



***January 28, 2026 COMMISSION MEETING
AGENDA PACKET ATTACHMENTS***

Attachments:

ITEM 2: Consent Agenda

- a) December 3, 2025 Minutes
- b) FY 25-26 Q2 Financial Report
- c) Memo: BOS Commissioner Appointment – Dawn Ortiz-Legg

ITEM 3: Memo re: Early Childhood System Stabilization Grant Agreements
(Draft Grant Agreements Attached Separately)

ITEM 4: Memo re: Contracting and Procurement Amended Policy

ITEM 5: Memo re: First 5 Association 2026 Policy Priorities

ITEM 7: Memo re: Executive Director Evaluation Process

ITEM 8: Memo re: Election of 2026 Officers

**FIRST 5 SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION**

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
December 3, 2025 (DRAFT)

Current Commissioners Present

Leslie Mehigan (Vice Chair)

Community at Large

Michelle Auran, MD
Penny Borenstein, MD
Patty Clarkson, EdD
Joe Koski, EdD
Nancy Kuster
Erica Ruvalcaba-Heredia, EdD
Alison Ventura, PhD

Medical Representative (FAAP)
SLO County Public Health Department
Early Care & Ed Planning Council
SLO County Office of Education
SLO County Dept. of Social Services
Community at Large
Community at Large

Commissioners Absent/Excused

Dawn Ortiz-Legg (Vice Chair)

SLO County Board of Supervisors

Staff Present

First 5 Staff: Wendy Wendt, Jason Wells, Misty Livengood, Maggie Payne
First 5 Intern: Elizabeth Goebel
Commission Counsel: Craig Steele

Call to Order

Vice Chair Mehigan called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

ITEM 1 - Public Comment – Items not on the agenda

None

ITEM 2 (ACTION ITEM) - Consent Agenda

- a. Approve October 22, 2025 minutes
- b. Approve 2026 Commission Meeting Calendar

Public Comment: None

Commissioner Ventura made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda with modifications. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ruvalcaba and passed unanimously.

ITEM 3: First 5 Annual Evaluation Report

First 5 Executive Director previewed the agenda item by expressing gratitude for the work that the Evaluation Team has led over the last several years.

First 5 Evaluation Team Member Laura Keene presented on this item. She first reminded Commissioners of the new Theory of Change framework that was introduced at the October 2025 Commission meeting. She also pointed out several new visuals that first appear in this year's report (thermometer and awareness-will-action continuum).

The evaluation report this year offers a high-level assessment of the FY24-25 year. The fundamental question asked was "How have First 5 efforts contributed to advancing First 5 goals from the 2024-28 Strategic Plan.

Significant policy shifts at all levels of government impacted supports for young children and families (e.g. immigration enforcement, budget cuts). Local organizations, including First 5, mobilized creativity and innovation in the face of change. The First 5 Early Childhood System Stabilization Fund is such an example.

Evaluation team member Laura Keene summarized highlights of the report. She reminded that the Theory of Change serves as a lens for the evaluation findings.

Sample of Direct Funding Findings:

- HEALTH -- 90% of targeted encounters by funded partners were reached. Many partners experienced staffing challenges, but most have filled gaps and are rapidly rebuilding capacity.
- PARENT ENGAGEMENT programs reached 99% of targeted encounters.
- CHILD CARE investments have shifted away from funding slots to funding system capacity.

Sample of Network Building/Advocacy Findings:

- HEALTH – MediCal Engagement, Immigrant Support Coalition, Help Me Grow Network, Martha's Place Transition
- PARENT ENGAGEMENT – Communications/Outreach activities out of the First 5 shop.
- CHILD CARE – FFW, Uplift Child Care Coalition, ARPA

Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Borenstein asked why ARPA Child Care Investment is listed in the "Action" category along with the Evaluation report's continuum of progress (awareness-willingness-action).

Ms. Wendt explained that the initial action – County Board of Supervisors allocation of \$3 million in ARPA funds toward child care support – was approved several years ago, with significant participation and influence by First 5 and other partners' advocacy. At that time, the funds were appropriated directly to the SLO County Office of Education, which in turn has managed a process through the County Early Care and Education Council (ECEC) to distribute support to local child care businesses and professionals through non-competitive and competitive grant processes. Nearly 100% of the allocated funds have been spent.

Commissioner Borenstein asked how these slots that were created will continue after ARPA dollars run out. Staff offered to invite Raechelle Bowlay from the ECEC to present on the ARPA investment at a future Commission meeting.

Commissioner Koski asked if all initiatives were expected to go from Awareness to Will to Action. Evaluation team answer: Yes, but the pace depends on the project and initiative. Ms. Wendt added that sometimes First 5 efforts catalyze other work. The Immigrant Support Coalition is an example through which partner organizations were able to come together and identify additional areas of needed work. Ms. Keane noted that even as these initiatives continue to move along without the direct influence of First 5, its convening strengths and abilities allow for more work to be done by others.

Associate Director Jason Wells offered that these new visuals are very helpful and give us a great way to track progress and look at the work being done in different ways

Public Comment: None

Commissioner Borenstein made a motion to accept the Annual Evaluation Report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Clarkson and passed unanimously.

ITEM 4: Staff Reports

Misty Livengood, Communications and Outreach Officer, provided an update on the following activities:

- Early Childhood Systems Stabilization Fund Request for Applications (RFA) was released on October 30, 2025. As of this Commission meeting date, 3 applications have been received. Staff expect more to be submitted by the application deadline of December 5, 2025. Commissioner Mehigan inquired if the application opportunity is well known across the community. Answer: Yes – the funding opportunity was broadly advertised. Commissioner Borenstein asked for clarification on the total \$600,000 in stabilization funds that was approved by the Commission. Ms. Wendt reminded that the total was approved across a three-year time period: Year 1 -- \$300,000; Year 2 -- \$200,000; Year 3 -- \$100,000. This RFA was for a total of \$150,000, with grant range from \$5k-\$50k. An additional \$100,000 has already been distributed out via the Community Foundation SLO County Together for SLO Initiative. The remaining

\$50,000 is being held for additional strategic investment if needed this year. Unspent funds will be carried into the FY26-27 budget year.

