



Memo

To: Commissioners, First 5 Ventura County

From: Petra Puls, Program Manager

Date: June 20, 2013

Re: Recommendation to receive up to \$445,170 in First 5 California CARES Plus Funds

Background

In March 2013, the Commission approved submitting an application to First 5 California in response to the release of a Request for Application (RfA) for Comprehensive Approach to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) Plus matching funds, Round 2. CARES Plus is a statewide professional development program for early educators designed to improve the quality of early learning programs by focusing on increasing the quality, effectiveness, and retention of early educators. Its main objective is to improve both the quality of early learning programs and, ultimately, improve young children's learning and development outcomes.

The Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE) has been the Commission's implementation partner for the CARES Plus program since 2008. VCOE blends CARES Plus and AB212 funds to create one seamless program that provides training, support, and financial incentives to early childhood educators for continuing their education.

CARES Plus continues to provide incentives for increasing teacher education, in addition to maintaining recently added components, such as training on the CLASS Observation Tool and on the dangers of second-hand smoke. CARES Plus also offers an intensive CLASS coaching component and a Peer Mentor track for teachers who already earned Bachelor Degrees.

In December 2012, the First 5 Ventura County Commission approved an annual allocation of \$265,000 for CARES Plus for FY 2013-14 through FY 2015-16 in anticipation of the State matching fund leveraging opportunity. While developing the application in response to the State's RfA, staff identified \$152,282 in Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT ELC) funds to enhance and expand existing workforce efforts, such as CARES Advisor positions and community college capacity building. As a result, First 5 Ventura County is eligible for up to \$445,170 in matching funds over the course of the next three years, instead of the \$270,000 as previously anticipated.

Recommendation

The recommended action would grant authority to the Executive Director to enter into a contract with First 5 California to receive up to \$445,170 in funds over a three year period, from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2016, to support First 5 Ventura County efforts to increase the quality, effectiveness, and retention of early educators.