

Appendix C – Communities Team Initiatives Summary Table and Briefs

Project Start	Investment	Grantees and Contractors	Stakeholders	Grantee-led Evaluation
2019	Advancement Project CA Data Partnership	Advancement Project CA	First 5 LA staff, Best Start Regional Network Grantee, regional partners	No
2018	Best Start Regional Networks	Regional Network Grantees (RNGs): 1 – Para los Niños 2 – Community Health Councils 3 – El Nido Family Services 4 – The Nonprofit Partnership 5 – Children’s Bureau of Southern California	Community members within 14 Best Start geographies, community-based organizations, resident groups	Yes
2018	Best Start RNG Community of Practice	Best Start RNGs (listed above)	RNGs	Forthcoming
2019	Built Environment Policy Advocacy Fund (BEPAF)	Prevention Institute (Intermediary) is managing the grantees: 1. Alliance for Community Transit – Los Angeles (ACT-LA) 2. Community Coalition 3. Investing in Place 4. Just Environment Long Beach 5. Physicians for Social Responsibility – Los Angeles (PSR-LA) 6. Promesa Boyle Heights 7. United Parents and Students	Community-based organizations, children and families within Best Start geographies	Yes
2020	Capacity Strengthening Consortium	Community Partners (Convener)	First 5 LA Communities Department Partners; capacity strengthening funders; county agencies	Yes
2019	Link Government Advocates Families and Parks (Link)	Pooled Fund Manager: Resources Legacy Fund. Co-funded by: The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation Resources Legacy Fund manages the current Link teams: 1. El Monte: ActiveSGV, Trust for Public Land 2. Southeast Los Angeles: Communities for a Better Environment, LA Neighborhood Land Trust	L.A. County parents, residents, community-based organizations, park experts	No
2020	Optimizing Organizational Capacity in Best Start Networks	Southern California Center for Nonprofit Management	Nonprofit organizations participating in Best Start networks	Yes

ADVANCEMENT PROJECT CA DATA PARTNERSHIP

PURPOSE:

To develop and strengthen the data infrastructure needed to support First 5 LA's ongoing systems change work of Best Start networks and First 5 LA staff within the five Best Start regions.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Increase the availability and accessibility of data to Best Start networks as they develop and implement systems change efforts (i.e., community change agendas) at regional and local levels.
2. Support First 5 LA staff and community reflection and discussion about the state of Best Start geographic areas to identify and advance collective priorities.
3. Provide additional context that deepens First 5 LA's and communities' understanding of the stories behind result indicator data within First 5 LA's Impact Framework.

KEY ACTIVITIES

1. Conduct a retrospective analysis of Best Start geographic areas using the original methodology.
2. Apply and upgrade the original methodology to today's context and incorporate key learnings from First 5 LA's evolved understanding of key factors such as trauma, resiliency, family engagement, and the built environment that impact the lives of children prenatal-5 and their families.
3. Provide data and technical assistance to staff, Best Start regional network grantees and communities that help prioritize systems change efforts.
4. Leverage the Best Start data infrastructure to provide additional data analysis and technical assistance to support First 5 LA's strategic plan implementation, Impact Framework, and its newly adopted equity investment guideline.
5. Update data periodically as new data is available to ensure that First 5 LA and Best Start regional networks have real-time and updated data to support planning, implementation and learning from strategies to improve results for children, families and communities.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND ACTIVITIES

Not Applicable

BEST START REGIONAL NETWORKS

PURPOSE:

To cultivate community voice, leadership, and power in the five Best Start regions to advance system change through relationships of support and collaboration among families, caregivers, and residents; public systems; community-based organizations; built environment advocates; funders; and other partners committed to improving results for children P-5 and their families within Best Start geographies.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Strengthen the web of relationships within the five Best Start regions as a springboard for community action and mobilization of resources.
2. Cultivate a network mindset and collective learning culture among diverse stakeholders.
3. Connect parents, community members and community-based organizations to opportunities that engage them in an ongoing way as thought leaders, organizers, and partners in assessing and designing solutions for systemic problems that impact children and families.
4. Support the infrastructure for community advocacy and systems change priorities aligned with First 5 LA's four results for children and families.

