



FIRST 5 ALAMEDA COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, April 24, 2025
9:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Members of the public may access the meeting via
Zoom Meeting ID: 844 9813 2129 Passcode: 203581T

First 5 Alameda County
1115 Atlantic Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501
Conference Room A

Teleconference Location:
Clarissa Doutherd
Marriott Cincinnati (Airport)
2935 Progress Drive
Hebron, Kentucky, USA 41048
Meeting Rm: International Room #1

Commissioners:

Chair: Cecilia Oregón, *Vice Chair:* Tomás A. Magaña M.D., Clarissa Doutherd, Andrea Ford, Nikki Fortunato Bas, Karina Moreno, Cathy Sandeen, Josh Thurman, Kimi Watkins-Tartt

Alternates: George Ayala, Cinthya Muñoz Ramos, Pamela Powell

1. Call to Order

Commission Chairperson Cecilia Oregón will call this meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

2. Public Comment

This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons desiring to address the Commission on any matter not on the agenda. Speakers are limited to three minutes except as otherwise ordered by the Chairperson.

3. Approve Commission Meeting Minutes

Recommended Action: Approve Commission Meeting Minutes from February 13, 2025 and March 17, 2025 meetings

- a. Commission Meeting Minutes February 13, 2025
- b. Commission Special Meeting Minutes March 17, 2025

4. Communication from Commissioners

5. Receive Executive Committee Report

6. Receive Staff Announcements

- a. General Staff Announcements

7. Receive Legislation and Public Policy Updates

Commission Meeting Agenda

April 24, 2025

Information about access:

Please contact Julia Otani at julia.otani@first5alameda.org or (510) 227- 6987 three business days in advance if you need special assistance or translation/interpretation support so we can make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility. We will swiftly resolve any requests for accommodation to resolve any doubt whatsoever in favor of accessibility.



- 8. Receive First 5 California Commission and First 5 Association Updates**
- 9. Ratify Revised Fiscal Year 2024-25 Contract Authorizations**
Recommended Action: Ratify the Revised Fiscal Year 2024-25 Contract Authorizations
- 10. Approve Fiscal Year 2024-25 Contract Authorizations**
Recommended Action: Approve the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Contract Authorizations
- 11. Approve First 5 California Fiscal Year 2023-24 Annual Report**
Recommended Action: Approve First 5 California Fiscal Year 2023-24 Annual Report
- 12. Receive Community Data Presentations**
 - a. Insights from Initial Family and Provider Surveys by Applied Survey Research
 - b. Insights from Measure C and Oakland Children's Initiative Community Listening Sessions Final Report by WestEd
- 13. Adjournment**



First 5 Alameda County Commission Meeting
February 13, 2025, 9:00 AM – 11:30 AM
Zoom Webinar Meeting ID: 818 9412 2486

Commissioners Present: Vice Chair Cecilia Oregón, Clarissa Doutherd, Nikki Fortunato Bas, Karina Moreno, Josh Thurman, Kimi Watkins-Tartt

Alternates Present: Pamela Powell

Not present: Andrea Ford, Tomás A. Magaña M.D.

First 5 Staff Present: Kristin Spanos, Vanessa Cedeño Geisner, Cally Martin, Ayano Ogawa, Steve Spiker, Diana Garcia, Anna Miera, Anne Morrison, Nick Zhou

Guest Presenter: Karl Meng, Chandler Asset Management

| AGENDA ITEM SPEAKER | DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS | ACTION | FOLLOW UP |
|---|--|---|-----------|
| 1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL | | | |
| C. Oregón | The Commission meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Oregón who gaveled in at 9:11 AM. Vice Chair Oregón shared that the meeting was being recorded and conducted roll call. Commissioners Oregón, Fortunato Bas, Thurman, Watkins-Tartt and Alternate Powell stated their names to indicate that they were present for the meeting. | None | None |
| 2. PUBLIC COMMENT | | | |
| C. Oregón | There was no public comment. | None | None |
| 3. APPROVE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 12, 2024 | | | |
| C. Oregón | [Attachment] Approval of Commission Meeting Minutes from December 12, 2024. Vice Chair Oregón asked if there was any public comment before taking a vote to approve. Vice Chair Oregón facilitated the vote to approve the Commission Meeting Minutes from December 12, 2024. | Motion: Kimi Watkins-Tartt Second: Josh Thurman Abstention: Nikki Fortunato Bas Motion passed. | None |
| 4. COMMUNICATION FROM COMMISSIONERS | | | |
| C. Oregón | There was no communication from Commissioners. | None | None |
| 5. RECEIVE STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS | | | |
| K. Spanos | [Attachment] a. Receive General Staff Report Ms. Spanos presented the Staff Announcements. | Commissioner Moreno arrived at 9:16 AM. Commissioner Doutherd arrived at 9:22 AM. | None |
| 6. RECEIVE LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC POLICY UPDATES | | | |
| D. Garcia | [Attachment] Ms. Garcia presented the Legislation and Public Policy Updates. | None | None |

| AGENDA ITEM SPEAKER | DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS | ACTION | FOLLOW UP |
|---|--|--|---|
| 7. ELECT CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2025 | | | |
| C. Oregón | [Attachment] Vice Chair Oregón asked the Commissioners for a nomination for Commission Chair and Vice Chair for calendar year 2025. Vice Chair Oregón asked if there was public comment before taking a vote to approve. Vice Chair Oregón facilitated the vote to approve the nomination of Cecilia Oregón as Commission Chair and Tomás Magaña as Vice Chair for calendar year 2025. | Motion: Kimi Watkins-Tartt Second: Clarissa Doutherd No Abstentions. Motion passed. | None |
| 8. APPROVE TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF A BUDGET POLICY PROVISION | | | |
| C. Martin | [Attachment] Ms. Martin presented the request to temporarily suspend the agency's Budget Policy provision requiring a two-step approval process for the current budget cycle. Vice Chair Oregón asked if there was public comment before taking a vote to approve. Vice Chair Oregón facilitated the vote to approve the temporary suspension of the agency's Budget Policy provision requiring a two-step approval process for the current budget cycle. | Motion: Kimi Watkins-Tartt Second: Clarissa Doutherd No Abstentions. Motion passed. | Staff will bring the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget forward for review at the May 29th Executive Committee meeting and for approval at the June 5th Commission meeting. |
| 9. APPROVE FISCAL YEAR 2024-25 MID-YEAR FINANCIAL REPORT AND PROPOSED BUDGET MODIFICATIONS | | | |
| N. Zhou | [Attachment] Mr. Zhou presented the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Mid-Year Financial Report and Proposed Budget Modifications. Vice Chair Oregón asked if there was public comment before taking a vote to approve. Vice Chair Oregón facilitated the vote to approve the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Mid-Year Financial Report and Proposed Budget Modifications. | Motion: Karina Moreno Second: Josh Thurman No Abstentions. Motion passed. | Staff will schedule an orientation for Commissioner Fortunato Bas on First 5's agency budget. |
| 10. APPROVE FISCAL YEAR 2024-25 CONTRACT AUTHORIZATIONS | | | |
| N. Zhou | [Attachment] Mr. Zhou presented the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Contract Authorizations. Vice Chair Oregón asked if there was public comment before taking a vote to approve. Vice Chair Oregón facilitated the vote to approve contracts with the following entities, subject to approval and appropriations of Measure C revenue by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors: American Institutes of Research (AIR), Community Child Care Council (4Cs) of Alameda County, Davis Street Community Center, Early Care and Education Pathways to Success (ECEPTS), Hively, School Readiness Consultants, Olson Remcho LLP, WestEd, Interpreters Unlimited, Iris Lin, and Hubbe, Inc. | Motion: Karina Moreno Second: Kimi Watkins-Tartt No Abstentions. Motion passed. | None |

| AGENDA ITEM SPEAKER | DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS | ACTION | FOLLOW UP |
|---|---|--|-----------|
| 10. APPROVE FISCAL YEAR 2024-25 CONTRACT AUTHORIZATIONS (Continued) | | | |
| | Vice Chair Oregón facilitated the vote to approve the contracts with BANANAS, Inc., subject to approval and appropriations of Measure C revenue by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors. | Motion: Kimi Watkins-Tartt Second: Nikki Fortunato Bas Abstention: Clarissa Doutherd Motion passed. | None |
| | Vice Chair Oregón facilitated the vote to approve the contracts with the following entities, subject to approval and appropriations of Measure C revenue by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors: Band Together Communications (formerly Joshua Steinberger) and Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF). | Motion: Kimi Watkins-Tartt Second: Nikki Fortunato Bas Abstention: Karina Moreno Motion passed. | None |
| 11. APPROVE FISCAL YEAR 2024-25 MID-YEAR INVESTMENT REPORT AND PRESENTATION | | | |
| N. Zhou K. Meng | [Attachment] Mr. Zhou presented the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Mid-Year Investment Report and introduced Karl Meng to present the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Mid-Year Investment Report Presentation. Vice Chair Oregón asked if there was public comment before taking a vote to approve. Vice Chair Oregón facilitated the vote to approve the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Mid-Year Investment Report. | Motion: Josh Thurman Second: Kimi Watkins-Tartt No Abstentions. Motion passed. | None |
| 12. RECEIVE CHILD CARE PATHWAYS COORDINATED ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT SYSTEM PRESENTATION | | | |
| A. Morrison A. Miera | [Attachment] Ms. Morrison and Ms. Miera presented the Child Care Pathways Coordinated Eligibility and Enrollment System Presentation. | None | None |
| 13. RECEIVE FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA COMMISSION AND FIRST 5 ASSOCIATION UPDATES | | | |
| K. Spanos | [Attachment] Ms. Spanos noted that the First 5 California Commission and First 5 Association Updates were included in the meeting packet as written updates. | None | None |
| 14. ADJOURNMENT | | | |
| C. Oregón | Vice Chair Oregón gavelled out and adjourned the meeting at 11:27 AM. | None | None |

Respectfully Submitted By: Julia Otani, Executive Assistant

**First 5 Alameda County Commission Special Meeting****March 17, 2025, 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM****Zoom Webinar Meeting ID: 885 8967 5897**

Commissioners Present: Chair Cecilia Oregón, Clarissa Doutherd, Andrea Ford, Supervisor Nikki Fortunato Bas, Karina Moreno, Kimi Watkins-Tartt

Alternates Present: Cinthya Muñoz Ramos

Not present: Tomás A. Magaña M.D., Josh Thurman

First 5 Staff Present: Kristin Spanos, Cally Martin, Ayano Ogawa, Vanessa Cedeño Geisner, Lisa Forti

Guest Present: James Harrison, Olson Remcho

| AGENDA ITEM SPEAKER | DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS | ACTION | FOLLOW UP |
|--|--|---|-----------|
| 1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL | | | |
| C. Oregón | The Commission meeting was called to order by Chair Oregón who gaveled in at 12:05 PM. Chair Oregón shared that the meeting was being recorded and conducted roll call. Commissioners Oregón, Doutherd, Ford, Fortunato Bas, and Moreno stated their names to indicate that they were present for the meeting. | None | None |
| 2. PUBLIC COMMENT | | | |
| C. Oregón | There was no public comment. | None | None |
| CLOSED SESSION: Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation (§ 54956.9(d)(2))& 54956.9 (e)(3) [Receipt of Written Communication from Threatening Litigation, Available for Inspection Pursuant to § 54957; Significant exposure to Litigation, Number of Potential Cases: 1] | | | |
| C. Oregón | Chair Oregón ask for any public comment for the Closed Session item. There was no public comment. Chair Oregón recessed the Commission into Closed Session in Conference Room B at 12:07 PM. | Commissioner Watkins-Tartt arrived at 12:07 PM. | None |
| OPEN SESSION | | | |
| C. Oregón | Chair Oregón reconvened the Commission in Open Session at 1:41 PM and announced there was nothing to report from the Commission's Closed Session. | None | None |
| 3. ADJOURNMENT | | | |
| C. Oregón | Chair Oregón gaveled out and adjourned the meeting at 1:42 PM. | None | None |

Respectfully Submitted By: Julia Otani, Executive Assistant



FIRST 5 ALAMEDA COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, April 17, 2025
11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

First 5 Alameda County
1115 Atlantic Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501
Conference Room E

Members of the public may access the meeting via
 Zoom Meeting ID: 897 4715 7647 Passcode: 773502

Commissioners:

Chair: Cecilia Oregón, *Vice Chair:* Tomás A. Magaña M.D., Supervisor Fortunato Bas

1. Public Comment

This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons desiring to address the Executive Committee on any matter not on the agenda. Speakers are limited to three minutes except as otherwise ordered by the Chairperson.

2. Receive Staff Announcements

- a. General Staff Announcements
- b. Legislation and Public Policy Updates
- c. CEO Contract Authorizations

3. Approve Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from December 5, 2024

Recommended Action: Approve Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from December 5, 2024

4. Approve Revisions to First 5 Employee Handbook

Recommended Action: Approve revisions to First 5 Employee Handbook

5. Approve Fiscal Year 2024-25 Contract Authorization

Recommended Action: Approve the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Contract Authorization

6. Recommend Approval of Fiscal Year 2024-25 Contract Authorizations to the Commission

Recommended Action: Recommend to the Commission approval of the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Contract Authorizations

7. Adjournment

Information about access:

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FY 2024-25 CEO-Approved Contracts List
CEO Contract Authorizations and Amendments

| Original Award, approved by Commission (June 20, 2024) | | | | | | | | New Contracts or Augmentations, approved by CEO (2/7/25-4/17/25) | | | Contractor Aggregate Amount | | |
|--|-----------------|---|---------------------|-------------------|---|------------|------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|--|---|--------------------------------|
| Strategy | Award Number | Contractor | Contract Start Date | Contract End Date | Original Description of Scope of Work | Amount | Previous CEO-Approved Augmentation | New Award, Amendment or Ancillary Amount | New Total Contract Amount | Description of New Contract or Added Scope of Work | Executive Committee Information Item Only >\$100,000 | Executive Committee Approval >\$200,000 | Commission Approval >\$300,000 |
| Communications | AS-CMC-2425-318 | Full Court Press Communications | 7/1/2024 | 6/30/2025 | Funding to develop communications strategies and materials to amplify the work of First 5's programs and policy advocacy. | \$ 38,800 | \$ 41,200 | \$ 60,000 | \$ 140,000 | Funding to increase hours to support website maintenance and additional communications support. | \$ 140,000 | N/A | N/A |
| Parent Partnership | PS-PAP-2425-316 | Camp in Common (dba Oakland Feather River Camp) | 7/1/2024 | 6/30/2025 | Funding to provide at least eight (8) sessions of family camp, including orientation, lodging, meals, transportation, equipment, and activities for families identified by First 5 Community Program partners. | \$ 160,000 | | \$ 35,000 | \$ 195,000 | Increased funding to support a one-time expenditure for operational equipment necessary to continue the gear lending library developed through First 5 programming and to fully fund transportation of First 5 campers. | \$ 195,000 | N/A | N/A |
| Planning | AS-PLN-2425-360 | Wellbrook | 12/13/2024 | 6/30/2025 | Funding to oversee implementation of the Provider Relief Grants and 'one-stop' grant facilitating, ensuring alignment with Measure C objectives, and managing the overall project plan using an implementation science framework. | \$ 73,500 | | \$ 100,000 | \$ 173,500 | Increase funding to support the extended implementation of the Provider Relief Grants and support implementation planning for Measure C. Continue to ensure alignment with Measure C objectives, and manage the overall project plans using an implementation science framework. | \$ 173,500 | N/A | N/A |
| | | | | | | \$ 272,300 | | \$ 195,000 | \$ 508,500 | | | | |



First 5 Alameda County Executive Committee Meeting
December 5, 2024, 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM
Zoom Webinar Meeting ID: 815 3890 6041

Commissioners Present: Chair: Renee Herzfeld, Tomás A. Magaña, M.D
 Commissioners Not Present: Vice Chair: Cecilia Oregón
 First 5 Staff Present: Kristin Spanos, Cally Martin, Vanessa Cedeño Geisner, Nick Zhou, Christine Hom, Detra Teal

| AGENDA ITEM SPEAKER | DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS | ACTION | FOLLOW UP |
|--|--|---|-----------|
| CALL TO ORDER | | | |
| R. Herzfeld | The meeting was called to order by Chair Herzfeld who gaveled in at 11:11 AM and stated that the meeting was being recorded. Commissioners Herzfeld and Magaña stated their names to indicate they were present for the meeting. | None | None |
| 1. PUBLIC COMMENT | | | |
| R. Herzfeld | There was one Public Comment by Daniel Johnson. | None | None |
| 2. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS | | | |
| K. Spanos | [Attachment] a. General Staff Announcements b. CEO Contract Authorizations The Staff Announcements and the two CEO contract authorizations were provided as written updates. | None | None |
| 3. APPROVE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM JUNE 11, 2024 | | | |
| R. Herzfeld | [Attachment] Chair Herzfeld asked if there was any public comment before taking a vote to approve. Chair Herzfeld facilitated the vote to approve the June 11, 2024 Executive Committee Meeting minutes. | Motion: Tomás Magaña Second: Renee Herzfeld No Abstentions. Motion passed. | None |
| 4. ADOPT THE 2025 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FINAL CALENDAR | | | |
| R. Herzfeld | [Attachment] Chair Herzfeld asked if there was any public comment before taking a vote to adopt. Chair Herzfeld facilitated the vote to adopt the 2025 Executive Committee Final Calendar. | Motion: Tomás Magaña Second: Renee Herzfeld No Abstentions. Motion passed. | None |
| 5. APPROVE ANNUAL REVISIONS TO GOVERNANCE POLICIES | | | |
| N. Zhou C. Hom | [Attachment] a. Financial Policies b. Technology Policies | Motion: Tomás Magaña Second: Renee Herzfeld No Abstentions. Motion passed. | None |

| AGENDA ITEM SPEAKER | DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS | ACTION | FOLLOW UP |
|--|--|---|---|
| 5. APPROVE ANNUAL REVISIONS TO GOVERNANCE POLICIES (Continued) | | | |
| N. Zhou C. Hom | [Attachment] Mr. Zhou presented the revisions to the Financial Policies and Ms. Hom presented the revisions to the Technology Policies. Chair Herzfeld asked if there was any public comment before taking a vote to approve. Chair Herzfeld facilitated the vote to approve the revisions to the Governance Policies. | | |
| 6. APPROVE FISCAL YEAR 2024-25 CONTRACT AUTHORIZATIONS | | | |
| N. Zhou | [Attachment] Mr. Zhou presented the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Contract Authorizations. Chair Herzfeld asked if there was any public comment before taking a vote to approve. Chair Herzfeld facilitated the vote to approve the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Contract Authorizations. | Motion: Tomás Magaña Second: Renee Herzfeld No Abstentions. Motion passed. | None |
| 7. APPROVE FISCAL YEAR 2024-25 CONTRACT AUTHORIZATION | | | |
| N. Zhou | [Attachment] Mr. Zhou presented the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Contract Authorization. Chair Herzfeld asked if there was any public comment before taking a vote to recommend. Chair Herzfeld facilitated the vote to recommend that the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Contract Authorization be brought to the Commission for approval. | Motion: Tomás Magaña Second: Renee Herzfeld No Abstentions. Motion passed. | The Fiscal Year 2024-25 Contract Authorization will be brought to the Commission for approval. |
| 8. APPROVE 2025 COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT (COLA) RECOMMENDATION | | | |
| N. Zhou | [Attachment] Mr. Zhou presented the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) Recommendation. Chair Herzfeld asked if there was any public comment before taking a vote to recommend. Chair Herzfeld facilitated the vote to recommend that the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) Recommendation be brought to the Commission for approval. | Motion: Tomás Magaña Second: Renee Herzfeld No Abstentions. Motion passed. | The Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) Recommendation will be brought to the Commission for approval. |
| 9. APPROVE REVISIONS TO EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK | | | |
| D. Teal | [Attachment] Ms. Teal presented the revisions to the Employee Handbook. Chair Herzfeld asked if there was any public comment before taking a vote to approve. Chair Herzfeld facilitated the vote to approve the revisions to the Employee Handbook. | Motion: Tomás Magaña Second: Renee Herzfeld No Abstentions. Motion passed. | None |
| 10. ADJOURNMENT | | | |
| R. Herzfeld | Chair Herzfeld gavelled out, and adjourned the meeting at 11:33 AM. | None | None |

Respectfully Submitted by: Julia Otani, Executive Assistant



To: First 5 Alameda County Executive Committee

From: Kristin Spanos, Chief Executive Officer
Cally Martin, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Detra Teal, Chief Human Resources Officer

Date: April 17, 2025

Subject: Employee Handbook Revisions

ACTION REQUESTED

To review and approve the revisions to the Employee Handbook.

BACKGROUND

First 5 Alameda County adopted Personnel Policies in May 2004 in preparation for separation from the County of Alameda. Since then, review of the Employee Handbook is conducted at least annually and periodically revisions are needed due to changes in practice or law. All significant policy revisions are listed on the change log at the end of the document.

The proposed changes identified in the Employee Handbook are as follows:

First 5 recommended changes:

- Page 10: **Health Insurance** – Updated language to reflect current practice that employees pay a percentage of the health insurance premium.
- Page 11: **Benefit Credit** – Removed language referencing “per calendar year” to address prorated amounts for new employees.
- Page 33: **Change Log** – Updated change log with noted changes.

FISCAL IMPACT


There is no fiscal impact.

AGENDA ITEM 4

RECOMMENDATION

First 5 Alameda County staff recommend that the Executive Committee approve the revisions to the Employee Handbook.

Submitted by:

Signed by:

4A13315680573415...
Detra Teal
Chief Human Resources Officer

Approved by:

DocuSigned by:

LB639B456154414...
Kristin Spanos
Chief Executive Officer

Reviewed by:

DocuSigned by:

F38237316EC4482...
Cally Martin
Deputy Chief Executive Officer

FIRST 5



Employee Handbook

Revised ~~December-April 2024~~2025

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Welcome

Welcome to employment with First 5 Alameda County (F5AC). Through the efforts of our employees, F5AC has established itself as a leading organization in our community and we are excited to have you join our team.

Our vision and mission, along with our strategic plan, guide our work. To ensure our continued success, all employees also need to understand, and comply with, our policies and procedures. This Handbook contains important F5AC information including a summary of our policies, benefits, and work expectations. We encourage you to use it as a reference throughout your employment with us.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask either your supervisor or our Human Resources team.

Sincerely,



Kristin Spanos, Chief Executive Officer

Our Vision

Every child in Alameda County will have optimal health, development and well-being to reach their greatest potential.

Our Mission

In partnership with the community, we support a county-wide continuous prevention and an early intervention system that promotes optimal health and development, narrows disparities and improves the lives of children aged 0 to 5 years and their families.

Part One: Introduction

This handbook is designed to help you familiarize yourself with important information about First 5 Alameda County ("F5AC"), and information regarding your own privileges and responsibilities as employees.

It is not possible to anticipate every situation that may occur in the workplace or to provide information that answers every possible question. Also, future circumstances may require changes in the policies, practices, and benefits described in this handbook. Accordingly, except for the principle of At-Will Employment relationship with its employees, F5AC reserves the right to modify, rescind, supplement, or revise any provision in this handbook. While F5AC makes reasonable efforts to provide you with advance notice of any modifications or revisions to the handbook and distributes updated information as revisions are made, advance notice of policy changes may not always be possible. Changes to policies apply to F5AC employees on their effective date.

This handbook is not intended to be a contract. The policies and procedures in this handbook are intended to, and do, replace all previous employee handbook policies, practices, and guidelines.

All employees are expected to comply with all policies in this handbook. Employees who fail to comply with any policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including immediate termination.

Any questions regarding the contents of this handbook may be addressed to your supervisor or to Human Resources.

At-Will Employment

Employment with F5AC is "at will." This means that the employment relationship is not for any specified period and can be terminated by either the employee or F5AC at any time with or without any particular reason and with or without cause. Nothing contained in these policies is intended to, or should be construed to, alter the at-

will relationship between F5AC and its employees. Although other terms, conditions and benefits of employment with F5AC may change, the at-will relationship of employment is one aspect that cannot be changed except by an agreement in writing with F5AC, signed by the CEO and by the employee.

Equal Opportunity

F5AC affords equal opportunity in all aspects of employment to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, religion (including religious dress or grooming), creed, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions), reproductive health decision-making, gender, national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, citizenship, age, physical or mental disabilities, color, marital status, registered domestic partner status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, medical condition, military or veteran status, exercise of rights under the Pregnancy Disability Leave Law or the California Family Rights Act, or any other basis protected by applicable law. This policy applies to all employees and applicants for employment, and extends to all phases of employment, including but not limited to recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, discharge or layoff, rehiring, compensation, and any benefits.

Reasonable Accommodation for Protected Disabilities

F5AC complies with the reasonable accommodation requirements of applicable law, including the obligation to engage in the interactive process to identify possible reasonable accommodations for employees and applicants with disabilities. Employees or applicants who wish to request a reasonable accommodation should make this request to Human Resources. Alternatively, employees may make their request to their direct supervisor, who will be responsible for communicating the request for accommodation to Human Resources.

Any complaints or concerns regarding reasonable accommodation should be directed promptly to Human Resources.

Policy Prohibiting Harassment & Discrimination

Harassment and discrimination in employment on the basis of sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical condition), reproductive health decision-making, gender, race, color, national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, citizenship, religion, creed, age, physical or mental disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, military or veteran status, marital status, registered domestic partner status, genetic information, or any other protected basis (collectively the "Protected Characteristics") is unlawful under federal and state law.

Every individual is entitled to work free of discrimination or harassment based on any Protected Characteristic. The law prohibits all employees (including coworkers, supervisors, and managers), as well as third parties with whom the employee comes into contact, from engaging in this impermissible conduct. Accordingly, F5AC does not tolerate discrimination or harassment in the workplace or in a work-related situation. Unlawful discrimination and harassment violate F5AC's rules of conduct.

Unlawful harassment in employment may take many different forms. Some examples are:

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory comments, slurs, or unwanted comments and jokes
- Visual conduct such as derogatory posters, cartoons, drawings, or gestures
- Physical conduct such as blocking normal movement, restraining, touching, or otherwise physically interfering with work of another individual
- Threatening or demanding that an individual submit to certain conduct or to perform certain actions in order to keep or get a job, to avoid some other loss, or as a condition of job benefits, security, or promotion
- Retaliation by any of the above means for having reported harassment or discrimination or having assisted another employee to report harassment or discrimination

Sexual harassment under these laws includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Internal Complaint Procedure

Discrimination and harassment in employment are not tolerated. In addition, F5AC prohibits retaliation for having made a report, and/or otherwise participating in the reporting or investigative process, under this policy. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to, and including, immediate discharge.

Any individual who believes they are the object of harassment or discrimination on any prohibited basis, or who has observed such harassment or discrimination, or who believes they have been subjected to retaliation, should notify their supervisor, Human Resources, or any supervisor or manager. Supervisors who receive a complaint under this policy will report it to Human Resources. F5AC will conduct a fair, timely, and thorough investigation, and will do so in a confidential manner, to the extent possible. The investigation will be performed by an impartial and qualified individual and will be appropriately documented.

Following the investigation, F5AC will take such action as is warranted under the circumstances and will timely close the matter.

Agency Complaint Procedure

Both the state and federal governments have agencies whose purpose is to address unlawful discrimination in the workplace. If an individual who provides services to F5AC believes they have been harmed by an unlawful practice and is not satisfied with F5AC's response to the problem, they may file a written complaint with these agencies.

- For the State of California, the agency is called the Civil Rights Department ("CRD"). The local address for the CRD is 2218 Kausen Drive, #100, Elk Grove, California 95758, or www.dfeh.ca.gov.
- For the federal government, the agency is called the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC"). The local address for the EEOC is 1301 Clay Street, #1170, Oakland, California 94612, or www.eeoc.gov.

If, after an investigation and hearing, either of these agencies finds that unlawful discrimination has occurred, the injured employee may, depending on the circumstances, be entitled to reinstatement or promotion, with or without back pay.

