



Commission Meeting

A G E N D A

Monday, September 11, 2023, 6:00 pm

First 5 Contra Costa, Conference Center, Conference Center

4005 Port Chicago Hwy., Suite 120, Concord CA 94520

309 Diablo Rd., Danville, CA 94526

The Commission meeting will be accessible in-person and via virtual webinar to all members of the public.

Persons who wish to address the Commission during public comment or with respect to an item on the agenda may call in during the meeting by dialing 669-444-9171 or 669-900-6833 or use the "raise your hand" feature in the Zoom app. The Commission Chair may reduce or eliminate the amount of time allotted to read comments at the beginning of each item or public comment period depending on the number of comments and the business of the day. Your patience is appreciated.

Virtual Webinar Information:

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84330536299>

Webinar ID: 858 7463 2289

1.0 Call to Order and Roll Call

2.0 Public Comment

The public may comment on any item of public interest within the jurisdiction of the First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission. In accordance with the Brown Act, if a member of the public addresses an item not on the posted agenda, no response, discussion, or action on the item may occur.

3.0 Approve the Minutes from the July 10, 2023 Commission Meeting.

Action

4.0 Approval of Consent Calendar

Action

A Commissioner or member of the public may ask that any of the following consent items be removed from the consent calendar for consideration under Item 4.

4.1 Accept the Minutes from the July 10, 2023 Executive Committee Meeting

4.2 Approve the Contracts Docket

- 4.2.1 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with the Contra Costa County Health Services Division, in an amount not to exceed \$92,917 to support the work of the Triple P Parenting program for the period July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. FY2023-24 budget line: Early Intervention Initiative: Triple P Positive Parenting (\$194,655). Funded 100% Contra Costa County Health Services.



4.2.2 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract amendment with Counseling Options & Parent Education Support Center, Inc. to increase the payment limit by \$50,926 (from \$144,014 to \$194,940) to support the work of the Triple P Parenting program. FY2023-24 budget line: Early Intervention Initiative: Triple P Positive Parenting (\$194,655). Funded 100% Contra Costa County Health Services.

4.3 Approve the Grants Docket

4.3.1 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute an agreement with Contra Costa Office of Education for a \$251,119 grant to provide California State Preschool Program (CSPP) Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Block Grant coaching and assessment services to state funded preschool programs for term July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. FY2023-24 budget line: Early Childhood Education Initiative: Early Learning Quality (\$487,032). Funded 100% Contra Costa County Office of Education.

4.3.2 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute an agreement with Contra Costa Office of Education for a \$205,870 grant to provide Quality Counts California (QCC), Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Block Grant coaching and assessment services to family childcare homes and private centers for term July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. FY2023-24 budget line: Early Childhood Education Initiative: Early Learning Quality (\$487,032). Funded 100% Contra Costa County Office of Education.

4.3.3 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute an agreement with Contra Costa County Office of Education for a grant, in an amount not to exceed \$10,000, to implement the Contra Costa County Professional Development Program (PDP) for term July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. FY2023-24 budget line: Early Childhood Education Initiative: Workforce Development (\$399,760). Funded 100% Contra Costa County Office of Education.

4.3.4 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with We Care Services for Children (fiscal sponsor) for a \$5,000.00 grant to provide outreach to families with children ages 0-5 for the Everyday Moments/Los Momentos Cotidianos program for term July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. FY 2023-24 budget line: Early Intervention: Coordinated Systems of Care Services (\$408,947). Funded 100% We Care Services for Children.

4.4 Accept the First 5 Contra Costa July and August 2023 Program Reports

4.5 **CONSIDER accepting** fiscal policies pertaining to and implementing GASB Statement Nos. 87 and 96, as part of the fiscal reporting process.



- 5.0 CONSIDER for discussion any items removed from the Consent Calendar.**
- 6.0 CONSIDER appointing the Nominating Committee for 2024 Officers' Election** **Action**
- 7.0 RECEIVE Presentation of Building Community Power for Equity: The Collaborative Advocacy and Power Partnership (CAPP) in Contra Costa County.** **Discussion**
Presenters: Dr. Kerby Lynch and Marianna Moore, Senior Director, Ensuring Opportunity Campaign to End Poverty in Contra Costa
- 8.0 RECEIVE Staff Update on Advocacy & Stakeholder Engagement Strategy** **Discussion**
Presenter: Sandra Naughton, Policy, Strategy and Evaluation Director
- 9.0 RECEIVE the Executive Director's Report** **Discussion**
- 10.0 Communications** **Discussion**
- First 5 Contra Costa CA State Controller Audit Report Acceptance Letter
 - First 5 Contra Costa CA State Controller Finding Follow-up Letter
 - First 5 Contra Costa Letters to Legislative Offices – SB 326(Eggman) MHSA Amendments
- 11.0 Commissioner F.Y.I. Updates**
- 12.0 Adjourn** **Discussion**

The First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities planning to participate in Commission meetings who contact the Commission's offices, at least 48 hours before the meeting, at (925) 771-7300.

Any disclosable public records related to an open session item on a regular meeting agenda and distributed by the First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission to a majority of members of the First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission less than 96 hours prior to that meeting are available for public inspection at 4005 Port Chicago Highway, Suite 120, Concord, CA 94520 during normal business hours.

In consideration of those who may suffer from chemical sensitivities or who may have allergic reactions to heavy scents, First 5 Contra Costa requests that staff and visitors refrain from wearing perfume, cologne, or the use of strongly scented products in the work place. We thank you for your consideration of others.



Commission Meeting
MINUTES
Monday, July 10, 2023, 6:00 pm
First 5 Contra Costa, Fishbowl Conference Room
4005 Port Chicago Hwy., Suite 120, Concord CA 94520

1.0 Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair John Jones called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM.

Commissioners present during roll call were:

- District 2: Marilyn Cachola Lucey
- District 3: Lee Ross
- District 4: Matt Regan, Treasure / Secretary
- District 5: John Jones, Chair
- Board of Supervisors: Supervisor Candace Andersen
- EHSD: Dr. Marla Stuart
- Children & Families Services: Alternate Roslyn Gentry

Also, in attendance during roll call were:

Keiko Kobayashi, County Counsel

Commissioners not present during roll call were:

- District 1: Dr. Rocio Hernandez, Vice-Chair
- District 2: Alternate Vidya Iyengar
- District 4: Alternate Gareth Ashley
- Board of Supervisors: Alternate Supervisor Ken Carlson
- Health Department: Dr. Ori Tzvieli
- Health Department: Alternate Dr. Sefanit Mekuria
- EHSD: Alternate Nicholas Bryant
- Children & Families Services: Kathy Marsh

2.0 Public Comment

No comment from the public.

3.0 Approve the Minutes from the June 12, 2023 Commission Meeting.

The Chair asked if there were any questions regarding item 3.0. There were none.

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the minutes from June 12, 2023.

Commissioner Lee Ross made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Matt Regan to approve the minutes.

Roll call of vote:

- Yes:**
- District 2: Marilyn Cachola Lucey
 - District 3: Lee Ross
 - District 4: Matt Regan, Treasure / Secretary



District 5: John Jones, Chair
Board of Supervisors: Supervisor Candace Andersen
EHSD: Dr. Marla Stuart
Children & Families Services: Alternate Roslyn Gentry

Nos: None

ABSTAIN: None

Absent: District 1: Dr. Rocio Hernandez, Vice-Chair
District 2: Alternate Vidya Iyengar
District 4: Alternate Gareth Ashley
Board of Supervisors: Alternate Supervisor Ken Carlson
Health Department: Dr. Ori Tzvieli
Health Department: Alternate Dr. Sefanit Mekuria
EHSD: Alternate Nicholas Bryant
Children & Families Services: Kathy Marsh

The motion was **APPROVED**.

4.0 Approval of Consent Calendar *A Commissioner or member of the public may ask that any of the following consent items be removed from the consent calendar for consideration under item 5.0.*

Items 4.2.4 was removed by the Chair from the Consent Calendar for consideration in Item 5.0 and voting on the remaining items proceeded.

The Chair called for a motion to approve the Consent Calendar with the removal of 4.2.4.

Supervisor Candace Andersen made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar, seconded by Commissioner Roslyn Gentry

Roll call of vote:

Yes: District 2: Marilyn Cachola Lucey
District 3: Lee Ross
District 4: Matt Regan, Treasure / Secretary
District 5: John Jones, Chair
Board of Supervisors: Supervisor Candace Andersen
EHSD: Dr. Marla Stuart
Children & Families Services: Alternate Roslyn Gentry

Nos: None

ABSTAIN: None

Absent: District 1: Dr. Rocio Hernandez, Vice-Chair
District 2: Alternate Vidya Iyengar



District 4: Alternate Gareth Ashley
Board of Supervisors: Alternate Supervisor Ken Carlson
Health Department: Dr. Ori Tzvieli
Health Department: Alternate Dr. Sefanit Mekuria
EHSD: Alternate Nicholas Bryant
Children & Families Services: Kathy Marsh

The motion was **APPROVED**.

5.0 CONSIDER for discussion any items removed from the Consent Calendar. Before discussing item 4.2.4 Commissioner Jones read a recusal statement then passed the meeting to Commissioner Matt Regan, Secretary, to chair the business of the Commission for Item 5.0.

Commissioner John Jones made the following statement: I have an interest in Agenda item 4.2.4 because I am employed by Coco Kids, and this item directly impacts my organization. I am recusing myself from this item and will be leaving the room.

Commissioner Matt Regan opened the discussion of item:

4.2.4 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with CocoKids, Inc. to provide Quality Improvement Navigation (QIN) coaching, ongoing technical assistance (TA), guidance and communication to QIS and QRIS sites, and support in local implementation of the QRIS, in an amount not to exceed \$102,900, for term July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. FY 2023-24 budget line: Early Childhood Education Initiative: Early Learning Quality (\$487,032) Funded 17% (\$17,493) Prop 10 funds and 83% (\$85,407) F5 CA Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive (IMPACT) funds.

There were no questions regarding this item.

The Secretary asked for a motion to approve item 4.2.4.

Supervisor Candace Andersen made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar, seconded by Commissioner Marilyn Cachola Lucey

Roll call of vote:

Yes: District 2: Marilyn Cachola Lucey
District 3: Lee Ross
District 4: Matt Regan, Treasure / Secretary
Board of Supervisors: Supervisor Candace Andersen
EHSD: Dr. Marla Stuart
Children & Families Services: Alternate Roslyn Gentry

Nos: None

ABSTAIN: District 5: John Jones, Chair, due to conflict of interest



Absent: District 1: Dr. Rocio Hernandez, Vice-Chair
District 2: Alternate Vidya Iyengar
District 4: Alternate Gareth Ashley
Board of Supervisors: Alternate Supervisor Ken Carlson
Health Department: Dr. Ori Tzvieli
Health Department: Alternate Dr. Sefanit Mekuria
EHSD: Alternate Nicholas Bryant
Children & Families Services: Kathy Marsh

The motion was **APPROVED**.

The Chair rejoined the meeting.

Commissioner Alternate, Dr. Sefanit Mekuria joined the meeting at 6:12pm.

The Chair briefly departed from the agenda to acknowledge the unfortunate passing of former Commissioner Dr. Cheri A. Pies on July 4, 2023, due to a long-time illness. For many years Cheri was an integral part of Contra Costa Health Services and an incredible First 5 advocate for children in the county. In her honor, a moment of silence was observed.

6.0 Recognize Lisa Morrell-Korb for 18 years of service as First 5 Contra Costa’s Family Support Program Officer

Commissioner Jones recognized Lisa as one of the longest members of First 5 as he announced her retirement. She leaves behind five very strong First 5 Centers in the community. Ruth Fernández, Executive Director, and Camilla Rand, Deputy Directed celebrated Lisa’s commitment to children and families since joining First 5 in 2005 where she helped build and develop centers. She nurtured relationships with partners and internal programs that led to the centers becoming hubs within the community. Ruth highlighted Lisa’s background in social work, her commitment to serving the whole child/ whole family within our values, and exemplary skills which she used in her First 5 work with children and families. Lisa worked with a strong devotion to meeting families’ needs and connecting them to services while honoring the parents and caregivers’ knowledge and wisdom. Camilla lauded Lisa’s ability to handle crisis situations with a steadfast manner; always maintaining high quality services; and for the recent transitions of the First 5 centers under new contracts and/or new operators. In closing, Chair John Jones shared memories of working with Lisa and presented her with an engraved clock as a token of appreciation for her 18 years of service to First 5. Camilla presented Lisa with a photobook of her many years with First 5.

