



STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 THROUGH 2034

LETTER FROM COMMISSION



Dear Sacramento County Community,



Phil Serna
Chairperson

For 25 years, First 5 Sacramento has maintained tried-and-true strategies toward advancing the health, well-being and early learning of children and families; these strategies have improved the lives of thousands of young children and their families. Despite all of this important progress, even more is necessary to successfully address disparities in our community.

In a departure from previous strategic plans, for our 2024–2034 Strategic Plan we engaged the community right from the start in order to more deeply center Racial Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Cultural Responsiveness (REDI+CR). We are committed to purposefully advancing racial equity and social justice in everything we do in fulfillment of our mission to best serve all children and families in Sacramento County. While the political ramifications of a focus on racial equity may shift over the lifetime of this Strategic Plan, First 5 Sacramento’s dedication to it will remain steadfast in order to address the clear disparities in well-being for all children.

We take pride in this Strategic Plan, which was developed using an inclusive and deliberative approach fostering active participation from all our decision-makers, start to finish. This strategic plan was inspired by the voice of parents, partners, and the community who transparently shared their perspectives during the plan’s development. This, in turn, gave us important feedback that has inspired bold-yet-thoughtful ideas for strategic growth and development.

This 10-year Plan, while adhering to the over-arching Priorities, Outcomes, and Goals for the entire decade, has unique spending plans and strategies for specific timespans within it; these will appear as appendices to this document as they are each developed. As a result, this single Strategic Plan will have three complementary Implementation Plan documents to provide detail on the spending plans and strategies to be implemented during each of the three timespans.

We want to express our gratitude to First 5 Sacramento Commissioners and the parents, partners, and community supporters whose perspectives provided us with important feedback about various strategic growth concepts and development potential. These contributions became the building blocks to consider critical systems change initiatives and we thank you for helping us turn commitment into action. Together, we will embed this work into the development of our goals, objectives, strategies, and investments.

First 5 Sacramento’s Strategic Plan was designed to ensure the Commission’s continued reach, increased impact, and improved financial sustainability so that we achieve our vision that Sacramento County will have strong communities where children are safe, healthy, and that they all reach their full potential.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Serna".

Supervisor Phil Serna
Chair,
First 5 Sacramento

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Julie".

Julie Gallelo
Executive Director,
First 5 Sacramento

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Executive Summary	4
1. Introduction	6
About First 5 Sacramento	6
Commitment to Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and Cultural Responsiveness	6
2. Development of this Strategic Plan	7
Mission Statement	9
3. First 5 Sacramento’s Conceptual Framework	10
4. Priorities, Outcomes, and Goals	11
5. Updates to this Strategic Plan	14
6. 2024 – 2027 Funding Allocations	15
Figure 1. Estimated Funding Allocations for Fiscal Years 2024-2034	15
7. Foundational Principles	17
8. Next Steps	18
Implementation Plan	18
Community Engagement	18
REDI+CR Initiative	18
Acknowledgements	19
Appendices.....	20

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



First 5 Sacramento’s vision is that Sacramento County will have strong communities where children are safe, healthy, and reach their full potential. To this end, First 5 uses tobacco tax revenue through Proposition 10 to support early childhood development through advocacy, systems improvement, and by funding a range of essential prevention and early intervention programs for Sacramento County children ages 0 to 5 and their families. Because tobacco tax is a declining revenue stream, First 5 has honed its investments over its history, shifting funding away from direct-services programming toward more systems improvement and policy work where impacts will be greater and longer-lasting. This trend continues in the current Strategic Plan. The entire strategic planning process was designed to center racial equity, to be highly inclusive, and to be data informed. The resulting plan lays out the priorities and goals for the 10-year period from 2024 through 2034.