Retaliation

Retaliation against any individual for making a report, or for participating in an investigation, under this policy is strictly prohibited. Individuals are protected by law and by F5AC policy from retaliation for opposing unlawful discriminatory practices, for filing an internal complaint under this policy or for filing a complaint with the DFEH or EEOC, or for otherwise participating in any proceedings conducted by F5AC under this policy and/or by either of these agencies.

Part Two: Employment and Hiring Policies

Work Eligibility

All employees hired on or after October 11, 2024, must complete a formal background check before employment commences.

Employees whose job duties require them to work alone with children are required to be fingerprinted before employment. Employees whose job requires them to work directly, in-person with families are required to pass a TB test or risk assessment before employment, and periodically, at least every 4 years during employment.

California law requires that certain employees must report suspected child abuse or neglect to a child protective agency. Consistent with F5AC's mission to improve the lives of children and their families, all F5AC employees who interact in person or regularly by phone with families and children are considered mandated reporters. Applicable employees are provided with training in these reporting procedures during their introductory period.

Introductory Period

The introductory period is typically the first one hundred eighty (180) days following the start of employment at F5AC. During this period, performance is carefully evaluated and a determination is made regarding whether the employee's job performance is sufficient to pass the introductory period and become a "regular" employee. An employee's successful completion of the introductory period does not alter the employee's "at-will" status and does not guarantee continued employment for any period. Under certain circumstances and at its sole discretion, F5AC may extend an employee's introductory period for up to an additional 90 days. The introductory period does not alter benefits or seniority. The introductory period is completed only when the employee is notified in writing and the introductory period is concluded.

Introductory Employees are employed "at-will" and employment may be terminated by you or by F5AC at any time, during your introductory period, for any reason or no reason, with or without cause, and with or without advance notice.

Employee Classifications

Employees are placed into classifications based on job description, job duties, and applicable wage/hour laws.

- **Exempt Employee:** An executive, administrative, or professional employee who is exempt from the overtime pay requirements of applicable law.
- **Non-exempt Employee:** An employee (generally paid by the hour) who is eligible to receive overtime pay for overtime hours worked.
- **Regular Full-Time Employee:** An employee who is regularly scheduled to work forty (40) hours or more per workweek, and who has successfully completed their introductory period.
- **Regular Part-Time Employee:** An employee who is regularly scheduled to work fewer than forty (40) hours per workweek, and who has successfully completed their introductory period.
- **Introductory Employee:** An employee who has not yet successfully completed their introductory period. (See Introductory Period policy, above.)
- **Temporary Employee:** An employee who is hired on a full- or part-time basis for a specified period, usually not to exceed twelve (12) months. This category includes interns.
- **On-Call Employee:** An employee who is not regularly scheduled to work a specified number of hours in any given workweek, but who is called to work on an as-needed basis.

All employees are classified as: 1) exempt or non-exempt; 2) as regular, introductory, temporary, or on-call; and 3) as part-time or full-time. These classifications determine, e.g., eligibility for benefits, compensatory time, and overtime.

Changes in employee classification may occur when a significant job change occurs (for example, a promotion or a change in work hours, etc.) that is intended to last for more than four (4) months.

Job Postings

F5AC attempts to find the most qualified candidates to fill position vacancies. This is generally accomplished through a combination of internal and external recruiting. Consideration is given to the advancement of current employees. Employees are encouraged to apply for promotions or transfers for which they believe they are qualified.

Open F5AC positions are posted through the Human Resources system and typically announced by F5AC email. Internal postings may occur simultaneously with external postings. F5AC determines when to fill positions from within or to hire externally.

Only Human Resources and the CEO have the authority to extend job offers. All employment offers are made in writing.

Hiring Relatives

Employees' or Commissioners' relatives may apply for F5AC positions. To avoid conflicts of interest, or appearances of conflicts, F5AC established these guidelines:

- Employees & Commissioners may not conduct a job interview or make employment-related decisions involving relatives.
- Employees may not supervise relatives under any circumstances.

The definition of "relative" for purposes of this policy is the employee's:

- Spouse/domestic partner
- Child, or spouse's or domestic partner's child (including natural child, legally adopted child, or a child for whom the employee, spouse, or domestic partner has been awarded court-appointed legal guardianship)
- Parent or spouse's/domestic partner's parent
- Sibling or sibling's spouse/domestic partner
- Any other individual living in the same household as the employee

It is expected that all employees, regardless of any relationship status, will conduct themselves professionally in their interactions with all other employees working at F5AC.

Part Three: Employee Development

Performance Management

Effective performance management is critical to our success. Employees need to know our expectations to carry out our strategic plan and achieve our mission. Supervisors are expected to provide ongoing, timely feedback and coaching to their team so that employees know how they are doing and to address any performance issues. Employees are expected to engage in dialogue with their supervisor to ensure a clear understanding of performance expectations and to identify any areas needing improvement.

Each employee's performance is formally reviewed at the end of the introductory period, and on an annual basis thereafter, to coincide with the approximate anniversary of the employee's start date with F5AC (or the anniversary date of any subsequent change in position). Performance review guidelines are provided by Human Resources for supervisors and employees to follow during the process.

Completed performance reviews signed by the employee, supervisor and Human Resources are placed in the employment file. Employees are provided a copy of their review and may comment on the review in writing.

If an employee's overall performance is rated as less than satisfactory, or if specific areas of performance are identified that need improvement, the supervisor may develop a written performance improvement plan for the employee. Performance improvement plans generally include specific goals for improvement along with strategies and timeline to improve performance. Supervisors are required to work with Human Resources when any performance issues are identified that may require a written improvement plan.

Professional Development

Staff Development and Training Program

F5AC encourages professional growth for all employees and has created the Staff Development and Training Program. The Development and Training team surveys staff on topics of interest and may engage local trainers to present trainings that support employees' desired growth. Any such trainings are typically offered free to employees and require supervisor approval in advance to attend. Supervisors are encouraged to allow employees to attend appropriate such trainings as work requirements allow.

Individual Professional Development

In addition to trainings through the Staff Development & Training program, employees may request up to \$500 per fiscal year for their own professional development. Employees may request to use these funds for

trainings, seminars, courses, webinars and conferences that are approved in advance by their supervisor but are not necessarily required for their particular job. Professional development books, CDs, other materials, licenses or certifications may also be requested by an employee from professional development funds.

Supervisor and Human Resources approval is required prior to payment or reimbursement of professional development funds. Detailed information about submitting professional development requests can be found in F5AC's Procedures Manual.

Part Four: Employee Benefits

Health Insurance

Employer Sponsored Health Insurance (medical, dental and vision insurance) is offered as part of the benefits package to regular and introductory full-time and part-time employees, who regularly work 20 hours or more per week. F5AC ~~and employees contributes pay a percent of to the premium cost of premiums for the eligible employees, as well as for their spouse/domestic partner and/or eligible dependents, up to an amount determined annually by F5AC. If an employee chooses health insurance that costs more than the employer contribution, the balance of the cost is paid by the employee~~ Employee contributions are made on a pre-tax basis through authorized payroll deductions as applicable by law. ~~The employer contribution is only used to offset the cost of the health premiums and is not used for other purposes, nor is it paid out to employees. F5AC's share of benefit costs for part-time employees is pro-rated to the percent of time the employee is regularly scheduled to work.~~

Temporary employees with temporary assignments lasting more than 60 days who regularly work 30 or more hours per week and their eligible family members are offered health insurance. For these eligible temporary employees, F5AC covers the same amount of employer share of premiums as it does for eligible regular and introductory employees. ~~Any balance of premium costs is paid by the eligible temporary employee on a pre-tax basis through authorized payroll deductions.~~ Temporary employees who work fewer than 30 hours per week and have temporary assignments lasting fewer than 60 days are not eligible for F5AC health insurance.

F5AC reserves the right to change medical, dental and vision insurance plans and benefits under those plans, to change the employer share of premium payments for the plans or change the amount it pays employees who opt out of the plan(s) (see "Payment in Lieu" section), with or without notice, consistent with any legal obligations it may have. In general, the employer share of premiums is determined prior to each Open Enrollment period.

For the purposes of health insurance coverage, "eligible dependent" is defined as spouse or domestic partner and eligible dependent children up to age 26.

A dependent child is covered for health insurance through the end of the month when they turn 26. Dependent Life Insurance covers full-time students up to age 24.

Flexible Spending Accounts

All regular employees may enroll in F5AC's flexible spending account ("FSA") program, which allows employees to set aside pre-tax dollars to be used for eligible medical or dependent care expenses. The IRS determines annual election limits and provides a comprehensive list of reimbursable expenses.

Carefully estimate your expenses when making an FSA election. FSA plans are "Use it or Lose it," and they reset each calendar year. The Health Care FSA allows employees to carry over up to the IRS Limit from one plan year to the next. If the balance exceeds the IRS limit at the end of the plan year, the account balance above the limit will be forfeited.

COBRA Insurance Continuation

If employees and covered dependents lose health insurance coverage due to certain qualifying events (including termination or reduction in hours), they may have certain rights to remain on the insurance plan at their own expense through COBRA.

Employees who experience a “qualifying event” (e.g., marriage, divorce, adoption) must provide written notice to Human Resources within 60 days after the qualifying event occurs.

Payment in Lieu

Regular employees may choose not to enroll in employer sponsored health insurance if they have proof of medical insurance through another source. Regular employees who confirm that they have coverage elsewhere will receive a “Payment in Lieu” of benefits at a set rate each pay period (pro-rated for part-time employees to the percent of time regularly scheduled to work). This amount is reviewed annually, generally before each Open Enrollment period, and F5AC reserves the right to change the amount. Payment in Lieu is subject to state and federal taxes.

Temporary employees who are offered health insurance and choose not to enroll are not eligible to receive a payment in lieu.

Benefit Credit

All regular and introductory, full-time employees receive ~~an annual~~ Benefit Credit ~~per calendar year~~. This amount is reviewed annually, generally prior to each Open Enrollment period, and F5AC reserves the right to change the amount of the Benefit Credit. Part-time, regular employees’ Benefit Credit is pro-rated based on the percent of time regularly scheduled to work. The Benefit Credit ~~may only be~~ applied to the cost of pre-tax plans.

After applying the Benefit Credit to pre-tax plans, the remaining balance is paid to employees as a taxable earning.

Life Insurance

Regular employees who work 20 or more hours per week are eligible to apply for employer-paid \$25,000 basic life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance benefits. Employees may also elect supplemental coverage at their own expense, with premium payments made on a pre-tax basis through authorized payroll deductions under F5AC’s Cafeteria (Section 125) Plan. Additionally, employees may elect supplemental life insurance for their spouse/domestic partner and/or dependent children at their own expense. These premiums are paid on an after-tax basis through payroll deduction.

Alameda County Employees Retirement Association (ACERA) Pension Plan

Regular and introductory, full-time employees are required to become members of ACERA, a defined benefit retirement pension plan for public employees in Alameda County.

- Participating employees are required to make a pre-tax retirement contribution to ACERA through payroll deduction. Contribution rates are set by ACERA and are subject to change each year.
- Part-time or temporary employees are not eligible to become members of ACERA.
- Full-time employees who convert to part-time or temporary status are required to continue ACERA membership.

457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan

Regular and introductory full-time and part-time employees may participate in the Alameda County Deferred Compensation Plan. Pre-tax or Roth (after-tax) contributions are made through authorized paycheck deduction. The plan offers a variety of investment options employees can select. Employees may enroll or change their deferred compensation election at any time during the year; however, any requested changes will not be effective until the month following receipt of the requested change.

Workers' Compensation

As required by law, F5AC pays for workers' compensation insurance to protect employees who are injured on the job. This insurance provides medical, surgical, and hospital treatment to qualifying employees, in addition to compensation for a percentage of loss of pay resulting from work-related injuries or illness.

You must immediately report any work-related injury to your supervisor, regardless of how minor the injury may seem.

Additional Benefits

F5AC offers additional benefits to all regular employees working 20 or more hours per week including Long-Term Disability, Employee Assistance Program, Commuter Benefits and an Employee Discount Program.

Enrollment and eligibility information for all benefits is available from Human Resources.

Part Five: Paid Time Off

Vacations

F5AC provides paid vacation time to certain eligible employees so that they may take time off to relax, recuperate and recharge. Regular and introductory full-time employees earn paid vacation time on the following schedule, beginning on their hire date:

| <u>Service Year</u> | <u>Total Possible Annual Accrual</u> |
|---------------------|--|
| 1–3 years: | 10 days each calendar year (80 hours) |
| 4–10 years: | 15 days each calendar year (120 hours) |
| 11-20 years: | 20 days each calendar year (160 hours) |
| 21+ years | 25 days each calendar year (200 hours) |

The CEO, in consultation with Human Resources, may approve a higher vacation accrual as part of the hiring process or retention efforts. Any additional time must be documented in the employee’s file.

Regular and introductory part-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work twenty (20) or more hours per week earn paid vacation time on a pro-rated basis based on the number of hours worked per week. Certain long-term temporary employees may be eligible to accrue vacation if approved in writing by the CEO. No other employee classifications are eligible for this benefit.

Accrued vacation time cannot be taken until three months after your first day of employment.

Employees may accrue vacation time up to a maximum of two (2) times their annual accrual. For example, an employee with five years of service may accrue up to a maximum of 30 days of accrued vacation time. Upon reaching this accrual cap, the accrual stops until vacation time is taken or vacation pay-out is used to reduce the employee’s balance to below the cap. Any unused vacation time is rolled over into the following year, up to the cap.

All vacation time must be requested through the Human Resources system, typically 4 weeks in advance, and is subject to advance approval from your direct supervisor. Please note that F5AC may not be able to approve all time off requests due to organizational needs.

F5AC encourages employees to use their accrued vacation time. Employees may, however, request to receive a vacation pay-out for some of their accrued, unused vacation in lieu of taking paid time off work. Vacation pay-out is limited to the number of hours that an employee accrues in one calendar year under this policy, and employees who request a vacation pay-out are required to have a minimum of one year’s accrual remaining after the pay-out.

When ending employment for any reason, employees are paid for any accrued, unused vacation.

F5AC does not pay employees for vacation time before it is accrued.

Holidays

F5AC generally observes the following holidays:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| New Year's Day | Labor Day |
| Martin Luther King Jr. Day | Indigenous Peoples' Day |
| Lincoln's Birthday | Veterans' Day |
| Washington's Birthday | Presidential General Election Day (every 4 years) |
| Memorial Day | Thanksgiving Day |
| Juneteenth | Friday after Thanksgiving |
| Independence Day | Christmas Day through New Year's Day (included) |

Full-time regular and introductory employees are provided a paid day off for each F5AC-recognized holiday. Part-time regular and introductory employees who are regularly scheduled to work on the above-identified holidays are paid for that holiday up to the number of hours they are regularly scheduled to work not to exceed a total of 8 hours per holiday. No other employee classifications are eligible for this benefit unless preapproved by the CEO.

If an observed holiday falls on a Saturday, said holiday shall be observed on the preceding Friday. If an observed holiday falls on a Sunday, said holiday shall be observed on the following Monday.

Paid Time Off (PTO)

All regular and introductory full-time employees receive 56 hours (7 days) of paid time off (PTO) each year in addition to vacation and paid sick leave and F5AC's regular holidays. PTO allows employees to have additional paid leave to cover absences for personal reasons such as religious observances. Eligible employees receive 56 hours of PTO on January 1 each year; eligible employees hired later in the year receive a PTO allocation at the time of hire that is prorated based on the hire date. Eligible employees may request to use PTO on or following the day that it is received, including new employees, who may request to use PTO during their introductory period. Requests to use PTO should be submitted as soon as possible. Please note that F5AC may not be able to approve all PTO requests due to organizational needs.

Part-time employees are granted pro-rated PTO hours based on their regular part-time schedule.

No other classification of employees receives PTO.

The total amount of PTO an employee may have in their account at any time is 56 hours (or the pro-rated amount described above for part-time employees). If an employee has the maximum amount of PTO remaining in their account on next January 1, no additional PTO will be granted for that year.

When the employment relationship ends, employees will be paid for any unused PTO in their final paycheck.

Paid Sick Time

Paid sick time provides employees with some paid time off to recover from illness or injury, to care for medical needs of family members, or for any other reason permitted by law, including for an employee who is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking to obtain relief, such as medical attention and psychological counseling.

For purposes of this section "family member" means parent or stepparent, spouse, domestic partner, child or stepchild, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, foster parent, foster child, parent-in-law, any other person sharing the relationship of in loco parentis; and, when living in the household of the employee, a sibling-in-law, or "designated person". A "designated person" is defined as a person identified by the employee at the time the employee requests to use paid sick time. Employees are permitted one "designated person" per 12-month period for paid sick leave usage.

Sick time may also be used for health care appointments for the employee or an employee's family member.

Eligible regular and introductory full-time employees may accrue sick time at the rate of 4 hours per pay period for a total possible accrual of thirteen (13) paid sick days per year. Regular and introductory part-time employees accrue sick time on a pro-rated basis, based on the number of hours they are regularly scheduled to work, and accruing at a rate of at least one hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked. Employees may use accrued sick time during their introductory period, beginning on their hire date, and may use paid sick time as soon as it accrues.

Temporary employees, whether full-time or part-time, are provided with five days (40 hours) of paid sick time at the time of hire. Temporary employees may not use sick time until their ninetieth (90th) day of employment.

Regular and introductory full-time and part-time employees' accrued, unused sick time may be carried over from one year to the next, and there is no limit to their sick time accrual. Paid sick time balances for temporary employees may not be carried over to the next year. Instead, temporary employees receive a new grant of five days (40 hours) of paid sick time every January 1.

No payment is made for accrued, unused sick time at termination or at any other time. However, regular employees who separate, and then are rehired within twelve (12) months, will have their sick leave balance at the time of separation reinstated.

Temporary employees who are rehired within 12 months from their date of separation will also have their sick leave balance reinstated and will also be provided with five days (40 hours) of sick time upon rehire, as described above, up to a combined maximum of ten (10) days of sick time.

Employees are responsible for directly notifying their supervisor before the start of the workday (or no later than one hour following their regularly scheduled start time) when prevented from starting or continuing a workday due to illness or injury. Employees must also keep their supervisor informed about the expected duration of the time away from work.

In most circumstances, a doctor's statement is required when an employee is absent for more than five (5) consecutive days of sick time (either for themselves or to care for an ill family member) or when an accumulation of absences seems to establish (in the supervisor's judgment) a problematic use of sick time. However, F5AC may request medical verification of the need for any use of sick time, regardless of duration.

If paid sick time is exhausted and additional time off for medical reasons is needed, employees may request a medical leave of absence.

F5AC does not make any advance payments of sick time (i.e., employees may not use sick time before it is accrued). F5AC may provide time off without pay to an employee who requests time off due to personal or family illness or injury as allowed above and who has exhausted their accrued paid time off.

Catastrophic Sick Leave

An employee may be eligible to receive voluntary donations of accrued vacation hours from other employees if they have suffered a catastrophic illness or injury, or if they must care for an immediate family member (as defined in the Paid Sick Time policy in this Handbook) who has suffered a catastrophic illness or injury. Catastrophic illness or injury is a critical, terminal medical condition or a long-term major physical impairment or disability that temporarily prevents the employee from working their usual hours, or from working at all.

The Catastrophic Sick Leave ("CSL") Program is designed to be as confidential as possible and is strictly voluntary. Employees who donate accrued vacation hours to the CSL Bank will be made aware of the dollar value of their donation to the Bank. The recipient of CSL benefits will be made aware of the value of their benefits received from the CSL Bank. Individual donations, and the identities of donors and recipients of benefits, are confidential, will not be disclosed except on a need-to-know basis for administrative purposes.

Any regular full or part-time F5AC employee is eligible to participate in the CSL Bank, either by donating paid vacation leave, or by requesting a donation. The donor employee may donate accrued paid vacation time only. No other paid time off may be donated to the CSL Bank. The donor's hourly value of paid vacation time

donated will be converted into a dollar value and deposited into the bank. After F5AC approval, CSL leave is withdrawn from the CSL Bank and granted as sick hours to the eligible requesting employee.

To be considered for a CSL Bank donation, the requesting employee, family member of the requesting employee, or another person designated in writing by the requesting employee must submit a request for donation to Human Resources. Human Resources administers the CSL Program and Bank.

The requesting employee must provide a medical verification of the employee's qualification for this CSL program, including an explanation of the employee's work limitations and estimated date of return to work, if applicable. If the employee requesting CSL benefits has left work to care for a critically ill family member, they must provide medical documentation confirming the critical illness/injury of the family member, the need for the employee's care, and the expected duration of the care period is required for the family member.

The determination of whether to award donations from the CSL bank will be at F5AC's sole discretion and will be final (e.g., not subject to challenge).

While the CSL bank donation request may be initiated prior to the anticipated date of the exhaustion of paid leave balances, the requesting employee is not eligible to receive and use donations when they have accrued hours available. No retroactive requests will be permitted (e.g., employees will not be granted donations for time off already treated as unpaid leave). Exhaustion of accrued hours alone is not justification for requesting a donation from the CSL Bank.

A requesting employee may be eligible to receive up to a total of 320 hours of donated CSL time throughout their employment. Donations are considered on a first-come, first-served basis. Donations from the CSL Bank may be approved only if there are funds available in the bank.

Periodically, F5AC may notify all employees that they may choose to donate to the bank.

Donations are made in 4-hour increments. Once the donation is made, and deposited in the CSL Bank, it is a final transaction and cannot be retrieved by the donating employee. The maximum donation in a calendar year is 80 hours per employee, except spouses or registered domestic partners, both employed by F5AC, may donate unlimited amounts of paid vacation time between one another. In any case, donations that would result in vacation balances falling below 40 hours are not permitted.

Jury or Witness Duty

Leave is granted for an employee to serve jury duty or witness duty in response to a summons or subpoena. Regular and introductory full-time and part-time employees receive paid time off for a maximum of two weeks when required to serve jury or witness duty (part-time employees' Jury or Witness Duty pay is pro-rated based on the percent of time regularly scheduled to work). If additional leave is required beyond the two-week period, or if the employee is not eligible to receive paid jury duty time, leave for this purpose will be provided as unpaid time off. The employee serving unpaid jury/witness duty may use accrued vacation and/or PTO time during the unpaid portion of the leave.

Proof of attendance from the court is required to receive jury/witness duty pay. When an employee is excused from jury or witness duty in time to work for half or more of the normal workday, the employee is required to work the rest of that day.

Bereavement Leave

All employees may take up to 5 days, consecutive or non-consecutive, for bereavement leave for a death in their immediate family. Any bereavement leave must be taken within three months of the death of the family member. F5AC may require documentation of the family member's death.

For purposes of this policy, "immediate family" means parent, step or foster parent or parent-in-law, spouse, domestic partner, child, step or foster child, grandparent, grandchild, sibling or sibling-in-law, or any other person sharing the relationship of "in loco parentis" with the employee.

Reproductive Loss Leave

An employee may take up to 5 days, consecutive or non-consecutive, for reproductive loss. Employees may take leave for themselves or their spouse/partner. Reproductive loss includes miscarriage, failed adoption or surrogacy, stillbirth, and unsuccessful assisted reproduction.

Time off with pay for a regular or introductory full-time employee may be granted for this leave. Regular and introductory part-time employees may be granted time off with pay pro-rated based on the percentage of time regularly scheduled to work; the remainder of the five-day bereavement entitlement would be without pay. Employees may request to use their applicable accrued paid time off during any otherwise unpaid leave for this policy or the bereavement leave policy.

State Disability Insurance (SDI)

F5AC employees who are unable to work due to illness, injury, or pregnancy disability may be eligible for, and are encouraged to apply for, disability benefits through State Disability Insurance (SDI) for the time they are unable to work. SDI is an employee-paid state-administered benefit that provides to employees deemed eligible by the state partial replacement of wages lost because of a disability not caused by work. The determination of benefits is up to the state Employee Development Department (EDD). The first seven calendar days of an employee's absence are generally considered a "waiting period," and SDI benefits are not paid during that period. Information and claim forms are available from the local EDD office or the EDD website.

Paid Family Leave (PFL)

The state-administered Paid Family Leave (PFL) insurance program is an employee-paid benefit that provides to employees deemed eligible by the state partial wage replacement when an employee is taking approved time off work to care for a seriously ill family member (as defined by the state), or to bond with a newborn or newly placed child.

The state Employee Development Department (EDD) determines your benefits. Information and claim forms are available from the local EDD office or the EDD website.

Paid Parental Leave

As a special benefit to regular and introductory employees, F5AC offers additional parental leave compensation. When a regular and introductory employee is taking an approved leave to bond with their newborn, an adopted child or a child placed in foster care, the employee is eligible to receive additional compensation from F5AC up to 100% of their regular pay in combination with PFL benefits received. Employees requesting this special additional compensation must provide the PFL Notice of Computation from the EDD to Human Resources.

Coordination of Benefits

If an employee is receiving State Disability Insurance ("SDI"), Paid Family Leave ("PFL") or Workers' Compensation benefits, and the employee has not exhausted their accrued paid benefits from the employer, F5AC will coordinate the outside paid benefit with the employee's accrued paid benefit (to the extent permitted by law) so that total compensation does not exceed the employee's regular wages for that pay period. Employees must communicate to Human Resources the outside benefit amounts and dates paid.

Part Six: Leaves of Absence

F5AC provides unpaid leaves of absence to eligible employees in a variety of circumstances. Information concerning legal requirements applicable to leaves of absence is posted in the workroom and on the intranet. Employees who are considering requesting a leave of absence are encouraged to meet with Human Resources as early as possible to discuss the details of the leave and to coordinate the integration of benefits and payroll.

Employees may request a leave of absence without pay for reasons including, but not limited to: personal or family illness, qualifying exigency arising from a call to active duty, or justifiable personal or other reasons. “Without pay” means that F5AC does not pay for time on leave, although F5AC may permit, or require, the employee exhaust accrued, unused vacation, PTO, and/or paid sick hours during the otherwise unpaid leave, consistent with F5AC policies and applicable law. Generally, no benefits or seniority will accrue during any unpaid portion of the leave. Human Resources will explain to employees requesting unpaid leave how to continue health plan coverage while on a leave of absence.

General information

Leave Requests

As soon as an employee learns of the need for a leave of absence, the employee should submit a written leave request to Human Resources. Request forms are available from Human Resources and on the F5AC intranet. If the need for the leave is foreseeable, employees are required to provide at least 30 days’ advance notice. Approval of the leave may be delayed if timely notice is not provided. If the employee learns of the need for leave fewer than 30 days before the leave is needed, the request must be made as soon as possible.

Medical Certification

Human Resources will notify the employee if medical certification is required for a requested leave to be approved. If the reason for leave is the employee’s own injury or illness, medical certification of the employee’s ability to return to work, with or without any work restrictions, at the conclusion of the leave is required before the employee will be permitted to return.

Concurrent Leaves

If an employee is on a leave that qualifies under more than one law (e.g., leave for a serious health condition under the FMLA/CFRA that is also a Workers’ Compensation injury), the leave time will run concurrently to the extent permitted by law.

Unpaid Leaves

The most common types of unpaid leaves are described below. Please see Human Resources for additional information about any leaves, or if you wish to request leave that is not covered by the descriptions below.

In addition to the leaves outlined below, F5AC may grant time off without pay to an eligible employee who requests time off for personal reasons and who has exhausted their accrued paid vacation and PTO leave. Time off granted in this circumstance, if any, is limited to a maximum of three (3) days. If an employee needs additional time away from work, the employee should request a Personal Leave of Absence.

Family/Medical Leave under the Family Medical Leave Act and California Family Rights Act (“FMLA”/“CFRA”)
Eligible employees may request an unpaid leave of up to 12 workweeks in a rolling 12-month period for any of the following reasons:

- For the employee’s serious health condition
- To care for the serious health condition of the spouse, registered domestic partner, child, or parent of an employee; and additionally, under CFRA, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, parent-in-law or “designated person”
- To care for the employee’s child after birth, or following placement for adoption or foster care (“baby bonding”)
- To handle “qualifying exigencies” arising out of the fact that the employee’s spouse, registered domestic partner, child, or parent is on active duty, or is called to active duty, in support of contingency operations as a member of the National Guard or Reserves.

A “designated person” is any individual related by blood or whose association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship. The designated person is identified by the employee at the time they request the leave. Employees are limited to one designated person per 12-month period for CFRA leave.