There were no public comments.

Lisa thanked the Commission for the opportunity to have served and expressed gratitude for the experiences and relationships she built by turning the Commission’s vision into a reality.

7.0 Receive Staff Presentation of Family Child Care Partner Program

Camilla Rand, Deputy Director and Deanna Carmona, Quality Improvement Coach presented a peer-to-peer coaching program initiative in Early Childhood Education (ECE) called the Quality Matters Family Child Care Partner program. The initiative began last year as a pilot program and has been a great success with the ECE providers. It was born out of the desire for providers to be part of a network, and have their voices heard; and also to find new ways to retain the ECE field. The Pilot Program focuses on the Quality Matters Family Child Care providers and is designed to address differing levels of support. This pilot facilitated the support of 33 providers and 17 mentors. Deanna and Camilla shared an overview of the program, the activities conducted throughout the year and several of the anecdotal comments on how the program has supported their work with families.

Commissioner Lucey asked how many families were served by the program. Deanna answered that approximately 400 families were impacted. Commissioner Regan shared his experience with his daughter in a family childcare program and the positive impact it made on his family. He acknowledged that the profession can be isolating and thus very important to support the providers.

8.0 Receive Staff Presentation of Overview of the State Budget

Sandra Naughton, Director of Policy, Strategy and Evaluation gave an overview of key elements of the State budget. She shared that the legislators and the Governor have come to a budget deal after a deficit year and two prior years of surplus funds. One highlight in the budget is the ECE Coalition's request to increase the child care reimbursement rates by 25%. There is \$2.8 billion over two years in the budget to increase rates, details are still being determined. The second highlight is the cap of family fees at 1% of family income that low-income families have been required to pay for subsidized care. Both of these are considered wins.

9.0 Executive Director's Report

Ruth Fernandez provided the following updates:

Internal Updates:

- Staffing: Ruth shared that staff are in the second round of interviews for the ECE Program Officer; our own Randee Blackstock has accepted the new position of Facilities and Office Coordinator; the Administrative Assistant position interviews are being conducted now.
- Operations: First 5 is in the midst of an annual audit through September - the final report will be brought to the Commission in October;
- GASB 96, regulations related to software subscription use, is new this year and we are developing policies as it relates to this new requirement; the IT assessment has been completed and a report with recommendations has been submitted. More information will be shared in the future;
- We will be going live next month with the new website refresh - an announcement will

be shared.

County updates:

- The first Children’s Leadership Council convening was a successful event with over 115 participants and 45 organizations in attendance. Ruth shared highlights of the event and the positive feedback from participants. She acknowledged First 5 staff and Health Services, Employment and Human Services and the County Office of Education, the leadership partners, as well as the members of the Board of Supervisors who spoke.
- First 5 had a visit that morning from Congressman DeSaulnier to present the \$150,000 check for the Growing and Retaining a Vibrant ECE Workforce grant. Several Commissioners, partners and providers attended . The funding will be complementary to the workforce being conducted by UC Berkeley; allowing for provider community listening sessions and an advisory group to support an ECE Guaranteed Income model for childcare providers. The Asset Funders Network invited Ruth to their Centering Community Voices in Policy Advocacy and Design meeting in June to present this project.
- First 5 center transitions are now official and the centers will be opening the 3rd week in July for drop in activities with exception of Antioch, which is still hiring staff. Those families will be connected with the other two nearby centers in the meantime.
- Over the past 3 months, the Measure X (MX) Community Advisory Board (CAB) has continued to meet with two focus areas: the revision of the Bylaws to include further definition of the CAB role and membership requirements; and to develop the Fiscal Oversight Committee , responsible for reviewing and confirming MX revenue and expenditures. The Board of Supervisors has asked county departments to submit proposals for the unspent \$4.67 million funds for the Board to consider at their Sept 19. Meeting. First 5’s agreement with EHSD to support Children with Disabilities was approved by the Board this month and planning activities have begun.

State updates:

- Two regional grant applications were submitted to First 5 California - the Home Visiting Regional Coordination and Technical Assistance grant for \$198,256 and Impact Legacy grant for \$1.3 million, both over 2 years. Both were approved by the State and San Benito County First 5 will be the lead fiscal agency for the region.
- First 5 received the Round One Children Youth Behavioral Health (CYBHI) grant totaling \$400,000. This grant partners with COPE to expand Triple P services to under-served populations and will invite new community partners to support outreach.
- The First 5 Association submitted an oppose letter to the legislature regarding the MHSA Modernization Act, SB 226 . The letter asks for 50% MHSA funding dedicated to PEI (Prevention and Early Intervention) funds for children and a 20% allocation for children birth to 5.
- The First 5 Association is working with a consulting firm to publish a report with REDI (Race, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) resources and also highlighting the REDI work being done in First 5s throughout the state. This report will be shared once released.
- First 5 has been chosen to be part of the Leshner Speaker Series on August 12th, where a local agency is highlighted. This highlight will include a KTVU TV interview. Tickets will be available to any Commissioner who would like to attend.



10.0 Communications

The following Communications are included in the packet

- ECPIC Letter: Concerns about the Current Proposal to Adjust the Mental Health Services Act
- Article: *What You Need to Know on the California Budget Deal*

11.0 Commissioner F.Y.I. Updates

No Commissioner Updates

12.0 Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:29 PM.

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**Executive Committee Meeting
Minutes**

**Monday, July 10, 2023 ~ 5:00-6:00 PM
4005 Port Chicago Highway, Suite 120, Concord, CA 94520**

1.0 Convene and call to order

Chair John Jones called the meeting to order at 5:22 p.m.

In attendance: John Jones, Matt Regan, Marilyn Cachola-Lucey

Staff present: Executive Director, Ruth Fernandez; Deputy Director, Camilla Rand; Policy and Strategy Director Sandra Naughton; Finance and Operations Director, Pankti Clerk; Human Resources Manager Tammy Henry.

2.0 Public Comment

No Public Comment

3.0 Approve the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting of April 17, 2023

Commissioner Regan motioned to approve the minutes of April 17, 2023

Commissioner Lucey seconded.

Roll-call Vote:

John Jones – Yes

Matt Regan – Yes

Marilyn Lucey - Yes

Motioned approved.

4.0 CONSIDER accepting the report on significant program, financial or contracts matters, and on any personnel matters relating to Commission staff.

4.1 Receive updates from the Finance and Operations Director Pankti Clerk:

- Near completion of first round of auditor requests for this year's audit. Second round to follow this fall.
- New rules apply to FY22-23 to comply with according to GASB 96 and GASB 87. Draft policies related to both GASB 96 & 87s will be brought to the September Commission meeting.
- Staff are also working on draft Use Agreement and protocols for the First 5 Conference-Training Center. Proposal includes fee for use concept with aim to recover some cost of space.
- Ongoing evaluation of IT support options for increased operational efficiencies and cost savings. Updates to come in the fall.

4.2 Receive updates from the Deputy Director Camilla Rand:

- The First 5 center operator transitions are official. Work is underway to prepare and clean Center facilities, including staff recruitment. The goal is to open centers the third



week of July; First 5 Center in Antioch will remain closed until August to ensure the needed staff are hired.

- First 5 received word that we are one of 63 grantees in the State awarded the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative grant. The \$400,000 grant, in partnership with C.O.P.E. will provide Triple P programming to 520 additional families in the county with a focus on marginalized communities.

4.3 Receive updates from the PSE Director Sandra Naughton:

- Over last 6 months, we adopted new performance measures for our contractors to align with our Results Based Accountability framework. The next step is developing metrics for First 5 staff's work.
- We plan to launch the refresh of our website in early August. The new content will include new photos, revised narrative content focused on decision-makers and a specific section of the site for families. Currently, gathering family input on the section geared to families and invite Commissioners to support that process.
- Future work for PSE includes compiling the annual state report for FY 2023, and implementing the goals related to policy advocacy in the Strategic Plan, including updating our policy platform.

Receive updates from the HR Manager: Tammy Henry shared the following:

- 4.4**
- Interviewing process in progress for the Early Childhood Program Officer, the Administrative Assistant II, and the Executive Assistant positions.
 - Randee Blackstock, current Program Assistant for Strengthening Families has accepted the new position of Facilities and Office Coordinator.

5.0 DISCUSS FY23/24 Commission Operations

- 5.1** Membership Updates: Executive Director reported that two applications were received for filled Commission seats, applications were acknowledged and will be kept on file if a vacancy occurs. Alternate for District 1 that was just recently appointed is relocating and so the seat is vacant again. A new recommendation from District 1 is in the works. Also, District V has a new Alternate who was just appointed by the Board of Supervisors – La Trena Robinson, Alternate District V.
- 5.2** Commissioner Engagement – Ruth discussed upcoming opportunities for Commission Officers and other interested Commissioners to participate in First 5 Association advocacy efforts and visits to the offices of Legislative representatives. More information will be shared in the fall and advocacy plans are finalized.
- 5.3** Update on ED Salary Negotiation – Chair Jones stated that there is a pause on negotiations until the salary study is completed.

6.0 REVIEW agenda items for upcoming Commission Committee Meetings

The group reviewed the Executive Committee Administrative Calendar.

7.0 Communications: The following communications were in the packet

- ECPIC Letter: Concerns about the Current Proposal to Adjust the Mental Health Services Act
- Article: What You Need to Know on the California Budget Deal

8.0 Adjourn - Meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.





ITEM 4.2
CONTRACTS & GRANTS APPROVAL DOCKET

September 11, 2023

Contracts Approval Docket

- 4.2.1 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with the Contra Costa County Health Services Division, in an amount not to exceed \$92,917 to support the work of the Triple P Parenting program for the period July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. FY2023-24 budget line: Early Intervention Initiative: Triple P Positive Parenting (\$194,655). Funded 100% Contra Costa County Health Services.
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ITEM 4.3
CONTRACTS & GRANTS APPROVAL DOCKET

September 11, 2023

Grants Approval Docket

- 4.3.1 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute an agreement with Contra Costa Office of Education for a \$251,119 grant to provide California State Preschool Program (CSPP) Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Block Grant coaching and assessment services to state funded preschool programs for term July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. FY2023-24 budget line: Early Childhood Education Initiative: Early Learning Quality (\$487,032). Funded 100% Contra Costa County Office of Education.
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Early Intervention

*Our **Early Intervention (EI)** initiative aims to ensure that families have access to prevention and early intervention supports and services that foster the optimal development of all children.*

Help Me Grow (HMG)

HMG Advisory Board: Our Advisory Board meeting in July brought board members together to discuss progress on this year's goals for the call center's continuous quality improvement and to review recent referral trends. Families continue to seek support for basic needs, as well as developmental needs, and there continues to be challenges accessing Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) in a timely manner. Board members also discussed their experiences with ongoing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) screening pilots in the county, noting the need to have holistic conversations with families about stress, adversity, and resilience—the ACE screen and/or ACE score alone may not capture all experiences thoroughly.

HMG Café: Our team hosted another successful virtual HMG Café on August 15. The goal of the cafes are to promote cross collaboration amongst providers and to increase understanding of how best to support families accessing services. Our guest speaker, Juliana Mondragon from Contra Costa Health Plan, presented an overview of the Health Plan's Behavioral Health Services with an emphasis on ABA therapy. There were 26 people in attendance from various child serving agencies.

