



October 28, 2021

INFORMATION ACTION

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC ADVOCACY SUPPORT SERVICES

Strategic Plan Priority Area: Child Health

Goal: All children thrive by achieving optimal health prenatal through age 5.

Strategic Plan Priority Area: Child Development

Goal: All children birth through age 5 have high-quality, nurturing environments that ensure their learning readiness.

Strategic Plan Priority Area: Family Functioning

Goal: All families have the knowledge, skills, and resources to support their children's optimal development.

RECOMMENDATION

First 5 California (F5CA) staff recommends the Commission authorize up to \$4.5 million over 4 years to support the F5CA Strategic Plan, North Star, and Children's Policy Agenda in four key areas: (1) advocacy and policymaker education capacity; (2) strategic partnerships and coalitions; (3) policy development; and (4) public policy research and education.

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

In order to continue expanding the Commission's and First 5 counties' capacity to achieve their public policy and advocacy goals, and the Commission's overarching mission, F5CA staff requests the Commission grant authority to sustain and expand F5CA's advocacy capacity in four distinct and supportive ways. This additional capacity building will ultimately yield success toward F5CA's Children's Policy Agenda (Attachment A) goals and assist in meeting the mandate of Proposition 10:

1. **Advocacy and Policymaker Education Capacity:** External contractors will continue to bolster F5CA's internal public policy capacity and partnership efforts within the First 5 Network to achieve the goals of its Children's Policy Agenda at the state level. F5CA's advocacy and policy education strategy is currently conducted in concert with First 5 Los Angeles (F5LA), the First 5 Association (Association), and the entire First 5 Network. Additionally, the contractors will introduce new and

innovative capacities that will continue to increase policymaker awareness of early brain science and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), build the F5CA brand as a trusted policy resource, and influence policymakers at the state level.

To achieve the scope of work outlined above, F5CA staff request authority for up to \$650,000 over a four-year period to secure state advocacy and policymaker education contracts.

2. **Strategic Partnerships and Coalitions:** In addition to core advocacy and policymaker education capacity, F5CA has successfully employed coalitions as a strategy to yield success on individual F5CA Children's Policy Agenda goals.

To continue to expand stable support for coalition-based strategies, F5CA staff is requesting authority for up to \$650,000 over a four-year period for coalitions and strategic partnerships on F5CA Children's Policy Agenda goals. Currently this is the work that helps support the facilitation and infrastructure of the Early Care and Education (ECE) Coalition.

3. **Policy Development:** Policy change requires feasible legislative proposals. In order to facilitate the creation of consensus-based and actionable policy recommendations necessary to articulate and achieve the goals of the Children's Policy Agenda, external contractor capacity is necessary to: 1) convene stakeholders for policy development work, and 2) synthesize stakeholder input into concrete and actionable policy recommendations.

To continue to facilitate the creation of consensus-based and actionable policy recommendations, F5CA staff is requesting authority for up to \$200,000 over a four-year period for policy development on F5CA Children's Policy Agenda goals.

4. **Public Policy Research and Education:** This investment will build upon previous efforts through F5CA's public policy research with the California Budget and Policy Center, whose deliverables included analyses and briefings on early care and education (ECE) issues, including access to quality child care, the long-term benefits of subsidized child care, paid family leave and family well-being, and child poverty.

With the Commission's development of a North Star Statement and Audacious Goal that provides the impact framework for the implementation of the F5CA's Strategic Plan, these services would also help to share the practice and data stories that support the need, benefit, and policy opportunities for promoting safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for children and families.

Funding would also support research and analyses through various mediums, including reports, fact sheets, briefs, webinars, panel discussions, and speaker series. These deliverables, relayed in-person, virtually, and in hybrid formats, will complement F5CA staff expertise, bridge data gaps, and support Commissioners, the ECE Coalition, the First 5 Network, and stakeholders in distilling, shaping, and communicating policy priorities.

This support will enable F5CA to better identify, track, and amplify data relevant to policy priorities and child outcomes, including on topics such as ACEs, child care, home visitation, child welfare, Race, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI), and

mental health. In addition, the scope will aid staff efforts to educate stakeholders, policymakers, and the public on the impact and relevance of policy priorities, as well as facilitate parent and stakeholder engagement in the review, development, and support of program and policy initiatives.

F5CA staff is requesting authority for up to \$3,000,000 over a four-year period for public policy research and education on F5CA Children's Policy Agenda goals.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

At its January 2018 meeting, the F5CA Commission approved up to \$2.7 million over 2 years as part of a three-pronged strategy to support public policy and advocacy goals via a dedicated public relations contract, the creation and dissemination of data communication tools, and supporting the strategic dissemination of information and data at town hall events. The public relations components were part of a previous contract and have now been incorporated into F5CA's media campaign work and recently concluded RFP. Meanwhile, the other components were carried out under a contract with the California Budget and Policy Center.

In January 2021, F5CA concluded a two-year, \$600,000 contract with the California Budget and Policy Center. Their deliverables analyzed California state budget policy items and F5CA-specific content that helped inform staff and supported sharing of strategic information to local leaders, elected officials, policy makers, and other stakeholders to promote First 5-supported legislation and policy priorities.

In July 2018, the Commission approved up to \$1.05 million over a three-year period to enter into contracts for F5CA advocacy, policymaker education, and strategic coalition efforts. In addition to a few smaller, short-term contracts, this approval resulted in a \$775,000 contract with California Strategies, LLC, whose scope includes state advocacy on behalf of F5CA, support and facilitation of the ECE Coalition, and other strategic partnership efforts. This contract is slated to conclude September 30, 2022.

With the previous and forthcoming conclusion of contracts relating to advocacy support, the adoption of new statewide investments that relate to child and family wellbeing, such as mental health supports, and the Strategic Plan implementation efforts at F5CA, approval of strategic advocacy support services will be critical to F5CA's policy work to ensure fidelity and execution of the organization's policy agenda.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

This four-year commitment (over 5 fiscal years) would be funded through the Education, and Research and Development accounts in the amount of up to \$4.5 million.

ATTACHMENTS

A. F5CA 2021–22 Children's Policy Agenda