- Uplift Child Care Coalition Session 1 convenings took place in November.
- First 5 was a sponsor at the Central Coast Breastfeeding Coalition Milk Drive. 2,700 ounces of milk were donated. The San Jose-based Milk Bank services the Sierra Vista NICU.
- Tolosa Children's Dental Center is accepting new patients at its Paso Robles location
- Parent Connection is offering a Positive Parenting series.
- First 5 Association is part of the newly launched Choose Children Campaign, designed to lift up children's issues as part of the 2026 Gubernatorial Campaign.
- The First 5 California Stronger Starts Road Show will be present at the Atascadero Winter Wonderland December 12.
- Commissioners were reminded to check out the First 5 Community Happenings webpage and social media channels for up-to-date information on upcoming family-friendly events around the county.

Maggie Payne, Special Projects Coordinator, reported on the following:

- Uplift Child Care Coalition attendance at November Session 1 convenings was at over 65 individuals representing all six Central Coast counties and multiple sectors. Session 2 will take place in late January.
- Help Me Grow Centralized Access Point has hired two new behavioral specialists and is now fully staffed. The Help Me Grow Network held an in-person meeting in November. Network "theme teams are working on 1) a network directory, 2) an updated directory of pediatric providers, including specialty care, and 3) advance planning for a Pediatric Town Hall scheduled for April 29, 2026. Commissioner Borenstein expressed interest in seeing the updated Pediatric provider lists. Commissioner Mehigan asked to be part of the Pediatric Town Hall planning group.

Ms. Wendt reported on the following:

- The December 9 Board of Supervisors Meeting includes an update on the Martha's Place Sustainability Plan.
- The First 5 Association is offering a series of zoom-based workshops targeted to Commissioners:
 - Inside First 5 Association of California (12/18/25, 12:00 pm -1:00 pm)
 - First 5 Commissioner Onboarding: Understanding the Network, Role, and Impact (1/22/26 10:00 am-11:30 am)
 - Regional Commissioner Roundtables (5/19/26 9:30 am -11:00 am)

Commissioner Koski commented that he attended a well-delivered Association workshop on the power of storytelling in advocacy work. He added that the workshop set a high bar for his future participation as a First 5 Commissioner.

Public Comment: None.

ITEM 5: Future Agenda Items

ARPA Child Care funding update, including a report on how the money was used in the child care sector, and plans for longer term sustainability.

Commissioner Ventura presentation on her research on technology use and early bonding.

ITEM 6 – Commissioner Announcements and Updates

Reminder of special location for the January 2026 meeting – at the SLO County Office of Education “MOT Training Center” at 3420 Watson Drive, San Luis Obispo – directly above the main SLOCOE building.

Commissioner Borenstein provided further details on the Martha’s Place Sustainability Plan. The Board Letter is posted, and will include a high-level presentation by County Behavioral Health Department Director Star Graber. Commissioner Borenstein feels optimistic about the FY26-27 year.

Commissioner Borenstein also provided an update on the reopening of the WIC office in Paso Robles. She added that the California Department of Public Health is holding a meeting with information on planned defunding of oral health programs.

Commissioner Mehigan asked how she and her colleagues can assist with getting more people to apply for the First 5 Stabilization grant. Mr. Wells urged Commissioners to encourage people in their networks to apply.

ITEM 7: Adjourn

4:25 p.m.

Light holiday reception ensued for Commissioners, staff and members of the public.

To: First 5 Commissioners

From: Wendy Wendt

Date: January 28, 2026

Re: ITEM 2b: 2025-26 Second Quarter Financial Report

Recommended Action

Staff recommends the Commission approve the Administrative Budget report and Operating Statement for fiscal year 2025-26 as of December 31, 2025.

Administrative Budget

As of December 2025, 49% of the administrative budget was spent.

Administrative budget comments:

1. Program Related Administrative Expenses – Administrative budget spending has been reduced by \$178,416 (a portion of office rent and staffing costs allocated to program activities). The cost is directly related to work performed for funded programs and can be considered program related expenses as defined by the GFOA guidelines.
2. Most other Administrative expenses are at or below 50% of total budget, with the following exceptions: a) 100% of insurance premiums (liability, crime, property) paid during Q1 and 2; b) Memberships – nearly 100% of dues paid during Q1-2 for Chamber memberships and First 5 Association membership; c) Auditor Department services, which are typically paid in full during the first or second quarter of each fiscal year.

Administrative Expense as Percent of Total Operating Expense

The Commission's adopted administrative cap is set at 15%. The administrative cap amount is defined as a percentage of Total Operating Expense. The policy also states that staff will monitor the administrative percentage to ensure it remains within approved limits. If the percentage exceeds the cap amount, staff is required to alert the Commission and explain the reason for a percentage in excess of 15%.

As of December 31, 2025, the Administrative Expense as a percentage of Total Operating Expense is 20% (\$188,055/\$937,505). Historically first and second quarter program expenditures have been low, so the higher percentage isn't unexpected. However, it is anticipated that during the second half of FY 2025-26, program and evaluation expenditures will increase, reducing the administrative percentage to within the adopted policy guidelines.

Operating Statement

As of December 31, 2025 net revenue is \$-476,536.

Operating Statement comments:

1. Prop 10 Tobacco Tax Revenue – Four tax revenue payments - July-Oct 2025 appropriations, were distributed before the end of the second quarter. Q1 CECET revenue totaling \$3,907 was also distributed.

