



October 28, 2021

INFORMATION ACTION

SUBJECT: RACE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION (REDI): BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL AND SYSTEM REDINESS CAPACITY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL TO ADDRESS OUTCOME INEQUITIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Strategic Priority Area I: Child Health

Goal: All children thrive by achieving optimal health prenatal through age 5.

Strategic Priority Area II: Child Development

Goal: All children birth through age 5 have high-quality, nurturing environments that ensure their learning readiness.

Strategic Priority Area III: Family Functioning

Goal: All families have the knowledge, skills, and resources to support their children's optimal development.

Strategic Priority Area IV: First 5 California Workplace Development and Culture

Value: Positive relationships and supportive culture.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

Melissa Stafford Jones, Executive Director, First 5 Association, and county commission executive directors will present REDI work being done at the local level and how a deeper connection can be made with First 5 California (F5CA) toward the shared goal of eliminating inequities. The purpose of this item is to:

- Increase State Commissioners' awareness and understanding of First 5 efforts at the local level to increase REDI capacity—within First 5 organizations and community early childhood systems—to advance shared goals of eliminating inequitable outcomes across California for young children.
- Highlight work occurring at the local level to build capacity at the individual leadership, organizational, and policy and systems change levels through a range of efforts, including incorporation of REDI constructs into training, policies and procedures, strategic planning, Commissioner-level efforts, community partnerships,

funding practices, parent and family engagement and influence, and systems redesign.

- Identify the connection and opportunity for deeper partnership between local level REDI work and F5CA toward the shared goal of eliminating inequitable outcomes for young children by building the systems and community conditions that support children and families to thrive.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

In October 2021, the First 5 Association released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a REDI consultant to help devise and implement a framework to increase the capacity of the First 5 Network to advance work addressing structural, policy, and systems-level inequities affecting young children, their families, and communities. The RFP development, review, and selection process included representatives from the First 5 Association, F5CA, and county commissions, which became the Core REDI Team (Core Team). The Core Team has been partnering with the consultant in carrying out the REDI reflection and learning effort. The firm Teng & Smith, Inc., was selected and began consulting in January 2021. F5CA contributed \$49,999.99 to support and partner in the REDI work through a contract with the First 5 Association.

The goal of the REDI work is for First 5 Network members to understand REDI concepts and constructs, increase their capacity to engage in REDI dialogues, have access and capability to use tools and supports to participate in REDI work in their local environments, and be prepared to engage in and lead work addressing systems-level inequities in collaboration with external partners.

In March, the Core Team and consultants drafted a mission and vision for the REDI work, as follows:

- *Mission:* To develop a foundation and framework for the First 5 Network to center racial equity, diversity, and inclusion (REDI in its mission to build early childhood systems and supports for California's families and children.
- *Vision:* Children live in a work where life outcomes are not determined by race or family income. Redi is embedded in all systems, structure, strategies, and practices within and across the First 5 Network and the extended ecosystem to ensure all children and families, especially those of color and those farthest from opportunities and access, reach their full potential.

The Core Team and consultants also developed a theory of change with short- and long-term outcomes for the First 5 Network, families and communities, and systems.

The consultants conducted 47 stakeholder interviews in April, including individuals from First 5 commissions, partner agencies, and organizations statewide. Findings are summarized in a report released May 2021. In general, stakeholders agreed the REDI work was timely, driven by national and local conversations regarding racial equity work,

and strong community voices advocating for change. Stakeholders also noted several challenges including lack of clarity about goals and strategies, lack of trust, some resistance, and systemic racism.

In July, the consultants piloted three leadership-oriented REDI sessions for Core Team members and additional invitees, including nine staff from F5CA. Through fall 2021, the curriculum will be delivered across the First 5 Network encouraging “courageous conversations,” providing practical tools, and offering individualized coaching and consulting on a one-on-one basis to help participants develop the skills and competencies associated with applying a REDI lens to policy development and systems change.

At the July 22, 2021, Commission Meeting, on behalf of the First 5 Network (county commissions, F5CA, and the First 5 Association), Executive Directors Melissa Stafford Jones and Camille Maben presented an overview of the REDI reflection and learning effort to build REDI knowledge and practice among and across all partners of the First 5 Network.

FISCAL DETAIL

As mentioned, F5CA contributed \$49,999.99 (from the Unallocated account) to support and partner in the REDI work through a contract with the First 5 Association for fiscal years 2020–21 and 2021–22.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Local First 5 Work to Advance Race, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion