



## **Certified Sustainable – An Initiative of First 5 Sacramento Project Report**

### **A Call for Action**

In early 2018, anticipating ever-growing declines in tax revenue, First 5 Sacramento decided that groundbreaking action was required. First 5 Sacramento, Storywalkers Consulting and the Impact Foundry (Sacramento’s nonprofit resource center) came together to tailor a program that could prepare 24 local agencies to face and overcome the anticipated funding cuts. The team designed a process by which agencies would develop actionable plans to ensure long-term program sustainability. Like a business plan, these documents are intended to prepare nonprofits to offset an anticipated reduction of funding. Once implemented, these detailed plans enable agency leaders to maintain current service levels even as First 5 funds are reduced. Four inter-connected elements were identified as the cornerstones of each agency team’s sustainability efforts:

- Broaden and mobilize the sustainability team within each organization
- Receive targeted training and coaching to build capacity
- Generate internal knowledge, understanding, innovation and planning toward sustainability
- Create meaningful and living sustainability plans

Officially named **“Certified Sustainable,”** all grantees were convened in May 2018 to launch the initiative. While each agency had the option to fully participate in all phases of the effort or to simply create a sustainability plan on their own, fully 100% of organizations chose to participate in the entire initiative. The yearlong effort culminated in June 2019 with a public certification that deemed each plan complete, innovative and achievable. Participating agencies included:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ★ 211 Sacramento                                | ★ La Familia Counseling Center*           |
| ★ Center for Oral Health                        | ★ Mutual Assistance Network*              |
| ★ Child Abuse Prevention Council of Sacramento* | ★ Natomas Unified School District         |
| ★ Child Action, Inc.                            | ★ River Delta Unified School District     |
| ★ Community Resource Project, Inc.              | ★ River Oak Center for Children*          |
| ★ Crocker Art Museum                            | ★ Robla School District                   |
| ★ Elk Grove Unified School District             | ★ Sacramento City Unified School District |
| ★ Folsom Cordova Community Partnership*         | ★ Sacramento Children’s Home*             |
| ★ Folsom Cordova Unified School District        | ★ Sacramento County Office of Education   |
| ★ Galt Joint Union Elementary School District   | ★ Sacramento County WIC                   |
| ★ Her Health First                              | ★ San Juan Unified School District        |
|   | ★ Twin Rivers Unified School District     |
|   | ★ WellSpace Health*                       |

\*Members of the Birth & Beyond Collaborative

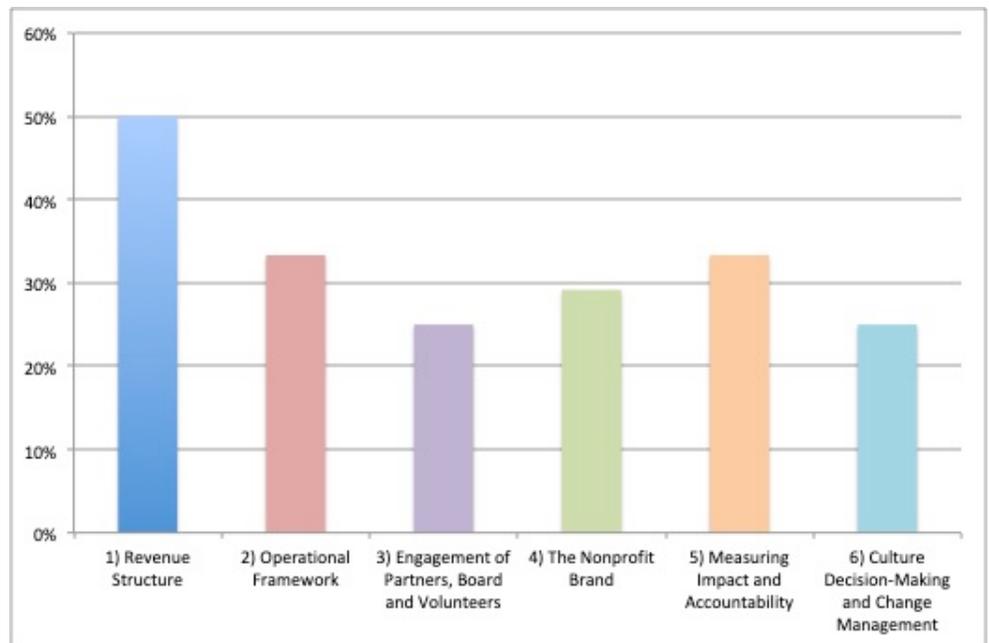


### A Different Approach and a Different Conversation for Each Agency

Given the immediate urgency that is common at school districts, public agencies and independent nonprofit organizations, it's hard to shift the focus toward longer-term discussions. At the beginning of the initiative, representatives from each organization were assigned to have their colleagues – at least five individuals and ideally more – each completed a self-assessment about their agency's sustainability. The primary purpose of this assessment was to identify different perceptions held by leaders across various sectors of an organization. A key takeaway from these surveys (and from the initiative overall) is that a little bit of internal agency conversation can go a long way.

To broaden each teams' conversations and move beyond fragmented understandings, Certified Sustainable deployed a set of Six Domains for nonprofit effectiveness. Each of these domains provides a distinct pathway to support sustainability and impact. Participants in the initiative ranked the six domains based upon which topics held the greatest promise to increase sustainability, then selected at least two domains upon which their plan would be built.