In support of its mission, vision, and foundational principles, First 5 Sacramento has prioritized five areas of focus for long-term investment (2024–2034):



In early 2021, the First 5 Sacramento Commission approved a historic [resolution](#) addressing Racial Equity and Social Justice that recognized racism as the root cause of health, early learning, and family resilience disparities and committed the Commission to actively and intentionally engage in work to dismantle racism both within and outside the First 5 network. With this as a launching point, in early 2022 the Commission sought a strategic planning consultant who could help center racial equity in the new Strategic Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The strategic planning process began with an internal and external assessment that included a review of organizational documents; discussions with staff; as well as interviews and focus groups with Commissioners, parents and caregivers, direct service providers, and systems/policy leaders. Interview and focus group findings led to the design, implementation, and analysis of a survey of 855 Sacramento County parents/caregivers, most of whom (66%) had not received services funded by First 5 Sacramento. With the goal of hearing from voices outside of the Commission's usual information sources, the survey collection plan intentionally targeted parents/caregivers who were not currently connected to First 5 funded programs.

Data from the interviews, focus groups and parent/caregiver survey were shared with the Commission, along with data from the [2022 County Trend Report](#), the [2022 Racial Equity Snapshot](#), and the [First 5 Sacramento Racial Equity Progress Report](#). Commissioners reflected on findings and subsequently:

- Updated the First 5 Sacramento mission statement
- Determined five investment Priorities and nine long-term Outcomes
- Approved goals for each of the Outcomes
- Prioritized goals within the Health & Well-Being priority

Using a consensus-building model, the Commission reached unanimous agreement at all key decision points; this demonstrates how deeply engaged the Commission was in embracing racial equity as the core of the work, their flexibility in departing from how things had been done in the past, and their willingness to turn learning into action. This document is a summary of First 5 Sacramento's decisions related to its strategic plan; it was updated in 2025 to guide the organization through 2034 using appendices to lay out specifics for each funding period between 2024 and 2034.

The Commission must be responsive to the constantly changing environmental context; as such, First 5 Sacramento will conduct ongoing evaluation of this plan, including adjusting the spending plan to fit emerging revenue scenarios and environmental threats; regularly reviewing demographic data to ensure the desired populations are being reached; engaging community to assess ongoing strengths and needs; and assessing that programs are achieving the desired outcomes. As a result, First 5 may make necessary adjustments as needed during each funding period and will make adjustments for each new funding period in the 2024–2034 timeframe. These adjustments are laid out in the appendix section.

This Strategic Plan provides a high-level view of the Commission's priorities and includes information on our goals and expected outcomes. Companion documents, a First 5 Sacramento Implementation Plan for each funding period in this Strategic Plan, provide greater detail on the strategies under each priority, indicators to be tracked, the funding by priority area, and the procurement process. Taken together, these documents provide the roadmap for First 5 Sacramento's investments and actions that will improve the lives of children and families throughout the County.

I. INTRODUCTION

About First 5 Sacramento

First 5 Sacramento was formed following California’s passage of Proposition 10 in 1998, enabling a 50-cent tax on tobacco products in response to research showing that a child’s brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and that what parents, caregivers, and communities do during these years to support children’s growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. First 5 funds programs promoting early childhood development for children prenatal to age 5 and their families. The Sacramento commission of seven voting members and seven alternates is appointed by the County Board of Supervisors to ensure First 5 Sacramento is accountable to the needs of the community. The First 5 Sacramento Commission is comprised of leaders from public agencies, such as the Sacramento County Offices of Education and Public Health, as well as non-profit executives, professionals who serve young children, and the public at large, especially parents of young children.

In FY 2023–24, First 5 Sacramento served 11,633 unique families, including direct services to 5,846 unduplicated children. A robust evaluation design is in place that measures whether milestones are being met; how much is being done; how well it is being done; and whether anyone is better off as a result; captures success stories from families’ and providers’ perspectives; and reviews population-wide changes.

Commitment to Racial Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Cultural Responsiveness

In 2021, First 5 Sacramento approved a [resolution](#) to address racial equity and social justice. The resolution is both a declaration of racism as the root cause of health, early learning, and family resilience disparities, as well as the Commission’s pledge to actively and intentionally engage in work to dismantle racism both within and outside the First 5 network. The approval of this resolution marked a key milestone resulting in the organization’s exploration of our unique role in advancing racial equity, inclusion and cultural responsiveness for the children and families who reside in Sacramento County’s diverse communities.

