

# AGENDA

## MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Chair: Sheila Kuehl

Thursday, February 25, 2021  
1:30 PM

### Meeting Location:

First 5 LA  
750 N. Alameda Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

(If you would like to speak to any item on the agenda, please complete a public comment form)

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Review Special Board/Program and Planning Committee Meeting Transcript and Meeting Summary from January 28, 2021 Meeting 3
3. **INFORMATION** 84  
Fresh Ideas for CalFresh Discussion of Findings and Next Steps  
  
**Presenters: Lee Werbel, Interim Director, Communities; Christine Tran, Executive Director, LA Food Policy Council; Nicole Williams, Human Services Administrator, Department of Public Social Services**
4. Break
5. **INFORMATION** 110  
Highlights from Best Start Region 1 (Metro LA, East LA, Southeast LA, South El Monte/EI Monte)  
  
**Presenters: Debbie Sheen, Program Officer, Communities; Brenda Aguilera, Director of Community Transformation, Para Los Ninos; Carlos Arceo, Regional Project Manager, Para Los Ninos; Alejandra Castillo, Community Promotora, Para Los Ninos**

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#### COMMISSIONERS

Los Angeles County Supervisor	Jane Boeckmann	Yvette Martinez
Sheila Kuehl	Bobby Cagle	Romalis J. Taylor
<i>Chair</i>	Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.Ed.	Keesha Woods Marlene Zepeda, Ph.D.
Judy Abdo		
<i>Vice Chair</i>		

#### EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Karla Pleitez Howell
Jonathan E. Sherin, M.D., Ph.D.
Wendy Smith, Ph.D., LCSW
Deanne Tilton

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kim Belshé

#### EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

John A. Wagner

#### A PUBLIC ENTITY

6. **INFORMATION**

133

Strengthening Welcome Baby Virtual Visits Study Through Data Partnership:  
Update and Cost Implications **(Written Only)**

7. Public Comment (for items not on the agenda)

8. Adjournment



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## SUMMARY MINUTES

**FIRST 5 LA**  
**January 28, 2021**  
**Special Board/Program & Planning Committee Meeting (VIRTUAL)**  
**1:30-3:30 pm**

**PROGRAM & PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Linda Aragon  
Bobby Cagle  
Astrid Heger  
Romalis Taylor

**Ex-Officio Commissioners:**

Jacquelyn McCroskey  
Deanne Tilton  
Keesha Woods

**NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

Judy Abdo (Acting Committee Chair)

**PROGRAM & PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Karla Pleitez Howell [Excused]  
Marlene Zepeda [Excused]  
Sheila Kuehl [Excused]

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Christina Altmayer, Senior Vice President for  
Center for Child and Family Impact  
Peter Barth, Chief of Staff  
Kim Belshé, Executive Director  
Linda Vo, Board Relations Manager  
John Wagner, Executive Vice President

**1. Call to Order / Roll Call**

Committee Acting Chair Judy Abdo called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm. Quorum was present.

**2. Review Special Board/Program and Planning Committee Meeting Transcript from October 29, 2020**

The transcript was received and filed with no deletions, additions or changes.

**3. Impact of the Digital Divide on Early Childhood Systems**

First 5 LA staff from the Center for Child and Family Impact presented an overview of digital technology affordability and access inequities, the effects on early childhood systems, and efforts underway to combat this reality, including incorporating digital equity within our systems change work.

**4. 2021 Policy Priorities and Policy Agenda Refinement**

Staff from the Office of Government Affairs and Public Policy presented First 5 LA's refined Policy Agenda noting their focus on high-level policy goals that respond to the context of race-based disparities exacerbated by the pandemic. They highlighted how First 5 LA's Policy Agenda goals are intended to ensure our advocacy represents First 5 LA's Strategic Plan priorities, aligns with current investments and demonstrated impact, prioritizes children prenatal to 5-years old as a special population, and supports children holistically in the context of their families and communities. This item will be brought for action at the February 11 Board of Commissioners meeting.

## SUMMARY MINUTES

Commissioners were excited at the prospect for opportunistic federal engagement and provided roundly positive feedback on the current draft of First 5 LA's Policy Agenda. Commissioners seemed particularly pleased with its grounding in equity, emphasis on culturally- and language-appropriate supports, and reinforced focus on parent-and community-voice as a driver of First 5 LA's policy work.

### 5. Preview Series of Upcoming Discussions on Best Start Regions

Staff from the Communities Team provided a preview of some upcoming presentations around the Best Start Regions that will begin at the February 25, Special Board/Program & Planning Committee meeting.

This Best Start series will engage the Board in a series of in-depth discussions to share learnings and results from the initial roll-out through today under the new regional model. The February 11 Board presentation will highlight the overall approach, community/resident involvement, impact of COVID to the work, and other considerations for the Best Start effort and the work in the five regions.

### 6. Public Comment (for items not on the agenda)

There were no Public Comments.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

The Commission adjourned at 3:28 pm.

### **NEXT MEETING:**

The next Special Board/Program & Planning Committee Meeting will take place on Thursday, January February 25, 2021 at 1:30 pm.

### VIRTUAL BOARD MEETING

Meeting details will be posted per Brown Act Requirements

Meeting minutes were recorded by Linda Vo, Board Relations Manager.

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MEETING OF FIRST 5 LOS ANGELES PROGRAM AND PLANNING  
Thursday, January 10, 2021  
750 North Alameda Street, First Floor  
Los Angeles, California 90012

STENOGRAPHICALLY REPORTED BY:  
HEATHERLYNN GONZALEZ  
CSR #13646

1 Thursday, January 10, 2021; Los Angeles, California

2 1:31 p.m.

3 -oOo-

4 COMMISSIONER ABDO: We have a few kind of "how  
5 are we going to do this meeting directions." And Linda  
6 will explain how people's hands can get raised or how --  
7 how you can get called on. Don't text me. That's not the  
8 way.

9 And -- and then I guess, Linda, you'll be doing a  
10 roll call; right?

11 THE SECRETARY: Yes. Thank you, Judy. And I'll  
12 start off with welcoming everyone to our first board  
13 meeting of 2021. And before we do begin this meeting, I  
14 just want to go over some important information. As a  
15 reminder, pursuant to Governor Newsom's executive order,  
16 N-25-20, members of the First 5 LA board of commissioners  
17 or staff may participate in this meeting via  
18 teleconference.

19 In the interest of maintaining appropriate social  
20 distancing, members of the public may observe this meeting  
21 telephonically or otherwise electronically as posted on  
22 our website and this agenda.

23 To provide public comment, you may submit written  
24 public comments by e-mail to [lvo@first5la.org](mailto:lvo@first5la.org), or you can  
25 call me at 213-276-9389. Do be sure to indicate the item

1 number your comment corresponds with. All public comments  
2 corresponding to an agenda item must be received before  
3 1:30 p.m. the day of the meeting. Any received after 1:30  
4 p.m. today will become a part of public record. All  
5 public comments received prior to 1:30 p.m. today will be  
6 read aloud it at the end of each item it coincides with.

7 And before we begin this meeting, do note the  
8 following: Today's meeting will include video and audio  
9 allowing all meeting participants and public members to  
10 view presentations via shared screen. To minimize  
11 background disruptions, all board members and staff should  
12 place their lines on mute until called upon to speak.

13 And as Commissioner Vice Chair Judy Abdo  
14 mentioned, she is going to be the acting chair of today's  
15 committee meeting. And if you would like to speak to an  
16 item, do not text. Do use the hand raise function or chat  
17 her directly via the Zoom chat box.

18 If there is technical assistance that is required  
19 during the meeting, you can also contact me at  
20 213-276-9389.

21 And with that, I'll be handing this back to our  
22 honorable acting committee chair, Judy Abdo.

23 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Okay. I want to welcome  
24 Jacquelyn McCroskey who is back. She was recently  
25 appointed to the board by the Commission For Children and

1 Families requesting Wendy Garen. She previously sat on  
2 our board ten years ago and currently works with  
3 philanthropic, government, and private sector partners to  
4 harness the scientific potential of linked administrative  
5 data to inform children's programs and policies. Her  
6 research has focused on the organization and funding of  
7 services for children and families, developing measures,  
8 metrics, and indicator to guide service development and  
9 improve outcomes from children, families, and communities.

10 So do you want to say anything --

11 COMMISSIONER McCROSKEY: I just --

12 COMMISSIONER ABDO: -- to add to that?

13 COMMISSIONER McCROSKEY: No. That was a  
14 mouthful. I apologize, Judy. That was a mouthful. I  
15 just want to say I'm delighted to be here, following your  
16 work from afar and now I get to follow it up close. so  
17 I'm looking forward to --

18 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Great. Well, welcome. We're  
19 very glad you're here.

20 So now I think we need a roll call.

21 THE SECRETARY: Yes. Thank you, Judy.

22 I'll start with yourself. Judy Abdo?

23 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Here.

24 THE SECRETARY: Linda Aragon.

25 Bobby Cagle.

1           COMMISSIONER CAGLE:  Here.

2           THE SECRETARY:  Astrid Heger.

3           COMMISSIONER HEGER:  (Nonverbal response.)

4           THE SECRETARY:  I see you waving.

5           Yvette Martinez.

6           Jonathan Sherin.

7           Romalis Taylor.

8           COMMISSIONER TAYLOR:  Here.

9           THE SECRETARY:  Marlene Zepeda.

10          Carla Pleitez Howell.

11          Jacquelyn McCroskey.

12          COMMISSIONER McCROSKEY:  Here.

13          THE SECRETARY:  Deanne Tilton.

14          Keesha Woods.

15          COMMISSIONER WOODS:  Here.

16          THE SECRETARY:  Quorum is present.

17          COMMISSIONER ABDO:  Okay.  So we have a quorum,

18          and we're expecting at least one more commissioner to

19          arrive.

20                 We are going through the agenda, which I'm

21          assuming each of you has.  And the first is to review the

22          special board program planning committee meeting

23          transcript from October 29th.  Oh, that sounds like so

24          long ago.

25                 Does anybody have any comments on it?

1           Hi, Deanne. We see you now.

2           And I guess we need a motion.

3           THE SECRETARY: We can receive and file the notes  
4 as is, Judy.

5           COMMISSIONER ABDO: Okay. That's fine. So we  
6 have the summary and the transcript. And those are  
7 received and filed without comment.

8           And now we move to actual items. So we have the  
9 Impact of the Digital Divide on Early Childhood Systems.  
10 Somebody going to introduce this?

11          MS. BELSHE: Who is leading off from our team?  
12 We got a number of colleagues across teams.

13          And, Breanna, your name is first on the agenda,  
14 but I don't want to assume that that is the case. It is  
15 the case.

16          MS. HAWKINS: That is the case.

17          MS. BELSHE: Then, Breanna, take it away.

18          COMMISSIONER ABDO: It's all yours, Breanna.

19          MS. BELSHE: And this is, I believe, Breanna's  
20 first opportunity to meet with the board. So we welcome  
21 her and share a virtual cookie with you.

22          MS. HAWKINS: Thank you. It appreciate it. And  
23 I missed that by mail option as well. I wish I could have  
24 that mail option as ell.

25          But welcome, commissioners, staff, and guests.

1 We're incredibly excited to share about an integrative  
2 effort to help address the digital divide and its impacts  
3 on young children and families. We're grateful for the  
4 opportunity to engage in a critical conversation with you  
5 about this work and to discuss strategies for increasing  
6 alignment with other countywide efforts.

7 So, of course, we can't begin a conversation  
8 about our collective work without starting with our  
9 strategic plan. And as you're all well aware, this plan  
10 serves as a roadmap to help us achieve our north star,  
11 ensuring all children enter kindergarten ready to succeed  
12 in school and life. However, as you also know, the  
13 Covid-19 epidemic has drastically impacted the health,  
14 education access, and economic security of millions of  
15 Angelenos, including our most vulnerable young children  
16 and families. While the Covid-19 crisis has caused many  
17 public agencies striving to address these issues to  
18 transition their services to digital platforms,  
19 zero-to-five families with limited access to Internet and  
20 computers are being left further behind, impacting our  
21 ability to achieve our north star.

22 So in today's presentation, we intend to  
23 understand digital equity as a pathway towards achieving  
24 our DEI value and north star, and also highlight First 5  
25 LA's efforts on the issue and elevate countywide

1 opportunities to elevate this work, and really leave most  
2 of our time for discussion. So understanding this issue  
3 and connecting it to our north star.

4 We can't talk about digital equity without first  
5 understanding the challenge of the digital divide or the  
6 goals between those who have access to computers and  
7 Internet and those who do not. The divide falls along  
8 lines of income, race, and age with low-income households,  
9 people of color, seniors, and young children least likely  
10 to have access to adequate Internet. 14 out of our 15  
11 Best Start geographies have lower rates of homes with  
12 Internet access than the LA county average. And according  
13 to a recent USC study, south Los Angeles and Long Beach,  
14 both Best Start geographies, have the highest rates of  
15 disconnection than any other communities in LA County.

16 The report also finds that Black, Latin X, and  
17 indigenous children in LA County are over three times more  
18 likely to lack Internet access at home than their White  
19 counterparts.

20 So clearly, having access to digital technology  
21 is an equity issue, one that the American Public Health  
22 Association has even identified as a social determinant of  
23 health. So in our increasingly digital age, digital  
24 access is necessary for not only health, but also civic  
25 participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access

1 to essential services.

2 So digital equity is simply when everyone has  
3 access to the technology they need to engage in our  
4 society, democracy, and economy. And digital inclusion is  
5 a vehicle to achieve equity.

6 The Covid-19 crisis has exposed and exacerbated  
7 disparities impact low-income children and families.  
8 While digital inequity has been a pertinent social justice  
9 priority prior to Covid, current conditions have  
10 heightened the level of urgency on this issue. For First  
11 5 LA, nearly every aspect of our work with communities has  
12 been impacted by the crisis and the move to digital  
13 platforms.

14 For example, our communications team is no longer  
15 able to distribute its usual 200,000 copies of our  
16 quarterly parenting guide, which was distributed at local  
17 libraries, nonprofits, and early care centers before the  
18 crisis. Now, the guide is distributed via e-mail and  
19 social media, leading to significantly lower numbers  
20 reached due to limited Internet access.

21 So as digital equity elevates as a priority for  
22 communities, public agencies, and funders now into the  
23 foreseeable future due to Covid, First 5 LA has played an  
24 integral role in elevating the needs of young children and  
25 families in ensuring that they're prioritized in various

1 digital equity efforts. Previously, much of the  
2 conversation had been focused on K-through-12 children,  
3 and our role has been to ensure that zero-to-five children  
4 are centered in these efforts as well.

5 So now I will transition to Diana Careaga who  
6 will lead us on a brief overview of some of the ways First  
7 5 LA has helped to band together to make this work.

8 MS. CAREAGA: Thank you, Breanna.

9 So for the next couple of slides, we're going to  
10 highlight some recent examples of efforts from the field  
11 that are helping to address the digital divide in home  
12 visiting, early care and education, and communities.

13 And so as you're aware, due to Covid, our  
14 grantees had to make pivotal shifts in utilizing digital  
15 platforms and investing in technology infrastructure.  
16 These shifts support our strategic plan efforts. They  
17 help ensure access to services and full participation via  
18 the use of technology, as well as our ongoing work with  
19 community leaders and policy makers to prioritize young  
20 children and families in the budgetary policy and practice  
21 positions through our policy and systems change efforts.  
22 Through these efforts, we also continue to generate and  
23 share learnings on how to effectively incorporate family  
24 and community engagement within the work of First 5 LA and  
25 our partners.

1           So the next slide we'd like to start sharing some  
2 specific examples of the field regarding application of  
3 digital equity lens and our work with the first being in  
4 home visiting.

5           So next slide please. So as you know, home  
6 visiting providers have to shift from providing in-person  
7 to virtual visits to families. First 5 LA's oversight  
8 entity led by last Los Angeles Best Babies Network or LA  
9 BBN conducted a survey to digital needs across the  
10 agencies providing home visiting, which indicated that at  
11 least 600 families were not able to fully participate in  
12 virtual home visits due to lack of access to technology.  
13 So the findings around this digital access were elevated  
14 not only at a convening with philanthropic in December,  
15 but also helped inform local and national health policy  
16 recommendations. Additionally, highlight digital access  
17 challenges, in September, Supervisor Kuehl elevated and  
18 supported efforts that helped the Department of Public  
19 Health secure 100,000 in funding to provide Chromebooks,  
20 hotspots, and Wi-Fi gift cards to 200 home visiting  
21 clients. And we are working with LA BBN to distribute to  
22 families and we'll be returning to the February board for  
23 approval.

24           And, finally, I'd like to highlight providing  
25 virtual visits has allowed the staff to continue to

1 connect to families to needed services. So as part of our  
2 sustainability efforts, our health system team continues  
3 to work with health plans, which are interested in  
4 ensuring high rates of children's immunization. So they  
5 work to increase their awareness and interest regarding  
6 home visiting and immunization. And our grantees have  
7 demonstrated a consistently high childhood immunization  
8 completion rate, even during this time of virtual visits;  
9 again, highlighting the importance of digital access with  
10 families.

11 And with that, I'll pass it on to Kevin Dieterle  
12 who will discuss our efforts in early care and education.

13 MR. DIETERLE: Thank you so much, Diana. Good  
14 afternoon, commissioners.

15 Within Quality Start Los Angeles, our partner  
16 agencies are working extremely hard and rapidly to shift  
17 to in-person support so that they were providing to our  
18 early learning and care providers to virtual modalities.  
19 And in short, this has really meant shifting our quality  
20 improvement supports, like coaching and training and  
21 technical assistance to a virtual format. As you might  
22 imagine, that shift has been challenging for a few reasons  
23 which are listed on the slide. And while I'm not going to  
24 recap everything that is on the slide, I did want to  
25 briefly touch on a few issues that the field is

1 experiencing with regard to the digital divide in the  
2 context of Quality Start LA or QSLA.

3 My colleague, Breanna, spoke about children's and  
4 families without access to technology. And that same lack  
5 of resources is, unfortunately, the case for many early  
6 learning and care providers. Many providers simply do not  
7 have the necessary technology to access quality  
8 improvement supports and many providers exclusively use a  
9 smart phone to access the Internet, and the quality  
10 support may not be designed to do access via a smart  
11 phone. So you can imagine doing a several-hour training,  
12 you know, holding a phone in your hand. That is not an  
13 optimal arrangement. And in addition, there's also the  
14 pipeline bandwidth issues that may also prevent a barrier  
15 even if hardware is available to the provider.

16 Another problem is that virtual learning is  
17 really different than in-person learning, and shifting the  
18 delivery modality requires a significant adaptation to  
19 make Quality Start LA's quality supports engaging and  
20 meaningful to an online learner. Virtual offerings for  
21 ECE providers have always been rather limited. And the  
22 need to shift to virtual delivery has taken on new urgency  
23 to develop these quality improvements for its four virtual  
24 setting in an environment where there aren't in-person  
25 alternatives available.

1           And, lastly, the field as a whole has really  
2           relied very heavily on in-person work and has been slow to  
3           adapt to the digital world, especially because technology  
4           does not really play a critical role in many classroom  
5           environments as a matter of practice. And so there's a --  
6           the consequence of that is that many early learning and  
7           care providers don't have the background knowledge require  
8           to effectively utilize remote learning tools without a  
9           little bit of baseline training.

