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First 5 Sacramento Breaks New Ground with \$4.17 Million Community-Led Investment in Early Childhood Equity

Historic participatory grantmaking process awards first-time funding to 35 community organizations serving Sacramento's most marginalized neighborhoods.

Sacramento, CA — In a bold shift toward equity and community power, the First 5 Sacramento Commission has approved \$4,172,410 in funding for 35 community-based organizations—all of which have never before received First 5 funding. The awards were made through First 5 Sacramento's Racial Equity funding pathway, marking a transformative moment in how early childhood investments are designed, decided and delivered.

This historic funding decision was led by First 5 Sacramento's **Equity in Action Committee**, a 15-member body composed of parents, caregivers and community leaders who live in the neighborhoods where the grant funds will be delivered. Through this committee, First 5 Sacramento pioneered a Participatory Grantmaking Model—intentionally shifting decision-making power from institutions to the community itself.

As a result, funding will reach organizations serving children and families in 27 high-priority ZIP codes, supporting culturally responsive, community-driven programs that address long-standing inequities in early childhood development.

"This bold new grantmaking process is rooted in trust—recognizing that community members closest to the challenges often have the most effective solutions, yet are rarely asked to lead," said Phil Serna, Chair of First 5 Sacramento and County Supervisor representing the First District. "By prioritizing equity, lived experience and local expertise in funding decisions, and through the thoughtful leadership of the Equity in Action Committee, First 5 Sacramento is reaching more families in the neighborhoods where resources are needed most."

This approach ensures that early childhood programs are not only effective—but rooted in lived experience, cultural knowledge and community trust.

Learn more about the funded organizations and their programs, the Equity in Action Committee and First 5 Sacramento's participatory grantmaking model, visit the [First 5 Sacramento website](#).

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