Since the resolution was approved First 5 Sacramento has created an [action plan](#) based on the resolution and released the [Creating Pathways Towards Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Progress Report](#), which outlined efforts to advance racial equity, diversity, inclusion + cultural responsiveness (REDI+CR). First 5 Sacramento remains committed to this work and to embodying REDI+CR through our values and strategic outcomes.

This strategic plan marks the next step to embody and advance REDI+CR for Sacramento’s children and families with the inclusion of a REDI+CR strategic priority that frames and informs all other strategic priorities we will seek to accomplish over the next ten years.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF THIS STRATEGIC PLAN



From the beginning of the strategic planning process, First 5 Sacramento knew that our typical approach to planning would have to be reconsidered. The compounding reality of the local impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the movement for Black Lives, the organization's internal journey towards REDI+CR, and the fiscal realities of a constantly changing external context, including declining tobacco tax revenue and a changing federal funding landscape, compelled the organization to consider new planning approaches to yield a strategic direction that both met the moment and reflected our values.

Commissioners and staff engaged in an eight-month planning process supported by consultants Dr. Nina Moreno and Evan Holland with Seed Collaborative, LLC (Seed). The process was designed to be highly inclusive, data-informed, and equity-centered. The process gave the organization an opportunity to rethink its investment approach and recommit to making child and family serving systems and services more equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive. First 5 Sacramento's commitment to racial equity dictated that the process be informed by new voices, particularly parents and caregivers from an array of backgrounds not currently served by nor familiar with the organization along with current grantees, partners, and other interested parties. To do this, Seed Collaborative conducted an assessment comprised of 1) interviews with seven Commissioners, 2) three focus groups with systems leaders, line staff service providers, and parents/caregivers, and 3) a countywide parent/caregiver survey offered in three languages, yielding 855 responses. The goal of the assessment was to understand the community's perspectives on the current culture, structure, operations, and impact of First 5 Sacramento and the organization's future strategic direction, as well as to identify potential opportunities and challenges.

The parent/caregiver survey revealed that top needs for Sacramento county parents of young children are all focused on concrete, basic needs: access to child care, access to healthy food, and immediate support in times of crisis. Parents reported that the main barriers in accessing existing services are not knowing that services exist or how to access them as well as feeling too stressed to be able to take the time and energy to access services. Survey respondents felt that "Feeling like my provider takes the time to listen to me"; "Knowing that I am receiving quality care"; and "Feeling welcome and having opportunities to be involved" were all things that made them feel safe and supported when receiving services. Parents also felt strongly that providing parent leadership opportunities with decision-making power, holding regular community listening sessions in home languages of participants, and creating ways to provide ongoing feedback to the Commission would all strengthen First 5's community engagement efforts.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF THIS STRATEGIC PLAN



Seed's analysis of the survey, interview, and focus group data was shared with Commissioners who used that data, along with the Racial Equity Snapshot, the REDI+CR Progress Report, the [Evaluation Report for fiscal year 2020–2021](#), and the [Sacramento County Trends Report](#) to ground and inform strategic discussions and decisions.

Commissioners worked collaboratively over the course of four public meetings to consider this data and grapple with key strategic questions, including how First 5 might need to change some of its operations in order to better support new priorities. The following ideas were endorsed by the Commission, which are reflected in the final plan:

Allocate funding specifically to engage non-traditional partners / create mini-grant program with capacity-building for grassroots agencies

Change procurement policies (i.e. including advances, loosening insurance requirements, revising scoring tools, revising review panel composition to include target populations, creating non-competitive processes for small CBOs)

Increase systems and sustainability allocation (to allow for contracting with partners specifically around systems work)

Allocate funding for communication to parents about how to access resources

Allocate funding for communication to build public will about importance of investing in prenatal to age 5

Allocate funds specifically for parent engagement and parent leadership development

Consider F5 staffing levels and composition, given new direction within the priorities (engaging in community-building, advancing racial equity, improving systems that serve children and families, securing new funding and partnerships, etc.)

