First 5 Sacramento
Participatory Grantmaking Project
Phase I Report

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Group

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Introduction

In 2021, the First 5 Sacramento Commission (Commission) adopted a resolution recognizing racism as a fundamental cause of disparities in health, early learning, and family resilience. As part of this commitment, the Commission pledged to actively and intentionally engage in efforts to dismantle systemic racism. This commitment was further reinforced through the approval of the 2024–2027 strategic plan, which allocates $5.2 million to advance racial equity.

To support this initiative, Touchstone Leadership Group (TLG) was engaged to implement a Participatory Grantmaking (PGM) Process—one of the recommended strategies for First 5 Sacramento to address and dismantle systemically racist structures.

The project is divided into two phases:

1. **Community Engagement**: Developing a process to identify a deliberative panel responsible for managing the participatory grantmaking process.

2. **Participatory Grantmaking**: Convening the selected panel to evaluate proposals and allocate grants.

This report focuses on Phase One, which involved organizing two community assemblies—one in-person and one virtual—to gather input on designing the panel recruitment process. Suggestions related to Phase Two, where relevant, are also noted.

Through the deliberative process, First 5 Sacramento aims to equitably fund BIPOC-led and -serving community-based organizations (CBOs) and non-traditional organizations dedicated to improving outcomes for children aged 0–5. This community-driven approach fosters trust, ensures community-informed decision-making, and builds capacity for meaningful engagement.

Planning and Outreach

In September 2024, the TLG team developed a comprehensive invitee list that included targeted organizations and individuals. This list was informed by resources provided by First 5 Sacramento, the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) Cohorts, and Touchstone Leadership Group's contacts. The goal was to ensure diverse representation across geographic areas, organizational affiliations, and community backgrounds.

A bilingual (English and Spanish) registration form was created, and the team conducted personalized follow-ups via email, text, and phone. To incentivize participation, attendees received a $50 stipend, with additional provisions such as dinner and childcare for in-person participants.

Participants were asked to register if they met the following criteria:

1. Staff of a BIPOC-led or serving community-based organization (CBO) supporting children and families aged 0–5. (*OR)*

2. A community member who has received services from such an organization. (*OR)*

3. An individual or business interested in serving children aged 0–5. (*AND)*

4. Their organization had not received funding from First 5 Sacramento since 2010.

To gather feedback on the sessions, an evaluation form was also distributed to participants.

Community Assemblies:
Setting the Stage for Discussion

Attendance & Demographics

The primary goal of the assemblies was to convene a diverse group of participants, fostering an inclusive and collaborative environment. The target attendance was 20–35 individuals per session, with the in-person event hosting 25 participants and the virtual event drawing 35. The assemblies prioritized BIPOC-led and serving organizations, resulting in a highly representative turnout:

- **78%** of participants were from BIPOC-led organizations.

- **87%** served BIPOC communities.

- Attendees represented Black, Latino, Asian, Middle Eastern, and White communities.

Participant Affiliations

- **10%** Business

- **72%** CBOs

- **10%** Community members

Neighborhood Representation
North Sacramento, South Sacramento, North Highlands, Rancho Cordova, and Arden Arcade.

Agenda & Grounding

Each session began by clearly outlining the purpose and desired outcomes, ensuring participants understood the importance of their contributions. Facilitators established group agreements to create an inclusive and productive environment. These agreements emphasized sharing space, fostering brave discussions, and welcoming first drafts of ideas.

Facilitators also provided background on the initiative to ground participants in the project's goals. This structured approach ensured the sessions were productive, and participants left feeling valued and optimistic about their contributions.

Community Assemblies: Discussion & Breakouts

Probing Questions & Insights

Facilitators posed several thought-provoking questions to encourage discussion and prepare participants for the breakout sessions. Below are the key questions and a summary of participant responses:

1. **What comes to mind when hearing this statement?**
   "First 5 Sacramento has set aside $4 million in grant funding to be decided by a panel of community members for BIPOC-led and serving organizations."

   o **Positives:** Intentionality, equitable distribution, diverse representation, community leadership, and empowerment.

   o **Concerns:** $4 million feels insufficient for long-term impact and may increase competition among organizations.

