



## California Children and Families Commission Meeting

August 17, 2023

### MEETING MINUTES

#### Item 1 – Opening Remarks

Chair Albright called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Katie Albright  
Elsa Jimenez  
Lori Risso  
Vivian Paz

Commissioners Absent: Shana Hazan  
Jackie Majors

Ex Officio Member Mijic: Absent

#### Announcements

Jackie Thu-Huong Wong, Executive Director, First 5 California, opened the meeting with a Tribal Land Acknowledgment.

Chair Albright began her remarks by thanking former Chair Giannina Perez for her leadership and service. Chair Albright briefly provided the goals for the meeting. Chair Albright stated Action Item 7 was moved up following Action Item 3 to ensure a quorum is sustained.

#### **Jackie Thu-Huong Wong, Executive Director, First 5 California**

Ms. Wong presented the Executive Director's report, which included appreciation for former Chair Perez' service. The report included program, fiscal, and personnel updates.

#### **Courtney Armstrong, First 5 Association, Policy Director**

Ms. Armstrong congratulated Chair Albright on her appointment as the new chair and thanked former Chair Perez for her leadership. Ms. Armstrong provided an update on Senate Bill 326-Mental Health Services Act Modernization proposal that is currently moving through the Legislature. Ms. Armstrong shared the Association sent out a survey to counties regarding declining revenue and the Association is in the process of analyzing the responses and data.

## **Commissioner Comments**

Chair Albright asked what some of the questions were on the survey. Ms. Armstrong stated the Association is trying to get a sense of what kind of revenue decline they're seeing at the county level and what the impact is on staffing levels, the community, and other agencies they support. Chair Albright expressed an interest in hearing the survey findings.

## **Advisory Committees**

Commissioner Risso, Public Policy Advisory Committee Chair, shared the Committee reviewed how First 5 California (F5CA) categorizes positions on bills, the four pillars guiding the work and how they align, and the four coalitions F5CA collaborates with. Committee Chair Risso expressed her agreement with Commissioner Jimenez's suggestion that the information be available when reviewing bills.

Chair Albright shared notes from the July 18 Public Education and Outreach Advisory Committee. Topics included a review of the media campaign and development of the whole child public relations campaign, overview of the Stronger Starts campaign, how F5CA transitions from Talk. Read. Sing.® to addressing and creating awareness of the effects of adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress, and the development of a Request for Proposal due to the current media contract that will end in June 2024.

## **Item 2 – Public Comment**

None.

## **Action Item 3 – Consent Calendar**

**MOTION/ACTION:** Commissioner Jimenez moved to approve the Consent Calendar. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Risso.

**VOTE:** The motion was unanimously approved by the Commission.

## **Action Item 7 – Refugee Family Support Extension**

Laxmi Gurajada, Education Programs Consultant, provided a PowerPoint presentation of the Refugee Support program. Highlights included:

- Background of the Program
- Evaluation Summary
- Benefits of the Program
- Justification for the Request to Extend the Program.

Ms. Armstrong stated the goal of the presentation was to share how local counties are implementing the Refugee Family Support program and hear from the grantees on the local impact.

Fabiola González, Executive Director, First 5 Fresno, shared Fresno is the lead Grantee for the central region of California. Ms. González provided an overview of the programs accomplishments, best practices, and challenges faced.

Alejandra Labrado, Program Planner, First 5 Sacramento, shared First 5 Sacramento has provided navigation services, language support, and mental health assessments and supports. She stated there have been many valuable lessons learned.

Dr. Mohammed Sadiq, Program Director, Public Health Institute, shared a client's personal story and challenges she faces as an Afghan refugee and relies heavily on support from the Refugee Family Support program in Sacramento. Dr. Sadiq stated the work First 5 is doing is indispensable.

Janice LeRoux, Executive Director, First 5 Placer, mentioned the systems change work that is being done. Ms. LeRoux shared Sacramento is home to the largest number of Afghan refugees. The refugees then resettle to Placer, Sutter, and Yolo counties which has brought significant strains to their systems. Ms. LeRoux thanked the Commission for their investment and is hopeful for continued investment in the Refugee Family Support program.