As displayed in the figure, there was a great diversity of approaches selected by participating agencies. The table shows the percentage of agencies (out of 24) that chose each domain as a priority. While half of all agencies selected Revenue Structure as one of their priorities, there was a complete mix of pairs of strategies selected by participating agencies, affirming the idea that the path to sustainability is distinct for every agency. And beyond that, many agencies developed completely different directions even within similar domains.



The process to create a sustainability plan required a fine balance. First 5 wanted to provide all necessary guidance and structure, while ensuring that the road traveled by each agency was genuinely and uniquely their own. Each agency received an array of training and coaching and utilized a detailed Sustainability Plan Template to complete a sustainability plan.



## Action Steps Taken

The process to support First 5 agencies in developing meaningful sustainability plans is intended to support First 5 Sacramento's Financial Resources strategy from their Systems Sustainability Plan. According to this strategy, "Systems are sustained and expanded through new funding, alternative funding, leveraged funding, and efficient use of existing funding."

To support each agency in the successful development of sustainability plans, a series of targeted steps were completed:

- In May 2018, all First 5 agencies attended an extended in-person meeting that detailed the Certified Sustainable process including the timeline and the six domains. In the weeks following the launch meeting, every agency had numerous staff members complete the initial sustainability status assessment.
- During the summer of 2018, approximately a quarter of agencies scheduled optional meetings with consultant, Mark Simon, to lay the foundation for their efforts. Additionally, agencies began signing up and attending a variety of trainings at Impact Foundry at no cost.
- In August 2018, agencies participated in meetings by cohort (Early Childhood Education, Effective Parenting and Health Services) to review the specific elements and requirements of the sustainability plan template and took a first stab at identifying their priority domains.
- From September to December, 100% of agencies held team meetings onsite with Mark Simon to review their initial status toward completing a first draft sustainability plan. In most cases, these meetings included three-six members of agency leadership, reinforcing the commitment to moving beyond silos.
- In October, Impact Foundry convened a special training on Innovation, Collaboration and Branding for Sustainability exclusively for Certified Sustainable members, including guest speaker Jessica Rhodes, Director of Strategy at 3fold Communications. In March 2019, Impact Foundry convened a special training on Culture, Difficult Choices & Change Management for Certified Sustainable members, including guest speaker Erica Dias, VP of Marketing and Communications at Safe Credit Union.
- In January 2019, all agencies were convened for a meeting and discussion with statewide First 5 leaders, including Moira Kenney, Executive Director, First 5 Association and Camille Maben, Executive Director, First 5 California.
- Throughout the year, agencies continued to utilize opportunities to participate at no cost in Impact Foundry trainings and to receive targeted technical assistance from Mark Simon as requested. Numerous Certified Sustainable teams attended the daylong annual What If Conference in February 2019.
- In February 2019, 100% of agencies submitted first draft plans. First 5, Storywalkers and Impact Family reviewed these plans. Feedback was provided in writing via email, and in person via meetings with each of the three cohorts in March.
- In April 2019, agencies submitted final versions of their plans. The second round of documents were designed to be public facing and meaningful to a broad variety of audiences, including other colleagues within their agencies, First 5 staff and commissioners, or prospective funders.



## Domains Prioritized and Targeted by Agency

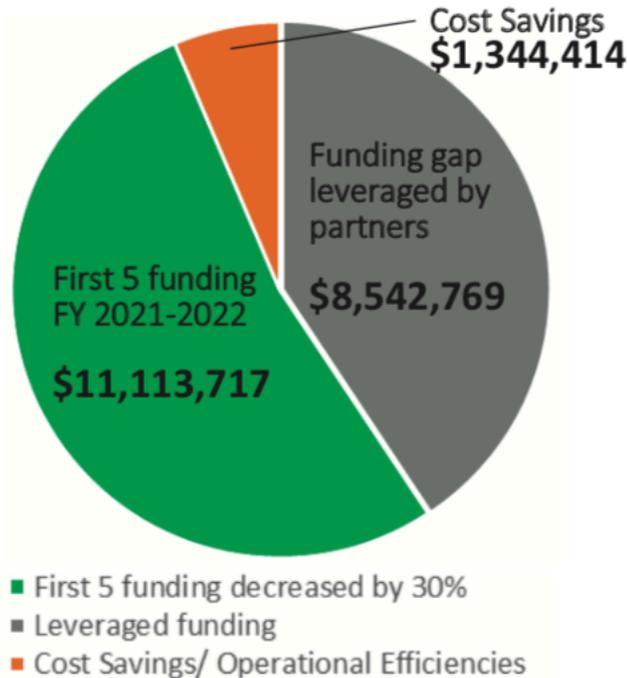
<p><b>1) Revenue Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Crocker Art Museum, •Galt Joint Union Elementary SD, •Center for Oral Health, •Elk Grove USD, •Sacramento Children's Home, •River Delta USD, •Twin Rivers USD, •Sacramento County WIC, •Child Abuse Prevention Council, •Folsom Cordova USD, •Her Health First, •Natomas USD</li> </ul>	<p>Revenue structure includes measures of financial health such as diversity in the mix of funding sources (i.e. grants, fee for service, government contracts, direct giving, and events), innovation in generating resources, and level of cash on hand.</p>
<p><b>2) Operational Framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Child Abuse Prevention Council, •Folsom Cordova USD, •Her Health First, •Natomas USD, •Sacramento City USD, •Community Resource Project, Inc., •Sacramento County Office of Education, •Robla School District</li> </ul>	<p>Operational frameworks are the structures within an organization that enable financial management, appropriate training, data collection and tracking, as well as sets of policies, goals, standards and procedures.</p>
<p><b>3) Engagement of Partners, Board and Volunteers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•La Familia Counseling Center, •River Delta USD, •Robla School District, •Twin Rivers USD, •211 Sacramento, •Sacramento County WIC</li> </ul>	<p>In the engagement domain, the focus is to review how to get the greatest return when involving partner agencies, board members and volunteers.</p>
<p><b>4) The Nonprofit Brand</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•211 Sacramento, •Folsom Cordova Community Partnership, •River Oak Center For Children, •Sacramento Children's Home , •Sacramento County WIC, •Child Action, Inc. , •WellSpace Health</li> </ul>	<p>Being sustainable with your brand means it attracts supporters and collaborative opportunities. In order to achieve these outcomes, organizations generally need to develop, implement and update a marketing and external communications plan.</p>
<p><b>5) Measuring Impact and Accountability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Center for Oral Health, •Child Action, Inc. , •Community Resource Project, Inc. , •Elk Grove USD, •Sacramento County Office of Education, •WellSpace Health , •Mutual Assistance Network, •San Juan USD</li> </ul>	<p>Nonprofits are often capable of measuring their output – the specific amount that a service is delivered or number of attendees at an event. But impact means that some sort of change occurs as a result of an organization’s efforts.</p>
<p><b>6) Culture, Decision-Making and Change Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Birth &amp; Beyond Collaborative, •Crocker Art Museum, •Galt Joint Union Elementary SD, •Mutual Assistance Network, •Sacramento City USD, •San Juan USD</li> </ul>	<p>Successful organizations have adaptive leadership capacity. Being adaptive includes the ability to notice and respond to internal and external changes while inspiring others to innovate in support of the mission.</p>