2. **What are some benefits of this approach?**

   o Transparency, community hope, cultural representation, and a shift in power dynamics toward grassroots organizations.

3. **What are potential drawbacks?**

   o Barriers to selecting appropriate panelists, cumbersome county processes, and concerns about sustainability.

4. **What questions do you have about this approach?**

   o Topics included inclusivity for specific groups (e.g., boys, youth, refugees), logistical concerns (e.g., criminal background checks, funding parameters), and long-term sustainability.

5. **What suggestions or considerations do you have?**

   o Educational workshops, leveraging funds for additional grants, and ensuring equity in panelist recruitment.

On occasion, discussions veered toward Phase II, focusing on grant specifics and fund allocation. Facilitators redirected participants to Phase One objectives, emphasizing the focus on recruiting a deliberative panel.

Breakout Session Discussions

In breakout groups, participants designed recruitment strategies for the deliberative panel, focusing on the following areas:

1. **Key Criteria:** Desired qualifications, expertise, and frameworks for panel members.

2. **Recruitment Sources:** Targeted organizations and geographic areas for outreach.

3. **Recruitment Messages:** Key themes and values to convey during recruitment.

4. **Key Messengers:** Individuals or groups responsible for outreach.

5. **Wildcard:** Additional considerations such as compensation and meeting accessibility.

Breakout Session Emergent Themes

The following themes emerged from the breakout sessions-

1. **Excitement and Equity:** Participants expressed enthusiasm about equitable funding and the shift in power dynamics, emphasizing the importance of grassroots and BIPOC-led organizations.

2. **Sustainability Concerns:** Many felt $4 million was insufficient for long-term impact and suggested using the funds to secure additional resources.

3. **Accessibility:** Recommendations included simplifying applications, using plain language, translating materials, and leveraging social media to reach underrepresented groups.

4. **Representation:** Participants stressed the importance of lived experience, diverse perspectives, and avoiding "the usual suspects" in panel recruitment.

5. **Youth Involvement:** Several suggested involving youth as panelists and messengers, given their unique insights into community needs.

   Participants provided actionable recommendations, demonstrating their commitment to a transparent and community-centered grantmaking process.

Recommendations

Panel Recruitment

- Ensure panelists represent diverse geographic, cultural, and professional backgrounds.
- Include individuals with lived experience in BIPOC communities and grassroots work.
- Adopt a nomination or referral process to identify strong candidates.

Accessibility

- Simplify the application process with user-friendly language and translations.
- Provide adequate compensation and support for panelists (e.g., transportation, childcare).

Community Trust

- Share this report with assembly participants to demonstrate transparency.
- Clearly communicate the panel selection process and how community feedback was incorporated.

Evaluation of Assemblies

Participants rated the assemblies highly with over 80% agreeing it was effective in terms of achieving its purpose.

They also noted clear goals, effective facilitation, and a safe environment for discussion.

Most expressed confidence that their feedback would inform First 5 Sacramento's decision-making. However, some were concerned about whether their feedback would be heard or if this would be another instance of community being summoned to provide input that was only used to "check a box."

Conclusion and Acknowledgments

First 5 Sacramento has an unprecedented opportunity to address racism as a public health crisis through a community-designed and community-led process of participatory grantmaking that seeks to invest in BIPOC-led and serving organizations committed to improving outcomes for children aged 0-5. This approach is an outgrowth of the agency's work to build internal capacity for Racial, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Cultural Responsiveness (REDI+CR).

Touchstone Leadership Group acknowledges First 5 Sacramento team's support and deeply appreciates the the Commission's continued commitment to advancing racial equity in service to community health.

Appendices

Appendix 1: The Invitation

First 5 Sacramento has set aside $4 million in grant funding to BIPOC CBOs

This funding will be decided by a community panel

We want YOU to tell us how to recruit this panel

October 23rd (in person) 5:30-7:30pm & October 29th (virtual) 5:30-7:30pm

Register for more details https://tinyurl.com/First5Panel

$50 Stipend * Childcare * Dinner

Appendix 2: Assemblies in Action - In-Person Assembly

Group Agreements

- Share the Space...
  step up, step up
- Create a Brave
  space for everyone.
- First Drafts are OK!

