

Systems Sustainability Plan Update

In 2017, First 5 Sacramento developed its first Systems Sustainability Plan.

First 5 Sacramento's Systems Sustainability Plan (SSP) has the goal of sustaining children's health, development, and family empowerment outcomes and the systems that promote them. The SSP outlines strategies and objectives for sustaining the outcomes sought by First 5 in more systemic, cost-effective ways. Through Public Awareness and Action, Policy and Systems Improvement, and Financial Resources, First 5 Sacramento is seeking sustainable ways to continue impacting the outcomes previously achieved through direct service grants.

Great strides toward Systems Sustainability continue in FY 2020-21

Systems Improvement Strategies for All!

The Commission recognizes that making lasting change and improving outcomes will also require work with systems to shift policies and practices, improving access to and quality of services. As a result, in the 2021-24 Strategic Plan, each of the Commission's priority result areas were identified as having both direct service and systems improvement strategies to promote the desired outcomes. The Plan outlines potential systems improvement strategies for each result area to increase the sustainability of the Commission's funded programs and sustain countywide outcomes for children and families.

S.O.S. Committee

The Systems Optimization and Sustainability (SOS) Committee, formerly known as the Sustainability Committee changed its name in 2020 to reflect the evolving role of the Committee.

The SOS Committee advises on the Commission's Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) and Cultural Responsiveness work in addition to systems improvement, sustainability, and policy and advocacy efforts. The committee was formed in 2016 to support First 5 Sacramento's engagement in these efforts.

Focus on Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

In February 2020, [First 5 Sacramento's Resolution on Racial Equity and Social Justice](#) was passed. The First 5 Sacramento Commission enacted a resolution to declare racism as the root cause of health, early learning, and family resilience disparities, and as a statement of the Commission's pledge to actively and intentionally engage in work to dismantle racism both within and outside the First 5 network. An Action Plan was developed to operationalize the goals the Commission set forth in its Resolution and focuses on five of the nine objectives that were prioritized based on the impact that achievement would have in the community.

The Commission's commitment to doing work more equitably was represented in both the 2021-24 Strategic and Implementation Plans. The corresponding applications for funding (RFPs) also outlined Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion as a required program collaboration. This language is now in all current contracts to outline our expectations for our funded partners' participation in these efforts. The Commission desires a shared vision of racial equity with our funded partners and have dedicated resources to engage and support their efforts.



Public Awareness and Action in Action

Have you heard?

Developing partnerships with leading influencers to build support and awareness around family-friendly work policies, as well as the return on investment for employers continued to be a priority for FY 2020-21.

First 5 Sacramento partnered with the Sacramento Business Journal on a series of three podcasts targeting local business audiences. Topics focused on the importance of child care as an essential service, and the need for employers to ensure that systems and supports are in place for families to thrive. The COVID-19 restrictions and realities forced many employers to recognize the challenges of child care and the need for family-friendly work policies. Podcasts featured field experts, First 5 staff and Commissioners, and highlighted the noteworthy processes and practices of employers RSE and SAFE Credit Union.

Win - Win

First 5 Sacramento's partnership with the River Cats hopes to target the business community and build public engagement in investing in early childhood. This unique partnership included First 5 Sacramento branding on 12 diaper changing stations, 30 child booster seats, concourse signage and outreach through games, community events, social media, and radio! First 5's visibility and message—"Investing in our kids...our future!" will be seen by hundreds of local business/corporate sponsors, and not to mention, over 500,000 families who visit Sutter Health Park all season long!

Policy and Advocacy Highlights

First 5 Sacramento aims to influence policy and systems change at the local, county, and state level to improve the way systems serve children and families. FY 2020-21 marked impressive gains for children and families. Some honorable mentions:

- The Governor signed two important pieces of legislation for families: AB 1876 expands the California Earned Income Tax Credit; SB 1383 expands job Paid Family Leave (up to 12 weeks) to care for a new baby or ill loved one.
- First 5 advocacy efforts continued in the wake of COVID-19. First 5 held several virtual meetings with legislators to discuss partnering, in support of policy changes, to meet the immediate needs of families affected by the pandemic. First 5's Advocacy Day was followed by the annual Dia de Los Libros live Facebook event featuring First Partner, Jennifer Siebel Newsom, reading a bilingual book and Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, the State's Surgeon General, with a message on trauma informed care.
- In addition, First 5 Sacramento partnered with Congresswomen Doris Matsui, the Children's Defense Fund, and Sacramento Children's Home on the Child Tax Credit. A Facebook live conversation highlighted the American Rescue Plan and how the child tax credit will help families affected by the pandemic.

Sustainability and Financial Resources Report Out

First 5 continues to implement strategies to strategically leverage existing resources, as well as seek new opportunities and resources, to maximize return on investments for children ages 0 to 5 and families.

