



October 27, 2022

INFORMATION ACTION

SUBJECT: Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive Legacy

Strategic Priority Area I: Children and Families

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

Strategic Priority Area II: Child Development

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 Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive (IMPACT) Legacy funding authorization for \$125,828,000 over four years (FY 2023–24 through FY 2026–27).

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

The purpose of this item is to request authorization to fund Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive (IMPACT) Legacy. This item builds upon the conceptual design presented to the Commission on July 28, 2022, and incorporates input from F5CA leadership, the Program Advisory Committee, First 5 county commissions, and other partners.

Overview

IMPACT Legacy is a comprehensive effort to enhance the quality of early learning and care (ELC) and support the workforce, with a focus on addressing the needs of the whole child, including health, behavioral health, child development, and family strengthening. It is part of Quality Counts California (QCC), the statewide Quality Rating and Improvement System led by F5CA, the California Department of Education (CDE), and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). IMPACT Legacy implementation will be coordinated at the regional level to create efficiencies and promote a more equitable system. IMPACT Legacy is the final investment in local implementation of QCC and will provide the support and innovation needed to maintain

sound infrastructure and encourage growth as the state system works towards a more sustainable statewide model.

Background

QCC is an existing statewide system to support and improve quality in ELC settings, specifically those that are less resourced. F5CA has been an integral partner in the development and implementation of QCC, beginning in 2015 with First 5 IMPACT funding, which expanded the system from sixteen Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant pilot counties in 2012, to all of California’s 58 counties participating today. Regional Hubs were established to support QCC consortia in addressing their needs collectively, encourage consistent access across programs in different counties, maximize efficiencies, and minimize duplication of efforts. Hubs coordinate the sharing of resources, training, and other elements of the QCC Quality Continuum Framework. F5CA intends to continue efforts to standardize services, increase equity across consortia and sites, and to make QCC programs more effective through streamlining administration of technical assistance, professional development, incentives, and stipends. As F5CA priorities shift away from formal ratings (and the costly certification structures associated with them) to more thoroughly fund access to activities that directly improve quality, IMPACT Legacy will provide the infrastructure to lift up ELC settings serving our most high impact children, families, and communities.

F5CA, CDE, and CDSS have a continued commitment to QCC and are working collaboratively toward a more equitable ELC system. The three agencies continue to support QCC’s mission to ensure that all children experience high-quality early learning and care that includes warm, nurturing adult-child relationships, engaging and culturally informed learning opportunities and materials, and safe and healthy environments to support their growth and development and to prepare them for success in school and life.

Alignment

This new funding cycle represents an opportunity to advance our respective agencies’ missions and our collective identity as QCC. F5CA is actively working with CDSS and CDE to align targets, timelines, priorities, and data collection, and to streamline reports, invoicing processes, and procedures.

Regional Consortia Structure

A Regional Consortia structure will allow for counties within a region to benefit from reduced administrative burden while building regional systems and reducing duplication. First 5 county commissions will be prioritized to apply as Regional Lead Agencies. Each Lead Agency will be responsible for responding to the Regional Consortia Request for Applications (RFA), describing how they will oversee the duties of the Regional Consortia, and ensure that the functions identified are executed within the region with maximum efficiency. A Regional Consortia Lead Agency will receive funding to administer their responsibilities and support local activities as appropriate (to be outlined in the Regional Consortia RFA).

IMPACT Legacy Supports Children and Families

In alignment with the California Children and Families Act, the [2019 Strategic Plan](#), and F5CA's North Star¹ and Audacious Goal², the purpose of IMPACT Legacy is to expand access to quality ELC. IMPACT Legacy will prioritize children's healthy development, the well-being of the workforce, and culturally responsive family engagement.

