SUBJECT:
Establish a Strategic Partnership with UNITE-LA in the Amount of $100,000 to develop a “Talent Development Network” of influential cross sector business partners to be engaged and activated in support of early childhood development and key economic recovery priorities from the COVID-19 pandemic to advance First 5 LA’s four outcomes for children prenatal to five and their families for the period of 24 months.

RECOMMENDATION (PROVIDED AS INFORMATION):
This memo is provided as information for the Board’s consideration at the July 9, 2020 Board of Commissioner’s Meeting. First 5 LA staff recommends that at the September Commission meeting, the Board approve the establishment a Strategic Partnership UNITE-LA for an amount not to exceed $100,000 the period of 24 months. Funds for FY 2020-2021 are included within the proposed First 5 LA Programmatic Budget under Strategic Partnerships – Cross-Cutting Funder Partnerships: Sector Partnership Development, scheduled for approval at today’s Board of Commissioners meeting. Beyond FY 2020-21, funds will be pulled from the assigned fund balance which will be brought to the Board of Commissioners for approval in June of the corresponding fiscal year. At the time of budget approval, requested resources will shift from the Assigned resource category of the fund balance, dedicated for broad Strategic Plan purposes, to the Committed category, amounts dedicated for a more specified purpose.

BACKGROUND:
This is a request to establish a Strategic Partnership with UNITE-LA to engage the business sector for early childhood advocacy. First 5 LA’s business sector strategy centers on the successful engagement of business executives from L.A. County’s leading economic sectors and small business community to champion issues that impact our youngest children and their families. The business sector strategy’s key strategic partners, the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, the National Association of Women Business Owners, and ReadyNation California, serve as important partners to identify, recruit, educate, and activate business leaders to become early childhood champions to advance First 5 LA’s policy and systems change agenda.

First 5 LA’s tactic of activating “unexpected voices” from business leaders to advance our four outcomes for children prenatal to five and their families is a crucial strategy. With economic recovery efforts underway in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever for both public and private leaders in cross-sector industries to work with early childhood advocates to ensure that programs, funding, and systems are accessible, quality, aligned, and sustainable.

Business has the potential to be a powerful partner in local, state, and national solutions to improve outcomes for young children and their families. First 5 LA’s business sector engagement strategy is grounded in a multipronged approach that creates foundational relationships within the varying niches stakeholders occupy in the business community. In the past year, four key strategic partnerships have been developed to inform and provide full integration in the business community. First 5 LA’s partnership with ReadyNation California, for example, is focused on developing relationships between corporate level executives and elected officials, who have existing influence and are poised as champions for young children with a greater understanding of the economic impact of early childhood advocacy. Work with consultants Public Private Strategies elevates community voices and advocacy by partnering with small businesses, which provide over a million private sector jobs in Los Angeles County. Public Private Strategies further amplifies these voices with smaller chambers, like the Inglewood and El Monte Chambers of Commerce, and diversity chambers, such as the Greater Los Angeles African American Chamber of Commerce and Southern California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The Mayor’s Fund in Long Beach activates a cross section of business partners, both large and small, to develop a larger city-wide model that can be scaled out to other cities in LA County. This strategic partnership with UNITE-LA
rounds out this strategy by drawing upon their deep expertise across all of these areas, from corporate leaders to small business owners, local chambers to elected officials, to coordinate their collective advocacy voice to help ensure all children enter kindergarten ready to success in school and life.

This partnership with UNITE-LA will support this work by developing a collaborative, county-wide Talent Development Network of targeted leaders from business, trade, and professional associations to advocate for early childhood development policies and aligned systems that serve children and families. UNITE-LA will build upon twenty years of relationships and expertise to continue to engage the business community in important issues, including increasing access to quality early care and education, improving education attainment, building inclusive economies, and supporting diverse and equitable economies. Implementing a peer learning collaborative, the Talent Development Network envisions a region where business is a consistent, forward-thinking voice in helping co-design and implement solutions to the most pressing education and workforce issues Los Angeles County faces. Communities are strongest when educational systems and government work alongside nonprofit and business partners to support systems that ensure multi-generational social and economic mobility. The Talent Development Network will build sustained cross-sector partnerships, leverage partner expertise, and support community transformation, with business as a key catalyst.