In addition, eligible employees may be entitled to take a leave of up to 26 weeks in a 12-month period to care for a spouse, registered domestic partner, parent, child, or next-of-kin who has sustained serious illness/injury in the line of military duty.

Eligible employees are those who have at least one year of service with F5AC, and who have worked at least 1,250 hours in the 12-month period before the date the requested leave will begin.

Generally, employees taking FMLA/CFRA leave must use accrued paid sick (if applicable), PTO, and vacation time during the leave. The exceptions to this are:

- Employees on FMLA/CFRA leave for their own serious health condition and who are receiving temporary disability benefits (e.g., SDI) or workers' compensation benefits may elect to use their paid leave to supplement their disability benefits up to an amount that, when combined with the disability benefit, does not exceed their regular pay for the pay period.
- Employees taking leave to care for a family member or for baby bonding are generally required to use accrued vacation, PTO or paid sick hours.
- Employees on leave for pregnancy disability are generally required to use paid sick time and may elect to use PTO or vacation time during the leave.

Employees on approved FMLA/CFRA leave retain their employer-paid health insurance under the same terms and conditions as if they remained actively working.

When an authorized FMLA/CFRA leave expires, employees will be returned to the same or comparable position to the extent required by law.

Non-FMLA/CFRA Medical or Family Leave

Employees who are not eligible for leave under the FMLA/CFRA may nonetheless request a leave for any of the reasons allowed for FMLA/CFRA leaves. The employee must provide evidence of one of the reasons for leave as stated in the FMLA/CFRA and provide 30 days' notice if the need for the leave is foreseeable.

If approved, in most cases, leaves of this type will not exceed a maximum duration of eight (8) work weeks within a rolling 12-month period. Generally, employees must exhaust all accrued sick leave (if applicable), PTO, and vacation time during the leave.

An employee whose medical condition temporarily precludes them from working may request an unpaid medical leave of absence as a reasonable accommodation.

F5AC will generally require the employee to provide reasonable medical documentation from a health care provider verifying the employee's temporary inability to work. The duration of leave will depend on the circumstances involved, which F5AC will evaluate on a case-by-case basis. Employees on leave must exhaust accrued paid sick, PTO, and vacation time during the leave.

Employees who have active health insurance with F5AC at the time they request this leave, will continue to be covered by health insurance through the end of the month when the unpaid portion of their leave begins. Afterwards, employees may continue coverage under F5AC's group insurance plans at their own expense pursuant to COBRA.

When an authorized leave ends under this section, employees will generally be returned to the same or comparable position to the extent required by law.

Pregnancy Disability Leave ("PDL")

Employees who are disabled and unable to work due to pregnancy, childbirth, or a related condition are eligible to request a leave up to four months per pregnancy. PDL does not need to be taken all at once but can be taken on an as-needed basis as certified by the employee's health care provider.

Employees requesting foreseeable PDL leave should ordinarily provide thirty days' notice in advance of the date the leave is to begin. When requesting PDL, an employee must provide certification of the need for leave from the treating health care provider, who must certify the date the leave is to begin as well as the anticipated return-to-work date. When returning from PDL leave, the employee must provide a release to return from the health care provider, including any work restrictions and the duration of any such restrictions.

Employees taking PDL leave must generally use accrued paid sick time during the leave but may elect whether to not to use accrued vacation or PTO.

Employees taking PDL retain their employer-paid health insurance during their approved leave (up to a maximum of four months) under the same terms and conditions as if they remained actively working.

Employees returning from approved PDL will be returned to the same or comparable position to the extent required by law.

Workers' Compensation Leave

Employees who are temporarily unable to work due to a job-related illness or injury may be eligible for a leave of absence until the earlier of the following:

- The employee is released to return to work
- The employee is determined to be unable to return to their usual duties permanently.

Employees must exhaust all accrued sick, vacation, and PTO during this leave. The exception to this is that employees receiving workers' compensation benefits whose leave runs concurrent with FMLA/CFRA leave are not required to use their paid leave but may elect to do so.

Employees who are covered by F5AC health insurance at the time their leave commences, and who do not have FMLA/CFRA leave running concurrently, will remain covered by F5AC health insurance coverage through the end of the month when the unpaid portion of their leave begins. Thereafter, employees may generally elect to continue coverage under F5AC's group insurance plans at their own expense pursuant to COBRA.

Employees returning from workers' compensation leave will be returned to the same or comparable position to the extent required by law.

Personal Leave of Absence

F5AC may consider granting a personal leave of absence without pay. Personal leaves are limited to a maximum of two months in any two-year period (measured in a rolling 24-month period). Personal leaves may generally not be added to any of the previously described leaves.

Any regular F5AC employee may request an unpaid personal leave of absence. Job performance, attendance, and work/program requirements are all taken into consideration before a request is approved. Requests for unpaid personal leave may be denied or granted by F5AC within the sole discretion of the Agency.

Personal leaves of absence must be requested in writing, and 30 days' advance notice is required if the need for leave is foreseeable. All requests must first be reviewed and recommended by the supervisor, Human Resources and approved by the director.

Employees are required to exhaust all accrued paid sick (if applicable), vacation, and PTO hours prior to requesting an unpaid personal leave of absence.

Employees who have active health insurance with F5AC at the time of their unpaid personal leave will have paid health insurance coverage through the end of the month when the unpaid portion of their leave begins. Thereafter, employees may continue coverage under F5AC's group insurance plans at their own expense pursuant to COBRA.

An employee is required to return from the personal leave on the originally scheduled return date. If the employee is unable to return, they must request an extension of the leave in writing within five (5) business days before expiration of the leave, explaining the reason for and requested duration of the additional leave sought. If the requested leave extension is not approved, the employee must return to work on the originally scheduled return date. Failure to return at the conclusion of the approved personal leave will generally be considered a voluntary resignation from employment. Extensions of leave are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Upon expiration of an approved personal leave, the employee will generally be returned to the same or comparable position, but there is no guarantee of reinstatement following a personal leave.

Part Seven: Work Hours & Pay

Pay Periods

For all employees, the standard pay period is biweekly. Employees are paid every other Friday. If the payday falls on a holiday, employees generally receive pay on the prior workday.

Work Schedules

The regular work schedule is from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday including a half hour unpaid rest period. Some employees may have different work hours and/or an alternative work schedule if the alternative schedule is agreed in advance in writing by the employee and the supervisor and reviewed/approved by Human Resources. Any alternate work schedule is subject to the demands and limitations of the job and department.

Alternative Work Schedules

4/10 Schedule

A 4/10 schedule allows an employee to work 4 days, instead of 5 days per week. An employee works 10 hours per workday, 4 days per week, rather than 5 eight-hour days per week.

Half-Flex Day Schedule

The Half-Flex Day Schedule allows an employee to work 4.5 days per work week. An employee works 9 hours per day, 4 days per week and 4 hours one day per week, rather than 5 eight-hour days per week.

9/80 Schedule

Any regular, exempt full-time employee is eligible to request a 9/80 schedule. A 9/80 schedule allows an employee to work 9 days, instead of 10 days, in a 2-week pay period. This schedule consists of eight 9-hour days and one 8-hour day, with every other Friday off (or other designated weekday as approved by F5AC, also known as a flex day off) in a single 80-hour pay period.

Employees must have supervisor approval and work set workdays each week for their Alternative Work Schedule. Employees may need to occasionally adjust their workdays due to organizational needs or their manager's request. Employees approved for an Alternative Work Schedule will sign a written agreement and cannot accumulate hours or days off.

F5AC holidays are paid at a rate of 8-hours per day. Employees who are scheduled to work a 9-hour or 10-hour day and are off on a holiday must request 1- or 2-hours accrued vacation or PTO to receive full pay for the day off.

If a holiday falls on the day an employee is scheduled for their flex day off, the employee will be allowed to take 8-hours of leave on another day in the pay period the holiday falls, upon supervisor approval. The 8-hours may be combined with 1- or 2-hours vacation or PTO to be paid a full 9- or 10-hour day.

Meal Periods

Non-exempt employees who work five (5) hours or more should take an unpaid lunch break of a minimum of thirty (30) minutes (or up to one (1) hour if working a 9-hour day) towards the middle of their workday. No work for F5AC should be performed during the unpaid meal period. On the rare occasion when F5AC work requirements make it impossible for the employee to be completely relieved of all duties during their lunch break, the employee must note this on the timecard, and inform their supervisor, and they will be paid for their meal period. Employees may not skip meal breaks without prior approval from their supervisor.

Timekeeping Requirements

Non-exempt employees must accurately complete and submit time sheets to be approved by their supervisor or manager for each pay period. Non-exempt employees record actual hours worked and any paid or unpaid

leave taken during the period; non-exempt employees must report all hours worked and are prohibited from performing any work “off the clock.”

Exempt employees should accurately complete a time sheet for each pay period showing their regular work schedule and any paid or unpaid leave taken.

Overtime Pay and Compensatory Time Off

F5AC provides overtime compensation to non-exempt employees for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours per workweek. All overtime must be approved in advance by the supervisor and the Division Chief.

As an employee option, F5AC offers compensatory time off (CTO) as a substitute for overtime pay. For all hours worked in excess of 40 in the workweek, the employee may elect to receive CTO at the rate of one and one-half hours of paid time off for each hour of overtime worked, up to a maximum of 240 CTO hours. Any employee wishing to receive CTO instead of overtime compensation must have a written CTO agreement on file with Human Resources in advance of performing the overtime work.

Taking paid time off work, such as vacation, PTO, holiday, and sick time, does not constitute hours worked for the purposes of computing overtime.

Multilanguage Pay

If an employee is required by their job duties to use a second or third language at least 20% of the time on the job (in the sole determination of F5AC), the employee or the employee's supervisor may make a request to human Resources that the employee be provided bilingual or trilingual pay.

Prior to any recommendation or approval for this special pay, the employee must first pass a language proficiency exam administered through F5AC's designated testing agency. A passing score is 70%. If the eligible employee passes the test, and F5AC approves, an additional taxable earning will be added to the employee's paycheck each pay period in an amount consistent with the Alameda County bilingual or trilingual pay rate.

Supervisors must contact Human Resources to schedule testing for eligible employees. Supervisors must also confirm, on an annual basis, that the employee is continuing to use the second/third language at least 20% of the time and must annually reauthorize bilingual/trilingual pay, if appropriate.

Part Eight: Workplace Health & Safety

Drug-Free Workplace

As part of F5AC's ongoing commitment to a safe and healthy workplace, we maintain a drug-free workplace. Any employee who reports to work while under the influence of drugs or alcohol runs the risks of endangering their safety and the safety of others, destruction of or damage to personal property or F5AC property, and a loss of productivity and workplace morale.

All employees of F5AC are required to understand and comply with F5AC's drug-free workplace policy. Employees either in our offices, or conducting business on behalf of F5AC regardless of location, are prohibited from the following:

- Use, possession, purchase, sale, manufacture, distribution, transportation, or dispensation of alcohol or drugs. (The sole exception to this is the appropriate use or possession of prescription or over-the-counter medication that does not impair the ability to work safely and effectively.)
- Reporting to work, or working, while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

If an employee is taking prescription or over-the-counter medications that may impair their ability to work safely or effectively, the employee should inform the supervisor of that fact prior to commencing work.

Smoking

Smoking, including the use of e-cigarettes, is prohibited in all F5AC offices, and while conducting F5AC business, regardless of location.

Part Nine: Work Practices and Environment

Punctuality & Attendance

If employees are unable to work as scheduled, they must inform their immediate supervisor prior to the start of the workday or, in any event, no later than one hour following their regularly scheduled start time. Employees must also keep their supervisor informed about the expected length of time away from work.

Employees are expected to be responsible and demonstrate respect for fellow employees by establishing a record of punctuality and regular attendance. These are factors considered in evaluating overall job performance.

Unexcused or frequent lateness or absenteeism is not permitted.

Facilities & Property Use

Employees are expected to treat F5AC facilities and property with respect and to keep their work area and common areas clean and well-maintained. F5AC equipment use is limited to work-related purposes. Employees must have written supervisory approval prior to removing any F5AC property from the premises. Employees may decorate their own workspaces, as long as decorations are consistent with F5AC policies and project a professional image appropriate to our work. Employees must have Office Manager approval before making any changes to public spaces or common areas.

Visitors

All visitors must sign in and out at the front desk and receive a visitor badge to wear in the office. Visitors should stay in the reception area until escorted by an employee. Please keep non-work-related visitors to a minimum to avoid interruptions to coworkers.

Security

F5AC strives to provide a secure work environment for our employees, volunteers, clients, and visitors. Our building is equipped with an alarm system that is activated during non-business hours, and exterior doors are always locked (except the front entrance and conference center entrance which are unlocked during business hours). Employees are required to comply with all F5AC security procedures and immediately report any security breach to your supervisor.

We encourage employees to be prudent about bringing personal items to work. F5AC is not responsible for losses resulting from property theft.

Immediately report lost or stolen keys/fobs or other missing F5AC property to your supervisor. Copying or giving F5AC keys/fobs, alarm codes, or lock combinations to an unauthorized individual is strictly prohibited.

Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace

F5AC recognizes that breastmilk is the optimal food for infants' growth and development, and encourages all employees to have a positive, accepting attitude toward breastfeeding employees. F5AC promotes and supports breastfeeding and the expression of breastmilk by breastfeeding employees and recognizes that employees have the right to request lactation accommodation.

F5AC provides:

- Information about breastfeeding support when hired and prior to employees' leave for pregnancy disability or related condition or baby-bonding leave.
- Reasonable time to express milk or breastfeed. Supervisors are encouraged to consider flexible break times, schedules, or other reasonable accommodation to meet employees' needs. Employees may request this accommodation either verbally or in writing to their supervisor or Human Resources.

- A designated Lactation Room, furnished with an electrical outlet, refrigerator for breastmilk storage, comfortable seating, a table, and appropriate furnishings/signage to ensure privacy.

Employees who believe they have not been accorded their rights in connection with this policy have the right to file a complaint with the California Labor Commissioner.

Children in the Workplace

F5AC values family and work-life balance and strives to create an employee-friendly workplace. Our employment policies and benefits reflect our beliefs. F5AC also believes in creating an environment that is conducive to work and generally should not be used in lieu of child care.

While we are sensitive to our employee's child care needs, it is not appropriate for minor children and other minor relatives of employees to be in the workplace during working hours, except for brief visits. This policy has been adopted to minimize potential liability to F5AC, the risk of harm to children, and decreased employee productivity due to distractions and disruptions.

F5AC recognizes there may be occasions when child care is not available and employees need to be available for work. In those situations, the employee may request to work remotely on a temporary basis, or, if the work must be done in the office, may request to bring in their child(ren) for a short period of time. In those rare cases where children are in the workplace, they must always be directly supervised by the parent. In the interest of maintaining the health and well-being of all F5AC employees, children who are ill must not be brought to the workplace. Employees may consult F5AC's Employee Assistance Program for assistance with finding emergency care providers to care for sick children.

Remote Work

F5AC considers remote work to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the job are suited to the arrangement. Employees may work at home, or in an alternate location, with supervisory approval. Remote work may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. It is not an entitlement, companywide benefit, and it in no way changes the employment terms and conditions.

Remote work arrangements will be reviewed annually during the performance review period. An employees' work must be reasonably carried out remotely without impacting productivity. Request to terminate remote work arrangements by an employee will be reviewed and considered for feasibility by Supervisor in consultation with the Operations and HR teams.

Additionally, employees are responsible for:

- Maintaining a safe workspace;
- Safeguarding all confidential information;
- Reporting hours worked the same way as working onsite.

Generally, employees with an approved remote work schedule must come onsite for a minimum of 2 days per week and as requested by your supervisor/manager. Some positions may require less days in the office as noted in the job description.

All employees must reside and perform their duties in California. Short-term accommodation may be made for temporarily working outside California, but employees must contact Human Resources prior to starting work in any location outside California.

Personal Automobile Use

Prior to using a personal vehicle for work, employees must have supervisory approval and provide a copy of their driver license and proof of personal automobile insurance (with required minimum coverage for property damage and public liability). Employees who use their own automobiles for travel on authorized F5AC work will be reimbursed for mileage at the rate established by the Internal Revenue Service.

Use of the personal vehicle for work does not include the normal commute between work and the employee's home.

Attire

Attire should enable employees to be comfortable in the workplace, while also projecting a professional image to co-workers, clients, partners, volunteers, and the public.

The following guidelines provide general parameters for appropriate work attire and help employees exercise good judgment about items not specifically addressed. A clean and neat appearance should be always maintained. In all situations, clothing should be comfortable and practical for work, but not distracting, revealing or offensive to others. Torn, frayed, ripped, messy or overly casual clothing are not considered appropriate for the office.

Employees may observe dress and/or grooming practices consistent with their religious beliefs, and employees requiring special clothing accommodation for any reason should advise their supervisor or Human Resources in advance. Supervisors, in collaboration with HR, are responsible for interpreting and monitoring attire and grooming standards, including counseling employees whose attire is inappropriate.

Expense Reimbursement

Reasonable and customary work-related expenses incurred in the performance of one's job will generally be reimbursed. Reimbursement requires prior written authorization by the employee's immediate supervisor, itemized actual expenses, and the employee's signed expense reimbursement form with all required documentation/receipts attached. Reimbursements submitted after 120 days will be subject to income tax. Employees should consult the Finance team or the F5AC Procedures Manual for specific instructions.

References

F5AC provides only limited reference information about current and former employees to prospective employers. i.e.: only employment dates and job titles. After receiving a written request and authorization signed by the employee, F5AC will also disclose requested earnings. References may only be provided by Human Resources. Any employee who receives a reference request for references or information about any current or former employee must refer this request to Human Resources.

Part Ten: Communication & Technology

Technology, Voicemail and Email

F5AC employees are permitted to use F5AC's voice mail, electronic mail, computers, networking sites and internet access (collectively "Technology Systems") to communicate with others for work purposes and otherwise to perform their job duties. The Technology Systems are primarily used for F5AC work, and not for personal purposes. Minimal personal use may be permitted, provided any use is during non-working time only, and that it does not interfere with the employee's work responsibilities.

Employees are not permitted to use F5AC's Technology Systems to send jokes, solicitations, comments or information to others that may be perceived as discriminatory, harassing, offensive, or disruptive, or otherwise in violation of any F5AC policy. Technology Systems must not be used to send material that disparages an individual, company, or business entity, or to disclose personal or confidential information without authorization.

Employees may not install, copy, stream, or download software or personal files onto the Technology Systems unless authorized by the IT team.

Employees do not have any right or expectation of privacy in the Technology Systems, including email or documents created, maintained, sent, or received by the Technology Systems. F5AC may monitor and/or search the contents of all voicemail, computer files, and electronic communications.

Social Media

F5AC has a social media presence and encourages employees to connect to help spread the word about F5AC's great work and the services and support that are available to children and families in Alameda County. Use of social media presents certain risks and carries responsibilities.

Social Media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet whether or not associated or affiliated with F5AC. The same principles and guidelines found in F5AC's policies apply to your activities online that may relate to F5AC. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Keep in mind that any conduct on social media or otherwise that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees, or otherwise adversely affects staff, volunteers, contractors/grantees, vendors, or any other people who work on behalf of or receive services from F5AC is not permitted.

Employees are expected to ensure their social media postings that may relate to F5AC are consistent with these and all other F5AC policies.

Always be respectful

Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, volunteers, contractors/grantees, vendors, or other people who work on behalf of or receive services from F5AC. Remember that colleagues, supervisors, and agency partners often have access to the online content you post. Keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve any work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or by using our Open-Door Policy than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism that may relate to F5AC, avoid any content that could reasonably be viewed as unlawful, malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparages employees, volunteers, clients, contractors/grantees or vendors, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant intentionally to harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment.

Be honest and accurate

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news that may relate to F5AC, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false.

Be conscious about mixing your personal and professional lives

- Maintain the confidentiality of F5AC's confidential, private, or sensitive information (see the Confidentiality policy contained in Part Eleven of this Handbook for examples). Do not post internal reports or memos, policies, procedures or other internal business-related confidential or sensitive communications.
- Do not create a link from your blog, website, or other social networking site to a F5AC website without identifying yourself as a F5AC employee.
- Express only your personal opinions, and never represent yourself as a spokesperson for F5AC. If F5AC is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee of F5AC; make it clear that your views do not represent those of F5AC, and you are not speaking on behalf of F5AC. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of F5AC."
- Do not use your F5AC email address to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized primarily for personal/social purposes.
- Do not use social media while on work time or on F5AC's Technology Systems unless it is work-related as authorized by your supervisor or consistent with F5AC's Technology Use Agreement.

F5AC's social media presence

The Communications team is primarily responsible for F5AC's Social Media presence. Only designated staff may post content on F5AC-affiliated social media sites. Employees who have ideas, suggestions, or resources for posts are encouraged to share them with the Communications team.

Employee Information & Records Inspection

It is important that employment files are current. Employees should update their information in the Human Resources system (address, phone, emergency contacts, etc.) and inform Human Resources when there are changes, such as marital or domestic partnership status, and dependents, that may affect pay or benefits.

Employees have the right to inspect employment records relating to their performance or to any grievance concerning them, or otherwise as permitted by law. Employees wishing to inspect employment records may do so during regular office hours, after a written request is made to Human Resources. An inspection request form is available from Human Resources and also on the F5AC intranet that employees may use to make their request. Records will be made available for inspection within 30 days of receipt of the written request. An appointment to inspect the file is made with the Human Resources team, who is present with the employee while inspecting the file. Employees may receive copies, at their own cost, of any document in the employment file to the extent required by law. Employee records are the property of F5AC and are not allowed to be taken from Human Resources without prior written authorization.

Internal Communication

F5AC uses bulletin boards, mailboxes, meetings, intranet, and email to communicate important F5AC information. Each employee is responsible for reading posted or distributed information.

Media Relations

Employees should not respond to any inquiries or requests received from the media for comments or statements on behalf of F5AC. Instead, employees should refer requests to the Strategic Communications Officer. The Strategic Communications Officer will coordinate with the CEO who will respond directly or designate another staff member to serve as the F5AC spokesperson.

Governmental, Legislative, and External Relations

Employees should refer legislative requests or inquiries to the Government Affairs and Policy Officer. Legislative requests may include requests to provide public comment or testimony on a legislative or budget proposal, requests to sign a coalition letter, or requests to submit legislative position letters. Employees should route any requests for organizational letters of support through their department's Executive Team member.

Part Eleven: Conduct

Workplace Conduct

F5AC requires employees' cooperation, efficiency, productivity, and compliance with all policies and procedures. Employees must always treat each other with dignity and respect at work and in work-related situations.

Some examples of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination, include, but are not limited to:

- Substandard job performance
- Unauthorized or excessive tardiness or absenteeism, unrelated to a protected leave
- Rudeness or discourtesy or disrespect toward a fellow employee, supervisor, volunteer, supporter, or member of the public
- Fighting, roughhousing, bullying, or engaging in violent or threatening language or gestures, or conduct that is abusive, hostile, or disrespectful (such as slandering or ridiculing others, making false accusations, humiliating others in public, or shunning/ostracizing others, etc.)
- Theft of or unauthorized use of F5AC or a coworker's property
- Disregarding established safety or security procedures, or creating an unsafe work situation for anyone
- Refusing to perform a work-related task when directly instructed to do so by a supervisor or member of management
- Possessing a weapon or firearm on F5AC's property
- Violating F5AC policy prohibiting workplace discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, or violating any other F5AC policy

Open Door Policy

F5AC has an open-door policy that encourages employee participation in decisions affecting them and their daily professional responsibilities. Employees who have a different opinion, misunderstanding or conflict with another F5AC employee are encouraged to address the situation directly with the employee(s) involved, if it is appropriate and safe to do so. We also encourage employees who have job-related problems or complaints to talk them over with their supervisor or a manager at any level of management. We believe that employee concerns are best addressed through informal and open communication.

To the extent possible, F5AC maintains confidentiality in addressing and resolving concerns brought to its attention. However, while investigating and resolving concerns, some information will likely be shared on a need-to-know basis.

No employee will be retaliated against for raising a concern in good faith.

Disciplinary Procedures

While F5AC may use any disciplinary step it concludes is appropriate given the circumstances, including immediate termination, any, all, or none of the following disciplinary steps may be taken, as appropriate:

- **Record of Counseling:** The supervisor counsels the employee, generally following a relatively minor offense to communicate or clarify acceptable conduct or performance. Counseling records are documented by the supervisor, signed by the employee to acknowledge receipt and placed in the employment file.
- **Written Warning:** The supervisor presents the written notice of corrective action, or written warning, to the employee in person if possible. A written warning includes a description of the misconduct or performance problem, the expectations going forward and the consequences if the problem is not corrected. Written warnings are signed by the employee to acknowledge receipt and placed in the employment file.
- **Suspension:** Employees may be suspended without pay for a period for relatively serious offenses at the sole discretion of F5AC.
- **Discharge:** Termination can result from a single, serious offense, or it can be the final step in a process designed to correct offenses or performance problems. It can also occur as the result of conduct inconsistent with F5AC policy.

Other disciplinary steps not described above may or may not be taken, depending on the circumstances. Supervisors are required to consult with Human Resources prior to taking or recommending any disciplinary action, including discharge.

The use of any of the above disciplinary procedures in no way alters the at-will employment relationship.

Right to Respond to Notice of Serious Discipline

Public agencies must comply with certain minimal due process procedures before taking Serious Disciplinary actions, defined for this policy to include pay reduction, suspension of more than five days, demotion, or dismissal, against regular employees.

After receiving a notice of intent to impose Serious Discipline, the regular employee has ten days to respond to the proposed discipline, either in writing or verbally. If an employee timely exercises this right to respond to the notice of discipline, a “Skelly” meeting is conducted.

A “Skelly” meeting provides an informal opportunity for an employee to respond to the proposed Serious Discipline. That is, the employee can refute charges, explain circumstances, or generally present their version of events. The employee is not entitled to a full evidentiary hearing or to call witnesses to testify. The employee may have a representative of their choice present at the meeting. The employee and/or the employee’s representative may present the employee’s response at the meeting.

A “Skelly” officer leads the meeting. The “Skelly” officer should generally be an impartial authority who was not involved in the investigation or events leading to the decision to issue proposed Serious Disciplinary action, and who is authorized to make an effective recommendation concerning the proposed action to the final decision maker.

After the “Skelly” meeting is conducted, the “Skelly” officer will provide a recommendation to the CEO either to uphold, modify, or revoke the proposed Serious Discipline. The CEO has the final authority over the proposed disciplinary action.

Conflict of Interest & Incompatible Activities

It is important that employees avoid conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest is a situation where an employee’s personal or economic interest interferes or may interfere with, influence, appear to interfere or influence, the employee’s job duties, or is, in the judgment of F5AC, otherwise incompatible with the employee’s duties and responsibilities at F5AC or with F5AC’s general activities. A conflict may exist even if the conflict or incompatibility has no adverse impact on job performance.

All employees are required to adhere to the F5AC Conflict of Interest Policy.

In compliance with the First 5 Alameda County Incompatible Activities Policy, all employees must complete an Incompatible Activities Statement Certification.

If employees have outside employment, they must advise their supervisor and the Finance Officer.

Any employee needing advice about a potential conflict of interest should contact the Finance Officer or Human Resources. Outside employment that may or does create a conflict of interest with the employee’s employment at F5AC will not be permitted.

Confidentiality

Careful custody and handling of F5AC files, documents or materials (in hard copy or electronic format), and especially those files and documents containing confidential information, is critically important to the well-being and success of F5AC and our clients. Each employee is responsible for safeguarding against the theft, loss, and unauthorized use or disclosure of this information and for following F5AC’s best practice policies and procedures addressing confidentiality including, but not limited to, HIPAA compliance. Further, employees must not, directly or indirectly, disclose any F5AC-related confidential information to any other person except as necessary to perform their job responsibilities. Employees who have access to confidential information must take all steps necessary to ensure F5AC confidential information is handled, stored, transmitted or destroyed, if appropriate, in a way that protects against loss or misuse, as outlined in F5AC’s Confidentiality Procedures Manual.

