

**Annual Report**  
**AR-3 Evaluation Summary**  
**Example: First 5 Sonoma County**

**Evaluation Activities Completed**

During FY 2013-14, First 5 Sonoma County has worked with the Commission's local evaluator, Learning for Action (LFA), to implement the evaluation framework for the 2011-15 Strategic Plan. Specific activities included:

- 1) Producing evaluation reports for 7 funded programs:
  - Mental Health Services Act: Prevention and Early Intervention 0-5,
  - Watch Me Grow,
  - VIP Preschool Scholarships,
  - WIC Dental Days,
  - Behavioral Consultation Project,
  - CARES Plus
  - Worksite Held Employee English Learning (WHEEL) Plus Program.

The majority of these evaluations reflected data from the 2012-13 fiscal year, although some also covered data from the 2013-14 fiscal year. These reports were based on previously-developed comprehensive evaluation plans, called Pathways to Results. Each Pathway maps the grantee's strategies and activities (as laid out in their SOW) to corresponding outputs, outcomes, specific targets, measurement tools, and a timeline for collecting and reporting on those data. Grantee staff members are responsible for collecting and entering evaluation data, and their Pathway helps to ensure a shared understanding about the expectations around data collection and reporting. The reports based off these Pathways were shared with grantees, First 5 Sonoma County Staff, First 5 Sonoma County evaluation committee members, and First 5 Sonoma County commission members. Reports are also posted on First 5 Sonoma County's website.

- 2) Creating, updating, and revising evaluation plans: Each First 5 Sonoma County grantee has an evaluation plan called Pathways to Results. In FY 2013-14, LFA and First 5 worked with grantees to revise previously-established Pathways for several grantees. These revisions reflected learnings and experience, and made the evaluation plans a better fit for both the grantees and First 5. In addition, these revisions helped First 5 staff prepare to add the grantees to their new data system (Persimmony). LFA, First 5, and grantee staff also worked together to create an evaluation plan for a relatively new grantee: Drug Free Babies.

- 3) Conducting a Triple P provider survey: In the fall of 2013, LFA conducted a survey of Triple P providers to better understand their experience and needs. Over 100 providers responded to the survey.

- 4) Conducting a Stakeholder Survey: LFA developed a survey that measured stakeholders' perceptions of First 5 Sonoma County's impact in the community,

including First 5's impact within each Strategic Plan goal area (health, family support, and early care and education) as well as First 5's visibility in the community. In November 2013, it was sent to 106 stakeholders. Sixty-four individuals responded, for a response rate of 60%. Respondents span all stakeholder groups, including former and current grantees, First 5 Commissioners, government supported agencies, community-based organizations, community partners, funders, policymakers, and other community leaders. The results were used to inform the Annual Impact Report.

5) Maintaining the Systems Change Activity Tracking Tool and facilitating reflection meeting: First 5 staff regularly document and quantify their engagement in various systems change activities, such as meetings or trainings, using an online tracking tool designed by LFA. LFA facilitated a meeting where staff reflected on what they had documented. The data from the tool and the information from the reflection meeting served as a data source for the Annual Impact Report.

6) Producing an Annual Impact Report: The Annual Impact Report (AIR) for FY 2012-13 was shared with the First 5 Sonoma County evaluation committee and the First 5 Sonoma County commission. This report relied on:

- Interviews with First 5 Sonoma County staff,
- Stakeholder Survey (described above),
- Systems Change Activity Tracking Tool data and reflection meeting (described above),
- Grantee reports,
- State Annual Report fiscal and demographic data
- Publicly available data

### **Evaluation Findings Reported**

LFA has worked with First 5 and grantee staff to complete program evaluations based on services delivered in FY 2013-14. Key findings from evaluations completed thus far are highlighted below:

#### **CARES Plus:**

- Staff were able to increase enrollment from 131 in FY 2012-13 to 199 in FY 2013-14.