**Results and Impact**

By the close of the initiative all 24 agencies submitted 21 sustainability plans (the Birth & Beyond Plan encompasses seven agencies). Of the 21 plans, 19 were “Certified Sustainable” and two remain pending Certification. In addition to First 5 Certification, each agency received a Certificate of Recognition from Assemblymember McCarty and Senator Richard Pan for participating and graduation from Certified Sustainable

Collectively, these 21 plans detailed strategies to leverage \$8,542,769 worth of funding to close the gap resulting from the anticipated 30% cut in First 5 funds. Additionally, participating agencies identified \$1,344,414 worth of combined cost savings.



**Evaluation Findings**

In May-June 2019, Applied Survey Research (ASR) conducted a program completion survey among Certified Sustainable participants to measure program impact and opportunities for program refinement. Certified Sustainable participants benefited overall from program offerings, yet offered constructive feedback for opportunities to refine specific program elements.

The tool most-mentioned by respondents that increased learning was the Certified Sustainable Six Domains Template.

According to survey respondents, the top three elements Certified Sustainable participants most valued were:

- 1) Capacity building to broaden more efficient funding strategies
- 2) Expanding and diversifying internal agency sustainability teams
- 3) Developing a marketing and external communications plan through the Certified Sustainable program

Approximately two-thirds of survey respondents were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” that the program content (69%) and domain-specific trainings (64%) helped to prepare them for their overall work, while the remaining third were “somewhat satisfied” and believed those elements “could improve.”



Respondents noted additional overall opportunities for program refinement, which included a desire for:

- More domain-specific exercises and trainings to develop stronger overall understanding (47% participants agreed), and improved overall content of the program (37%).
- Clearer expectations of exercises and products, with more time devoted to agency-specific coaching to allow for varying levels of experience and progress.
- One respondent commented: “It should be more streamlined and engaging- its hard work and it felt like hard work.”
- Roughly one-quarter of respondent (26%), however, did not feel that any program refinements were needed.

ASR measured respondents’ confidence levels among a variety of skills and concluded that:

- Respondent acquired stronger confidence in networking and soliciting grantmakers and the business community, and developing a marketing and external communications plan, as a result of the Certified Sustainable program.
- The majority of respondents (85%) reported they were “prepared enough” or “very prepared” in *networking with fundraising and development professionals* as a result of the program, compared to when they began the program (70% reported they were “not prepared” or “somewhat prepared”).
- The majority of respondents (84%) reported they were “prepared enough” or “very prepared” to *develop a marketing and external communications plan* as a result of the program, compared to when they began the program (55% reported they were “not prepared” or “somewhat prepared”).

ASR’s evaluation also provided an opportunity for respondents to comment directly on their Certified Sustainable experience. Some of these statements include:

*Capacity building to broaden more efficient funding strategies:*

- “This process improved our agency’s strategy to look for outside funding to sustain our efforts... It made tangible the progress we achieved in capacity building, and provided a road map to be better known as a strong, community-based organization.”
- “The budget could be replicable. Coaching helped us narrow efforts down to First 5-specific measures, instead of feeling like we had to carry the weight of our entire agency in the plan.”
- “It forced me to focus on... the upcoming three years, and what our staff and team needs to develop for efficiency models... to see how we can better serve our families.”

