



**Staff Report  
July 10, 2017**

**ACTION:**     X      
**DISCUSSION:**           

**TITLE: Proposed Staff First 5 Centers Plan, 2017-2020**

**Introduction**

First 5 Contra Costa is deeply committed to supporting First 5 Centers. These centers have thrived for more than a decade, and we are proud of the many ways they have benefitted children and families in Contra Costa County. As we look to the future, and face declining revenue, our goal is to ensure that these effective services endure in the community and continue to reach families most in need.

**Background**

The First 5 Centers are innovative, place-based hubs where parents and caregivers with young children receive support, training and information, and build connections to other parents and resources in their community.

The First 5 Centers are part of First 5's Family Support Initiative, which provides funding and support for programs serving families with children through age three, the most critical time in children's development. In addition to our First 5 Centers, the Initiative funds voluntary home visiting services. Combined, these two family support programs make up nearly one-quarter of First 5 Contra Costa's overall budget.

First 5 Contra Costa conceptualized these centers in its first strategic plan, and has served as the sole funder since their inception. We contract with various agencies to carry out our vision, and provide oversight, training, and technical assistance. Locations for the five First 5 Centers were determined in 2001 based on an extensive community engagement process and on factors such as poverty, areas with low-performing schools, lack of community safety, and distance from services. First 5 Contra Costa began funding First 5 Centers in 2003, and all five sites were fully operational by 2007.

Over the years, however, the communities in which First 5 Centers are located have changed. In the spring of 2017, First 5 staff began a process to carefully assess the First 5 Centers as they are now and the populations they serve, as well as the demographic changes throughout Contra Costa County.

This assessment informed the new direction proposed in this staff report. If approved, it also will inform First 5 Contra Costa's competitive bidding process later this summer to secure contractors to operate the centers. The last competitive bidding process for First 5 Centers was five years ago.

The planning effort revealed the following key findings:

**Key Finding 1: First 5 Centers are a successful model.**

By and large, First 5 Centers fulfill the vision that First 5 leadership had when they were created: they are hubs in the community where families of young children feel welcome and receive needed resources and support. Friendships and connections have flourished among new parents and children at the centers, and center directors report that many parents are reluctant to leave at the end of the day. Parents gain access to other services they need through the help of Community Resource Specialists, who staff every center. The centers also offer developmental screening for children, free car seats, and recurring community events.

Further, dozens of free classes and workshops are offered at the five centers each month, including evidence-based classes such as "Triple P" that have been shown to improve parenting practices and reduce isolation. Programs focus on pregnancy, parent support, healthy child-parent relationships, positive parenting practices, child health and development, school readiness, and more.

First 5 Contra Costa has invested more than \$24 million in First 5 Center services since 2003. In the last year alone, the five centers reached 1,832 families. Evaluation results show that families who participate:

- Value the opportunity to connect and socialize with other parents;
- Read to their children more and for longer periods of time;
- Improve parenting skills;
- Feel less stressed or anxious; and,
- Are better able to locate services.

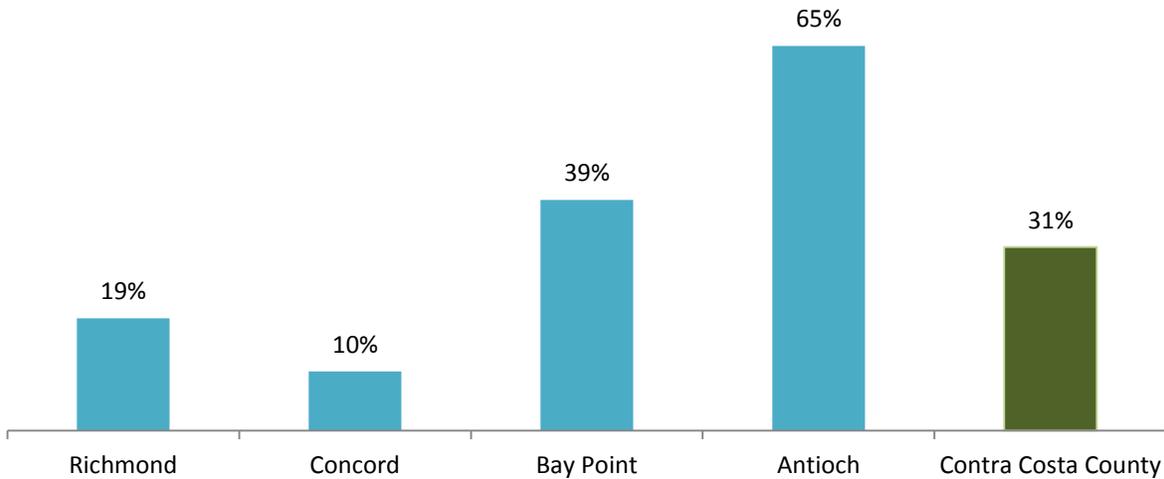
Despite declining revenues, First 5 Contra Costa's current Strategic Plan affirms our commitment to sustain First 5 Center services as our signature program far into the future.