Tax Revenue Distribution Schedule 2024-25

July 2025	August 2025	Sept 2025	October 2025	November 2025	December 2025	January 2026	February 2026	March 2026	April 2026	May 2026	June 2026
97,569	89,556	77,456	83,676								

Tax Revenue Distribution Schedule 2024-25

July 2024	August 2024	Sept 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025
89,669	96,256	74,797	89,142	82,170	74,858	71,804	64,724	19,118	84,723	69,805	76,503

2. Total revenue received from all sources through December 31, 2025 is \$460,969. This includes the above noted Prop 10 appropriations, CECET revenue, \$92,560 in local interest, and \$16,247 in UPLIFT payments.
3. Total Program and Administrative Expenditures through December 31, 2025 are \$937,505.
4. The external auditor – Moss Levy Hartzheim – ordered several adjusting journal entries to accrue revenue and expenditures to FY 2024-25 that were received/paid during Q1 FY25-26. Revenue accruals included May and June 2025 Proposition 10 tax appropriations, Q3 and Q4 of CECET payments from FY24-25, First 5 CA payments for IMPACT Legacy, and a payment from First 5 Santa Barbara for Home Visiting Coordination services provided during Q4 FY24-5. Expense accrual included one payment to the Ventura County Office of Education for Q4 FY24-25 Impact Legacy services.



	Jul25-Sep25	Oct25-Dec25	Jan26-Mar26	Apr26-Jun26	Total
Child Health and Development					
BABES (SLO Co PHD)		35,010			35,010
Oral Health Coordinator (SLO Co PHD)		12,891			12,891
Tolosa Children's Dental Clinic		12,282			12,282
Vision Screening		581			581
Health Access Trainers (Carsel Consulting Group)	6,339	6,245			12,584
HMG Centralized Access Point		59,578			59,578
TOTAL	6,339	126,587	-	-	132,926
Early Learning					
Curiosity to Career (SLOCOE)		6,225			6,225
Building Connections (CAPSLO)					-
IMPACT LEGACY (to be accrued to FY24-25)	694,693	(596,921)			97,772
TOTAL	694,693	(590,696)	-	-	103,997
Family Strengthening					
Parents Helping Parents	8,796	4,411			13,207
South County Youth Coalition	2,081	13,110			15,191
LINK Paso Robles Family Advocates	9,495	33,445			42,940
Pregnancy and Parenting Support of SLO County		25,492			25,492
Atascadero Chamber Family Friendly Workplace Accelerator		13,353			13,353
MICOP	23,302	30,705			54,007
TOTAL	43,674	120,516	-	-	164,190
Advocacy Projects					
Holly Goldberg - Uplift	9,788	18,450			28,238
Koble Collaborative - Uplift		11,250			11,250
Advocacy -- Uplift		1,370			1,370
Advocacy - Early Learning/WATC/TRS	2,046				2,046
Advocacy - Health (HMG, EI, CalAIM, etc.)	1,651	559			2,210
Advocacy - Family Resilience	2,008				2,008
TOTAL	15,493	31,629	-	-	47,122
Other					
Evaluation - Core Allocation	4,332	15,707			20,039
Kits for New Parents	480	480			960
Event Sponsorships	1,500	300			1,800
Emergency Response Funding					-
Together for SLO County (Community Foundation)		100,000			100,000
TOTAL	6,312	116,487	-	-	122,799
TOTAL PROGRAM AND EVALUATION EXPENSE	766,511		-	-	571,034
					Quarter ending: 12/31/2025



First 5 Children and Families Commission of San Luis Obispo County				
Administrative Budget				
FY 25-26				
December 31, 2025				
	Beginning	YTD	Ending	%
	Budget Bal	Expensed	Budget Bal	Expensed
Regular Hours - Permanent	558,820	285,416	273,404	51%
Computer Supplies	1,300	255	1,045	20%
Copy/Printing	2,000	-	2,000	0%
Food	2,000	185	1,815	9%
Insurance	6,000	6,082	(82)	101%
Copier Maint Contract	150	-	150	0%
Memberships	11,000	9,422	1,578	86%
Office Expense	2,000	457	1,543	23%
Other Services - Auditor Dept.	9,973	9,973	-	100%
Postage - Direct	150	6	144	4%
Professional Services	58,500	28,540	29,960	49%
Registration/Training	7,000	-	7,000	0%
Rent	40,212	20,106	20,106	50%
Significant Value Purchase	10,000	973	9,027	10%
Special Dept Expense	12,000	3,096	8,904	26%
Phone, Data, Internet Access	5,000	1,787	3,213	36%
Other Travel Expenses	4,000	173	3,827	4%
Contingency	23,000	-	23,000	0%
Total Administrative Expense	753,105	366,471	386,634	49%
Less: Program Related Admin	(393,632)	(178,416)	(215,216)	45%
Net Administrative Expense	359,473	188,055	171,418	52.3



First 5 Children and Families Commission of San Luis Obispo County

Operating Statement

FY 25-26

December 31, 2025

EXPENSES	Jul - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr-Jun	YTD
<u>Administration</u>	196,060	170,411			366,471
Less: Program Related Admin	(83,058)	(95,358)			(178,416)
Net Administrative Expense	113,002	75,053			188,055
<u>Program & Evaluation</u>					
Child Health and Development	6,339	126,587			132,926
Early Learning	694,693	(590,696)			103,997
Family Strengthening	43,674	120,516			164,190
Advocacy/Network Building - ECE/UPLIFT	11,834	31,070			42,904
Advocacy/Network Building - Health	1,651	559			2,210
Advocacy/Network Building - Family Resil	2,008	-			2,008
Event Sponsorships	1,500	300			1,800
Kits for New Parents	480	480			960
Evaluation (Core)	4,332	15,707			20,039
Emergency Response Funding					-
Together for SLO		100,000			100,000
Plus: Program Related Admin	83,058	95,358			178,416
Total Program & Evaluation Expense	849,569	(100,119)	-	-	749,450
Total Operating Expense	962,571	(25,066)	-	-	937,505
REVENUE (Trust Fund: 3300000000)					
Prop 10 Tobacco Tax (includes Prop 56 Backfill)	146,308	201,948			348,256
CECET (CA Electronic Cigarette Excise Tax)	5,003	(1,096)			3,907
IMPACT (Legacy)	696,400	(696,400)			-
UPLIFT	15,895	352			16,247
SMIF (Prop 10 interest)	9,316	(9,316)			-
Interest (Local)		92,560			92,560
MAA					-
Other Revenue	35,019	(35,019)			(0)
Total Revenue	907,941	(446,972)	-	-	460,969
Net Revenue (Expenses)	(54,630)	(421,906)	-	-	(476,536)