Developmental Screening Online: The Early Intervention and Early Childhood Education team are collaborating in launching an online developmental screening pilot with two childcare providers in West Contra Costa. El Nuevo Mundo in Richmond and the West Contra Costa Unified School District Preschool Program staff will be utilizing the Ages and Stages Questionnaire online screening database to provide a more seamless and equitable modality for families to complete screening packets. This will allow families to easily complete the tool on their own time, on any mobile device, or in person at the childcare site, and the tool will be accessible in multiple languages including Arabic, Chinese, and Vietnamese.



Pediatric Health Provider Training: As part of our HMG efforts, our team continues to train pediatric health provider staff on using evidence-based screening tools. In August, our team trained Medical Assistants and Clinic managers from La Clínica de La Raza in Concord. Staff were trained to utilize the Ages and Stages Questionnaires developmental screening tool and the Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (MCHAT) autism screening tool.

Network of Care Hub and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Activities

ACEs Prevention: In July, we finalized and shared our practice brief and paper that document the collaborative ACE screening pilot project implemented by First 5 Contra Costa, La Clinica de la Raza, and Contra Costa Crisis Center via an ACEs Aware Network of Care Implementation Grant.

Visit the [Early Intervention](#) section on our refreshed First 5 Contra Costa website to view and download both papers, or check out the direct links here: [Practice Brief - "From Adversity to Resilience: Overview of the Contra Costa Network of Care Model"](#) and [Practice Paper - "From Adversity to Resilience: Building a Countywide Network of Care."](#)

PROGRAM UPDATES

July/August 2023



HMG Pediatric News: In July, we released the second edition of our quarterly HMG newsletter for Pediatric Providers in Contra Costa County, which highlighted local, state, and national resources and system change efforts.

Self-Care is not Selfish: In our continuous effort to highlight the importance of self-care in preventing and reducing toxic stress, we have begun planning for Self-Care week—occurring in September during Self-Care Awareness month. This will be the second year of what is fast becoming an annual event. Emily Hampshire, Trauma and Resiliency Coordinator, has begun reaching out to last year's partners who participated in self-care activities on the Network of Care Hub.

System Support: The EI team was asked for support from the Contra Costa Health Plan regrading effective outreach and engagement strategies for connecting and serving African American families. They appreciated the information shared and felt it would be very helpful to their efforts to improve well-baby visit attendance.

Grant Movement

Children & Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI): After a highly competitive application process, the First 5 application was selected for funding on July 14. This grant will allow us, in partnership with C.O.P.E., to further scale Triple P to the 0- 5 population—we are awaiting next step instructions from the funder.

Measure X: On July 26, the interagency agreement/contract between Contra Costa County Employment & Human Services (EHSD) and First 5 was executed. Upon this exciting news, the First 5 team created an internal workplan and workgroup meetings, and began taking the next steps toward releasing the Planning Consultant Request for Proposals (RFP).

Family Economic Security Partnership

*The **Family Economic Security Partnership (FESP)** is a public, private and nonprofit collaboration dedicated to increasing the income and building the assets of low-income families and individuals living in Contra Costa County.*

Recruiting new members and increasing FESP's profile in the field

In late June, FESP was featured as one of First 5 Contra Costa's collaborative projects at the June 21 [Children's Leadership Council](#) convening. Check out this brief [summary](#) or [video](#) to learn more about this in-person event, coordinated by First 5 Contra Costa, that aimed to help service providers, professionals, elected officials, and other connect with one another, learn about 9 collaborative projects underway, and be empowered to take action for change. As a result of FESP being a featured project, all 115 event participants learned about FESP's work through a brief presentation and had the opportunity to visit a booth and hear more from staff. At the event, 18 individuals from 13 organizations signed up to join FESP.



Upcoming Quarterly Meeting to Focus on Guaranteed Income

The next quarterly FESP meeting will be on September 14 from 9:30 to 11 am on Zoom to learn about what community members in Contra Costa think about Guaranteed Income strategies, and hear from two local organizations planning pilot programs. There will be three guest speakers at the meeting:

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- Marissa Garibay, Guaranteed Income Coordinator, from Community Financial Resources speaking about their work last year educating community members about guaranteed income and gathering their input how guaranteed income could support Contra Costa residents.
- Judith Ortiz, Executive Director, from Monument Impact speaking about their ARPA-funded pilot in Concord.
- Ruth Fernández, Executive Director, from First 5 Contra Costa speaking about plans to design a guaranteed income pilot for child care teachers.

The meeting will also feature a representative from the County Elections Office to talk about their voter outreach to coincide with September's National Voter Registration Day, as well as time for updates on local activities related to ending poverty for families in our county. Please join and help us share the word about this exciting meeting. Register today at this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/family-economic-security-partnership-meeting-tickets-692580315367?aff=oddtcreator> or for more info, contact FESP@first5coco.org.

Early Childhood Education

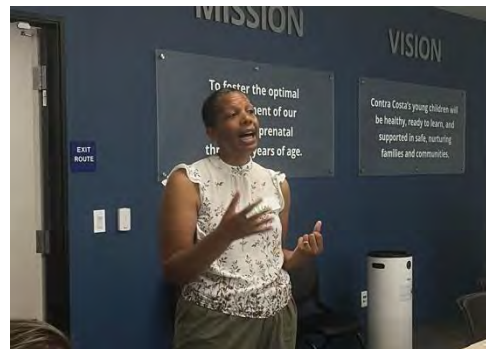
*Our **Early Childhood Education (ECE)** initiative aims to ensure that all children have access to high-quality, affordable child care and early learning.*

Ready Kids East County Parent Group

The Ready Kids East County Parent Group had its July virtual meeting on Tuesday, July 25 and was joined by a special guest speaker, Sue-Ellen Anderson-Haynes, MS, RDN, CDCES, LDN, CPT, the Founder and CEO, 360Girls&Women®. Sue-Ellen is a registered dietician and certified diabetes educator who specializes in Black women's and children's health and nutrition. Fifteen parents and caregivers, as well as three First 5 staff members attended the meeting. Sue-Ellen led an hour-long, high-level presentation and discussion covering general nutrition education, quick and healthy meal ideas, feeding picky eaters, and information on prediabetes. Parents and caregivers left the meeting with new knowledge, strategies, and resources on how to improve their own health, as well as the health of their families.

Ready Kids East County Initiative: ECE Provider Training Series A Love Letter to Black Children: | An Anti-Bias & Anti-Racism Approach

Nini Humphrey, M.Ed, a consultant with the Black Women in Early Childhood Collective (BWECC), is an Early Learning Coach and Oakland Unified School District teacher with extensive experience in early childhood education. She facilitated the first "A Love Letter to Black Children: An Anti-Bias & Anti-Racism Approach" training on Saturday, August 26. A total of 20 Contra Costa County ECE providers attended this three-hour, in-person training in the First 5 Contra Costa conference center. This introductory training provided participants with an opportunity to explore and understand an anti-bias and anti-racism (ABAR) framework and make connections to working with all children, particularly children of color. African American children were the primary focus of study with applications and analyses for what is needed for all children to thrive, experience wonder, and possess a felt-sense of belonging. Participants were offered simplified theoretical research, as well as practical engagement activities to discover the experiences of children, care providers, and systems as major contributors to children's growth and development within an ABAR



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framework. The next session of the series takes place on Saturday, September 16, 2023, and will focus on exclusionary discipline.

Quality Matters

Planning for the new program year occurs each July and August, including creating our training calendar and sending out our welcome-back coach update to all sites. We are excited to be introducing a Specialization in Infant and Toddler care, and in August, our ECE team planned the rollout of this new Specialization to our program. Many of our programs are moving towards serving more infants and toddlers due to Universal Preschool (UPK) and Transitional Kindergarten (TK) opportunities for families in our county. We will be partnering with WestEd to offer a 3 unit course (units through Fresno State) in the program for Infant Toddler Caregiving series and will offer other asynchronous work through the California Early Childhood Online (CECO) website, along with an opportunity for environment assessments for those participating in the Specialization. In early September, we will be joining the County Office of Education in welcoming our sites back with an open house on September 7.

The coaches are working with the internal Measure X workgroup to offer some inclusion trainings this year and, in collaboration with the inclusion team at CocoKids, began creating an inclusion toolkit for early care sites in Contra Costa County. With the implementation of IMPACT LEGACY State funding, the coaching team signed up to complete trainings offered this fall by Hubbe to make sure we are documenting our Quality Improvement Plans and coach logs in compliance with new IMPACT reporting requirements.

Strengthening Families

*Our **Strengthening Families** (SF) initiative helps families build healthy relationships, strengthen support systems, and nurture their children's development.*

First 5 Centers

After spending the first part of July ramping up to serve families, all First 5 Centers are open and operating. Each center developed a transition plan to ensure the necessary steps were taken to open the doors for families by the designated dates. For the new operators at the Monument First 5 Center (Bay Area Community Resources) and the East County First 5 Center (Lincoln Families), this included lots of logistics: transferring phone lines, orienting new staff, deep cleaning, and the Monument First 5 Center received a much needed fresh coat of paint.



Aspirant welcomed two new center directors, Deanna Gales and Fabiola Salceda, of Antioch and Delta respectively; and while the Antioch First 5 Center opened by the date planned, they are operating on a hybrid schedule of virtual and in-person classes while Aspirant continues to hire a full cadre of staff. The centers have started off the year with open house events, open play hours, and many classes for families. Ruth Fernández, First 5 Contra Costa Executive Director and Camilla Rand, Deputy Director are planning to visit to each of the five centers at the end of September to see them in action and meet the new staff.

First 5 learned that Help a Mother Out (HAMO), which had been supplying the five centers with free diapers and wipes, has lost their grant funding and can no longer provide this benefit to the centers. We know that diapers and wipes continue to be a great need for families and also unaffordable for many;

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therefore we are diligently searching for diapers at low cost through the Supply Bank and other partners to continue to provide this benefit to our families.

Home Visiting Technical Assistance and Coordination Grant

First 5 received a two-year First 5 state grant in the amount of \$198,000 to provide technical assistance and coordination to the home visiting network within Contra Costa County. We are partnering with Natalie Burbick, Family Maternal and Child Health (FMCH) Director, and the FMCH Home Visiting Community Advisory Board (CAB) to plan grant activities to support the home visiting workforce in our county.

The purpose of the grant is to empower counties to continue their work creating a sustainable, unified system that supports families with the home visiting services to support family well-being and maximize available funding to serve more families. The activities of this grant will include regular networking and training sessions for Contra Costa home visitors, regular technical assistance and training for the Advisory Board, and regional technical assistance with other Bay Area counties with emphasis on data sharing, promising practices, data collection, and fiscal sustainability. First 5 staff have had two meetings with the CAB which have generated excitement and great ideas for getting the work started—we are eager to dive into this work and support this critical workforce.



Staff Report
September 11, 2023

ACTION: X
DISCUSSION:

TITLE: GASB Related Policies, First 5 Contra Costa

Recommendation

Commission acceptance of the fiscal policies pertaining to GASB 87 and GASB 96, as part of the annual fiscal reporting process.

Background

In recent years, the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) has introduced a series of new statements aimed to increase transparency in financial reporting with the goal of improving the comparability of government (a.k.a. public entities') financial statements and enhancing the understandability, reliability, relevance, and consistency of information about its assets and liabilities. Most recent has been the release of GASB 87 and GASB 96 to recognize that certain leases and subscription-based information technology arrangements, respectively, are financings of the right to use an underlying asset and need to be represented as such in an entity's financial statements.

GASB 87

GASB Statement No. 87—*Leases*, became effective as of fiscal years beginning after June 15, 2021 (as of FY21-22). In accordance with GASB 87, a lease is defined as a contract that conveys control of the right to use another entity's nonfinancial asset (the underlying asset) as specified in the contract for a period of time in an exchange or exchange-like transactions (i.e., buildings, land, vehicles, and equipment). Any contract that meets this definition should be accounted for under the lease guidance as identified in GASB 87. Subject to certain provisions and exceptions noted in the guidance, leases are generally reported as follows in a government's external financial statements:

Lessee: A lessee should recognize a lease liability and a lease asset at the commencement of the lease term. A lessee should reduce the lease liability as payments are made and recognize an outflow of resources (i.e., expense) for interest on the liability. The lessee should amortize the lease asset in a systematic and rational manner over the shorter of the lease term or the useful life of the underlying asset.