10           So the digital divide has really been a  
11           long-standing issue in early care and education. But  
12           addressing the issue, obviously, has new urgency now in  
13           the context of a global pandemic. QSLA's work to expand  
14           its digital operating has been a challenge, but we also  
15           feel really confident that in the long run, it will  
16           benefit the ECE providers by making quality supports more  
17           available and accessible to the unique needs of the field.

18           We're now beginning to think of technology as a  
19           way of broadening the availability of quality supports to  
20           wider audiences. And that's not to say that there aren't  
21           still barriers and challenges to overcome. There  
22           definitely are, including the deep inequities within that  
23           access to technology. But focusing on how to effectively  
24           harness the power of technology to serve the ECE field can  
25           help us create a more viable pathway to provide quality

1 supports to new providers entering the field using fewer  
2 financial resources.

3 And with that, I want to pass to my colleague,  
4 Alyssa. Thank you.

5 MS. GUTIERREZ: Thank you, Kevin. Good  
6 afternoon, commissioners.

7 Much like the experiences of other teams,  
8 communities quickly saw the gaps and inequities exposed by  
9 the Covid crisis. One of the key tactics the regional  
10 network grantee has been deploying in the Best Start  
11 communities has been to amplify parent voice in these  
12 conversations. This is happening across the Best Start  
13 communities. And I will highlight an example of the Long  
14 Beach digital inclusion initiative where we're seeing this  
15 play out successfully.

16 In 2019, the City of Long Beach began the process  
17 of co-creating a digital inclusion roadmap with community  
18 and stakeholders which will be the blueprint for ensuring  
19 that everyone in Long Beach has equitable access to use of  
20 digital literacy training, the Internet, and technology  
21 devices. Members of Best Start Central Long Beach  
22 participated on the stakeholder engagement committee where  
23 they worked to develop a shared vision and common agenda  
24 for digital equity and began to find new strategies to  
25 create digital inclusion in the city, such as citywide

1 free Wi-Fi. When Covid hit, the city pivoted its focus  
2 away from the long-term strategies the group was working  
3 on and instead focused on the immediate crisis at hand by  
4 pivoting the group into the Covid-19 digital inclusion  
5 response work group, which prioritized short-term and  
6 quick link strategies that could be implemented with three  
7 to six months, and was able to leverage \$1 million of  
8 CARES Act funding to support their efforts.

9 They focused the funding on policy and advocacy  
10 strategies that would serve as a catalyst for additional  
11 systemic progress on bridging the digital divide, while  
12 partnering with local efforts to help meet the immediate  
13 need of getting devices and hotspots into the hands of  
14 community.

15 Our Best Start parents and partners were really  
16 equipped with the skills and capacity to engage in this  
17 work, partially due to the infrastructure that we've  
18 helped to support for so many years. And you know, LB  
19 digital divide initiative has now been uplifted as a  
20 national model by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance,  
21 and First 5 LA has shared these learnings with other  
22 jurisdictions in the county, with LA being one of them.

23 Slide. Next slide, please. Thank you. So these  
24 examples from home visiting, the ECE, and communities are  
25 all demonstrations of how First 5 is supporting digital

1 equity efforts through our respective teams. And we know  
2 that there's work we can do as an agency that we're doing  
3 cross teams to elevate the digital divide as a priority  
4 across multiple sectors.

5 We know that to effectively bridge the digital  
6 divide, we need a coordinated countywide approach where  
7 the private sector, government, and philanthropy are all  
8 working together engaging in collective action. And with  
9 this in mind, staff across the agency are tracking the  
10 various digital divide efforts happening across the  
11 county, and we are actively participating, sitting at  
12 tables, work groups, collaboratives that are engaging the  
13 issue of digital divide across these multiple sectors.

14 So having that understanding of the local,  
15 national, and state policy landscape as it relates to  
16 digital equity measures and pandemic relief funding really  
17 better positions us to show up in these spaces, help  
18 connect the dots, and ensure that zero-to-five kids are  
19 prioritized in these conversations. One example is First  
20 5 LA has a seat on the regional digital divide work group  
21 that is being convened by National Corp. and being led by  
22 SCAG, the Southern California Association of Governments.  
23 And that work group is serving as a cross-sector think  
24 tank of both public and -- public and private regional and  
25 state agencies that are all working on the issue. And

1 it's been a really effective bridge to getting all the  
2 right folks talking to one another, focusing on a  
3 coordinated strategies. And example of one of their  
4 priorities has been to get the seven counties in Southern  
5 California to adopt and implement a broadband resolution  
6 that would expedite permitting, promote inner-agency  
7 cooperation, and really address the barriers in emergency  
8 overrides that are needed in order to get fiber built in  
9 underserved communities.

10 So LA County recently passed their own broadband  
11 resolution, which really served as broad endorsement of  
12 low-cost municipal broadband efforts across the county and  
13 supporting cities who choose to take those on.

14 Most recently, the work group has been discussing  
15 working in partnership with community-based organizations  
16 that are working in communities experiencing the digital  
17 divide in order to inform their digital equity strategy  
18 and action plans that Internet service providers will be  
19 using to reach the most underserved communities.

20 And, finally, our role at that table has been to  
21 ensure that the zero-to-five population, again, are being  
22 prioritized in these planning and strategy conversations  
23 and to continue to elevate the importance of incorporating  
24 those most impacted by a problem into the solutions.

25 Slide. So over the last nine months, we've

1 learned a lot. We have learned some lessons and on what  
2 we can do to better support the work of our grantees and  
3 partners who are engaging in this issue. And a few of  
4 those learnings include using our dollars to directly  
5 support tech infrastructure. While the digital divide  
6 isn't fully about computers and Internet access to those  
7 things are fundamental in bridging the gap.

8 Flexibility and tailoring. We know that one size  
9 doesn't fit all. Grantees and the communities they serve  
10 have unique sets of needs around digital equity. Some  
11 will need capacity building around digital skills or Zoom  
12 facilitation. Some will need the tech infrastructure.  
13 Some will want greater flexibility to support more macro  
14 systems change approaches, such as convenings and data  
15 gathering and policy advocacy.

16 And finally, accessibility. We have a duty to  
17 strengthen family, community, and public systems capacity  
18 to engage on digital platforms with language-accessible  
19 resources, and our funding structure can support this.

20 Slide. So each of the examples shared today  
21 demonstrate the roles that First 5 LA can play in  
22 advancing digital equity across LA county through our  
23 current efforts.

24 And to recap, we can continue to work to  
25 strengthen public and community systems to ensure digital

1 access is prioritized in historically impacted communities  
2 such as what ECE is doing around ensuring early care and  
3 education is prioritizing those conversations and that  
4 it's not just about the K-through-12 need or, you know,  
5 our advocacy at regional SCAG table to ensure  
6 K-through-five is being prioritized in the planning. We  
7 can advance and build on community experience by  
8 amplifying parent voice in each of these conversations,  
9 ensuring that the perspective and expertise of parents is  
10 included in the crafting of solutions such as what Long  
11 Beach has been able to do with their digital inclusion  
12 initiative and just really underscoring that those closest  
13 to the problems and are closest to the solutions. We can  
14 continue to expand influence and impact by using data,  
15 using First 5 LA's impact framework and other data sources  
16 to guide the policy solutions, elevate the need, and  
17 ultimately catalyze the critical conversations that are  
18 needed to advance equity.

19 And, finally, continuing to optimize our  
20 effectiveness by strengthening staff capacity to  
21 incorporate digital inclusion into our work, whether we're  
22 attending the home visitors funders briefing, sitting on a  
23 regional work group, or advocating for new pandemic relief  
24 to include zero-to-five funding allocation. These types  
25 of efforts require skills that can be built with the right

1 professional development. And, ultimately, infusing a  
2 digital equity lens into our systems change approaches not  
3 only helps us make progress towards our north star, but  
4 also toward our diversity, equity, and inclusion values,  
5 recognizing that those most disproportionately impacted by  
6 digital inequity are our youngest kids and families of  
7 color.

8 So we thank you so much for your time. And at  
9 this time, we'd like to open the floor for questions and  
10 discussion.

11 MS. BELSHE: And, Judy, I would note that this  
12 was Alyssa's first presentation, I believe, as well before  
13 the board. So thank you, Alyssa and Breanna, as well as  
14 their other colleagues.

15 MS. HAWKINS: Thank you. I'll be waiting for  
16 those cookies in the mail as well.

17 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Great. So I guess what --  
18 what staff would like is some feedback and -- and/or  
19 questions, and particularly how can First 5 LA better  
20 align with LA County's digital efforts. I think we all  
21 are quite aware of the inequities and what opportunities  
22 do you see that have not been mentioned.

23 So I see that Romalis has his hand up. So  
24 anybody else who's wanting to speak?

25 Okay. Romalis, you're on.

1           COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Okay. I am going to jump  
2 in here. First of all, I have a question about the  
3 information with regards to digital access within the  
4 Antelope Valley. That's a huge population. They have  
5 high needs, and the digital access is terrible. So I'm  
6 wondering where do they fit in this assessment because I  
7 know -- I totally agree with you about south central LA  
8 and Long Beach, but I have a great affinity for that  
9 community, socially isolated, socially disadvantaged in so  
10 many other ways. So I don't want to leave them out. And  
11 it's hard for them to get the resources they need.  
12 Transportation is a huge -- huge inability in that  
13 community as well as other communities. So I'm -- I'm  
14 going to point that out.

15           So I will let you answer that, but I still have  
16 several other questions about this program.

17           COMMISSIONER ABDO: Okay. Who's going to be the  
18 answering person?

19           MS. HAWKINS: I can take that question.

20           Thank you, Commissioner Taylor, for that really  
21 important question. You're right; significant disparities  
22 exist beyond south Los Angeles and Long Beach which are  
23 oftentimes the communities that get named when we're  
24 talking about places with inequitable access. But places  
25 like Antelope Valley, Lancaster, and Palmdale also

1 experience significant inequities. What's interesting  
2 about the data is, actually, I mentioned 14 out of the 15  
3 Best Start geographies are below the county average. The  
4 one geography that was not below the county average was  
5 actually Lancaster.

6 And so -- but when you disaggregate the data, you  
7 can see that those who -- there's a great disparity  
8 between those who do have access and those who do not. So  
9 while the numbers may be there, those who don't have  
10 access to your point, Commissioner Taylor, are further  
11 really separated from resources, from access to  
12 opportunities, and so that disparity is great. And that  
13 sort of underscores the need for having more disaggregated  
14 data to be able to identify where those additional  
15 inequities lie.

16 There's definitely work that's taking place in  
17 the Antelope Valley and Palmdale as well. Some of the  
18 highlight that we're mentioned were just a brief overview  
19 of the work that's happening. Our Best Start partners are  
20 collecting data on this issue and have also worked with  
21 Children's Bureau, our regional network grantee, to be  
22 able to get devices out to children and families who in  
23 that area as well as a part of our effort.

24 So thank you for that question and thanks for  
25 ensuring that that community isn't left out.

1 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I have another one.

2 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Go ahead, Romalis.

3 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: This is about digital  
4 training for zero-to-five families and support. Because  
5 some of the families never gotten any training and don't  
6 understand how the digital divide works or how to access  
7 it or what it needs.

8 So what is the culturally -- are we doing  
9 culturally appropriate training for these families in  
10 providing support so they'll know how to access not only  
11 the things that we're talking about, but the social  
12 support systems across our cultural support departments  
13 and agencies, such as health, such as DPSS, such as DCFS,  
14 on and on, so that they're training and accessing the  
15 resources they need to support their children and their  
16 families, food access, things of that nature? So is there  
17 a division digital training around these issues that are  
18 culturally appropriate?

19 MS. CAREAGA: I can speak to one example,  
20 Commissioner Taylor, in home visiting specifically, and  
21 invite any of my other colleagues to share.

22 In home visiting, imagine when it was the initial  
23 pivot, there was a lot of challenges with families not  
24 knowing how to use technology. I think Zoom wasn't as  
25 familiar as it is now to so many people.

1            Obviously, with school children using it, that  
2            was one way I think that some families have been learning  
3            how to use the technology through the teachers and how  
4            their children have been using it. Home visitors did have  
5            to do a lot of work with families, provide materials  
6            translated to other languages and walk families through  
7            how to use the different technology.

8            So I think it is probably still definitely a  
9            challenge. It's an ongoing one. I think staff had to  
10           invest a lot of time to work with the families in home  
11           visiting to make sure that they know how to use the  
12           technology.

13           COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Well, when we're advocating  
14           at the state level and government, we need to elevate that  
15           issue because it gets lost in the technology speak.  
16           Because this is important for me, for the family at the  
17           ground level, at the community level. If we don't elevate  
18           that, it gets lost and the importance of it gets lost,  
19           because we're -- we're on target. I totally support what  
20           you're trying to do. But if we don't cover the issue that  
21           really help the families connect and do the things that  
22           we're trying to guide them to do and do it in a  
23           culturally-effective way, we are losing sight of the  
24           efforts and the great work that you're doing. So I just  
25           want to elevate that issue And make sure that we don't get

1 it lost.

2 And so at some point, we have to have an online  
3 parent guide that they can access as well. So make sure  
4 that all of the things that we're putting out there for  
5 people that are a part of this dynamic is to teach them  
6 how to access it on our platform so they don't have to  
7 worry about it. Just sometimes these things we don't  
8 connect and we don't let them know that what is available.

9 The -- the communities and lack of knowledge of  
10 what is available to help them leads them down a path of  
11 confusion -- what do they call it -- dissuade passion loss  
12 that says, hey, how am I going to do it, what am I going  
13 to do that. Depression hits, that trauma hits, and things  
14 of that nature.

15 The other issue is that, when we're doing  
16 training -- and this is really hot for me -- we have to  
17 deal with the issue of systemic and implicit bias. That  
18 said, that we have to train ourselves to think differently  
19 to consider people who they are, where they are, and not  
20 what we think of them more so to help them to get to that  
21 part of that cultural issue. So I'm hoping that we keep  
22 that going as well because I know you guys are doing that  
23 as well.

24 I'm going to leave it to others. I'm sure others  
25 have their own questions. Thank you.

1           COMMISSIONER ABDO: I think we've also seen this  
2 at the other end of the age spectrum with the difficulties  
3 that people have been having to sign up for vaccinations.  
4 And -- and there's a whole new learning going on with --  
5 with people as they try and sign up for -- for those  
6 vaccines.

7           Astrid.

8           You have to unmute, Astrid.

9           COMMISSIONER HEGER: I am trying to.

10          COMMISSIONER ABDO: There we go.

11          COMMISSIONER HEGER: In dealing with what we're  
12 dealing with here with the kids, not only the children --  
13 I'm glad that Bobby's on, but also in anticipating  
14 prevention strategies and calling families and getting  
15 them online and asking them what we can do to try to do a  
16 preventive model on helping families. The biggest  
17 challenge we have is not in getting a laptop to them or a  
18 tablet or something, but it's the idea that they don't  
19 have access to the network, so that's why they end up  
20 relying on phones,

21           And to me, you know, I appreciate everything  
22 about training, but I would love -- and it would be simple  
23 I think to get everybody the equipment they need if they  
24 actually have access to the network, and you're right,  
25 Judy, if they had access to training regardless of where

1 they are in the age range, but that we actually have a  
2 system of training. But to me, it's the network, not  
3 having universal access to network that's the biggest  
4 barrier.

5 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Okay. Anyone else want to  
6 weigh in here?

7 Okay. Good. Linda.

8 MS. GUTIERREZ: Commissioner Abdo, if I could  
9 just for a second respond to Commissioner Heger's point  
10 about the infrastructure.

11 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Okay.

12 MS. GUTIERREZ: I just wanted to elevate that the  
13 regional work group, the Southern California Association  
14 of Governments is convening has been -- their exact  
15 priority. That's been what they've been really rallying  
16 around, in addition to a few other things, but I'd say  
17 that's been the focal point in really working with the  
18 seven counties across Southern California to be able to  
19 figure out how they can streamline some of those processes  
20 so that the Internet service providers and the fiber  
21 providers like Crown Castle among others can more easily  
22 actually build the fiber that is needed. And, you know,  
23 they're really working to I think cut a lot of that red  
24 tape so they can more easily build the infrastructure  
25 that's needed in communities.

1           And I think that a piece that is really great to  
2 hear in this space is, you know, for the first time many  
3 of these, you know, Internet service providers and folks  
4 who would actually be building the fiber are approaching  
5 this with an equity lens, thinking about how do we make  
6 sure we don't just build through communities, but we build  
7 with community. So I think that's been really -- you  
8 know, really great to see these conversation happening.  
9 And I think, you know, more to come on that.

10           I know that they're doing a lot of advocacy at  
11 the municipal level as well. There's the county, you  
12 know, level that there's real advocacy that needs to be  
13 done there. And I think six of the seven counties now  
14 have now actually implemented a broad -- some type of  
15 broadband resolution that helps streamline, and then now  
16 it's up to the cities. And, you know, cities are actually  
17 looking to Long Beach right now to see how they have been  
18 able to streamline their processes to be able to build  
19 more easily to get the communities connected in that way.

20           COMMISSIONER ABDO: Thank you.

21           So now, Linda.

22           COMMISSIONER ARAGON: Thank you. I just wanted  
23 to first start off by saying actually First 5 LA is  
24 actually has a model that can be replicated and had should  
25 be replicated in terms of getting the hardware, the

1 laptops and the Wi-Fi hotspots to our -- to our  
2 communities. I mean, just what Diana was talking about.

3 I just want to commend also First 5 for being  
4 able to do this in, A, that we already had when -- when we  
5 were approached about doing a, quote, loaner program of  
6 laptops for families, we immediately went to the data and  
7 the reports that First 5 had in terms of availability of  
8 laptops and accessibility, and so we were able to show our  
9 CEO, like, where there was a need. And then from there,  
10 we were able to say, and they have the capacity because  
11 you all did with the partnership with our community-based  
12 organizations to acquire and develop a plan for  
13 distributing the laptops and the Wi-Fi in such a quick  
14 way.

15 And I just want to acknowledge First 5 and folks  
16 to understand that this conversation about distributing  
17 200 laptops and Wi-Fis to our communities in most need  
18 started at the end of October, and in less than 60 days,  
19 it happened. So I just -- and that was because First 5  
20 was already aware of it and on top of and willing and able  
21 to do this for our county.

22 And so I just want to say thank you to First 5  
23 for that partnership. It's been amazing. And just the  
24 ability to respond quickly to the needs of the community  
25 is -- is -- it show what we can do here in LA that can be

1 replicated.

2 I think that we're also that digital divide in  
3 terms of fibers and stuff are -- being partners with the  
4 cities to make that happen, but just even the very least  
5 getting people the ability to have a laptop in front of  
6 them with an actual hotspot or a gift card for them to  
7 have a hotspot to be able to do this is just -- is really  
8 commendable, and the time that folks did it is very  
9 commendable. And I just want to say thank you for that  
10 and to show that that is a model that can be shared with  
11 the rest of the state on how this can happen and how it  
12 can happen quickly.

13 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Thank you, Linda.

14 Deanne. Deanne, you'll need to unmute.

15 COMMISSIONER TILTON: I just said something so  
16 profound that you missed. See if I can pull it up again.  
17 Joking.

18 I want to make sure that in the training for the  
19 use of the laptops and the digital equipment that there's  
20 -- that there's ample safety factors for the really  
21 distressing scams and crime that go on with kids and  
22 adults over the -- over the Internet. This has been a  
23 concern of ours for some time. I just want to make sure  
24 we're aware of that and we assure that there's protection  
25 for that.