First 5 Children and Families Commission of San Luis Obispo County			
Balance Sheet (TRUST FUND 3300000000)			
December 31, 2025			
ASSETS			
Cash in County treasury			\$ 9,107,334
Rent Deposit & Prepaid Rent			\$ 7,277
Bank Deposit			\$ 10,000
Total Assets			\$ 9,124,611
LIABILITIES			
Accounts/Salaries payable			
Trust Deposits			\$ 758
Deferred Revenue			
Total Liabilities			\$ 758
FUND BALANCE			
Fund Balance:			\$ 9,600,390
Reserved for Encumbrances			\$ 1,984,348
Total Reserved			\$ 1,984,348
Fund Balance Available			\$ 7,139,505
Total Fund Balance			\$ 9,123,853
Total Liabilities and Fund Balance			\$ 9,124,611



To: First 5 Commission

From: Wendy Wendt

Date: January 28, 2026

Re: Agenda Item 2c: Confirm Commissioner Appointment – Dawn Ortiz-Legg

Recommended Action

Staff is recommending the Commission confirm appointment by the SLO County Board of Supervisors for the following Commission seat: Dawn Ortiz-Legg, BOS Designated Representative.

Background

At its December 16, 2025 meeting (Agenda Item 12), the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors approved committee assignments for the 2026 calendar year. These include assignment of a Supervisor to the First 5 Commission. Dawn Ortiz-Legg has been assigned to continue in this role for 2026 (see attached Board Transmittal).



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL**

(1) DEPARTMENT Executive Office	(2) MEETING DATE 12/16/2025	(3) CONTACT/PHONE Matthew Pontes, Chief Executive Officer 805-781-5011	
(4) SUBJECT Request to approve the appointments of Board members to various committees and commissions for the calendar year 2026.			
(5) RECOMMENDED ACTION It is recommended that the Board approve appointments of the individual Board members to various committees and commissions for the calendar year 2026.			
(6) FUNDING SOURCE(S) N/A	(7) CURRENT YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT N/A	(8) ANNUAL FINANCIAL IMPACT N/A	(9) BUDGETED? N/A
(10) AGENDA PLACEMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing (Time Est. _____) <input type="checkbox"/> Board Business (Time Est. _____)			
(11) EXECUTED DOCUMENTS <input type="checkbox"/> Resolutions <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinances <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A			
(12) OUTLINE AGREEMENT REQUISITION NUMBER (OAR) N/A		(13) BUDGET ADJUSTMENT REQUIRED? BAR ID Number: N/A <input type="checkbox"/> 4/5th's Vote Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	
(14) LOCATION MAP N/A	(15) BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT? No	(16) AGENDA ITEM HISTORY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A Date _____	
(17) EXECUTIVE OFFICE REVIEW Zachary A. Lute			



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Executive Office / Matthew Pontes, Chief Executive Officer 805-781-5011

DATE: 12/16/2025

SUBJECT: Request to approve the appointments of Board members to various committees and commissions for the calendar year 2026.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board approve appointments of the individual Board members to various committees and commissions for the calendar year 2026.

DISCUSSION

Historically, individual Board members have served on a variety of commissions and committees. Based on input from the Board members individually, assignments are recommended to remain the same with one new appointment to the Countywide Oversight Board that was left vacant in 2025. The following assignments are recommended based on individual feedback with no conflicts.

Title	2025 Appointments	2026 Appointments
Atascadero Basin GSA Exec Committee	MORENO ALTERNATE - PESCHONG	MORENO ALTERNATE - PESCHONG
Behavioral Health Board	PAULDING	PAULDING
Cal ID System Advisory Board	PESCHONG	PESCHONG
Cal Poly Campus Planning Committee	MORENO	MORENO
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)	GIBSON ALTERNATE - PAULDING	GIBSON ALTERNATE - PAULDING
Carrizo Plain National Monument Advisory Committee (MAC)	MORENO	MORENO
CENCAL SB/SLO Regional Health Authority	ORTIZ-LEGG	ORTIZ-LEGG
Central Coast Community Energy Board (3CE)	ORTIZ-LEGG ALTERNATE - PAULDING	ORTIZ-LEGG ALTERNATE - PAULDING
Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo (CAPSLO)	PESCHONG	PESCHONG
Countywide Oversight Board (CWOB)	NO APPT	PAULDING
Cuyama Basin JPA Board of Directors (CBGSA)	PAULDING ALTERNATE - B REELY	PAULDING ALTERNATE - B REELY

Fire Safe Council	MORENO	MORENO
First 5 Children & Families Commission (First5 SLO)	ORTIZ-LEGG	ORTIZ-LEGG
Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA)	PESCHONG ALTERNATE - MORENO	PESCHONG ALTERNATE - MORENO
Golden State Finance Authority (GSFA)	PESCHONG ALTERNATE - MORENO	PESCHONG ALTERNATE - MORENO
Homeless Services Oversight Council (HSOC)	PAULDING	PAULDING
Integrated Waste Management Authority (IWMA)	MORENO ALTERNATE - PAULDING	MORENO ALTERNATE - PAULDING
Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)	MORENO ORTIZ-LEGG ALTERNATE - GIBSON	MORENO ORTIZ-LEGG ALTERNATE - GIBSON
Los Osos Basin Management Committee (LOBMC)	GIBSON ALTERNATE - ORTIZ-LEGG	GIBSON ALTERNATE - ORTIZ-LEGG
Latino Outreach Council (LOC)	MORENO	MORENO
Morro Bay Estuary Program Executive Committee	GIBSON	GIBSON
Nacimiento Water Project Commission	PESCHONG	PESCHONG
REACH	ORTIZ-LEGG ALTERNATE - PAULDING	ORTIZ-LEGG ALTERNATE - PAULDING
Rural Counties Representatives of California (RCRC)	PESCHONG ALTERNATE - MORENO	PESCHONG ALTERNATE - MORENO
SLO Basin Groundwater Sustainability Commission	ORTIZ-LEGG ALTERNATE - PAULDING	ORTIZ-LEGG ALTERNATE - PAULDING
Student-Community Liaison Committee (Cal Poly SCLC)	MORENO	MORENO
Visit SLO Advisory Committee (SLOCAL)	ORTIZ-LEGG	ORTIZ-LEGG