**Key Finding 2: East County has experienced significant growth and demographic changes.**

In the last 15 years, there has been significant population growth in Contra Costa County, particularly in the eastern portion of the county. The number of families living in poverty has also grown, and the nature of poverty in this region has changed, as well. During the early

2000s, the booming economy of the Bay Area led to massive expansions in housing developments in East County. With the Great Recession, the foreclosure crisis hit these developments particularly hard. East County became one of the most foreclosed upon regions in the state. Some property owners, seeking income on their properties, began accepting housing vouchers. Over the course of the 2000s, the number of people living in poverty rose by more than 70 percent in this region, growing so quickly that social safety net services have not kept pace.<sup>1</sup>

**Percent Change in Population, 1990 to 2010**

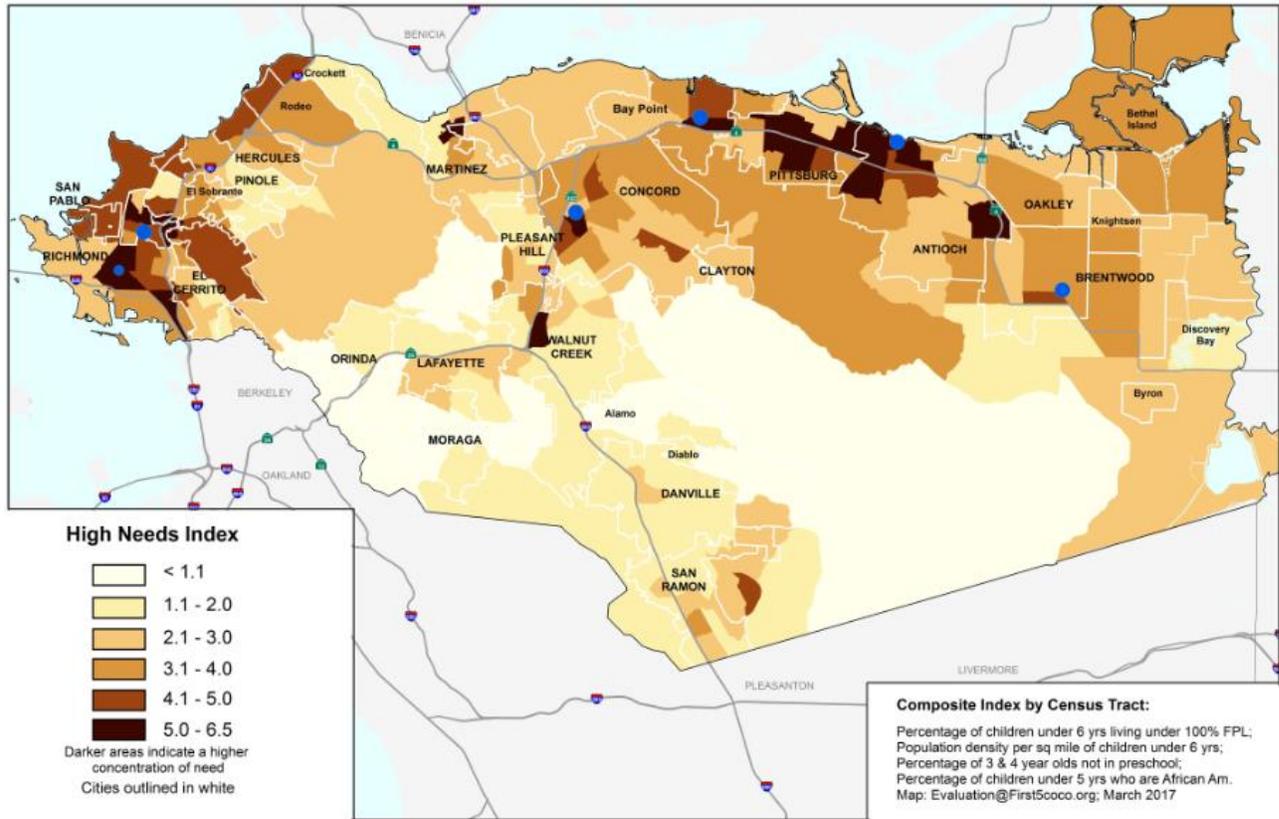


Source: Rattray, T et al. "Health Indicators and Environmental Factors Related to Obesity for Antioch, Bay Point, and Pittsburg," May 2013. Contra Costa Health Services. Available at: <http://cchealth.org/prevention/pdf/Health-Indicators-and-Environmental-Factors-Related-to-Obesity-2013.pdf>

Analysis of census data shows particular need for family support services both north and south of Route 4 in Pittsburg and Antioch, and even in southeast Antioch bordering on Oakley and Brentwood. These regions are densely populated with young children living in poverty. Families in these communities