1 I also wanted to mention that, in terms of child  
2 safety -- and I've talked to Bobby about this -- that the  
3 law requires a phone call to report child abuse to the  
4 hotline. And so we are very interested in -- in pursuing  
5 the concept of text messaging. The National Child Abuse  
6 Hotline has seen an increase in reports of child abuse  
7 that have resulted in accessing resources for these  
8 families. And here in LA County, our reports have gone  
9 down.

10 I don't even -- I don't need to mention the risks  
11 of isolation and the increase in alcohol consumption on  
12 stress and anxiety and whatever. I just know that, to the  
13 extent that we have access to what's going on in those  
14 isolated homes in a way that allows us to provide  
15 prevention resources and protection would be so important.  
16 So that's my two cents on the child protection.

17 And I did ask -- I did want to know if we are  
18 including safety precautions from cyber crimes for these  
19 families.

20 MS. ALTMAYER: I'll just jump in. That's a good  
21 question. I don't know if that has come up specifically  
22 within the training that our home visitors are providing.  
23 I'll just say that's something we can look into. So I  
24 appreciate that feedback.

25 COMMISSIONER HEGER: Christina, one of the things

1 that we ought to think about is, there is applications out  
2 there -- and I think I talked to -- I think even Bobby and  
3 I talked about this some time back about that there is an  
4 evolving app that we can put on -- on -- on laptops, et  
5 cetera, that actually absolutely block access to anyone,  
6 you know, that is using that. And I think -- you know,  
7 I've even thought about how effective that would be with  
8 foster homes in terms of keeping anybody accessing the  
9 kids in foster care or in transitional shelter that --  
10 from anybody including, you know, pimps and others that  
11 are recruiting them off of those phones, off computers,  
12 off of laptops, any kind of device you can prevent by  
13 putting that software on. And it's very, very interesting  
14 programming that I learned about and I -- about a year and  
15 a half ago. It can be expensive, but like everything,  
16 it's coming down in cost. And I think that's -- that's  
17 critically important.

18 And I will -- I'd like to emphasize that using  
19 this mechanism as a prevention tool is way underrated.  
20 The idea of calling these families and connecting with  
21 them and asking them how to help them is -- you get an  
22 insight into them, they know they're not isolated. And,  
23 you know, Deanne, you're preventing that isolation sense  
24 to some degree.

25 So I really -- I really want everybody to have a

1 tablet that's blocked from the crazy stuff but that the  
2 kids and the family have access to so they get onto a  
3 network. It's an amazing tool.

4 COMMISSIONER TILTON: That sounds really  
5 important and a good path to pursue.

6 Thank you, Astrid.

7 MS. BELSHE: Judy has fallen off. We're eager  
8 for her to rejoin us. So I'm going to channel my Judy  
9 Abdo for a minute.

10 Are there any other commissioner comments or  
11 questions? I am not seeing hands up. Hands raised.

12 Let me suggest this. Let me thank our  
13 colleagues, Diana and Breanna and Alyssa and Kevin for  
14 their very substantive, thoughtful, and integrative  
15 presentation and responses to commissioner questions on  
16 digital inequity.

17 We're going to take, I think, a ten-minute break,  
18 give Commissioner Abdo the chance to return. And then we  
19 are going to turn to our 2021 policy priorities and policy  
20 agenda refinement with Ofelia and Charna.

21 So my Timex says 2:15. Can we say 2:25? And  
22 we'll have Judy connected by then.

23 Thanks, team. We'll see everyone in ten minutes.

24 (A brief break.)

25 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Okay. Well, we're on Item 5.

1 And I guess we could start with that presentation. I'm  
2 very sorry to have --

3 MS. BELSHE: I don't think we can hear you.

4 Can people hear Judy? We can. Okay. Error on  
5 my end.

6 COMMISSIONER ABDO: I'm sorry. So we've started  
7 a presentation.

8 MS. WIDBY-MARTIN: We'll dive in if that's okay  
9 with you.

10 Good afternoon, commissioners. We're excited to  
11 be here with you this afternoon and continue the  
12 conversation and refinement of our priorities from the  
13 November board meeting.

14 Can you go to the next slide, Ofelia?

15 As we last shared, our policy agenda was  
16 previously tied to the last strategic plan. So we're  
17 coming to you today with a preview and to provide an  
18 overview of the policy agenda refinement efforts and the  
19 applications to the current opportunities, including  
20 priorities in the Governor's budget proposal,  
21 administrative and legislative opportunities, the new  
22 Biden administration, and the opportunities that are  
23 emerging at the federal level, and also noting that we  
24 will be asking for approval as an action item in the  
25 February full board meeting. So we're asking for your

1 feedback on priorities in our discussion today so that we  
2 can incorporate as we finalize the proposed agenda  
3 refinement.

4           So to start, we wanted to talk about how we use  
5 the policy agenda and where we have grown in our  
6 application. The policy agenda is a work in progress and  
7 will continue to be for us. It wasn't that long ago that  
8 we were presenting just a list of bills that we were  
9 tracking. And then we developed the previous policy  
10 agenda to articulate a set of high-level policy goals  
11 representing First 5 LA's strategic plan priorities. And  
12 we used the policy agenda to inform and prioritize  
13 administrative budget, legislative advocacy work, as well  
14 as to guide us in developing public policy proposals to  
15 tightly align with First 5 LA strategic priorities and  
16 long-term system outcomes for children and families.

17           We use the policy agenda as the guide for  
18 discussions with partners and as the guide for formal  
19 analysis of policy proposals and recommendations for any  
20 evaluation of opportunity to add value, and as our  
21 guidelines to plan, align, and execute our advocacy  
22 strategies.

23           So I want to emphasize that what we are  
24 presenting is an example of First 5 LA's maturing approach  
25 to policy and advocacy work, and that every year we evolve

1 and refine our priorities to be more tightly aligned with  
2 our strategy values and investment guidelines. And this  
3 one today grounded in the adopted 2020-2028 strategic  
4 plan.

5 The agenda refinement is informed by our unique  
6 experiences and expertise rooted in the learnings of local  
7 investments and working with the families our direct  
8 engagement for improving systems for children and  
9 families.

10 Annually, First 5 LA staff will present a policy  
11 agenda to the board for consideration. And adoption of  
12 that will guide our federal, state, and local policy  
13 efforts. As we deepen our advocacy and policy experience,  
14 we've seen our value and success in areas that reflect  
15 parent and community experience informed by local  
16 experience and improving systems at the community and  
17 county level and aligned with state and national  
18 administrative priorities.

19 First 5 LA has been increasingly able to occupy a  
20 unique space in advocating for policy change that's  
21 grounded in evidence and needing to be pragmatic in  
22 feasibility of our recommendations and our advocacy  
23 through local testing. The refined agenda also seeks to  
24 better embed equity throughout all aspects of First 5 LA's  
25 policy work, reflecting the adopted strategic plan's

1 commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion,  
2 as well as to prevent siloing of equity-focused advocacy  
3 and ensure that equity is a focus for all of our advocacy  
4 efforts and priorities.

5 A more explicit focus on equity is also necessary  
6 as the Covid-19 pandemic highlights and exacerbates  
7 race-based disparities in health and well-being that  
8 negatively impact LA County's families of color.

9 Next slide. So our process for development and  
10 refinement of the policy agenda started with our office of  
11 government affairs and public policy team reviewing the  
12 existing and updated First 5 LA guide and materials,  
13 including the refined strategic plan, our updated  
14 investment guidelines, and our values against -- and we  
15 cross-walked that with the previous policy agenda  
16 priorities with long-term system outcomes and new  
17 short-term markers of progress to identify gaps and  
18 opportunities to clarify and further prioritize our work.  
19 We engaged the Center for Child and Family impact teams  
20 and agenda development learning sessions, which were deep  
21 dives in the policy agenda priorities and analysis of the  
22 work to date. These sessions in particular provided an  
23 important opportunity to learn from and collaborate with  
24 our colleagues and the perspectives -- integrate the  
25 perspectives and expertise held by teams throughout the

1 organization to be more explicitly and effectively  
2 incorporated in our policy focus work led by the Office  
3 and Government and Public -- Affairs and Public Policy.

4 The goal of the process has been to refine and  
5 focus and improve our policy agenda to be accurate,  
6 contextually mindful, and reflective of the opportunities  
7 we see in the year ahead. The guiding questions were  
8 centered on alignment with our investments and  
9 demonstrated impact, meaning that we are leaning in to the  
10 learned experience from investments and community, and  
11 translating that expertise in proof of concept to policy  
12 advocacy and shared clear policy statements. Do these  
13 priorities prioritize and demonstrate our diversity,  
14 equity, and inclusion value. And do these priorities  
15 reflect a strength-based approach and meaningfully support  
16 family and community voice and family choice in systems  
17 design.

18 And after today's discussion with the PPC, we  
19 will do an integrated review with the offices and center  
20 leadership to incorporate any additional refinements and  
21 narrow focus to bring to the next commission meeting in  
22 February for your action.

23 What we hope you see and hear in our refinements  
24 are that we are leaning into making the policy agenda more  
25 actionable and that we were deepening our work which means

1 clarifying where we have impact. This is the guiding  
2 framework to help us better navigate priorities and invest  
3 our advocacy and policy resources and to assess  
4 differentiation of our value add and where we should be  
5 leading and where we should say, not us. Doing so will  
6 ultimately allow for more efficient policy and advocacy  
7 efforts, all to support the achievement of the strategic  
8 plans for results for children and families.

9 The refined policy agenda incorporates more  
10 specificity into our role and involved understanding of  
11 our work. So Ofelia and I want to call out the explicit  
12 changes that we're working on and would like to present  
13 for approval at the commission meeting next month. So I'm  
14 going to start with the new kind of overarching policy  
15 development and prioritization frame, and Ofelia will join  
16 with the specific examples of new changes.

17 One of the new frameworks that we are working  
18 through internally in terms of policy development but also  
19 shared understanding and prioritization is a whole  
20 child/whole family framework for systems design and policy  
21 recommendation development. When we say whole child and  
22 whole family in this context, we're pointing to a core set  
23 of principles, including that foundational to the agenda  
24 is an understanding that children ages prenatal to five  
25 years old represent a special population because the brain

1 develops more rapidly during the earliest two years of  
2 life than at any other time; and that services supporting  
3 our youngest children must be family centered and that  
4 families are the pathway for improving outcomes; there's  
5 an urgency in connecting and supporting families at the  
6 earliest moments; that we are recognizing and continuing  
7 to define this magic window of urgency as a special  
8 population, and that the impacts of structural racism  
9 powerfully disrupt optimal brain development in child  
10 health as well as broader family stability.

11           So with that overarching lens across our work and  
12 our thoughts, we're proposing throughout the policy agenda  
13 priority area to refine priority areas in general, to  
14 refine and focus our work so that the overall policy  
15 agenda will support the whole child and whole family by  
16 working to close race-based disparities in health,  
17 well-being, and opportunity utilizing full and complete  
18 data to understand which communities face the most  
19 significant barriers to resources and so have the greatest  
20 opportunity to benefit from our aligned efforts and  
21 promote a holistic system of supports that is language and  
22 culturally appropriate.

23           I'll ask Ofelia to walk through some specifics.

24           MS. MEDINA: Thank you, Charna.

25           So as Charna shared, we looked at this

1 opportunity to refine our priorities and policy agenda to  
2 narrow our focus and added value. I want to walk through  
3 some of the specific changes we're proposing and we look  
4 forward to your reflections on this today.

5 So the first bullet that you see on your screen  
6 reflects a clarified understanding of our role in family  
7 support. In the past, our advocacy has largely focused on  
8 access to family strengthening services, prioritizing home  
9 visiting. We are recognizing our differentiation in the  
10 advocacy space that we bring a unique perspective and  
11 expertise in system design, integrating systems and  
12 systems change. We want to lean in into building a  
13 universally-targeted and integrated system of high-quality  
14 family-strengthening supports prioritizing home visiting  
15 and early intervention services. We're highlighting  
16 targeted universalism in system design.

17 We also in the past have held a priority around  
18 promoting family self-sufficiency, but have more  
19 opportunities this year, especially in the context of  
20 Covid-19, to be advocating for economic security within  
21 family strengthen policies.

22 The second bullet refers to our priority around  
23 expanding access to affordable early care and education  
24 for children. The specific refinement we're proposing  
25 here centers around calling out equity more specifically.

1 So for example, we're calling out the ECE workforce, we're  
2 proposing to emphasize who the workforce is. So calling  
3 out that it's primarily women and then taking it a step  
4 further and saying that it's primarily women who are black  
5 and brown.

6 Third, we have a priority around including  
7 systems to support the optimal development for the  
8 earliest screening intervention and linkages to  
9 appropriate supports. In refining, we are proposing to  
10 this work is a priority to close maternal and pediatric  
11 health disparities by incentivizing preventive care and  
12 utilizing disaggregated data to prioritize communities  
13 most at risk.

14 And our fourth priority we're aligning more  
15 towards strategic plan goals to promote parents and  
16 communities as critical voices so that families have the  
17 resources, opportunities, relationships, and environment  
18 needed to optimize their children's development. We are  
19 looking to increase opportunities to include community  
20 voice to help shape resources, interventions, and other  
21 critical issues affecting young children and their  
22 families.

23 And we are also looking to more closely align and  
24 amplify our Best Start investment story telling and  
25 approach to promoting views of -- and understanding of

1 population level and integrated service data.

2 So while I -- so while our priority areas remain  
3 largely consistent, these refinements and their focus  
4 demonstrate our maturing approach in work focused  
5 prioritization of our work and our intended impact.

6 I know that that was a lot of detail. So quickly  
7 wanted to walk through the application of these priorities  
8 to policy and advocacy opportunities we are developing  
9 with our work ahead of us. And to connect the dots from  
10 our November presentation of priorities, we want to start  
11 with the new Governor's proposal that came out a few weeks  
12 ago.

13 But, of course, there's much more in detail in  
14 your material. We can answer any specific questions you  
15 have at end of the presentation.

16 So I went two ahead. So earlier this month on  
17 January 8th, the Governor Newsom unveiled his budget  
18 proposal for the 2021-2022 fiscal year, proposing a \$227  
19 billion spending plan that focuses on both near-term  
20 immediate needs related to Covid pandemic, but also  
21 long-term structural investments. The proposed budget  
22 includes 34 billion in the combination of reserves and  
23 discretionary surplus with 15.6 billion coming from the  
24 State's rainy day fund. A full budget memo was provided  
25 again in your budget packet, but overall, the budget

1 proposal focuses on near-term immediate needs, again,  
2 related to the pandemic and long-term structural  
3 investments.

4 But, however, the budget also recognizes a need  
5 to support families and promote equity throughout the  
6 range of services and supports that children and family  
7 interact with, particularly as the pandemic  
8 disproportionately impacts low-income communities and  
9 communities of color throughout California.

10 I'll turn it over to Charna.

11 MS. WIDBY-MARTIN: I wanted to take the health  
12 piece to highlight a few key pieces for us. We're also  
13 very interested to see that the proposal to expand and  
14 make permanent certain telehealth flexibilities. This is  
15 important in the context of the previous presentations, of  
16 course, and also continues to be new territory as we  
17 navigate Covid-19 response across systems. So looking for  
18 learnings on those flexibilities but also leveraging that  
19 through our federal conversations as well.

20 And we're -- while we're still working on  
21 analysis of the specific pieces around expanding funding  
22 for preventative health care services with a specific  
23 focus on screening for average childhood experiences.  
24 We'll be looking for opportunities to shape and expand  
25 opportunities for Los Angeles County.

1           And then there were several good signs of program  
2 extensions. We're happy to see the Prop 56 programs and  
3 the postpartum MediCal eligibility extensions, as well as  
4 new money for health navigator model implementation  
5 scaling and implementation of the Families First  
6 Prevention Service Act are all priorities that we had  
7 coming into this year. So really robust kind of themes  
8 there.

9           There were several proposal items directly  
10 related to health equity. Our team was impressed with how  
11 the priorities around health disparities were woven  
12 throughout budget through the budget -- throughout the  
13 systems, not just health care. We are exploring the  
14 efforts around using data and development of a equity  
15 dashboard, which we think aligns well with the shared  
16 priorities across issue areas to prioritize disaggregated  
17 and integrated data systems, and that the Governor is  
18 proposing a set of quality and health equity benchmark  
19 standards that we would really be addressed in helping  
20 shape, develop, and support. We're interested to inform  
21 and learn from the analysis of the intersection of  
22 Covid-19 health disparities and health equity. This  
23 potentially could be a huge window to leverage and advance  
24 our federal and local work as well.

25           And as we shared in November, we're looking at

1 MediCal managed care reprocurement and CalAid as important  
2 windows for advocacy and policy development. So we're  
3 glad to see a commitment to focusing on health disparities  
4 through the MediCal reprocurement and in Cal A, which  
5 aligns with the feedback we've consistently previously  
6 provided to both opportunities as well.

7 I'll turn it back over to Ofelia to walk us  
8 through the early learning and legislative priorities.

9 MS. MEDINA: Thank you, Charna.

10 So on the early learning side, the Governor's  
11 proposed budget, he built on the recommendations made in  
12 the master plan for early learning and care. So it  
13 includes a strong focus on expanding transitional  
14 kindergarten. So, for example, it includes incentive  
15 funds for school districts to expand TK programs as well  
16 as funds for TK and kindergarten program facilities and  
17 professional development for teachers.

18 California also set to receive funds appropriated  
19 through the last federal Covid-19 relief stimulus bill.  
20 So the proposed budget also features language to help  
21 prioritize how the federal funds will be spent. For  
22 example, it prioritizes childcare vouchers for essential  
23 workforce, childcare stipends for providers, and funds to  
24 provided -- to assist with reopening costs.

25 And I went one ahead. Further understanding that

1 childcare providers and families have experienced  
2 firsthand major challenges resulting from Covid-19, the  
3 proposed budget also includes support for families and  
4 providers who have been directly impacted, in addition to  
5 funding new childcare spaces.

6 And finally, the budget also includes proposed  
7 funding for early intervention via a special early  
8 intervention grant to -- that would build optimum health  
9 and development -- special education/early intervention  
10 grant to help promote the optimal development of child and  
11 development because, as we know, the earliest possible  
12 identification of an intervention for development delay is  
13 critical and if the child is to overcome that delay.  
14 Included -- it also includes to promote optimal child  
15 health and development overall.

16 So just to recall the process is now to -- just  
17 to recall, the process now is to move into 2021 the  
18 Governor's January budget proposal is the first step in  
19 the State's budgetary development process, and it lays the  
20 groundwork for the negotiation between the administration  
21 and lawmakers and for us, along with the network of  
22 partners to shape -- to shape proposals and advance our  
23 priorities.

24 Also, there you go. The legislative session is  
25 apparently already underway, and Covid-19 is still

1 impacting our everyday function. So we anticipate another  
2 chaotic and unpredictable year in the State legislature  
3 that will require a flexibility again. We have a couple  
4 of bills that we're already watching and have been  
5 introduced already. Of the early learning bills  
6 introduced, we are already seeing an effort again to align  
7 with the recommendations of a master plan for early  
8 learning and care, primarily around the expansion of TK.

9 We're also seeing priorities tied in with the  
10 Covid-19 pandemic and the need for childcare for families  
11 and communities of color, such as Family's Feast.

12 There's also a bill on reimbursement rates that  
13 didn't make it into this PowerPoint, but we already  
14 understand that there's going to be quite some interest  
15 around. It includes implementing a plan in that  
16 establishing reasonable standards and increased rates for  
17 our providers.

