

Summary of Commission Actions

Meeting of Nov 13, 2014

2015-2020 Strategic Plan Approved

The First 5 LA Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the [2015-2020 First 5 LA Strategic Plan](#): Focusing for the Future, which clarifies the overarching result that First 5 LA seeks: All children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life. This organizational “north star” will anchor the organization’s work going forward, work that will place a higher emphasis on policy and systems change to achieve broader, more sustainable impact for children prenatal to age 5 and their families.

Under this new Strategic Plan, First 5 LA emphasizes the important and valuable role that parents/caregivers have in their child’s development and, therefore, parents/caregivers are at the center of the organization’s work. Additionally, First 5 LA will support a more collaborative effort with families, communities, and other organizations to change policies and improve service delivery systems. See Strategic Plan Highlights [here](#). And for a more in-depth look at the process in developing the First 5 LA’s 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, please click [here](#).

Update on *Best Start’s* Building Stronger Families Framework (BSFF) Implementation Plan

The *Best Start* Community Partnerships have been working diligently to determine the best way to support children prenatal to 5 and their families in each of the *Best Start* communities through the “Learning By Doing” (LBD) process. This process has five progressive stages and utilizes the “Results Focused Actions” approach, which allows communities to select and implement the most appropriate strategies and activities to achieve their desired results. Communities have been encouraged to think in terms of long-term change and impact, building a foundation for later activities. To date, all 14 communities have completed stages 1-3, which involve the selection of a family core result, indicators and a target population. In Stage 4, the communities select strategies and community capacity building activities, which will fall into one or more of the following categories:

- **Civic Engagement** – Efforts that build public awareness/support around issues of public concern that affect children prenatal through age 5 and their families, as well as efforts that influence public policy at the municipal and/or *Best Start* Communities (BSC) level to achieve BSFF core results.
- **Social Capital** – Efforts to build relationships and partnerships among and across families, organizations, networks and other community stakeholders. These activities are intended to strengthen the social fabric of a community – sense of community – by building and strengthening relationships.
- **Organizational Capacity Development** – Efforts that strengthen informal and formal community groups/organizations/collaboratives to improve overall functioning to more effectively meet the needs of families.
- **Community Resource Mobilization** – Efforts to mobilize, leverage, and connect resources to increase access and availability of services, supports, places and spaces to achieve the BSFF core results.

A funding approach and process has been developed that reflects the collaborative relationship of First 5 LA with the community. Once a community has selected its strategies and activities, First 5 LA will initiate a solicitation process to select one contractor to implement the desired activities. This contractor can have multiple subcontractors. This

HIGHLIGHTS

- 2015-2020 Strategic Plan Approved
- Update on *Best Start* Implementation Plan
- Approval of New Funding Agreement for PFF
- Executive Director Commends First 5 LA Commission and Staff for outstanding accomplishments

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approach is intended to encourage collaboration and minimize competition between organizations that serve the community.

Information Sessions are currently being held in the *Best Start* communities to inform potential applicants about the funding opportunity. To date, six have been conducted covering nine communities. The first RFQ will be released this month and involves the *Best Start* Central Long Beach (CLB) community, with an anticipated contract start date of early 2015. The other Community Partnerships will follow soon thereafter, starting with Metro LA, Lancaster and Southeast LA cities.

Next Steps in BSFF Implementation

- Select the contractor and negotiate a contract for *Best Start* Central Long Beach.
Complete the selection of strategies and activities (LBD Stage 4) in the 13 remaining communities.
- Select contractors for the remaining 13 *Best Start* communities.

Partnerships for Families

The Commission agreed to authorize First 5 LA to receive funding from the L.A. County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to continue administering the Partnerships for Families (PFF) initiative. The intent of PFF is to provide prevention services and supports to families considered to be at high-risk for child abuse and/or neglect. PFF provides community-based child maltreatment prevention services through a strengthening families approach and fills a gap in the current child welfare system. PFF mitigates risk through the development and enhancement of the Protective Factors: 1) parental resilience; 2) social connections; 3) concrete support in times of need; 4) knowledge of parenting and child development; and 5) social and emotional competence of children.

Under the new agreement DCFS will provide nearly \$16 million in funding to First 5 LA to continue administering PFF. The 18-month contract between DCFS and First 5 LA will begin in January and last through June 30, 2016, with possible month-to-month extensions through December 31, 2016. This plan provides bridge funding and avoids a gap in services while DCFS rebids this program. These funds are included in DCFS' current FY14-15 adopted budget.

Executive Director Report

Executive Director Kim Belshé told the Commission that “Running fast, and working hard,” was the theme at the May meeting and is a theme that has continued to reflect First 5 LA’s work throughout the year. She said: “We have been running fast and working hard across multiple domains in 2014 – all anchored in the ‘finish line’ that reflects the overarching result we seek: that all L.A. County children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life.”

Belshé said she was enormously proud of the work that First 5 LA has undertaken together – Commission and staff, contractors and grantees, parents and residents, and so many others. She then highlighted these accomplishments:

- Clarified and communicated the fiscal context within which we do our work via the Long Term Financial Projection;
- Established clear decision-making rules to promote transparency, consistency and discipline in decision-making via the Governance Guidelines;
- Strengthened our organizational infrastructure to support a high performing First 5 LA via a new compensation structure and salary classification system and via important investments in the professional and leadership development of First 5 LA managers;
- Clarified and strengthened our governance via revisions and updates to the Commission’s By-Laws and Commission duties, roles and responsibilities;
- Elevated First 5 LA’s visibility, profile and reputation as a collaborative partner and resource via our efforts in L.A. County, Sacramento and Washington, D.C.;
- Solidified implementation of “cornerstone” First 5 LA investments, Welcome Baby/Select Home Visitation and Best Start Communities capacity-building; and
- Clarified First 5 LA’s strategic direction, role and impact via the Strategic Plan for 2015-20.

“In short, together we have made significant progress to put into place the needed foundation and key pillars for a strong, strategic First 5 LA that contributes to meaningful and measureable change in the lives of our county’s youngest children,” Belshé said. “Running fast, and working hard” captures the work of the entire First 5 LA staff, and she acknowledged every member of the team for bringing their smarts, expertise and talents to the multiple strands of activity that have contributed to the important progress First 5 LA has made this past year.

According to the Executive Director, “Running fast, and working hard” also reflects the work of our Board of Commissioners. Belshé commended them for their investment of time, energy and wisdom, which has been indispensable to focusing and strengthening First 5 LA so that it can truly be the organization we aspire it to be: a leading early childhood advocate working in partnership with others to strengthen families, communities, and systems of services and supports to ensure that all children in L.A. County enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life.

Finally, Belshé closed by acknowledging Chair Don Knabe, whose fourth term as Chair with the Commission ended at this meeting, for his leadership and the legacy he established with the formal approval of the long-term financial projection, the adoption of new Governance Guidelines, and the new Strategic Plan for 2015-20.