*Expanding/diversifying internal agency sustainability teams:*

- “Being able to work with our internal team showed how much interaction is needed, at all levels of the organization, to complete a successful sustainability plan.”

*Developing a marketing and external communications plan:*

- “A focus on an overall message about our program and the ability to market to outside agencies.”



## **Recommendations and Next Steps**

Given that all 24 agencies spent many months engaging and expanding their sustainability teams, attending meetings and trainings, and ultimately completing detailed sustainability plans, we consider Certified Sustainable to be a solid success. However, arriving at 21 plans in many ways is only the beginning of the work at hand. As we move to implementation of these plans, additional efforts, coordination and resources will be required of each agency, as well as First 5 Sacramento. As detailed below, agencies and First 5 must each focus on no less than five follow-up steps.

### **Funded Agencies**

- 1) Assign Leadership and Take Action – Following the creation of a detailed plan, the most critical next step is both the most obvious and the most common point of breakdown. One or more identified leaders must begin implementing the plan. Team members must each review their tasks and timelines and begin carrying out the initial steps of the plan.
- 2) Seek Training and Technical Support – As part of working the plan, each agency should consider how outside support could enable them to increase effectiveness and overcome obstacles to implementation. Agencies should identify specific training topics that could allow additional team members to play a role in sustainability and identify how to access this training. Alternatively, agencies might review the list of trainings available at Impact Foundry or Compass Point and identify if any of those trainings might support effective implementation. Beyond training, agencies should consider if technical support by outside experts are needed. Technical assistance might be sought in areas including: data and evaluation; marketing and branding; grant funding research and proposal writing; team building and communication; strategic planning; or financial systems and analysis.
- 3) Engage Broad Internal and External Collaboration – As detailed in this report, each agency was required to engage a team of individuals in developing their plans, and also to identify opportunities for collaboration with partners. During implementation, sustainability leaders must remain cautious of returning to silos and instead, continue to engage an extended team of agency leaders in the sustainability process. This engagement will require reporting out on a regular basis to ensure that all team members are up to speed. Additionally, agencies should continue to maintain and strengthen existing partnerships while also identifying and pursuing new opportunities for collaboration that reinforce sustainability.
- 4) Update the Plans – Numerous circumstances will require that plans are occasionally reviewed and updated. These circumstances might include changes to anticipated revenue or expenses for the agency; changes in anticipated awards by First 5; staff or leadership changes; unanticipated opportunities or obstacles; lessons learned; and new partnership opportunities.
- 5) Share Stories of Success and Lessons Learned – With all the effort required in planning for and implementing sustainability efforts, it is crucial that agencies identify lessons learned, celebrate milestones reached and share stories of success internally and externally. The First 5 Sacramento community all stands to benefit by sharing in the learning and success that occurs throughout the Certified Sustainability effort.



## **First 5 Sacramento**

- 1) Commissioners and Leadership Know the Plans – First 5 management and program staff must remain familiar with the details of the plans for each agency they directly work with. (A summary of all plans is included with this report.) In addition, First 5 Sacramento Commissioners should play a key role in supporting sustainability by using their positions to leverage and influence decision makers on behalf of funded agencies and the Commission, in general. Commissioners should be provided the opportunity to report out at each commission meeting on how they were able to use their role to further the mission of First 5.
- 2) Follow Up and Monitor Progress – First 5 staff should establish a timeline and structure for updates from all Certified Sustainable agencies. These updates should include progress made, delays or obstacles and minor changes. Additionally, First 5 might consider requesting formal updates to sustainability plan documents at the one-year mark.
- 3) Offer Training and Technical Support – First 5 Sacramento should strongly encourage and support agencies to seek additional training and pursue technical assistance. Program Staff should inquire as to what steps agencies are taking to enhance their capacity. First 5 should publicize and encourage relevant training opportunities and consider making funds available to cover targeted technical assistance.
- 4) Rally the Business Community – For 20 years First 5 Sacramento has been a known entity to service providers while remaining the region’s best kept secret to the business community. Going forward First 5 Sacramento must continue to build upon the work they are doing to educate business owners and employers on the high return on investment that results from family friendly policies and procedures. Additionally, to the greatest degree possible, First 5 Sacramento should serve as a matchmaker for corporate giving from local businesses to First 5 service providers.
- 5) Engage State and Local Officials – Sacramento County is increasingly poised to stand as a statewide and national leader in family friendly policies, priorities and outcomes. Governor Newsom, Supervisor Serna, Mayor Steinberg, Vice Mayor Guerra, Assembly Member McCarty and Senator Pan are all staunch supporters of early childhood action. First 5 Sacramento is in a position to enhance sustainability by further building linkages between their network of funded agencies and these state and local officials.



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## Sustainability Plan Highlights

In June 2019, 24 agencies were identified by First 5 Sacramento (along with Storywalkers Consulting and Impact Foundry) as Certified Sustainable. Each of these agencies spent month developing detailed and lengthy plans. The pages that follow capture a brief set of highlights for each of these plans.

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## Sustainability Plan Highlights

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### **1. 2-1-1 Sacramento**

2-1-1 Sacramento provides a one-stop connection to community resources for social, health and disaster services. Trained Specialists speaking multiple languages are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to connect callers to vital services, most appropriate to their specific needs.

2-1-1 Sacramento is also funded by a host of public service agencies who value the reach and capacity of the organization to serve targeted populations with specific information and resources.