18 Additionally, some exciting and important  
19 legislation around equity and health, such as SB17 which  
20 would address racism in the health care --

21 The deadline for new legislation to be introduced  
22 is February 19th. And we will, of course, keep you  
23 apprised of any new further developments.

24 And then, as we think about our state priorities  
25 going into 2021, we're anticipating working toward

1 safeguarding our ECE funding and increase equity across  
2 systems. On the administrative side, we aim to work on  
3 aligning implementation of the master plan for early  
4 learning, progress whole child and whole family  
5 priorities, and elevating early childhood development in  
6 the Medi-Cal managed care plan contract procurements. The  
7 transition of childcare programs from the California  
8 Department of Education to the Department of Social  
9 Services is another administrative priority we'll closely  
10 monitor.

11 As we state back in November, the goal of the  
12 move is to have California with a more integrated and  
13 coordinated early learning and care system. This will  
14 first be done by moving all of the childcare programs,  
15 except the California State Preschool Program to the  
16 Department of Social Services.

17 The move means that all childcare programs will  
18 be housed and determined of the services will ultimately  
19 want to see that this leads to a greater coordination of  
20 interfacing programs and services for children and  
21 families.

22 I do want to note that former First 5 California  
23 commissioner (unintelligible) was recently appointed  
24 deputy director of the childcare and development division  
25 at California Department of Social Services. So we're

1 definitely looking forward to working with her when she  
2 starts and comes on board next month.

3 From the CD prospective, we also want to make  
4 sure that we leverage the fact that CD will be left in the  
5 early learning and care division with only the California  
6 State Preschool Program under the umbrella. So this will  
7 be a great opportunity for us to rethink what CD's  
8 priorities could be for young children.

9 And then, finally, we're also prioritizing from  
10 our 2020 advocacy agenda, including the prioritization of  
11 action of power and public health home visiting system and  
12 county coordination and expanding roles. Advancing family  
13 strengthening proposals and continued development  
14 including paid family leave.

15 I'll turn it over to Charna so she can walk us  
16 through the federal priorities for 2021.

17 MS. WIDBY-MARTIN: Thank you, Ofelia.

18 The federal landscape looks quite a bit different  
19 since we last spoke in November. There have been some key  
20 updates since we prepared the board memo in your material  
21 as well and to this slide. In fact, we can check one of  
22 them off already.

23 With the new administration and a new congress  
24 including several California natives, this is new and  
25 exciting opportunities at the federal level. And in just

1 eight days in office, there's a lot to be encouraged by  
2 and interested in.

3 While we remain hopeful that -- of and are  
4 continuing to advocate for a bold stimulus package that  
5 supports children and families and are excited by the  
6 proposals put forth by the Biden administration, we're  
7 also encouraged by many of the executive orders that have  
8 been announced as well as legislation and plans being  
9 introduced that directly impact families.

10 Since taking office, President Biden's announced  
11 several executive orders, including launching an  
12 initiative to advance racial equity, revoking the order  
13 that aims to exclude undocumented immigrants from the  
14 census, providing guidance on safely reopening schools and  
15 childcare, establishing a Covid-19 health equity task  
16 force, addressing discriminatory housing practices,  
17 increasing federal food supports, and more, as well as the  
18 introduction and of bold immigration legislation.

19 Additionally, in the coming days we expect to see  
20 executive orders that begin to roll back the harmful  
21 public charge rule implemented by the Trump administration  
22 and the creation of a task force to reunite migrant  
23 families separated at the border.

24 We know that early learning helps disparities,  
25 family resiliency, economic security strategies, and

1 immigration are priorities for this administration, and  
2 that we'll need to be leaning into these areas and working  
3 with the First 5 network and our partners to develop a  
4 more consequenced, long-term plan of engagement. First 5  
5 California has an RFP out for federal advocacy services to  
6 expand our capacity and engage in Washington DC on behalf  
7 of the entire First 5 network and to support the state  
8 administration priorities. So we are really eager to dig  
9 in and inform and get to work there as well.

10 We know that many of you have expertise in the  
11 areas and we're looking across all the phases of our work  
12 to get your feedback to deepen and see where you're  
13 willing to get engaged as well.

14 So with that, I'll stop talking and open it up to  
15 questions, feedback on priorities and reflections that you  
16 may have.

17 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Okay. It is time for  
18 commissioners to speak up.

19 Jacquelyn.

20 COMMISSIONER McCROSKEY: I think I should unmute  
21 before you tell me to unmute. I am so happy to have  
22 joined in time to hear this presentation. I'm just  
23 delighted at the some of the things, some of the  
24 enhancements you've made, particularly around parent and  
25 community voice and expanding access to ECE because this

1 is our moment.

2 I just wondered -- and I will follow up in  
3 particular with Ofelia about some specifics that we're  
4 talking about this year at the state level in particular.  
5 But I just wondered whether you have also looked at the  
6 county policy priorities to see -- not that they -- not  
7 that we have to match exactly to the county at all. But  
8 just that it would be interesting to have maybe some  
9 focused conversations if they're needed around where there  
10 is, you know, kind of purposefully different sorts of  
11 strategizing. First 5 has been an incredible partner on  
12 the policy for so many of these things. And so since  
13 there's a new opportunity, that seems like it would be an  
14 interesting thing to look into.

15 MS. WIDBY-MARTIN: Absolutely, please. We work  
16 to integrate and support and do as much story telling and  
17 represent and hold as much as we can in county interests,  
18 but also in county flexibility. So the more we can  
19 partner closely, we are always looking for opportunities.  
20 And really appreciate that.

21 MS. MEDINA: On the legislative side, the  
22 legislative committee just recently met about two weeks  
23 ago and we started prioritizing some of those bills that  
24 have been introduced to make sure that they do align with  
25 the county priorities and the priorities of the members of

1 the county as well.

2 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Okay. Romalis.

3 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Okay. My question -- I  
4 have several questions, but I wanted to start with, how  
5 does our efforts align with the new direction at the  
6 federal level, you know, our targeted policy strategy;  
7 especially about measuring quality of service in the most  
8 needy communities?

9 And then the other one would be this issue -- the  
10 idea of a story telling as a part of that data measurement  
11 is a good idea, and I think that's the way to say for the  
12 people that they understand that it's actually having  
13 impact at their level.

14 But data is very important to us as we all know.  
15 So across all of these efforts, how are we going to  
16 capture data to prove a point of concept that we're  
17 pushing forward?

18 MS. WIDBY-MARTIN: I'm delighted to hear an  
19 encouragement to shift our strategies and to lean in at  
20 the federal level.

21 We -- including data is an explicit part of our  
22 policy agenda as a new approach for us. We have leaned  
23 into that in the past and explored it in several areas.  
24 But as a through line through priority areas, that is work  
25 that we are developing this year to be consistent and to

1 partner with the office for data for action to develop a  
2 data agenda as well. So we'll be hearing more of that.

3 We don't have a prescription of what that looks  
4 like across the board, but our ideas have centered around  
5 data quality standards, working with the equity dashboard  
6 with DHCS's proposal and, of course, the health  
7 disparities task force at the federal level. We've had  
8 some outreach and we're working closely with the coalition  
9 on disaggregated data standards coalition building within  
10 states within the national consortium. So there are a  
11 couple of opportunities for us to inform, but right now we  
12 are also in the learning mode of what we should be leading  
13 with and would be really interested in your priorities or  
14 feedback thereto.

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I think the concept that we  
16 have in doing these cross-systems level of transference to  
17 help the families navigate systems to get the help they  
18 need is a -- is things that you guys are leading that we  
19 need to bring up to the federal level. That's very  
20 important because the people get lost in the minutia of  
21 all these different organizations and things, and they  
22 don't know that I can go here and get this, go there and  
23 get that. And it's not integrated.

24 So are we going to help the feds understand that  
25 they need to do a better job of integrating these within

1 these multisystems and dynamics.

2 The other issues that I want to put on the table  
3 is domestic violence is an issue that's going on that's --  
4 that may or may not be getting -- because I hear our  
5 partners in DCFS and ICAN saying that people aren't  
6 reporting. So it's important that we make sure that  
7 somehow we're recognizing that and understanding, that's a  
8 risk for children as well.

9 MS. WIDBY-MARTIN: Couldn't agree with you more.  
10 I appreciate that.

11 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Okay. Keesha, you have some  
12 words for us.

13 COMMISSIONER WOODS: Yes. Good afternoon, all.  
14 And thank you, Charna and Ofelia, for the presentation.

15 I have two -- two comments, kind of questions  
16 coming that may form into question. One of them goes back  
17 to -- and I'm mean really pleased to see that all the work  
18 that we're doing -- and I know that it's First 5 is the  
19 basis of who we are, but many of the policies and  
20 legislation requests that are coming out are really  
21 focused on the whole child and not just the educational  
22 aspect of it.

23 And I'm also particularly pleased to see that we  
24 are calling it more early care and learning as opposed to  
25 childcare because, if you think about large bureaucratic

1 legislative bodies, childcare is -- could be not such a  
2 pleasant word or phrase for some. And if we link it to  
3 health, education or success, and brain development, I  
4 think we are more likely to help them understand that this  
5 is definitely a necessity and entitlement in order for our  
6 children of color to be successful in school. It's not  
7 just a placeholder. It's something childcare is. What  
8 we're doing is much, much, much more than that.

9           The other comment I have is relative to the  
10 federal policy agenda that you showed on your screen. And  
11 it was one of your bullets that spoke specifically to Head  
12 start and the eligibility. I am also on the board with  
13 the Head Start California Association and work very  
14 closely with the National Head Start Association. And I  
15 would like to encourage us -- and I'm not sure who you're  
16 dealing with, but that we partner together and that we're  
17 moving in the same direction. There are many initiatives  
18 out there at the federal level and at the state level.  
19 And I don't even start with the recently revised master  
20 plan that does not even mention Head Start. But the  
21 models that they're proposing are things that Head Start  
22 has been doing for 50 years. I encourage us to be very  
23 careful because we will get a benefit, but we'll shoot --  
24 shoot ourselves in the foot at the same time. And some of  
25 the strategies that are moving forward could position us

1 to lose federal local dollars. And we don't want to cut  
2 off Head Start in connection with universal preschool. We  
3 want universal preschool aligned with Head Start or in  
4 conduction with. We don't want to lose the federal  
5 dollars at the local level.

6 And, personally, just based on my own experience,  
7 I would hate to see Head Start bloc granted to the state.  
8 You're going to lose some of the conceptual design of Head  
9 Start as well as some of the funding amounts that are  
10 allocated to the State.

11 And so I -- I recommend that we are very careful.  
12 From the federal level, we are looking at focusing on  
13 reauthorization and dealing with eligibility and  
14 reauthorization, but not necessarily from an income base,  
15 but more from a need base. So poverty can be defined many  
16 different ways, not just based on income. So we really  
17 are exploring how can we change the entire approach to  
18 determine Head Start eligibility where it could be a  
19 family that's working, have an income of \$50,000, but  
20 they're still getting food stamps. That to me means they  
21 still need additional supports. So if we could work  
22 collaboratively together so that we are not giving mixed  
23 messages at the federal level, that would be better for LA  
24 County.

25 Thank you.

1 MS. WIDBY-MARTIN: Absolutely and agree with all  
2 of that and definitely looking to your lead and expertise  
3 to partner in this.

4 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Okay. Thank you.

5 I have a question myself, and that has to do with  
6 -- with First 5 California's and First 5 LA's  
7 relationships with the new Biden administration in terms  
8 of education and early learning. And I'm just wondering  
9 how -- how we are connecting ourselves into these policy  
10 discussions, particularly the ones that Keesha mentioned,  
11 but there are lots more as well and, obviously, a huge  
12 change happening in the federal world.

13 MS. WIDBY-MARTIN: Absolutely. We have worked  
14 historically, especially at the federal level but in state  
15 advocacy as well, closely with First 5 California and  
16 First 5 Association as a network of First 5s. This year I  
17 think will mark another step into a deeper, more aligned  
18 strategy as the First 5 California will be holding the RFP  
19 in contracts for federal lobbyists, advocates, and the  
20 policy development contract that will represent all the  
21 network of First 5s for all of us to participate in. And  
22 we will have a key role in driving that as well.

23 We have in all of our transition conversations  
24 joined First 5 California, brought them with us as well as  
25 the association in preparing and sharing materials that

1 we've aligned priorities. Where we have more interest in  
2 priorities, we've been leading. Where First 5 California  
3 has more interest in the priority or expertise, they have  
4 led. But we have been together in all of the  
5 conversations and are planning our strategies -- our  
6 strategic planning jointly. I'll just say that.

7 We don't like surprises and we don't like to  
8 surprise others. So that is our leading principle when it  
9 comes to the planning.

10 MS. MEDINA: The only thing that I'll add is that  
11 First 5 Association, First 5 California, and First 5 LA  
12 are also all members of the statewide ECE coalition. So  
13 even thinking from the early learning side, we have  
14 multiple partners who also have a federal presence. So  
15 just being much more coordinated going into this year  
16 knowing that the administration could be much more talk  
17 here early learning friendly, but being much more aligned  
18 and being much more coordinated in how we show up to DC.

19 COMMISSIONER ABDO: I -- I just want to mention  
20 that I'm on a recovery task force -- economic recovery  
21 task force around the issues of early learning and  
22 childcare. And I -- I think because of Covid and because  
23 of the economic situation that's happening right now  
24 across the country, there is probably a more important  
25 need to look at family childcare, family programs, small

1 home-based programs that I personally have not paid much  
2 attention to until this year. But they've been operating  
3 throughout this pandemic and they are -- are struggling  
4 with lots of new problems that they never had to address  
5 before. And I'm just wondering how that fits in with all  
6 of our legislative priorities, both federal and state.

7 MS. MEDINA: From our state perspective, one of  
8 the changes in our policy agenda is also being much more  
9 aligned with what our teamwork is doing. So, for example,  
10 the work that the early care and education team is doing  
11 being led by Becca. One of the things is definitely  
12 highlighting much more our family childcare providers and  
13 even our family, friends, and neighbor. They're really  
14 thinking about what did that work look like at the local  
15 level, LA County level, but also what are the  
16 opportunities at the state and even maybe at the federal  
17 level to make sure that we're affecting that. Because,  
18 you're right, those are the providers that have one way  
19 being able to step up during Covid-19 and have continued  
20 to care for children. So we're trying to be pay much more  
21 attention about how we're doing that work, again aligning  
22 with the work that the ECE team is doing, but also looking  
23 at opportunities at the state and even federal level.

24 MS. WIDBY-MARTIN: One of the reviews that we're  
25 proposing at add to the policy agenda for us in the coming

1 year is language around economic security and an  
2 acknowledgment that it's not just self-sufficiency, but  
3 that economic security is essential to family stability,  
4 which is a new explicit priority for us and hoping that  
5 that also leads us down new paths of learning and  
6 expertise and opportunities to support whole family  
7 strengthening policies.

8 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Thank you. And I think also  
9 we will be needing to look at quality and licensing in  
10 particular because licensing may be the one official  
11 agency that -- that many programs relate to as opposed to  
12 being funded by state programs or federal programs.

13 Romalis.

14 COMMISSIONER ABDO: You have --

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Thank you. Mine is a  
16 little bit at the state level. SB464 passed not too long  
17 ago, and it's already been implemented for a year. And  
18 what I'm trying to still get a handle on and still isn't  
19 off my agenda is, where are we with that and how is that  
20 helping doctors do a better job in helping people of color  
21 with their birth of their children as well as the services  
22 for the children. And that's number one. And that's the  
23 training that doctors will get.

24 The other is, I didn't hear enough on the state  
25 side as to where they are with the black and maternal and

1 infant health project, where they are with that. And did  
2 that go away or is it still on their agenda?

3 MS. WIDBY-MARTIN: I'll start with the second  
4 part first. The Black Infant Health project is still on  
5 the agenda but there were no expansions or new proposals  
6 to talk about to point out in the Governor's budget. So I  
7 was just trying to give an update from where we were in  
8 November from new things that have come on the horizon.  
9 We're still actively engaged and looking for  
10 administrative advocacy opportunities to expand  
11 flexibility or work in that program, and, of course,  
12 advocating for expansion or at least stability there if  
13 there were a threat, but there was nothing in the  
14 Governor's proposed budget to change the program.

15 And the California Dignity in Birth Act two years  
16 ago, my understanding is the implementation funding rolled  
17 out last year and is just now getting out to providers for  
18 training.

19 And I would ask Christina if she has any local  
20 updates on implicit bias training.

21 MS. ALTMAYER: Just to remind the board of the  
22 actions that we took this past fall to contribute to the  
23 countywide Cherished Futures Project, which is a project  
24 with the Hospital Association and several other funders,  
25 including HealthNet and the Department of Public Health.

1 And this is around providing training to -- it's not  
2 explicitly as the -- the implicit bias training, but it's  
3 really strengthening hospitals as birthing centers to have  
4 the capacity in order to support the bias. So we are just  
5 now getting started. Cherished Futures has been a  
6 multiyear project, and we are right now in the process of  
7 executing that funding that was approved by the board, I  
8 want to say, September or October. I apologize. I can't  
9 remember which meeting.

10 MS. WIDBY-MARTIN: I'd also clarify, too, that we  
11 can't -- we're not taking support positions or being super  
12 active an support positions and visibility until we have  
13 an approved policy agenda so we know that we are  
14 representing the commission's interests and priorities,  
15 and then activities to advocate and shape proposals will  
16 start being fed back as well fore the current proposals.

17 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Well, I would like to see  
18 the board agenda as being a part of the proposal because  
19 we don't change the thinking of doctors and how they  
20 approach the client and take away their implicit bias, not  
21 that they're trying to be biased, but they don't even  
22 realize that they're taking a bias because they're looking  
23 at the world from their perspective. And they have to  
24 learn to think a little different in order to make it  
25 better.

1           Why is it that Black doctors do better in taking  
2   care of Black women and making help when doctors that are  
3   White are not doing it? So we have to help them to get it  
4   -- do it better so that they can help the client because,  
5   you know, there's not enough Black doctors to help  
6   everybody. And this goes the same thing for Latin X  
7   families. If they come in there with their bias against  
8   those families, then the reality is they can't help that  
9   family help that child, help that mother.

10           So to me, it's a dual purpose thing. So I would  
11   put it on the thing and see what the board wants to do.  
12   But I think it's important that we encourage the trainings  
13   for them so that we can move the health of all families  
14   forward in a positive way.

15           I just want to add one more thing. I want to  
16   thank you and thank Kim and everyone. I like the way we  
17   think out of the box. I -- and be creative about what  
18   we're trying to push forward for the community and  
19   families. And I love that whole family idea like my  
20   colleague has said too. But the idea is that we have to  
21   keep thinking out of the box and help everyone else.

22           The federal level -- the President got on the  
23   national TV and says he wants to address these issues.  
24   And I'm hoping that we -- they understand that that issue  
25   is not only here but counting nationwide with regards to

1 this training for doctors, nurses, and everyone else that  
2 has to help these families when the time of crisis around  
3 having children and actually having them prosper from zero  
4 to five.

5 So I just wanted to bring that back out. I'm  
6 sorry if I cut you off. But, Charna, go ahead if you had  
7 anything else.

8 MS. WIDBY-MARTIN: No. If I was speaking, it was  
9 to agree with you.

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: All right. Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Astrid, you have something to  
12 say on this.