Lessor: A lessor should recognize a lease receivable and a deferred inflow of resources at the commencement of the lease term. A lessor should recognize interest revenue on the lease receivable and an inflow of resource (i.e., revenue) from the deferred inflows of resources in a systematic and rational manner over the term of the lease.

GASB 87 requires entities to record a lease asset or lease liability for most of its leases. As of FY21-22, First 5 Contra Costa (F5CC) has recorded revenues or expenditures on its leases when revenues are received, or payments are made. At the commencement of the lease term, F5CC will analyze the terms and provisions of the lease agreement (contract) in order to calculate the value of the underlying asset.

The Lease Materiality Policy is being established at this time to set a materiality dollar threshold for determining the inclusion or exclusion of leases in the external financial statements, both as lessee and lessor. F5CC is setting a lease capitalization threshold, consistent with its capital asset capitalization policy statement, of \$5,000 for lease contracts to be recorded under GASB 87. Any lease with a present

value at inception less than \$5,000 will be deemed immaterial in relation to the financial statements as a whole and, thereby, excluded.

GASB 96

GASB Statement No. 96—*Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements* (SBITAs) became effective for fiscal years beginning after July 15, 2022 (as of FY22-23). In accordance with GASB 96, a SBITA is defined as a contract that conveys control of the right to use another party's (a SBITA vendor's) IT software, alone or in combination with tangible capital assets (with underlying IT assets), as specified in the contract for a period of time in an exchange or exchange-like transaction, subject to certain provisions and exceptions noted in the guidance.

GASB 96 requires public entities to recognize a subscription liability for the amount owed on these contracts offset by a capital asset. Similar to GASB 87, this standard will enable the reader of government-wide financial statements a clearer idea of the public entity's net position which is influenced by the underlying event and cash flows related to future fiscal periods. As of FY22-23, F5CC is recording revenues and expenditures on its SBITAs when payments are made. At the commencement of the contract terms, F5CC will analyze the terms and provisions of the agreement (contract) in order to calculate the value of the underlying asset.

The SBITAs Materiality Policy is being established to set a materiality dollar threshold for determining the inclusion or exclusion of SBITAs in the external financial statements. F5CC is setting a SBITAs capitalization threshold, consistent with its capital asset capitalization policy statement, of \$5,000 for SBITA contracts to be recorded under GASB 96. Any SBITAs with a present value at inception less than \$5,000 will be deemed immaterial in relation to the financial statements as a whole and, thereby, excluded.

Fiscal Impact

No fiscal impact. However, in the absence of such formally adopted policies or policy statements, the organization could be subject to additional scrutiny during annual audits. In addition, the absence of such policies may reduce efficiencies in operations and negatively impact staff resources in terms of time required to complete tasks associated with meeting fiscal mandates.

Consequence of Negative Action

Should the First 5 Contra Costa Children & Families elect not to accept the fiscal policies as set forth, it could result in an audit finding for failure to have written policies and procedures for GASB 87 and GASB 96.

Attachment

- 1) Lease Materiality Policy
- 2) Subscription Based IT Arrangements (SBITAs) Materiality Policy

Lease Materiality Policy

Purpose:

The purpose of the Lease Materiality Policy is to establish the dollar threshold at which First 5 Contra Costa (F5CC) accounts for leases for external financial reporting purposes.

Adoption and Review

This policy may be revised as needed in order to maintain alignment with the financial goals of F5CC and to ensure compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

Policy

In accordance with Governmental Accounting Standard Board (GASB) Statement No. 87, *Leases*, a lease is defined as a contract that conveys control of the right to use another entity's nonfinancial asset (the underlying asset) as specified in the contract for a period of time in an exchange or exchange-like transactions (i.e., buildings, land, vehicles, and equipment). Any contract that meets this definition should be accounted for under the lease guidance as identified in GASB Statement No. 87. Subject to certain provisions and exceptions noted in the guidance, leases are generally reported as follows in a government's external financial statements:

Lessee: A lessee should recognize a lease liability and a lease asset at the commencement of the lease term. A lessee should reduce the lease liability as payments are made and recognize an outflow of resources (i.e., expense) for interest on the liability. The lessee should amortize the lease asset in a systematic and rational manner over the shorter of the lease term or the useful life of the underlying asset.

Lessor: A lessor should recognize a lease receivable and a deferred inflow of resources at the commencement of the lease term. A lessor should recognize interest revenue on the lease receivable and an inflow of resource (i.e., revenue) from the deferred inflows of resources in a systematic and rational manner over the term of the lease.

F5CC is setting a lease capitalization threshold consistent with its capital asset capitalization policy of \$5,000 for lease contracts to be recorded under GASB 87. An individual lease agreement (contract) that generates a right-to-use underlying asset value calculated at greater than or equal to \$5,000 will be included in the external financial statements.

Any lease with a present value at inception less than \$5,000 will be deemed immaterial in relation to the financial statements as a whole and, thereby, excluded. However, a lease agreement (contract) with an underlying asset value less than \$5,000 may be included in the external financial statements at the discretion of Finance Management Team should it be determined that its exclusion might otherwise cause the financial statements to be incomplete or misleading in some manner.

Additionally, GASB 87 does not apply to the following types of contracts and leases:

1. Leases of intangible assets
2. Leases of biological assets
3. Leases of inventory

4. Contracts that meet the definition of a service concession arrangement
5. Leases in which the underlying asset is financed with outstanding conduit debt, unless both the underlying asset and the conduit debt are reported by the lessor
6. Supply contracts
7. Short-term leases when the maximum possible lease term is 12 months or less, including all options to extend, regardless of whether it is reasonably certain the options will be exercised.

Leases that transfer the right to use an underlying asset that require only a nominal amount, such as one dollar per year, are not subject to the new statement. These types of transactions are considered non-exchange transactions, which are addressed under existing generally accepted accounting principles.

As with any potential exception, there is usually a degree of judgment involved in determining whether a contract qualifies under an exception criterion. For any contracts where it is not clear whether an exception applies to the contract, the Finance Management Team recommends that the contract be submitted to them for review. Any potential exceptions should be identified when the contract is submitted to the Finance Management Team.

Subscription Based IT Arrangements (SBITAs) Materiality Policy

Purpose:

The purpose of the Subscription Based Information Technology Arrangement (SBITAs) Materiality Policy is to establish the dollar threshold at which First 5 Contra Costa (F5CC) accounts for contracts/agreements for external financial reporting purposes.

Adoption and Review

This policy may be revised as needed in order to maintain alignment with the financial goals of F5CC and to ensure compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

Policy

In accordance with Governmental Accounting Standard Board (GASB) Statement No. 96, *Subscription Based Information Technology Arrangements* is a contract that conveys control of the right to use another party's IT software, alone or in combination with tangible assets, as specified in the contract for a period of time in an exchange or exchange-like transaction.

The standard does not apply to:

- Contracts that convey control of the right to use another party's combination of IT software and tangible capital assets that meets the definition of a lease in Statement No. 87, *Leases*, in which the software component is insignificant when compared to the cost of the underlying tangible capital asset;
- Government entities that provide the right to use their IT software and associated tangible capital assets to other entities through SBITAs;
- Contracts that meet the definition of a public-private or public-public partnership as defined in GASBS No. 94, *Public-Private and Public-Public Partnerships and Availability Payment Arrangements*; or,
- Licensing arrangements that provide a perpetual license to government entities to use a vendor's computer software.

Short-Term SBITAs

Short-term SBITAs are excluded from this new reporting requirement. A SBITA is considered short-term if, at commencement of the subscription term, it has a maximum possible term under the SBITA contract of 12 months (or less), including any options to extend, regardless of their probability of being exercised. However, a SBITA that had previously been determined to be short-term and has been modified to extend the initial maximum possible term under the lease contract should be reassessed from the inception of the lease. If the reassessed maximum possible term is greater than 12 months, the lease should no longer be considered a short-term lease.

Effective starting FY22-23 (July 1, 2022), F5CC has established a materiality dollar threshold of \$5,000.

Building Community Power for Equity: The Collaborative Advocacy and Power Partnership (CAPP) in Contra Costa

Kerby Lynch, Ph.D.

Angela Irvine-Baker, Ph.D.

Carolyn Reyes

Crystal Farmer

Overview of the Evaluation

In July 2021, a collaboration between the Ensuring Opportunity Campaign (EO) and First 5 Contra Costa's Family Economic Security Partnership (FESP) started an innovative two-year program called the Collaborative Advocacy and Power Partnership (CAPP).

This project aimed to bring a broad range of organizational and community leaders together to address inequalities in Contra Costa County.

The Role of Ceres Policy Research

- Ceres Policy Research was asked to conduct an **independent evaluation** to assess the approach used and the extent to which the intended outcomes were achieved.
- The report shares learnings on **resident-centered leadership, collaboration, ecosystem mapping, and inclusion and belonging.**
- The findings show that CAPP was a **unique, cross-sector, learning-in-action approach** that brought together diverse community leaders and organizations to advocate for policy changes that improve residents' lives.

Findings and Discussion

Survey Findings:

1. Areas where people showed the **most improvement** were:
 - a. Policy Advocacy and Systemic/Structural Oppression
2. Area where people reported the smallest improvement was:
 - a. **Base Building**
3. In Addition to Skill Building:
 - a. **72%** of respondents report that they are comfortable building and joining coalitions as a result of CAPP.
 - b. **72%** of respondents report they have a deeper belief that their voice matters in improving the conditions of their community through political action.

Findings and Discussion (con't.)

In open-ended questions, people noted additional positive outcomes. Participants reported that they:

- are more comfortable speaking to groups
- trust their ability to have difficult conversations about social change
- will be able to bring more people into their advocacy work
- have a common language about the advocacy process, particularly in the area of defining policy areas
- more firmly believe in the power of personal stories
- deepened relationships with other organizations in the group
- have a better understanding of the interconnectedness of work across the county
- appreciated the diversity of experiences and backgrounds of the participants
- feel that building relationships and collaboration was key to success.

“When I started coming to CAPP, it aligned with what I was looking for. It’s important to understand how we shift and change policy to get the extra resources needed to improve our community.”

“CAPP made me realize there must be a real effort to emphasize, bring out, or encourage cross-sector collaboration. Direct service, advocacy organizations, and residents working together would be great. Still, we need people in those roles who understand the marginalized community perspective and how you make stuff happen in these county systems.”

“The program stimulated and opened my eyes to many structural and systemic injustices that had existed for a long time. At least for me, I became even more exposed and more sensitized to the underlying systemic issues. And I learned a lot during CAPP, not just by understanding the problems but also by using the shared language that sparks social change.”

Recommendations

Improve resident power-building: There is still room for even more **improvement in resident power-building**. The program should focus on **empowering residents to take leadership roles** within CAPP and make decisions that impact their communities **with the support of direct service and advocacy organizations**.

Further Recommendations

- **Equity Focus:** Emphasize support for communities facing systemic inequities.
- **Activist Development:** Facilitate growth of activist base, complementing stakeholder involvement and advocacy playbook.
- **Generational Diversity:** Increase outreach to younger demographic segments.
- **Cultural & Linguistic Accessibility:** Provide multilingual materials and financial aid to foster inclusivity.
- **Local Leadership:** Integrate the Spectrum of Community Engagement framework; ensure resident representation in governance.
- **Impact Assessment:** Pair ongoing evaluations with Results-Based Accountability and performance metrics focusing on real-world impact.

Core Strategies for First 5 Contra Costa (2023-2026)

Capacity-Building

- *In-depth Training*: Equip the workforce with advanced skills and knowledge.
- *Cross-Sector Communication*: Foster holistic capacity building for effective collaboration.
- *Seed Funding*: Invest in initiatives that build sustainable and equitable systems.

Research

- *Impact Evaluation:* Utilize Results-Based Accountability methods.
- *Performance Metrics:* Adopt tools focused on real-world impact, beyond mere outputs.
- *Community-Centric Research:* Include ecological factors and employ community-based methods.