Allocate funding for implementing all 9 goals of the REDI+CR action plan, including mentorship, capacity building, training, evaluation

II. DEVELOPMENT OF THIS STRATEGIC PLAN



Change how decisions are made by more intentionally including community voice in F5 funding processes

Require applicants to incorporate community voice in developing their applications for First 5 funding

Allocate funding for ongoing accessible, parent-friendly community input processes

Explore/implement a participatory funding process within identified under-resourced communities

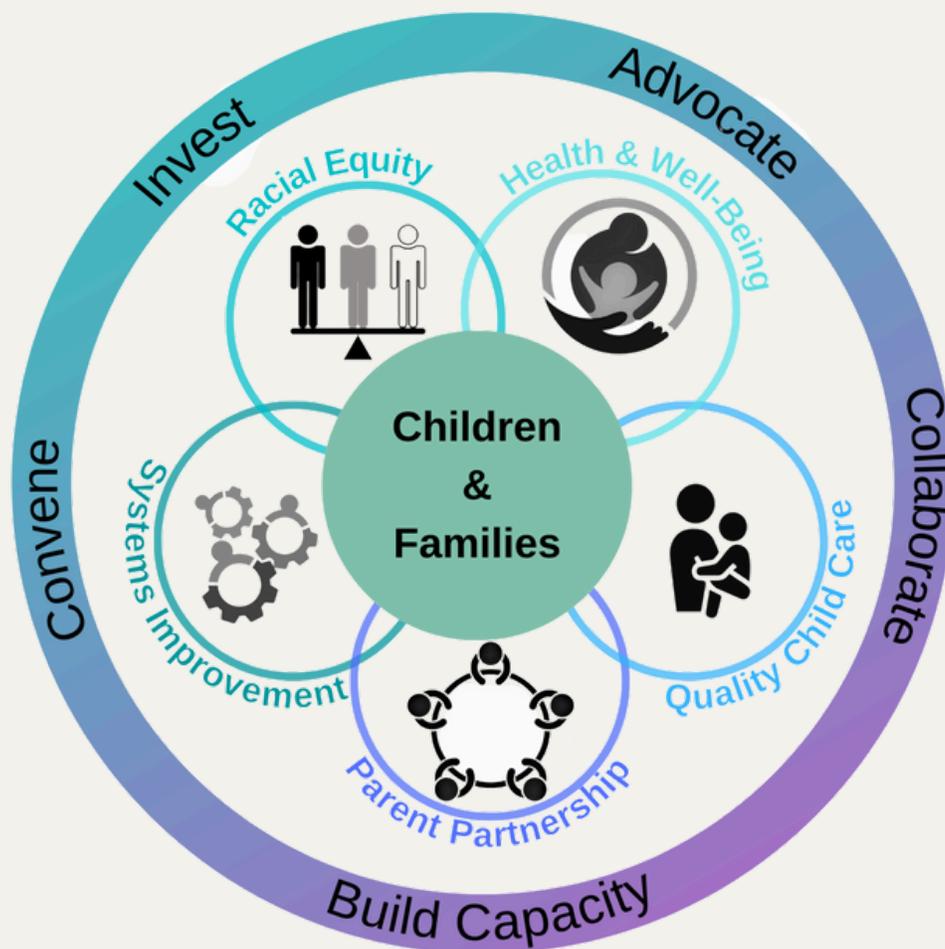
The Commission reached unanimous agreement on a revised mission statement that centers racial equity as well as on a set of long-term strategic priorities, desired outcomes, and goals for the 2024–2034 time period, all of which can be found in the following pages.

Mission Statement

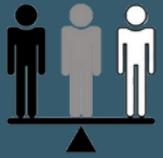
In partnership with parents, caregivers, and their communities, we seek to advance equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive prevention and early intervention policies, systems, and practices that eliminate racial inequities, promote optimal health and development, and improve the lives of children prenatal through age five and their families.

III. FIRST 5 SACRAMENTO'S CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework illustrates First 5 Sacramento's strategic plan in a single infographic. Children and families are at the center of the framework, informing and touched by all that First 5 does. The five priorities encircle this center, interlocking as an illustration of their interdependence. Around the outside are First 5's **Core Functions**: to invest, advocate, collaborate, and build capacity.