Confidential and/or private matters include, but are not limited to:

- Employee or client names, addresses, telephone numbers, social security numbers, and medical/health information
- Information contained in employment or benefits files, including but not limited to disciplinary action records, performance evaluations, benefit applications, beneficiary information, etc.
- Anything marked “Confidential” or “Personal,” such as incoming mail, internal documents marked with these terms, etc.
- Private/Confidential data in F5AC web-based applications

Private and confidential information should not be disclosed except to those who have both the need and authority to know about the information to properly perform their job duties.

Employees are expected to maintain F5AC confidential information as confidential even after separation from F5AC. Employees will, at F5AC’s request at any time and/or when employment terminates, return all documents, papers, computer files or storage devices, web application passwords, or any other material in their possession that may contain or be derived from F5AC confidential information.

External requests for documents or information, including those that may be governed by the Public Records Act, must be referred immediately to the CEO, Public Information and Communications Officer or Chief of Staff.

Part Twelve: Ending Employment

Voluntary Termination

In all cases of voluntary resignation (e.g., separation of employment that is voluntarily initiated by the employee), employees are asked to provide a written notice to their supervisor at least 10 working days in advance of their expected last day of work. If F5AC asks an employee who has given notice of voluntary resignation to leave our employ before the end of the notice period (for example, if a replacement is to begin immediately), the employee will be paid for the entire notice period, up to a maximum of two weeks.

Employees may use available accrued vacation and PTO to extend their employment for up to 4 weeks following their final day in office.

Human Resources will coordinate and/or conduct an exit interview with each employee who voluntarily terminates employment prior to the employee's exit from F5AC. These conversations enable F5AC to gather important information about the employee's experience at F5AC, and the work environment, that may benefit other employees. Although exit interviews are not mandatory, employees are encouraged to participate in them and to speak frankly about their employment experience with F5AC.

Payroll and Returning F5AC Property

All employees separating from F5AC receive their final paycheck on the next regularly scheduled payroll date. Employees are required to return all F5AC property or equipment to Human Resources or the Office Manager before leaving on their last day of work.

Reduction in Workforce

In the event F5AC requires a reduction in workforce, the below guidelines may be followed.

In its sole discretion, F5AC determines when and whether it is necessary to implement a reduction in force (RIF); which employees are affected by the RIF; and the implementation method. Generally, we give primary consideration to the program and F5AC's needs and circumstances.

- To reduce the need for a potential RIF, employees may be hired for temporary positions, with the duration of the position dependent on funding. Employees hired for temporary positions are not eligible for severance pay but may be eligible to receive outplacement services at the conclusion of the temporary position.
- F5AC may reduce positions through attrition instead of RIF.
- F5AC may require a furlough instead of a RIF (e.g., require employees to work fewer hours per week or take a specified period off work without pay). During the period of furlough, F5AC will attempt to maintain employees' health and dental insurance benefits at the same level as they were prior to the furlough for a period not to exceed eighteen (18) months.
- F5AC may reduce positions from full-time to part-time depending on program needs and funding availability. If F5AC reduces a position to part-time, F5AC will attempt to maintain the employee's health and dental benefits at the same level immediately prior to the hours reduction for a period not to exceed eighteen (18) months, and subject to any future changes in the F5AC's benefit package. Employees who voluntarily request a part-time schedule are not eligible for this benefit.
- F5AC may eliminate positions and will determine if the RIF will occur on an agency-wide basis or in one or more programs, departments, and/or classifications.

Length of Service: An employee's length of service is measured from the original employment date with F5AC (including time as a County employee, Tri-Net employee, or Diversified employee) if there has not been a break in service greater than 30 days (not including leave protected by law. Approved legally protected leaves do not constitute a break in service).

Notice: Employees selected for RIF through position elimination will be given at least 10 business days' notice of the proposed final employment date.

Severance Pay: If positions are eliminated due to RIF, F5AC may authorize severance pay of two weeks' regular base salary or pay less applicable tax and other withholdings, for every year of continuous service (according to the above length of service definition), not to exceed eighteen (18) weeks of pay. If severance pay is authorized, it will be paid in one lump sum on or after the termination date, and, according to ACERA, is not pensionable.

To receive severance pay, if payment is authorized, employees must first sign a waiver releasing F5AC from any and all liability related to their employment with F5AC and their separation from employment. Refusal to sign the waiver within the allowed period and/or lawful revocation of the waiver renders an employee ineligible to receive severance pay.

In addition to severance pay, if any, F5AC may also make a payment equivalent to \$500 per year of service (as defined above in the length of service definition), but not to exceed \$3,000 total, to help with the cost of health insurance. This payment, if authorized by F5AC, will be made in one lump sum, and will be issued at the same as severance pay. To receive the payment described in this paragraph, if authorized, employees must first sign a waiver releasing F5AC from all liability from their employment with F5AC and their separation from employment. Refusal to sign the waiver within the allowed period and/or lawful revocation of the waiver renders an employee ineligible to receive severance pay.

If an employee who was previously part of a RIF and received any severance pay is rehired and then subsequently laid off, that employee may be eligible for severance only up to a maximum of eighteen (18) weeks of pay when all severance payments (e.g., from the first and second RIFs) are combined.

Outplacement Services: Employees whose positions are eliminated in a RIF, or who were hired for temporary positions in connection with a RIF, may be eligible for F5AC outplacement services. These services are designed to help F5AC employees find positions in Alameda County where they can continue to use their skills and expertise on behalf of children aged 0 to 5 years. Outplacement services, if provided, will not exceed three months following the date of separation. F5AC makes no guarantee that utilizing its outplacement services will result in an employment offer.



Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the First 5 Alameda County (“F5AC”) Employee Handbook. I understand that the Handbook contains important information on the general employment policies of F5AC and on my privileges and obligations as an employee. I acknowledge that I am expected to read, understand, and adhere to F5AC’s policies, and I understand I am governed by the contents of this Handbook. I further understand that F5AC may change, rescind, or add to any policies, benefits, or practices described in the Handbook, other than the concept of at-will employment. By my signature below, I also acknowledge and understand that employment at F5AC is at-will employment. That is, either I or F5AC may terminate my employment at any time, for any reason or no reason, with or without cause.

Employee Name

Employee Signature

Date

Change Log

| Item | Date |
|--|------------|
| Original adoption of Employee policies adopted by Commission | 5/21/2004 |
| Handbook Update – Approved by Commission Includes addition of fingerprinting under “Work Eligibility”, “Tools and Technology”; and “Bilingual Pay”. Medical and Dental Insurance sections rewritten to reflect current benefit structure; “Floating Personal Days” and “Personal Use Time” merged under “Paid Time Off (PTO)”; “Unpaid Time Off and Leaves of Absence” section reformatted to include matrix of leaves | 5/26/2005 |
| Addition of Catastrophic Leave Bank – approved by Commission | 9/29/2005 |
| Year End Manual Clean-up – reviewed by Executive Committee | 6/19/2006 |
| Year End Manual Clean-up – reviewed by Executive Committee Includes Addition of Professional Development, Payment in Lieu Long Term Disability, Children in the Workplace, Telecommuting, & References sections; Change in Full Time Status definition, Remove Position Description section | 5/22/2008 |
| Formatting Update | 2/25/2009 |
| Year End Manual Clean-up – reviewed by Executive Committee Includes addition of Paid Family Leave, Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace section Addition of Reduction in Workforce section – approved by Commission 12/11/08, with addition of severance pay cap 3/26/09 | 6/25/2009 |
| Year End Manual Clean-up – reviewed by Executive Committee Includes Addition of Personal Leave of Absence modifications to sick leave policy – approved by Commission on 12/10/09; Deleted Tools and Technology benefit – approved by Commission on 12/10/09 | 6/24/2010 |
| Year End Manual Clean-up – Reviewed by Executive Committee Addition of Child Abuse Reporting, Confidentiality policies & Temporary Military Duty Leave; Removed Lent to Other Government or Educational Institution Leave | 12/8/2011 |
| Deleted ACERA offset benefit – approved by Commission on 12/13/12 | 12/13/2012 |
| Year End Manual Clean-up – Reviewed by Executive Committee Revisions to Unpaid Leave section, including deletion of the Matrix format, Separation of Pay Periods into Pay Periods and Work Schedules, addition of Reasonable Accommodation Leave, Social Media, Media Relations; Removed Educational, Temporary Military Duty and Military Leaves | 5/23/2013 |
| Year End Handbook Clean-up – Reviewed by Executive Committee Consolidation of Medical and Dental Insurance sections, deletion of Wage Garnishments and Appeal of Serious Discipline sections | 6/26/2014 |
| Year End Handbook Clean-up – Reviewed by Executive Committee, including modifications to Sick Time to reflect provisions in the Healthy Workplace Healthy Family Act, and to Health and Dental Insurance to reflect provisions in the Affordable Care Act | 6/18/2015 |
| Year End Handbook Clean-up – Approved by Commission on 6/16/16 Title change from “Employee Policies and Procedures Handbook” to “Employee Handbook” Addition of “Paid Time Off” usage during Introductory Period Addition to Eligibility of Dependent Children of Temporary Employees; Employer Share of Health and Dental Premiums for Temporary Employees and Their Eligible Dependents; Definition for Eligible Dependents; Vacation Time off Requests; Modification to “Workplace Conduct” | 6/16/2016 |
| Addition of \$500 per Fiscal Year for Professional Development, to Be Reimbursed After Completion of Course(s) – Any Unused Funds Will not Carryover | 7/20/2016 |
| Addition to Leaves of Absence – Paid Leave, Work Hours and pay – Flex schedule | 8/18/2016 |

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Modify Leaves of Absence – Paid Leave | 6/15/2017 |
| Week of Christmas Off & 3% Cola Eff. 01/26/18; In Lieu update from \$125 per month to \$137.50 per month – Approved by Commission. | 12/14/2017 |
| Year End Handbook Clean-up – Approved by Commission Includes Extension of Employee's Introductory period, modify Leaves of Absence – Unpaid, Paid Sick Time, Workplace Conduct | 6/21/2018 |
| Modify Benefits & CA Paid Family Leave – Approved by Commission | 12/13/2018 |
| Handbook Clean-up – Approved by Commission, including updates to approval levels and titles, Reasonable Accommodation, Replaced Policy Prohibiting Harassment & Discrimination, Benefits, Added "additional benefits" section, Vacations, Jury Duty, Pay Periods, 9/80 Schedule, Bereavement, Leave Policies and Catastrophic Leave Bank, Paid Parental Leave, Children in workplace, Telecommuting has been renamed Remote Work, Attire, Technology-Voicemail & Email, Social Media, Workplace Conduct, Open-door Policy, Conflict of Interest, Voluntary Employment Terminations, Reduction in Workforce. The following have been removed: References to pre-employment/onboarding processes, sections on Employing Commissioners, Executive Benefits Package, Long-Term Disability, Payroll Deductions, and Parking. | 10/17/2019 |
| Update approved by the Commission – At-Will Employment, Policy Prohibiting Harassment & Discrimination, Adding Presidential General Election Holiday and COVID 19 Temporary Remote Work Policy | 10/15/2020 |
| Update approved by the Executive Committee – Handbook Clean-up – approved by the Commission Executive Committee, including updates to approval levels and titles, clarification on introductory employees, At Will Employment, Policy Prohibiting Harassment & Discrimination, Work Eligibility, Introductory Period, Employee Classifications, Professional Development, Benefits, Vacations, Paid Time Off, Paid Sick Time, Bereavement Leave, Paid Parental Leave, Leaves of Absences, Work Schedules, Bilingual and Multilanguage Pay, Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace, Expense Reimbursement, References, Communication & Technology, Conflict of Interest & Incompatible Activities, Confidentiality, Reduction in Force Additions: Juneteenth & Indigenous People's Day Holidays; Additional Eligible Family Members under CFRA, 4-10 Schedule; COVID-19 Workforce Vaccination Policy, Right to Respond to Notice of Serious Discipline | 05/26/2022 |
| Updates for legislative compliance to add "designated person" to Paid Sick Time and Unpaid Leaves, to include 5 days of bereavement leave for part-time employees (paid leave prorated), to update name of Civil Rights Department (from Fair Employment and Housing). | 12/08/2022 |
| Updates to TB test in Work Eligibility section, added Alternative Work Schedule, Overtime Pay and Compensatory Time Off, Remote Work Policy, Removed COVID-19 Workplace Vaccination Policy | 10/5/2023 |
| Updates to Equal Opportunity and Policy Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination, temporary employee sick leave allotment, Reproductive Loss Leave, Alternative Work Schedule, and Technology, Voicemail and Email Policy | 2/15/2024 |
| Update Media Policy and add Governmental, Legislative, and External Relations Policy | 06/11/2024 |
| Handbook Update - Added Background Check Policy and Updated "Flex" Benefit Credit to "Benefit" Credit | 12/5/2024 |
| <u>Handbook Update – Updated Health Insurance language to reflect employees paying a percentage of premium; updated Benefit Credit to remove reference of "per calendar year."</u> | <u>04/17/2025</u> |



To: First 5 Alameda Executive Committee

From: Kristin Spanos, Chief Executive Officer
Cally Martin, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Nick Zhou, Chief Financial Officer
Maria Canteros, Senior Finance Administrator

Date: April 17, 2025

Subject: Fiscal Year 2024-25 Executive Committee Contract Authorization

REQUESTED ACTION

To review and approve the following Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 contract authorization.

BACKGROUND

Per our Financial Policies, Section IX. Purchasing and Contracting, the Executive Committee must approve contract/award amounts between \$200,000 and \$299,999 in aggregate. The following award requires specific authorization from the Executive Committee.

Exygy - \$70,000

First 5 Alameda County is requesting approval of a FY2024-25 \$70,000 sole source contract amendment with Exygy to continue the design, development, build, and launch of the Measure C ECE Emergency Grants application. Exygy currently has a \$200,000 contract and the amendment will support increases in the requirements, complexity, and review processes. The extended scope of work covers new features, new functionality to facilitate processing of applications, and other changes based on feedback from the Beta testing cohort.

Fiscal Impact: Funding is budgeted.

Action Requested: Approve an aggregate FY 2024-25 award amount of \$270,000 for Exygy.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive Committee approve the above contract authorization.

Submitted by:

Signed by:

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Nick Zhou
Chief Financial Officer

Reviewed by:

DocuSigned by:

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Cally Martin
Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Approved by:

DocuSigned by:

8493762444274E9

Maria Canteros
Senior Finance Administrator

DocuSigned by:

ED639B4561544E4

Kristin Spanos
Chief Executive Officer



To: First 5 Alameda Executive Committee

From: Kristin Spanos, Chief Executive Officer
Cally Martin, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Nick Zhou, Chief Financial Officer
Maria Canteros, Senior Finance Administrator

Date: April 17, 2025

Subject: Fiscal Year 2024-25 Contract Authorizations

REQUESTED ACTION

To review the following contract authorizations.

BACKGROUND

Per our Financial Policies, Section IX. Purchasing and Contracting, the Commission must approve contract/award amounts of \$300,000 and above in aggregate. The following awards require specific authorization from the Commission.

Lotus Bloom - \$62,603

First 5 Alameda County is requesting approval of a FY 2023-25 contract amendment for \$62,603 with Lotus Bloom for the Oakland Family Resource Center to support the continuation of a planning process to relaunch a Countywide Navigator Network in FY 2025-26, which will support staff working with families with children 0-5. The current contract of \$63,653 supports the coordination of the Oakland Family Resource Center Network (OFRCN) and the addition of \$62,603 brings this contract total to \$126,256 and the aggregate total to \$1,314,927 for which Commission approval is needed.

First 5 currently has three additional contracts with Lotus Bloom:

- FY 2023-25 contracts for \$942,092 (FY 2023-24 \$459,557 & FY2024-25 \$482,535) to coordinate and implement programs and services at the Castlemont Community Room to Bloom Family Resource Center.
- FY 2023-25 contract for \$196,579 (FY 2023-24 \$94,185 & FY 2024-25 \$102,394) for the San Antonio Family Resource Center (a Neighborhoods Ready for School site).
- FY 2024-25 contract for \$50,000 to support the Oakland Family Resource Center Network for basic needs services supporting families in Oakland.

Fiscal Impact: Funding is in the budget.

Action Requested: Approve an aggregate FY 2023-25 \$1,314,927 contract amount with Lotus Bloom.

Berlin Rosen - \$35,000

First 5 Alameda County is requesting approval of a FY 2023-25 contract amendment for \$35,000 with Berlin Rosen to support search and recruitment process for the Chief Strategic Communications Officer.

The addition of \$35,000 brings this contract total to \$560,000 for which Commission approval is needed.

Fiscal Impact: Funding is in the budget.

Action Requested: Approve a FY 2023-25 award amount of \$560,000 for Berlin Rosen.

School Readiness Consulting - \$100,000

First 5 Alameda County is requesting approval of a \$100,000 sole source new contract with School Readiness Consulting (SRC) to support facilitation and to develop a collaborative planning process to strengthen Oakland Children’s Initiative’s (OCI) collective implementation. SRC will conduct document reviews, facilitate four strategic planning meetings, and synthesize input from partners to co-develop a shared vision, identify solutions, and outline clear next steps. The engagement will culminate in a Strategic Implementation Brief and accompanying presentation deck that summarizes decisions and provides actionable guidance for future work.

SRC currently has a FY 2023-25 contract of \$589,271 (FY 2023-24 \$441,622 & FY 2024-25 \$147,649) to support the planning, community engagement, and strategic implementation of early care and education systems.

Fiscal Impact: Funding is in the budget.

Action Requested: Approve an aggregate FY2023-26 award amount of \$689,271 for School Readiness Consulting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive Committee recommend the above contract authorizations be brought to the Commission for approval at their next meeting.

Submitted by:


Signed by:

 9CAD6F2B98B34BC...
 Nick Zhou
 Chief Financial Officer


Reviewed by:

DocuSigned by:

 F38237316EG4482...
 Cally Martin
 Deputy Chief Executive Officer

DocuSigned by:

 8483762444274F0...
 Maria Canteros
 Senior Finance Administrator

Approved by:

DocuSigned by:

 ED639B4561544E4...
 Kristin Spanos
 Chief Executive Officer



Staff Announcements

April 24, 2025

GENERAL AGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Welcome to our New Commissioner!

- **Cathy Sandeen**, president of Cal State East Bay since October 2020, was appointed to the Commission in March.
- Cathy has previously served as chancellor of the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) and as chancellor of the University of Wisconsin Colleges and University of Wisconsin-Extension.
- Cal State East Bay offers a PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Teaching Credential that aims to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and tools to educate California's youngest learners.
- We are excited to have her on the Commission, especially as we look to strengthen and expand workforce pipelines in early care and education.



GENERAL AGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Staff Development & Internal Culture Building

- **Launched the Supervisors Training Series** with a kickoff session facilitated by Onward.
- **Continued the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (DEIB) Lunch & Learn series** with Dr. Sacha Joseph-Mathews.
- **Shifting to In-Person All-Staff Meetings** to provide opportunities for staff to see different communities in the county and to more directly learn about our community partners' work.

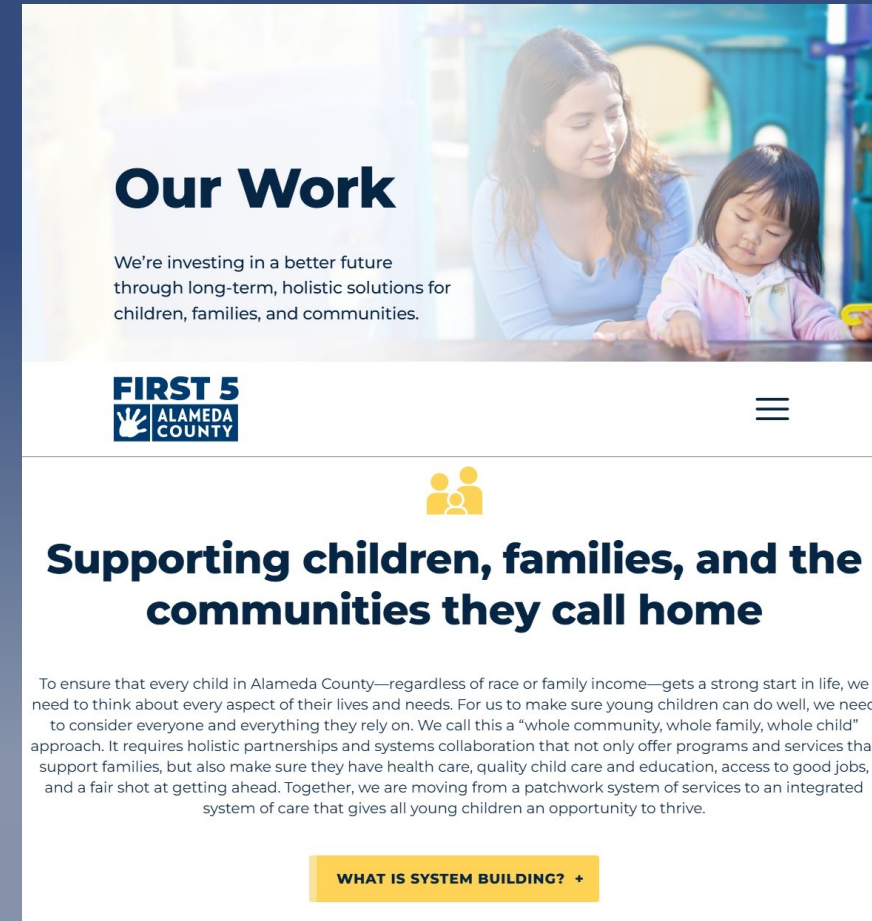


GENERAL AGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Technology & Innovation

- **Advanced the Centralized Eligibility and Enrollment System and began landscape assessment to inform a Data Warehouse,** including continuation of design sessions with our Child Care Pathways Design Team and the start of partner interviews with Child Trends.
- **Soft launched our new website!** Partnered with creative agency Vermillion, Inc. at the start of last year and together, over the span of 16 months, have built a new, modern website, which we are in the final stages of completing.





PEOPLE

We partner with stakeholders to support parents, caregivers, and children and ensure that families and providers have the resources they need for children to thrive.

PEOPLE



Measure C: 5-Year Plan Development

- Despite securing the Board of Supervisors' approval and appropriation of the \$165.8M Emergency Stabilization Fund, we were **forced to delay the launch of Measure C funds** until the adoption of the full 5-Year Plan in June.
- Continuing to do everything in our power to **build the implementation infrastructure needed to disburse Measure C funds** as soon as possible following the Board's appropriation of funds in June.
 - Launched **beta testing of the ECE Emergency Grant application platform**
 - Continued to develop Year-1 **implementation plans**
- Hosted **more than 37 hours of public meetings**, including six Community Advisory Council Listening Sessions. In total, for all six listening sessions, we had **600+ community members** participate.



PEOPLE



DULCE Family Celebration

We hosted a celebration for families who have **"graduated"** from **Project DULCE** after the first six months of their child's life. It included a resource fair that connected families to services for the next phase of their child's life.

- Community partners, including **Oakland Promise, Bay Area Youth EMT Program, Alameda County Community Food Bank**, and others. Partners provided valuable resources and information to the **250+ children and families** in attendance.

In FY 23-24 Project DULCE **served 153 families** with newborns at Highland Hospital and **provided 150+ hours of legal support** from East Bay Community Law Center.

We continue to meet with Alameda Health System to support planning for the sustainability of Project DULCE.



An aerial photograph of a city, likely San Francisco, with a large marina filled with sailboats in the foreground. The city skyline is visible in the middle ground, and hills are in the background. A yellow rectangular box is centered over the city.

PLACE

We partner with communities to build relationships, services, and infrastructure that support neighborhood conditions for family and child well-being.

FIRST 5



PLACE



Fathers Corps Breakfast at OUSD

Fathers Corps partnered with **Oakland Unified School District (OUSD)** to host a breakfast for fathers and father figures at the Laurel Child Development Center (CDC). The event celebrated and honored Laurel CDC fathers and father-figures.

- The event marked the culmination of a fatherhood training series provided to staff at five OUSD early learning sites. Each of the five sites hosted a father-centered event.
- **15 fathers and father-figures attended**, joined by their little ones.

In FY-23-24 Fathers Corps **served more than 500 fathers and father-figures**, hosted a Father-Friendly Provider Network and Healthy Relationship Learning Community, coordinated a Fatherhood Training Series with two public system partners, and hosted the 2023 Fatherhood Summit, attended by more than 400 fathers, father figures, and partners.



PLACE



Oakland Children's Initiative

- In February, **presented to the Children's Initiative Oversight Commission** on the Early Education Fund's Fiscal Year 2024-25 investments at OUSD, proposed investments at the City of Oakland Head Start, and our work supporting the system build in Oakland.
- **Hosted four Community Listening Sessions** across Oakland to inform future investments by the Early Education Fund and the next iteration of the Five-Year Guidelines.
- Engaged School Readiness Consulting to **facilitate future visioning for the Early Education Fund** among City of Oakland and OUSD leadership, and evolve alignment between budget, program impact, and systems planning.
- Engaged in the **two-year evaluation planning process** for the Initiative and collaborating with American Institutes for Research (AIR) to **align with the Measure C evaluation**.



PLACE



Oakland Children's Initiative continued...

- Engaged School Readiness Consulting to **facilitate future visioning for the Early Education Fund** among City of Oakland and OUSD leadership, and evolve the alignment between budget, program impact, and systems planning.
- Engaging in the **two-year evaluation** planning process for the Initiative and collaborating with **American Institutes for Research (AIR)** to align with the Measure C evaluation and to refine the methodology and data collection strategies for the process study component of the Oakland Children's Initiative evaluation.



FIRST 5



ALAMEDA
COUNTY

First5Alameda

POLICY

We advocate for policy and systems change that centers the needs of families, young children, and caregivers and supports community and family conditions for children and families to thrive. We also support community-led efforts, including parent leadership.



FIRST 5
ALAMEDA
COUNTY

FIRST 5

POLICY



National Early Care and Education (ECE) Working Group

Participated in the **ECE Implementation Working Group Spring Convening** at New America's offices in Washington, D.C.

- Sessions focused on coalition-building, messaging, and leveraging data for policy advocacy at the local, state, and federal level.
- Participants explored how local efforts can influence federal policy, shared key implementation challenges faced by Work Group members, and discussed how the Work Group can support local work.
- The convening wrapped up with reflections and next steps to maintain the group's momentum.



POLICY



First 5 Advocacy Day

- Participated in the **Annual First 5 Advocacy Day** at the State Capitol in Sacramento. This year's focus was on advocating against potential state budget cuts while highlighting opportunities for collaboration with the First 5 Network.
 - Met with Assembly Member Ortega and the Offices of Assemblymembers Bonta, Lee, Wicks, and Bauer-Kahan and the Offices of Senators Arreguin and Grayson.
- Attended the California Budget & Policy Center's **2025 Policy Insights Conference** and heard from state officials and leaders on the shifting federal and state fiscal and policy landscape.







AGENDA ITEM 7

Legislation and Public Policy Updates April 2025

FEDERAL POLICY

Fiscal Year 2025 Appropriations

On March 14th, Congress successfully averted a federal government shutdown by passing the House's [Continuing Resolution](#) (CR) that extends federal funding through September 30, 2025. The CR provides discretionary funding for key programs such as:

- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)
- Head Start
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Key highlights of the Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations package include:

- **\$13 billion cut** to non-defense programs and services
- **\$6 billion increase** in defense spending
- **Flat funding** (at FY 2024 funding levels) for most child- and family-serving programs, which fails to account for rising programs costs and growing need
- **Elimination of earmarks**, removing special funding for projects in specific congressional districts or states

While this CR provides temporary budget stability, it does not meet the increasing demands on family and early childhood services and supports. Congress must now turn its attention to developing and passing the FY 2026 budget by the September 30, 2025 deadline to avoid future disruptions and provide budgetary certainty for state and local governments as they prepare their budgets for the upcoming year.

Recent [reporting](#) indicate that the Trump Administration will propose **elimination of Head Start funding** in the FY 2026 budget. Congress will need to move this proposal forward as part of the FY 2026 appropriations process. Head Start serves as a cornerstone in our nation's commitment to lifting children and families out of poverty. It supports more than one million working parents and delivers proven outcomes with both short- and long-term, multigenerational benefits. Alameda County currently has seven federally funded Head Start contractors, serving over 3,300 children.