Advocacy & Community Engagement

- *Stakeholder Involvement*: Actively engage those impacted by policy changes.
- *Resident Advisory Bodies*: Create platforms for community input and advocacy.
- *Advocacy Playbook*: Develop a guide for effective advocacy strategies.
- *Policy Focus*: Champion specific changes and strategically allocate resources.
- *Resource Leverage*: Narrow policy scope to use resources most effectively.

Next Steps

1. Read the Report at <https://tinyurl.com/CAPP2023REPORT>
2. Send Feedback to klynch@cerespolicyresearch.com





Building Community Power for Equity: The Collaborative Advocacy and Power Partnership (CAPP) in Contra Costa

Kerby Lynch, Ph.D.

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Crystal Farmer

June 2023



ABOUT

ENSURING OPPORTUNITY



The Ensuring Opportunity Campaign to End Poverty in Contra Costa was established in 2014 to combat economic disparity in the region. It aims to address the root causes of poverty through policy change in areas such as Economic Security, Housing Security, Health Security, Food Security, Education, and Safety.

FIRST 5 CONTRA COSTA



First 5 Contra Costa's vision is that Contra Costa's young children are healthy, ready to learn, and supported in safe, nurturing families and communities. First 5 invests in programs and advocates for policies focused on children during their first five years, the most important time in a child's development.

FAMILY ECONOMIC SECURITY PARTNERSHIP (FESP)



The Family Economic Security Partnership (FESP) is a public, private and nonprofit collaboration dedicated to increasing the income and building the assets of low-income families and individuals living in Contra Costa County. While acknowledging the significance of direct service provision, FESP also increases awareness of the root causes of poverty and the importance of policy/advocacy to focus on the structural and systemic changes needed to end poverty. First 5 provides staff support to FESP.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Collaborative Advocacy + Power Partnership (CAPP) is grateful to the San Francisco Foundation, Dean & Margaret Lesher Foundation, Y & H Soda Foundation, The California Endowment, and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative for their partnership in pursuing a shared vision. Together, CAPP established a strong and interconnected network of community organizations and residents, working collaboratively to advocate for impactful systems and policies that enhance the well-being of residents and improve their quality of life.



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INTRODUCTION

In July 2021, a collaboration between the Ensuring Opportunity Campaign (EO) and First 5 Contra Costa's Family Economic Security Partnership (FESP) started an innovative two-year program called the Collaborative Advocacy + Power Partnership (CAPP). This project aimed to bring a broad range of organizational and community leaders together to address inequities in Contra Costa County.

CAPP was designed to build a stronger network of direct service organizations, residents, and advocates pushing for policies and system change to increase equity. The program's goals include increasing knowledge and understanding of advocacy activities, deepening the understanding of nonprofit advocacy, expanding the power of uniting residents, direct services, and advocacy organizations, analyzing and changing narratives, increasing knowledge of public budgets and processes, and completing action planning.

The program recognizes the need for direct service providers to engage in effective systems advocacy grounded in equity, rooted in community voice, and coordinated with advocacy organizations and resident leaders. This approach is aligned with best practices in community organizing, which emphasize the importance of building relationships, trust, and partnerships among diverse stakeholders to achieve meaningful and sustainable change.

CAPP intends to deepen the collective power of residents, organizations, and coalitions in Contra Costa County to advocate for changes to policies and systems that unfairly prevent residents from gaining fair access to education, employment, health care, and safety net services. The program aims to address significant gaps in the advocacy landscape, including fragmented systems and a need for more consistent, coordinated, and deeply-informed advocacy.



The program included recruitment and selection of cohort members, retreats, monthly full cohort meetings, smaller Learning Pod gatherings, and planning and executing policy campaigns related to equity. Program participants had conversations with one another, learned about organizational assessments, completed reading assignments, heard presentations from local advocates and outside experts, learned about power mapping, and received individual coaching and mentorship. The program created a cohort of resident leaders, direct service providers, and advocacy organizations that developed/supported policies and created system shifts that are more inclusive, equitable, and effective.

CAPP's facilitators convened the cohort monthly, supported the cohort's research and discovery phase, supported the formation of cohort members into committees or working groups, ensured residents' voices and leadership were strongly centered in the advocacy campaign, approached work through a strong and intentional racial justice lens, and brought in key issue and strategy experts to provide information on best practices and examples from the field.

The program recruited into the cohort a diverse group of eleven service providers that were motivated to learn and take action. Each service provider organization was asked to bring a team, including a manager, frontline staff, resident constituent, and one board member. The program also recruited nine advocacy organizations that were already engaged in advocacy and community organizing that wanted to share advice and strategies, deepen system shifts, find new allies, and leverage new resources.

The program invested particularly heavily in the twenty resident leaders – ten of whom were affiliated with a direct service provider organization and ten who participated as individuals. CAPP ensured that these community members gained a deeper understanding of external constituents' individual needs, systemic issues that impact constituents, and their ability to influence the public systems that impact historically excluded communities.

In addition, CAPP created an Advisory Committee composed of a majority of CAPP cohort residents, CAPP member direct service organizations and advocacy groups, and three external community advisors with knowledge of Contra Costa County's advocacy eco-system. This committee provided input to the CAPP facilitators throughout the project, serving as thought partners for all cohort-related activities, providing ideas and input on the program curriculum, and providing insights and feedback on each cohort session to support continuous learning and improvement.

Year One: Building Knowledge, Capacity, and Community

Throughout Year One of the CAPP program, the primary focus of the cohort was to host meetings to help develop skills and foster a robust and involved learning community. These meetings aimed to build knowledge, enhance capacity, and establish a strong sense of community among the participants. The learning cohort meetings of the program were well-received, with predominantly positive feedback. Every month, guest speakers joined the virtual meetings to lead discussions and share their expertise on various subjects. These topics included building community power, transitioning to resident-led campaigns, and implementing effective policy advocacy.

Year Two: Learning In Action

In Year Two, the program's cohort members chose two policy areas to concentrate on education equity and economic equity. Initially, the entire cohort intended to focus on a single area, but it was decided to split into two teams. After three months of research and discussions, each team identified a specific policy area they wanted to address. Throughout the year, the teams refined their objectives and developed action plans.

The economic equity team dedicated its efforts to increasing support for transitioning foster care youth. This involved advocating for establishing a Guaranteed Income (GI) program. They actively wrote letters of support for state legislation and the county Board of Supervisors. Additionally, they planned to advocate for utilizing county Measure X funding for a GI project.

Meanwhile, the education equity group divided into three smaller teams based on school districts: West, Mt. Diablo, and East. Their focus was on fostering authentic parent and community engagement. The West county team continued to explore options for parent engagement, furthering some of the advocacy work they had begun before CAPP. East county team members established a solid relationship with district staff in Brentwood, and the Mt. Diablo USD team was pleased that the district was exploring various strategies for parent engagement. All three realized that organizing parents and advocating for authentic parent engagement is a long-term effort.

Overall, the program's Year Two activities centered on empowering the cohort to take collective action, advocating for policy changes, and working towards achieving education and economic equity.

Ceres Policy Research was asked to conduct an independent evaluation to assess the approach used and the extent to which the intended outcomes were achieved. This report will share learnings on resident-centered leadership, collaboration, ecosystem mapping, and inclusion and belonging. The findings show that CAPP was a unique, cross-sector, learning-in-action approach that brought together diverse community leaders and organizations to advocate for policy changes that improve residents' lives. However, it must be noted that when CAPP was created, the cohort intended to meet in person. Unfortunately, because of COVID, the only in-person meeting was the final retreat in March 2023. This impacted the ability of cohort members to connect and interact.

METHODOLOGY

Multiple data sources and collection methods were used to assess CAPP. CAPP evaluators collected:

- Pre and post-participation surveys to understand individual progress through the program,
- Survey data from participants who attended the end-of-program retreat to gather additional insights about the program,
- One-on-one participant interviews and stakeholder interviews to gather additional feedback about the process,
- Administrative data and documents from CAPP facilitators to understand the implementation of CAPP and how the program shifted program activities to address barriers to participation.
- Field observations at monthly meetings to learn about resident power building and the various equity campaigns participants were involved in.

Finally, the evaluation team conducted focus groups based on sector, including resident leaders, direct service providers, and advocacy organizations with CAPP participants using a participatory action research (PAR) approach. This approach aimed to involve the participants in the research process, as they were considered to be best situated to research and create solutions around the issues experienced in implementing the program. Thirteen participants were involved in the focus groups, providing qualitative data regarding their subjective experience in collaborating cross-sector on equity campaigns and allowing for an assessment of the program components' consistency with the program's guiding principles.

FINDINGS

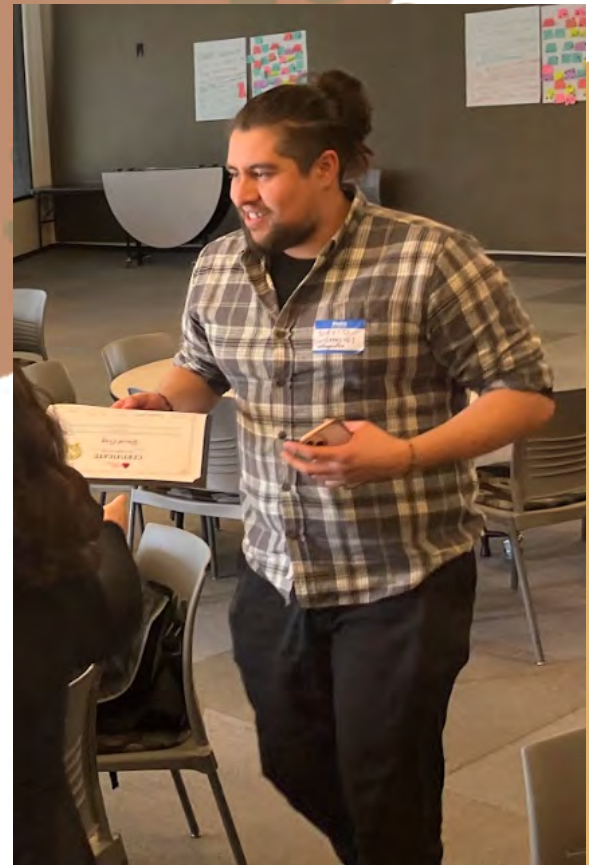
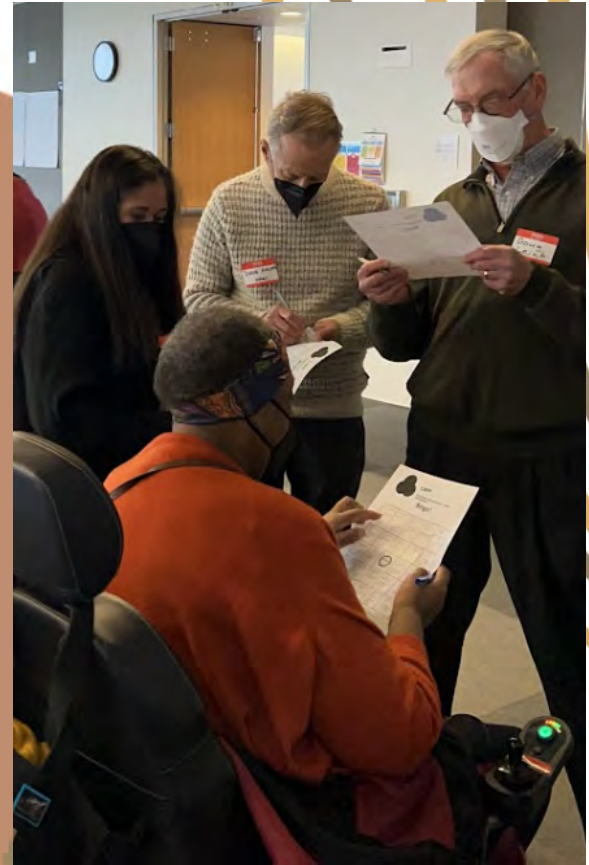
We share the research findings from each of the various sources and data collection activities below.