Safe Sleep Baby 2.0

In late 2020, six years after the Commission began funding Safe Sleep Baby (SSB), Commission staff partnered with the Sacramento County Department of Child, Family, and Adult Services (DCFAS), the Child Abuse Prevention Council of Sacramento (CAPC), and the Sierra Health Foundation/Black Child Legacy Campaign (BCLC) on a joint proposal to the California State Department of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse and Prevention (OCAP). The proposal, which was funded for \$250,000 per year for two years, is an expansion of the current SSB program. SSB 2.0 focuses on systems changes within DCFAS to reach vulnerable and at-risk communities. It connects eligible families to safe sleep education and culturally responsive support services in the community. It also further embeds safe sleep in DCFAS by training staff to conduct SSB trainings. Outside of DCFAS, SSB 2.0 will create a toolkit and provide technical assistance, creating the opportunity for other agencies and communities to replicate and integrate SSB into their work.

Certified Sustainable Final Report and Outcomes

The Certified Sustainable Initiative of First 5 Sacramento, launched in May 2018 with goals of supporting funded partners in developing meaningful and achievable plans to maintain current service levels, even as First 5 funds are reduced. In all, 24 agencies completed Sustainability Plans outlining over \$6 million dollars in leveraged funds and \$1.3 million through cost savings and operational efficiencies.

A follow-up report was conducted at the end of the three-year funding period in 2020 to honor and evaluate each agency’s efforts toward sustainability. The report asked agencies to describe successes and challenges, revisit the Five-Year Budget and progress toward meeting targeted sustainability goals, and follow-up on capacity-building activities focusing on their prioritized domains. As seen on the figure below, 13 of 20 respondents said they acquired funding.



Image Source: Certified Sustainable Initiative Update to First 5 Sacramento Commission, March 4, 2019. All typos are in original presentation.

Partner Feedback on Certified Sustainable Initiative:

“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.”

“Honestly, if [we] hadn’t been gently ‘pushed’ into writing this plan and thinking outside the box on how to restructure and add additional funds to ECE, we would have gotten to the 30% fiscal cliff without a parachute, and our programs would have suffered.”

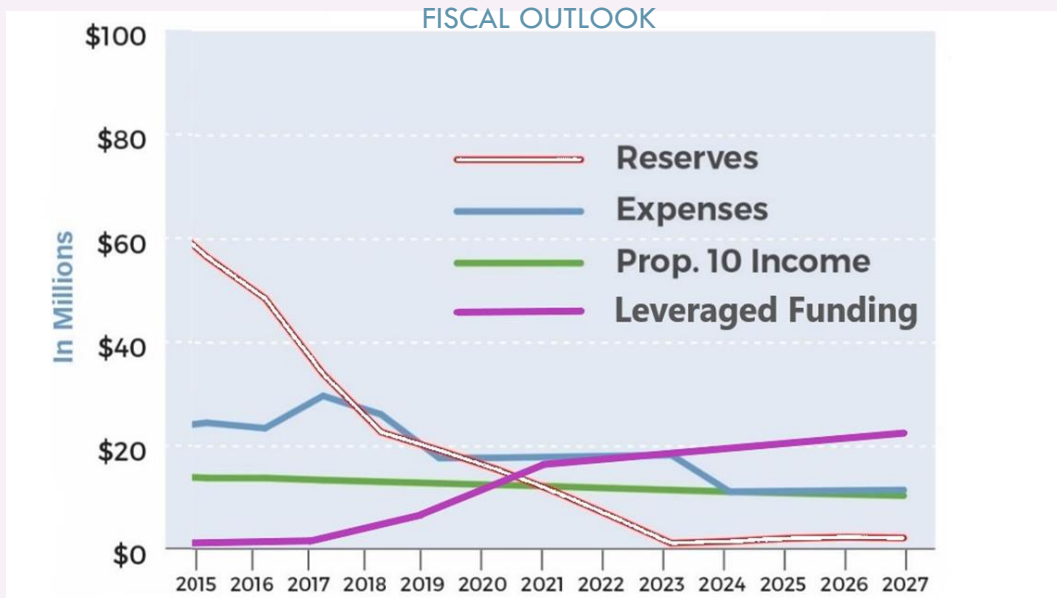
“Being able to work with our internal team showed how much interaction is needed, at all levels of the organization, to complete a successful sustainability plan.”

“This program helped me to really identify the true value of the First 5 portion of our agency’s work.”

The Commission’s dedication to systems sustainability creates a path to a strengthened, supported, and collaborative future for programs meeting the needs of children and families. This is a future where “Declining Revenues” creates opportunities for “Advancing Sustainability”, which would tell a new story about its commitment to sustain programs, about the innovation, and the intentional efforts our partners are making toward their own sustainability and a positive outlook.

A NEW NARRATIVE:

First 5 Sacramento: Advancing Sustainability



Long-lasting Change

As funding for direct services lessens, First 5 Sacramento will continue to strengthen systems and cultivate partnerships that deliver and expand upon equitable programs for young children and families. It is proven that the investments made early in life will have the greatest financial returns, and awareness about the importance of each child’s first five years must extend beyond First 5 partners; local and state policy makers, community, and business leaders must put children first in their budget and policy decisions.