

Appendix A: Policy and Advocacy Background

First 5 LA currently operates two Policy and Advocacy Funds (PAF), and a PAF expansion pilot, staffed independently by teams and offices across the organization. These launched between 2017 and 2020, and broadly intend to strengthen and amplify First 5 policy, advocacy and systems change work. Furthermore, the PAFs share major goals around building the capacity of funded organization; developing shared problem statements and understandings of early childhood as a special population across assorted stakeholders; cultivating diverse groups of voices to advocate for early childhood; building third-party validators around the importance of prioritizing the needs of children and families; and generating progress toward achievement of First 5 LA strategic plan goals and objectives.

The precursor to current PAF efforts was First 5 LA's Community Opportunities Fund, which originally launched in 2011 to support advocacy related to the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan. That fund ultimately provided more than \$10 million in project-specific funding to 23 grantees, with final grant expirations coming in 2018. To better coordinate between First 5 LA's advocacy and disconnected PAF grantees, as well as to prioritize movement building over the completion of discrete projects, First 5 LA launched the Early Care and Education Policy and Advocacy Fund (ECE PAF) in November 2016. Upon approval, the Long-Term Financial Projection assumed allocation of \$15 million in funding over five years, through June of this year.

Early Childhood Education Policy Advocacy Fund (ECE PAF)

The overarching goal of ECE PAF is to support advocacy for improved access to affordable, quality, sustainable ECE through greater public investment. It offers three types of grants:

- Partnership Funds of up to \$350,000, for grantee organizational capacity building, to support policy advocacy in LA County and Sacramento;
- Field-Building Funds of up to \$75,000, for organizational capacity-building that allows funded organizations to more effectively participate in ECE advocacy efforts; and
- Rapid Response Funds of up to \$50,000, for discrete or otherwise time limited projects that address field-wide needs.

Results from the ECE PAF included over 1403 total legislative visits conducted by grantees, greater collaboration in pursuit of the "Billion Dollars for Babies" budget request during the 2018 legislative session and increased self-reported stability and effectiveness within the ECE advocacy field resulting from strengthened relationships between grantees.

ECE PAF grantees included organizations such as: Advancement Project; Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles; Child Care Resource Center; Crystal Stairs; Child360; Children Now; Early Edge; the LA Chamber of Commerce; The California Child Care Resource and Referral Network; Child Care Law Center; Common Sense Media; Community Coalition; Council for a Strong America; EveryChild CA; Inner City Struggle; MomsRising Educational Fund; Parent Voices; REAL Coalition; and the United Way of California.

Built Environment Policy Advocacy Fund (BEPAF)

Expanding upon the experiences of ECE PAF, First 5 LA launched the Built-Environment Policy and Advocacy Fund (BEPAF) in October 2019. Grants ranged from \$40,000 to \$100,000, and were awarded to community-based organizations, policy advocacy organizations and coalitions that focus on improving neighborhood conditions for children and families. Funding is currently set to continue through June 2022. BEPAF includes two grant categories:

- Policy Advocacy Incubation Grants of up to \$50,000, to support grantee advocacy planning efforts and build organizational advocacy capacity related to built-environment issues, including Best Start parent engagement; and

- Policy Advocacy Implementation Grants of between \$75,000 and \$100,000, to support established policy advocacy organizations and networks with experience in impacting development or implementing built-environment policy and systems changes efforts.

BEPAF's goals were to maximize advocacy toward improving child and family access to high-quality parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities; promoting safe and reliable transportation/ opportunities for mobility; and increasing food security. Activities included convenings with parents and residents in the Best Start geographic areas that focus on how to conduct digital community engagement, and that provide technical assistance to improve advocacy for public funding related to the built-environment areas impacting children and families. Monthly convenings of BEPAF grantees began in June 2020. Following onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Prevention Institute, BEPAF's funding intermediary, helped allocate a total of \$85,000 in Strategic Response Funds to BEPAF grantees. This delivered direct assistance for the immediate needs of family, as well as bolstered grantee abilities to monitor and address emerging or otherwise urgent policy opportunities.

BPAF grantees included organizations such as: The Community Coalition; Investing in Place; East LA Community Corporation/ ACT-LA; Proyecto Pastoral/ Promesa Boyle Heights; United Parents and Students; Just Environment; Long Beach/ Walk Long Beach; and Physicians for Social Responsibility LA.

Early Child Health Policy Expansion fund

Finally, in November 2019, the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners approved a Strategic Partnership for \$600,000 over a 24-month period to launch pilot grants related to funding early childhood development priorities. As an expansion to the ECE PAF, pilot grants intended to support advocacy for policies and practices that better ensure public systems provide maternal health services and early identification and intervention services, inclusive of home visiting supports, as well as the expansion of family-centered practices, including trauma-informed approaches in systems that serve children and families. In alignment with the 2020-2028 Strategic Plan, the pilot's broad goals centered on increasing the rate of LA County children birth to age 3-years old with a developmental delay who participate in early intervention services; decreasing the average age of LA County children enter special education services; and increasing the rate of eligible LA County families participating in home visiting programs prenatally through age 5-years old. Grants for discrete projects, capacity-building and rapid response were provided by invitation-only, in amounts between \$10,000 and \$75,000. Examples of funded projects include:

- Preparing for and analyzing the state's Medi-Cal managed care re-procurement efforts. This work identifies opportunities to ensure that the state's new Medi-Cal managed care contracts prioritizes the health of pregnant women and young children, addresses social determinants of health, and promotes health equity. For example, ECHPAF grantees provided analysis and strategy development related to the draft Request for Proposal (RFP) the Department of Health Care Services released related to the reprocurement. That document summarized new requirements that health plans will need to meet in order to serve Medi-Cal beneficiaries, with the department also asking stakeholders to provide feedback on it. The work of ECHPAF grantees helped inform First 5 LA's efforts to effectively respond to the RFP, all to better ensure health equity and child health are prioritized in the procurement process.
- Advocating for expanding to the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program for children, and increasing CalWORKs grants so no child is living in deep poverty.
- Working with local public health agencies, private hospitals and community clinics to implement universal perinatal access policies developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Early Child Health expansion fund grantee organizations included: The California Children's Hospital Association; Western Center on Law and Poverty; Child Care Resource Center; National Health Law Program; Children's Partnership; California Black Women's Health Project; Children's Specialty Care Coalition; and Black Women for Wellness.