IV. PRIORITIES, OUTCOMES, AND GOALS

PRIORITY	OUTCOME	GOAL
<p>Racial Equity</p> 	<p>Racial Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Cultural Responsiveness (REDI+CR) is strong across all priority areas</p> <p>F5 Sac has invested in underserved communities</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement REDI+CR Plan 2. Build capacity of non-traditional partners/smaller community-based organizations 3. Fund new and non-traditional partners to effectively address community-led plans to support young children and families
<p>Quality Child Care</p> 	<p>Children are connected to affordable, quality child care and early learning</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure coordinated county-wide effort that effectively advocates for the prioritized needs of the child care community 2. Increase providers' access to and engagement with quality child care supports

IV. PRIORITIES, OUTCOMES, AND GOALS

PRIORITY	OUTCOME	GOAL
<p>Health & Well-Being</p> 	<p>Children are born healthy and achieve optimal physical and mental well-being</p> <p>Children’s basic needs are met so they can reach optimal development</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase whole-child and family-centered services to support the well-being and safety of children and fortify family strengths 2. Reduce perinatal health disparities for parents and infants through culturally responsive programs and services 3. Strengthen children’s social-emotional development and increase early detection of developmental and behavioral health concerns among infants and toddlers while improving access to early intervention services
<p>Systems Improvement</p> 	<p>Leveraged dollars support children prenatal through age 5 and their families</p> <p>Systems serving children prenatal through age 5 and their families are integrated, interconnected, equitable, and accessible</p> <p>Advocacy and systems change work has improved the lives of children and families</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build public will and leverage resources in support of children’s well-being and development 2. Develop integrated and coordinated services between public agencies and community-based organizations 3. Advocate for systems improvements 4. Increase utilization of medical, dental, and mental health services

IV. PRIORITIES, OUTCOMES, AND GOALS



PRIORITY	OUTCOME	GOAL
<p data-bbox="175 527 363 600">Parent Partnership</p>  An icon consisting of five stylized human figures arranged in a circle, holding hands, representing a community or partnership.	<p data-bbox="410 537 829 600">Parent/caregiver expertise is lifted up across all priority areas</p>	<ol data-bbox="899 491 1463 688" style="list-style-type: none">1. Cultivate parent/caregiver leadership in Sacramento County2. Allow parents to have decision-making power within First 5 Sacramento's programs, policies, and practices

V. UPDATES TO THIS STRATEGIC PLAN

The First 5 Sacramento 2024–2034 Strategic Plan will consist of an initial funding period of three years (2024–2027) followed by two subsequent funding periods of three years (2027–2030) and four years (2030–2034). The Priorities, Goals, and Outcomes, captured in the conceptual framework icon, will remain the same across the entire ten-year Strategic Plan period. The layout is below:



The strategies designed to reach the Outcomes and Goals under each Priority will be revisited in anticipation of each new Funding Period. These Strategies will be found in the Implementation Plan for each Funding Period, as will the accompanying Spending Plan and Funding Allocation. Please see the Appendices for sample Spending Plans and Funding Allocations.

In order to determine which Strategies will be selected in each Funding Period, the Commission will use several data sources, among them:

- Community input from focus groups, community feedback sessions, and surveys
- Community trends as identified by publicly-available data and tracked in the [Community Trends Report](#), with a particular focus on disaggregated data and group disparities
- Information from the First 5 Sacramento database about current service usage
- Landscape analyses of threats and opportunities, including opportunities to leverage funding from other sources
- Information about best- and promising-practices, including cultural relevance and community endorsement

VI. 2024-2034 FUNDING ALLOCATIONS



First 5 Sacramento’s annual spending for the 2024–27 funding period will remain the same as that for the 2021–24 funding period at \$14.9 million per year, every year, for this three-year period. Proposed expenditures total \$44.6 million and are categorized in Figure 1. The lengths of the coming funding periods are three years (2027–30) followed by four years (2030–34); Figure 1 shows the estimated total funding that would be available in these periods.

Allocations across Administration, Evaluation, and Program costs will be determined by the Commission for each future funding period as part of the Implementation Plan and noted in the appendix to this document.