...eveling the playing fie...
...ltural representatio...

...Ass Accessibilty- in all
Social media/print, etc.

- revolunize the approach
  "not how we've always
  done it"

- do a survey to ask
  the community what they
  need projects wise/services
  that should be funded

- have shared values
- Come to our offic...

First 3 has
Set aside $4 million
for Participatory Grantmaking

1. Intentional investment
2. Community support
3. Diverse representation +
   equitable distribution
4. educational workshops
   from Comm orgs + understanding
   how will work

Positives

- good intention with the
  approach! not top down
- optimistic because the need
- diverse members/unbiased
- transparent, organic
  decision-making
- brings hope to the
  Community
- be [creative] around the
  ...

Drawbacks

- What if the proper people
  aren't selected? Barriers...
- 4 mil likely not enough for
  longterm/sustainability/main.
- Lead to competition among
  groups/org.
- Lack of shared values =
  neg. impact on grant process
- County processes difficult
  (funding and help up front)

Questions

(large panel, left)
...hat will money
...e used for?
...s it enough? 4
...ill "community
...embers" really
...present the comm...
...ill there be focus
...r community buildin...

Questions (top middle panel)

- How...trust-building
  Community : County and visa
  versa?
- Will funds be annual /
  Sustainability
- How will it be tracked? Impact
- How...help newly arrived
  refug. and existing people?
- Will there be help w/ budget
  development?
- Supp. of funds or project
  based? Budget
- First 5 CA or Sac County?   #2

KEY CRITERIA (top right panel)

- WORK DIRECTLY W/ 0-5yo
  ↳ EXPAND TO 0-10 yo WORK EXP
- YOUTH 16 & UP
- ANY EXPERIENCE WORKING
  W/ CHILDREN
- CRIMINAL BACKGROUND, CHECK
- NON BIPOC FOLKS + DIVERSE,
  REFLECT COUNTY DEMOGRAPH
- *HOW DO WE ASK IF AGENCY IS BIPO

RECRUIT
- BY REFERRAL, BY WHO
- SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, PARENTS,
  CHILD CARE PROVIDERS / AGENCIES

Drawbacks (middle panel)

- What if the proper people
  aren't selected? Barriers.
- 4 mil likely not enough for
  longterm / sustainability / main.
- Lead to competition among
  groups / org.
- Lack of shared values =
  neg - impact on grant process
- County processes difficult
  (funding and help up front)

(middle right panel)

- CONSIDER COUNTY STATS
  ↳ BCLC, CHILD ACTION, BEANSTALK
- RESEARCH & INVITE
?

MESSAGES
- BIPOC DEFINED
- CULTURE CONSIDERED
- GEOGRAPHIC AREAS, LANGUAGE
  VIDEOS, AUDIO VOICE OVER
- COLLAB VS COMPETITION
- GRASS ROOTS, COMMUNITY
- DEFINITIONS, SPELLED OUT
  CRITERIA, DEMOGRAPHICS
- SIMPLE, NO VERBAGE

KEY MESSENGERS
- WHATS THE CRITERIA DEFINE, SCREENIN
- CRITERIA TO RECEIVE FUNDING
- PERSONAL INVITATION

Questions (bottom middle panel)

- Where do boys / young men
  fit in for this?
- Can youth be on the panel?
- What about criminal
  background as a barrier?
- How we make sure this
  night / event - will be
  considered / valued?

#

WILD CARD (bottom right panel)

- DIFFERENT POSITIONS
- SPACE USE W/O COST
- COMPENSATION - STIPEND
- DEFINE THE COMMITMENT, EXPECTATION
  REQUIREMENTS
- ROTATE MTG LOCATIONS
- LISTEN TO VOICE OF YOUNG PPL MALE #

EASY - OPEN MINDED, ALL OPINIONS MATTE

HARDER - LIMITED TIMING OF BRAINSTORM

Panel 1 (top-left)

... ture to Recruit

- In community –elders, youth, etc. Social, Safe Schools {free, paid groups', community events
- Expanding locations – outlying
regular considerations
(different populations –
housing/food support)
0-5 + "fresh eyes"
- Faith Communities {former 0-5, First 5 children
- Mental Health Providers
- Parents and caregivers
- Community Leaders