Lastly, UNITE-LA will facilitate alignment of early childhood advocacy efforts within the business community by multiple partners, such as LAEDC, ReadyNation, LA Chamber, National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), Valley Industry and Commerce Association, Small Business Majority, and others. The more businesses and stakeholders engaged in aligned advocacy efforts, the greater the opportunity to ensure that programs, funding, and systems are accessible, quality, aligned, and sustainable to best serve young children and their families.

Scope of Work:

UNITE-LA will develop a “Talent Development Network” of influential cross-sector business partners to be engaged and activated in support of early childhood development and key economic recovery priorities from the COVID-19 pandemic to advance First 5 LA’s four outcomes for children prenatal to five and their families.

UNITE-LA will:

• Develop a collaborative, county-wide Talent Development Network of targeted leaders from business, trade, and professional associations to advocate for early childhood development policies and aligned systems that serve children and families, as informed by First 5 LA’s advocacy agenda.
• Facilitate alignment of early childhood advocacy efforts within the business community by multiple partners, such as LAEDC, ReadyNation, LA Chamber, National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), Valley Industry and Commerce Association, Small Business Majority, and others.
• Create an early childhood advocacy agenda for the Talent Development Network that is equity centered and aligns with First 5 LA’s advocacy agenda, addresses ECE Master Plan, and COVID-19 economic recovery plans to include early childhood issue.
• Activate business leaders to advocate for early childhood priorities locally and at the state level as they align with First 5 LA’s four priority outcomes and policy agenda for children and their families.

UNITE-LA will pursue the following tactics:

• Identify and cultivate LA County business organizations to serve on Talent Development Network.
• Recruit C-Suite business leaders form Fortune 500 companies, including professionals from government relations, community relations, and corporate social responsibility.
• Cultivate partners using an “earned influence” approach that aims to understand business partners’ individual needs and priorities, win their trust, and influence/engage them on key issues, such as ECE.
• Host introductory meetings between local business leaders recruited for Talent Development Network and LA County EC advocates.
• Convene leaders of LA County’s top business coalitions to discuss priorities in 0-5 early care and education.
• Identify key areas of advocacy alignment and coordinate tactics to engage business community.
• Partner with LA county representatives and state level advocates to align agendas and activity.
• Coordinate district meetings with elected officials and business leaders.
• Host panel discussion with an ECE Champion in the Senate or Assembly and an LA County Corporate Leader.
• Develop and prep business leaders to participate in key legislative deadlines to advance policy, programming, and systems change related to children prenatal to five and their families:
  - Bill deadline (September)
  - Proposed budget (January)
  - May Revise (April – May)
  - Final Budget (June)

Pursuant to the Procurement Policy, Strategic Partners of $75,000 or more in a fiscal year must be presented to the Board for approval. Staff is requesting an establishment of a Strategic Partnership for an amount not to exceed $100,000 to comply with this policy.

GOVERNANCE GUIDELINES #5 AND #6 (SUSTAINABILITY AND LEVERAGING):
Sustainability: First 5 LA’s support of a Strategic Partnership with UNITE-LA will create long-term partnerships within the Los Angeles County business community to recruit and activate early childhood advocates to deliver key strategies in support of First 5 LA’s four outcomes for young children and their families. Milestone activities that measure this partnership’s sustainability include business leader’s internal organization change (adoption and promotion of family-friendly workplace policies and implementation of company-specific campaigns) and external advocacy (letters of support and Op-Eds, hosting meetings with elected officials, attending advocacy trips, participating in panels and presentations).

Leveraging: This partnership leverages other First 5 LA funds in support of the Business Sector Engagement Strategy, including strategic partnerships with ReadyNation California and the Mayor’s Fund of Long Beach. UNITE-LA’s relationship with both public and private sectors, such as the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, First 5 CA, the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Unified School District, Los Angeles County Office of Education, and numerous philanthropic and business leaders further leverages this project with additional expertise, relationships, and resources.