send their three- and four-year-old children to preschool at low rates. In addition, they are home to large numbers of African American families, who tend to use prenatal health services at lower rates and who have higher rates of infant mortality.<sup>2</sup> The map below displays the high-need areas of the county, based on these factors.

<sup>1</sup> From [confrontingsuburbanpoverty.org](http://confrontingsuburbanpoverty.org), an excerpt of Kneebone, E. January 2014 *Confronting Suburban Poverty*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

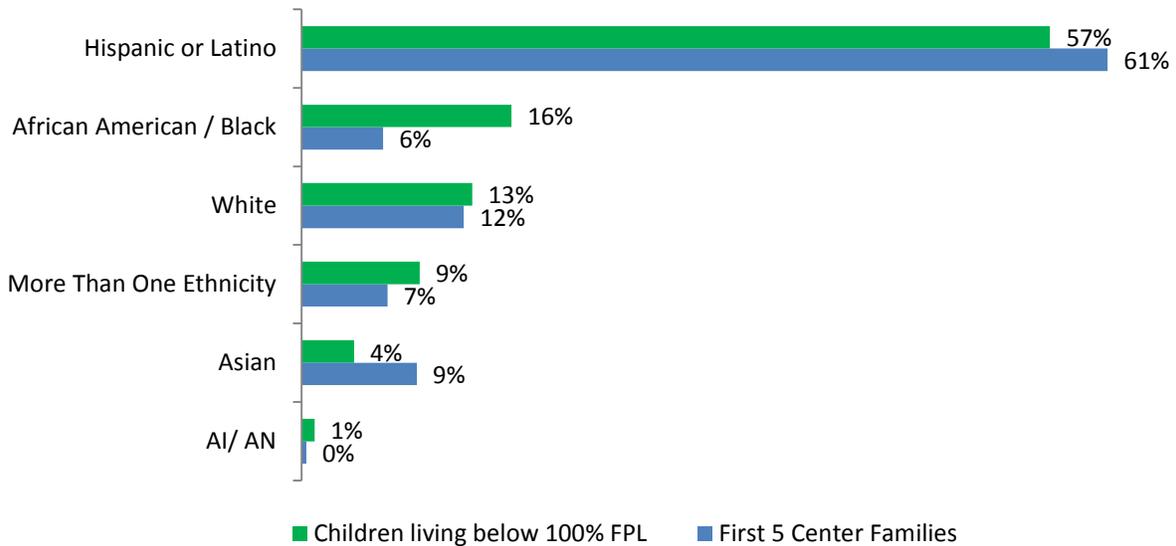
<sup>2</sup> Alexander, G; Kogan, M; Nabukera, S. December 2002. "Racial Differences in Prenatal Care Use in the United States: Are Disparities Increasing?" *Am J Public Health*.92(2): 1970-1975. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. October 2008. *Eliminating Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Health Care: What are the Options?* Available at: <http://www.kff.org/disparities-policy/issue-brief/eliminating-raciaethnic-disparities-in-health-care-what/>



**Key Finding 3: First 5 Centers are underserving African American families, and different family support services may be needed.**

While we are proud of the services we provide at First 5 Centers, we recognize that not all families have benefited from them. African American families have been less likely to attend First 5 Centers as compared to other groups. Whereas 16% of African American children in the county live below the Federal Poverty Level, only 6% of families served by First 5 Centers are African American.