Panel 2 (top-middle)

#3   Messengers / Messenging

- Equity ... fair, free, far reaching
- First of kind
- Welcoming ... open ... exp. not required ... "Lived" experience
- Transparency in process
- Inspiring ... impact ... hope ... village
- Invitation to 0-5 Success

Panel 3 (top-right)

- Transparent - time, payment
  - Use accessible language; say it plain; translation
  - Use social media & other relevant technology to reach folks
4 Must have firsthand knowledge of BIPOC community
  - Compensation!
  - Accessible locations

(sticky notes): Application should be user-friendly –Internet –Lived experience

Reporting/Capacity building

Geographic diversity

Process– County must be willing to iterate

Make application easy & accessible

Panel 4 (middle-left)

Awareness of
- Diversity in the community
Corp. Nonprofits = understands the differences between the two
- Diversity of backgrounds (leaders vs adults) grassroots vs grass top
- Representing those w/o a voice (ex: incarcerated) folks
- Experienced/knowledge of the needs of that population
- Cultural competency/sensitivity
- Awareness of implicit bias
- No white supremacy framework

② Recruitment? Advocacy orgs, folks served by CBOs (0-5), shelter orgs, schools & school districts
Parent Committees @ schools (vested interest)
- Social service agencies
- Peer-to-peer
- Therapists/mental health professionals
- No google form!

③ Narrative: calling on comm. leaders to help other comm leaders
- Building a new model for other counties   Needs assessment (community)
- Making "history"   - Step up!

Panel 5 (middle-middle)

Group 2: funct...

Criteria:
- Commit. to racial equity (specific examples)
prof. or lived exp. - experience with diverse communities w/in BIPOC (individuals)
- Ability to engage w/ community applicants (fairness/ outside box)
- Analitical and critical thinking

Panel 6 (middle-right)

- WORK DIRECTLY W/ 0-5 yo
  - EXPAND TO 0-10 yo WORK EXP
- YOUTH 16 & UP
- ANY EXPERIENCE WORKING W/ CHILDREN
- CRIMINAL BACKGROUND; CHECK
- NON BIPOC FOLKS + DIVERSE, REFLECT COUNTY DEMOGRAPHIC
* HOW DO WE ASK IF AGENCY IS BIPOC

RECRUIT
- BY REFERRAL, BY WHO
- SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, PARENTS, CHILD CARE PROVIDERS /AGENCIES

Panel 7 (bottom-left)

#4   First 5 ...

"Consultants in community"

Pay people ...
Make ... it virtual
and in-person

Panel 8 (bottom-middle)

Messages:
- Inclusion (BIPOC)
- Empowerment
- opportunity to create change in your community
- Building a transparent pouss for all
- Looks good on your resume
- We value your input and beliefs
- Proof that the county isn't "all" bad

Wild Card: - Compensation
- location for meetings (accessibility)
- feed people
- Panel people (their org should be primary bipoc)
- Identify and buy-in to the time commitment

Messengers: WHO?
- grassroot organizers
- ... who do the work

Panel 9 (bottom-right)

Key criteria:
- Resident of community to be served
- Have children ↓ 5
- Range of ages/ demographics
- diverse understanding of (nonprofit com)
- having financial knowledge
- diversity of history/ age of the org.
- have children or be a parent
- Rep from BIPOC community
- Similar lived experiences
- Expertise w/ ECE

Recruitment sources:
- Churches – others Religous orgs.   - foster parents
- K12 parent orgs (PTA, etc)   - foster family Agencies
- low income housing complexes
- CBO's
- Headstart parents/ participants
- Hospitals/ clinics
- Tribal orgs
- Small comm. businesses
- Child care providers

