



AGENDA ITEM: 11

DATE OF MEETING: JANUARY 28, 2016

ACTION: _____

INFORMATION: X

FIRST 5 TOWN HALL PROGRAM

SUMMARY

Staff will provide an update on First 5 California's (F5CA) plans to provide one-time funding to several select First 5 county commissions to organize and execute town hall events in 2016. Staff also will provide an update on F5CA's investment in and development of a publicly available town hall toolkit and targeted technical assistance for interested First 5 county commissions. The intent of this program is to build public will for the First 5 movement through grassroots engagement with families, communities, and policymakers to support children ages 0 to 5 and their families.

BACKGROUND

Town hall forums provide a traditional and effective stage for public engagement on policy issues. Town halls provide the opportunity to engage elected officials and the general public on the importance of specific topics. However, issue-based town hall meetings with elected official and stakeholder attendees can be complex events to plan and successfully execute.

F5CA staff is working with the First 5 Association to develop a comprehensive "First 5 Town Hall Toolkit" to aid interested First 5 county commissions in successfully engaging in local outreach, planning, and execution of First 5 town hall events, including:

- 1) Development and dissemination of an online Toolkit that includes town hall issue papers and step-by-step instructions on how to execute a successful town hall event
- 2) Technical assistance (TA) to aid in implementing the Toolkit and executing First 5 town hall events
- 3) One-time funding offered to select county commissions to support the costs of related local public relations outreach efforts and execution of First 5 town hall events

The Toolkit and TA are intended to serve as a support for interested First 5 county commissions to engage with their local, state, and federal elected officials and build public will for the First 5 mission, efforts, and investments at the local level.

This online Toolkit will provide First 5 county commissions, elected officials, and their local partners with the research, issue information, and organizational advice and supports that are crucial for designing and executing an effective town hall meeting.

By supporting First 5 partners with the tools to engage policymakers and build influential local constituencies, this strategy will advance a shared children's policy agenda with the First 5 Association and county commissions, and will serve to compel policymakers' commitment and accountability to children's issues and programs.

Toolkit Development, Dissemination, and Technical Support

The publicly available, web-based Toolkit and corresponding supports will be reflective of collective state-level policy goals, issues, and messaging that serve to advance shared goals between First 5 California's Policy Agenda and the First 5 Association's Policy Agenda. Additionally, it will enable participants to customize materials with local data and parent and provider testimonials that provide a local lens to this larger agenda. Development of Toolkit materials will be done in close coordination with the First 5 Association to align with its policy priorities and grassroots media efforts.

Technical support will be offered to select First 5 county commissions interested in receiving additional hands-on support to implement the Toolkit and to plan and execute town hall events. First 5 county commissions will determine their individual level of interest and engagement in accessing these resources based on what works best locally. Technical assistance may include webinars, in-person workshops, and/or one-on-one county-specific consultations, or a combination thereof, based on continued feedback from the First 5 Association.

F5CA staff will oversee the development of both the Toolkit and related technical assistance, and monitor the services provided, including evaluating the need for and utilization of these resources by First 5 county commissions. Staff will continue to work closely with the First 5 Association in the development of Toolkit materials and the design of technical assistance to ensure both are most appropriate for the needs of First 5 county commissions.

PROPOSAL

Funding for Outreach, Planning, and Execution of Town Hall Events

One of the barriers to successful town hall planning, as identified by local stakeholders, is cost. To alleviate these cost concerns and to ensure First 5 county commissions can implement this important strategy within their communities, F5CA will establish a funding program to assist select First 5 county commissions with the costs of outreach, planning, and execution of town hall events in 2016.

F5CA will provide one-time funding of \$5,000–\$8,000 for no more than 10 selected First 5 county commissions, or multi-county partnerships. A total of no more than \$80,000 in F5CA investment in 2016 will be used for this purpose.

Select counties will be geographically located within a set number of target legislative and/or congressional districts, so as to strategically target this funding to maximize potential statewide impact.

The types of expenditures allowable through these one-time grants will be those typical and crucial expenses in a town hall format, including, but not limited to:

- Day-of facilities rentals
- Staff time and/or subcontractors
- Interpreters
- Childcare for town hall attendees
- Media and promotional expenses
- Event materials

Staff will continue to work with the First 5 Association to determine the target legislative districts that will define the select First 5 county commissions, and to design funding in a manner that ensures eligible county commissions are appropriately resourced and have clear expectations in order to meet the program's stated goals.

CONCLUSION

The Strategic Plan Advisory Committee convened and discussed this proposal at length, and agreed on the importance of implementing this strategy, including that it is appropriate for F5CA staff to move forward in executing this one-time program.

F5CA staff's goal is to develop eligibility criteria in collaboration with the First 5 Association as soon as possible, and provide select county commissions with town hall funding as early as late spring 2016.