13 COMMISSIONER HEGER: Yeah. Occasionally, I have  
14 something to say.

15 I'm glad that we're recognizing the need for  
16 clinics that are run by, organized by, and provide the  
17 service through ethically-appropriate staff because I  
18 think, if I remember though when I had our -- and Kim can  
19 smile at me now -- the idea of creating a African  
20 American-run clinic for women and children would improve  
21 and change the whole idea of the heightened rates of death  
22 surrounding deliverance for African American women and  
23 children. And I personally believe that.

24 Let me just -- the other thing -- and Bobby and  
25 his crew and I have been talking about this. As a

1 gatekeeper for the kids going into foster care, what do  
2 you think I see in terms of this -- this bias that exists  
3 in both African American families and Hispanic families?  
4 And we have a proposal right now looking at how we could  
5 create a separate triage for -- for minorities that would  
6 identify the needs of the family, not just knee-jerking  
7 taking the kids into foster care, but really actually  
8 looking at them in a way of what can we do to stabilize  
9 the family. Because when I sit in my clinic and I get a  
10 call from an emergency room one week and they say, we have  
11 this African American family here, the father is six-six,  
12 looks like he's a football player, and the kid has a  
13 broken leg and I'm going to report it. Okay? And I'm  
14 going to call DCFS. And the next week the same ER calls  
15 me and says, I have this nice, middle class White family  
16 from the Valley and the kid has a broken leg, and I don't  
17 think there's any abuse.

18           You know, there has to be -- there has to be a  
19 different kind of filter that's appropriate for those  
20 families and looks at the family on how we can sustain.  
21 Them if we are going to do more than listen to the words  
22 that are spoken in this country right now, Black  
23 children's lives matter the most. And I'm glad that Black  
24 lives matter and I'm glad we're finally saying that. I'm  
25 sure there are several people -- I see their faces up here

1 that we're active back when we marched. But there were a  
2 lot of words and things that didn't change enough. And  
3 I'm saying, if we're going to do it and we're looking at  
4 those little kids, then we find a way to sustain the  
5 families.

6 And I'm sure that both Romalis and Keesha can  
7 speak right back at me about this, about how it has to be  
8 delivered in a way that is appropriate and sustains the  
9 family and we figure out how to keep them together and  
10 safe. And we're really advocating for that right now, but  
11 I tell you what. I feel like I'm 20 years ago advocating  
12 for a system of child protection that would keep kids in  
13 their families. I feel like I'm doing it all over again.

14 So I'm glad that First 5 agrees with me.

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I think the State agrees  
16 with you too, because they're putting in the budget -- at  
17 least the Governor -- a Strong Family Act in which there  
18 is about not detaining families but giving them whole  
19 family health in order to help them deal with the  
20 dynamics, the social dynamics they're facing which could  
21 have led to the crisis that they're dealing with, not  
22 that, you know -- but, you know, that's not taking away  
23 from the dynamic that we have to make sure that the  
24 children are safe. But the bottom line is, we need to  
25 start looking at this a little differently and we need to

1 take into account that issue you're talking about. I  
2 totally agree with you.

3 COMMISSIONER HEGER: And, Romalis, look, I  
4 understand that, and I'm glad the Governor's got that in  
5 his budget. What I am absolutely passionately committed  
6 that we have to have action, that we have to go ahead and  
7 build the model and show that it works and that we can  
8 reduce the detention rates for African American kids or  
9 for Hispanic kids, especially the children who are here  
10 second generation or so. And we have a lot of same  
11 problems of poverty and alcohol and all of that. We have  
12 to do it. And until we do it, it's all going to be just  
13 words on paper.

14 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Okay. I think we've had the  
15 discussion about this particular item and we have another  
16 item still to go in our -- on our agenda, and that is  
17 previewing the series of upcoming discussions on Best  
18 Start regions and related projects.

19 So who is started -- Lee. Here we go.

20 MS. WERBEL: Hi. Good afternoon, commissioners,  
21 staff, and other guests. I'm really happy here  
22 representing the communities department, committed group  
23 of individuals who, along with rest of the First 5 staff,  
24 is really showing their strength with all we've been  
25 experiencing this year, all of us.

1           So this is a preview, as Commissioner Abdo said.  
2 For the next three program and planning committee  
3 meetings, we would like to have a series of conversations  
4 to talk about what's happening in Best Start at the  
5 regional level, at the local level. So in October,  
6 Antoinette, who was the director of communities and who  
7 brought great leadership and vision to what was the  
8 communities department at that time and is now the new  
9 chief learning officer for the Office of Equity Strategy  
10 and Learning, and Kim Hall who is now the chief officer  
11 for the Office for Data for Action, talked about the  
12 broader big picture, learning within Best Start.

13           These deep dives that we want to engage with you  
14 all on help demonstrate the alignment of Best Start, the  
15 Best Start effort, and the strategic plan, especially  
16 strategic priority two, which is about advancing and  
17 building on community experience. This is about  
18 connecting, maximizing, and coordinating public resources,  
19 relationships, and local assets and relationships within  
20 the 14 Best Start geographies.

21           It's important because the Best Start geographies  
22 in the five regions provide an opportunity to really  
23 demonstrate the impact and the value of weaving together  
24 key resources and infrastructure to advance local  
25 solutions. And that's what this effort is about.

1           So, again, we want to share what's happening at  
2 the local level. We want to, through these proposed  
3 conversations, bring forward some key themes, insights,  
4 and challenges, including any community issues, community  
5 priorities, focusing on community engagement, elevating  
6 community voice, and impacts due to Covid-19.

7           So in February, we're actually going to start  
8 with a conversation about the fresh ideas for CalFresh  
9 project which were implementing a partnership with LA  
10 County Department of Public Social Services and the LA  
11 County Food Policy Council to better understand CalFresh  
12 -- excuse me -- CalFresh access and participation  
13 barriers. And we'll share findings and we will share some  
14 recommendations. So following our presentation, if I can  
15 refer to you the second page of the memo for this Item 6,  
16 where we list what communities are in each region. I  
17 won't list those out right now to save some time. But  
18 following the presentation on CalFresh in February, we  
19 will move to region one.

20           And then in March, we will highlight two Best  
21 Start regions, region three and region five. And in the  
22 region five presentation, we will also include an update  
23 on the Antelope Valley Resource Infusion Project.

24           And then in April, we will focus on region two  
25 and region four.

1           So at the February board meeting, we will precede  
2 all these PPC engagements with a further introduction to  
3 the overall Best Start approach, common things that we've  
4 bringing forward and more information about what we want  
5 to share about the Best Start working regions.

6           And that's the preview. Thank you. We don't  
7 really have a PowerPoint. We'll have a further  
8 presentation in February. I just want to --

9           MS. ALTMAYER: Lee, do you want to add just a few  
10 comments about how we'll use the commissioners' feedback  
11 going forward?

12           MS. WERBEL: Yes. We're hoping that -- we really  
13 want to have that feedback and learn from you to help in  
14 terms of planning with our future work planning and  
15 budgeting in terms of looking at how we move to be up with  
16 our system. So it will be an active and concrete  
17 conversation.

18           COMMISSIONER ABDO: Okay. Are there  
19 commissioners who want to make comments or ask questions  
20 about this item? It's pretty clear that it's coming back.  
21 Thank you.

22           All right. We've reached the point in our agenda  
23 where we would hear from the public. And, Linda, do we  
24 have public comment that is set up and waiting? I assume  
25 it's reading people's written comments.

1           COMMISSIONER ABDO: Before you do that, Judy, I  
2 see Romalis's hand up.

3           COMMISSIONER ABDO: Oh. I'm sorry.

4           MS. BELSHE: I don't know if that's a hold over  
5 from the last item, but just to confirm before we move on  
6 to public comment.

7           COMMISSIONER ABDO: Romalis, do you have  
8 something on this item?

9           COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yeah. I just hope that  
10 we're going to sit down and take a deep dive and look at  
11 this -- the network process and outcomes and what it's  
12 really doing and not doing and how we really want to  
13 measure outcomes to see if they do that or make the model  
14 changes that we need to do to make credibility on this  
15 project. We're spending a lot of money and I want to make  
16 sure that we're getting the outcomes that we expect as a  
17 board from this process.

18           And as I said last time, I'm not trying to be  
19 hard. I'm been given the opportunity for the department  
20 to come up or the agency to come up with a real plan that  
21 shows measurements and outcomes as to what this is  
22 intended to do, how it's doing it, and not continuing to  
23 spend the money we're spending on this and not getting the  
24 outcomes we expect.

25           So I want to know that we're going to change this

1 model and fix it so that we get outcomes because, in the  
2 last presentation, I didn't hear that. I said that. And  
3 I've been quiet about it because I'm waiting to see what  
4 the agency comes up with with the model that shows  
5 measurement and outcomes. Because I don't see any  
6 outcomes, I'm going to have a lot of questions before we  
7 move forward.

8 And I'm not saying that to be strong because I  
9 want it to be successful. But if that means the board and  
10 all of us have to work together to come up with a concept  
11 that shows us the outcomes that we want to see versus that  
12 which we were promised, then I want to know that and I  
13 want to be able to prove it, because this is an important  
14 concept if we want to take that to the State, to the feds  
15 or even the City or anything else to say, this is how it  
16 should work in the communities to give voice and power to  
17 the people so that they can do things and make things  
18 happen. But I'm not seeing that and I'm concerned. And  
19 what I'm expressing is a concern. And I want you to be.

20 Successful. Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Okay. Thank you. I see that  
22 Linda is saying her audio is not working.

23 Linda, is your audio still not working? Looks  
24 like maybe it isn't. So I don't know what we have for  
25 public comment. Anybody have any idea?

1           We can't hear you, Linda.

2           COMMISSIONER TILTON: Use sign language.

3           THE SECRETARY: This is Jamie Knowles, and I'm  
4 working with Linda offline to confirm that. I'll let you  
5 guys know in just one second.

6           COMMISSIONER ABDO: Okay. Technology needs to  
7 catch up with us, doesn't it?

8           THE SECRETARY: It does, I agree.

9           COMMISSIONER WOODS: Madam chair, while we're  
10 waiting, can I make one comment? This is Keesha.

11           When we're talking about the digital divide and  
12 needing to get more resources out there to family, we also  
13 talked about professional development with that or this  
14 training opportunities with that. And I wanted to add a  
15 comment to encourage us to add in health and ergonomics  
16 training with the digital information that's being put out  
17 there because we are less mobile, we're not -- and we're  
18 going to end up with other health issues in the system as  
19 it relates to our -- so whenever we're doing those kinds  
20 of trainings, we should also just have a segment on  
21 healthy use of our equipment and being virtual.

22           Thanks.

23           COMMISSIONER ABDO: Thank you. That's a very  
24 good point, Keesha.

25           COMMISSIONER TILTON: Can I ask something?

1           COMMISSIONER ABDO:    Sure.

2           COMMISSIONER TILTON:  As long as we have a break  
3 here.  I just want to make a point of how encouraging and  
4 inspiring so many of these presentations were.  I wanted  
5 to add that, if we could pair addressing of the  
6 disproportionalities in the systems that we have with a  
7 focus on fathers, little boys and their development of  
8 attitude and capabilities and skills to grow up to be  
9 parent figures.  We -- we tend to think of parents as  
10 mothers.  And if you look at the realities of -- of  
11 outcomes, the negative outcomes, unfortunately, tend to be  
12 connected to male caretakers.  They just are.  And why is  
13 it?

14           I believe it's because little boys do not believe  
15 or are not taught to believe that they're going to be  
16 caregivers of infants, toddlers, and young children, and  
17 that -- that they -- when given the opportunity really do  
18 love being involved in the -- in the process of making  
19 decisions and taking care of children.

20           So I know that First 5 has a project with  
21 fathers, Fatherhood Project.  I think on an overall  
22 universal level, we haven't really done justice to that  
23 opportunity.  And we could measurably improve opportunity  
24 to young children if we pay more attention to fathers and  
25 to the development of little boys in -- in terms of their

1 skills, attitudes, capabilities, and expectations of  
2 parenthood.

3 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Thank you, Deanne.

4 So Jamie, I think you're back with us.

5 THE SECRETARY: Yes, I am here. Thank you so  
6 much for your patience.

7 So Linda did confirm there are no public  
8 comments. There was a public comment that was received  
9 after 1:30 p.m. today and will be part of public record as  
10 she indicated at the beginning of the meeting.

11 COMMISSIONER ABDO: That's fortunate since we're  
12 having these technical difficulties.

13 So are there any last words before we actually  
14 adjourn?

15 COMMISSIONER TILTON: Good job, Judy. Love your  
16 pig tails.

17 COMMISSIONER ABDO: Thank you. Yup. They're  
18 growing.

19 MS. BELSHE: Great to see everyone. We look  
20 forward to seeing everyone and your fellow commissioners  
21 at the full first formal board meeting in February. So  
22 until then, please be safe, be well.

23 (At 3:28 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.)  
24  
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Heatherlynn Gonzalez, a Certified Shorthand Reporter for the State of California, License Number 13646, do hereby attest that:

The preceding is a true and accurate transcription of the meeting of the organization named herein;

The meeting was taken down stenographically and transcribed into English under my supervision and authority;

I have no interest, financial or otherwise, in any of the parties, issues, or individuals who are involved in this organization.

Attested to on this 10th day of February 2021.

DocuSigned by:

*Heatherlynn Gonzalez*

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FOR THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

## Fresh Ideas for CalFresh: An Executive Summary

Public assistance programs are crucial to the health and stability of millions of families. Yet navigating systems to access benefits can be quite challenging and stigmatizing. These issues are not uncommon in a large and diverse region like Los Angeles County—where even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity has been on the rise. It is estimated that the percentage of food-insecure people in Los Angeles County increased from 11.4% in 2018 to 17.4% during this pandemic. For children, the rate jumped even higher from 15.2% to 27.3%<sup>1</sup>. During the timeframe of this project, CalFresh household enrollment in Los Angeles County jumped 32.8% from 628,409 in July 2019 to 834,828 in June 2020<sup>2</sup>.

The CalFresh Program, federally known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), supports low-income individuals and households with additional dollars to purchase food. CalFresh is considered one of the most important lines of defense against food insecurity among advocates and researchers. Given this, why are so many people who may be eligible for CalFresh not enrolled? There are several commonly known factors that inhibit successful enrollment and participation in the CalFresh program: stigma, misinformation, and administrative burdens—just to name a few.

For decades, many CalFresh stakeholders have tried to address participation barriers. In 2017, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a motion to increase the CalFresh participation rate by 20% and address disparities in access particularly among students and young children<sup>3</sup>. Although CalFresh participation has steadily increased, 29% of eligible families still did not receive benefits in 2018<sup>4</sup>. In Los Angeles, the largest county in California, only 74% of the eligible population accessed benefits<sup>5</sup>.

Many efforts have been led by program administrators and advocates, including the partners of this project. Some strategies and activities include supporting applicants in the community through outreach events and partnerships with organizations like Code for America, a nonprofit that partners with the state to enroll people in CalFresh. Despite these efforts, there are many barriers that CalFresh-eligible populations still face. This forces food insecure individuals to make tough choices in finding their next meal.

In order to fully address these issues, it is important to understand the context and lived experiences of CalFresh-eligible clients. To do so, causes must be explored alongside the community by discussing the problems and possible causes, while developing solution-oriented approaches to the problem.

### Overview of Project

The *Fresh Ideas for CalFresh* project was launched to better understand CalFresh access and participation barriers in the context of Los Angeles County, while providing some tangible considerations for program improvement. This was a 18-month project (2019-2021) between the Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC), First 5 LA, and the Los Angeles County Department of

<sup>1</sup> Freeman, A. (2020). [The Impact of the Coronavirus on Food Insecurity](#). Feeding America Action.

<sup>2</sup> [CalFresh Data Dashboard](#) from the California Department of Social Services

<sup>3</sup> Kuehl, D. & Hahn, J. Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. (2017). [Reduce Prevalence of Food Insecurity and Poverty by Increasing CalFresh Participation](#) (Motion). *Los Angeles*.

<sup>4</sup> Tan, D. & Danielson, C. (2020). [The CalFresh Food Assistance Program](#). Public Policy Institute of California.

<sup>5</sup> [CalFresh Data Dashboard](#) from the California Department of Social Services

Public Social Services (DPSS; the local administrators of CalFresh). The project aimed to (1) better understand the first-hand experiences of community members navigating the CalFresh program and (2) identify ways to improve access and enrollment to the program. The project comprised of the following phases:

1. **Community Listening Tour.** From July 2019 to June 2020, LAFPC led a community engagement strategy in the form of a “Listening Tour” with over 400 community residents in low-income neighborhoods about ways to improve CalFresh services and expand access to nutritious food. Following the listening tour, we coded information for themes and presented the findings to community members.
2. **Engagement Sessions with Systems of Care Stakeholders<sup>6</sup>.** From July 2019 to March 2021, LAFPC led sensemaking sessions with systems of care stakeholders to (1) share findings from the Community Listening Tour and (2) strategize considerations to improve CalFresh programming and culture.

### **Understanding & Changing CalFresh Culture**

CalFresh is an essential resource available to many who may who need it. The project allowed us to deeply listen to the community about the barriers they face with CalFresh and develop ways to overcome them. Ultimately, the project enabled us to better understand the complex culture of CalFresh, including but not limited to issues related to community-level stigma and governmental attempts to improve programming. Due to the deeply rooted stigma towards CalFresh, the full report’s findings are grounded in the local community context to help provide a more holistic perspective on the community’s relationship with CalFresh. This is also a new window of opportunity for CalFresh program staff and systems of care providers to meet the needs, conditions, culture, and language of CalFresh-eligible clients. An important differentiation of this project was the involvement of various stakeholders, many with their own lived experiences and relationships with CalFresh. These various voices are highlighted throughout the report, providing a forum for future discussions to improve the program.

Navigating systems should not be a burden left to clients alone. The community-informed recommendations in the report are intended to provide a common starting point between CalFresh-eligible clients and providers. Together, DPSS, community members, and other stakeholders can engage collaboratively to increase the availability of and access to fresh and nutritious foods in local neighborhoods across Los Angeles County.

### **COVID-19 Context**

While COVID-19 is not the focus of the report, the pandemic has impacted both the data collection process and elevated the importance of this report. The economic fallout of the pandemic resulted in a significant rise of CalFresh-eligible households. During the timeframe of this project, CalFresh households in Los Angeles County jumped by 32.8% from 628,409 in July 2019 to 834,828 in June 2020<sup>7</sup>. The pandemic has had a profound impact on us all but has influenced different segments of the population differently. “Right now we are seeing a lot of folks who have never applied for anything before — folks who are bartenders, hairstylists, folks who make decent money but still live

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<sup>6</sup> Including, but limited to: Los Angeles County Departments of Public Social Services and Public Health, First 5 LA, Nourish California, Advancement Project, Hunger Action LA, The Children’s Partnership.

<sup>7</sup> [CalFresh Data Dashboard](#) from the California Department of Social Services

paycheck to paycheck. And when that evaporates, they don't have savings," said Tracey Patterson, senior director with Code for America<sup>8</sup>.

From enrollment to online shopping, the COVID-19 pandemic has made CalFresh more accessible. To support CalFresh-eligible clients, the federal government enacted a series of waivers to temporarily modify application requirements and expedite enrollment. In fact, when the federal waivers were implemented, the rate of denied applications due to procedural reasons decreased significantly from 71% in February 2020 to 51% in May 2020 for Los Angeles County residents<sup>9</sup>. This decrease in procedural denials was experienced across the State of California, dropping from 75% in March 2020 to 55% in May 2020. Even with the combination of the economic fallout due to COVID-19 and increased enrollment in CalFresh, the federal waivers provided temporary flexibilities to improve access to CalFresh. Waivers such as these do not undermine the integrity of the application process or requirements, but rather streamline the process such as allowing telephonic signatures from clients. In addition to waivers, partnerships and technology have made grocery purchases more accessible to program participants. CalFresh benefits can now be used online to purchase groceries through Amazon, Walmart, Vons, Safeway, and Albertsons.