PARTNERS:

Five Best Start Regional Network Grantees (RNGs)

1. Para los Niños – Region 1: Central East (East Los Angeles, South El Monte/EI Monte, Southeast LA, Metro LA)
2. Community Health Councils – Region 2: South Los Angeles (Compton, Broadway Manchester, Watts Willowbrook, West Athens)
3. El Nido Family Services – Region 3: San Fernando Valley (Northeast Valley, Panorama City & Neighbors)
4. The Nonprofit Partnership – Region 4: Port Cities (Central Long Beach, Wilmington)
5. Children's Bureau of Southern California – Region 5: Antelope Valley (Lancaster, Palmdale)

KEY ACTIVITIES:

1. Support five Regional Network Grantees as they implement activities to:
 - Nurture regional and local network growth
 - Demonstrate the network's purpose and value proposition
 - Mobilize collective action on community systems change priorities
 - Obtain monetary and in-kind resources for network action
 - Provide infrastructure that enables regional and local networks to function effectively and mobilize quickly.
2. Convene a Community of Practice among RNGs and between RNGs and First 5 LA to promote collective learning and adaptation

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EVALUATION APPROACH

SITE-SPECIFIC EVALUATION

Each Regional Network Grantee conducts site-specific evaluation. In February 2020, First 5 LA hired Appreciative Development for Justice (ADJ) Consulting to synthesize the learning and documentation work across the regions in support of the Best Start Learning Agenda 1.0. Data sources included:

- Data and progress reports, and summaries of learning conversations conducted in each region.
- Interviews conducted with program and evaluation representatives from each region.
- Sense-making with Regional Network Grantees (RNGs) representatives and First 5 LA.

INITIATIVE-LEVEL EVALUATION: BEST START LEARNING AGENDA 1.0

Learning Agenda 1.0 Questions

Approach & Structure

1. How is the new approach being implemented? What are the facilitators and barriers to implementing the new approach?
2. How are the Best Start networks connecting to existing community leaders, advocates, and other networks to increase the focus on and impact of collective efforts for children prenatal to age five?

Positioning & Systems Change

3. To what extent does the approach to building capacity position the Best Start networks to drive policy and systems change?
4. To what extent does policy and systems change occur through Best Start networks' efforts? What factors influence the effectiveness of their efforts and how?

First 5 LA Adapting & Evolving

5. How is First 5 LA adapting and evolving as an agent of policy and systems change as a result of its work with the communities?

Data Sources

- Grantee Reports
- Grantee/subcontractor Interviews
- Community of Practice and Retreat Discussions
- First 5 LA Internal Reflective Sessions

BEST START REGIONAL NETWORK GRANTEE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

PURPOSE:

To provide ongoing reflection and learning spaces (i.e. face-to-face meetings, retreats, and web-based tools) that enable the RNGs and First 5 LA staff to regularly interact, provide updates, share practices, and create a sense of community that inspires ongoing reflection, adaptation, and practice improvements. Through CoP, the RNGs and First 5 LA will learn together, assess progress, foster collective accountability, and inform approaches to address critical issues and opportunities emerging in the work.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Build trust and relationships / strengthen network relationships
2. Strengthen practices and capacities of networks
3. Build a sense of true community ownership

KEY ACTIVITIES:

6. Engage stakeholders in co-designing process to develop one-year plan and roadmap for CoP and continue to coordinate with stakeholders.
7. Organize, facilitate and document up to 20 CoP sessions and gatherings with key stakeholders over the course of 12 months.
8. Generate three quarterly learning memos and annual learning report to document key learnings and continuous improvement for all stakeholders.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND ACTIVITIES

Currently in the planning phase of this project. Evaluation approach and activities have not been identified.

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BUILT ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVOCACY FUND

PURPOSE:

To maximize policy- and systems-change advocacy strategies within Best Start regions to improve children and families' access to: 1) high-quality parks, open space, and recreation facilities; 2) safe and reliable transportation/opportunities for mobility; and 3) food security. The ultimate goal is to reduce built environment inequities within Best Start geographies.