To enhance program sustainability, 2-1-1 sees value in having the flexibility to align services to meet key community service needs and gaps. By leveraging infrastructure, 2-1-1 Sacramento aims to improve access to vital community services while supporting partners' efforts to engage vulnerable populations. 2-1-1 envisions a win-win collaboration where sustainable revenue streams could be created as a result of a boost in community awareness and collaborative partnerships.

### **2. Birth & Beyond Family Support Collaborative**

The Birth & Beyond Family Support Collaborative has been a strong running collaborative of 6-non-profit organizations for 20 years. Each of the 9 Birth & Beyond Family Resource Centers operated by these agencies are located in neighborhoods known to have the highest risk and highest need families. Each site offers a continuum of strategic supports that build the capacity and resiliency of families and strong communities to achieve long-term positive change.

The impact of family resource centers on overall community health and well-being has been clearly documented. Through this process of sustainability planning, the Collaborative has recognized the importance of communicating their story and impact to key stakeholders and new audiences.

The organizations that make up the Family Support Collaborative plan to implement strategies for increasing visibility by launching social media campaigns, storytelling, actively engaging business and policy-makers and broadening the evaluation focus to include family and community strengthening outcomes.

The Collaborative concluded that how well they tell their story can directly impact potential funding and even more importantly, how they are perceived in and by the neighborhoods they serve.



## Sustainability Plan Highlights

### **3. Center for Oral Health: Early Smiles Program**

#### **Program Mission & Background**

Center for Oral Health (COH) is a non-profit organization with the mission to improve oral health of vulnerable populations through research, education, and advocacy. COH advocates for reducing oral health inequities through data driven and evidence-based practices, development and implementation of innovative oral health programs. Moreover, COH strives to improve the oral health care delivery system by educating health care professionals and through advocacy to change of public policies.

#### **Program Sustainability**

The Center for Oral Health, launched the Early Smiles Sacramento (ESS) program in 2016. The program provides evidence – based preventative dental services, risk assessment, and case management to navigate each child (aged 0 to 20 years) to a dental home. To sustain program efforts, in 2018, the three GMC dental plans committed to leverage and support the expansion of ESS services to children aged 0-5 years. Through this partnership, the three GMC plans leveraged match funding from First 5 Sacramento. As a result, ESS increased its goal to serving over 20,000 children aged 0-20 years. Additional sustainability efforts will include advocating continued funding of mobile dental service by incorporating language in the Medicaid contract.

### **4. Child Abuse Prevention Council**

Based in Sacramento, the Child Abuse Prevention Center (CAPC) is a longstanding champion for healthy children and families across California, the US and internationally. In addition to providing leadership and administrative oversight for the Birth and Beyond Collaborative, CAPC also the Safe Sleep Baby program. The goal of Safe Sleep Baby is to reduce the rate and number of Sacramento County African American infant sleep-related deaths.

One of CAPC's well-established strengths are the extensive set of relationships they maintain and build with elected officials, business leaders, experts in the field and change-makers across the region. In order to sustain Safe Sleep Baby and its critical services, CAPC will leverage its broad network of champions to secure additional funding from a diverse combination of agencies. This support may include several of Sacramento's four hospital systems, the California Child Health and Safety Fund (with fees collected from the Kids Specialty License Plates), as well as local service organizations and small business philanthropies. Additionally, to promote efficiency, CAPC will build a capacity building model so that agencies supported by Safe Sleep Baby will be better prepared to directly educate their individual stakeholders.



## Sustainability Plan Highlights

### **5. Child Action, Inc.**

With a vision that all children and families have access to affordable, quality child care and early education, Child Action's well written plan focuses on strengthening their brand and measuring their impact and accountability. They clearly state the value of combining these two domains for swifter growth in opportunity and sustainability. In other words, if more people know their work and its impact, more funding is possible.

Child Action is the only Child Care Resource & Referral agency in Sacramento County and will leverage this differentiator by telling their story more effectively – through traditional as well as digital means. Imagine interesting, informative and visually appealing evidence of their impact, delivered through new channels for engagement.

Assessing their current framework for measuring results will lead to improvements that support stories of impact. Evidence plus impact enriches and supports their brand, leading to new collaborative partners and increased community awareness.

A plan to expand beyond their long history of securing public funds to include pursuit of private funding and increase current capacity by hiring a full time professional in fund development is part of a diversified approach to funding. Additionally, Child Action increases their odds of success by discussing ways to reduce costs of delivering their services, leveraging their collaborative network, eliminating duplicity, and maintaining their already strong funding relationships.

### **6. Community Resource Project, Inc.**

The Community Resource Project (CRP) Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program serves approximately 22,700 mothers and children every month, strategically placed in high need areas. Within the CRP WIC program are three inter-related breastfeeding support programs, including the Community Lactation Assistance Project, the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program and the Regional Breastfeeding Liaison Program.

CRP utilized the Certified Sustainable process to create an internal culture of innovation and service expansion. Among the strategies pursued for sustainability, CRP WIC will collaborate with the Sacramento County WIC program to establish a pilot program at River City Medical Health to obtain reimbursement for lactation services. If successful, this practice will be replicated with other medical providers across the county. They will increase collaboration with local hospitals, and build upon a new partnership with UC Davis Human Lactation Program to provide master level lactation consultant interns.