Figure 1. **Estimated** Funding Allocations for Fiscal Years 2024-2034

2024-2034 Strategic Plan			
	FYs 2024-27 (3 years)	FYs 2027-30 (3 years)	FYs 2030-34 (4 years)
Administration	\$3,751,673	TBD	TBD
Evaluation	\$1,394,180	TBD	TBD
Program	\$39,494,148	TBD	TBD
Total	\$44,640,000	\$34,088,000	\$37,600,000

VII. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES



First 5 Sacramento will use the following five foundational principles to guide the allocation of funds across strategies within each priority area.

1. Make narrow and deep investments to achieve the greatest impact.
2. Look for opportunities to leverage other dollars to sustain critical services for children and families.
3. Choose strategies that promote prevention, early intervention, and community collaboration.
4. Make data informed decisions that address community strengths and needs, build community assets, and prioritize underserved children and families.
5. Focus services on the county's most vulnerable families to reduce disparities in access to equitable, quality services and outcomes.

VIII. NEXT STEPS



This plan's operationalization, as well as its relationship to the current REDI+CR initiatives and the constantly changing external environment, will be top-of-mind for First 5 Sacramento as it moves into the future. This plan will continue to guide Commission decision-making through 2034.

Implementation Plan

First 5 Sacramento is committed to its implementation efforts. To this end, an Implementation Plan will be developed for each funding period, beginning with the 2024-27 funding period. The Implementation Plans will lay out the strategies under each Priority Area that will be funded, and the indicators and funding mechanisms that will accompany those strategies.

Community Engagement

Staff will center community input as they plan the strategies that will make up each Implementation Plan.

REDI+CR Initiative

This strategic plan aligns with First 5 Sacramento's REDI+CR Initiative and the two will work synergistically over the next ten years to guide the achievement of the goals we seek for Sacramento's children and families. More information about our Equity in Action initiative can be found [here](#).

We express our sincerest gratitude to those who supported the development of this strategic plan.

We also have deep appreciation for all of the Sacramento County Parents and Caregivers who shared their feedback and wisdom about the experiences and needs of Sacramento’s children and families for the development and updates of this plan.

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This Strategic Plan was jointly prepared by



APPENDIX 1: SPENDING PLAN AND PRIORITY AREA ALLOCATIONS FOR 2024-27 FUNDING PERIOD



2024-27 Funding Period: Three-Year Spending Plan

2024-2027 Funding Period				
	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	TOTAL
Administration	\$ 1,250,558	\$ 1,250,558	\$ 1,250,558	\$3,751,673
Evaluation	\$464,727	\$464,727	\$464,727	\$1,394,180
Program	\$13,164,716	\$13,164,716	\$13,164,716	\$39,494,148
TOTAL	\$14,880,000	\$14,880,000	\$14,880,000	\$44,640,000

In alignment with data from the interviews and focus groups, the parent/caregiver survey findings, and their REDI+CR groundwork, First 5 Sacramento realigned their funding priorities. The Commission identified Racial Equity, Parent Partnership, and Systems Improvement as stand-alone priorities for the first time. The most striking realignment of funding is for Racial Equity work, which increased from 0.3% of program funding in the 2021-24 funding period to 15% of program funding in the 2024-27 funding period. The ultimate goal of all of these investments is to advance the health and well-being, as well as the early care and learning, of children prenatal through age 5.

2024-27 Funding Period: Three-Year Funding Allocation and Percentage by Priority Area

Priority Area	2024-2027 \$	2024-2027 %
Racial Equity	\$5,239,483	15%
Health and Well-Being	\$25,498,817	73%
Quality Child Care	\$1,746,494	5%
Parent Partnership	\$1,047,897	3%
Systems Improvement	\$1,397,195	4%

APPENDIX 2: SPENDING PLAN AND PRIORITY AREA ALLOCATIONS FOR 2027-30 FUNDING PERIOD



2027-30 Funding Period: Three-Year Spending Plan: TBD

2027-2030 Funding Period				
	FY 2027-28	FY 2028-29	FY 2029-30	TOTAL
Administration				
Evaluation				
Program				
TOTAL	TBD	TBD	TBD	

2027-30 Funding Period: Three-Year Funding Allocation and Percentage by Priority Area: TBD

Priority Area	2027-2030 \$	2027-2030 %
Racial Equity		
Health and Well-Being		
Quality Child Care		
Parent Partnership		
Systems Improvement		



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