BEPAF funding is distributed through an Intermediary and is combination of Policy Advocacy Implementation Grants (\$75-100K) and Policy Advocacy Incubation Grants (\$25-50K) focused on field and policy outcomes that reduce inequities in the built environment. In June 2020, seven community-based organizations were awarded BEPAF grants: five implementation grants and two incubation grants.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Build the organizational capacity and effectiveness of advocacy groups and community-based organizations to develop and implement effective, culturally competent built environment policy- and systems-change advocacy initiatives in the Best Start geographies.
2. Provide support to organizational members of the Best Start networks to enable greater collective action to drive a community agenda for children and families.
3. Provide an opportunity to strengthen their relationship as a network, leverage resources and advance a shared vision.

PARTNER:

Prevention Institute (serves as intermediary)

KEY ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERMEDIARY:

- 1) Co-designs and Implements: Partners with First 5 LA staff to refine thinking around the design and implementation of the components of BEPAF as well as developing grant objectives, strategies, timelines and evaluation and learning strategy.
- 2) Administers Grants and Monitors: Has direct responsibility for the oversight of BEPAF grantees and compliance to the contract with First 5 LA.
- 3) Coordinates and Convenes: Provides all of the logistical support needed to plan, facilitate and hold grantee meetings and events.
- 4) Provides Technical Assistance: Supports BEPAF grantees in developing the capabilities they need to successfully influence the built environment policies and systems that impact children and families
- 5) Evaluates and Promotes Learning: Documents, captures and shares learnings and achievements of BEPAF

EVALAUTION APPROACH AND ACTIVITIES

OUTCOMES

Implementation Grant Outcomes

1. Adoption of new policies or systems change (or measurable progress toward adoption)
2. Changes to existing policies

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<p>3. Oversight of the policy implementation or funding measure</p> <p><u>Incubation Grant Outcomes</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Built environment policy research & identification of potential policies 2. Cultivation of allies and/or elected champions 3. Development of resident engagement & leadership plan <p><u>Field Outcomes</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase policy advocacy capacity 2. Increase community engagement 3. Increase resident/parent capacity to engagement in built environment policy advocacy work 4. Establish new connections between built environment policy advocates 			
METHODS & DATA COLLECTION			
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th align="left">Policy Advocacy Implementation</th> <th align="left">Policy Advocacy Incubation</th> </tr> </thead> </table>	Policy Advocacy Implementation	Policy Advocacy Incubation
Policy Advocacy Implementation	Policy Advocacy Incubation		
<p>Methods to track Field Building Outcomes <i>(both grantee-types)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Annual capacity building survey</i> assesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ policy advocacy capacity, ○ built environment knowledge/capacity, ○ community engagement capacity ○ requests/suggestions for future capacity building or technical support • <i>Annual collaboration survey:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ measures increase in new collaborations among advocates; ○ probes on relationships among BEPAF grantees, as well as other BE advocates and non-traditional partners ○ probes on collaboration with resident leaders across Best Start communities (qualitative & quantitative) 		
<p>Methods to track Planning Outcomes <i>(Incubation grantees only)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Annual brief written report</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identifies cultivation of allies and elected officials ○ Identifies policy areas of interest and momentum • <i>Submission of key documents</i> such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ advocacy plans, processes, research findings • <i>Resident engagement & leadership development plan</i> 		
<p>Methods to track Policy Outcomes <i>(Implementation grantees only)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Annual written report</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identifies cultivation of allies and elected officials ○ Identifies policies adopted, changed and/or in-progress ○ Identifies role in implementation of policies or funding measures ○ Identifies any other role played in practice, procedure or resource-allocation changes 		

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CAPACITY STRENGTHENING CONSORTIUM

PURPOSE:

To cultivate cross-sector relationships, share knowledge, and apply learning among funders, county agencies, advocacy organizations, and service providers that occupy different places in the larger system of community capacity strengthening in LA County. The intent is to gain a better understanding of the whole system and possible points of leverage to advance their respective work and catalyze collective efforts to strengthen communities.

OBJECTIVE:

1. Inform and strengthen First 5 LA’s efforts to build relationships with other funders and partners to catalyze collective efforts.
2. Improve learning between and amongst capacity strengthening efforts underway in the five Best Start regions by engaging those working to change systems alongside First 5 LA to improve results for children and families.