Additionally, up to \$20,000 per year in efficiencies are anticipated from a combination of system upgrades, including a newly adopted CRP financial management and accounting system; WIC Wise, a 2019 statewide cloud based Management Information System; and an automated communication system to remind clients of their upcoming appointments. These systems will also better enable CRP WIC to ensure that pertinent data is collected, measure and highlight the program's impacts, increase community awareness of the critical role that Lactation Consultant support plays in preventative services, and build community support.



## Sustainability Plan Highlights

### **7. Crocker Art Museum**

Crocker's All About Families (AAF) programming incorporates early childhood education that supports school readiness. For the last 9 years, funding from First 5 Sacramento and the Institute of Museum and Library Services has enabled AAF to expand their staffing while increasing and strengthening their core programs. Going forward, Crocker is prepared to sustain their programs with no continued funding from First 5 Sacramento.

Goals were set to attract multi-year funding through a combination of earned revenue and expansion of private philanthropy. The culture shift being sought is about a deeper level of transparency, advocacy and internal stakeholder investment in AAF. Crocker will achieve this by developing a clear, shared vision for the program, and by documenting its impact on children and families.

We applaud the Crocker team for calling out the need for good data to complement a compelling case for support and for planning to engage Board and staff leadership, along with volunteers, in a greater understanding of the importance of early childhood programs. We especially like the plan to create an endowment for an Education Internship to ensure consistency and growth in programming.

### **8. Elk Grove Unified School District**

As the largest school district in Northern California, Elk Grove Unified School District serves 62,675 students in learning communities that challenge ALL students to realize their greatest potential. EGUSD is a rich cultural mosaic that integrates a wide spectrum of ethnic, linguistic and economic diversity. Through multiple funding sources, Elk Grove Unified is committed to providing opportunities for PreK early childhood education by offering several programs that help 3 and 4 year old children get ready for kindergarten.

By focusing on Measuring Impact and Accountability, the EGUSD School Readiness program has identified several key strategies for increasing capacity and building sustainability.

- Utilizing current relevant data from evaluation reports that concludes the impact to families and children 0 – 5 years is worth the increased and continuous investment from the school district. Staff will work with the Districts' Research and Evaluation department to include PreK in student outcome data which will further educate stakeholders on the benefits of the program and the link between high-quality programs.
- Utilize data for self-evaluation and continuous improvement to identify ways to ensure quality services and programs while maintaining cost efficiency. For example, one such efficiency led to the program piloting a technology based parenting education curriculum to fill the gap for parents who are unable to attend a workshop.
- Work intentionally to build collaboration with the new Family and Community Engagement Office to provide comprehensive program offerings to parents. In addition they hope to expand partnerships with other district departments and community agencies to grow potential resources and services.



## Sustainability Plan Highlights

### **9. Folsom Cordova Unified School District**

Folsom Cordova Unified School District's early education program operates 10 CSPP-funded preschool programs nine elementary school sites, as well as five parent education preschools that are operated out of the Adult Education program at five elementary school sites. They currently serve 426 students in preschool programs, as well as 180 families and over 350 children in their 0-3 playgroups. FCUSD has a strong and dedicated pre-k team that has been in place for many years. Their Superintendent and Board of Education members express their recognition of the importance of early childhood education through regular pre-school program visits.

In order to sustain their First 5 funded programs, FCUSD will utilize a braided funding strategy, leverage resources from a variety of sources that may include Special Education, Title 1, FCUSD Adult Education and the Folsom Cordova Community Partnership. To provide cost savings, they are exploring alternative revenue streams to fund salaries for nurses, speech therapists and psychologists, and they are in continuing conversations with fiscal personnel, Cabinet level decision makers and the Adult Education Director.

Going forward, the early education program will leverage an array of strengths to secure sustainability. FCUSD is currently undergoing a budget visioning process in order to address the potential budget deficits which are projected for the general fund in the next three years and to engage district leadership, board members, teachers and administrators to work collaboratively to come up with solutions. Additionally, FCUSD's ECE Coordinator has recently been appointed to the *Folsom Lake College's Early Education Advisory Board* and in this capacity will be meeting regularly with representatives of other agencies within their locality.

### **10. Galt Joint Union Elementary School District**

The Galt Joint Union Elementary School District's School Readiness program is preparing more children to enter Transitional Kindergarten and kindergarten "ready to learn". Leveraging funding from multiple sources, school readiness program provides early education, parenting & family support and health services to families with children ages 0 – 5 in the Galt and surrounding rural areas.

To support program sustainability, GJUESD is on a mission to seamlessly align Pre-K to 8<sup>th</sup> grade initiatives. Program staff are dedicated to promoting the importance of early learning and educating the District's Board of Trustees on the benefits of early childhood education. Through the use of assessment data, program presentations and routine updates, they hope to connect Pre-kindergarten efforts to TK-8 initiatives in the District's LCAP. The LCAP is a three-year, district-level plan to set goals, plan actions, and leverage resources to meet those goals to improve student outcomes.

To further support the connection between Pre-Kindergarten efforts and TK-8 initiatives, the School Readiness Program plans to create a Preschool Parent Advisory Committee and collaborate with transitional-kindergarten, kindergarten teachers and elementary school administrators.



## Sustainability Plan Highlights

### **11. Her Health First**

With First 5 funding to provide pregnancy support services to African American women, Her Health First strengthened their signature programs, Black Mothers United and Girls on the Rise. Together, these programs provide women invaluable resources during three key stages of life: adolescence, pregnancy, and motherhood.

