



MINUTES
FIRST 5 RIVERSIDE COUNTY
Advisory Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 11, 2026
11:00 AM
First 5 Riverside County
585 Technology Ct
Riverside, California 92507

Advisory Committee Present: Kari Middleton-Hendrix, Malinda Margiotta, Agam Patel, Angel Anton, Antonia Eli Mast, Helena Lopez, Jennifer Briseño, and Neftalí Galarza-Toledo

Advisory Committee Absent: Saovaros Diehl-Hope

Advisory Committee Vacancy: District II

Administrative Staff Present: Charna Widby, Executive Director; Michael Knight, Assistant Director; Patricia Perez, Deputy Director; Lynn Stephens, Executive Assistant IV; Martina Guevara, Commission Coordinator; Carol Abella, Regional Manager; Larissa Wills, Regional Manager; Charity Webb, Regional Manager; Estella Briseño, Regional Manager; Sean Pravica, Senior Public Information Specialist; Michelle Rodriguez, Public Information Specialist; Steven Hernandez, Administrative Services Analyst II; Michael Avalos, Support Services Technician

Legal Counsel: Kristine Bell-Valdez, Supervising Deputy County Counsel

A. Call to Order – Kari Middleton-Hendrix, Advisory Chair

1. Pledge of Allegiance – Led by Advisory Member Lopez.
2. Roll Call – Conducted by Ms. Stephens, Executive Assistant IV
Advisory Member Diehl-Hope is absent. A Quorum of the Advisory Committee was established.

B. Public Comments (for items not listed on the agenda) – Kari Middleton-Hendrix, Chair
None.

C. Commission and Advisory Committee Business – Kari Middleton-Hendrix, Chair

1. Advisory Committee Recognition for Malinda Margiotta and Jiles Smith - Charna Widby, Executive Director; Lynn Stephens, Executive Assistant IV
Ms. Widby honored Ms. Margiotta with a brief message of gratitude. She also recognized Mr. Smith for his service and support.
2. Oath of Office was administered to Advisory Member Jennifer Briseño by Kristine Bell-Valdez, Supervising Deputy County Counsel
Ms. Bell-Valdez welcomed Ms. Briseño and administered the Oath of Office.

3. Director Updates – Charna Widby, Executive Director; Michael Knight, Assistant Director; Patricia Perez, Deputy Director

Ms. Widby provided updates on recent activities, including the Riverside County State of Education event, Read Across America, the First 5 California Commission Meeting, the 2026 State Healthcare IT Connect Summit, and First 5 Riverside County leadership engagement in Mecca. She also highlighted a recent visit to the Mead Valley Family Resource Center.

Mr. Knight provided an update on the reopening of the Desert Hot Springs Family Resource Center, scheduled for March 18, 2026.

Chair Middleton-Hendrix requested a copy of the invitation for the Desert Hot Springs Grand Re-Opening event. Staff will send an invitation to the Advisory Committee and welcome their attendance.

4. Public Information Report – Sean Pravica, Senior Public Information Specialist and Michelle Rodriguez, Public Information Specialist

Ms. Rodriguez provided updates on JFK Family Day and recent Family Resource Center outreach materials, including brochures and coloring books. She also provided an update on the First 5 Riverside County and Department of Public Social Services drowning prevention video.

Due to technical difficulties, the drowning prevention video was not presented and will be shared at a later time.

5. Advisory Committee Comments
None.

6. First 5 Riverside County Advisory Committee Annual Chair and Vice Chair Process/Elections Presented by Kristine Bell-Valdez, Supervising Deputy County Counsel.

Ms. Bell-Valdez referenced Ordinance 784 regulations for the Advisory Committee Annual Chair and Vice Chair Process/Elections.

Ms. Widby confirmed Advisory Member Antonia Eli Mast accepted the nomination to serve as Chair for 2026, and Advisory Member Agam Patel accepted the nomination to serve as Vice Chair for 2026.

Advisory Member Margiotta moved to approve the Chair nomination for Antonia Eli Mast. Advisory Member Middleton-Hendrix seconded the motion.

Ms. Stephens conducted roll call.

- **Ayes:** (8) Patel, Lopez, Mast, Margiotta, Anton, Galarza-Toledo, Middleton-Hendrix, Briseño
 - **Nays:** (0)
 - **Abstentions:** (0)
 - **Absent:** (1) Saovaros Diehl-Hope
- Quorum maintained. Motion carried.**

Advisory Member Mast moved to approve the Vice Chair nomination for Agam Patel. Advisory Member Lopez seconded the motion.

Ms. Stephens conducted roll call.

- **Ayes:** (8) Patel, Lopez, Mast, Margiotta, Anton, Galarza-Toledo, Middleton-Hendrix, Briseño
 - **Nays:** (0)
 - **Abstentions:** (0)
 - **Absent:** (1) Saovaros Diehl-Hope
- Quorum maintained. Motion carried.**

Ms. Bell-Valdez noted that the newly appointed Chair, Mast, and Vice Chair, Patel, will assume their official roles immediately. Outgoing Chair Middleton-Hendrix then passed the gavel to Chair Mast to continue the meeting.