PARTNER:

Community Partners

KEY ACTIVITIES:

1. Design a peer learning structure and processes that facilitate learning, relationship building, and ongoing capacity building and technical assistance among the Communities Department’s partners working to build community capacity.
2. Implement and continuously improve designed peer learning structure and processes.
3. Capture, document and share learning that will inform First 5 LA’s and partner’s respective and collective work.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND METHODS

Evaluation Question	Outcomes	Data Collection Method/Timeline
How are participants impacted by their participation in the Consortium?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased engagement of participants in consortium activities 2. Increased satisfaction of participants with Consortium activities (feeling energized, found learning consortium a good use of their time, etc.) 3. Increased capacity for partners to collaborate and share learnings (increased awareness of what it takes to work together, then increase in skills needed to work together) 4. Strengthen relationships (trust, safe to be one’s authentic self, empathy, reciprocity, mutual value, power, and influence) and development of new relationships among participants 5. Increased awareness and use of leadership tools and frameworks, including systems thinking 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Document review/tracking (ongoing), participant survey (annual), feedback forms (after convening) 2. Participant survey (annual), feedback forms (after convening), + Δ Activity (during convening) 3. Participant survey (annual), feedback forms (after convening), + Δ Activity (during convening) 4. Participant survey (annual, feedback forms (after convening), + Δ Activity (during convening), network mapping

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Evaluation Question	Outcomes	Data Collection Method/Timeline
		(bi-annual pre and post), stakeholder interview (annual) 5. Participant survey, feedback forms, + Δ Activity (during convening)
How is the broader system being impacted by the Consortium?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase in understanding of funders and government departments of what communities and community-based organizations really need 2. Development of shared understanding or multiple shared understandings of community capacity strengthening/building among LA County players 3. Increase in awareness and opportunities to amplify capacity strengthening efforts in communities across LA County, recognizing context matters 4. Increased understanding of what it takes to move thinking away from the individual level in terms of capacity building/strengthening and who seems poised for that movement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Document review/tracking (ongoing), participant survey (annual), stakeholder interview (annual) 2. Document review/tracking (ongoing), participant survey (annual), stakeholder interview (annual) 3. Document review/tracking (ongoing), participant survey (annual), network mapping (bi-annual pre and post), stakeholder interview (annual) 4. Document review/tracking (ongoing), participant survey (annual), stakeholder interview (annual)
How is the Consortium impacting First 5 LA investments and decision making?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased awareness and clarity on First 5 LA's role within the Consortium 2. Increased awareness of the impact the Consortium has on F5LA language and investments 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Internal meeting/focus group (quarterly) 2. Internal meeting/focus group (quarterly)
How are lessons learned from the Consortium impacting processes?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased awareness of cohort-wide areas of interest, strengths, challenges, and areas where Community Partners and F5LA can support cohort activities within the context of the Consortium. 2. Increased awareness of the barriers and facilitators of a Consortium 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Document Review/tracking (ongoing), feedback forms (after convening), internal meeting/focus group (quarterly) 2. Document Review/tracking (ongoing), feedback forms (after convening), internal meeting/focus group (quarterly) 3. Document Review/tracking (ongoing), feedback forms (after convening), internal meeting/focus group (quarterly)

LINK GOVERNMENT ADVOCATES FAMILIES AND PARKS

PURPOSE:

To strengthen the capacity of underserved municipalities to partner with parents, residents, community-based organizations and park experts in the development of a comprehensive park plan that will position them to develop and then mobilize around a comprehensive park/open space plan that would be the basis for applying for county and state funding.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Build capacity in under-invested communities to draw down and leverage county and state funding.
2. Ensure that parents and residents have a voice in decision-making and that the funding meets the needs of children and families.
3. Partner with the LA County Regional Parks and Open Space District to integrate Link into their Technical Assistance Program (TAP) for Measure A, a permanent parcel tax that will raise over \$80 million a year for parks and open space in LA County.

