Partnerships that included: (1) tiered funding of each Partnership, based on current Partnership capacity; (2) Best Start Department management of a specific funding level for the entire effort to support all Partnerships; and (3) a performance- based model that would adjust Partnership access to funds based on measureable progress and performance in implementing strategies and achieving targeted results.

Finally, a draft implementation timeline was presented indicating that by November, staff expects to return to the Commission with the results of the detailed Partnership Capacity Assessment and a recommended comprehensive implementation plan and funding approach for work through June 30, 2015. The Commission intends to discuss the BSFF implementation in more detail at the September 26 meeting of the Planning and Program Committee

Executive Director’s Report

Executive Director Belshé highlighted a primer on current conflict of interest regulations provided as a reference by legal counsel for Commission members. She then deferred the rest of her comments to the introduction of the item later in the agenda regarding the Best Start Building Stronger Families Framework Implementation Update.

New Agreements Made, Key Grants and Programs Renewed to Maintain Important Services

The Commission approved 15 new agreements totaling \$6,268,074. These include:

- Seven Countywide Investments projects - \$4,874,978
- One from the Place Based Investment Area - \$154,625
- Five from the Prior Strategic Plan for the Baby Friendly Hospitals Initiative - \$1,029,736
- Two from the Research and Evaluation Investment Area - \$208,735



Four amendments totaling \$577,700, which include:

- Three from Countywide Investments - \$424,000
- One from Research and Evaluation - \$153,700

Ten Renewals totaling \$1,805,210, which include:

- One from Place-Based Investments - \$79,327
- Eight from the Prior Strategic Plan Investment Area – \$1,064,403
- One from Research and Evaluation - \$661,480

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.