Survey Findings

Findings from the participation survey and retreat surveys were very strong. They show that participants had an improved understanding and expertise in most community organizing and policy advocacy areas. The survey included questions to track whether participants' skills improved in the following areas:

- power making,
- resident power building,
- political advocacy,
- lobbying,
- public policy,
- impact on individual lives,
- base building,
- community organizing,
- movement building, and
- knowledge about systemic oppression.

Respondents were asked if—as a result of program participation—they feel like they have an expert level of understanding, enough to teach the subject (the value assigned to this answer was “5”), a good level of understanding, enough to initiate a conversation (the value assigned to this answer was “4”), an adequate level of understanding, enough to engage in a conversation (the value assigned to this answer was “3”), a little understanding but not enough to engage in conversation (the value assigned to this answer was “2”) and, no understanding (the value assigned to this answer was “1”).





Overall, the program has been successful in enhancing participants' skills and knowledge in these areas of community organizing and policy advocacy. Respondents reported being a 3 or 4 in most of the areas.

The areas that people showed the most improvement on were:

POLICY ADVOCACY

The average for this area was a 3.9. Twelve people rated themselves a 4 or 5 in this area.

SYSTEMIC OR STRUCTURAL OPPRESSION

The average for this area was 3.8. Thirteen people rated themselves a 4 or 5 in this area.

The area where people reported the smallest improvement was:

BASE BUILDING

The average for this area was 3.1. Five people reported that they wouldn't be able to have a conversation about this topic.

In addition to skill building,

- 72% of respondents report that they are comfortable building and joining coalitions as a result of CAPP.
- 72% of respondents report that they have a deeper belief that their voice matters in improving the conditions of their community through political action.

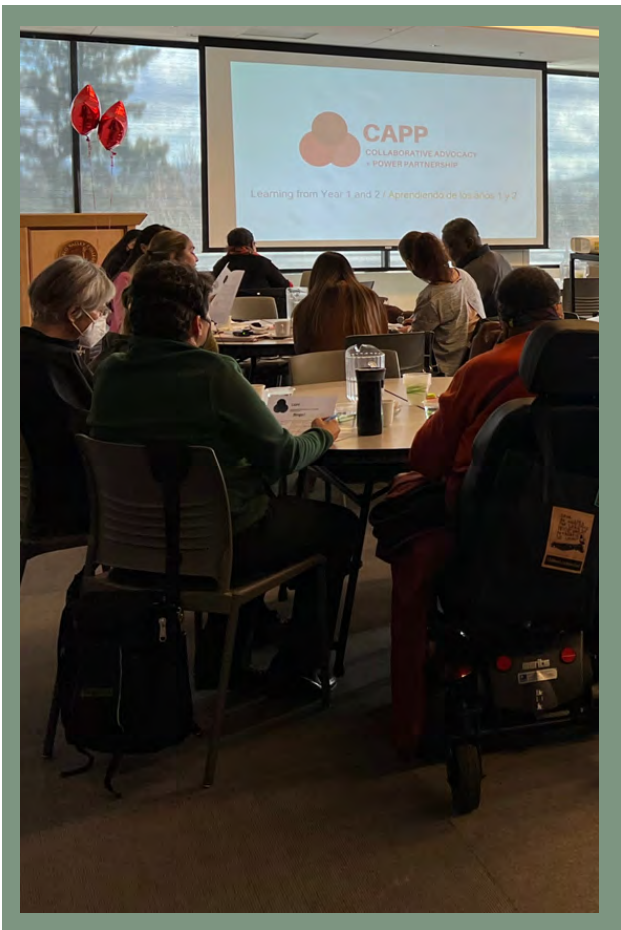


In open-ended questions, people noted additional positive outcomes. Participants reported that they:

- are more comfortable speaking to groups
- trust their ability to have difficult conversations about social change
- will be able to bring more people into their advocacy work
- have a common language about the advocacy process, particularly in the area of defining policy areas
- more firmly believe in the power of personal stories
- deepened relationships with other organizations in the group
- have a better understanding of the interconnectedness of work across the county
- appreciated the diversity of experiences and backgrounds of the participants
- feel that building relationships and collaboration was key to success.

Some of the more mixed findings were related to staying in touch with people in the cohort and the size and structure of the cohort.

- 44% of people plan on regularly keeping in touch with people they met in the program. Another 44% of people plan on infrequently keeping in touch.
- 61% of people thought the cohort was the right size (there were 65 participants in year one; 28 in year two). The remaining respondents were split between thinking that the cohort was too big or too small or needed better facilitation. Still, other participants suggested that adding people to the cohort with additional expertise, time, or proximity to power/resources could be helpful moving forward.
- While CAPP provided Spanish-language interpretation and translation for all meetings and materials, some respondents still identified language access as a potential barrier to participation.
- Some participants would have liked more trainings and smaller group settings.



Feedback on Learning Cohort Meetings

The program's learning cohort meetings mainly received positive feedback. Guest speakers facilitated the monthly virtual meetings to share topics on building community power and effective policy advocacy. The program's learning cohort meetings in year one focused on establishing a strong and engaged learning community. Overall, the learning cohorts aimed to foster relationships, acquire knowledge and skills, and develop action plans to advance equity campaigns on the ground.

Overall, participants appreciated the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals, work in small groups, and engage in interactive activities. The breakout sessions in each cohort meeting were well-received, allowing participants to learn from one another, and presentations on power, privilege, prejudice, and oppression were particularly noteworthy for some participants. Overall, the learning cohort model was well-organized, informative, and a good opportunity for community leaders to come together and learn from each other.



The things that participants appreciated the most were:

- meeting and interacting with like-minded people,
- learning from others,
- making connections,
- small group breakouts,
- the presentations on the racial equity analysis tool, and
- the learning pods, as they provided an opportunity for insightful discussions and brainstorming of action plans.

The things that could be improved are:

- more time for larger group discussions before breaking into smaller groups and
- more time for the breakout groups so participants could delve into the content more thoroughly.

Overall, the feedback suggests that the program's learning year one cohort model successfully allowed community leaders to learn from one another, take action together, and engage in insightful discussions around power, privilege, prejudice, and oppression.

Participant and Stakeholder Interviews

We conducted one-on-one interviews with thirteen participants and eight stakeholders and emerged with the following findings:

Residents were placed into the center of the work. Participants believe their time in CAPP has changed their home organization's approach to community engagement and put supporting residents at the forefront. CAPP facilitators emphasized the importance of residents defining and articulating their needs. Additionally, participants found that advocacy and direct service should coordinate to tackle systemic and structural problems supporting by resident leadership. For example, one participant from direct service discussed how they learned that they need to include residents in their work:

“I was excited to be a part of CAPP, just knowing that, as a community, we can change our county as a group. That's the main reason I stuck with it for two years, to get the whole concept of how everything works together and how we can work together with our residents.”

The importance of sharing tools and power with residents was heavily emphasized in participant interviews as a major learning. Participants also learned more about the barriers for families whose first language is not English and gained more awareness of institutional or structural factors that contribute to inequity in civic engagement.



There is power in having sectors work together. Respondents talked about the power that was generated by connecting different sectors with each other to build confidence and help them see that they have power and can use their voices collectively. This was particularly true in the areas of economic equity and educational access. In discussing their history with community organizing in Contra Costa, many participants highlighted the historical challenges of coming together, particularly in coordinating meetings, developing shared agendas, and getting people to commit to the work. For example, one participant stated,

“I had always understood that there has historically been a disconnect between direct services and advocacy work. I saw the value of creating opportunities for bringing people together, breaking the silos, and having them work together. Because you can't have change by just providing the right services, that's incremental work. It will go on forever and ever and ever, but I think it brings about systemic change. You need that policy. You need that advocacy arm as well. But, the two have to work together. And then you've got to get the actual residents and stakeholders involved in helping shape the program.”

After their participation in CAPP, many realize that community engagement is a practice that requires constant improvement, and that it is important to continue evaluating and refining campaigns for equity so that they are effective in achieving their goals.



Participants experienced personal and professional growth. Many participants noted that their involvement in the program has allowed them to grow both personally and professionally, and they have positive relationships within their community due to participation. For example, one participant stated,

“The CAPP program was very supportive. Much of the material we learned in the first year was new to me. I liked the speakers that they came in and spoke, and the PowerPoints had a lot of information. It took a while for the information to sink in because every presentation was different, and vocabulary was new to me with concepts like lobbying and power mapping. This was the first time I’ve heard of those ideas. So it was all new to me. So at first, it was baby steps for me. And I was considered pretty advanced. But even though I felt a little intimidated at the beginning, I met all diverse people and people who speak other languages, which helped me open up and share even if I made a mistake.”

Many participants shared key points about their experience with policy advocacy and community organizing in Contra Costa. They learned that it takes a significant amount of time and effort to do power-building work, and that relationships between residents and within groups need to be built and maintained, which is why spaces like CAPP are critical. Participants appreciated the opportunity to learn about other sectors and their role in advancing change.

Focus Groups Based on Sector

Ceres completed three focus groups. We summarize our findings below.

Direct Service Organizations: The Direct Service focus group provided valuable insights into the experiences and perceptions of its members regarding their involvement in advocacy work. Participants discussed their motivations for joining and their struggles and successes in achieving common goals. For example, one participant talked about how the program met their hopes of bringing extra resources to their community,

“When I started coming to CAPP, it aligned with what I was looking for. It’s important to understand how we shift and change policy to get the extra resources needed to improve our community.”

The group highlighted the importance of collaboration and acknowledged the challenges of navigating power dynamics and funding limitations. Many noted their participation in CAPP informed future efforts to promote resident leadership and community engagement in advocacy work in their organizations.

Resident Leaders: Resident Leaders shared their motivations for joining CAPP and discussed their experiences. They also discussed the importance of cross-collaboration and guidance, the challenges of working with others, and technical difficulties. Language barriers and the need for translation services were also highlighted. The conversation also touched on the challenges faced by families in accessing and navigating public resources. They urged more advocacy for expanding dedicated resources and support for underrepresented communities. For example, one participant stated,

“CAPP made me realize there must be a real effort to emphasize, bring out, or encourage cross-sector collaboration. Direct service, advocacy organizations, and residents working together would be great. Still, we need people in those roles who understand the marginalized community perspective and how you make stuff happen in these county systems.”

The participants emphasized the importance of community involvement and representation in decision-making processes and the need for community-led initiatives that are accessible and tailored to the needs of residents.

Advocacy Organizations: Advocacy organizations emphasized the importance of collaboration between advocacy groups, service providers, and impacted residents to bring about systemic change. The value of involving residents and stakeholders in shaping programs and bringing about change was also emphasized. One participant talked about how a common language was created.

“The program stimulated and opened my eyes to many structural and systemic injustices that had existed for a long time. At least for me, I became even more exposed and more sensitized to the underlying systemic issues. And I learned a lot during CAPP, not just by understanding the problems but also by using the shared language that sparks social change.”

Additionally, advocacy organizations recognized the need for direct services and advocacy arms to work together to achieve change. The conversation also highlighted the benefits and challenges of using Zoom for community building and advocacy, with participants noting the effectiveness of face-to-face communication and convenience, but also the importance of personal connection and the challenges of coordinating and setting up Zoom meetings. One participant reflected,

“One of the benefits of Zoom meetings is that if everybody's got their camera on, you're looking at everybody face to face all the time. And that is a benefit. Now in my organization, we will, at a minimum, require a hybrid approach. To involve more people while also building personal connections.”

