



July 28, 2022

INFORMATION ACTION

SUBJECT: IMPROVE AND MAXIMIZE PROGRAMS SO ALL CHILDREN THRIVE (IMPACT) 2020 FUNDING EXTENSION

Strategic Priority Area I: Children and Families

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

Strategic Priority Area II: Community Partners

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

RECOMMENDATION

First 5 California (F5CA) staff recommends the Commission approve a twelve-month, no cost, extension of the IMPACT 2020 funding authorization.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

The purpose of this item is to request a twelve-month, no cost, extension of the Shared Services Alliance (SSA) Pilot and the WestEd system support contract. This request also includes the WestEd evaluation contract for SSA and IMPACT, which is under development. All three contracts are funded under IMPACT 2020, authorized on July 25, 2019, by the Commission. This spending authority is set to expire June 30, 2023.

SSA Pilot

In August 2020, the Commission approved using \$1.5 million of the IMPACT 2020 funding for the SSA Pilot.

SSAs are referenced as a key strategy in the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care (Master Plan), which called for the implementation of the SSA Pilot to inform key stakeholders and policy makers on the effectiveness of SSA in California. The Master Plan report, and a companion knowledge brief, identify SSAs as a priority for California (see: <https://www.chhs.ca.gov/home/master-plan-for-early-learning-and-care/>).

SSAs are an emerging model in California and many other states to strengthen small early learning and care (ELC) businesses by supporting them to become financially sound and more efficient, which allows them to offer high-quality ELC opportunities to children and families. In 2021, seven counties were selected through a competitive bidding process to implement shared services networks in their county. These contracts are funded through IMPACT 2020, and therefore set to expire June 30, 2023.

The SSA contracts were designed to be carried out over 24 months (July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2023) to accommodate ramp-up activities such as ELC provider recruitment, staff training, and sub-contract executions. These activities can take up to six months, and at least a full year to implement, learn from one another, and understand what is effective and scalable, particularly given their implementation during COVID-19 recovery. However, the public health crisis also impacted the contracting process and timeline, significantly delaying execution of county contracts. Counties were unable to begin the SSA activities (including hiring staff and sub-contracting) to carry out the SSA activities without an executed local assistance agreement (LAA) in place, which did not occur until April 2022. The current funding authorization for SSA will expire June 30, 2023, providing insufficient time to meet the goals of this funding.

IMPACT 2020 and SSA Evaluation

A new contract with WestEd is also under development for the evaluation of IMPACT 2020 and the SSA pilots. This contract is in process and expected to be executed in Summer 2022. The evaluations cannot be finalized prior to the SSA pilot participants' full implementation and the closing of IMPACT 2020. Data collected through SSA and IMPACT 2020 are vital sources of information for ELC systems planning. Evaluation is a critical component of both IMPACT 2020 and the SSA pilots, so additional time is essential to assessing these current investments and informing new ones.

Professional Development (PD) Content

In August 2020, the Commission approved \$1 million for development of new online professional development content for the early learning and care workforce. The Administration requested that the Commission commit funding towards developing new online content for the ELC workforce in order to expand upon the content being developed through the Preschool Development Grant Renewal (PDG-R). The content funded by F5CA is being developed through a contract with WestEd, an amendment for which is currently in process and expected to be approved shortly. New content for the workforce will expand relevant professional development opportunities and create more equitable access to existing content through online availability and translation.

WestEd was asked to develop online PD content with an equity lens. Content development, translation, and meeting WCAG 2.1 and 508 ADA accessibility requirements will exceed the authorized time frame. As execution of this contract amendment has also been delayed, an extension is needed to complete the work.

A twelve-month extension for these specific contracts within IMPACT 2020 will enable these projects to come to completion as designed and will allow time for the following:

- Counties will be able to fully implement their SSA projects and the evaluation will analyze specific SSA strategies and to quantify their success in supporting ELC businesses.
- Online content development for PD and supports for ELC professionals will be developed with attention to equity and accessibility.
- The evaluation of IMPACT 2020 will have the necessary time to be completed in order to document the successes and lessons learned from this funding.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

On July 25, 2019, the Commission approved \$103 million over three years (FY 2020–21 through FY 2022–23) IMPACT 2020 to support local, regional, and state quality improvement infrastructure investments for California’s ELC system. IMPACT 2020 is specifically designed to fund quality improvement expansion and support providers serving high-impact communities and populations not already receiving support. Participation focuses on expansion of access to high-quality ELC in private centers; family child care homes; family, friend, and neighbor caregivers; and in alternative settings such as home visiting programs and libraries.

On August 19, 2020, the Commission approved reallocation of IMPACT 2020 funds from evaluation to support SSA contracts and development of online PD content. The funding reallocation for SSA was \$1.5 million. Development of online PD content was requested in order to align with federal funding from the PDG-R grant. The funding reallocation for PD content was \$1 million.

FISCAL DETAIL

This is a no cost, time-only request. There is no additional fiscal impact.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. F5CA Shared Services Alliance Logic Model
- B. IMPACT 2020 – Evaluation Logic Model