Federal Budget Resolution and Reconciliation

In parallel, Congress is working on a separate budget process called the **Budget Resolution**, which guides mandatory spending (e.g. Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP) and sets the stage for the **Reconciliation Process**—a mechanism that allows certain legislation to pass in the Senate with a simple majority, bypassing the 60-vote filibuster threshold.

Earlier this year, the House and Senate each introduced their own budget blueprints with two very different approaches:

- **Senate Proposal:** A two-step approach with \$342 billion in new spending paired with modest initial spending cuts to fund border security. A second, future bill would address broader tax and budget changes.
- **House Proposal:** A single, comprehensive bill that includes over **\$4 trillion in tax cuts** and a corresponding **\$4 trillion increase to the debt ceiling**. To pay for these provisions, the House plan includes deep cuts to:
 - [Medicaid](#): \$880 billion
 - [SNAP](#): \$230 billion
 - [Child nutrition and education programs](#): proposed cuts among many programs

Just before the April recess, both the Senate and the House passed a new revised budget resolution which allows Congress to move forward with legislation that will determine how the top-line cuts are implemented. The newly passed budget framework includes instructions to the Senate Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over Medicaid and taxes, that allows for an increase to the deficit by \$1.5 trillion over 10 years (on top of a 2017 tax cuts extension). The framework increases the likelihood of larger cuts to Medicaid. The House will take the first attempt at writing legislation to direct the \$1.5 trillion in spending cuts. However, due to disagreements within party lines, this could be a lengthy process. You can learn more about the [budget process here](#).

Executive Orders and Federal Workforce Reductions

The Trump Administration has continued to issue several executive orders and implement workforce reductions across key federal agencies, including the Department of Education, Health and Human Services, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. These actions have heightened anxiety and uncertainty about the future of critical programs and services that support communities, families, and children. Key developments include:

- **Restructuring of Health and Human Services:** On March 27, the Trump Administration announced a [major restructure](#) of Health and Human Services (HHS), which will reduce the workforce from 82,000 to 62,000 employees and consolidate the agency's structure from 28 to 15 divisions. According to the HHS Secretary, the changes aim to redirect focus toward addressing

AGENDA ITEM 7

the chronic disease epidemic. However, these cuts will affect all HHS divisions, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and other smaller divisions. These cuts will impact all HHS divisions and have significant implications for the nation's public health infrastructure.

- **Region 9 Office Closure:** As part of these workforce reduction efforts, the HHS Secretary laid off all staff from both the Office of Head Start and the Office of Child Care in five regional offices, including San Francisco which serves the western states of California, Arizona, Hawaii and Nevada. These offices play a critical role in providing oversight, guidance, and direct support to local Head Start programs, ensuring they have the resources and assistance needed to deliver Head Start's high-quality child care, education, health, nutrition, and wrap around supports. It is unclear who will administer Head Start grants going forward. This is particularly concerning for grants that are due to start on May 1st. We are working to gather more information on the impacts to local Head Start grantees, including the City of Oakland's Head Start program—one of our contractors under the Oakland Children's Initiative (OCI).
- **Department of Education Dismantling:** On March 20, President Trump signed an Executive Order directing the Secretary of Education to take all necessary steps to wind down the Department of Education—while maintaining delivery of services, benefits, and programs. Although the department cannot be formally dissolved without an act of Congress, the Administration has already taken steps to lay off more than half of its workforce. [Some statutory programs are being transferred to other federal agencies](#), such as Health and Human Services and the Small Business Administration.
- **Birthright Citizenship:** On April 17th, the Supreme Court announced that they will hear arguments on President Trump's executive order to end birthright citizenship on May 15, 2025. The executive order, which would end birthright citizenship for the children of undocumented immigrants and foreign residents, will remain paused in every state while the court considers the case.

A complete list of President Trump's executive orders from this term is available [here](#).

STATE POLICY

State Budget Outlook

The Governor's January budget proposal for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 projected a modest surplus, with stronger than anticipated revenue growth improving the budget outlook for both the state and school districts. However, significant risks remain. Rising [Medi-Cal costs](#), ongoing economic uncertainty, and the potential for significant federal funding cuts place the state budget in a precarious position. The Governor's May Revise is expected to provide more detailed updates on revenue forecasts and spending priorities for the upcoming fiscal year.

2025-2026 Legislative Session Overview

California lawmakers introduced 2,350 bills by the February 21st deadline. First 5 is actively tracking and analyzing legislative and budgetary proposals aligned with our [2025 Policy Agenda](#). Below are key bills of interest:

| Bill Number | Summary | Position |
|---|--|----------|
| AB 29 (Arambula) Medi-Cal: Adverse Childhood Experiences trauma screenings: providers. | This bill would allow 1) community-based organizations and local health jurisdictions that provide health services through community health workers and (2) doulas, that are enrolled Medi-Cal providers, as providers qualified to provide, and eligible to receive payments for, ACEs trauma screenings pursuant to the provisions described in the bill. The bill would require these providers to make clinical or other appropriate referrals, as specified, as a condition of payment for conducting ACEs trauma screenings. | Watch |
| AB 49 (Muratsuchi): Schoolsites and day care centers: entry requirements: immigration enforcement. | Would add protections to school sites by prohibiting immigration enforcement agencies from entering a school site without valid identification, signed judicial warrant, and proper approvals from school leaders. The bill also limits access of enforcement officers to facilities where students are not present. First 5s and other ECE partners are advocating for inclusion of child care centers and home based child care providers in a separate bill. | Support |
| AB 403 (Ortega) Medi-Cal: community health worker services. | Requires the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to report annually on several aspects of the Medi-Cal Community Health Worker (CHW) benefit, including assessing outreach and education efforts by managed care plans, CHW spending and utilization, referrals by provider type, and demographic disaggregation of CHWs and Medi-Cal members receiving CHW services. | Watch |
| AB-563 (Jackson) Childcare: strategic planning councils. | Renames “local planning council” to “strategic planning council” and would revise the definition of “childcare” to include early childhood education services. The bill would revise the makeup requirements for strategic planning councils, as provided. The bill would authorize a county board of supervisors and a county superintendent of schools to merge the strategic planning council with the Quality Rating and Improvement System local consortia or with another strategic planning council in a contiguous county under certain conditions, as provided. The bill would repeal all of the requirements imposed on strategic planning councils in order for the strategic planning council to identify local priorities, except those provided in the bill. | Watch |
| AB-607 (Rodriguez) CalWORKs: Home Visiting Program. | Extends the time on the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program to at least 24 months, not to exceed the duration of the applicable home visiting program model, and would extend the maximum age of the child at the time of enrollment to less than 36 months of age. The bill would also authorize a voluntary participant whose participation would otherwise be | Watch |

AGENDA ITEM 7

| | | |
|---|---|-------|
| | terminated because the participant no longer meets CalWORKs income, eligibility, or need criteria to continue through the duration of the home visiting program or for up to an additional 12 months, whichever is longer. | |
| <u>AB-636 (Ortega)</u> <u>Medi-Cal: diapers.</u> | Establishes diapers as a covered Medi-Cal benefit for a child greater than 3 years of age who has been diagnosed with a condition, as specified, that contributes to incontinence, and for an individual under 21 years of age if necessary to correct or ameliorate a condition pursuant to certain federal standards. The bill would limit the provided diapers to an appropriate supply based on the diagnosed condition and the age of the Medi-Cal beneficiary. | Watch |
| <u>AB-753 (Garcia)</u> <u>Childcare: facility licensure: teacher requirements.</u> | Increases access to childcare and early learning programs by reforming lengthy licensure wait times. This bill enables childcare and preschool programs to hire a teacher and provides them with 2 years from their hire date to pursue the necessary permit or complete additional coursework to meet the credentialing requirements for their position. Additionally, to expedite the licensing process for facilities who have an application pending to serve infants and toddlers, this bill allows child care and preschool programs, that are already licensed child care facilities providing services to preschool children, to also serve infants and toddlers, as long as the facility's existing license is not on probation and the provider has submitted a complete application. | Watch |
| <u>SB-792 (Arreguín)</u> <u>Childcare: state median income threshold.</u> | Revises the income eligibility for CalWORKs stage three childcare services to be 85% of the state median income, adjusted for family size. This change would align it with the income eligibility of other programs. | Watch |

FIRST 5 ALAMEDA COUNTY POLICY ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

Our policy team recently attended First 5 Advocacy Day at the state capital where we met with seven offices, including Assemblymember Ortega. We advocated for the protection of early childhood and safety-net programs and services for our communities. We highlighted the importance of Medi-Cal and diaper supports as well as protections for our immigrant communities.

We will continue to monitor developments at the federal and state level to assess their impact on early childhood systems and advocate for strong, equitable support for communities, families, and young children. Below are additional actions we have taken to support families with young children and advocate for equitable early childhood systems:

Federal Advocacy

- [Opposed recent harmful executive orders](#) that restrict families' access to early care and education, health care, basic needs, and essential services.

AGENDA ITEM 7

- [Opposed staffing and funding cuts](#) to the Administration for Children and Families that undermine an already fragmented and under resourced public early care and education system.
- [Rejected attempts to eliminate or weaken the Head Start program](#) proposed by the Trump Administration.

State

- [Supported AB-49 \(Muratsuchi\)](#) which would add protections to school sites by prohibiting immigration enforcement agencies from entering a school sites without valid identification, signed judicial warrant, and proper approvals from school leaders. The bill also limits access of enforcement officers to facilities where students are not present. First 5s and other ECE partners are advocating for inclusion of child care centers and home based child care providers in a separate bill.
- **Supported a \$5 million budget request** to [restore the 2025 rate increase for Community Health Workers/Promotoras/Representatives \(CHW/P/Rs\)](#), raising rates by 22.2% to \$32.58 per half-hour visit. Future rates will be regionally adjusted starting in 2026 to reflect differences in the cost of living throughout the state.
- **Supported a budget request** to fully fund [multi-year continuous Medi-Cal eligibility](#) for children ages 0 through 5, ensuring uninterrupted access to healthcare coverage for California's youngest low-income children, prioritizing a healthy start for one of the state's most vulnerable populations.
- **Supported a \$16.5 million budget request** for diaper bank funding in the FY 2025-2026 state budget.

First 5 Alameda will continue to monitor developments at the federal and state level to assess their impact on early childhood systems and advocate for strong, equitable support for communities, families, and young children.



AGENDA ITEM 8

First 5 California Commission and First 5 Association Updates April 2025

First 5 Advocacy Day 2025

First 5 Advocacy Day 2025 was held on April 9th and brought together the First 5 Network to meet directly with state legislators and leaders to champion the well-being of children ages 0-5. Advocacy Day is intended to advance policies and investments that strengthen and support California's youngest children, their families and the statewide early childhood system of care. The Government Affairs and Policy team represented First 5 Alameda County in Sacramento and **advocated for preserving investments in and strengthening access to Medi-Cal, diapers, and other essential services for families.**

First 5 Association of California Calls on Congress to Reject Alarming Health Care Cuts That Will Hurt Young Children and Families

The First 5 Association of California, which represents the First 5 Commissions across the state's 58 counties, issued a statement in response to the House Republican budget plan that would eliminate vital health care benefits for an estimated five million California children. The press release includes initial estimates of California children ages 0-5 who could lose health care if the House budget plan were implemented. The statement is available to [here](#). The First 5 Center for Children's Policy also [released a blog](#) that further analyzed how cuts to Medicaid might affect each county's birth to five population. **In Alameda County, the estimated impact of the proposed Medicaid cuts could adversely impact 32,739 Medi-Cal eligible children under five and their families.**

Immigration Policy & Young Children: First 5 Strategies and Federal Updates

On March 24, the First 5 Association hosted a learning call to share updates on recent federal actions related to immigration and their potential impact on young children and families. Participants also heard from a First 5 peer panel, with local commissions sharing how they are responding to immigration-related challenges in their communities.

First 5 Network 2025 Family Engagement Survey

The First 5 Association launched a Family Engagement Survey to capture how First 5s are engaging with families across the state, update Family Engagement maps they developed with the 2024 survey data, and create more peer to peer learning opportunities. **First 5 Alameda County submitted a response highlighting our family engagement efforts and that of our funded community partners.**



AGENDA ITEM 8

First 5 Association of California Revised Membership Dues Formula

The First 5 Association of California is phasing in a new membership dues formula for the next three fiscal years to meet the Association's revenue goals in a more equitable way. The base rate will begin at \$6,000 per member plus \$2.60 per birth beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26. The base rate will increase to \$8,000 in FY 2026-27 and to \$10,000 in FY2027-28. Dues for any member will be capped at \$95,000 and the voluntary policy fund will be eliminated. With the new formula, seven members will contribute a combined 40% of all annual membership dues and 30 members will contribute less than 1% of total dues. Thorough discussions to address members' concerns amid decline Proposition 10 revenues were held to inform and finalize the new formula change.

First 5 California Commission Meeting

The First 5 California Commission met on April 17, 2025. The meeting was focused on adopting the First 5 California Strategic Plan, approval of the FY 2025-26 annual report, state and federal updates, and an informational presentation on immigration support for children and families. Agendas and meeting materials are [available here](#).



To: First 5 Alameda County Commission

From: Kristin Spanos, Chief Executive Officer
Cally Martin, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Nick Zhou, Chief Financial Officer
Maria Canteros, Senior Finance Administrator

Date: April 24, 2025

Subject: Ratify Fiscal Year 2024-25 Contract Authorizations

REQUESTED ACTION

To review the revised Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 contract authorizations.

BACKGROUND

At the February 2025 Commission meeting, staff brought forward a list of contract authorizations as part of the Mid-Year Budget Modification process, subject to approval and appropriation of Measure C revenue by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors.

As of the date of this memo, the Board of Supervisors has not released Measure C revenue to First 5. Due to the delay in the release of funding, staff are returning to the Commission to ratify a revised contract authorization list.

First 5 staff have identified certain Measure C contracts that are critical to maintaining programmatic continuity, meeting operational timelines, and to avoiding further delays in releasing funds to the community. Accordingly, staff are requesting the Commission's ratification of the use of Proposition 10 funding for these essential contracts. Upon the release of Measure C funding, the source of funding may shift from Prop 10 to Measure C in alignment with the 5-Year Plan approved by the Board of Supervisors.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Contracts will be funded through existing budgeted allocations and funding sources, such as revenues from the Oakland Children's Initiative, California Department of Social Services Quality Counts California grant, Title 19, philanthropy, and Proposition 10. Contracts that may support readying for Measure C implementation and program delivery are temporarily funded with Proposition 10 revenue. The reimbursement for the advancing of resources for Measure C will be included in the payback calculations included in the 5-Year Plan that will be approved by the First 5 Commission and Alameda County Board of Supervisors. Following approval of the 5-Year Plan by the Board of Supervisors and the release of Measure C revenue, funding for these contracts may be realigned accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission ratify the revised FY 2024-25 contract authorizations.

Submitted by:

Signed by:

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Nick Zhou
Chief Financial Officer

Reviewed by:

DocuSigned by:

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Cally Martin
Deputy Chief Executive Officer

DocuSigned by:

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Maria Canteros
Senior Finance Administrator

Approved by:

DocuSigned by:

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Kristin Spanos
Chief Executive Officer

FIRST 5 ALAMEDA COUNTY
REVISED FY 2024-2025 Contract Authorizations

| Strategy | Contractor Name | Program/Project | Scope of Work/Description | New, Amendment or Renewal | PROPOSED Total Contract or Amendment Amount | PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED Contracts | TOTAL Contract Authorization | Description of Previously Authorized Contracts |
|------------------------|--|--|--|---------------------------|---|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Communications | Band Together Communications (formerly Joshua Steinberger) | Strategic Communications | Increased funding to add additional strategic communications support in strategy, planning, project management, and execution to meet growing agency communications needs related to Measure C implementation, core agency messaging and narrative, and CEO communications and thought leadership. Funding will also support an assessment of communications capacity and develop a recommendation on a communications team structure given the agency's evolving and growing communications work. | Amendment | \$ 220,000 | \$ 40,000 | \$ 260,000 | Funding to provide communications advising and consulting services to First 5 leadership staff. Contracts previously authorized under the vendor name "Joshua Steinberger." |
| Operations | Olsen Remcho LLP | Legal Services | Increased funding to provide legal consultation to address additional compliance requirements that demand specialized legal expertise. | Amendment | \$ 130,000 | \$ 670,000 | \$ 800,000 | Funding to provide legal services and consultation on an as-needed basis (FY 23-25: \$670,000) |
| Planning | WestEd | Community Listening Session Facilitator | Funding to add two (2) community listening sessions (an extra session for OCI, and one Measure C session for Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers). Funding to also add a supplemental report for Measure C after the OCI sessions are completed to recommend systems alignment between the two initiatives. And additional funding to support development of the Measure C 5-Year Plan. | Amendment | \$ 75,000 | \$ 288,323 | \$ 363,323 | Funding for two contracts 1) to coordinate and provide valid and reliable Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®) assessments for early care and education programs participating in the Alameda County Quality Counts program. (\$160K) and 2) to facilitate community listening sessions related to local early care and education (ECE) ballot measures and synthesize the findings in an independent report (\$128K). |
| Operations | Interpreters Unlimited | Listening Sessions, Grant Application Process, Centralized Eligibility and Enrollment System | Funding to provide interpretation and translation support for community listening sessions, the provider relief grant application process, technical assistance and the Child Care Pathways Design Team meetings. | Amendment | \$ 283,000 | \$ 17,000 | \$ 300,000 | Funding to provide language assistance services to First 5 programs and selected providers. |
| Operations | Iris Lin | Centralized Eligibility and Enrollment System | Funding to provide interpretation and translation support for the Child Care Pathways Design Team meetings. | Amendment | \$ 35,000 | \$ 10,000 | \$ 45,000 | Funding to provide language assistance services to First 5 programs and selected providers. |
| Early Care & Education | Hubbe, Inc | ECE Database Expansion | Funding for additional Hubbe database license fees in anticipation of adding up to 1,400 new ECE sites through proposed Emergency Stabilization Fund grants. License fees are prorated 25% of the annual fee for this fiscal year. The addition of these sites into Hubbe supports data collection, program monitoring, and data-driven decision making. | Amendment | \$ 35,000 | \$ 230,912 | \$ 265,912 | Funding to host a secure and fully managed iteration of the QRIS Hubbe database system for Alameda County Quality Counts to manage the local QRIS program. Funding also includes upgrades to the Hubbe database system to streamline data collection for both current sites and new sites added through Measure C. |
| | | | | | | | | |



To: First 5 Alameda County Commission

From: Kristin Spanos, Chief Executive Officer
Cally Martin, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Nick Zhou, Chief Financial Officer
Maria Canteros, Senior Finance Administrator

Date: April 24, 2025

Subject: Fiscal Year 2024-25 Contract Authorizations

REQUESTED ACTION

To review and approve the following contract authorizations.

BACKGROUND

Per our Financial Policies, Section IX. Purchasing and Contracting, the Commission must approve contract/award amounts of \$300,000 and above in aggregate. The following awards require specific authorization from the Commission.

Lotus Bloom - \$62,603

First 5 Alameda County is requesting approval of a FY 2023-25 contract amendment for \$62,603 with Lotus Bloom for the Oakland Family Resource Center to support the continuation of a planning process to relaunch a Countywide Navigator Network in FY 2025-26, which will support staff working with families with children 0-5. The current contract of \$63,653 supports the coordination of the Oakland Family Resource Center Network (OFRCN) and the addition of \$62,603 brings this contract total to \$126,256 and the aggregate total to \$1,314,927 for which Commission approval is needed.

First 5 currently has three additional contracts with Lotus Bloom:

- FY 2023-25 contracts for \$942,092 (FY 2023-24 \$459,557 & FY2024-25 \$482,535) to coordinate and implement programs and services at the Castlemont Community Room to Bloom Family Resource Center.
- FY 2023-25 contract for \$196,579 (FY 2023-24 \$94,185 & FY 2024-25 \$102,394) for the San Antonio Family Resource Center (a Neighborhoods Ready for School site).
- FY 2024-25 contract for \$50,000 to support the Oakland Family Resource Center Network for basic needs services supporting families in Oakland.

Fiscal Impact: Funding is in the budget.

Action Requested: Approve an aggregate FY 2023-25 \$1,314,927 contract amount with Lotus Bloom.

Berlin Rosen - \$35,000

First 5 Alameda County is requesting approval of a FY 2023-25 contract amendment for \$35,000 with Berlin Rosen to support the search and recruitment process for the Chief Strategic Communications Officer. The current FY 2023-25 contract of \$525,000 supports the development and facilitation of a change management framework for First 5, including executive coaching and consultation to the Executive Leadership Team and the CEO, systems capacity building, project management and coordination, and providing strategic communications consultation and support. The addition of \$35,000 brings this contract total to \$560,000 for which Commission approval is needed.

Fiscal Impact: Funding is in the budget.

Action Requested: Approve a FY 2023-25 award amount of \$560,000 for Berlin Rosen.

School Readiness Consulting - \$100,000

First 5 Alameda County is requesting approval of a \$100,000 sole source new contract with School Readiness Consulting (SRC) to support facilitation and to develop a collaborative planning process to strengthen Oakland Children's Initiative's (OCI) collective implementation. SRC will conduct document reviews, facilitate four strategic planning meetings, and synthesize input from partners to co-develop a shared vision, identify solutions, and outline clear next steps. The engagement will culminate in a Strategic Implementation Brief and accompanying presentation deck that summarizes decisions and provides actionable guidance for future work.

SRC currently has a FY 2023-25 contract of \$589,271 (FY 2023-24 \$441,622 & FY 2024-25 \$147,649) to support the planning, community engagement, and strategic implementation of early care and education systems.

Fiscal Impact: Funding is in the budget.

Action Requested: Approve an aggregate FY2023-26 award amount of \$689,271 for School Readiness Consulting.

RECOMMENDATION

To approve the above contract authorizations.

Submitted by:


Signed by:

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 Nick Zhou
 Chief Financial Officer


Reviewed by:

DocuSigned by:

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 Cally Martin
 Deputy Chief Executive Officer

DocuSigned by:

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 Maria Canteros
 Senior Finance Administrator

Approved by:

DocuSigned by:

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 Kristin Spanos
 Chief Executive Officer



To: First 5 Alameda County Commission

From: Kristin Spanos, Chief Executive Officer
Steve Spiker, Chief Impact Officer
Laura Schroeder, Director of Data and Evaluation

Date: April 24, 2025

Subject: Fiscal Year 2023-24 First 5 California Annual Report Approval

REQUESTED ACTION

To review and approve the First 5 California Fiscal Year 2023-24 Annual Report.

BACKGROUND

Proposition 10 legislation requires each county Commission to conduct a public hearing on the First 5 California Annual Report. The report is a compilation of data collected from counties and from statewide initiatives. Highlights from Alameda County can be found on page 39. The report also summarizes county results by four focus areas: Family Resiliency, Child Development, Child Health, and Systems of Care. The full report can be downloaded at: [First 5 California 2023-24 Annual Report](#).

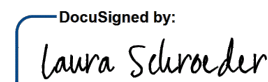
FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact for this approval.


RECOMMENDATION

To approve the Fiscal Year 2023-24 First 5 California Annual Report.


Submitted by:

DocuSigned by:

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Laura Schroeder
Director of Data and Evaluation

Approved by:

DocuSigned by:

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Kristin Spanos
Chief Executive Officer

Reviewed by:

Signed by:

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Steve Spiker
Chief Impact Officer

First 5 County Highlights

Alameda

Spurred by additional revenue from local tax measures, this was a year of growth and transformation for First 5 Alameda County. Our budget increased by 55%, allowing us to scale stakeholder engagement, increase staffing by 12% and build internal systems to support administration of new funding streams.

We continued our investments through the Oakland Children's Initiative Early Education Fund in support of priority public system partners Oakland Unified School District and City of Oakland Head Start to build infrastructure to better support ECE professionals, children and families.

We engaged community in the implementation of Alameda County Measure C, collaborating with a Community Advisory Council to inform recommendations for the first round of investments, collecting 1,000+ survey responses from families and ECE providers and enlisting parents, family navigators and public systems partners to inform the design of a centralized eligibility list.

We also convened 13 school districts to adopt the Early Development Instrument for our next Kindergarten Readiness Study.

Our partnership with Alameda Alliance for Health continued, ensuring 2,000+ Medi-Cal managed care plan members completed a well-child visit and 1,000+ were referred to an early intervention service by our care coordinators. We also continued our birth equity work, providing 140 hours of lactation training and peer support groups for 180+ participants.

Our Fathers Corps initiative hosted a Fatherhood Summit, engaging 400+ fathers, father figures and partners in workshops and trainings. Through our Trainings initiative, we provided 48 trainings for 700+ partners and providers to expand early childhood knowledge in our local systems.

Through our placed-based Neighborhoods Ready for School initiative, we invested over \$3M in community organizations in traditionally underserved neighborhoods and facilitated a strategic planning process for the grantees to guide the next phase of investments.

Alpine

An accomplishment during the fiscal year involved the engagement of the local tribal community through playgroups to understand the community's needs as part of the Home Visiting Coordination with Mono and Inyo First 5's.

First 5 Alpine recognizes efforts to support the local tribal community effectively must begin with authentic engagement of community members to identify their own needs. In addition, First 5 Alpine acknowledges that its investments could more effectively reach the tribal

COMMUNITY DATA PRESENTATIONS

FIRST 5 ALAMEDA
COUNTY COMMISSION
APRIL 24, 2025



OUR LANDSCAPE: WHAT WE ARE LEARNING



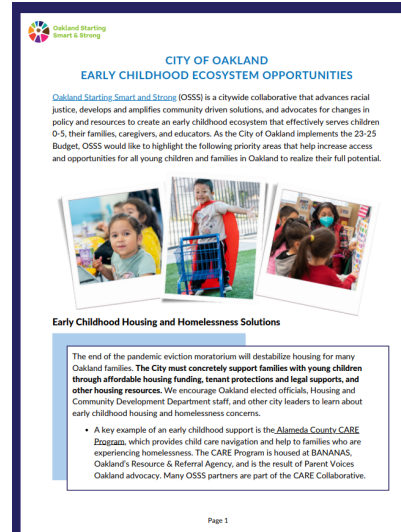
COMMUNITY DATA & PRIORITIES



PARENT ENGAGEMENT STUDY: Informal Care in East Oakland



Parent Engagement Study: Informal Care in East Oakland (2017)



City of Oakland Early Childhood Ecosystem Opportunities (2023)



Black Californians United for ECE Policy Plan (2024)



South Hayward Promise Neighborhood (2021)

South Hayward Promise Neighborhood

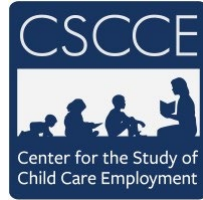
COVID Community Survey Summary Report, 2020/21



Prepared by Hatched Tulewsk and Associates, April 2021

LOCAL ECE STUDY FINDINGS

Examples of local data sources that inform our planning



Alameda County SEQUAL Report

2016



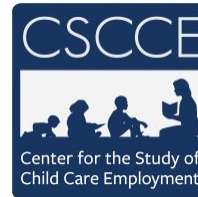
Alameda County Early Care and Education Needs Assessment

2021



Unmet Need for Child Care in Alameda County Report

2022



Early Educator Compensation Report

2022



Eastern Alameda County Human Services Needs Assessment.