To: First 5 Commission of San Luis Obispo County

From: First 5 Staff

Date: January 28, 2026

Re: Item 3: Early Childhood Systems Stabilization Fund: Approve Nine (9) Grant Agreements Totaling \$150,000

Recommended Action

Staff requests Commission approve Nine (9) Early Childhood Systems Stabilization Fund Grant Agreements totaling \$150,000.

Background

At the May 28, 2025 meeting, First 5 SLO County staff presented to the Commission on funding and policy shifts at the federal, state and local levels that are likely to significantly alter, reduce or eliminate existing systems of support for young children and their families.

At the June 25, 2025 meeting, the Commission approved the establishment of a new program funding allocation named the First 5 Early Childhood Stabilization Fund. The life of the fund will extend over a maximum of three fiscal years (FY25-26, FY26-27, FY27-28) with declining annual amounts each year from \$300,000 to \$200,000 to \$100,000.

At the September 24, 2025 meeting the Commission approved the first two parts of the Year One funding deployment:

1. A Collaborative Funding Process: First 5 Contribute \$100,000 to the Community Foundation of San Luis Obispo County's Together for SLO County: A Critical Response Fund.
2. A Request for Applications (RFA): Fall 2025, First 5 will release a countywide RFP for up to \$150,000 to invest in critical services - for children prenatal to age 5 and their families - that have been reduced or eliminated due to recent budget cuts or reductions. This process will invite applying entities to explain their funding and/or service reductions, as well as increased needs resulting from policy shifts impacting family service organizations. Eligible organizations will include nonprofit organizations, schools and other public agencies whose services align with the First 5's Strategic Plan.

The First 5 SLO County Stabilization Fund: Request for Applications was released widely through First 5 and its partner networks on October 30, 2025. By the December 5th deadline, a total of 12 applications had been received, requesting a total of \$311,700. All applications were read, scored and discussed by an ad hoc review committee consisting of Commissioner Patty Clarkson, Lady Freire Project Manager with Uplift Central Coast Coalition, and First 5 Staff Wendy Wendt and Jason Wells. Intent-to-award notifications were sent to applicants on December 19th.

Recommended for Action

Staff recommend the Commission approve the Nine (9) Grant Agreements listed below totaling \$150,000. Because of the small to modest funding amounts, the one-time nature of the awards, and the Agreement duration (5 months), First 5 Staff and Counsel used a Grant Award Letter template to execute these agreements. Following Commission action, Grantees will sign their award letters and return them to First 5. Grantees will be paid the full award within 10 business days. Grantees will submit a simple end of year report on the impact of the grant by July 30, 2026.

Agency Name	Agreement Amount	Funds Support
Womenade SLO	\$5,000	Emergency assistance to families with young children facing housing, food, utility, and transportation crises; requests funds primarily for direct family assistance for ~10 families with children 0-5.
South County Youth Coalition (SCYC)	\$5,000	Emergency assistance to families with young children facing housing, food, utility, and transportation crises; requests funds primarily for direct family assistance (for ~25 families) plus modest administrative/bookkeeping costs.
Center for Family Strengthening – Parent Connection	\$25,000	Parent Connection key staff (program director and bilingual/bicultural parent educators), outreach/marketing, technology, basic-needs stipends, and limited indirect costs.
Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County (SLO Food Bank)	\$30,000	Staff and food purchases tied to children’s programs (such as backpacks and produce distributions) so families with young children continue to receive healthy food.
Cuesta College Children’s Center	\$10,000	Child care class expansion through purchase of essential classroom furniture and equipment (tables, chairs, shelves, rug, dramatic play kitchen, etc.)
CASA of San Luis Obispo County (Court Appointed Special Advocates)	\$10,000	A portion of the CASA Volunteer Training Manager’s salary/benefits to sustain recruitment, training, and supervision of CASA volunteers serving children 0-5 in foster care.
San Luis Obispo Child Development Resource Center	\$20,000	Trauma-informed therapy and in-class behavioral support for children ages 2-5; funds help restore therapist and rehabilitation specialist hours (individual, family, group, and in-class support).
Pregnancy and Parenting Support of San Luis Obispo County (PPS)	\$20,000	Staff time for bilingual/bicultural family doulas/car-seat technicians, Baby Bank supplies (diapers, formula, safe-sleep items, car seats, etc.), and core overhead to keep the Baby Bank and warmline operating.
Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County, Inc. (CAPSLO)	\$25,000	Restoration of SAFE Lead Case Manager time to serve children 0-5 and their families countywide.
Total	\$150,000	

To: First 5 Commissioners

From: Staff (in consultation with Legal Counsel Craig Steele)

Date: January 28, 2026

Re: Item 4: Commission Procurement Policy Update

Recommended Action:

Staff recommends the Commission approve a 2026 update to Commission Contracting and Procurement Policy

Background:

County First 5 agencies are required to comply with Health and Safety Code §130140(d)(4)(B), requiring the Commission to adopt contracting and procurement policies that are consistent with specified State laws, and to comply with Health and Safety Code §130151(b)(1) requiring contracting and procurement policies contain provisions to ensure that the Commission's grants and contracts are consistent with the Commission's strategic plan.