D. Presentation/Information Items – Antonia Eli Mast, Chair (A copy of all Presentation/Information Items and attachments can be viewed at www.rccfc.org and at the Commission Business Office)

1. Inland So Cal United Way — Guaranteed Income Pilot Project Presentation — Dr. Danielle Kilchenstein, Dr. PH, Executive Director, Government Relations Director, Guaranteed Income, and Joanna Osorio, Guaranteed Income Pilot Project Manager

Dr. Kilchenstein and Ms. Osorio presented an overview of the Guaranteed Income pilot, including early findings related to Whole Person Health Score outcomes and participant trends.

Chair Mast asked about participant tracking and group structure. Dr. Kilchenstein stated that data will be collected through May, with follow-up surveys administered 12 months post-exit, including those conducted by the Department of Social Services and the Urban Institute. She clarified that the experimental group receives guaranteed income plus voluntary wraparound services, including randomized financial coaching, while the control group also has access to voluntary wraparound services.

2. Help Me Grow Inland Empire Presentation — Megan Daly, Director, and Chad Vercio, M.D., Division Chief of Pediatrics, Med-Peds, and Pediatric Hospitalists, Loma Linda University Children's Hospital

Ms. Widby provided an overview of First 5 investments with Help Me Grow.

Ms. Daly presented an overview of the Help Me Grow Inland Empire (HMGIE) initiative, highlighting its local implementation and key outcomes over the past 5 years.

Dr. Vercio followed with an update on the current status and future direction of HMGIE, outlining opportunities for growth and ongoing system development efforts.

A discussion ensued regarding declining youth vaccination rates in the Inland Empire area and the importance of local partnerships to build trust. Advisory Member Lopez, Chief Executive Officer of Greater Hope, highlighted its new children's vaccination clinic and interest in collaboration. Challenges in rural pediatric care, including physician shortages, were noted.

3. Brown Act Training and Presentation on 2026 Updates — Kristine Bell-Valdez, Supervising Deputy County Counsel

Due to time constraints, the Brown Act Training and Presentation was tabled until the next Advisory Committee Meeting.

Advisory Member Briseño moved to table the Brown Act Training and Presentation until the May 13 Advisory Committee meeting. Advisory Member Lopez seconded the motion.

- **Ayes:** (8) Patel, Lopez, Mast, Margiotta, Anton, Galarza-Toledo, Middleton-Hendrix, Briseño
 - **Nays:** (0)
 - **Abstentions:** (0)
 - **Absent:** (1) Saovaros Diehl-Hope
- Quorum maintained. Motion carried.**

4. 2027-2030 First 5 Riverside County Strategic Plan Update — Charna Widby, Executive Director

Ms. Widby reported that the strategic plan is being further refined using detailed input from community listening sessions. Themes included access, family stability, and early support, with notable differences across communities. Work continues to better define First 5's roles in leading, co-designing, capacity-building, and supporting partners. Ms. Widby noted the importance of explicitly including RivCoONE under Goal Area #4 to emphasize countywide systems integration.

E. Consent Items – Antonia Eli Mast, Chair (A copy of all Consent Items and attachments can be viewed at www.rccfc.org and at the Commission Business Office)

1. Approve First 5 Riverside County Draft Advisory Committee September 10, 2025 Meeting Minutes
2. Approve First 5 Riverside County Draft Advisory Committee January 21, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Advisory Member Briseño moved to approve consent items E.1 and E.2 as presented. Advisory Member Patel seconded the motion.

- **Ayes:** (8) Patel, Lopez, Mast, Margiotta, Anton, Galarza-Toledo, Middleton-Hendrix, Briseño
 - **Nays:** (0)
 - **Abstentions:** (0)
 - **Absent:** (1) Saovaros Diehl-Hope
- Quorum maintained. Motion carried.**

F. Presentation/Action Items – Antonia Eli Mast, Chair (A copy of all Presentation/Action Items and attachments can be viewed at www.rccfc.org and at the Commission Business Office)

1. **26-01:** Review and Recommend Nominations for 2026 Champion for Children Award Recipients — Sean Pravica, Senior Public Information Specialist

Mr. Pravica provided an overview of the 2026 Champion for Children nomination process and nomination backgrounds.

Making a Difference

Multiple Advisory Committee members nominated Samudra Leitan for the “Making a Difference” category

Leading the Way

Multiple Advisory Committee members nominated Sophia Williams for “Leading the Way” category

Advisory Member Briseño moved to approve Action Item 26-01 as presented, recommending Samudra Leitan (“Making a Difference”) and Sophia Williams (“Leading the Way”) as the 2026 Champions for Children. Advisory Member Lopez seconded the motion.

- **Ayes:** (8) Patel, Lopez, Mast, Margiotta, Anton, Galarza-Toledo, Middleton-Hendrix, Briseño
 - **Nays:** (0)
 - **Abstentions:** (0)
 - **Absent:** (1) Saovaros Diehl-Hope
- Quorum maintained. Motion carried.**

G. Future Agenda Items:

1. First 5 Riverside County Updates
2. Poder Consulting Presentation
3. HealthySteps Presentation
4. Communications Plan
5. 2027-2030 First 5 Riverside County Strategic Plan Update

H. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 12:08 p.m. to the next Regular Meeting of the Advisory Committee to be held on May 13, 2026, beginning at 11:00 a.m. at:
First 5 Riverside County Children and Families Commission Office
585 Technology Court — Conference Room A
Riverside, CA 92507

Meeting Minutes Recorded by Lynn M. Stephens, Executive Assistant IV.