#### Discussion

Commissioner Jimenez asked how much money has been spent on the Refugee Family Support program. Ms. Wong stated \$2 million has been expended. Chair Albright asked why the funding that was passed is so narrow that some families are not eligible for services. Ms. Wong shared F5CA aligned their refugee definition with the federal definition and asylees are not captured. Chair Albright confirmed that a community-based organization is required to evaluate eligibility criteria to access [Refugee Support Services] funding. Ms. Wong stated that is the reason why the partnerships with the county agencies is important. The local partnerships ensure the successful local implementation of the program.

#### Public comment

None.

**MOTION/ACTION:** Commission Paz moved to approve a one-year no-cost extension to the Refugee Family Support Local Grants from September 1, 2023, to August 31, 2024.

**VOTE:** The motion was unanimously approved by the Commission.

#### **Information Item 4 – Update on Current Media Campaign**

Brandon Tate and Irma Vega, Rescue Agency, provided a PowerPoint overview of the media mid-campaign updates, including information on the research. Highlights included:

- Dragon Song Campaign Review
- Stronger Starts Mid-Campaign Review
- Public Relations Update

- Ongoing Content
- What's Next

### Discussion

Commissioner Jimenez thanked Rescue Agency for the overview and the emphasis on public engagement, and asked them to make sure that the message, and more importantly, the messengers, are people the public are going to be drawn to.

### Public comment

Cindy Hernandez, Communications, First 5 Fresno, thanked the Commission for focusing on toxic stress. Ms. Hernandez expressed her concern regarding the large digital divide and lack of broadband specifically in BIPOC communities.

### **Information Item 5 – Future Requests for Proposals Regarding New Campaign Investments**

Jamiann Lopez, Information Officer II, stated the media campaign is a huge value add to getting out the message for F5CA. Ms. Lopez provided a brief history and plan for future Requests for Proposals (RFP). Ms. Lopez briefly provided the goals of the media and outreach contract and the process for the RFP. Ms. Lopez shared F5CA is happy to take any recommendations that Commissioners would like to share for consideration when developing the scope of work.

### Discussion

Commissioner Jimenez asked what effort there will be to create materials that will resonate with our indigenous speaking communities. Ms. Lopez responded by stating F5CA does not focus solely on English and Spanish. She stated F5CA explores areas where there are pockets of populations that can be reached. Commissioner Jimenez asked if F5CA would bring some messaging that focuses on the systems change aspect of the work. Ms. Lopez stated F5CA will work with the Public Education and Outreach Advisory Committee to review those aspects of the RFP to ensure all of these suggestions are included. Commissioner Risso agreed with Commissioner Jimenez on messaging the systems change work. Commissioner Paz agreed and would like to see more outreach to indigenous communities.

### Public Comment

None.

## Information Item 6 – Update on Current *Kit for New Parents* Program and Future Investment Recommendations

Vernettia Syphax, Information Officer, shared a PowerPoint presentation on the *Kit for New Parents*. Highlights included:

- Background and History of the *Kit*
- Expanding the *Kit's* Reach to Families with Low Incomes
- *Kit for New Parents* Study and Timeline
- Future Investments
- Reflections on the *Kit* from First 5 San Diego Executive Director Alethea Arguilez

### Discussion

Commissioner Risso asked what counties have high distribution rates and how they are obtaining that. Ms. Syphax responded by stating the smaller counties struggle with staffing and because the *Kit* has been available for a long time, some counties have developed their own strategies for getting *Kit's* to communities. Heather Quick, Managing Researcher, American Institutes for Research (AIR), also responded by sharing that AIR is still analyzing the data, as these questions are part of a study that is currently being conducted. Ms. Quick stated the counties that are distributing more *Kits* tend to have more partners engaged in the work. Ms. Quick also noted in some counties there is a centralized effort at the county level to get the message out to develop partnerships. Commissioner Risso expressed that a more collaborative approach with some of the successful counties would help some of the struggling counties and generate some ideas. Chair Albright stated in addition to engaging partnerships between counties and providers, it's important to evaluate and leverage technology to address the literacy divide.

### Public Comment

None.

## Item 7 – Adjournment

**MOTION/ACTION:** Commissioner Paz moved to adjourn the Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jimenez.

**VOTE:** The motion was unanimously approved by the Commission.

Vice Chair Hazan adjourned the meeting at 3:46 p.m.

The next scheduled Commission meeting is October 19, 2023.