JUSTIFICATION:

This Strategic Partnership meets the criteria below:

☐ The Strategic Partnership can provide specific resources needed by First 5 LA to implement an approved program or initiative in a manner or on a scale that makes the Strategic Partnership more cost effective than resources provided through a competitive solicitation; or

☐ The Strategic Partnership can implement an approved program or initiative more expeditiously than resources provided through a competitive solicitation; or

☒ The Strategic Partnership can provide a demonstrated level of ability or expertise that is only available in the community through the proposed Strategic Partnership; or

☐ The Strategic Partnership provides an opportunity to leverage First 5 LA funds to produce additional funding for the program or initiative or service.

AND

☒ The proposed Strategic Partnership is aligned with the adopted Strategic Plan.
UNITE-LA has a unique level of expertise based on their ability to leverage long-standing relationships within the varying subsets in the business community and public sector, locally, statewide, and nationally. For the past twenty years, UNITE-LA has been a powerful partner at the local, state, and national levels by providing early childhood advocacy and policy leadership for the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, the statewide Regional Economic Association of Leaders of California (R.E.A.L) Coalition, and the national Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE). Partnership details:

- **LA Area Chamber of Commerce:** In 2003, UNITE-LA formed a formal strategic partnership with the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce to become the education and workforce development arm for the Chamber and more deeply engage the local business community in education and workforce efforts. Over the past 16 years, UNITE LA has grown to 34 staff dedicated to improving cradle-to-career education and workforce outcomes locally, statewide, and nationally. Policy wins include: over 20 bills passed and signed; advisory roles to the Governor, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, California Community Colleges Board of Governors, the Speaker, and Senate Pro Tem; launched and matured a systems change initiative between 24 leaders in Los Angeles dedicated to reaching a set of shared and bold cradle-to-career education and workforce goals; became a model for a network of 1,400 chambers of commerce across the country on how chambers can engage business in education and workforce efforts in their communities.

- **R.E.A.L Coalition:** UNITE-LA staff advises the statewide R.E.A.L. Coalition (comprised of California’s 18 most influential business organizations, representing 15,000 businesses) on its education policy agenda. The R.E.A.L. Coalition’s Education and Workforce Development Committee has had annual wins in their cradle to career policy and budget framework, including $31.4 million in 2019-20 and $124.9 million ongoing non-Proposition 98 General Fund to increase access to the State Preschool Program for 10,000 eligible children, through non-local educational agency providers and Early Learning and Care Workforce Development Grant Program—$195 million for grants for child care and ECE workforce.

- **Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE):** In 2012, through a partnership between UNITE-LA, the L.A. Chamber, and the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE), a professional association for chamber executives from over 1,600 chambers of commerce across the country, ACCE launched the Education and Talent Development Division through which UNITE-LA staff provide technical assistance, develop resources, and lead programming and initiatives to help chambers of commerce successfully engage in education and workforce efforts in their communities.

This proposed project aligns with First 5 LA’s 2020-2028 Strategic Plan because it exemplifies our intentional efforts to strategically partner with community leaders and organizations to strengthen public systems that serve children prenatal to five. The Strategic Plan explicitly states the need for active engagement with community leaders and organizations to work in partnership with First 5 LA to achieve our core Four Results for Children and Families. Furthermore, our systems change work requires we work with local leaders at the state, county, and local level to change the conditions that affect child development and family well-being. Partnerships with the business community impact long-term systems change goals by creating both policy change and will building. Lastly, this project specifically addresses these two strategic priorities:

- **Strategic priority #1:** Strengthen Public and Community Systems
  Recruiting and activating unexpected champions, such as business leaders, deepens First 5 LA’s advocacy voice in ensuring that the systems that serve young children and their families are quality, accessibility, aligned, and sustainable.

- **Strategic Priority #2:** Advance and Build on Community Experiences
  Identifying existing and aspirational small business relationships and local chambers of commerce allows us to connect and maximize local resources and relationships within our 14 Best Start geographies that advance local solutions to early prevention, intervention and learning.

**NEXT STEPS:**
Staff anticipates returning to the Board for action to approve the Strategic Partnership at the September 10,2020 Board Meeting and present a contract for Board approval if the contract amount is over $75,000.