2024

STUDIES **SPONSORED BY FIRST 5**

To prepare for the administration of local ECE ballot funding



Alameda County Child Care Data Report

(2021)



Alameda County Early Care and Education Licensed Facilities Assessment

(2022)



Alameda County Early Care and Education CalWORKs Apprenticeship Brief

(2022)



Alameda County Urban Unincorporated Areas Early Care and Education Needs Assessment

(2024)



Measure C Family + Provider Surveys

(2025)





Insights from Measure C Family and Provider Surveys

April 24, 2025

Jordan Katti, PhD
Project Director

Jessica Irwin, PhD
Project Manager



Applied Survey Research



Family and Provider Surveys: Overview

First 5 Alameda partnered with Applied Survey Research (ASR) to develop two surveys

- “Family Survey” for families in Alameda County with children under six
- “Provider Survey” for licensed ECE providers

Incentive:

- Family Survey: \$25 gift card to Safeway or Target
- Provider Survey: \$50 gift card to Safeway or Target

Languages offered:

- Provider Survey: English, Spanish, Traditional Chinese
- Family Survey: English, Spanish, Traditional Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Arabic

Family and Provider Surveys: Vetting and Distribution

Vetting Process:

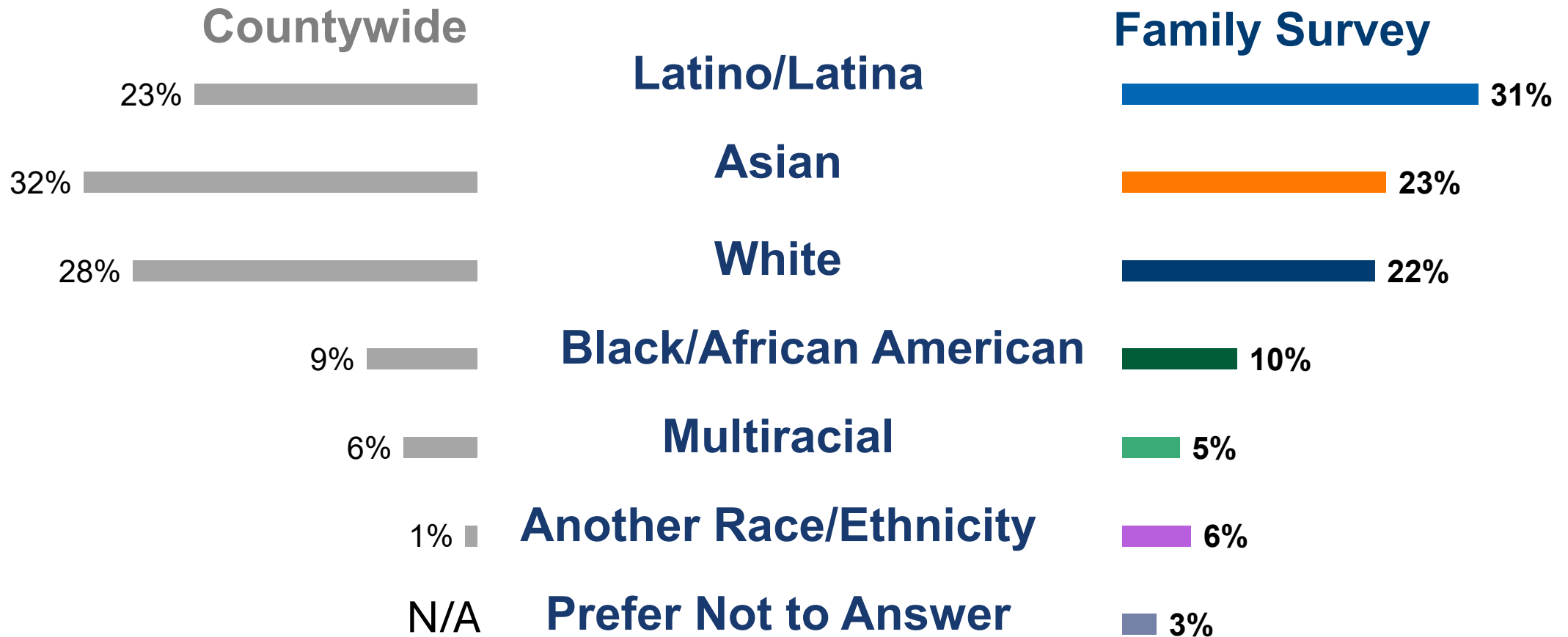
- 18 organizations invited to review
- Particularly interested in identifying unintended biases in questions or response categories
- Considerations: length, number of questions, time to complete

Survey Distribution:

- 86 organizations across the County were asked to help disseminate the survey
- First 5 led a phone outreach campaign
- Partnership with El Tímpano for text message outreach to Spanish-speaking families
- Survey responses were tracked on a weekly basis and outreach was adjusted in real time

Family Survey Demographics

Respondent Race/Ethnicity



Family Survey Demographics

Respondent Race/Ethnicity

Countywide, 100% SMI or Below

Family Survey

49%

Latino/Latina

31%

17%

Asian

23%

10%

White

22%

14%

Black/African American

10%

9%

Multiracial

5%

1%

Another Race/Ethnicity

6%

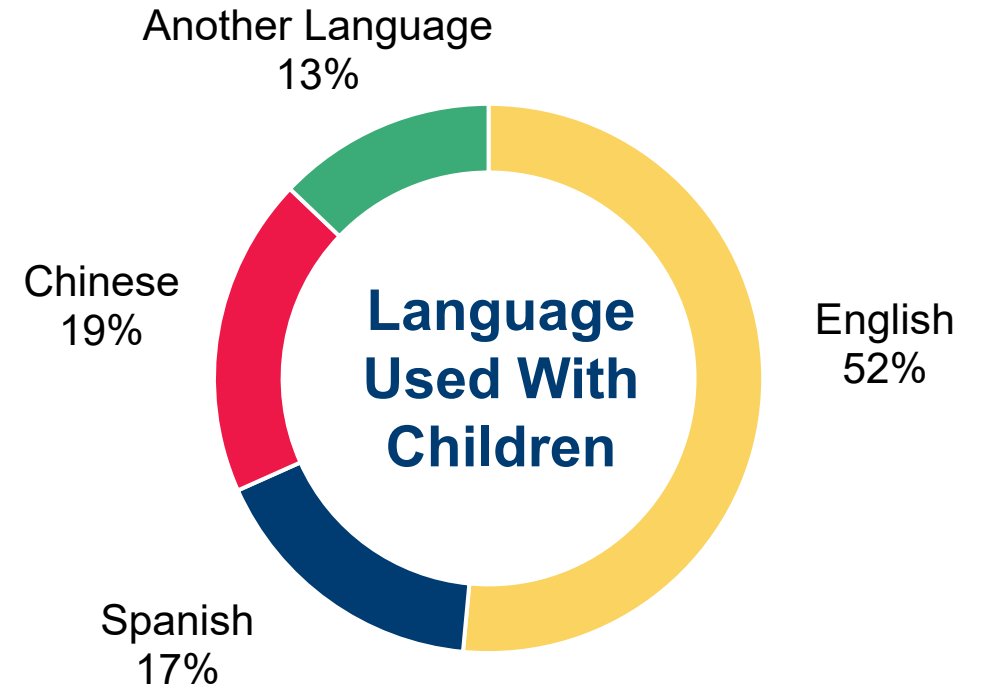
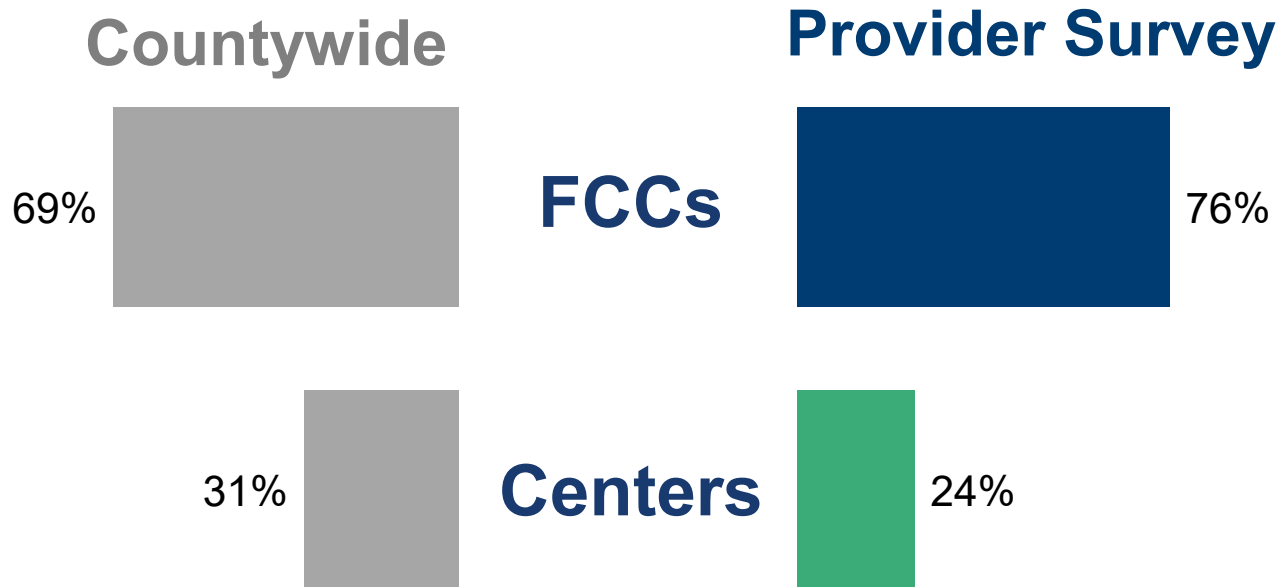
N/A

Prefer Not to Answer

3%

Provider Characteristics

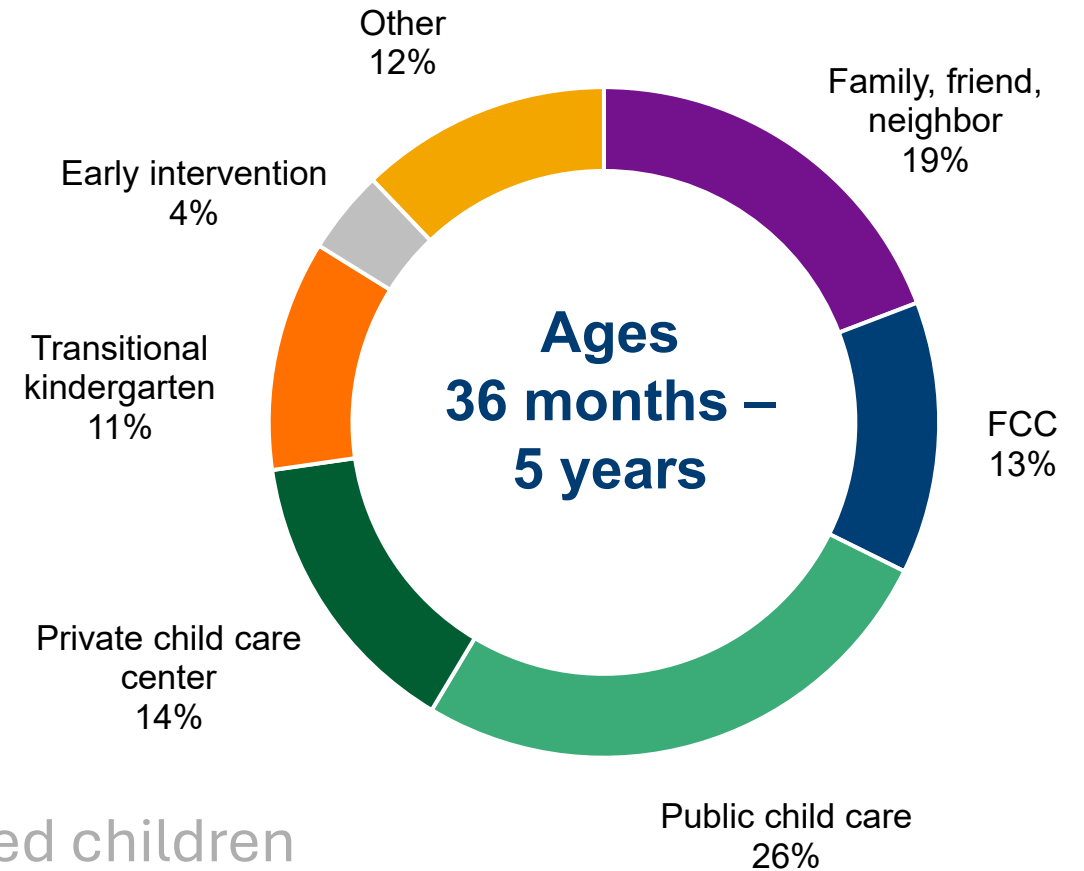
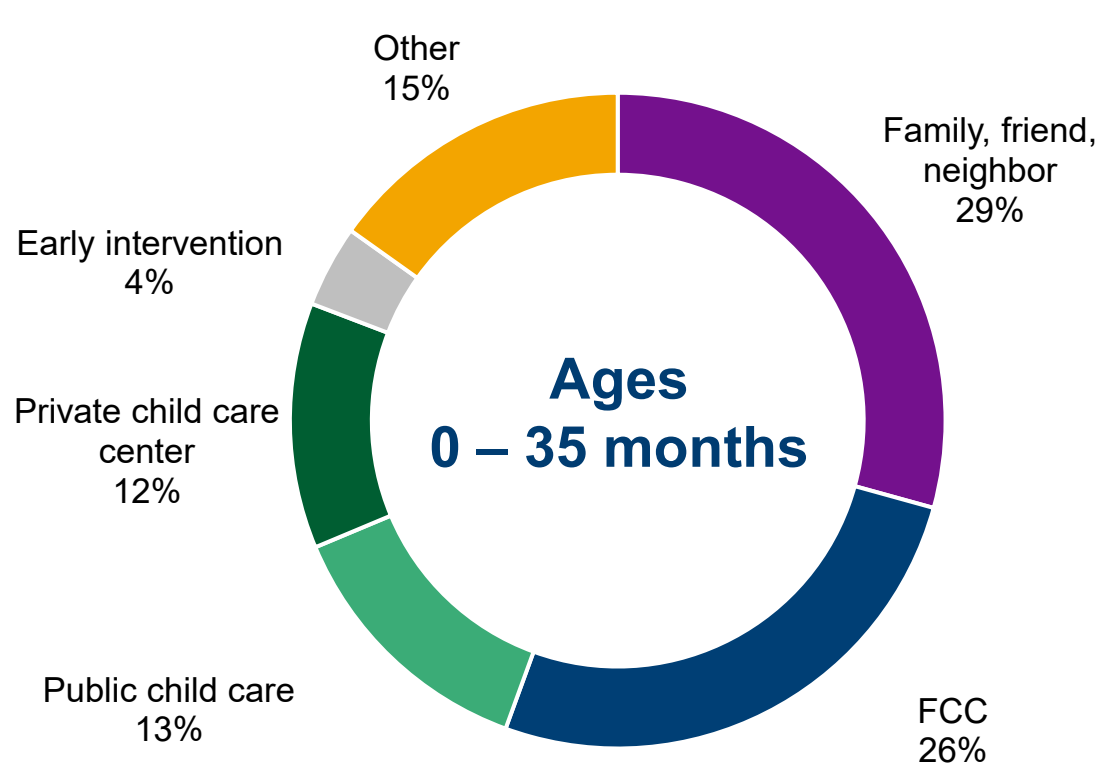
399 unique respondents



Access to Care

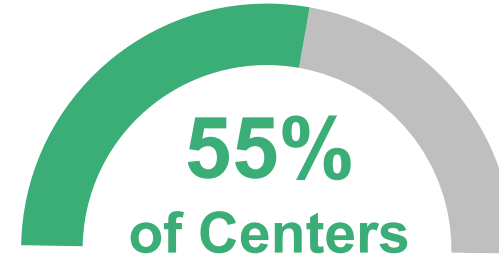
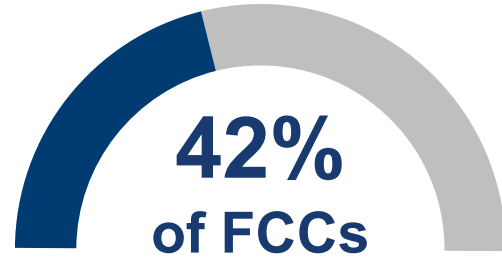


Type of Care Used by Age (0-35 months and 36 months-5 years)



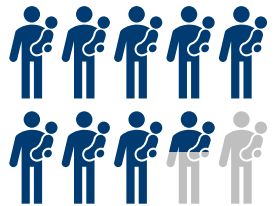
N = 846 reported children

ECE Subsidies: Provider Participation & Family Eligibility



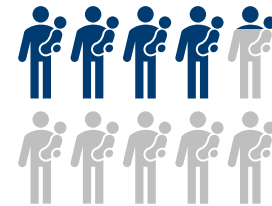
serve children in ECE subsidy programs (direct subsidies and vouchers)

Family Eligibility vs. Enrollment



84%

of families surveyed were **eligible for a subsidy**, based on household income and size



42%

of families surveyed reported that their child was **enrolled in a subsidy program**

Facilities

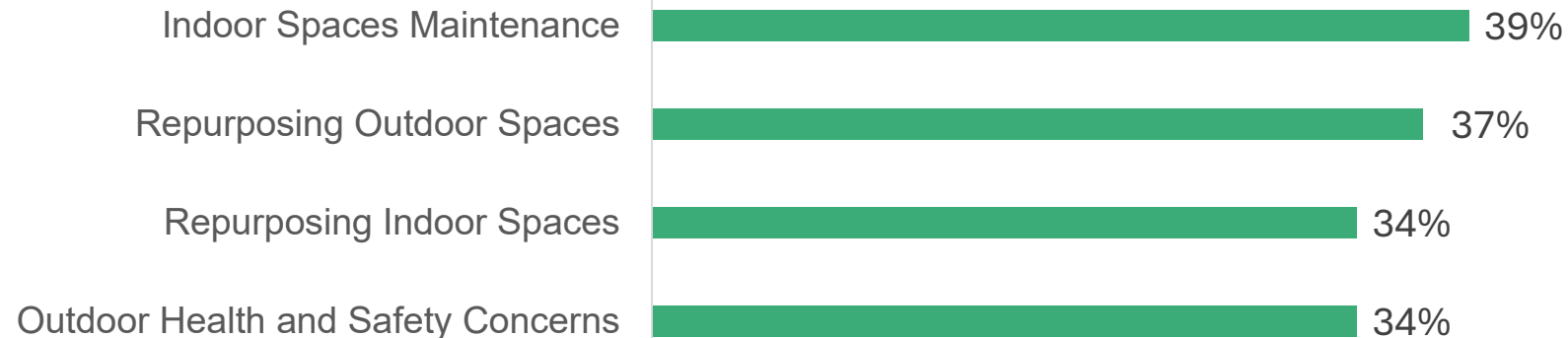


Greatest Facility-Related Needs

FCCs



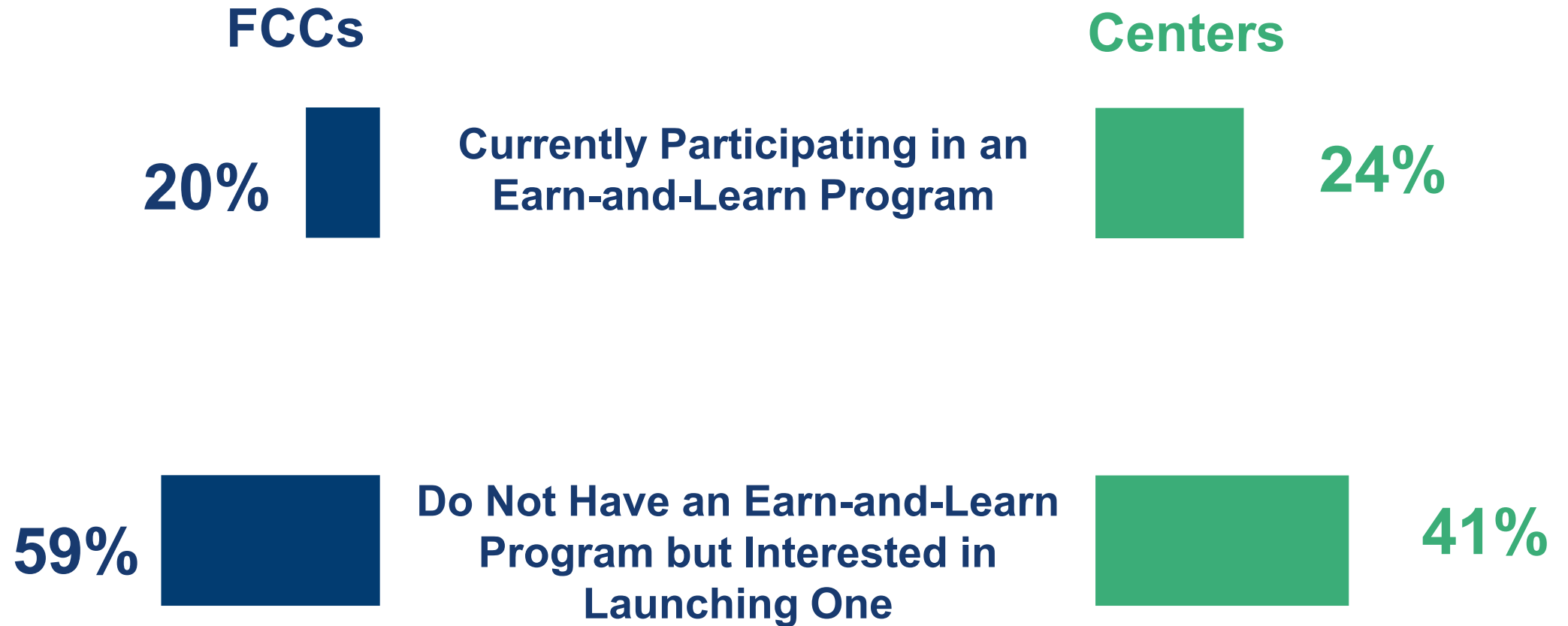
Centers



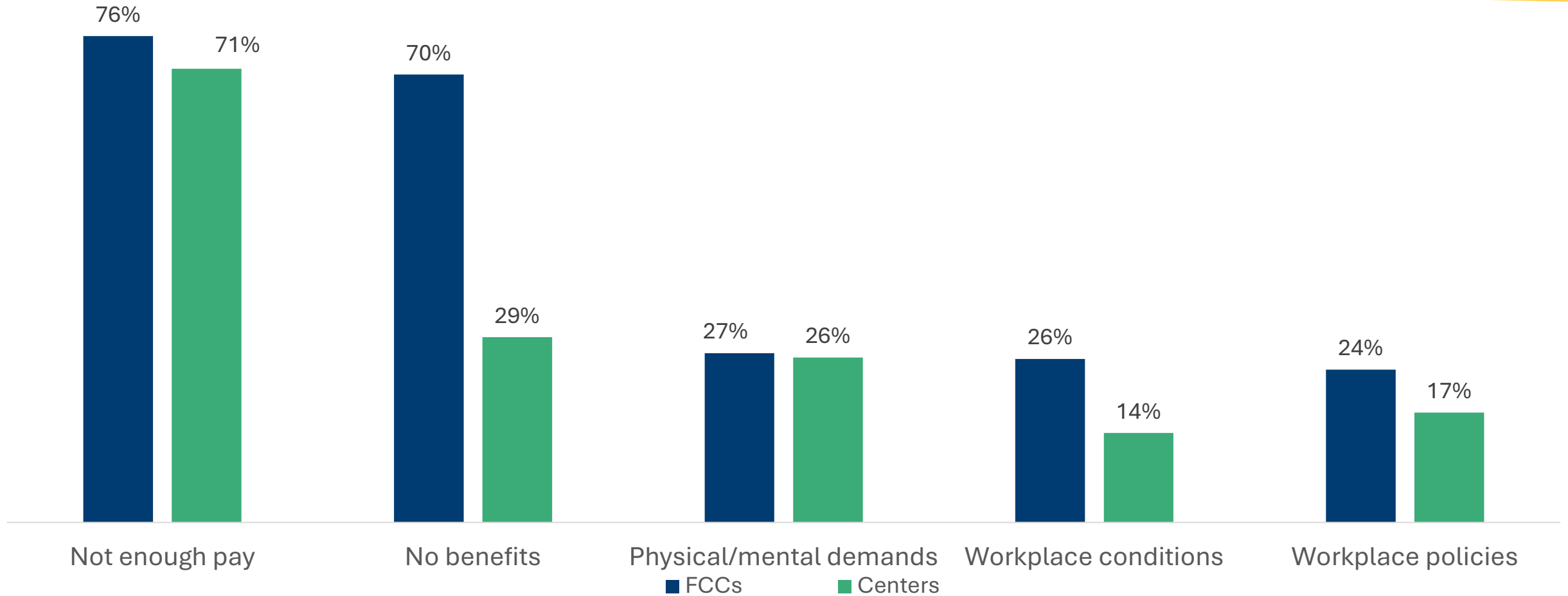
Workforce Development & Compensation



Providers Participation in Earn-and-Learn Programs



Commonly Reported Challenges in Hiring and Retaining Teachers

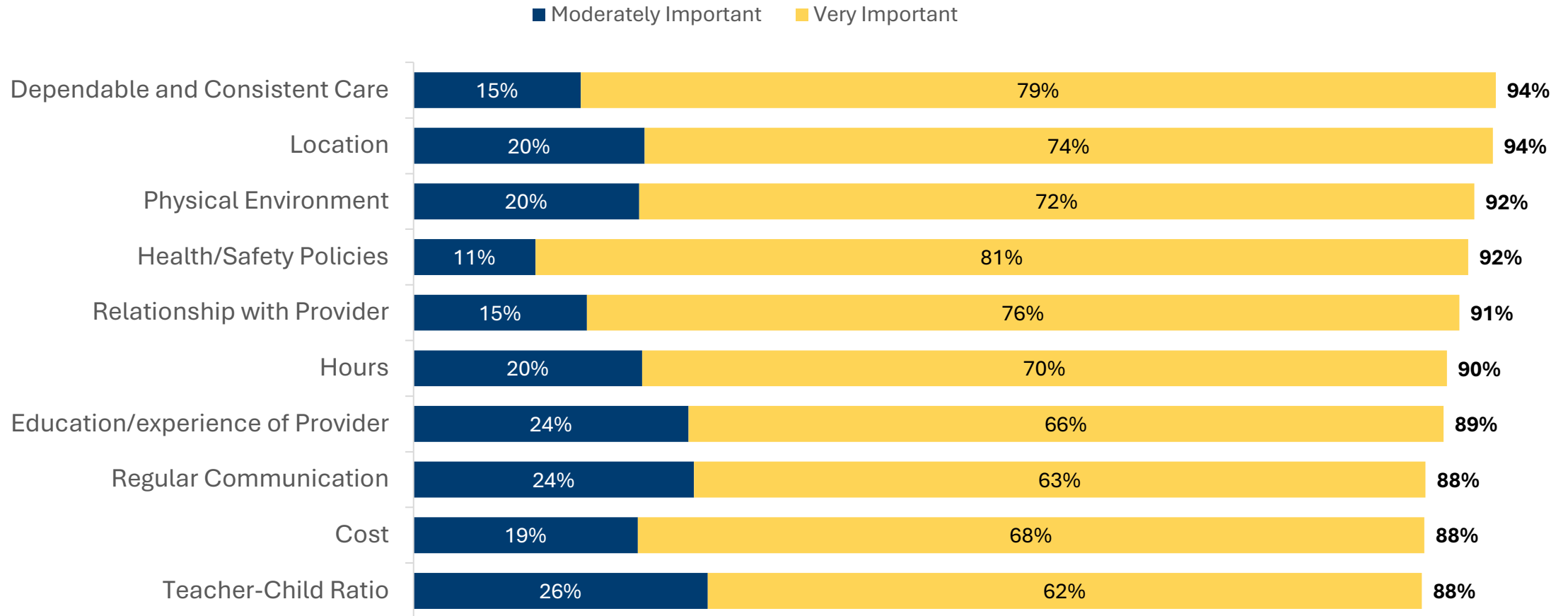


Quality of Care & Inclusion



Child Care Factors: What Matters Most to Families?

