



## **Executive Director Report – October 30, 2024**

This report provides programmatic and administrative updates about key activities First 5 California (F5CA) staff have engaged in since the August 22, 2024, Commission Meeting. Program updates include relevant highlights, rather than a summary of all staff work, and are framed by the [Strategic Priority Areas](#) and [Theory of Change System Levers](#).

**Please note:** Items that will be presented as Action or Information Items during the October 30, 2024, Commission Meeting will not be included in the report below.

### **2025-2028 Strategic Plan Development**

As a next step in our strategic plan development process, Arabella Advisors will conduct a series of six one-hour focus groups with external partners in early October. Specifically, the Arabella team will meet with advocacy organizations, legislative and government bodies, parent and practitioner groups, researchers, state agencies, and First 5 county commissions and the First 5 Association. In these focus groups, Arabella will collect partners' insights and feedback on what they see as F5CA's role in advancing the North Star and Audacious Goal, what role(s) they see our partner and peer organizations playing in advancing the North Star and Audacious Goal, what opportunities and potential risks they see for our agency in the next four years, and how they would advise us to use our non-financial assets and resources to advance our goals.

The F5CA leadership team and Executive Advisory Committee will continue to work closely with the Arabella team in Q4 to build out a draft of the 2025–2028 strategic plan to share with the full Commission in early 2025.

### **First 5 County Playbook**

In light of the challenges of First 5 Glenn and the presentation we heard at the May Commission meeting, as well as the Association presentation on declining revenue at the January meeting, F5CA has contracted with Cathy Senderling-McDonald from Catbird Strategies to produce a playbook to help local First 5 commissions understand and maximize funding flexibilities and opportunities. This playbook will serve as a resource to local commissions on ways to use Proposition 10 funds to leverage state and federal funding opportunities that support First 5 goals and objectives, and open partnership opportunities with other local agencies and departments that serve children ages 0 to 5

and their parents and caregivers.

Her expertise will provide the tools to guide the 58 First 5 County Commissions in leveraging funds to survive declining revenue streams, for the purpose of impact and outcomes for children ages 0-5 and their families. Ms. Senderling-McDonald's work is near complete, with the playbook slated to be finalized and shared in coming weeks.

## Program Update

The Program Innovation and Evaluation Division (PIED) has been working diligently to address amendments for our county partners. The following efforts are underway:

- **Small Population County Funding Augmentation** is working with counties to submit budget change requests for those who need to roll over unspent funds from FY 2023–24.
- **Home Visiting Regional Grants** are undergoing budget change requests for all nine regions for the last grant year. All amendments are expected to be done by November 2024 if not earlier. The Annual Performance Report for 23–24 was collected, pending submission from 1 region. We have begun analyzing and compiling the data for a summary report that will be shared with the Commission upon completion.
- **IMPACT Legacy** is working on fiscal year funding rollover amendments that are being processed as submitted. All the regions that have submitted accurate amendments have been executed, two regions are pending accurate submission to F5CA, and two regions will not be requesting amendments. Thus far all amendment submissions have been processed and executed within 60 days of submission.

## Amador Site Visit

On September 20, 2024, the PIED conducted our very first site visit to First 5 Amador County during “Messy Mornings”, an event Amador First 5 offers to families.

This visit was a chance for us to have face to face engagement with county members as well as recipients of the program. While visiting we had a tour of the facility and sat down for further discussion on the programs conducted through First 5 Amador and ways that Executive Director Nina Machado engages with the community inside the First 5 realm and beyond to reach the goals of bettering their communities and families. During the “Messy Mornings” event there were approximately 15-20 families with children (around 35 children) of all ages who were having a great time playing and learning outside with about six different stations focusing on different styles of play that help them with sensory motor skills.

## **Culturally Responsive and Equity Approach**

To further amplify and elongate culturally responsive and equity strategies, PIED welcomed on October 1, 2024, Lisbeth Woodington as a Multilingual Learner (MLL) Specialist. This position is funded by the Heising Simons Foundation and is hosted by Catalyst California. Lisbeth will collaborate with F5CA and CA Department of Social Services to support each department with the overall development of MLL strategies, professional development, development of materials and resources, and policy.