To accomplish the purpose, IMPACT Legacy will:

1. Expand Access to Quality

IMPACT Legacy will prioritize investments that support and retain a valued workforce in center- and home-based ELC settings not already receiving quality support. In delivering outreach, engagement activities, and incentives to these populations, this investment will:

- Support regional needs assessment efforts for the purpose of targeted engagement and recruitment
- Direct recruitment efforts to include new settings with a focus on home-based sites
- Endorse processes and procedures that welcome diverse families, including multilingual learners
- Address implicit bias and barriers to participation

2. Improve Adult-child Interactions

IMPACT Legacy will focus improvements on adult-child interactions in the areas of trauma-informed practice, culturally responsive care, and authentic family engagement for children's social and emotional health. This will be accomplished through strategic, focused professional growth opportunities and coaching tailored to individual site and staff needs in:

- Classroom and environment observations
- Effective program management
- Emerging best practices to address challenging behaviors, and to reduce suspension and expulsion
- Child-level assessments
- Research-based curriculum

¹ **North Star:** *Trauma-informed, healing-centered, and culturally responsive systems promote the safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments necessary to eliminate inequities and ensure healthy development for all children.*

² **Audacious Goal:** *In a generation, all children 0–5 will have the safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments necessary to achieve healthy development.*

3. Enhance Family Engagement

IMPACT Legacy will build provider capacity to authentically engage families in decision making, utilizing their expertise regarding their child's development, and incorporating their values into each child's education and care. Strong family engagement, driven by culture and values of the families, is an important component in children's healthy development and early learning experiences. Family engagement will be enhanced through workforce supports, including:

- Equity-focused coaching
- Professional development (PD) opportunities for teachers and administrators
- Teacher practice that celebrates community culture in the classroom or care setting

4. Coordinate Statewide Efforts Toward Sustainability

IMPACT Legacy will work with State Agency partners to advance Administration priorities, achieve sustainability, and further efforts to onboard and retain a diverse, highly qualified, and respected ELC workforce. Sustainability will be promoted by:

- Advocating for state policies to improve workforce compensation
- Evaluating IMPACT Legacy implementation to identify efficiencies and promising practices for long-term use
- Reflecting and monitoring system operations to ensure equity in policy and practice
- Funding the statewide professional workforce data system to ensure information is widely available

State-level Infrastructure

IMPACT Legacy will continue its focus on PD for ELC professionals and the coaches, trainers, and technical assistance providers serving them. IMPACT Legacy will include development projects, pilots, and evaluation studies at the program/site and teacher/provider level.

Development projects may include the following, pending equity audit results, input from QCC leadership, and other stakeholder discussions:

- Badging/micro-credential concept development and expansion
- Apprenticeship development and expansion
- Community engagement leadership/champions cohort
- Coordinated revision of the QCC Quality Continuum Framework, including refined engagement and quality improvement priorities and resources

The California Early Care and Education Workforce Registry (Registry) is currently the repository for the state's ELC workforce information, including training, education, and professional credentials. IMPACT Legacy will fund Registry operations through FY 2024–25 to ensure data is available to state policymakers to inform future policy related

to workforce compensation, and to improve state efficiencies for the ELC field. F5CA will support the transfer of operational responsibility of the Registry to another entity in the state.

A portion of the IMPACT Legacy funding will be reserved by the state to contract for ongoing administrative support for the management, coordination, and communication between QCC funders.

System Evaluation

IMPACT Legacy funding will include evaluation projects to further equity in the ELC system, promote best practices in care settings and classrooms, and support state policies to increase field/site retention. An IMPACT Legacy evaluation plan will be informed by the QCC Equity Audit currently in process, and will be developed in coordination with state partners, the Research and Evaluation Advisory Committee, regional/local implementation partners, and input from practitioners and community.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

On July 28, 2022, the Commission heard F5CA staff proposals for future investments. Commissioners requested that the IMPACT Legacy be brought back as an Action Item for funding authority.

FISCAL DETAIL

Fund Account	FY 2023–24	FY 2024–25	FY 2025–26	FY 2026–27	TOTAL
Education	\$13,000,000	\$13,000,000	\$13,000,000	\$13,000,00	\$52,000,000
Child Care	\$11,707,000	\$11,707,000	\$11,707,000	\$11,707,00	\$46,828,000
Research and Development	\$8,600,000	\$8,600,000	\$4,900,000	\$4,900,000	\$27,000,000

The total funding request of \$12,828,000 will be distributed across three fund accounts: Education, Child Care and Research and Development. The reduction in spending within the Research and Development account in the final two fiscal years is reflective of the end of a two-year contract to support the Early Care and Education Workforce Registry, which is currently planned to be transferred to the CA Department of Social Services in the 2025-26 Fiscal Year.

ATTACHMENTS

None.