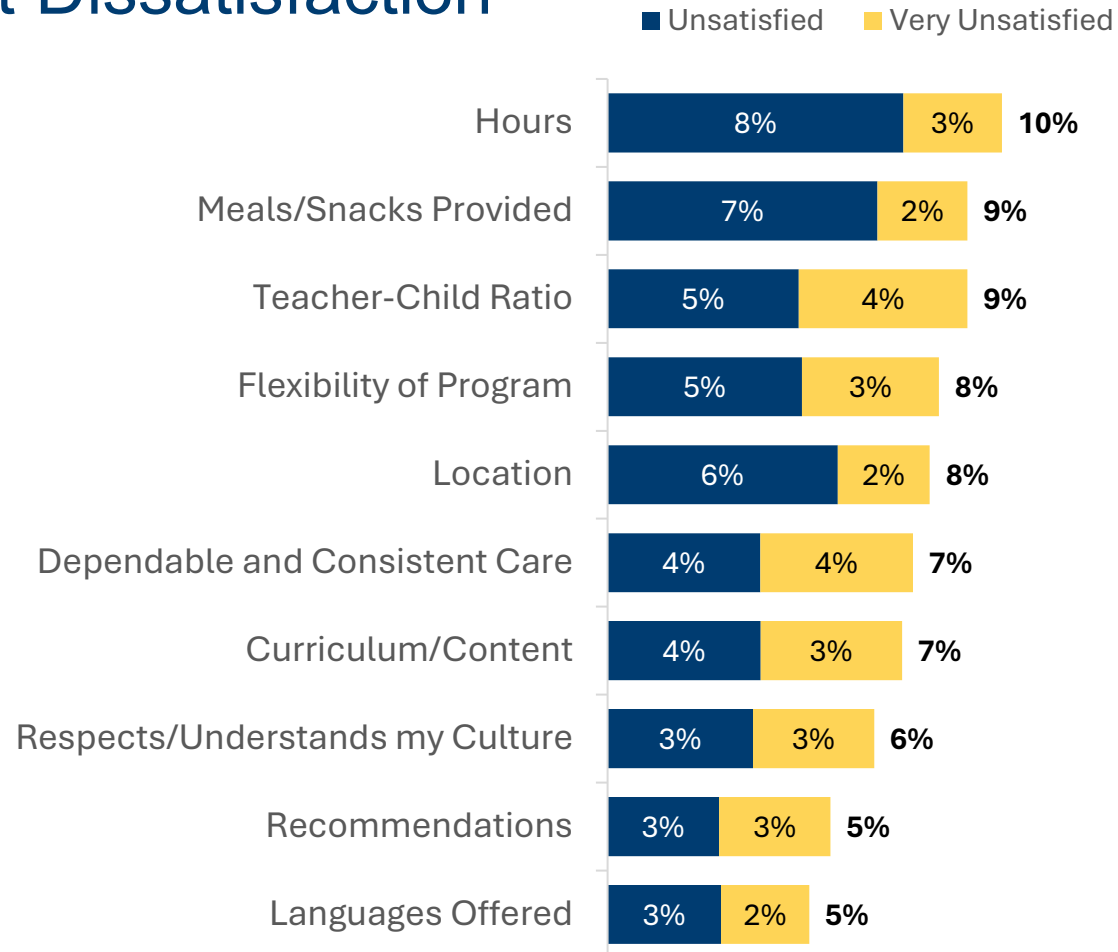
Top Ten Most Important Factors



N = 373-379. Four-point scale included very important, moderately important, neutral, and not important.

Child Care Factors: How Satisfied are Families?

Factors with Most Dissatisfaction

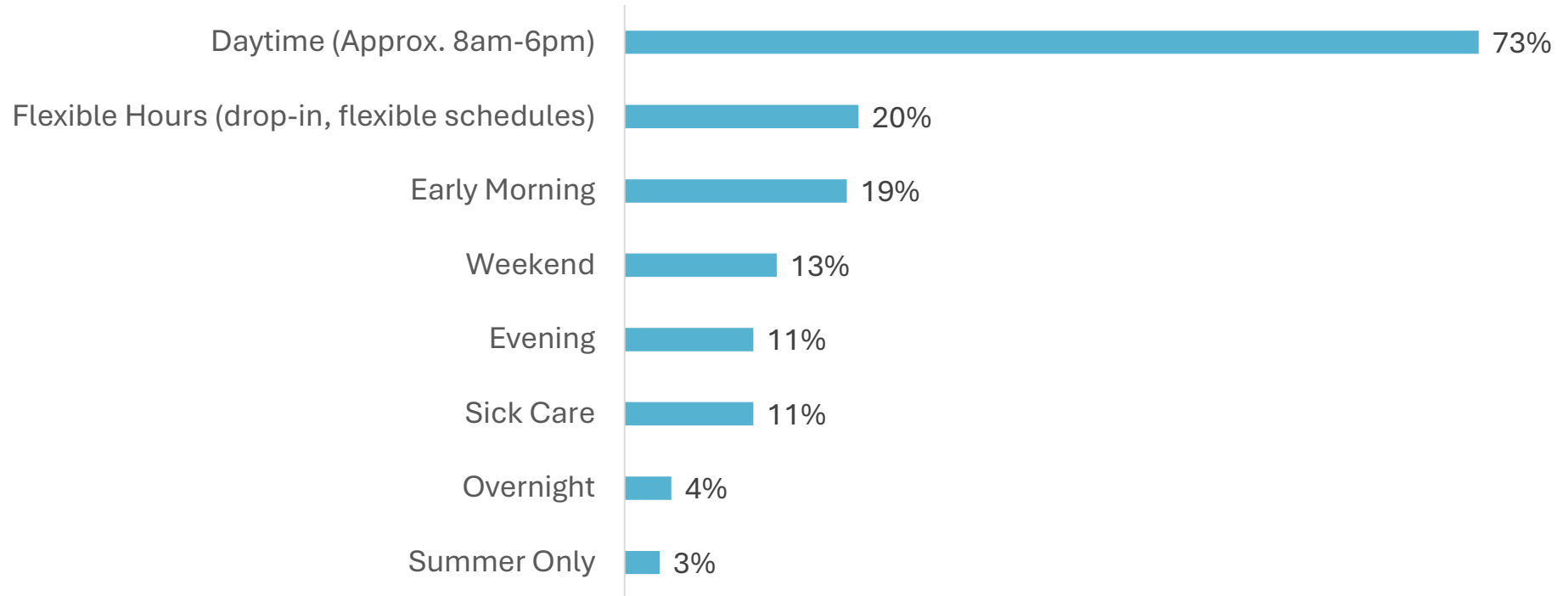


N = 345-352. Five-point scale included very satisfied, satisfied, neutral, unsatisfied, and very unsatisfied.

Family Supports, Coordination & Navigation



Preferred Hours of Care



33% of respondents need care outside of typical working hours (M-F, 8am-6pm)

Participants could select all that apply, so sum of percentages exceeds 100%

Questions? THANK YOU!

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In Alameda County, programs and services designed to help young children and their families have long been underfunded and disconnected from each other. With new funding from Measure C, First 5 Alameda County has a unique opportunity to strengthen and transform the early childhood system. To ensure we use Measure C funds to address the biggest challenges, we are gathering extensive community input. First 5 partnered with Applied Survey Research (ASR) to conduct two surveys: one with families and another with licensed ECE providers, including those from Family Child Cares (FCCs) and Centers. **This report highlights key findings from the surveys.**

Survey Development & Participation

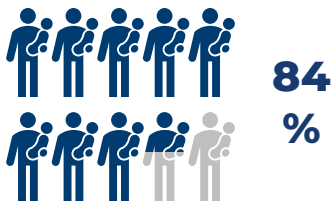
620 families with children ages 0-5 completed the Family survey.

399 licensed ECE providers completed the Provider survey, including 305 FCCs and 94 Centers.

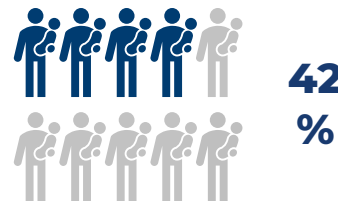
First 5 partnered with the community to develop and distribute both surveys, ensuring diverse voices—spanning different geographic areas, cultural backgrounds, racial compositions, and languages—were represented across Alameda County. In total, 86 organizations helped distribute the surveys.

Access to Care

- **Challenge:** Twice as many families need and qualify for ECE subsidies than were enrolled.
- **Opportunity:** With need exceeding the use of subsidies, explore how to expand subsidy availability in some areas and maximize existing resources through better outreach, streamlined enrollment, and increased ECE capacity.
- **Challenge:** One possible reason for low enrollment in subsidized child care may be lack of available spots, especially for infants, as over half of all FCC providers serving this age group were at full capacity.
- **Opportunity:** Understanding what affects capacity for FCCs and Centers, especially for infant care—such as staffing, funding, or licensing constraints—can help identify strategies to expand access.



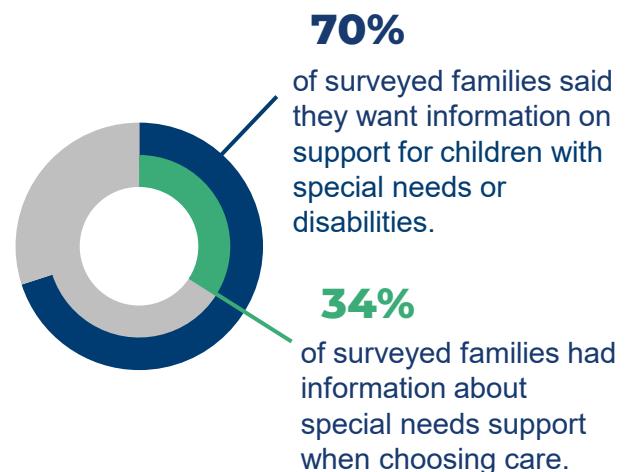
of surveyed families are **eligible** for an ECE subsidy, based on household income/size.



of surveyed families report currently being **enrolled** in an ECE subsidy program.

Quality of Care & Inclusion

- **Challenge:** The majority of Latino, Black, Asian, and Multiracial families said they want a provider who respects their culture and speaks their language. However, many also said they didn't have this information when selecting an ECE program.
- **Opportunity:** Expanding access to information on providers' cultural backgrounds and languages can help families make informed decisions.
- **Challenge:** Many families said they wish they had information on support for children with special needs, but many lack access to this information.
- **Opportunity:** Increasing the visibility of ECE programs' support for children with special needs can help families find the right care for their child.



Family Supports, Coordination & Navigation

- **Challenge:** Many families reported needing nontraditional ECE schedules.
- **Opportunity:** Families also reported prioritizing dependability and consistency when choosing an ECE program, reinforcing the need for expanded nontraditional scheduling options.

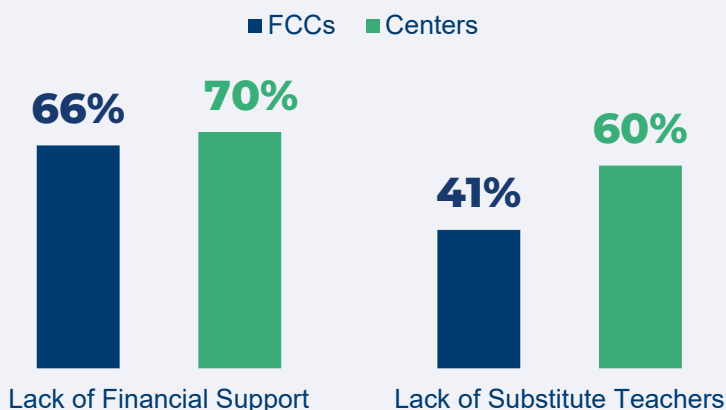


38%

of surveyed families need child care **outside of traditional hours**, including early morning, evening, overnight, and weekend care.

Workforce Development and Compensation

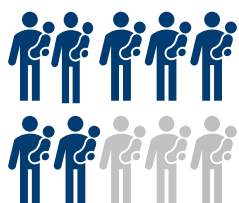
Greatest Barriers to Participating in Professional Development



- **Challenge:** Most providers do not participate in workforce apprenticeship and on-the-job certification options like Earn-and-Learn programs, which offer accessible pathways for career advancement.
- **Opportunity:** Many FCCs and Centers reported interest in participating in or expanding Earn-and-Learn programs, which could help strengthen the ECE workforce.
- **Challenge:** Lack of financial support and substitute teachers limit educators' ability to engage in professional development.
- **Opportunity:** Shared substitute pools and business operation supports can increase professional development access.

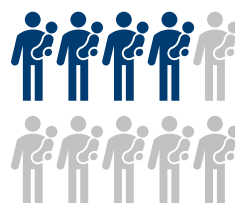
Facilities

- **Challenge:** Families identified the physical environment—including the look and function of classrooms or homes, as well as access to safe outdoor spaces—as a key factor in selecting an ECE program. However, satisfaction with current facilities was much lower.
- **Opportunity:** Repurposing indoor and outdoor spaces to better accommodate children of different ages was a shared priority among both FCCs and Centers. This presents a key opportunity to align with family expectations and create more adaptable, engaging environments at FCCs and Centers.



73%

of surveyed families consider the physical environment of the program **“very important.”**



39%

of surveyed families report being **“very satisfied”** with the physical environment at their ECE program.



Stay informed about Measure C.
Sign up for our newsletter!

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Measure C and Oakland Children's Initiative Community Listening Sessions



FACILITATED PARTICIPATORY PROCESS



MEASURE C

- **6 Measure C Community Advisory Council Listening Sessions**, between December 2024 and March 2025, to inform priorities for the Measure C 5-Year Plan.
 - **More than 37 hours of public meetings** since August 2025
 - 15+ hours of community listening sessions
 - 16+ hours of Community Advisory Council meetings
 - **600+ community members** (duplicative #) attended
 - 450+ online—69% of total
 - 200+ in-person—31% of total

OAKLAND CHILDREN'S INITIATIVE

- **4 Community Listening Sessions in Oakland** in March 2025 to inform future investments by the Early Education Fund and the next Five Year Guidelines.
 - **One virtual session and three in person sessions, for a total of 12 hours of public input**, at locations across the City and hosted by our partners:
 - Lincoln Families in West Oakland
 - Center of Hope Community Church in East Oakland
 - Trybe in San Antonio
 - **~125 community members** attended

Measure C and OCI Community Listening Sessions

Presentation and Discussion of Key Findings and Systems Building Opportunities

The Role of Community Listening Sessions

To ensure that Measure C and OCI implementation reflects the priorities and needs of their interest holders, First 5 Alameda engaged WestEd to facilitate a series of ten community listening sessions (CLSs) as part of a broader participatory, community informed process.

- 6 CLSs for Measure C
- 4 CLSs for OCI

To eliminate barriers to participation, sessions offered:

- Translation and interpretation
- Child care
- Food



Session Overview

Sessions were approximately 2–3 hours in length . Nine sessions followed a hybrid format ; one was virtual . All sessions were designed to be accessible and inclusive :

- Promotional materials were offered in the six threshold languages Spanish, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Farsi, Cambodian, and Tagalog
- Interpretation and translation services were provided in Spanish, Cantonese, and Mam

Elements included :

- Public testimony about the session topics, with the following prompts :
 - What do you believe is currently working?
 - What would you change?
 - What general questions do you have?
- Opportunities to share final priorities, through a voting activity and with the opportunity to add final thoughts on Post-It notes .

Methodology

- **Analysis included:**
 - Written materials (the ordinances, the Emergency Stabilization Fund, survey data, research reports, presentations and meeting materials)
 - CLS meeting recordings, transcripts, and results of the session activities
 - Guidance and insight from First 5 Alameda leadership
- **Preliminary analyses were provided after each Measure C CLS**
- **Three final reports are being created:**
 - Measure C
 - OCI
 - Systems Alignment [in progress]

Measure C Topics

| | | |
|--|---|-------------------|
| Workforce development | Dublin (District 1) | December 4, 2024 |
| Family access and supports | Fruitvale, Oakland (District 3) | December 18, 2024 |
| Wages and compensation | Hayward (District 2) | January 11, 2025 |
| Facilities and infrastructure | West Oakland (District 5) | February 1, 2025 |
| Quality improvements, family supports, coordination, navigation, and inclusion | Unincorporated Cherryland (District 5) | February 5, 2025 |
| Family, friend, and neighbor caregivers | Hayward (District 2) | March 1, 2025 |

“As you know, high -quality childcare is essential to the well -being and development of our children, as well as to the economic stability of our community. However, many daycare providers, especially small and locally owned businesses like mine, are facing significant financial challenges in meeting the rising costs of operation, including staff salaries, facility maintenance, and supplies.

- Emailed Testimony

Measure C

Key Findings from Community Listening Sessions

Theme 1 – Workforce Development

- Participants highlighted a variety of reasons for **high turnover**, including poverty-level wages that drive educators to higher-paying professions, such as teaching in K12 settings
- Participants called for more strategies for **recruiting** educators into the early childhood profession, such as apprenticeships, high school CTE, tuition assistance, and accessible degree programs
- Participants called for more strategies for **retaining** educators in the early childhood profession, such as addressing low wages, providing benefits, and providing professional development
- Educators would benefit from **networks** for mentorship, resource sharing, and camaraderie

**In this field, we are the first ones to
welcome children into their learning
journey.**

- Participant Testimony

Theme 2 – Wages and Compensation

- Participants described **burnout, financial instability, and loss of talent to higher paying industries** as persistent concerns.
- Wages and other types of compensation are not keeping up with the **cost of living** in the Bay Area.
- **Wage supplement programs** - which base access on subsidy enrollment, not capacity do not serve all early childhood educators who need the support.
- Participants advocated for increases to the **wage floor** .
- There are significant **economic gaps between center and family childcare providers** .

“To keep good teachers, we need clear career pathways and better wages.

- Participant Testimony

Theme 3 – Family Access and Supports

- Generally, families described **difficulty finding affordable, high -quality care** .
- Families also described difficulty navigating the **complicated subsidy system** . Waiting lists are long.
- Some families are not eligible for the subsidy program, but still **struggle to afford high -quality care** .
- Participants observed that parts of Alameda County are **childcare “deserts,”** contributing to challenges with access to affordable, high quality care.
- Families described a need for care during **nontraditional hours** , such as evenings, overnight, and weekends. Family, Friend, and Neighbor care givers are a critical resource for that need.
- Families are grateful for the **wrap around supports** they have found through family resource centers and other community based organizations.
- ECE settings need to be equipped to provide additional support, including **specialized care** for children with disabilities.
- There is a need for **stronger coordination** between preschools and elementary schools.

FRCs are a lifeline for families who may not have access to traditional childcare or early education programs. They provide essential services such as parenting support, early childhood education resources, health referrals, and community connections —helping to bridge the gap for families who might otherwise fall through the cracks. Investing in these centers ensures that all children, regardless of their care setting, receive the support they need to thrive. I urge First 5 Alameda to prioritize funding and resources for family resource centers as part of the Measure C implementation. Strengthening these community hubs will enhance family stability, promote early childhood development, and ensure equity in access to critical services.

- Email Testimony

“Parents are the first and best teachers and advocates for their children, so I would like to see supports for families prioritized, with parents both included in the services and valued as the experts.”

- Participant Testimony

Theme 4 – Facilities and Infrastructure

- Facilities experience **significant wear and tear**, such as basic annual maintenance, deferred facilities investments, and safety upgrades.
- Families and providers share a desire for **more parks, playgrounds, and public spaces** that are safe and appropriate for early learning activities.
- As more 3- and 4-year old children access Universal Pre-K and childcare homes and centers pivot to serve more infants and toddlers, **facilities need to be converted** to be developmentally appropriate for younger children.
- As we experience hotter, more extreme weather, facilities must invest in **climate resilience upgrades**, such as HVAC and appropriate outdoor shade.
- Educators struggle with **zoning restrictions, licensing challenges, and in some cases, rent increases** when lessors learn that childcare is being provided from their property.

“Financial assistance helps us to ensure that facilities are safe, developmentally appropriate, and open.

- Participant Testimony

The Perspective of Family, Friend, and Neighbor Caregivers

- Additional education, training, professional development, and incentives for participating in educational opportunities are desired.
- There is a desire to bring together FFNs for greater community and to overcome isolation .
- Additional outreach and information about the definitions and the benefits of being designated as FFN caregivers are desired.
- There is a need for support with transportation .

“Our FFN workforce are [a field] of potential that aligns with the childcare expansion needs of Alameda County. Let’s invest in the FFN workforce and the much needed childcare slots.

- Participant Testimony

WestEd Recommendations from the Measure C CLSs

Continue to...

- Ensure that the fiveyear plan adheres to the **equity aim** of Measure C.
- Integrate **participatory approaches** in Measure C implementation.
- Take an **ecosystem approach** to impact.
- Seek opportunities for **alignment and coherence** with other major policies and initiatives, as well as for systems building in partnership with local and state leaders.
- Prioritize promising, effective, and **enduring solutions**.



Oakland Children's Initiative

Common Themes and Insights across Measure C and OCI CLSs

Topics and Dates

CLS dates were March 6, March 12, March 15, and March 20, 2025

All topics were addressed at each CLS session. Topics were:

- Priority Populations
- Outreach
- Classroom Experiences
- Hours of Operation and Location
- Family Supports and Basic Needs
- Professional Development for Educators
- Facilities

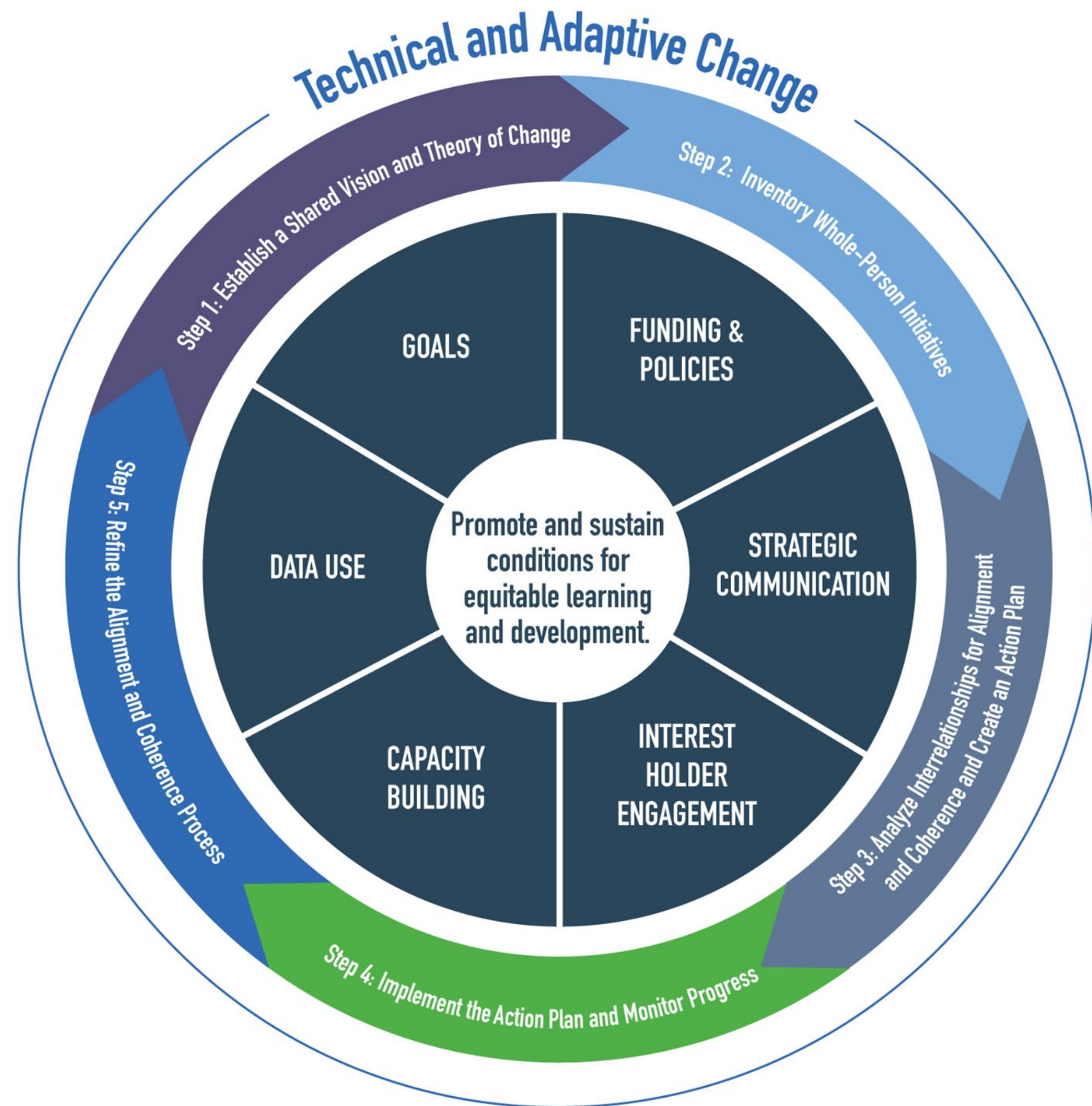
Shared Findings

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Access and Affordability | The implementation of the subsidy program is not meeting the needs of providers or families. |
| Market Shifts | Providers struggle with the rising costs of providing quality care and the demands of securing contracts to keep their business afloat, especially as more families opt for free public options. |
| Workforce Development | Providers expressed a need for accessible, affordable, and relevant professional development, mentorship, and career pathway options. |
| Wages | Providers struggle with low wages that do not keep up with the cost of living in Alameda, as well as lack of access to other types of compensation such as retirement plans, and other benefits. |
| Outreach | Families are eager for more information about accessing high quality ECE, through channels that meets them where they are – in faith-based organizations, health centers, shelters, and community centers, and in a variety of languages. |
| Inclusion | Educators and families are eager for more comprehensive support for the neurodiverse and various developmental needs of all children. |
| Family Supports | Educators and families expressed a need for more wrap around supports for families, such as access to housing, food, employment, and other basic needs. |
| Facilities | Educators expressed a desire for high-quality, safe, developmentally appropriate and inclusive facilities and environments. |

Systems Alignment and Coherence

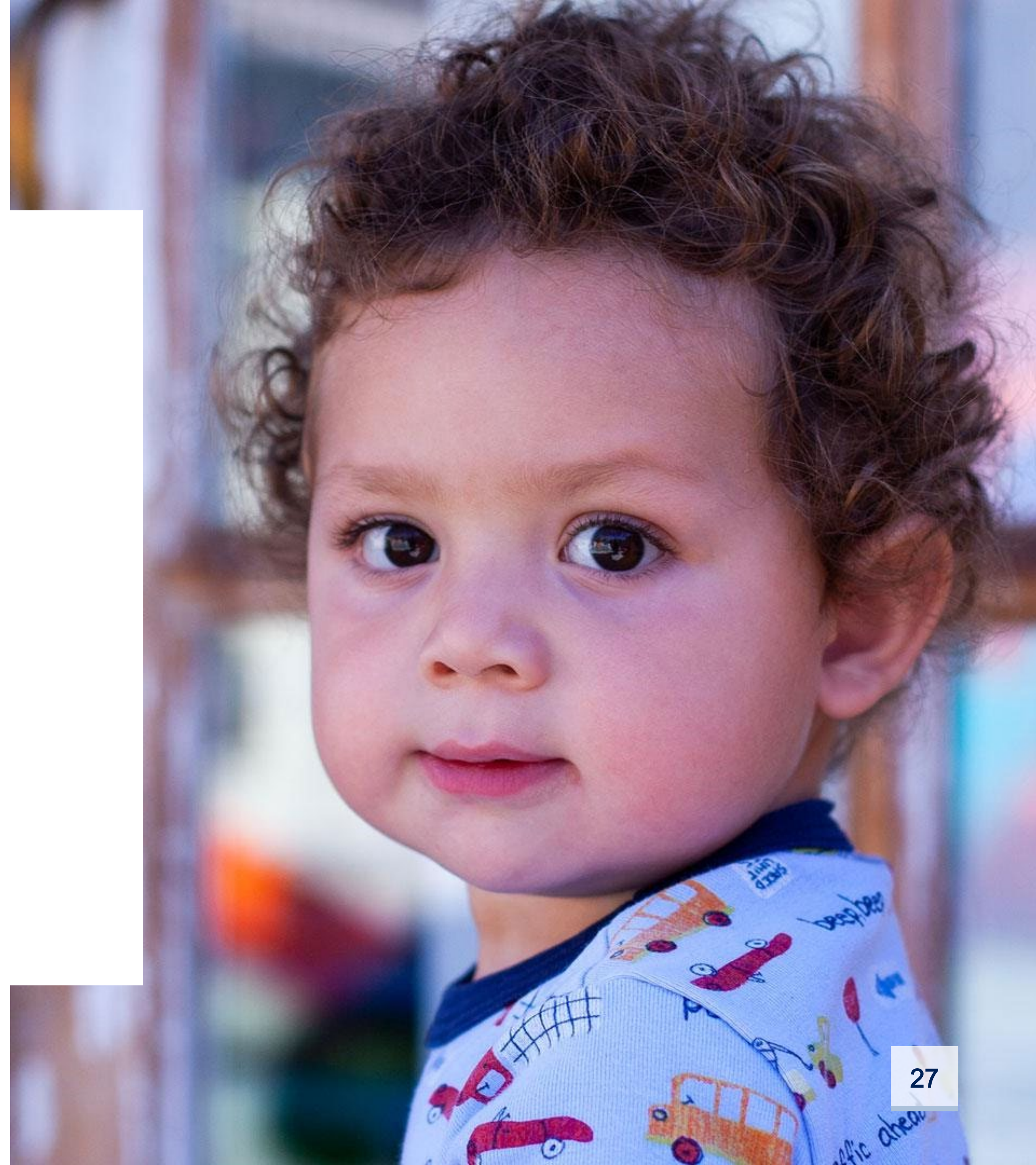
Working Across the Ecosystem

Systems Alignment and Coherence



For Discussion

- What questions do you have?
- What considerations should we keep in mind as we move forward?