### Ethnicity of Contra Costa Children in Poverty and First 5 Center Families



As described in our strategic plan, First 5 is committed to working with partners to develop strategies to effectively reach and engage marginalized families – particularly African American families and those living in poverty – in family support activities.

In recognition of this finding, First 5 has embarked on an assessment process to better understand how to serve low-income African American families. The outcome of this process may include improved services at First 5 Centers, or new family support services altogether.

The goals of this process are to clarify:

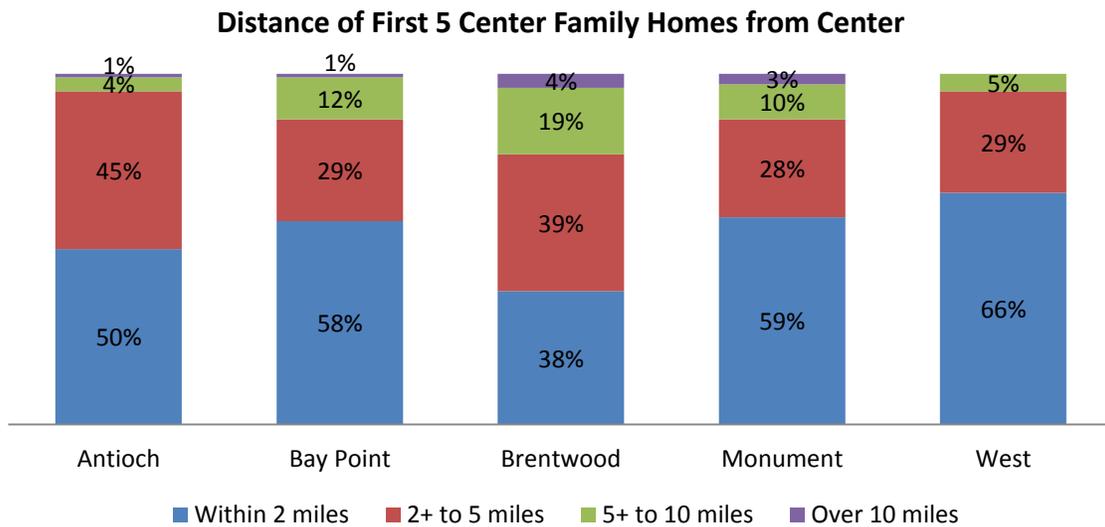
- What family support services are the most important and most valuable to African-American families?
- Where in the county do these services take place?
- Which spaces would be most convenient and accessible to families?

First 5 will gather data from several sources, including focus groups of families and stakeholders, and input from:

- First 5 Center Community Advisory Councils and Regional Groups,
- Faith-based organizations,
- Key staff in Contra Costa’s Health Services and Employment and Human Services Departments.

**Key Finding 4: First 5 Center families are mobile.**

First 5 Centers were originally envisioned to be neighborhood-based. However, our analysis suggests that the centers have come to resemble hubs that serve larger regions, instead. A large proportion of the high-need families we serve are able to travel to center services. For example, about a quarter of families who visit the Brentwood site travel over five miles to get there. Large proportions of the families we serve live more than two miles away (as the crow flies), suggesting they may not get there by foot. A survey conducted in February found that 84% of First 5 Center families used a car to get to their center.



Note: Analysis based on Family Survey data from calendar year 2016. Geocoding done in ArcGIS.

**Key Finding 5: Owned, larger First 5 Center sites work best.**

First 5’s years of experience implementing services at centers has demonstrated that high-quality centers require relatively large and/or flexibly configured spaces. Furthermore, First 5 is best equipped to deliver on its vision for services when it owns (or controls the leases of) the site. During inevitable contractor transitions, it has been critical for First 5 Contra Costa to have control of the facility to ensure smooth operations. Furthermore, ownership is a wise investment, providing First 5 with long-term assets.