Their sustainability plan focuses on revenue structure and operational framework, two important areas of a successful organization. To ensure long-term financial security through a diversified and expanded funding portfolio, Her Health First will build their Board, attract new forms of financial support, incorporate a trauma-informed approach to their work, and advocate for Medi-Cal reimbursement for pregnancy support services.

To strengthen their operational infrastructure, the staff and Board will focus on developing core values to be used in all decision-making and prioritization of resources, align staffing with their strategic plan, assess operational issues to improve effectiveness and efficiencies, and implement a robust volunteer structure to support programming.

Execution of their sustainability plan will serve their mission to improve health equity and focus on their strategies will also help them grow name recognition and organizational brand. We applaud their choice of priority areas given where the organization is in its growth cycle; and appreciate the straightforward approach taken in formulating their plan.

### **12. Natomas Unified School District**

Natomas Unified School District's early education program operates preschools at six of the district's nine elementary schools, serving approximately 240 four year olds per year. Additionally NUSD provides play groups at three preschool sites along with Parent University for parent education classes for parents of 0-5 year olds.

To sustain their programs, the ECE programs at NUSD will call upon the new Student and Family Engagement Department (SAFE). Established by the District in September 2018, SAFE provides a range of resources to support NUSD programs to ensure that all NUSD students graduate as college and career ready, productive, responsible, and engaged global citizens, which they believe starts with their youngest clientele. They anticipate that the Coordinator overseeing First 5 work will be fully integrated into SAFE. This cost savings will also enable them to add more days/times to their current playgroups.

By consolidating leadership and coordination within SAFE, NUSD expects to increase preschool enrollment numbers, which will result in additional CSPP funding. In turn, these CSPP funds can cover a portion of an office specialist who is currently paid by First 5. To support these strategies, the School Readiness staff team is working with school site and district administrators to educate the importance of programs for children 0-5. They are utilizing data to demonstrate how early learning pays off for student achievement and NUSD's bottom line.



## Sustainability Plan Highlights

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### **13. River Delta Unified School District**

Located along the Sacramento River within three counties, River Delta Unified School District is committed to sustaining its critical early childhood programs. The District proactively began this work in 2016 when they partnered with Head Start to bring two preschool classrooms to Walnut Grove School and, simultaneously, received California State Preschool funds to open a new preschool classroom in Isleton. Not only did the District sustain preschool services that were threatened with closure, but they increased the number of slots, hours and days per year that these programs operate.

Through creative planning, River Delta Unified School District will shift internal staffing and make external connections to build new partnerships which will result in significant operational efficiencies, thereby reducing the cost of running their early learning programs. Additionally, the District will educate school board members and the newly hired superintendent on the positive impact that early learning programs have on children entering kindergarten. Financial and in-kind support can be garnered only through imparting a deep understanding and appreciation of their successful early education services at the highest level. And finally, looking outward, the District will cultivate relationships with local businesses in an effort to increase direct donations and volunteer hours.

### **14. Robla United School District**

Robla Unified School District is relatively small, serving 2,500 students in an impoverished community in North Sacramento. Despite significant challenges with homeless/near homeless children, all of whom qualify for free lunches at school, the District has an exemplary early learning program. Buy in from the Superintendent and school board trustees has ensured the District's significant in-kind contribution toward critically needed services will continue, even as First 5 funding decreases.

Robla's Early Learning Department will work with focus and intent to engage all district stakeholders with the goal of aligning their early learning programs with the District's larger operational framework. Their strategy is an expansion on the good work started nearly two decades ago through consistent meetings with the District's Chief Business Officer, Superintendent and Trustees. Staff will also ensure that early learning resources available through First 5 CA, First 5 Sacramento, SCOE and the CA Department of Education are maximized in the areas of training and collaboration.

Robla has also been proactive in securing a planning and implementation grant from the Central Valley Foundation that will allow them to increase staffing for the Robla Preschool, provide community outreach, train preschool staff and bolster playgroups and preschool activities in 2021 and beyond.



## Sustainability Plan Highlights

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### **15. Sacramento Children's Home**

Sacramento Children's Home Crisis Nursery is a safe, compassionate space where at-risk children receive the support they need to stay connected with their family during times of crisis.

Prioritizing the domains of revenue structure and nonprofit brand makes a lot of sense. With about 42% of Crisis Nursery funding already from privately raised philanthropy, the team looks to leverage their longstanding success by strengthening a culture of philanthropy within the organization, adding grant writing expertise, and deploying a marketing plan for greater brand awareness. SHC has formed a Crisis Nursery Sustainability Committee that includes board members, staff, and community volunteers.

Overall, this solid plan plays to the strengths of the organization, discusses practical ways to help the Crisis Nursery stand out among the many services the organization provides, and leverages the input of professionals and longstanding supporters of the Crisis Nursery.

### **16. Sacramento City Unified School District**

Serving almost 47,000 students on 77 campuses, Sacramento City Unified School District is one of the largest in the county. It's diverse students are primarily from lower income families, with 40% speaking something other than English as their primary language. Due to the District's current financial crisis, Early Learning staff will focus sustainability efforts on developing an operational framework that aligns resources to maximize what is in place. A second area of focus will be on culture, decision making and change management.