THANK YOU!

FIRST 5



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Measure C Community Listening Sessions

Key Themes and Recommendations

**Giselle Farrell, Natalie Walrond,
Ramee Serwanga, and Jateri Willis**

March 2025

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| Continue to integrate participatory approaches into Measure C’s implementation. | 8 |
| Take an ecosystemic approach to impact. | 8 |
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Introduction and Summary of Findings

This brief describes the key themes and participant recommendations that emerged from six community listening sessions (CLSs) hosted by First 5 Alameda County (First 5 Alameda) and facilitated by WestEd. The CLCs provided a platform for interest holders to share their most urgent and important priorities related to the Children’s Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C). Participants engaged in discussions about the current landscape of early care and education (ECE), identifying both strengths and areas for improvement. Their insights offer a deeper understanding of the most pressing needs in the community and inform the 5-year plan for Measure C to enhance services, resources, and support systems.

Summary of Findings

Participant insights fell into four key themes.

1. Workforce development

- The size of the ECE workforce is not sufficient to meet demand, so it is important to address the entire career pathway for providers, including recruitment, professional development, and retention.

2. Wages and compensation

- Wages and other types of compensation are not keeping up with the cost of living in the Bay Area.

3. Family access and supports

- The whole ecosystem of organizations and agencies that serve young children and their families are essential partners for improving the ECE system.
- Barriers to family access include the complicated subsidy system, childcare “deserts,” and the need for care during nontraditional hours.
- ECE settings need to be equipped to serve linguistically and culturally diverse families.
- ECE settings need to be equipped to provide additional support—such as early intervention strategies and referrals to specialists—for families with young children who are neurodiverse; are gifted; or have developmental delays, disabilities, or other special needs.

- There is a need for stronger coordination between preschools and elementary schools.

4. Facilities and infrastructure

- Facilities experience significant wear and tear, which is expensive for providers to address.
- Families and providers share a desire for more parks, playgrounds, and public spaces that are safe and appropriate for early learning activities.

Additionally, WestEd facilitated a dedicated community listening session for family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) caregivers. This session underscored the special value of FFN caregivers in the early childhood ecosystem, providing care deeply rooted in trust, cultural connection, and specialized care. Five themes emerged from this session.

1. Additional education, training, professional development, and incentives for participating in educational opportunities are desired.
2. There is a desire to bring together FFNs for greater community and to overcome isolation.
3. Additional outreach and information about the definitions and the benefits of being designated as FFN caregivers are desired.
4. There are significant economic gaps between center and family childcare (FCC) providers.
5. There is a need for support with transportation.

The Measure C Initiative

In March 2020, voters in Alameda County passed Measure C, a countywide, sales tax–funded health care and childcare initiative, which will generate an estimated \$150 million annually for the initiative’s Childcare, Preschool, and Early Education Fund. The measure was upheld by the California State Supreme Court in April 2024 and is now being launched. Measure C’s Childcare, Preschool, and Early Education Fund has three key aims:

- provide additional support for and expanded access to high-quality childcare, preschool, and early education services for children and families with low and middle income in Alameda County;
- improve wages and compensation for participating childcare providers and early educators who provide services under this ordinance; and
- promote wellness, kindergarten readiness, and school success.

Measure C’s initial investments will include a 2-year Emergency Stabilization Fund to provide short-term relief aligned with the measure’s objectives.

Important Note

By First 5 Alameda's estimate, the cost of addressing the full scope of needs in Alameda County's ECE ecosystem may be as much as \$1.3 billion, not counting capital investments in facilities. Measure C mandates a minimum wage floor and prioritizes the funding of child care subsidies for families. This means that the distribution of funds will require a critical look at eligibility as there is not enough funding to pay for everyone or everything.

Although Measure C funding has enormous potential for transformational impact, \$150 million per year is not sufficient to address every need across Alameda County. Therefore, not every participant recommendation can be implemented, and strategic prioritization will be essential to setting the 5-year plan.

Measure C names equity as a guiding principle. Therefore, prioritizing those most in need of resources and support must be one criterion for determining how best to allocate Measure C funding.

First 5 Alameda's Roles and Responsibilities

First 5 Alameda's mission is to ensure that policies, systems, communities, and schools support families and children by creating the conditions that position all for success. As the administering agency for the early childhood portion of Measure C, First 5 Alameda is charged with

- developing a 5-year program plan and budget to guide the first 5 years of implementing Measure C;
- administering programs and services and award funds;
- staffing the community advisory committee (CAC), which provides input for the 5-year plan and evaluation; and
- operating with transparency, public accountability, and good fiscal stewardship of public resources.

Measure C is governed by the First 5 Alameda County Commission and the Alameda County Board of Supervisors.

The Community Listening Sessions

To ensure that the 5-year strategic plan reflects the priorities and needs of Measure C's interest holders, First 5 Alameda engaged WestEd to facilitate a series of CLSs as part of a broader participatory, community-informed process.¹ The purpose of the community CLSs was to gather diverse input from interest holders to inform and guide the implementation and alignment of local ECE initiatives in

¹ Similar listening sessions were hosted for Measure AA, the Oakland Children's Initiative's Early Childcare Fund, for which First 5 Alameda serves as the implementation partner.

Alameda County. The CLSs focused specifically on identifying key priorities and challenges related to ECE, including the following topics in the first five sessions:

- workforce development
- wages and compensation
- family access and supports
- facilities and infrastructure
- quality improvements, family supports, coordination, navigation, and inclusion

A sixth CLS focused on the experiences and unique needs of FFN caregivers. Details about the CLSs can be found in the [Methodology section](#) of the report.

By engaging families, childcare providers and caregivers, community organizations, and other interest holders, these CLSs provided critical insights into areas such as emergency stabilization needs, capacity building, compliance and oversight, family caregiver navigation, and the use of policy tools like the Early Development Instrument (EDI) to guide investments. Additionally, the feedback gathered will help inform the strategic allocation of resources, improve coordination among services, and enhance the effectiveness of Measure C's mandate to promote, support, and improve early childhood development across Alameda County. These CLSs served as a vital component in building a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable ECE system for Alameda County.

The Emergency Stabilization Fund

Although the Emergency Stabilization Fund was not a focus of the CLSs, several participants testified about the emergency grants that are part of the fund. In alignment with Measure C's mandate to prioritize equity, eligibility to receive these grants is determined by (a) the extent to which the provider is serving young children in the subsidy program and (b) the extent to which services are being provided within a geographic census tract with poverty at 5 percent or higher.

Participants advocated removing the eligibility requirements so that all providers in Alameda County could access the grants regardless of geographic location or population served. Some also requested that the grants received through the Emergency Stabilization Fund be increased to \$100,000 for large FCCs and \$90,000 for small FCCs.

The Fund, which is the initial investment of the 5-year plan, does not include long-term investments of wages and subsidies for child care. The eligibility criteria for these future Measure C programs will need to meet the ordinance equity principles. They will also need to be refined with the establishment of the ordinance-mandated countywide minimum wage floor and the build-out of family supports such as subsidies for child care. The 5-year plan will need to balance immediate needs with long-term sustainability of the wage increases and other components.

WestEd Recommendations

The CLS process was an important mechanism for First 5 Alameda to ensure that the Measure C 5-year plan deeply reflects community priorities and responds to community needs. The insights shared in this process were rich, setting a firm foundation for a participatory, ecosystemic approach to enhancing impact for the measure. As the administering agency for Measure C and as a trusted, nonpartisan agency in the county, First 5 Alameda is well positioned to ensure the measure's success. WestEd's final recommendations follow.

Continue to ensure that the 5-year plan adheres to the equity aim of Measure C.

The measure seeks to promote wellness, kindergarten readiness, and school success, with particular attention paid to the needs of children and families with low or middle incomes, experiencing homelessness, and from historically underserved communities. This equity aim provides one important criterion—demographic population and geography—for making decisions about how best to allocate these limited resources.

Continue to integrate participatory approaches into Measure C's implementation.

Participatory approaches support the continuous improvement of Measure C's implementation and ensure its tight alignment with interest holders' goals and needs. Continue to seek approaches that reach families where they are to talk about their priorities and the strengths and needs of the system. Meeting with families prioritized by Measure C in settings they typically frequent, such as playgroups and libraries, will ensure that their voices are included in community engagement and the focus of decision-making. Additionally, the 5-year plan should invest in programs that support family and child well-being.

Take an ecosystemic approach to impact.

Complex systems issues call for multidisciplinary, interdependent, enduring strategies. In Alameda County, the well-being and development of young children and their families is the shared responsibility of all child- and family-serving agencies, not just the ECE sector. Therefore, WestEd recommends that First 5 Alameda build upon existing partnerships and seek new partnerships across the entire ECE ecosystem in order to share resources and strategies and amplify Measure C's impact. By working in concert with the entire ecosystem of ECE programs and service providers, Measure C can help ensure

that providers and families experience seamless and effective supports and that impact is sustainable. For example, First 5 Alameda could work with local elected officials and city and county administrators to leverage local tax investments; include consideration of ECE in policies that impact families and their care providers (e.g., economic development, city planning, public transportation); share school readiness data to inform investment in social and health and human services; and elevate policy priorities to state and federal government.

Continue to seek opportunities for alignment and coherence with other major policies and initiatives and for system building in partnership with local and state leaders.

Consider how best to align Measure C with other mission-aligned initiatives, such as the Oakland Children’s Initiative. By working to bridge silos and create an aligned and coherent ECE system for Alameda County, Measure C can strengthen outcomes for providers, families, and the young children they care for. Essential dimensions of alignment and coherence include shared goal setting, shared data across initiatives and public systems, aligned and intentional strategic communications, funding and policymaking, collaborative capacity building, and shared engagement of interest holders. In particular, First 5 Alameda could work with other local agencies to leverage and coordinate funding streams, including analyzing existing allocations and utilization of funds; exploring opportunities to potentially administer state funding locally; and maximizing all funding to ensure local funds that have the most administrative flexibility are the funding source of last resort. These themes will be explored separately in a forthcoming systems alignment brief.

Continue to prioritize promising, effective, and enduring solutions.

Though Measure C’s funding is significant—even transformational—it is insufficient to meet all of the ECE needs in Alameda County. Thus, the 5-year plan should prioritize high-leverage opportunities to improve the system in long-term ways rather than investing in opportunities that are short-term or do not result in lasting systems improvement.

Key Themes and Participant Recommendations

Four key themes emerged from the testimony of participants in all six CLSs. These themes reflect the ongoing challenges and priorities in Alameda County’s ECE system:

1. Workforce development
2. Wages and compensation
3. Family access and supports
4. Facilities and infrastructure

This section presents a discussion of these themes, along with relevant insights and specific recommendations from the participants to address them.

“As you know, high-quality childcare is essential to the well-being and development of our children, as well as to the economic stability of our community. However, many daycare providers, especially small and locally owned businesses like mine, are facing significant financial challenges in meeting the rising costs of operation, including staff salaries, facility maintenance, and supplies.”

—Emailed testimony

Theme 1. Workforce Development

The size of the ECE workforce is not sufficient to meet demand, so it is important to address the entire career pathway for providers, including recruitment, professional development, and retention.

Participants described challenges with attrition as providers leave the field for better paying roles—such as those offered in K–12 education—which FCCs cannot afford to match. Participants further emphasized the need for more accessible professional development opportunities (i.e., online and in-person learning with flexible schedules and in multiple languages), including career ladder frameworks and stipends for degree programs, mentorships, and paid apprenticeships. Participants also underscored that investing in the ECE workforce through education opportunities and fair wages is an essential element of treating providers as respected professionals.

Participant Recommendations to Consider

- Expand tuition assistance, mentorship programs, and incentives for ongoing professional growth. Include youth in apprenticeships in order to foster the next generation of providers.
- Create and maintain provider networks to share resources, advice, and support and to create a greater sense of community and professional camaraderie.

“In this field, we are the first ones to welcome children into their learning journey.”

—Participant testimony

Theme 2. Wages and Compensation

Wages and other types of compensation are not keeping up with the cost of living in the Bay Area.

Participants underscored the need for ECE providers to earn wages that match the cost of living. Some FCC providers shared that they feel overlooked in wage supplement programs, and they advocated for stipends based on licensed capacity rather than enrollment numbers. Further, several participants mentioned that the minimum wage for fast-food workers in California is now \$20 per hour, significantly higher than what many FCC providers can offer their staff. Burnout, financial instability, and loss of talent to higher paying industries are persistent concerns. Beyond wages, participants called for access to health care, retirement plans, mental health supports, and student loan forgiveness to improve provider retention.

Participant Recommendations to Consider

- Raise base wages for ECE providers so that compensation is competitive with other jobs. Ensure salary equivalence between FCC providers and center-based educators.
- Improve workforce stability by expanding benefits such as paid leave, retirement accounts, and health insurance.
- Provide direct financial support (i.e., grants) and wage supplements for FCC providers.

“To keep good teachers, we need clear career pathways and better wages.”

—Participant testimony

Theme 3. Family Access and Supports

The whole ecosystem of organizations and agencies that serve young children and their families are essential partners for improving the ECE system. Participants expressed gratitude for the support of resource and referral agencies, family service organizations, family resource centers (FRCs), and parent-led advocacy groups that provide critical support to families who need access to additional services.

These supports include their children’s care and education as well as related wraparound supports such as access to food and housing, support for finding employment, and access to mental health services. Further, home-based childcare providers have been instrumental in serving families who are displaced, families facing homelessness, children who are in foster care, and multilingual families who may face barriers to care. Libraries and community centers also serve as crucial hubs for information, resources, and learning opportunities for families.

“FRCs are a lifeline for families who may not have access to traditional childcare or early education programs. They provide essential services such as parenting support, early childhood education resources, health referrals, and community connections—helping to bridge the gap for families who might otherwise fall through the cracks. Investing in these centers ensures that all children, regardless of their care setting, receive the support they need to thrive. I urge First 5 Alameda to prioritize funding and resources for family resource centers as part of the Measure C implementation. Strengthening these community hubs will enhance family stability, promote early childhood development, and ensure equity in access to critical services.”

—Email testimony

Barriers to family access include the complicated subsidy system, childcare “deserts,” and the need for care during nontraditional hours. Providers shared that they commonly struggle with getting children in the subsidy program placed in their care, and families shared that they commonly struggle with long waiting lists for placement. This high demand from families eligible for the subsidy program and the high supply of providers available to serve them indicate inefficiency in the placement process. Participants identified many potential reasons for this disconnect in the system. Some providers indicated that resource and referral programs have not been effective in placing families with them. Both families and providers reported struggling with navigating subsidy applications, meeting eligibility requirements, and waiting on slow reimbursement systems. This feedback highlights the need for simpler, streamlined processes. Participants emphasized the need for assistance for families who do not qualify for the subsidy program but still struggle with costs. Additionally, participants shared that families in childcare “deserts” and rural areas struggle to access care due to limited transportation options. Finally,

participants also described challenges with finding care after school (especially for partial-day programs), in the evenings, and overnight. Tools such as the centralized eligibility and enrollment system required by Measure C may help families, caregivers, and providers overcome these barriers by providing transparency and greater ease of use.

ECE settings need to be equipped to serve linguistically and culturally diverse families. Families and providers called for more bilingual providers, culturally relevant curricula, and inclusive and trauma-informed practices to better support diverse communities. Providers requested more training, funding, and specialists to ensure inclusive practices and multilingual supports in childcare programs.

ECE settings need to be equipped to provide additional support—such as early intervention strategies and referrals to specialists—for families with young children who are neurodiverse; are gifted; or have developmental delays, disabilities, or other special needs. In several CLSs, participants highlighted that early childhood is a critical time for identifying developmental needs in young children and called for improved access to inclusive childcare environments and better developmental screening and early intervention services. Support programs for children with special needs, such as Help Me Grow, have been beneficial.

There is a need for stronger coordination between preschools and elementary schools. Finally, providers and families emphasized the need for stronger coordination between preschools and elementary schools in order to support smooth transitions, particularly for students who are in special education.

“Parents are the first and best teachers and advocates for their children, so I would like to see supports for families prioritized, with parents both included in the services and valued as the experts.”

—Participant testimony

Participant Recommendations to Consider

- Simplify and strengthen the subsidy system so it can serve more families and providers.
 - Create a centralized hub or support system to guide families through subsidy applications and enrollment more efficiently. (Such a system is already mandated in Measure C.) Consider self-certification to the extent allowed by law or, as a first step, regulation.
 - Designate Measure C funding for increasing available subsidized slots and lower income eligibility barriers, especially for middle-income families.

- Work across child- and family-serving sectors and systems to improve family access and child learning and development outcomes.
 - Streamline pathways between related programs, such as WIC and childcare subsidies, for easier access to services.
 - Fund targeted outreach campaigns to increase the awareness of available childcare options, particularly among underserved communities.
 - Fund transportation assistance programs or expand mobile childcare services.
 - Strengthen collaboration between early childhood educators and K–12 schools through transition planning and shared training opportunities.
- Support families and providers with early intervention and inclusion.
 - Enable early intervention reimbursements for providers through regional centers, care management organizations, and other partners.
 - Expand funding for inclusion specialists and family navigators. Additionally, train childcare providers in early intervention strategies. For example, consider ways to offer strategies and referrals onsite for providers and parents. Ideally, a team of specialists follows children who have unique needs through their educational journey.
 - Invest in professional development for providers.
- Support professional development in multilingual education and culturally responsive practices.

Theme 4. Facilities and Infrastructure

Facilities experience significant wear and tear, which is expensive for providers to address. Facilities are essential to both sustainability and quality of care. Many providers raised significant concerns about the wear and tear on their facilities, and they expressed an urgent need for funding for basic repairs, safety upgrades, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Furthermore, as 3- and 4-year-olds move into universal prekindergarten and transitional kindergarten, providers are shifting to serve more infants and toddlers. As a result, providers must convert their facilities to be developmentally appropriate for younger children. The challenge of this additional cost is compounded by the fact that the provider-to-child ratios are much smaller for infants and toddlers, limiting the income of the provider.

Participants expressed gratitude for Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF) grants, which have supported facility improvements to flooring, plumbing, kitchen upgrades, and more. However, some providers noted concerns about delays and inefficiency. Providers also shared that facility renovation grants were difficult to access due to zoning restrictions, fire safety requirements, and licensing hurdles. Notably, some FCC providers reported facing rent hikes when landlords learned their homes were used for childcare, making economic sustainability difficult to achieve.

Families and providers share a desire for more parks, playgrounds, and public spaces that are safe and appropriate for early learning activities. Providers described wanting to see more partnerships with school districts and municipalities for greater access to shared spaces such as recreation centers, and

they would like to see revitalized opportunities for programs such as mobile libraries. Investments in community safety, such as crossing guards and better street lighting, also support the needs of their facilities.

“Financial assistance helps us to ensure that facilities are safe, developmentally appropriate, and open.”

—Participant testimony

Participant Recommendations to Consider

- Ensure that facility grants serve all types of providers, including large and small childcare centers, home-based providers, and providers who are currently not serving children and families in the subsidy program. Related, tier the amount of funding available by small/start-up programs, midsize programs, and large programs.
- Provide emergency facility grants (i.e., for repairs and appliance replacement and temporary childcare during repairs) and long-term infrastructure funding (i.e., climate resiliency, HVAC systems, lead and hazard removal, safe water, sunshades, outdoor lighting, security systems, playground structures).
- Simplify the grant application process and provide technical assistance for providers who are navigating facility improvements. Create a hub of information about quality standards and practices.
 - Create a navigation center where providers can apply for permits and contractors. Provide training and support to administrators about applying for and monitoring facilities funding.
 - Hold training for tradespeople, construction managers, and so on, regarding childcare facility requirements, health and safety standards for building materials, and the like.
 - Provide a listing of contractors, businesses, and tradespeople who have experience renovating and constructing childcare facilities using environmentally safe and healthy materials.
 - Hold a trade show specifically regarding safe building materials and equipment for childcare programs, including flooring, playground materials, and technology.
 - Offer a helpline should providers need assistance during improvements.
- Offer rental assistance programs or work with policymakers to protect home-based providers from predatory rent increases. Advocate for rental assistance or homeownership support programs for childcare providers in order to ensure long-term stability.

- Invest in shared community spaces (i.e., parks, libraries, and FRCs) and partner with local governments and school districts to provide public spaces that are friendly to early learning.

The Perspectives of Family, Friend, and Neighbor Caregivers

WestEd facilitated a dedicated CLS for FFN caregivers. This session underscored the special value of FFN caregivers in the early childhood ecosystem, providing care deeply rooted in trust, cultural connection, and specialized care. Further, FFNs provide care that “fills in the gaps” of other caregivers and providers in the ecosystem by providing weekend and overnight care and essential wraparound support. Many participants described FFN caregivers as the backbone of their communities who provide a safe, nurturing, and culturally familiar environment for children.

First 5 Alameda defines an FFN caregiver as one who is “an informal, license-exempt provider who cares for children, typically in a home setting. This includes relatives, close friends, or neighbors. They are trusted community members who offer childcare outside of formal settings like centers or preschools.

In California, license-exempt childcare providers, including FFN caregivers, can legally provide childcare under certain circumstances:

- They may care for children from only one other family (excluding their own) at a time without needing a license.
- If they care for children from multiple families, they must be licensed unless they qualify for an exemption (e.g., caring only for relatives).

Additional education, training, professional development, and incentives for participating in educational opportunities are desired. Some caregivers are eager for support in pursuing early childhood education, moving toward earning their licenses, and starting their own businesses. Budgeting classes were mentioned as a practical example. Several participants wanted to learn new strategies, such as managing challenging behaviors and serving the needs of children with disabilities. Participants also described their unique role of supporting the needs of refugee families, families whose members are undocumented, and other families who are often overlooked by traditional systems.

There is a desire to bring together FFNs for greater community and to overcome isolation. Several participants stated that their role can be isolating, both for the caregiver and the children they care for. Opportunities for training, hearing from speakers, attending playgroups, and visiting neighborhood heroes like firefighters can help promote connection.

Additional outreach and information about the definitions and the benefits of being designated as FFN caregivers are desired. Several participants were eager to understand how they could join the subsidy program and asked for technical assistance with navigating the program.

There are significant economic gaps between center and FCC providers. Several participants talked about the importance of alternative payment programs for caregivers who do not qualify for the subsidy

programs. Additionally, FFN caregivers in Alameda do not receive adjustment factors for caregiving on evenings and weekends as center providers do.

There is a need for support with transportation. Participants asked for support with transporting children from their daycare settings to their evening and overnight caregivers. Participants also shared a desire for transportation to community spaces.

Participant Recommendations to Consider

- Provide access to additional education, training, professional development, and incentives for participating in educational opportunities.
- Consider ways to bring FFNs together for greater community and to overcome isolation.
- Invest in additional outreach and provide additional information about the definition of an FFN caregiver and the benefits of being designated as FFN caregivers.
- Provide additional financial support and benefits in order to equitably close the gaps between FFN caregivers and center and FCC providers.
- Provide support with transportation needs.

“Our FFN workforce are [a field] of potential that aligns with the childcare expansion needs of Alameda County. Let’s invest in the FFN workforce and the much needed childcare slots.”

—Participant testimony

Methodology

Overview of the Community Listening Sessions

The CLSs were formal meetings of the CAC. They followed the Brown Act—also known as the open meeting law—which is a California law that aims to ensure the public’s right to attend and participate in local legislative meetings.

Each CLS was topic specific, and sessions were approximately 2 to 3 hours long. Sessions were hosted on either a workday evening (5:30 p.m. or 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.) or a Saturday morning (9 a.m. to noon).

Childcare and food were provided. The CLSs were facilitated to include both in-person and remote testimony. Enhanced interpretation and translation services were provided. Promotional materials and the CAC meeting books were translated into Alameda County's six threshold languages: Spanish, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Farsi, Cambodian, and Tagalog. Interpretation services in Cantonese and Spanish were provided at every meeting, and interpretation of other languages was available upon request. Table 1 provides a summary of the meetings' topics, dates on which they were held, and number of participants.

Table 1. Summary of Community Listening Session Topics, Dates, and Number of Participants

| Community listening session topic | Date | Number of participants |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|
| Workforce development | December 4, 2024 | 89 |
| Family access and supports | December 18, 2024 | 133 |
| Wages and compensation | January 11, 2025 | 153 |
| Facilities and infrastructure | February 1, 2025 | 106 |
| Quality improvements, family supports, coordination, navigation, and inclusion | February 5, 2025 | 128 |
| Family, friend, and neighbor caregivers | March 1, 2025 | 62 |

Each CLS included two main components:

- **public comment** to allow participant testimony guided by three questions:
 - What is currently working related to this topic?
 - What would you change related to this topic?
 - What questions do you have about this topic?
- **a prioritization activity** to allow participants to identify their highest priorities from the themes that emerged during public comment

During public comment, participants were given either 2 or 3 minutes to speak depending on the length of the meeting and the number of people who signed up to testify. WestEd staff took detailed notes, paying particular attention to recurring themes or significant insights shared by the participants.

Categories were created during the listening process to organize emerging themes, which served as the basis for the prioritization activity. At the end of each session, these themes were listed on chart paper and posted around the room. Before they left the meeting, participants were invited to place one sticky dot—yellow for public participants and green for CAC members—at the theme they deemed to be of the utmost priority. Participants also had the options to write additional thoughts on sticky notes or send an email of further reflections to a dedicated account after the meeting. These prioritization activities provided critical insight into which themes and issues were most pressing to those in attendance, further helping WestEd identify trends and determine the most important priorities.

Materials Analyzed

WestEd analyzed the following materials for this report:

- written materials related to Measure C, including
 - the Measure C and OCI ordinances
 - the Emergency Stabilization Fund proposal
 - presentations, meeting materials, and memos for CAC meetings
 - notes from meetings with First 5 Alameda staff
- CLS meeting materials and notes included
 - presentations and talking points prepared for the CLSs
 - WestEd notes from the CLS meetings
 - CLS meeting recordings and transcripts
 - CLS prioritization activities with sticky dots and sticky notes
- emails to a dedicated account for the Measure C CLSs

Process of Analysis

After the CLSs were complete, WestEd’s research staff reviewed the recorded sessions to gain a full recap of all the participants’ contributions. WestEd also conducted a thorough review of the full transcripts to cross-check the notes, ensuring that no insights or important details were missed. Additionally, all participant statements were cross-checked with the recording transcripts to ensure accuracy before being included in the analysis. This review also included an analysis of the Zoom chats of participants who joined the meetings online, in which additional contributions and comments from participants were often shared. The recommendations and suggestions made by participants were carefully documented, ensuring that their input was reflected in the final synthesis. By combining real-time categorization, prioritization activities, and a meticulous review of session transcripts and chat data, WestEd developed a comprehensive and accurate synthesis of the participants’ perspectives and priorities. This iterative approach ensured that the analysis was both thorough and reflective of the diversity of participant input.