LESSONS LEARNED

As the evaluators spoke to key stakeholders and participants through interviews and focus groups, people did identify a number of growing edges for the CAPP program. Some respondents noted that

- limited resources and staffing made it difficult to provide enough support for all groups to achieve their goals. With more staffing and funding, CAPP could support the work of different teams and ensure that all participants feel supported and empowered.
- there were challenges in coordinating meetings and getting people to commit to the work. Some participants had different agendas or priorities, and there was a lack of coordination between different teams. Other participants noticed a drop-off in attendance throughout the project, worrying that this decline was due to people feeling unheard.
- policy work has also been slow to see results, and some participants have felt micromanaged while others were left with no support. More structure and guidance might also help turn ideas into action, especially regarding aligning on an advocacy plan and coordinating with different teams.
- CAPP might consider coordinating with other county initiatives and having a longer-term strategy and staffing structure.
- the experiences working on Equity teams were mixed, with some describing it as a great team with kind people. In contrast, others struggled with logistics, issues selection, lack of support, and inconsistent attendance. Some members felt left behind or unheard, and there were challenges with time commitment and accountability. However, some also found it a good learning experience and an opportunity to network and advocate for their community.
- the program could have benefited from more group facilitation, project management support, and resident participation, while also addressing issues of racial bias and improving communication and training.

DISCUSSION

Many themes emerged during our data analysis of the CAPP program. Through our findings, we recognize the CAPP program as a cross-sector initiative to build a powerful base of committed activists to push for policies that increase racial and economic equity in Contra Costa.

The findings above show that the CAPP program in Contra Costa aims to increase equity for communities disproportionately impacted by systemic racism and economic inequality, particularly Black, Latinx, and immigrants. The program aims to build a broader and more powerful base of committed activists to push for policies and systems that increase racial and economic equity in Contra Costa. The program utilizes a unique, cross-sector approach that supports cohort members as they complete a joint advocacy initiative in a specific policy realm while assessing the effectiveness of this approach. The program provides financial, language, and cultural support to resident leaders participating in the cohort, and all program materials are provided in English and Spanish, with simultaneous Spanish interpretation provided in all cohort meetings. The program centers the voices and leadership of resident participants by applying the Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership framework in their project design, and half of the members of the Steering Committee are resident leaders.

Regarding the skills assessment in the survey, the results show that the CAPP program successfully improved participants' skills in power mapping, policy advocacy, lobbying, public policy impact, base building, community organizing, movement building, and systemic or structural oppression. These findings suggest that the CAPP program effectively increased participants' knowledge and skills in community organizing, but there is still room for improvement in some areas. Additionally, the findings suggest that the program successfully builds a broader and more powerful base of committed activists to push for policies and systems that increase racial and economic equity in Contra Costa. The program's focus on inclusion and belonging, resident-centered leadership, and learning-in-action approach was key to its success.

The program utilized a unique approach that supports cohort members in completing a joint advocacy initiative in a specific policy realm while assessing the effectiveness of this approach. Below are some ways to thematically categorize the program's impact:

RACIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY:

The program's goal is to increase equity for communities that have been disproportionately impacted by systemic racism and economic inequality in Contra Costa. Participants noted that the program has reinforced the importance of educating a broader base of residents and training them to be advocates. Additionally, the program has helped participants learn about structural inequalities and the county's responsibility in addressing these issues. Overall, the program has been successful in empowering community members to work together for a common cause, particularly in the areas of economic equity and education.

ADVOCACY AND COLLECTIVE IMPACT:

The program aims to build a broader and more powerful base of committed activists to push for policies and systems that increase racial and economic equity in Contra Costa. Participant interviews indicate that the program has helped participants develop their advocacy skills and provided them with opportunities to represent their respective communities. The importance of sharing tools and power with residents was heavily emphasized as a major learning, and the program has been successful in empowering residents to work together for a common cause.

LEARNING-IN-ACTION:

The program utilizes a unique, cross-sector approach that supports cohort members as they complete a joint advocacy initiative in a specific policy realm while assessing the effectiveness of this approach. The learning cohort meetings in year one received mostly positive feedback, with participants appreciating the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals, work in small groups, and engage in interactive activities. The breakout sessions were well-received, allowing participants to learn from one another. Participants also appreciated the learning pods, as they provided an opportunity for insightful discussions and brainstorming of action plans.

INCLUSION AND BELONGING:

The program provides financial, language, and cultural support to resident leaders participating in the cohort, and all program materials are provided in English and Spanish, with simultaneous Spanish interpretation provided in all cohort meetings. Most respondents expressed satisfaction with the cohort meetings, with meeting and interacting with like-minded people, learning from others, and making connections being the top three themes. Participants also appreciated the opportunity to get to know cohort members and the racial equity analysis tool presentation.



RESIDENT-CENTERED LEADERSHIP:

The diversity of experiences and backgrounds within the group was seen as a strength, and participants found that advocacy and direct service should coordinate together to tackle systemic and structural problems in support of resident leadership. Overall, the program empowered community members to work together for a common cause, particularly in the areas of economic equity and education. Participants found that the program provided an opportunity for personal growth and increased advocacy.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE GROWTH

While the initial CAPP cohort has ended, some cohort members have expressed interest in continuing in a “CAPP Community” with limited support from CAPP facilitators. With additional funding and support, future iterations of CAPP might be considered. The findings from this evaluation suggest several fruitful areas to explore.

Based on the evaluation findings, there are several recommendations for the future of the CAPP program/any CAPP-like program:

1. Continue to prioritize racial and economic equity: The program should continue to prioritize equity for communities disproportionately impacted by systemic racism and economic inequality, particularly Black, Latinx, and immigrants. This should remain at the core of the program’s mission and goals.
2. Emphasize advocacy and collective impact: The program should continue to build a broader and more powerful base of committed activists to push for policies and systems that increase racial and economic equity in Contra Costa. The program should continue providing opportunities for residents to develop their advocacy skills and represent their communities.
3. Improve resident power-building: While the program has effectively increased the knowledge and skills of participants in community organizing, there is still room for even more improvement in resident power-building. The program should focus on empowering residents to take leadership roles within the CAPP project and make decisions that impact their communities with the support of direct service and advocacy organizations.
4. Expand outreach to diverse age groups: The overall program had fewer younger participants and more participants in the older age ranges. The program should consider expanding outreach to diverse age groups to ensure all voices are represented.



5. Maintain a focus on inclusion and belonging: The program should continue to provide financial, language, and cultural support to resident leaders participating in the cohort, and all program materials should be provided in English and Spanish. The program should also prioritize creating a space where residents feel included and valued. Additionally, consider in-person gatherings to deepen cross-sector collaboration.

6. Continue to center resident voices and leadership: The program should continue to apply the Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership framework in their project design, and half of the members of the Steering Committee should be resident leaders. The program should continue prioritizing resident voices and leadership in all aspects of the program.

7. Evaluate program effectiveness: The program should continue to conduct comprehensive assessments to evaluate program effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. This will ensure that the program is meeting its goals and making a positive impact in the community.

By implementing these recommendations, the CAPP program can continue to positively impact racial and economic equity in Contra Costa and empower residents to take leadership roles in their communities.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Collaborative Advocacy and Power Partnership (CAPP) program in Contra Costa aims to increase equity for communities disproportionately impacted by systemic racism and economic inequality, particularly historically excluded communities countywide. The program successfully built a broader and more powerful base of committed activists to push for policies and systems that increase racial and economic equity in Contra Costa. The program's focus on inclusion and belonging, resident-centered leadership, and learning-in-action approach is key to its success. The program utilized a unique approach that supports cohort members in completing a joint advocacy initiative in a specific policy realm while assessing the effectiveness of this approach. The CAPP program effectively increased the knowledge and skills of participants in community organizing, although there is still room for improvement in some areas. The findings suggest that the program's unique approach and focus on equity, advocacy, collective impact, learning-in-action, inclusion, and resident-centered leadership are promising strategies for future advocacy efforts in Contra Costa.

APPENDIX A: CAPP ROSTER

Direct Service Organizations

Organization	Membership	Membership	Membership	Membership
Aspiranet	Vacant	Suman Dhanju	Hind Lalami*	
Care Parent Network	Hannah Michaelson*	Cherese LeBlanc	Shakira Reynolds	
Center for Human Development	Benisa Berry*	William Goodwin	Michelle Stewart*	
Court Appointed Special Advocates Program (CASA)	Ann Wrixon*	Sherina Criswell*		
Family Justice Center	Natalie Oleas	Rosa Dennis	Janell Coleman	Janet Kennedy
Food Bank of CoCo & Solano	Lizette Avalos	Keva Dean*		
Healing Circles of Hope (DBA) MASK Inc.	Charlene Harris	Olivia Mejia	Jannat Muhammad	Kathryn Wade
Hope Solutions	Vacant	Rosina Shipman	Irma Bodden	Kara Douglas
Mobility Labs	Loren Dalbert*	Estella Nunez*	Edith Aguilar	Greg Medley*
Opportunity Junction	Alissa Friedman*	Michelle Wade	Diana Aleman/ Sara Zoccoli	Linda Best*
Village Community Resource Center	Dhoryan Rizo*	Karina Martinez*	Alicia Naranjo*	(Gaby) Gabriela Castro*

* Participant graduated from the program in Year 2.

APPENDIX A: CAPP ROSTER

Advocacy Organizations

Organization	Membership	Membership
350 Contra Costa	Marti Roach*	Ogie Strogatz*
Collaborising	Lea Murray	
Contra Costa Central Labor Council	Traci Young	
East Bay Leadership Council	Kristin Connelly	
Global Village for Healthy Families	Lisa Finnie	Raquel Watkins-Jones
Healthy Richmond	Roxanne Carrillo Garza*	Dante Miguel
IBEW LU 302/Contra Costa Labor Council	Rachel Shoemake	
Lift Up Contra Costa	Taylor Sims	James Herard*
Multi-Faith ACTION Coalition	Doug Leich*	Doug Holmes*

* Participant graduated from the program in Year 2.

APPENDIX A: CAPP ROSTER

Resident Leadership

Erika Cruces*
Petronila Fernandes*
Betty Gabaldon*
Dr. Michelle Hernandez
Linda Nelson*
Manisha Rattu
Stephanie Sequeira*
Linda Waters*

Community Advisors/Steering Committee Members

Ali Uscilka, Healthy and Active Before 5 (HAB45)
DC Carole Dorham-Kelly, Rubicon Programs
Solomon Belette, East Contra Costa Community Alliance (ECCCA)

* Participant graduated from the program in Year 2.

A photograph of children sitting at a white table, engaged in a painting activity. Several small plastic containers of paint in various colors (green, blue, purple, yellow, red) are scattered on the table. The children's hands are visible, some with paint on them. The background is slightly blurred, showing more children and the setting. A semi-transparent blue overlay covers the entire image, with the title text centered on it.

Advocacy & Stakeholder Engagement Update

September 2023

Regional Group Transitions

- 3 staff resigned early July 2023
- Reached out to enrolled Regional Group members about transition
- Regional Group members interested in other efforts, so programming paused

Strategic Plan Goals - Advocacy

- 1) Thoughtfully engage those involved with and impacted by proposed policy or system changes to inform the approach and outcome and strive to ensure the process is mutually beneficial.
- 2) Create and identify avenues for parents/caregivers and service providers to understand their power and ability and opportunities to be advocates for policy and systems change in our 3 focus areas.
- 3) Champion policy changes and the allocation of public resources related to our 3 focus areas that will lead to the family and system outcomes in our Theory of Change.

Internal Work Group

- Representative of each team within agency
- Meet every other week
- By November, recommend avenues for parents and service providers to be advocates for policy and systems change in our 3 focus areas

Internal Work Group

Current activities:

- Reflect on own parent and provider advocacy efforts (Regional Groups, Community Advisory Councils at First 5 Centers, Early Learning Leadership Group, etc.)
- External landscape analysis of advocacy by parents and providers in our county in 3 focus areas

Internal Work Group

Next Steps:

- Recommendations to Commission for FY 2024-25
- Develop report on Regional Groups since their inception





Executive Director's Report

COMMISSION MEETING
SEPTEMBER 11, 2023





Internal Updates

- Staffing Updates
- Organizational Strategies: Operations & Processes Updates
- First 5 Contra Costa Website Refresh Launch!