## **Annual Report Training and Listening Sessions**

Staff conducted the Annual Report web training in August. The focus of this training is to inform the county users of the changes made to the portal, assist users with how to report their data, and answer any questions users may have about the portal or functionality. F5CA held a one-day training on August 14 followed up by two in-office Q&A/ additional training sessions on August 27 and September 17 for those who may have missed any of the previous trainings. The initial training in August had approximately 10-15 attendees and the two supporting office hour sessions had approximately 5-8 attendees.

## **Personnel Update**

- David Huang has been hired as an Associate Governmental Program Analyst in the Contracts and Procurement Office as of August 5, 2024. David joins us from his last assignment at the Employment Development Department. A former grade-school teacher, David received his BA/BS in History and Management Science from UC San Diego. David will continue his State journey as an Acquisitions Analyst, Small Business Advocate, and State Agency Buy Recycled Campaign (SABRC) representative for F5CA.
- Barbara Schmitz has been hired as a Staff Services Manager I Specialist in the External and Governmental Affairs Office as of September 9, 2024. Barbara brings a wealth of experience and a strong background in policy and legislative affairs, making her a great addition to our team. Barbara offers over 12 years of experience in policy and legislative work. She has managed complex legislative portfolios, conducted research, and drafted bill analyses and policy guidance. Barbara has extensive experience working with various state departments, including the Department of Health Care Services and the Department of Public Health, where she supervised teams of policy analysts, oversaw complex projects, and engaged with stakeholders at all levels. She has also been instrumental in building and leading advocacy departments in previous roles, such as her time at the San Francisco SPCA, where she developed strategies to achieve key policy goals and facilitated public education through

organizing workshops. Barbara is known for her dedication, strategic thinking, and passion for making a difference through her work.

- Dr. Rudiel Fabian has been hired as a Research Scientist II in the PIED division as of October 1, 2024. Dr. Fabian will contribute to research and evaluation efforts aimed at improving early childhood outcomes across the state. With a strong focus on equity-driven research, Dr. Fabian brings extensive expertise in data analysis, program evaluation, and implementation science, supporting the development of evidence-based policies and initiatives that address disparities in early childhood health.

Dr. Fabian holds a PhD in Public Health from the University of California, Merced, with a specialization in health economics and behavioral health. He has significant research experience studying substance use among hard-to-reach populations. Throughout his career, Dr. Fabian has demonstrated a deep commitment to using research to inform public policy, collaborating closely with stakeholders to translate data into actionable insights. His work is driven by a passion for making a positive impact on the health and well-being of underserved communities.

- The following positions are in the process of being filled:
  - Research Scientist II in the PIED
  - Chief Counsel in the Executive Office
  - Staff Services Manager II in the Administration and Governance Office

## **First 5 California Commission Calendar**

As requested by the Commission, the proposed Commission Calendar will help with the planning and cadence for F5CA Commission meetings each year. Typically, the calendar will be brought forward in January of each year, but as the initial draft, it is being shared at the October meeting in this report for feedback.

### **January**

- Review Annual Commission Calendar (*will review at October meeting in 2024*)
- Annual Report Adoption
- Vice Chair Election
- Advisory Committee Assignments
- Governor's Budget Financial Update
- Update on Governor's January Budget Proposal
- FPPC Training – Form 700 Filing
- Annual Executive Director Evaluation (Closed Session)

## **May**

- Approval of Annual Report Guidelines
- Budget Study Session
- Update on Governor's May Revise

## **August**

- Program Dashboard
- Financial Update
- Evaluate Commission and Advisory Committee Meeting Cadence/Scope
- Mid-Year Executive Director Evaluation (Closed Session)

## **October**

- Program Review Continued
- Year-End Financial Update
- Approve 2025 Commission Meeting Dates
- Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Training