The First 5 San Luis Obispo County Commission's current Contracting and Procurement Policy was last reviewed and amended on January 22, 2014. Legal Counsel Craig Steele has reviewed and provided recommended changes to the existing Policy, as attached (clean and redline copies).

These recommended changes are summarized as follows:

- **Threshold Restructuring:**
 - Under \$5,000 tier: Increased from "Less than \$4,999" to "\$9,999 or less" (doubled the threshold). Approval by Executive Director is unchanged.
 - \$5,000-\$9,999 tier: This tier was eliminated - previously required informal bids and written report
 - \$10,000-\$24,999 tier:
 - OLD: Required Executive Director AND Commission Chair approval with formal bids
 - NEW: Only Executive Director approval needed with informal (not formal) bids
 - Reporting changed from documentation "at next meeting" to "Written report with supporting documentation to the Commission at next meeting"
 - \$25,000+ tier: No changes (still requires Commission approval with formal bids)
- **New Exempt Categories:**
 - Typical office supplies (except equipment)
 - Qualification-based grants where price isn't the primary factor
 - Honoraria/stipends up to \$1,000
 - "Services" added to public agency procurement exemption
 - "Other specialized professional services" added beyond just auditing
- **Other updates** were made to documentation, contract requirements and policy exemptions during declared local, state or national emergencies.



AMENDED CONTRACTING AND PROCUREMENT POLICY
Presented for Review/Approval January 28, 2026

CLEAN DRAFT

SUBJECT: Contracting and Procurement Policy

PURPOSE: To comply with Health and Safety Code §130140(d)(4)(B), requiring the Commission to adopt, in a public hearing, contracting and procurement policies that are consistent with specified State laws, and to comply with Health and Safety Code §130151(b)(1) requiring contracting and procurement policies contain provisions to ensure that the Commission's grants and contracts are consistent with the Commission's strategic plan.

Part I. STATEMENT OF POLICY

In order to insure that First 5 funds are used in the most effective and efficient manner possible the Commission and staff will comply with applicable State and Federal laws and this policy in all matters regarding Commission contracting and procurement. All grants and contracts shall be consistent with the Commission's current strategic plan.

With respect to funding and procurement decisions, the Commission and staff will comply with all applicable California laws regarding constitutional rights of persons and nondiscrimination.

Staff will regularly review new laws for changes applicable to Commission activities and, if necessary, recommend to the Commission any necessary revisions to Commission policies and procedures.

Except as specifically provided in Parts III and IV of this Policy, the Commission's preferred method of procurement of goods and services is through a competitive process. No goods or services will be procured that are not provided for in the annual budget as approved or amended by the Commission.

Part II. COMPETITION

Subject to the thresholds in Part II A, below, the Commission may generate contracts or awards based on requests for proposal, quotations or other forms as determined by the Executive Director consistent with this Policy. Where a procurement requires an evaluation of the proposers' qualifications in addition to proposed prices, contracts or awards may be approved based on a competitive process utilizing outside evaluators for scoring purposes, as determined necessary by the Executive Director or the Commission, direct contracting for specific services, or other methods determined by the Commission consistent with this Policy.

THRESHOLDS AND REPORTING

A. The dollar thresholds in the table below determine the type of procurement process and the awarding person or entity. Dollar thresholds shall be determined based on the aggregate amount the Commission anticipates paying to the proposed contractor for the same or similar goods and services in a fiscal year. Contracts and purchases shall not be broken into smaller amounts to avoid the processes required by this Section.

Cost of Purchase	Approval	Type of Bid	No. of Bids/Quotes	Reporting
\$9,999 or less	Executive Director	ED	n/a	Not required
\$10,000 to \$24,999	Executive Director	Informal	3 oral or written	Written report with supporting documentation to the Commission at next meeting
\$25,000 or greater	Commission	Formal	3 written	Written report to Commission with supporting documentation prior to approval by Commission

B. All grants of Commission funds to program service providers shall be subject to a written grant agreement approved by either the Commission or the Executive Director, based on the dollar thresholds specified in Section III A, regardless of the process by which the grantee is selected.

C. For purchases not requiring a quotation, staff shall retain a sales receipt or purchase order/contract with detail regarding the item purchased, quantity, unit price (if applicable) and total price as sufficient documentation of the quote or price.

D. For informal bids the documentation may include product or service catalogues, current price lists, or verbal contact with vendors to obtain quotes. Quotes must be memorialized in writing by the vendor, with detail regarding the item purchased, quantity, unit price (if applicable) and total price, and signed by a staff person. Fax or email from the vendor, as may be permitted by the request for bid, shall constitute sufficient written documentation.

E. For formal bids the request for quotation or proposal must be provided in writing to the vendor(s). Fax or email from the vendor, as may be permitted by the request for bid, shall constitute sufficient written documentation.

F. Staff shall make *bona fide* efforts to solicit and receive at least the number of bids or quotes required above. Where fewer bids or quotes are received, the Executive Director may verify those efforts were sufficient prior to award of contract.

PART III. CATEGORIES EXEMPT FROM COMPETITION

A. The competition requirements of Part II do not apply when the proposed purchase falls within one of the below listed categories, except all single purchases or aggregate purchases exceeding \$25,000 per fiscal year must receive approval of the Commission, and must be provided for in the then-current annual budget and consistent with the Strategic Plan. The Executive Director is authorized to approve such purchases in an aggregate amount of less than \$25,000 per fiscal year.

1. Books and Subscriptions
2. Conference sponsorship
3. Membership dues and fees
4. Postage, including postal services
5. Typical office supplies (with the exception of office equipment)
6. Goods and services procured from other public agencies
7. Auditing and other specialized professional services
8. Evaluators, interpreters, transcribers, and persons having broad experience within similar specialized areas.
9. Qualification-based grants or procurements where the Executive Director or the Commission (as applicable under the dollar thresholds above) makes a written determination that price is not the primary criteria for awarding a contract or grant of funds, and that negotiation with a proposed grantee, service provider, or strategic partner is in the Commission's best interest due to the experience and qualifications of that contracting party.

