SUBJECT:
Authorize First 5 LA to Receive Funds from First 5 CA for COVID-19 Early Care and Education provider relief and IMPACT 2020 in support of Quality Counts California (QCC) and Quality Start Los Angeles (QSLA) Regional Efforts and Approve Resolution # 2020-04

RECOMMENDATION:
First 5 LA staff recommends that at the July 9, 2020 Commission meeting, the Board approve the following actions related to the First 5 CA IMPACT 2020 initiative:

1. Approve a Budget Resolution # 2020-04 for receipt of funds in the amount of $9,054,135 through June 30, 2023 to implement initiatives of Quality Counts California (QCC), including Improve and Maximize Programs So All Children Thrive 2020 (IMPACT 2020) and IMPACT incentive layer funds ($777,000) for COVID-19 relief for ECE providers.
2. Authorize the Executive Director to execute contracts with First 5 CA in the amount of $9,054,135 to receive funds through June 30, 2023.
3. Authorize Executive Director to accept additional funding from First 5 CA should additional funding for Quality Counts California (QCC) and/or Quality Start Los Angeles (QSLA) regional efforts continue.

BACKGROUND:
In September 2015, First 5 LA staff and VIVA Strategy + Communication presented to the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners Program and Planning Committee both on Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) and First 5 CA’s new funding initiative entitled Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive (IMPACT). First 5 LA staff briefed Commissioners on the purpose of QRIS and provided a national, state, and local overview of QRIS efforts. As First 5 CA’s IMPACT investment sunsets on June 30, 2020, the work will continue to evolve under First 5 CA’s IMPACT 2020 initiative, which seeks to build upon the work of the last five years, with an explicit focus on providing quality improvement services to underserved early care and education settings, such as Family Child Care Homes (FCCs/FCCHs); Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care (FFN); and center-based settings without state preschool funding. This evolution in the statewide work of quality improvement rightfully places less emphasis on a rating, and more on meeting provider needs and providing an array of quality improvement services across settings to meet the diverse needs of a mixed delivery ECE system. In First 5 CA’s Request for Applications (RFA) for IMPACT, it established a discretionary fund of $9M intended to “help support ambitious achievement and those associated costs.” Regions that exceeded programmatic targets established by the state would be eligible for a portion of these funds based upon total sites served and the number of regions exceeding targets. Quality Start Los Angeles (QSLA) has consistently exceeded its service targets through its blending and braiding of available quality improvement funds. Consequently, in May 2020, First 5 CA informed First 5 LA that it was eligible for $777,000 in IMPACT funds, with a contingency that they must be spent to meet needs related to COVID-19 by the final IMPACT expenditure submission on September 30, 2020. First 5 LA is proposing to contribute these funds toward the California Community Foundation’s (CCF) LA County COVID-19 Response Fund (Item 2G).
needs of providers, rather than spending valuable time on responding to a litany of funding opportunities and requirements.

The evolution of this funding merges the following funding streams:

- First 5 CA Improve and Maximize Funding so All Children Thrive (IMPACT & IMPACT 2020)
- California Department of Education (CDE) QCC Block Grant
- CDE California State Preschool Program (CSPP) Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Block Grant, and
- The federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (B-5) Renewal

This funding opportunity comes at a unique and exciting time in California’s Early Learning and Care (ELC) system. With new funding building on our last five years of partnerships and lessons learned under QSLA, and a comprehensive vision from the state, this collaborative funding opportunity represents the state’s next phase in building a more effective statewide quality improvement system utilizing QCC as the unifying framework. Under this funding opportunity, QSLA will continue to do the work of quality improvement in a variety of settings to help meet First 5 LA’s goal of increasing access to quality early learning experiences.

In July 2019, the California Children and Families Commission approved $103 million for IMPACT 2020, representing a renewed commitment to the innovative First 5 IMPACT approach to quality improvement and professional development systems for ELC providers. IMPACT 2020 is meant to work in cooperation with all other ELC quality improvement efforts and investments in California to support the implementation of the QCC Framework.

Region 8, Los Angeles County, is funded at $8,277,135 over a period of three years and requires a 1:1 match from First 5 CA, which may be fulfilled by programs aligning with QCC and may come from Proposition 10 county tax revenue, federal funding, state funding, local government, in-kind matches, and more. Funding from IMPACT 2020 will flow through Quality Counts California and First 5 LA via the Quality Counts California Local Consortia and Partnership Grants and will be contracted to conduct work that advances the plan that was submitted to the state on May 15, 2020. Remaining funds released under the same RFA will be administered by the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE). This RFA combines what was previous numerous grant opportunities (e.g., California State Preschool Program QRIS Block Grant and QCC Block Grant). This represents a continuity with the way state quality improvement dollars have been administered in recent years. Activities under IMPACT 2020 include, but are not limited to, the creation of a low intensity quality improvement model for non-traditional care settings, conducting a landscape analysis of LA County’s FFN providers to better understand how to develop programming to improve the quality of care provided by this population, and continuing with programmatic refinements to the QSLA model to reflect best practice and fiscal realities.

First 5 LA’s 2020-2028 Strategic Plan identifies high-quality early care and education as a desired result of First 5 LA’s funding initiatives. This is a natural extension of First 5 LA’s 2015-2020 Strategic Plan. In providing an array of quality improvement supports, ranging from very low-intensity to high-intensity, First 5 LA is working to develop the capacity of early learning settings, both licensed and unlicensed, to provide quality early learning experiences for young children by providing a combination of classroom materials, technical assistance, coaching, professional development opportunities, and more.

**NEXT STEPS:**

Upon Commission approval, authorize the Executive Director to execute contracts with First 5 CA in the amount of $9,054,135 through June 30, 2023, and Authorize Executive Director to accept additional funding if funding for the same purpose continues.