#### **Behavioral Consultation Project:**

- 94% of children at risk of disenrollment were retained at case closure.
- 93% of providers report that their program will continue using strategies from the consultation in their ongoing work with children and families.
- 85% of families were referred to support services, including all 11 families exposed to alcohol and substance abuse issues who were referred or connected to relevant services.

#### **MHSA PEI 0-5:**

- Almost 5,000 individuals were served (4,914) were served under MHSA PEI 0-5.
- Over 80% of parents who rated their children as having a high frequency of problem behaviors, and/or indicated that they see their children's behavior as a substantial

problem, rated their children as substantially improved after participation in Triple P – Positive Parenting Program®.

#### Watch Me Grow:

-Of the children who were enrolled in the Home Visiting program, 66% improved after receiving services. The remaining 34% were connected with additional services. For those enrolled in the Wee Play and Say program, 69% improved and the remaining 31% were referred to further services.

#### Value in Preschool:

-4Cs has registered as an Accreditation Facilitation Project Site through the NAEYC, allowing them to provide accreditation to early childhood programs that meet a standard of quality.

-27 children whose families could otherwise not afford preschool received a VIP scholarship and now have an opportunity to have a high quality preschool experience. All 134 children who attended VIP programs have benefitted from the VIP quality improvement activities.

#### WHEEL Plus:

-22 participating businesses adopted and implemented new family-friendly policies.

-The North Bay Business Journal has agreed to add questions regarding family-friendly workplaces to the Best Places to Work survey and will highlight a family-friendly local business at their upcoming annual recognition event.

In addition to these programmatic evaluations, LFA produced an Annual Impact Report in April of 2014. The focus of that report was on First 5 Sonoma County's work to create system-level change for children 0 to 5. In that report, stakeholders reported that they have seen First 5 generate a significant positive impact in the community. They also highlighted three areas in which First 5 could improve: more communication with the broad community, better support for grantees as they learn to work with data, and help identifying alternative funding streams.

### **Policy Impact of Evaluation Results**

All of the reports profiled above, from the programmatic evaluations to the Annual Impact Report, were shared and discussed with the First 5 Sonoma County Evaluation Committee. All reports were then included in the First 5 Sonoma County Commissioner's packets, and a subset of reports were also presented at Commission meetings (as determined by the Evaluation Committee). First 5 Sonoma County invited the relevant grantees to both the Evaluation Committee meeting and the Commission meeting where the report about their program was discussed.

As a result of these reports and presentations, First 5 Sonoma County made several changes. These included revising the scope of several programs, re-thinking the evaluation approach for a few programs, and asking some grantees to provide more information about their programs. For example, the evaluation of Watch Me Grow

highlighted the connections/relationships between WMG and other community support services. In order to better understand the role the program plays in the system of care, we will be doing a network analysis in 14/15. This analysis will pilot an analytic approach to systems analysis that we hope to use in other areas of our systems-focused work. In addition, program-level evaluation report findings were a factor in 14/15 funding allocation planning.

LFA presented the Annual Impact Report to the First 5 Sonoma County Commission in June 2014. In addition to the findings already shared in the previous question, the report included a section on engaging with the community and with community leaders (including policymakers). Highlights from that section include the following First 5 accomplishments:

- 30 meetings held with community leaders and/or policymakers regarding the importance of investing in early childhood development
- 15 new community allies in support of First 5-funded priorities
- 21 meetings with 14 community funders to discuss opportunities for joint- or leveraged-funding
- \$1.9 million leveraged to support First 5 priorities and funded programs
- 88% of grantees report that First 5 Sonoma County is a highly approachable funder, and 88% also report that they are highly responsive
- 96% of grantees have increased the effectiveness of their funded program through their partnership with First 5 Sonoma County
- 95% of stakeholders report that First 5's work has contributed to structural or policy-level changes in the county

The Annual Impact Report also contained specific suggestions for how to increase First 5's contact with community members. They included:

- Broadening its geographical presence to communities that have historically been less served by First 5 funding
- Finding ways to communicate with the broader public, including using social media

The Commission appreciated these insights and will use them to inform their communication and community engagement strategies.