PARTNERS:

- Resources Legacy Fund
- The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation
- Enterprise Community Partners
- LA County Regional Parks and Open Space District (key agency managing Measure A funding)

KEY ACTIVITIES:

1. Implement a pooled fund to support collaboration among the funders, create a mechanism of joint decision-making, and streamline management of Link
2. Implement Link as a pilot in up to three Best Start geographies (Southeast LA, El Monte, a third site TBD).
3. Convene partners to support continuous learning and improvement.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND ACTIVITIES

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

1. A parks and open space vision and planning document that can benefit children and families in their community
2. A grant application by the partnership team for a local, county, or statewide parks and open space grant
3. Increased capacity for community-based organizations to advocate for increased parks and open space funding

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EVALUATION PURPOSE:

UCLA Luskin Center will conduct an evaluation of the Link pilot to identify what works, what does not, and gaps that need to be filled for the equitable distribution of parks, green infrastructure and community development in Best Start geographies. The evaluation will be conducted as participatory action research with up to 52 participants, representing the diversity of partners and stakeholders.

OPTIMIZING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY IN BEST START NETWORKS

PURPOSE:

To strengthen the capacity of nonprofit organizations actively participating within each of the 14 Best Start networks to more effectively influence policy and systems level change. Through this project, nonprofit organizations will receive training, technical assistance and coaching to improve the systems, structures, resources, relationships, and skills needed to fully realize their contribution as important players within Best Start networks to advance systems change in partnership with others.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Strengthen participating nonprofit organizations systems, structures, resources, relationships, and skills needed to advance policy and systems change.
2. Provide support to organizational members of the Best Start networks to enable greater collective action to drive a community agenda for children and families.
3. Provide an opportunity to strengthen their relationship as a network, leverage resources and advance a shared vision.

PARTNER:

Southern California Center for Nonprofit Management

KEY ACTIVITIES:

- 1) Co-designing a capacity building approach and plan – in coordination with First 5 LA and the RNGs –to strengthen the ability of nonprofit organizations that are active participants in the community partnerships to be more effective in influencing policy and systems level change within the local and regional Best Start networks.
- 2) Coordinating and convening of project participants and implement peer-to-peer learning exchanges and increase collaboration.
- 3) Providing training, technical assistance, and coaching to nonprofit organizations participating in Best Start grounded in the local and regional network approach.
- 4) Serving as the project’s evaluation and learning coordinator by collecting data and facilitating reflection and learning sessions on an as needed basis with First 5 LA, RNGs, and other identified partners, and compiling lessons learned from working with project participants.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND ACTIVITIES

EVALUATION PURPOSE:

The intent of co-designing and implementing a Learning and Evaluation Framework throughout the life of the OOC Project is to document, capture and share project learnings and achievements in a reflective and reflexive mode alongside participating nonprofit organizations, Regional Network Grantees and First 5 LA and the First 5 LA Learning Consortium. The goal is to gather learnings and achievements in such a way that facilitates peer learning within and across Best Start Regions, and allows for:

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- The building of a set of best practices for organizational network and systems change capacity building
- Making real-time course corrections in project implementation
- Integrating learnings with those of evaluation partners working within various initiatives under Best Start, and related First 5 LA investments

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify points of intersection between the OOC Project Learning and Evaluation Framework and evaluation initiatives currently underway and planned for connected evaluation projects within Best Start and related evaluation projects across First 5 LA investments.
2. Weave together the insights, goals and objectives, and resources of First 5 LA, Best Start RNGs and other leading organizations within Best Start Communities to develop a learning agenda that best advances the work underway of these stakeholders.
3. Develop a Learning and Evaluation Framework that supports the development, monitoring and ongoing improvement of organizational capacity-building plans/activities unique to each of the 5 Best Start Regions, *and*, across all Best Start Regions.

EVALUATION PHASES:

The proposed learning and evaluation objectives are organized according to the three phases, organized within the first year of learning and evaluation activities:

1. Initial field scan and assessment to understand current challenges facing, and initiatives forming among/within, nonprofit organizations in the Best Start Regions. Additionally, to understand how nonprofit organizations can better function as a network of diverse partners to influence structural, relational and/or transformational change.
2. Developmental and process evaluation to better understand how to best engage and support nonprofit organizations in Best Start networks, how to best augment existing nonprofit capacity building resources, and how best to align OOC with other initiatives under the Best Start Communities investment.
3. Early outcomes evaluation to better understand the extent to which capacity building activities have augmented individual organizations' and organizational networks' interest in, readiness for and ability to influence structural, relational and/or transformational change?