**Current First 5 Center site status:**

	Families Served (2013-16)	Square Footage	Site Status	FY1516 Facility Expenses
<b>Antioch</b>	466	2,524	Owned by Contractor	\$43,920 (facilities)
<b>Bay Point</b>	516	2,300	First 5 Lease	\$55,200 (rent)
<b>Delta</b>	790	4,500	First 5 Lease	\$67,500 (rent)
<b>Monument</b>	692	2,640	Owned by City of Concord	\$17,660 (rent, parking lot)
<b>West County</b>	1,436	4,100 + 1,048 (satellite)	First 5 Owned	\$19,978 (facilities)

First 5 paid **\$813,916** for facilities in East County over 5 years.

Our experience with current First 5 Centers further supports this finding:

- **Antioch:** This site is owned by the current contractor and is one of the smallest sites. It also serves the fewest number of families.
- **Bay Point:** First 5 leases this site, which has challenges with growing safety issues in the neighborhood.
- **Delta:** First 5 leases this site. Although it is large, there is only one contained classroom. All other program space is divided by cubicle walls, making sound an issue. Moreover, its location is not best situated to serve families with the highest needs.
- **Monument:** We purchased the modules for this facility, and the city charges below market rent. The space, though small, is well configured and allows for multiple classes to occur at the same time, including in an outdoor classroom that can be used during warm months.
- **West County:** First 5 owns the large site in San Pablo, which has several classrooms, an outside play area, and private offices. We lease a satellite site in Richmond. West County serves the most families and receives nearly \$600,000 to provide services, compared to the other four sites which receive \$376,012.

**Recommendations:**

1. **Establish two large regional First 5 Centers in East County instead of three small Centers.**

Instead of funding three small First 5 Centers, none of which First 5 Contra Costa owns, we recommend operating two large regional centers in East County. New, larger facilities that are strategically located and well configured will allow First 5 to provide more activities and reach more families. If the two new centers are each able to serve as many families as the West County First 5 Center (and satellite), 1,000 additional families stand to be served over three years.

Staff is not recommending any changes to the Monument or West County locations.

**2. Pursue site purchases in Pittsburg and Antioch.**

First 5 intends to purchase at least one site, pending funding. Based on analysis, staff is focused on identifying locations in Pittsburg and Antioch. The Commission has approved initiating an offer for a site in Pittsburg. Inspections, renovation estimates, and approval of a final offer are pending.

In addition, staff plans to explore options for a future site in Antioch, pending approval of a capital plan to be discussed at the September Commission meeting. Outside fundraising may be necessary to purchase a second new site. First 5 staff will convene a small committee of parents and other stakeholders to advise on the location.

**3. Pilot new services to better serve African American families.**

We recommend allocating funding to pilot services for African American families, which will be determined through the needs assessment process currently underway. The outcome of this process may include improved services at First 5 Centers or new family support services altogether. First 5 would pilot these services through 2020. Results of the pilot will inform our next strategic planning process.

The budget for these services is currently estimated at \$200,000 per year for the next two fiscal years.

**4. Issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the following:**



Center/Program	Jan 2018 - June 2018	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	Total
Delta (Antioch, far east)	\$300,000	\$600,000	\$600,000	\$1,500,000
East County (Bay Point, Pittsburg)	\$300,000	\$600,000	\$600,000	\$1,500,000
Monument (Concord)	\$206,807	\$413,613	\$413,613	\$1,034,033
West County (San Pablo and Richmond)	\$300,000	\$600,000	\$600,000	\$1,500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,106,807</b>	<b>\$2,213,613</b>	<b>\$2,213,613</b>	<b>\$5,534,033</b>

NOTE: The current annual First 5 Center allocation is \$2,206,050.

This plan will require a transition from our current First 5 center sites to new ones in East County. These transitions will be described in the RFQ, and will include:

**East County:** Assuming First 5 is successful in our attempt to purchase a new site in the coming months, the Bay Point First 5 Center contractor must be able to transition from the current Bay Point location to the new permanent site in Pittsburg during the contract period.

**Delta:** The proposed new Delta site should be large enough to serve families from Antioch and communities farther east. In the months ahead, First 5 will continue to try to locate a site to lease or purchase that will meet these needs. However, real estate options are limited, and the goal of locating services in a high-need area with the right space and layout may not be achievable in the short run. Services will be provided in a temporary site in Antioch and in the current Brentwood location until the new regional Delta site opens.