10. Honoraria or stipends of \$1,000 or less to third party individuals who provide expertise to the Commission or staff.

B. All service agreements, memoranda of understanding, contracts, and agreement templates for services listed above in Part III, A. 7, 8 and 9 must have prior approval of the Commission, regardless of dollar amount.

PART IV. SPECIAL SITUATIONS

A. Waiver of Competition – When the Executive Director determines a competitive procurement otherwise required by this Policy is impracticable, and no exception listed in Section III, A applies, for purchases not exceeding \$25,000 the Commission Chairperson may grant a “waiver of competition.” The Executive Director shall submit a written request to the Commission Chairperson stating in detail the specific reasons for the proposed waiver of competition. The Commission Chairperson has discretion to approve waiver of competition for purchases not exceeding \$25,000. Any waiver for purchases in excess of \$25,000 must be approved by the Commission.

B. Competition – Competition among distributors of a particular brand is acceptable provided that effective competition can be realized. When three (3) or more potential vendors who would normally be able to quote on the specified item of supply or service are contacted and only one (1) responds due to licensing or franchising reasons, this may be considered adequate competition if documented as part of the bid or quote.

C. Compatibility – In order to obtain optimum performance in the operation of various types of our equipment, special considerations may be required. When good business practice dictates the use of the manufacturer’s replacement parts in the repair of particular equipment, these items may be purchased without competition directly from the manufacturer at the discretion of the Executive Director. In this same context, the Executive Director may also use this discretionary authority to purchase supplies and/or services, as well as additional equipment, without competition directly from the original equipment manufacturer and/or his licensee or other producer as designated by the original equipment manufacturer to enhance the overall performance and operation of the equipment or system. When a purchase on a compatibility basis is estimated to exceed \$25,000 in the aggregate from a single vendor in a fiscal year, approval shall be obtained from the Commission, which may be given in the adopted budget.

D. Emergency – When the Executive Director determines that the goods or services are necessary to protect First 5 personnel, programs, or property during a declared local, state, or national emergency, and time is of the essence, the Executive Director may waive the

requirements of this Policy for a given purchase following consultation with the Commission Chair, and shall provide written notice of such waiver to all Commissioners as soon as practicable following the purchase.

E. State or County Vendor – If the Commission determines there would be no increased benefit of going through a local competitive process, the Commission may procure goods or services from a vendor currently under contract with the State, County or other public agency without a competitive selection process if the State, County or First 5 Commission contract was procured by a competitive selection process and the vendor agrees to extend the same terms of the contract to the Commission.

F. Compliance with Section 22150 of the Public Contract Code - First 5 San Luis Obispo shall purchase recycled products, instead of non-recycled products, whenever recycled products are available at the same or lesser total cost than non-recycled items, and fitness and quality are equal.

G. Compliance with Section 3410 of the Public Contracts Code - First 5 San Luis Obispo shall give preference to United States-grown produce and United States processed foods when there is a choice and it is economically feasible to do so. Spending in any category must stay within the current adopted budget and this Policy.

Commissioners:

Julian Crocker
Chairperson
Designated Representative,
San Luis Obispo County
Office of Education

Penny Borenstein, M.D.
Vice-Chairperson
Designated Representative,
San Luis Obispo County
Health Agency

Lee Collins
Designated Representative,
San Luis Obispo County
Department of Social Services

Bruce Gibson
Designated Representative,
San Luis Obispo County
Board of Supervisors

Mary Kern
Representative at Large,
Child Advocate

Michael McNeerney, M.D.
Designated Representative,
San Luis Obispo County
Medical Association

Janet Murphy
Representative at Large,
Cal Poly Child Development
Department

Tracy Schiro
Designated Representative,
Children’s Services Network

Melinda Sokolowski
Designated Representative,
Child Care Planning Council

Executive Director
Susan K. Hughes

CONTRACTING AND PROCUREMENT POLICY

SUBJECT: Contracting and Procurement Policy

PURPOSE: To ~~facilitate compliance~~ with Health and Safety Code §130140(d)(4)(B), requiring the ~~County~~ Commission to adopt, in a public hearing, contracting and procurement policies that are consistent with ~~specified~~ State laws, and to comply with Health and Safety Code §130151(b)(1) requiring contracting and procurement policies contain provisions to ensure that the ~~Commission’s~~ grants and contracts are consistent with the Commission’s strategic plan.

Part I. STATEMENT OF POLICY

In order to insure that First 5 funds are used in the most effective and efficient manner possible the Commission and staff will comply with ~~applicable~~ State ~~law~~ and Federal laws and this policy in all matters regarding Commission contracting and procurement ~~to the extent applicable to the Commission~~. All grants and contracts ~~will~~ shall be consistent with the Commission’s ~~current~~ strategic plan.

With respect to funding ~~and procurement~~ decisions, ~~the Commission and staff will comply with~~ all ~~applicable~~ California laws regarding constitutional rights of persons and ~~applicable~~ nondiscrimination ~~laws shall be complied with to the extent applicable to Commission activities~~.

~~Staff Governing laws will be~~ regularly review ~~new laws~~ for changes ~~in~~ applicable to Commission activities ~~and, if necessary, recommend to the Commission any necessary revisions to~~ Commission policies and procedures, ~~will be revised to be consistent with such changes~~.

~~Except as specifically provided in Parts III and IV of this Policy, the~~ Commission’s preferred method of procurement of goods and services is through a competitive process. No goods or services will be ~~procured~~ ~~obtained~~ that are not provided for in the annual budget as approved or amended by the Commission.