Appendix 3: Assemblies in Action - Virtual Assembly

Appendix 4: Breakout Group Responses

Key Criteria	Recruitment Sources	Recruitment Messages	Key Messengers	Wild Card
Must have first hand knowledge of BIPOC community	Advocacy orgs and orgs that serve 0-5; shelters, school districts, social service agencies, Head Start and childcare providers	Calling on community leaders to help other community leaders	Peer to Peer. The youth!	Compensate people
Proven lived experience	Therapists and mental health professionals	Building a new model for other counties. Making history.	Grassroots organizers- the people who do the work	Accessible location for meetings – virtual and in person; rotate meeting locations
From a boots on the ground organization	K-12 parent orgs	Empowerment. An opportunity to create change.	Foster parents	Accessible language not jargon (e.g. BIPOC)
Must represent those without a voice	Low income housing complexes	Building a transparent process for all.	LGBTQIA+ Parents and families	Accessible application format
Cultural competency and sensitivity	Hospitals/clinics	Proof that the County isn't bad.	Undocumented families	Panel should be geographically, educationally, and professionally diverse
Org should be primarily BIPOC	Tribal orgs	Looks good on your resume. Build leadership skills.		Feed people! Real food, not pizza or sandwiches
From the community to be served	Small businesses in underinvested areas	Hope filled message. Invitation to 0-5 success.		Be clear about time commitment
Have children 0-5	Smaller groups and organizations to get something different	Use the village metaphor.		Don't forget refugee community.
Experience with early childhood education	Community Nominations "who would you want to represent you?"	Dismantle power dynamics		Consider criminal background check
Able to engage with community to be served	Libraries			Ask if they were referred
Youth 16+	Grocery stores, beauty salons, nail salons, supermarkets			Use videos for recruitment in addition to text

Appendix 5: Assembly Participant Evaluation Form

Today's meeting provided a vital opportunity for community members and community-based organizations to help shape the future of our community as we determine how to recruit and select a diverse and representative panel that will decide how to distribute $4 million in funding to BIPOC-serving or BIPOC-led CBOs. Your voice is essential to ensuring that we build an inclusive, equitable process that reflects the needs and strengths of Sacramento's diverse communities.

Name:_____ (required)

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Purpose of the Survey: We understand that meetings can sometimes feel unproductive or repetitive. This survey aims to gather your honest feedback to help improve our meeting practices and ensure they add value to your work and our team's goals. **Please read the questions below and mark the response that most closely aligns with how you felt about the Assembly.**

1. How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the meeting in terms of achieving its purpose?
   - ☐ Ineffective
   - ☐ Neutral
   - ☐ Effective

2. Did you find the meeting goals clear and relevant?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No
   - ☐ If no, please share what was unclear or irrelevant.

3. How engaged did you feel during the meeting?
   - ☐ Not Engaged
   - ☐ Somewhat Engaged
   - ☐ Very Engaged

4. Did you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts or concerns during the meeting?
   - ☐ Not at All Comfortable
   - ☐ Somewhat Comfortable
   - ☐ Very Comfortable

5. Do you now understand the participatory grant making process?
   - ☐ Did Not Understand
   - ☐ Somewhat Understood
   - ☐ Completely Understood

6. Do you believe your feedback was received and will be considered?
   - ☐ No Confidence
   - ☐ Some Confidence
   - ☐ Complete Confidence

7. How relevant was the meeting content to your daily work?
   - ☐ Not Relevant
   - ☐ Somewhat Relevant
   - ☐ Very Relevant

8. Were Next Steps identified during the meeting?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

9. Do you believe these next steps will lead to meaningful outcomes?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No
   - ☐ Too Soon to Tell

10. How would you rate the length of the meeting?
    - ☐ Too Short
    - ☐ Just Right
    - ☐ Too Long

11. Was the meeting scheduled at a convenient time for you?
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

12. What aspects of the meeting did you find most valuable, if any?

13. What changes would you suggest making future meetings more effective or engaging, if any?

14. Your feedback is crucial in helping us improve how we communicate and collaborate as a team. Please share any additional comments or suggestions.

Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback. We value your input and are committed to making our meetings more effective and beneficial for everyone involved. As discussed as a thank you for participating, you will receive a $50 stipend. The stipend can be sent via Venmo or as an amazon gift card.

Choose your stiped below (Required Response):

☐ Venmo Name or associated phone number: _____

☐ Email for Amazon gift card: _____

Thank you!

Touchstone Leadership Group Team

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