CalFresh changes such as these demonstrate that program reform and improvements are possible. Yet, change is not always easy at the local-level due to state and federal regulations. In addition to providing insight into community-level perceptions and experiences with CalFresh, the report also provides considerations for program improvement especially within LA County. The recommendations can help narrow the CalFresh participation gap, locally and beyond, making food more accessible for communities that need it the most. This is critical for those that are food insecure, a growing population during the current pandemic recession, as well as those who may need the program in future years.

### **Summary of Methods**

The Community Listening Tour process included three main components: recruitment, two-part listening session format, and member checking.

To get a full representation of each supervisorial district and the majority of Service Planning Areas (SPAs)<sup>10</sup>, participants were recruited from all five Best Start regions as listed below.

- Best Region 1: Central East (East LA, South El Monte/El Monte, Southeast LA, and Metro LA)
- Best Start Region 2: South Los Angeles (Compton, Broadway-Manchester, Watts-Willowbrook, West Athens)
- Best Start Region 3: San Fernando Valley (Northeast Valley, Panorama City, and neighbors)
- Best Start Region 4: Port Cities (Central Long Beach, Wilmington)
- Best Start Region 5: Antelope Valley (Lancaster, Palmdale)

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<sup>8</sup> McGreevy, P. (2020, March 31). Demand for food stamps surges in California as virus takes economic toll. Los Angeles Times.

<sup>9</sup> CF 296 - CalFresh Monthly Caseload Movement Statistical Report from the California Department of Social Services

<sup>10</sup> The only SPA not represented in the Best Start Region is SPA 5.

Participants were recruited through Best Start partner organizations, to help create trusted intermediary spaces for both community members and entities like DPSS. Those recruited for the listening sessions were parents and community members who were familiar with CalFresh services. Recruitment strategies included flyers with appropriate language translations and incentives for attendance.

Community listening sessions were held across each of the five Best Start regions, First 5 LA-supported geographic areas that have faced historic disenfranchisement as well as socio-economic and environmental challenges. The regions are representative of geographic areas with high CalFresh enrollment opportunities due to significant poverty rates. In most Best Start regions, there is a higher concentration of families with young children who experience poverty (29.9 - 35.4%), compared to the County average of 27.3%<sup>11</sup>. Additionally, these communities are located in food deserts where community members have lower access to healthy food and experience disproportionate rates of poor nutrition and food-related diseases. Best Start communities are also home to essential workers, who are a significant part of Los Angeles County's workforce and economy.

Over 400 individuals shared their experiences with CalFresh through five listening sessions held in the respective Best Start Regions throughout Los Angeles County. The sessions were conducted from October 2019 to June 2020 in the following languages: English, Spanish, American Sign Language, and Khmer. Three listening sessions (Regions 2, 3, and 4) were held in-person where participants could also meet with a CalFresh enrollment assister onsite. Due to COVID-19, the remaining two listening sessions (Regions 1 and 5) were delayed and held virtually through Facebook Live. While the in-person events hosted large crowds of 80-100 participants, the virtual events hosted 60 participants each.

Each listening session consisted of the same two-part format; presentations that followed with either focus groups or interviews, which were used as the primary source of data collected for this project<sup>12</sup>. The information collected was analyzed for recurring themes, categorized under the report's findings, through all the Best Start Regions.

The findings and considerations in the full report were vetted with the community to verify alignment with their experiences and views. On November 17, 2020, a community forum was virtually convened sharing the findings and initial considerations with over 60 community members from the Best Start Regions in English and Spanish. This community feedback approach is known as "member checking," a technique used to ensure the findings are accurate. Organizational partners collectively discussed and developed tangible approaches to address programmatic barriers faced by community members.

## Community Findings

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<sup>11</sup> First 5 LA (2020). *Pathway to Progress: Indicators of Young Child Well-Being in Los Angeles County*.

<sup>12</sup> The first three convenings each held a total of 8-10 in-person focus groups with a trained facilitator and note-taker. The focus groups allowed participants to share feedback on CalFresh. This allowed for small group conversations where participants "bounce ideas off of one another."

From the listening sessions, the following are major findings and community-informed barriers to CalFresh enrollment and participation. The four common themes from the listening sessions include:

1. **Stigma, Misinformation, and Mistrust.** There is stigma, misinformation, and mistrust about CalFresh being circulated within communities. Stigma can negatively influence the way people perceive public assistance programs like CalFresh, while misinformation can cause confusion through false or inaccurate notions. Much of this stems from mistrust and a negative long-standing culture towards the program. Community members may feel shame in receiving or applying for CalFresh. This makes it difficult for CalFresh to reach those who may need it. Community members also compared CalFresh and WIC experiences citing interest in having better customer service and provider relationships with the latter.
2. **Cultural and Linguistic Capacity.** Given the diversity of Los Angeles County, language translations and culturally appropriate messaging are critical access points for CalFresh-eligible clients. However, community members in need of those supportive services experience stigma and poor service which leads to mistrust and confusion. Community members expressed not being able to access services that reflect their cultural and linguistic needs. For example, there are numerous regional dialects within one language category like Spanish.
3. **Application Process and Program Navigation.** CalFresh application and program processes can cause administrative and emotional burdens for clients. The application is the first step to enrolling and participating in CalFresh. Yet, many CalFresh-eligible clients hesitate to apply or stay enrolled. Some reasons may include the psychological toll from previous experiences and/or negative perceptions of CalFresh customer service. This creates an entry barrier for many CalFresh-eligible clients. Furthermore, community members cited a lack of support to retain existing clients which is a common cause for churn in the program. Community members expressed wanting more direct support and consistency with CalFresh.
4. **Food Quality, Availability, and Accessibility.** Local food quality and access play a significant role in CalFresh purchasing patterns. Community members expressed inconsistencies in the quality and availability of food for CalFresh participants. This includes seeing lower quality foods in their local stores compared to more affluent areas as well as vendors who may have different rules for acceptable items. Many would like to have more accessible fresh produce in their community through Farmers Markets and expressed interest in starting home gardens through CalFresh seed purchases.

Each of these findings are complemented with direct quotes from community members in the full report. The incorporation of community voices inform the greater culture toward CalFresh among the identified communities. This is a powerful way to not only assess the current landscape, but create community-centered and -appropriate solutions.

## Recommendations

Based on the four thematic findings above, the following recommendations aim to address various community-identified causes of CalFresh enrollment and participation barriers. The recommendations also strive to provide feasible next steps within the local context, especially for CalFresh participants and providers. To improve CalFresh culture, we need to:

1. **Improve CalFresh’s reputation, in order to decrease stigma and misinformation within communities.** Some considerations include: coordinate approaches to meet the psychological safety of participants by decreasing stigma (i.e. use of technologies and enrollment at comfortable settings); develop long-term community outreach strategies to combat deeply rooted stigma towards CalFresh; and learn from WIC's community-friendly approaches.
2. **Expand cultural and linguistic support services, in order to increase trust and CalFresh participation within communities.** Some considerations include: cultivate a resilient systems of care workforce to better respond to the needs of CalFresh-eligible populations; provide existing DPSS staff support to improve client experiences (i.e. trainings related to implicit bias, trauma-informed care, cultural humility, etc.); and increase the availability of language support services.
3. **Strengthen client-provider relationships by alleviating administrative and emotional burdens on the CalFresh-eligible populations.** Some considerations include: provide direct support for enrollment and recertification processes (i.e. live support, follow-ups for incomplete client applications, etc.); streamline enrollment processes and services; apply user experience research to better understand CalFresh enrollment and program experiences; and learn from changes related to COVID-19 and wildfire responses.
4. **Address the everyday barriers CalFresh participants face in their communities by improving local food access.** Some considerations include: invest in technical assistance for CalFresh vendors; support clients with CalFresh food options; and engage with local growers and producers to strengthen the supply chain with higher food quality options.

### Reshaping CalFresh Culture

Engagement sessions with systems of care stakeholders and additional research provided another critical perspective to the project. While the community findings built the foundation to understand the local landscape of CalFresh, the second phase of this project incorporated the numerous layers and complexity that make up the CalFresh ecosystem. By embracing each of these realities, this project provides a more comprehensive look at the culture of CalFresh with a local focus.

While the report does outline a number of recommendations and next steps to improve community barriers to CalFresh, it is also important to recognize the many resources and initiatives that are currently available. CalFresh advocates and providers have been actively working to improve CalFresh for a long time, but there may be a gap in public outreach and education. Additionally, negative customer experience and feedback may overshadow positive ones which only reiterate existing stigma and misinformation about CalFresh.

The full report details the various solution-oriented resources and activities as a way to both highlight its existence and scalability as a best practice. For example, CalFresh providers understand the challenges for many eligible clients in navigating the enrollment process and system. By adopting new technologies and better catering their services, providers can now

conduct CalFresh enrollment in a number of ways (i.e. at-home/remote enrollment, DPSS offices, community-based settings and organizations) but that may be unknown to many CalFresh-eligible clients. The impact of COVID-19 also provided a new avenue to improve CalFresh as well as interact with newly eligible audiences for the first time. Implementing new federal waivers and responding to the growing need for CalFresh, stakeholders play a pivotal role in taking these lessons learned into the next stage of CalFresh transformation. Many stakeholders cited federal advocacy to make current program waivers and flexibilities a permanent feature of CalFresh a top priority. While each of these improvements take time to implement and scale, they are necessary and positive steps forward.

## Report Design

The full report's unique design and format is an important element to the content being shared from this project. There is informative text within the margins throughout the report that provide additional context and information to the main text, which illuminate the reader to a broader understanding of the topic at hand. The marginal text is intended to be read alongside the main text, as it is both complementary and necessary information to achieve the project's goal. These two areas of text help facilitate a dialogue between the various perspectives that each play a critical role in improving CalFresh.

## Conclusion

The *Fresh Ideas for CalFresh* project provides a number of unique cross-sections to strengthen and improve program participation across Los Angeles County. The full report integrates various key stakeholder perspectives to present both the common traits and opportunities for further engagement. The project's timeline offers a unique and critical window into the foundational and shifting challenges for food insecure communities. These additional details and contextualized information are outlined within the body and off-set texts throughout the report, a marker of this project's distinguishable and significant factor.

Given the COVID-19 pandemic, this is a particularly urgent matter. Improved relationships between the community and the systems intended to support them can mean the difference between life and death. Disasters increase the urgency for food and other assistance for lower-income people. As the pandemic continues, this population is growing rapidly. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in September 2020, Los Angeles and Orange Counties' unemployment rates were ranked second in the country as it rose to 13.6%<sup>13</sup>. Throughout 2020, advocates have worked with federal and state partners to ensure waivers were passed and successfully implemented in each community. This project has captured the positive impact of those changes, yet more adjustments are needed to further improve the experiences of clients as we weather this pandemic storm. Ultimately, these improvements will enable us to create a more resilient food system — one that is both responsive and equitable to the needs of our large and diverse region.

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<sup>13</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved on November 13, 2020: <https://www.bls.gov/web/metro/laurgch.htm>



# FRESH IDEAS FOR CALFRESH

**Lee Werbel, Interim Director, Communities**

**Christine Tran, Executive Director, LAFPC**

**Nicole Williams, Human Services Administrator, DPSS**



- Problem Statement – The CalFresh Gap
- Project Overview
- Project Design
- Findings & Recommendations
- Next Steps

Known as the CalFresh Gap, there are those who qualify for CalFresh but do not apply because of:

- Lack of information
- Stigma of public assistance
- Difficult application process
- Perception of ineligibility  
(i.e. household is over income & immigration status)
- Mobility issues
- Not worth applying for
- Complex application processes

*Source: Food Research and Action Center, The Food Trust, & Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. (2018). [The CalFresh Gap: Understanding Low Rates of Participation for Los Angeles County.](#)*

## L.A. County CalFresh Snapshot

- Caseload: 1.1 million
- Eligible but not enrolled: 500,000
- Enrollment Rate: 64.9% of Angelenos who are eligible for CalFresh participate

**A year after, enrollment rate increased to 74%**

If CalFresh was accessed at 100% participation, then Los Angeles County would:

- Receive \$541 million in additional CalFresh federal funding annually;
- Benefit from the additional business of 6,200 food retailers and farmers markets;
- And circulate an additional \$833.1 million in the local economy.



Sources: CalFresh Dashboard (2018); Nourish California (March 2020). [Lost Dollars, Empty Plates](#)

*Fresh Ideas for CalFresh* was an 18 month project (2019-2021) between the LA Food Policy Council, First 5 LA, and the LA County Department of Public Social Services. The project aimed to:

- Better understand the first-hand experiences of community members navigating the CalFresh program
- Identify ways to improve access and enrollment to the program.

**Best Start Regions** are in food deserts and home to essential workers. At 29.9%-35.4%, Best Start Regions have a higher concentration of families with young children experiencing poverty, compared to the County average of 27.3%.

(Source: First 5 LA, 2020. *Pathway to Progress: Indicators of Young Child Well-Being in Los Angeles County.*)





# Project Design

## July 2019 to June 2020

With over 400 community members from all 5 Best Start Regions, we conducted:

- Presentations with DPSS, Office of Immigrant Affairs or Nourish California
- Post-presentation: Focus group interviews or individual interviews
- Enrollment assistance provided at in person sessions

Presentations were conducted in English, Spanish, Khmer, and American Sign Language

For in-person meetings, onsite enrollment was conducted.

**Member checking:** Listen Tour concluded with a Community Feedback Session to share back what we learned (November 2020)



The pandemic impacted both the data collection process and elevated the importance of this report. The economic fallout of the pandemic resulted in a significant rise of CalFresh-eligible households:

- During the timeframe of the Listening Tour, CalFresh households in Los Angeles County jumped by **32.8%** from 628,409 in July 2019 to 834,828 in June 2020.
- The pandemic has had a profound impact on us all but has influenced different segments of the population differently.

“Right now we are seeing a lot of folks who have never applied for anything before — folks who are bartenders, hairstylists, folks who make decent money but still live paycheck to paycheck. And when that evaporates, they don’t have savings”  
— **Tracey Patterson**,  
**senior director at Code for America**

Throughout the project, we engaged with project stakeholders, including DPSS, to:

- Share findings from the Community Listening Tour
- Strategize recommendations to improve CalFresh programming & culture

During sessions to review the data, we asked all participants to share perspectives and review the data:

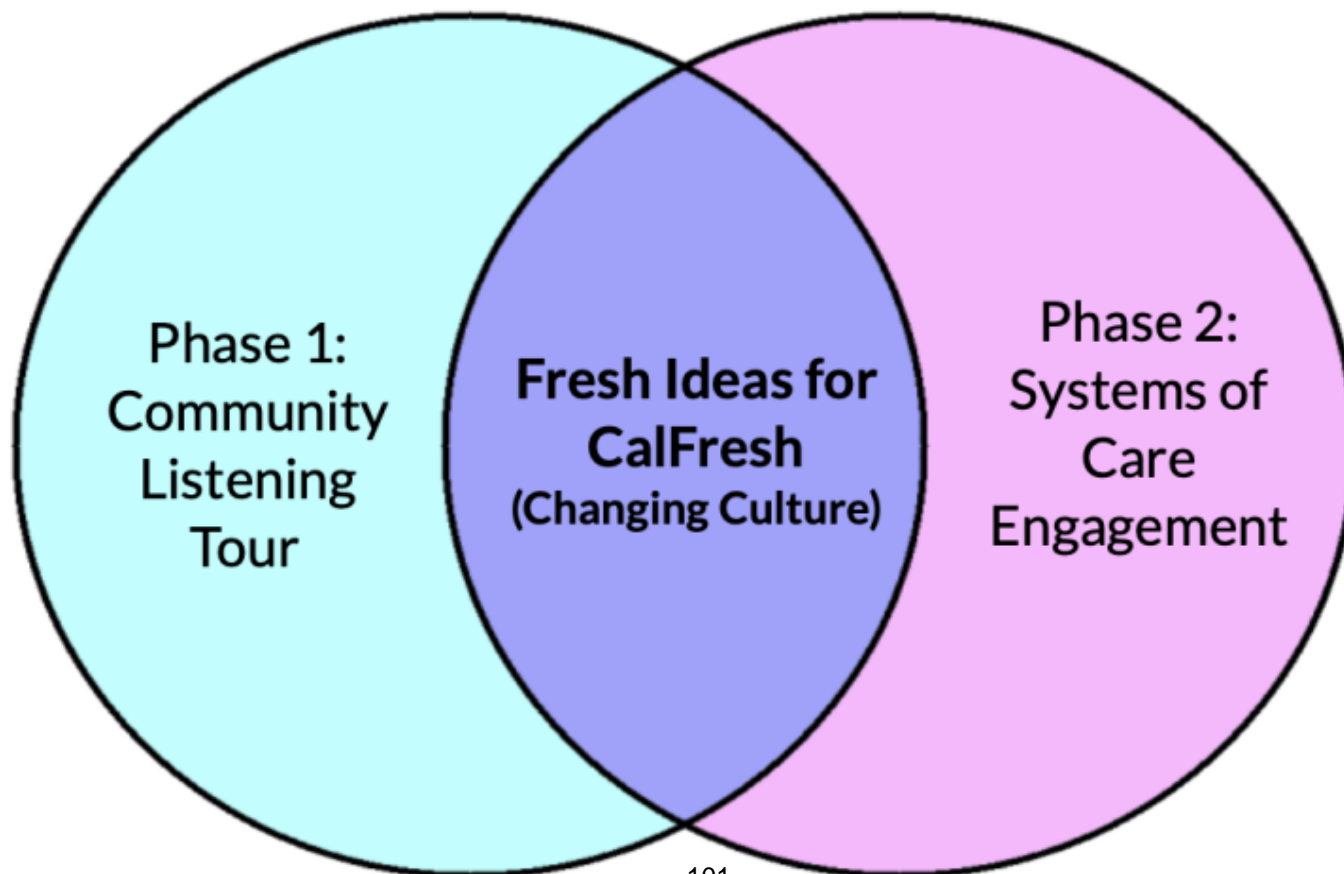
- **Community:** *“We feel/need...”*
- **Program Administrators:** *“We hear you, we can/cannot...”*
- **Common Ground:** *“Let’s try to...”*

**Nicole Williams, MPA**

**Human Services Administrator**

**LA County Department of Public Social Services**

Combines the power of **lived experiences** and **systems change**.



101

A photograph of two women and a child sitting on a blue and white patterned blanket on a lawn. The woman on the left is holding a young child in a blue t-shirt. The woman on the right is wearing a colorful patterned cardigan over a white top. They are all smiling and looking towards each other. In the background, there are palm trees and a building. A large pink circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text 'Findings & Recommendations'.