The District already has a jump start on sustaining it's programming for children ages zero to three. By returning 152 Early Head Start slots to SETA (who will run the classrooms directly, rather than contracting them to the District), young children will be able to stay in their classroom. Most transition is taking place behind the scenes, remaining nearly seamless to families. These cost savings will allow for the continuation of all infant/toddler playgroups. Additionally, major restructuring of the Child Development Department is underway, with staffing adjustments and a focus on preschool for 4 year olds.

An emphasis on decision making will be essential to sustain the early learning services currently in place at Sacramento City Unified School District in the future. While progress is being made, until all stakeholders come to consensus on the vision for early learning, programming remains in jeopardy. The silver lining of the financial crisis is the opportunity it presents to find a shared vision between the District, Early Learning Department, parents and community.



## Sustainability Plan Highlights

### **17. Sacramento County Office of Education**

In seeking a path to sustainability, the Early Learning Department at Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) demonstrated a level of innovation and out of the box thinking that is often rare for government agencies. SCOE operates two First 5-funded programs – Help Me Grow (HMG) and the Preschool Bridging Model (PBM). It should be noted that these two SCOE programs are utilized by numerous other First 5 funded school district early childhood programs.

To fully sustain both HMG and PBM, the Early Learning Department intends to leverage funds from IMPACT and QRIS to cover portions of a range of staff salaries, including ECE Specialists and Family Advocates. They will begin conducting weekly time studies to identify staff time allocated to MediCal Administrative Activities (MAA) and seek federal reimbursement. Once established, MAA reimbursement has the potential to grow in the years to follow. The Early Learning Department has been exhaustive in identifying avenues for cost savings, including increased utilization of in kind goods, cost reductions, leveraging of staff from internal programs with similar duties, and analysis of data to maximize effectiveness and share with stakeholders.

SCOE Early Learning is always looking ahead at the early learning funding landscape to identify potential funding opportunity and maintains a very successful track record for seeking and land early learning grants. They will utilize this strength to pursue additional funding as it becomes available, with particular attention to new state budget investments such as *Preschool for All*, *Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)*, *Developmental Screenings*, *Home Visiting*, *Black Infant Health Programs* and *Early Inclusion*.

### **18. Sacramento County DHS WIC**

Sacramento County WIC selected to focus on the domains of revenue structure and engagement of partners and volunteers. Their plan includes excellent data on the efficacy of funding for breastfeeding support services, noting a gain from 6% to 24% - or 650 more infants per year – receiving their mother’s milk because of First 5 funding for the Community Lactation Assistance (CLA) project. The strength of their data positions them well to maintain current funding sources and attract other forms of support in anticipation of reduced First 5 dollars.

Being a government agency can be a barrier to traditional grant funding opportunities, and the WIC team has thought through this issue by identifying a reimbursement model with local Independent Practice Associations (IPAs). In addition, they plan to increase their networking ability with community partners as a way to be known by more potential funding sources; and to have capacity by utilizing volunteers and interns for operations support.

Co-locating their Oak Park clinic site with a Federally Qualified Health Center is anticipated to increase participation rates; and a technology improvement will streamline documentation of lactation services and allow WIC to communicate with participants more easily through an integrated texting system component. These upgrades are innovations being taken with growth in mind.



## Sustainability Plan Highlights

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### **19. San Juan Unified School District**

While a larger district in terms of geography and student size, San Juan Unified School District has a narrow and deep strategy for delivering its early learning programs. All services are targeted to just 5 schools where 50-60% of the children served are low income, newly arrived refugees. Through improved operational efficiencies, the District will achieve significant cost savings when First 5 reductions occur in 2021. Specifically, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Department will combine two separately funded and operated summer transition camps into a single 4-week program that runs multiple times over the break. By further targeting to children who have not had any prior preschool experience, learning gains will be significant.

Additionally, San Juan Unified School District is one of the few districts that have dedicated Local Control Accountability Plan dollars to build stronger transition activities for children from preschool to kindergarten. San Juan's groundbreaking sustainability plan outlines a newly developed partnership between the district's ECE Department and their Professional Learning and Innovation Department. Through this envisioned partnership, data will be aligned from preschool to kindergarten. Focusing on the use of aligned data allows for a greater conversation with district leadership and board members. Presenting aligned data shows connection between the ECE Department and the K-5 system, which makes clear the importance of early education in preparing children to be school ready. This, in turn, will increase the ECE Department's ability to gain additional support to leverage internal and external funding.

### **20. Twin Rivers Unified School District**

Twin Rivers Unified School District's early education programs serve approximately 1,200 pre-kindergarten children and their families at twenty-four school sites and has a mission to inspire a passion for life-long learning within each student. The District blends six funding sources in order to provide a myriad of high quality early learning programs. Through restructuring staffing levels and using State funding to retrofit classrooms to serve the expanding 0-5 enrollment throughout the district, significant operational savings will be realized.

To increase revenue, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Department set a goal to maintain less than a 5% absence rate and to increase enrollment in programs to fully earn reimbursement from State Preschool funding.

The District will also focus on engaging with trustees and school site administration. Through education and promotion of the importance of early learning, the ECE Department will build relationships between early childhood programs and K-12 programs. Twin Rivers is the only District in the county that has proactively developed an Early Childhood Education 5-Year Strategic Plan. Sustainability efforts will move the needle on work identified in their groundbreaking ECE Strategic Plan.