County Updates

- Children with Disabilities
MX Project
- CYBH Round 1 Grant Award
- HV Regional Grant Award
- Workforce Survey Update
- First 5 Centers Updates
- Leshar Newsmaker
Speaker Series





State Updates

- MHSA SB 326 update
- New First 5 CA Commission Chair: Katie Albright



MALIA M. COHEN
California State Controller

July 25, 2023

Ruth Fernandez, Executive Director
First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission
1485 Civic Court, Suite 1200
Concord, CA 94520

Re: California Children and Families Commission (First 5) Audit Report Certification

Dear Ms. Fernandez:

The State Controller's Office has completed the desk review of your annual audit report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2022. Our review disclosed that the audit report met the minimum reporting standards contained in the fiscal year 2021-22 *Standards and Procedures for Audits of Local Entities Administering the California Children and Families Act* and prescribed in California Health and Safety Code section 130151(b).

If you have any questions, please contact Iryna Bush, Audit Manager, by telephone at (916) 327-5005, or by email at First5Audits@sco.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

JOEL JAMES, Chief
Financial Audits Bureau
Division of Audits

cc: Marcia Thomas, Director—Fiscal Services
First 5 California (via email)
Eide Bailly LLP (via email)



MALIA M. COHEN
California State Controller

August 1, 2023

Ruth Fernandez, Executive Director
First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission
1485 Civic Court, Suite 1200
Concord, CA 94520

Re: California Children and Families Commission (First 5) Audit Finding Follow-up Teleconference

Dear Ms. Fernandez:

The State Controller's Office (SCO), has completed its follow-up of audit findings in the fiscal year 2021-22 audit report. The SCO conducted a teleconference to discuss the results of our follow-up in accordance with California Health and Safety Code section 130151(e) with First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission on June 27, 2023, to ensure that corrective action was adopted, and any finding(s) were resolved.

Based on the results of our teleconference, the SCO determined that the commission has implemented corrective action relative to the finding identified in its audit report as required by California Health and Safety Code section 130151(d).

If you have any questions regarding the follow-up of audit findings, please contact a member of my First 5 staff by email at First5Audits@sco.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. James", is written over a light gray circular stamp.

JOEL JAMES, Chief
Financial Audits Bureau
Division of Audits

cc: Marcia Thomas, Director—Fiscal Services
First 5 California
Eide Bailly LLP



August 25, 2023

Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan
P.O. Box 942849-0016
Sacramento, CA 94249-0016

Re: Concerns with SB 326 (Eggman) - MHSA Modernization

Dear Assemblymember Bauer-Kahan:

First 5 Contra Costa has some concerns with the latest proposals to adjust the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) that we feel will not provide the safeguards needed to ensure upstream investments in the mental health and well-being of our county's youngest and currently underserved population: children prenatal to age 5 years old. While we appreciate the Administration and Legislature's August 16th amendments to Senate Bill 326 (Eggman) – *MHSA Modernization*, to restore the 50% prevention and early intervention set-aside for children prenatal through age 25, we urge you and other leaders to consider strengthening the bill further. Without a set-aside dedicating funds for children pre-natal to age 5 we are not maximizing the largest window of opportunity for prevention and early intervention services – the time during a child's first 5 years of life.

Currently the mental health needs of many children prenatal to age 5 and their parents go unmet in our county due to lack of resources. Despite our efforts and the collective efforts of our mental health, child care, and social service partners, our county's historical MHSA spending has not prioritized this subgroup of children. Unfortunately, in our county many of the families with young children who experience mental health needs are disconnected from systems of support, including access to health care.

MHSA funds are one of the potentially most significant sources of funding for prevention-focused services for children prenatal to age 5, and in the previous and current planning cycles for MHSA funds children prenatal to age 5 were identified as one of our county's historically underserved subgroups. Yet, in the current fiscal year, only 1.9% (or \$229,201) of our county's \$11.9 million in Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) MHSA funds are dedicated solely to this age group, meaning the services are specifically designed to meet the unique needs of early childhood. Of the county's MHSA funds for Prevention & Early Intervention about 51%, or \$6.1 million, could possibly serve children ages 0 to 5 through



broad population-based programs such as outreach and supports for LGBTQQ+ or those experiencing violence. However, even if families with children ages 0 to 5 are able to get to the front of the line to be served, it is unlikely that those funded programs and providers have expertise and/or approaches tailored to early childhood.

Yet, in the instances our youngest children have had access to mental health supports, we have witnessed the difference that early intervention and treatment can mean for a young child and their family. We have seen successful examples where early childhood mental health consultations, home visiting, developmental playgroups, parenting education and parent support groups have transformed the trajectory of children's and families' lives. Unfortunately, we have also witnessed far too many local families whose mental health needs were not met due to a scarcity of resources.

Our county, like many others, needs a safeguarded source of public funding to support upstream prevention-focused mental health services for young children, starting at birth through their first five critical years of development. Research shows that the brain development of infants and toddlers is more rapid and foundational than that of any other age group, and that babies' earliest relationships and experiences shape the architecture of their brain which has lifelong impacts on their well-being.

Based on our experience working with young children and families in Contra Costa County, **we recommend that the MHSA proposal go a step further to include a set-aside to support children ages 0 to 5 within the requirement that counties spend at least 50% on prevention and early intervention for youth ages 0-25.**

We appreciate your consideration of this issue, and we would be happy to discuss it further with you and your staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ruth Fernandez". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the bottom of the name.

Dr. Ruth Fernandez
Executive Director



August 25, 2023

Senator Bill Dodd
1021 O Street, Suite 7610
Sacramento, CA 95814-4900

Re: Concerns with SB 326 (Eggman) - MHSA Modernization

Dear Senator Dodd:

First 5 Contra Costa has some concerns with the latest proposals to adjust the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) that we feel will not provide the safeguards needed to ensure upstream investments in the mental health and well-being of our county's youngest and currently underserved population: children prenatal to age 5 years old. While we appreciate the Administration and Legislature's August 16th amendments to Senate Bill 326 (Eggman) – *MHSA Modernization*, to restore the 50% prevention and early intervention set-aside for children prenatal through age 25, we urge you and other leaders to consider strengthening the bill further. Without a set-aside dedicating funds for children pre-natal to age 5 we are not maximizing the largest window of opportunity for prevention and early intervention services – the time during a child's first 5 years of life.

Currently the mental health needs of many children prenatal to age 5 and their parents go unmet in our county due to lack of resources. Despite our efforts and the collective efforts of our mental health, child care, and social service partners, our county's historical MHSA spending has not prioritized this subgroup of children. Unfortunately, in our county many of the families with young children who experience mental health needs are disconnected from systems of support, including access to health care.

MHSA funds are one of the potentially most significant sources of funding for prevention-focused services for children prenatal to age 5, and in the previous and current planning cycles for MHSA funds children prenatal to age 5 were identified as one of our county's historically underserved subgroups. Yet, in the current fiscal year, only 1.9% (or \$229,201) of our county's \$11.9 million in Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) MHSA funds are dedicated solely to this age group, meaning the services are specifically designed to meet the unique needs of early childhood. Of the county's MHSA funds for Prevention & Early Intervention about 51%, or \$6.1 million, could possibly serve children ages 0 to 5 through



broad population-based programs such as outreach and supports for LGBTQQ+ or those experiencing violence. However, even if families with children ages 0 to 5 are able to get to the front of the line to be served, it is unlikely that those funded programs and providers have expertise and/or approaches tailored to early childhood.

Yet, in the instances our youngest children have had access to mental health supports, we have witnessed the difference that early intervention and treatment can mean for a young child and their family. We have seen successful examples where early childhood mental health consultations, home visiting, developmental playgroups, parenting education and parent support groups have transformed the trajectory of children's and families' lives. Unfortunately, we have also witnessed far too many local families whose mental health needs were not met due to a scarcity of resources.

Our county, like many others, needs a safeguarded source of public funding to support upstream prevention-focused mental health services for young children, starting at birth through their first five critical years of development. Research shows that the brain development of infants and toddlers is more rapid and foundational than that of any other age group, and that babies' earliest relationships and experiences shape the architecture of their brain which has lifelong impacts on their well-being.

Based on our experience working with young children and families in Contra Costa County, **we recommend that the MHSA proposal go a step further to include a set-aside to support children ages 0 to 5 within the requirement that counties spend at least 50% on prevention and early intervention for youth ages 0-25.**

We appreciate your consideration of this issue, and we would be happy to discuss it further with you and your staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ruth Fernandez", with a horizontal line underneath.

Dr. Ruth Fernandez
Executive Director



August 25, 2023

Senator Steven M. Glazer
1021 O Street, Suite 7520
Sacramento, CA 95814-4900

Re: Concerns with SB 326 (Eggman) - MHSA Modernization

Dear Senator Glazer:

First 5 Contra Costa has some concerns with the latest proposals to adjust the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) that we feel will not provide the safeguards needed to ensure upstream investments in the mental health and well-being of our county's youngest and currently underserved population: children prenatal to age 5 years old. While we appreciate the Administration and Legislature's August 16th amendments to Senate Bill 326 (Eggman) – *MHSA Modernization*, to restore the 50% prevention and early intervention set-aside for children prenatal through age 25, we urge you and other leaders to consider strengthening the bill further. Without a set-aside dedicating funds for children pre-natal to age 5 we are not maximizing the largest window of opportunity for prevention and early intervention services – the time during a child's first 5 years of life.

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Dr. Ruth Fernandez
Executive Director



August 25, 2023

Assembly Member Timothy Grayson
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0015

Re: Concerns with SB 326 (Eggman) - MHSA Modernization

Dear Assembly Member Grayson:

First 5 Contra Costa has some concerns with the latest proposals to adjust the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) that we feel will not provide the safeguards needed to ensure upstream investments in the mental health and well-being of our county's youngest and currently underserved population: children prenatal to age 5 years old. While we appreciate the Administration and Legislature's August 16th amendments to Senate Bill 326 (Eggman) – *MHSA Modernization*, to restore the 50% prevention and early intervention set-aside for children prenatal through age 25, we urge you and other leaders to consider strengthening the bill further. Without a set-aside dedicating funds for children pre-natal to age 5 we are not maximizing the largest window of opportunity for prevention and early intervention services – the time during a child's first 5 years of life.

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Dr. Ruth Fernandez
Executive Director



August 25, 2023

Senator Nancy Skinner
1021 O Street, Suite 8630
Sacramento, CA 95814-4900

Re: Concerns with SB 326 (Eggman) - MHSA Modernization

Dear Senator Skinner:

First 5 Contra Costa has some concerns with the latest proposals to adjust the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) that we feel will not provide the safeguards needed to ensure upstream investments in the mental health and well-being of our county's youngest and currently underserved population: children prenatal to age 5 years old. While we appreciate the Administration and Legislature's August 16th amendments to Senate Bill 326 (Eggman) – *MHSA Modernization*, to restore the 50% prevention and early intervention set-aside for children prenatal through age 25, we urge you and other leaders to consider strengthening the bill further. Without a set-aside dedicating funds for children pre-natal to age 5 we are not maximizing the largest window of opportunity for prevention and early intervention services – the time during a child's first 5 years of life.

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Dr. Ruth Fernandez
Executive Director



August 25, 2023

Assemblymember Buffy Wicks
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849-0014
Sacramento, CA 94249-0014

Re: Concerns with SB 326 (Eggman) - MHSA Modernization

Dear Assemblymember Wicks:

First 5 Contra Costa has some concerns with the latest proposals to adjust the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) that we feel will not provide the safeguards needed to ensure upstream investments in the mental health and well-being of our county's youngest and currently underserved population: children prenatal to age 5 years old. While we appreciate the Administration and Legislature's August 16th amendments to Senate Bill 326 (Eggman) – *MHSA Modernization*, to restore the 50% prevention and early intervention set-aside for children prenatal through age 25, we urge you and other leaders to consider strengthening the bill further. Without a set-aside dedicating funds for children pre-natal to age 5 we are not maximizing the largest window of opportunity for prevention and early intervention services – the time during a child's first 5 years of life.

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Dr. Ruth Fernandez
Executive Director



August 25, 2023

Assembly Member Lori Wilson
P.O. Box 942849-0011
Sacramento, CA 94249-0011

Re: Concerns with SB 326 (Eggman) - MHSA Modernization

Dear Assembly Member Wilson:

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