



Memo

To: Commissioners, First 5 Ventura County
From: Petra Puls, Executive Director
Date: March 19, 2020
Re: **Recommendation to Ratify the Decision to Maintain Current First 5 California IMPACT 2020 Contracting Model**

Background

The CA Department of Education (CDE) and First 5 California (F5CA) released a joint Request for Applications (RFA) for the Quality Counts California (QCC) grant, combining funds from F5CA IMPACT 2020, CDE State Preschool Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) and QCC Block Grants, and federal Preschool Development grant. This unified RFA requires local county consortiums to develop a single, unified application to implement a continuum of quality improvement supports for a wide variety of early learning providers, including alternative settings (such as Family Resource Centers or Home Visiting programs); Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) caregivers; publicly funded programs; and licensed private centers and family childcare (FCC) homes.

Each funding stream included in the QCC RFA has specific program and fiscal requirements with the intent to leverage these resources and support QCC as a whole. F5CA IMPACT 2020 is designed to address the needs of the whole child by funding quality improvement expansion and supporting providers serving high-need communities and populations not already receiving quality supports, including centers, FCCs, FFNs, and alternative settings.

F5VC has had a longstanding investment and commitment to high quality early education through its participation as the lead agency in the federally-funded Race to the Top QRIS grant, and F5CA's Preschool for All and IMPACT grants. F5VC has subcontracted with the Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE), the Commission's longtime QRIS implementation partner and recipient of CA QRIS Block Grants, to deploy these funds as part of the county's broader quality improvement efforts.

In October 2017, the Commission approved the recommendation to terminate the F5CA IMPACT contract, and to transfer the F5CA contract from F5VC to VCOE. This action allowed for increased efficiency in managing the various sources of funds supporting local QRIS work and streamlined implementation efforts. F5VC continued to guide QRIS implementation as an important partner and key decision maker on Ventura County's QRIS Consortium.

While the QCC RFA requires a single application, qualifying fiscal agencies vary depending on the funding source. The selected lead agency(ies) for each consortium must collaboratively lead the local QCC and ensure all required partners have a voice and a role in the QCC system and its work. First 5 county commissions have first right of refusal to serve as the fiscal agency for F5CA IMPACT 2020, thus making local public entities also eligible to serve as the lead.

Over the course of the three years of funding through this RFA, local consortia are expected to use QCC as the unifying umbrella to support more efficient and targeted use of federal, state, and local investments to improve quality. Upon examination of the RFA's goals, program expectations, and fiscal requirements, it was determined that there is no added value of F5VC to serve as the fiscal lead for the F5CA IMPACT 2020 portion of QCC. F5VC, the agency with right of first refusal for IMPACT 2020 grant funding will not be applying as the lead agency for IMPACT 2020.

Recommendation

The recommended action would continue the streamlined Quality Counts California contracting model and allow the Ventura County Office of Education, the county's QRIS key implementation partner to receive First 5 California IMPACT 2020 funding directly.