## Findings & Recommendations

## Community members voiced:

- Feeling **shame** in receiving CalFresh
- Difference between CalFresh and **WIC**
- Being confused by **mixed messaging** from peers and service providers

## Recommendations:

- Coordinate to meet the **psychological safety** of participants by decreasing stigma (i.e. use of technologies & enrollment at comfortable settings)
- Develop long-term community outreach strategies to combat **deeply rooted stigma** towards CalFresh
- Learn from **WIC's** community-friendly approaches

“Right now I feel like the message [is that the program] is ‘for poor people’ and ‘leeches.’ I think that the real message [should instead be] more friendly, or nice, be like WIC because they are more helpful...approachable”  
—**Region 5, Antelope Valley**

“I’ve never asked for help because one lady told me about her experience. She didn’t qualify even though she had a disabled son. [I thought,] if she didn’t qualify, then how could I qualify and I never wanted to go back.”  
—**Region 2, South Los Angeles**

### Community members voiced:

- The **lack of bilingual staff** made some clients feel discriminated against, disrespected, and judged
- Staff's **responses varied** by the person & office
- Challenges in **understanding the wording or phrases** in applications in English and other languages

### Recommendations:

- Cultivate a **resilient systems of care workforce** to better respond to the needs of CalFresh-eligible populations;
- Provide existing **DPSS staff support** to improve client experiences (i.e. trainings related to implicit bias, trauma-informed care, cultural humility, etc.)
- **Increase the availability** of language support services

104

“Although the application is in Spanish [and I speak Spanish], sometimes I don’t understand it because of the way it’s written.”  
—**Region 1, Central East**

“Services are good, but when we have to go to the office it’s very different. People don’t attend to us properly because we don’t speak the language.”  
—**Region 2, South Los Angeles**

## Community members voiced:

- The **application is too complicated** and would like someone to help with the applications
- The **interaction at DPSS offices varied** depending on who they happened to interact with or who was assigned their case
- The **DPSS office environment** is different from the environment at non-profits and schools

## Recommendations:

- Provide **direct support** for enrollment and recertification processes (i.e. live support, follow-ups for incomplete client applications, etc.)
- **Streamline** enrollment processes and services;
- Apply **user experience research** to better understand CalFresh enrollment & program experiences
- Learn from changes related to emergency response (i.e. COVID-19 and wildfires)

“Well, the truth is I find it easier to apply in person, with a representative. Give me the option to fill out the application with a representative so they can help explain the questions.  
—**Region 3, San Fernando Valley**

“It’s not easy, the paperwork was confusing, lots of ‘proof of this,’ ‘proof of that.’ It took me a long time to gather everything because it was my first time going in. I didn’t know what I needed. It was confusing.”  
—**Region 5, Antelope Valley**

## Community members voiced:

- **Varied food** quality, availability, and lack of organic options
- **Different requirements at stores** accepting CalFresh, which influenced what they can and cannot purchase
- Challenges when trying to find **CalFresh vendors** to purchase food
- Interest in using CalFresh to purchase **seeds for home and community gardens**

## Recommendations:

- Invest in **technical assistance** for CalFresh vendors;
- Support clients with CalFresh **food options**
- Engage with **local growers and producers** to strengthen the supply chain with higher food quality options

“The food price is too high. I’d like to see a farmers market because I only see them in rich areas. I would also like to plant around our community so things can grow and the community can eat the fruit.”

—**Region 1, Central East**

“The food is too expensive and only people with high incomes can afford to buy good quality food. Even with the food stamps they get with CalFresh, it’s not enough to get good food.”

—**Region 3, San Fernando Valley**

## The *Fresh Ideas for CalFresh* project:

- Integrates various **key stakeholder perspectives** to present both the common traits and opportunities for further engagement
- Provides **unique cross-sections** to strengthen and improve CalFresh participation across the County
- Encompasses a timeline that offers a unique and critical window into the **shifting challenges** for food insecure communities (inclusive of pre- and current COVID realities)

## Next Steps

- Report will be published end of March 2021
- “CalFresh 101”: LAFPC is developing workshops about CalFresh to inform underserved cultural and linguistic communities including: Indigenous Latinx populations like Mixtec (Oaxaca) and Maya (Yucatán) speakers & Chinese dialects like Teochew and Toisan

- Provided First 5 LA the opportunity to leverage our existing community engagement expertise
- First 5 LA was able to facilitate the relationship-building between DPSS, LAFPC and its partners, as well as Best Start Regional Network Grantees
- Opportunity for First 5 LA to collaborate with DPSS more formally
- Elevated the critical need to listen to and partner with parents and residents to address inequities in the food system

Thank you!

Reflections  
and  
Questions.



**FIRST 5 LA**

**SUBJECT:**

Best Start Learning Sessions: Highlights from Best Start Region 1 (Central-East)

**BACKGROUND:**

The North Star guiding First 5 LA's work is: *By 2028, all children in Los Angeles County will enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life.* First 5 LA supports the strengthening of public and community systems, advancing and building on community experience, and expanding influence and impact with data in 14 geographic areas in Los Angeles County through an initiative called Best Start. This investment was created in 2010 to cultivate community partnerships, i.e. collaborative spaces where community members would become powerful catalysts to achieve and sustain positive outcomes for children and families in their communities.

Through Best Start, our goal is to catalyze, strengthen, elevate and scale empowering and innovative approaches generated by communities that improve the lives of children prenatal to age 5, their families and communities. This is consistent with FY 2020-2028 Strategic Plan Objective 2.1, which focuses on demonstrating impact at a local level as "proof of concept" to inform countywide system improvement efforts.

In 2018, First 5 LA Board of Commissioners approved five Regional Network Grantees (RNGs): Para Los Niños (Region 1), Community Health Councils (Region 2), El Nido Family Services (Region 3), The Nonprofit Partnership (Region 4), and Children's Bureau (Region 5). This was the result of a comprehensive community planning process, transitioning the work into five regions, consisting of the 14 geographic areas, and supporting the emergence of regional and local networks of parents, residents, other community leaders and organizational partners, including but not limited to the Best Start community partnerships. This shift to networks recognizes the critical role networks play in developing, uplifting, and sustaining systems changes.

The RNGs manage each region's unique approach to systems change and the strategic progress of the local networks, along with contracted partners. To support cross-region learning and collaboration, First 5 LA launched a Communities of Practice as a space for RNGs to deepen partnerships, provide updates, share practices and create a sense of community that inspires ongoing reflection, adaptation, and practice improvements.

**DISCUSSION:**

Beginning in February, staff will engage the Board in a series of in-depth learning sessions at the Program and Planning Committee meetings to share learnings and results since the 2018 Board action approving the regional model. The February Program and Planning Committee meeting will include a presentation highlighting the work in Region 1 (Central-East) with Para Los Niños (PLN) serving as the RNG. PLN was selected as a key partner in this work to serve as the Regional Network Grantee for Best Start Region 1, building on the organization's decade-long experience and commitment as the backbone agency for the Best Start Metro LA pilot initiative which was created in 2009.

As the RNG, PLN's goal is to expand and scale the work of local communities to build power and catalyze positive outcomes for children and their families. The focus of these efforts is in the Region 1 Best Start communities of East LA, Metro LA, South El Monte-El Monte, and Southeast LA. These communities are among LA County's most severely impacted areas during the COVID-19 pandemic. The residents who live in this region experience a mix of local and county systems

that reflect the complexity that exists within our county – a network of small municipalities along with the city of Los Angeles and its unincorporated areas. Within this diverse landscape, PLN manages the strategic progress of the regional and local networks of parents, residents, community leaders, and organizational partners to develop, uplift, and sustain systems change.

During the meeting, First 5 LA and PLN will provide an overview of the work of the region. The objectives for the presentation and discussion are to:

- Highlight PLN's Best Start Framework for Community Transformation and the strategies to ground the work of all partners in the lived experience of parents and residents;
- Elevate the ways in which the Best Start approach and philosophy came to action during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Invite the Commissioners to share insights on how to strengthen countywide supports for our communities as Region 1 unveils its Bill of Rights for Systems Change.

**Next Steps:**

Best Start Region 1 is hosting a region-wide meeting, Driving Equity and Justice Community Bill of Human Rights for Systems Change on Saturday, April 24, 2021, from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm.

# Best Start Region 1 Highlights From the Field

Debbie Sheen, First 5 LA  
Alejandra Castillo, Para Los Niños  
Brenda Aguilera, Para Los Niños  
Carlos M. Arceo, Para Los Niños



## Esquema de Presentación

- Contexto
- Filosofía y enfoque: x  
Marco Best Start para la transformación de la comunidad
- Estrategia: Asociarse con los residentes
- Estrategia: Colaboración con las organizaciones
- Pivotar hacia la respuesta COVID-19
- Desarrollar métricas precisas para el trabajo de cambio de sistemas
- Carta Comunitaria de Derechos Humanos para el Cambio de Sistemas e Impulso de Equidad y Justicia

## *Presentation Outline*

- *Context Setting*
- *Philosophy and Approach: Best Start Framework for Community Transformation*
- *Strategy: Partnering With Residents*
- *Strategy: Partnering With Organizations*
- *Pivoting to COVID-19 Response*
- *Developing Accurate Metrics for Systems Change Work*
- *Driving Equity and Justice Community Bill of Human Rights for Systems Change*

## Las Complejidades de la Construcción del Poder

## The Complexities of Power Building





**BEST START  
REGION 1**

115

El trabajo de la Región 1 se basa en la experiencia y la acción de la comunidad.

La asociación / colaborativa entre las comunidades de Best Start, Para Los Niños y First 5 LA es flexible y adaptable.



*The work of Region 1 is grounded in community expertise and action.*

*The partnership between Best Start Communities, Para Los Niños, and First 5 LA is flexible and adaptive.*

# Residentes como Colaboradoras/es

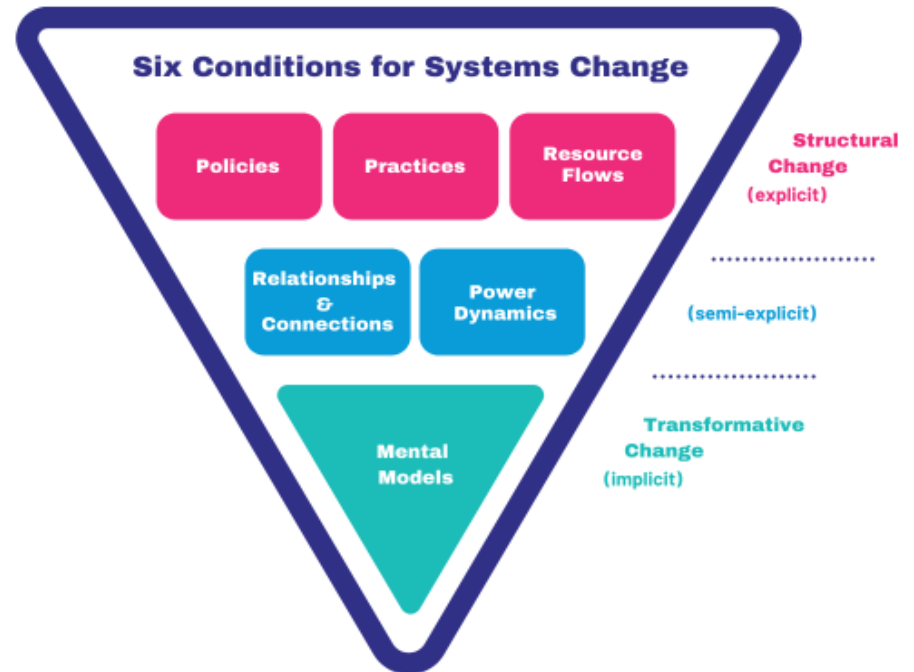
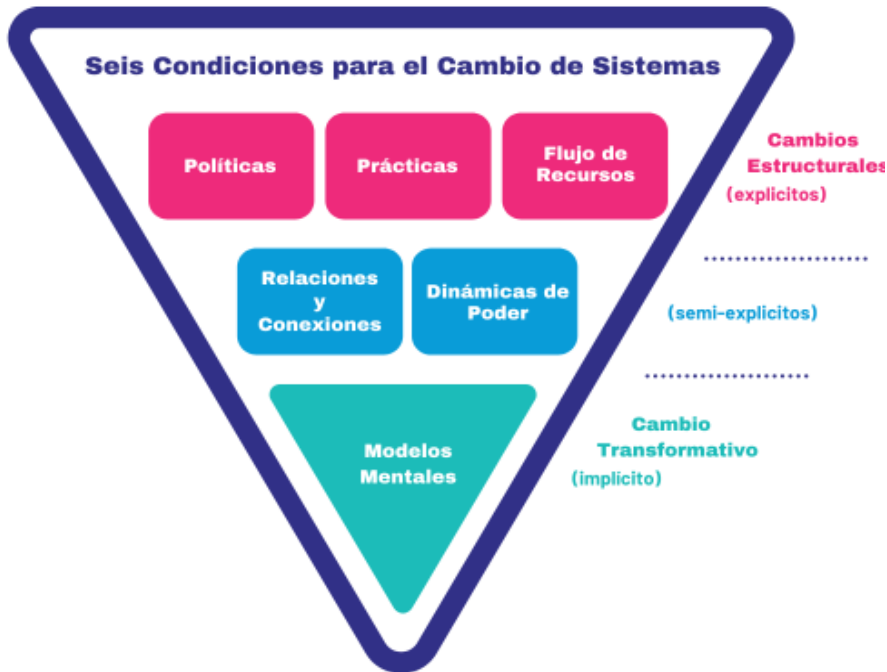
## *Residents as Partners*

## Una Historia de Desinversión: Violencia Sistémica

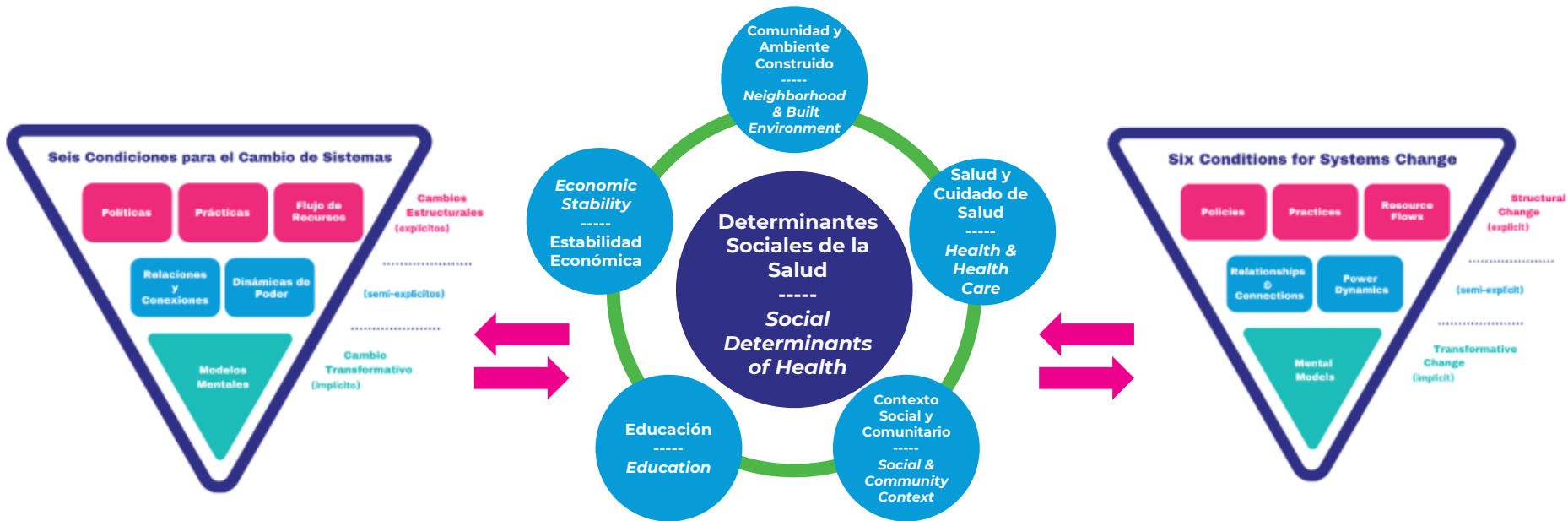
- La violencia como dinámica interpersonal
- La violencia como daño sistémico
- Ejemplos de violencia/lesión sistémica
- Colocar la responsabilidad donde corresponde

## *A History of Disinvestment: Systemic Violence*

- *Violence as an Interpersonal Dynamic*
- *Violence As Systemic Injury*
- *Examples of Systemic Violence/Injury*
- *Placing responsibility where it belongs*





