



Memo

To: Commissioners, First 5 Ventura County

From: Petra Puls, Program Manager (on behalf of the Early Learning Best Practices Committee)

Date: June 20, 2013

Re: Recommendation for funding of applications selected for Preschool Expansion

Background

In April 2013, the Commission released a Request for Application (RFA) for Preschool Expansion (Round 2) to identify implementation partner(s) for operating new, licensed center-based preschool spaces. As with Round 1, the Commission envisioned building on existing capacity with this new preschool funding, such as funding additional sessions within existing classrooms. The RFA described a set of criteria for the new preschool spaces related to serving 4-year old children, meeting minimum operating requirements, collaborating with NfLs, and a maximum reimbursement of \$21.22 per space per day.

The RFA stated that priority in selecting new spaces would be given to:

- Programs located in low performing school areas (API 1-5)
- Programs located in an area of low supply of preschool/child care (LPC 2010 Priorities Report)
- Long-term operating and sustainability plans

An informational applicant's conference was held on April 29, 2013 with 7 organizations in attendance. Eleven mandatory Letters of Intent were subsequently received, although one of the letters was submitted late and could not be accepted. Eight applications were received by the May 22, 2013 due date, requesting a total of \$694,000 for 184 new preschool spaces.

In line with the Commission's policy for reviewing proposals, the eight applications were read and scored by five independent readers without a conflict of interest, utilizing a scoring matrix that aligned with the application questions and evaluation criteria set forth in the RFA. Two of the eight applications met the minimum score of 80 points required to be considered for funding by a review committee.

On June 11, 2013, a review committee comprised of members of the Early Learning Best Practices committee and community members with expertise in early childhood met to discuss the applications and to develop funding recommendations. The review committee consisted of 6 individuals without a conflict of interest. In addition to the LPC/API priority criteria set forth in the RFA, the committee members considered the following factors in their decision making:

- Feasibility of implementation model
- Sustainability plans

- Proposed staff qualifications and other indicators of program quality
- Geographic location and availability of other publicly funded programs

The eligible requests totaled \$184,614 per year for 49 new preschool spaces. The available allocation is \$97,165 per year, for three years.

Review committee members acknowledged the difficulty of recommending only one of two very viable proposals for funding. They also recognized the need for organizational capacity building as demonstrated by the large number of proposals that didn't meet the minimum score of 80 points. Staff will offer to provide detailed feedback to those applicants not eligible or not recommended for funding.

Recommendation:

The recommended action would select Continuing Development Inc. (CDI) for funding to provide 25 new preschool spaces for FY 2013-14 through FY 2015-16 at the Juanamaria Elementary School campus in Ventura. The recommended action would also grant authority to the Executive Director to enter into annual agreements with CDI for July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2016 in the amount of \$95,490 per year. Contracts would be renewed on an annual basis subject to performance.