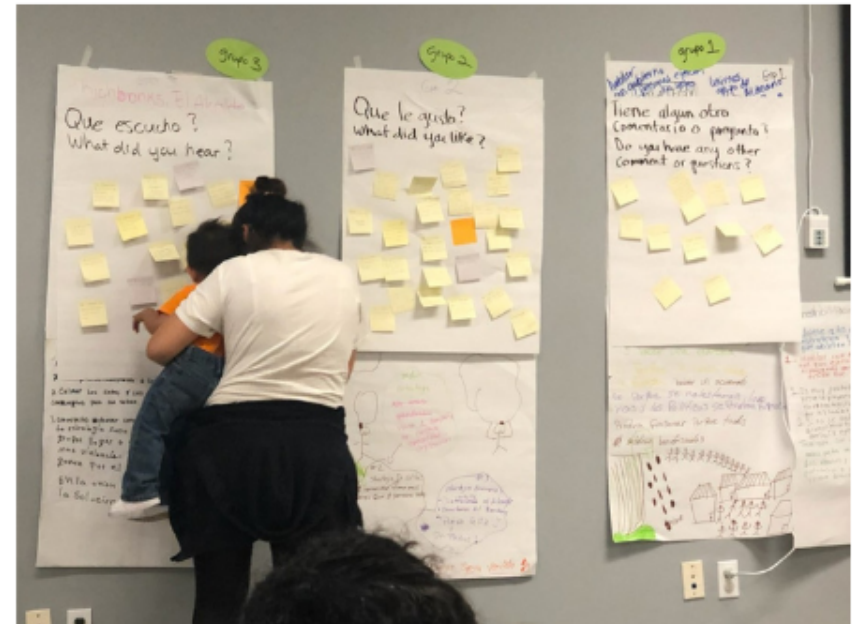


**Residentes como  
Colaboradoras/es**  
**Residents as Partners**

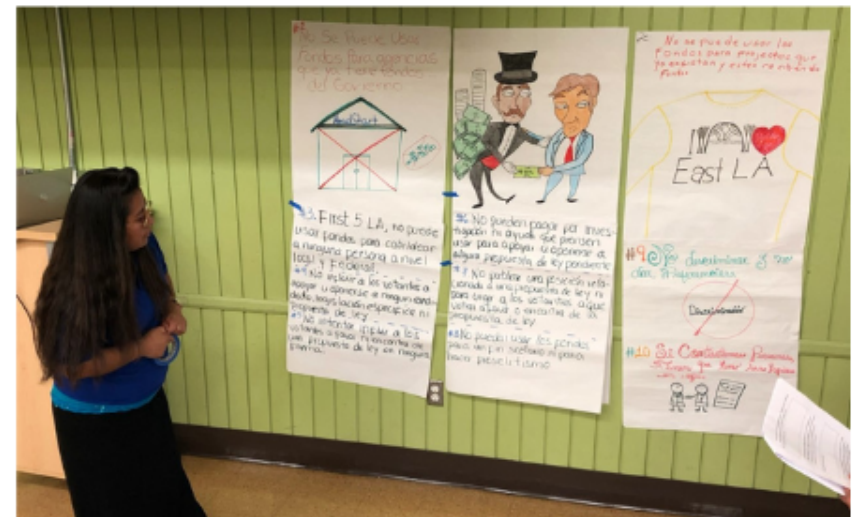


### Residentes como Colaboradoras/es

### Residents as Partners



123



**Organizaciones como  
Colaboradoras**  
***Organizations as Partners***



# Pivotar hacia una respuesta COVID-19

## Pivoting to a COVID-19 Response

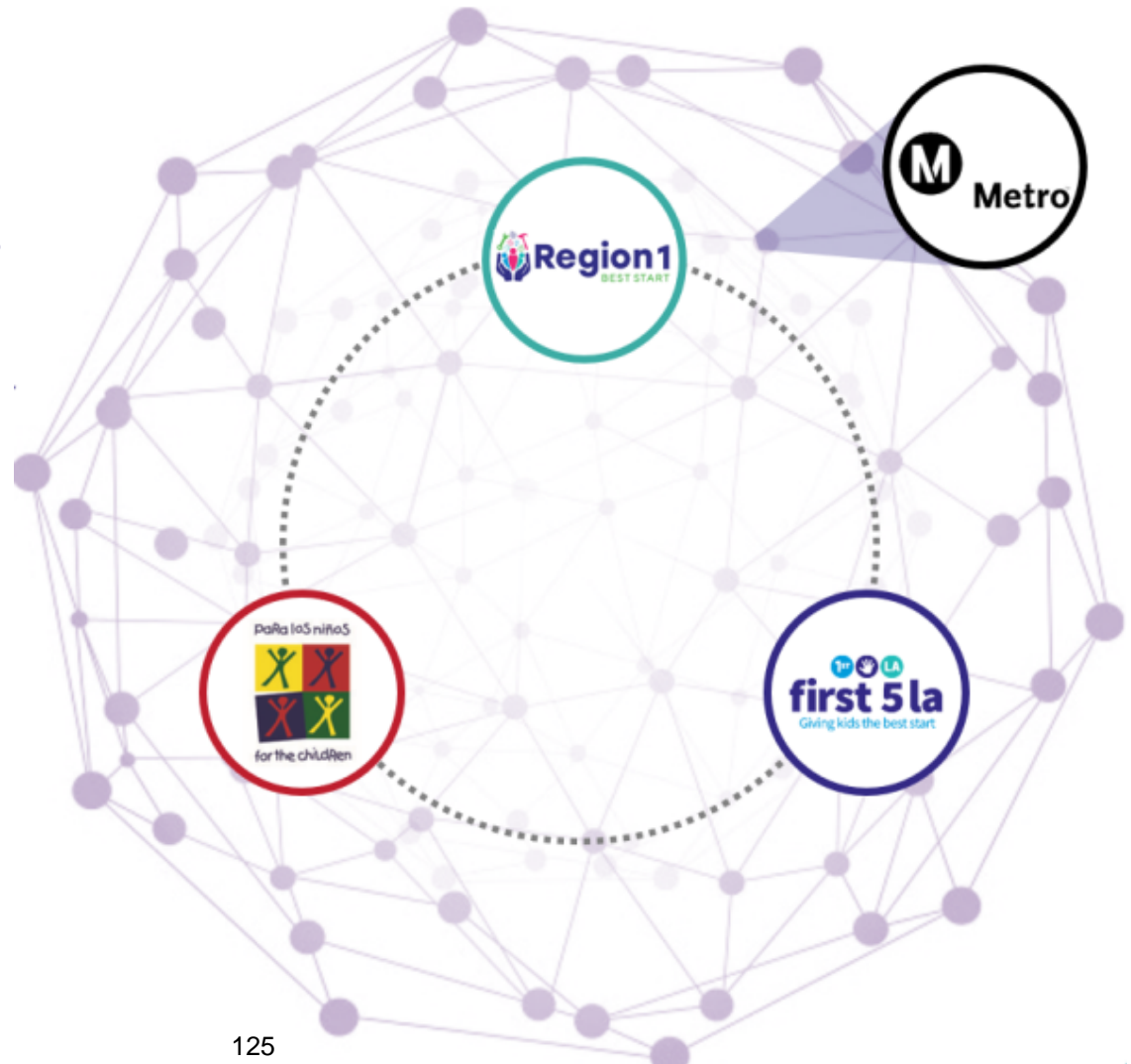
14

### First 5 LA as a **Catalyst**

- **Flexibility** in budget to address community need through new partnerships
- **Continuity** in funding year-to-year

### First 5 LA as a **Connector**

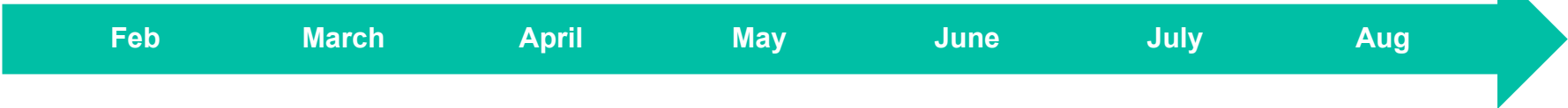
- **Connecting** RNGs to LA Metro to pilot and scale food delivery project
- RNGs developing **relationships** with county partners



125

## Direct Supports Timeline

2020

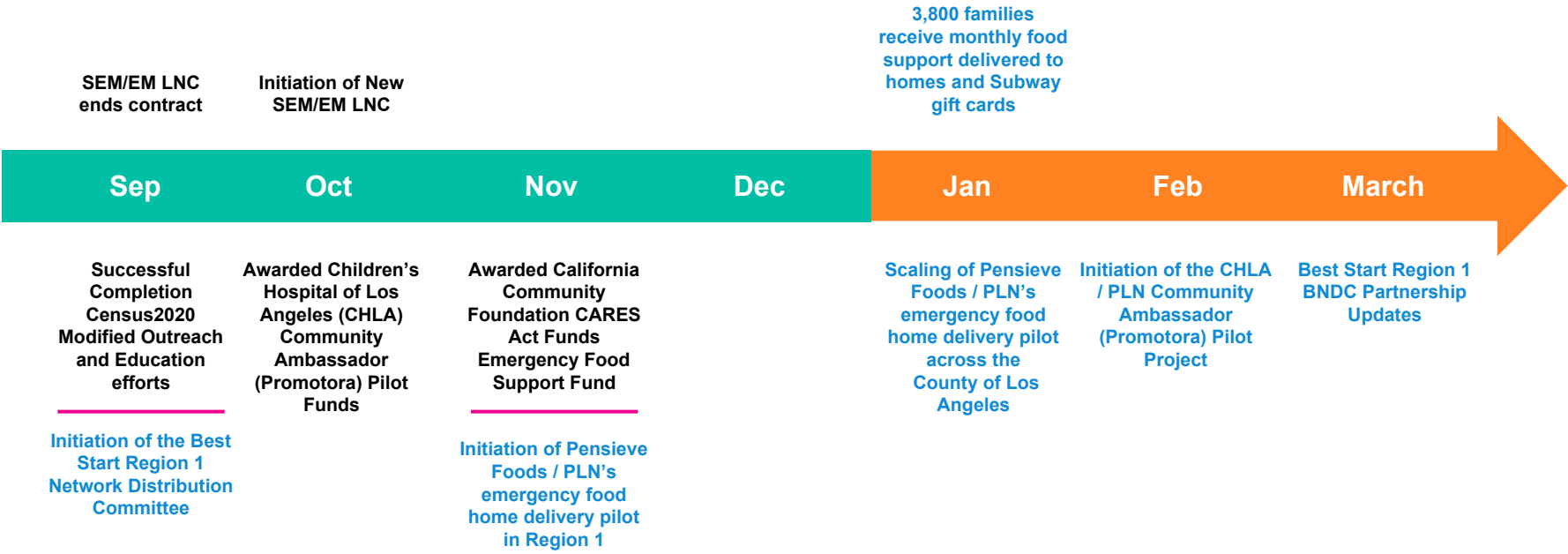


Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug
Region Wide Strategic Planning	<p><b>City &amp; County Stay at Home Orders</b></p> <p>Assessed / Mobilization of New and Existing CBO Partners for Exploration of fit as Network Distribution Hub</p>	<p><b>Initiation of 18 Regional Network Distribution Hubs</b></p> <p>PLN identifies vendors (food/PPE)</p> <p>F5LA, LA Metro Transportation and PLN collaborate to design the emergency home delivery</p>	<p><b>Initiation of Census 2020 modified outreach and education efforts</b></p> <p>Initiation of LA Metro / PLN's Transportation's emergency home delivery pilot in Metro LA</p>	<p><b>Scaling of LA Metro / PLN's Transportation emergency home delivery pilot across Region 1</b></p>	<p><b>Awarded a Robert Wood John Foundation Grant for our Regional COVID-19 Response and Recovery Efforts</b></p>	<p><b>Awarded a Momentum Fund Grant for our Regional COVID-19 Response and Recovery Efforts</b></p>

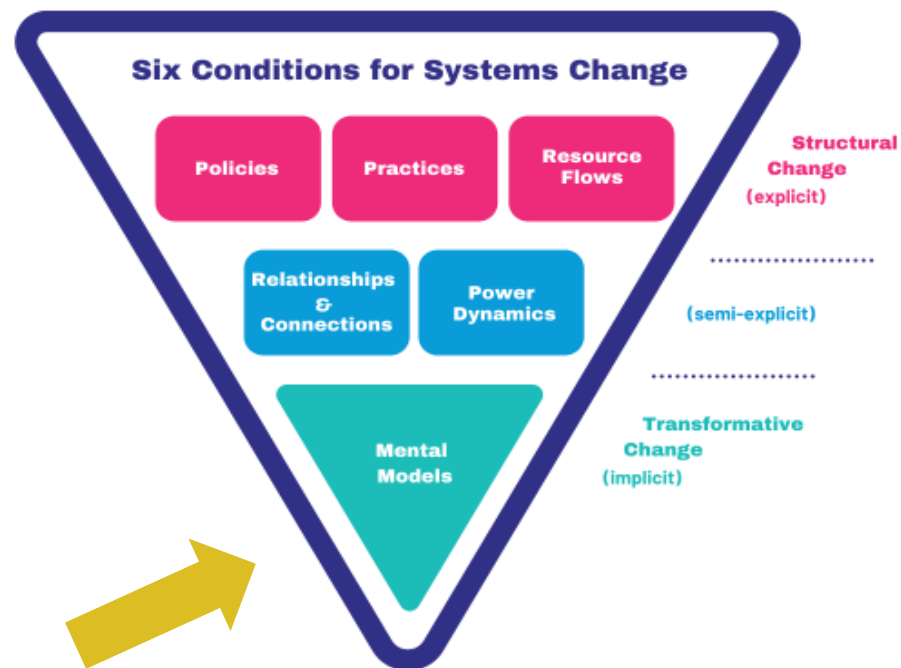
## Systems Change Timeline

**Direct Supports  
Timeline**

2021

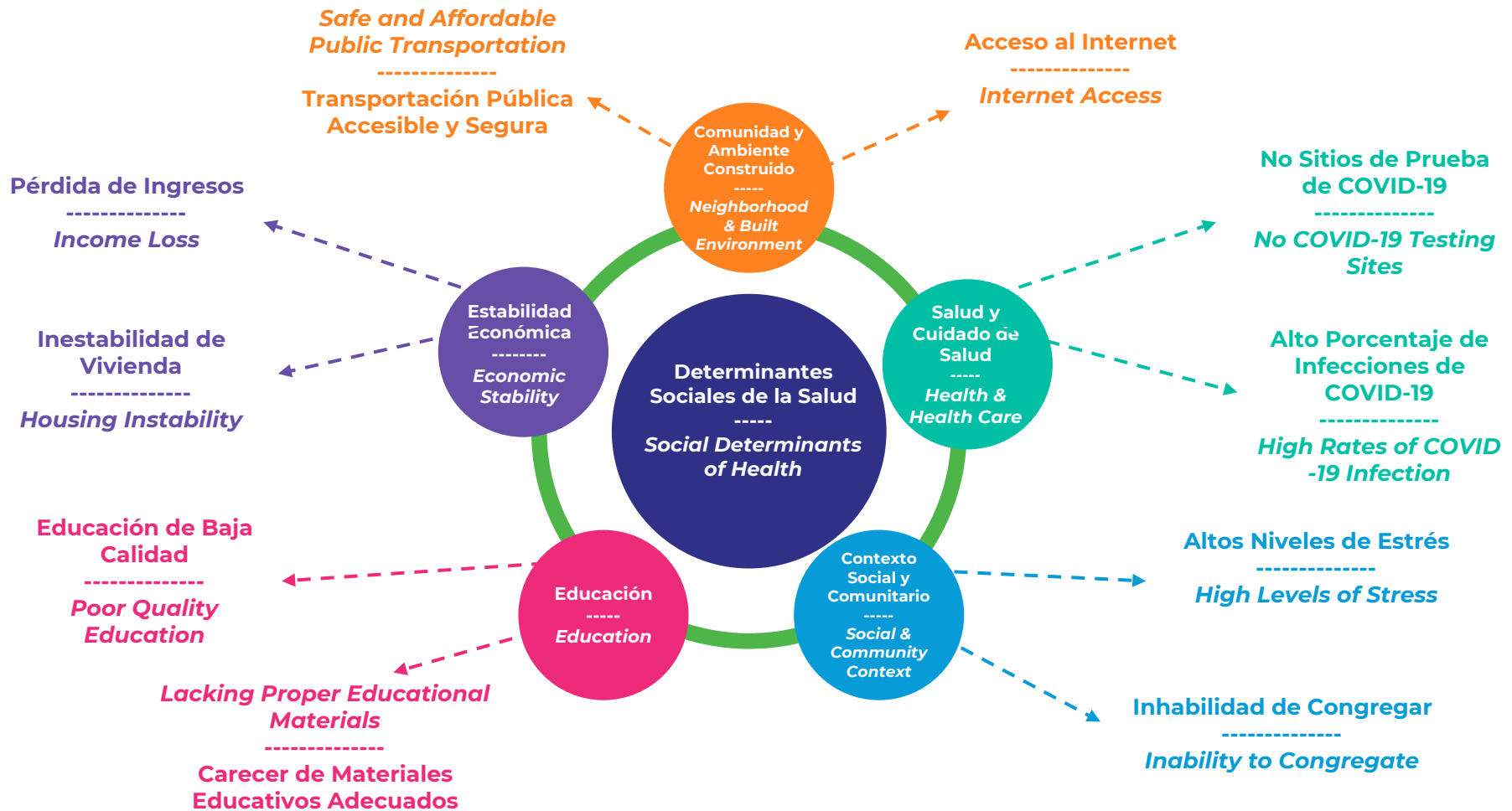


**Systems Change  
Timeline**



# Determinantes Sociales de la Salud

## Social Determinants of Health



## **Carta Comunitaria de Derechos Humanos para el Cambio de Sistemas e Impulso de Equidad y Justicia de Best Start Región 1**

- **Fecha: Sábado, 24 de abril de 2021**
- **Horario: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm**
- **Invitación a seguir**

## ***Best Start Region 1 Driving Equity and Justice Community Bill of Human Rights for Systems Change***

- ***Date: Saturday, April 24, 2021***
- ***Time: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm***
- ***Invitation to Follow***



**¿Preguntas?**

***Questions?***

# Memo

To: First 5 LA Board of Commissioners

From: First 5 LA Office of Data for Action

Date: February 19, 2021

Subject: **Strengthening Welcome Baby Virtual Visits Study Through Data Partnership: Update and Cost Implications**

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**SUBJECT:** Strengthening Welcome Baby Virtual Visits Study Through Data Partnership: Update and Cost Implications

**Where we have been:** At the October 29, 2020 Special Board/Program and Planning Committee Meeting, staff shared with the Board of Commissioners how First 5 LA's approach to home visiting data and learning was evolving in response to the challenges – and opportunities – posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This included shifting the focus of the Welcome Baby Program evaluation from a randomized control trial (RCT) centered on building the evidence base of the Welcome Baby Program's impact to addressing knowledge gaps on best practices and outcomes of virtual visits through the Welcome Baby Virtual Visits Study. These shifts leverage the existing study infrastructure and will result in insights into maternal and child outcomes of virtual visits, including variations in outcomes by race/ethnicity, prenatal enrollment status, and risk-level. Additionally, the revised study will provide insights that will guide further programmatic refinements. This memo provides an update progress to minimize the study's limitations and cost implications associated with the study's evolution.

**Where we are:** In order to best support families through the COVID-19 pandemic, First 5 LA is dedicated to providing Welcome Baby Program services to as many families as possible. As having a control group would be at odds with this commitment, the Welcome Baby Virtual Visits Study seeks to leverage national and regional data as benchmarks for comparing maternal and child outcomes. This shift, however, is not without its drawbacks. Most benchmark data, especially at the national level, were collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and do not capture current conditions. Additionally, even small variations in how data is collected can impact comparability, which limits the extent to which benchmark data can provide accurate comparisons. Finally, the Welcome Baby Virtual Visits Study explores nuanced outcomes for which L.A. County benchmark data is not available.

To address these limitations, First 5 LA staff have brokered a partnership between the Welcome Baby Program evaluation team from American Institutes for Research (AIR) and First 5 LA's strategic partner for the WIC Data Mining Partnership, Public Health Foundation Enterprise, Inc. (PHFE WIC; a program of Heluna Health). These two data partners will collaborate to gather comparison data from a sample of 300 clients participating in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). As such, these efforts are consistent with the goals of the strategic partnership with PHFE WIC to inform communication and system change strategies for home visiting and to better understand health outcomes and factors associated with the well-being experiences of WIC families, approved by the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners in June 2020.

## Strengthening Welcome Baby Study Through Data Partnership

Feb. 19, 21

Page 2 of 2

To recruit WIC clients for the Welcome Baby Virtual Visits Study, PHFE WIC will re-contact 2020 L.A. County WIC Survey respondents, which included over 300 pregnant mothers that have agreed to be contacted in the future for follow-up study. Data collection will then occur concurrently with 560 Welcome Baby Program clients and 300 WIC clients using the same study tools to measure maternal and child outcomes over an 18-month period.

This approach provides comprehensive comparison data for the Welcome Baby Virtual Visits Study that is relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic era and allows for flexibility if additional outcomes of interest emerge over the course of the study. Additionally, this approach provides further insights into the experiences of WIC families during the pandemic and how these may be affecting child development.

While this approach addresses many of the limitations of benchmark data, an important limitation to consider is that the WIC Comparison Sample does not provide the same level of comparability that would be achieved with a randomly assigned comparison group. It is possible that differences in outcomes may be due to possible differences between the WIC population and the Welcome Baby population that are not accounted for through matching on key demographics. However, including the WIC Comparison sample in the Welcome Baby Virtual Visits Study mitigates many of the challenges of conducting a study during the COVID-19 pandemic and maximizes the learnings about the experiences of L.A. County families.

The evolution of the Welcome Baby evaluation, from the revision of the study design to the addition of the WIC Comparison Sample, have impacted the projected cost of the study. The projected cost to complete the Welcome Baby Impact Study was \$3,089,161. The projected cost to complete the Welcome Baby Virtual Visits Study is \$3,374,718 over two and a half years, which includes \$400,000 for the addition of the WIC Comparison sample.

**Where we are going:** Staff is working to amend Fiscal Year 2020-2021 contracts with American Institutes for Research (AIR) and Public Health Foundation Enterprises, Inc. (PHFE WIC) to reflect the revised study approach, and plan to return to the Board of Commissioners for support of the contract amendment exceeding \$75,000 at the March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Board of Commissioners meeting. In the meantime, both teams engaged in the Welcome Baby Virtual Visits Study are finalizing IRB approvals to launch data collection in late March and will continue through March 2023. Throughout FY 21-22, the study will produce a series of implementation memos to inform refinements to Welcome Baby virtual home visits. Additionally, interim outcome memos are expected in FY22-23, with a final report of all study findings anticipated in October 2023.