Part II. COMPETITION

~~Subject to the thresholds in Part II A, below, the~~ Commission may generate contracts or awards based on requests for proposal, quotations or other forms as determined by the ~~Executive Director~~ Commission consistent with this Policy. ~~Where a procurement requires an evaluation of the proposers’ qualifications in addition to proposed prices,~~ contracts or awards may be approved based on a competitive process utilizing outside evaluators ~~for scoring purposes,~~ as determined necessary by the Executive Director or the Commission, ~~for scoring purposes,~~ direct contracting for specific services, or other methods determined by the Commission consistent with this Policy.

A. Thresholds and Reporting

~~A. The dollar thresholds in the table below determine the type of procurement process and the awarding person or entity. Dollar thresholds shall be determined based on the aggregate amount the Commission anticipates paying to the proposed contractor for the same or similar goods and services in a fiscal year. Contracts and purchases shall not be broken into smaller amounts to avoid the processes required by this Section.~~

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Cost of Purchase	Approval	Type of Bid	No. of Bids/Quotes	Reporting
Less than \$24,999 or less	Executive Director	ED	n/a	Not required
\$510,000 to \$924,999	Executive Director	Informal	3 oral or written	Written report <u>with supporting documentation</u> to the Commission at next meeting
\$10,000 to \$24,999	Executive Director & Commission Chair	Formal	3 written	Written report to Commission with supporting documentation at next meeting
\$25,000 or greater	Commission	Formal	3 written	Written report to Commission with supporting documentation prior to approval by Commission

~~B. All grants of Commission funds to program service providers, regardless of dollar amount, must shall be subject to a written grant agreement receive approved by from either the San Luis Obispo County Children and Families Commission or the Executive Director, based on the dollar thresholds specified in Section III A, regardless of the process by which the grantee is selected, as authorized by this Policy.~~

~~C. For purchases not requiring a quotation, the staff shall retain a sales receipt or purchase order/contract with detail regarding the item purchased, quantity, unit price (if applicable) and total price as sufficient documentation of the quote or price.~~

~~D. For informal bids the documentation may include product or service catalogues, current price lists, or verbal contact with vendors to obtain quotes. Quotes must be memorialized in writing by the vendor, source with detail regarding the item purchased, quantity, unit price (if~~



applicable) and total price, and signed by a staff person. Fax or email from the vendor, as may be permitted by the request for bid, shall constitute sufficient written documentation.

E. For formal bids the request for quotation or proposal must be provided in writing to the vendor(s). Fax or email from the vendor, as may be permitted by the request for bid, shall constitute sufficient written documentation.

F. Staff shall make bona fide efforts to solicit and receive at least the number of bids or quotes required above. Where fewer bids or quotes are received, the Executive Director may verify those efforts were sufficient prior to award of contract.

PART III. CATEGORIES EXEMPT FROM COMPETITION:

A. The competition requirements of Part II do not apply when the proposed purchase falls within one of the below listed categories, except all single purchases or aggregate purchases exceeding \$25,000 per fiscal year must receive approval of the San Luis Obispo County Children and Families Commission, and must be provided for in the then-current annual budget and consistent with the Strategic Plan. The Executive Director is authorized to approve such purchases in an aggregate amount of less than \$25,000 per fiscal year.

- 1. Books and Subscriptions
- 2. Conference sponsorship
- 3. Membership dues and fees
- 4. Postage, including postal services

5. Typical office supplies (with the exception of office equipment)

~~5.6~~ Goods and services procured from other public agencies

~~6.7~~ Auditing and other specialized professional services

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8. Evaluators, interpreters, transcribers, and persons having broad experience within similar specialized areas.

9. Qualification-based grants or procurements where the Executive Director or the Commission (as applicable under the dollar thresholds above) makes a written determination that price is not the primary criteria for awarding a contract or grant of funds, and that negotiation with a proposed grantee, service provider, or strategic partner is in the Commission’s best interest due to the experience and qualifications of that contracting party.

~~7~~10. Honoraria or stipends of \$1,000 or less to third party individuals who provide expertise to the Commission or staff.

B. All service agreements, memoranda of understanding, contracts, and agreement templates for services listed above in Part III, A. ~~6 and 7~~, 8 and 9 must have prior approval of the ~~San Luis Obispo County Children and Families~~ Commission, regardless of dollar amount.

PART IV. SPECIAL SITUATIONS

A. Waiver of Competition – When the Executive Director determines a competitive procurement otherwise required by this Policy ~~is impracticable, and no exception listed in Section III, A applies or impossible to secure competition~~, for purchases not exceeding \$25,000 the Commission Chairperson may grant a “waiver of competition.” The Executive Director shall submit a written request to the Commission Chairperson stating in detail the specific reasons for the proposed waiver of competition. The Commission Chairperson has discretion to approve waiver of competition for purchases not exceeding \$25,000. Any waiver for Purchases in excess of \$25,000 must be approved by the ~~San Luis Obispo County Children and Families~~ Commission.

Page 3 of 4

B. Competition – Competition among distributors of a particular brand is acceptable provided that effective competition can be realized. When three (3) or more potential vendors who would normally be able to quote on the specified item of supply or service are contacted and only one (1) responds due to licensing or franchising reasons, this may be considered adequate competition if documented as part of the bid or quote.

C. Compatibility – In order to obtain optimum performance in the operation of various types of our equipment, special considerations may be required. When good business practice dictates the use of the manufacturer’s replacement parts in the repair of particular equipment, these items may be purchased without competition directly from the manufacturer at the discretion of the Executive Director. In this same context, the Executive Director may also use this discretionary authority to purchase supplies and/or services, as well as additional equipment, without competition directly from the original equipment manufacturer and/or his licensee or other producer as designated by the original equipment manufacturer to enhance the overall performance and operation of the equipment or system. When a purchase on a compatibility basis is estimated to exceed \$25,000 ~~in the aggregate amount~~ from a single vendor ~~in a per~~ fiscal year, approval shall be obtained from the ~~San Luis Obispo County Children and Families Commission~~, which may be given in the adopted budget.

D. Emergency – When the Executive Director determines that the goods or services are necessary to ~~further the purpose of the strategic plan or for the protection of~~ First ~~Five~~ personnel, ~~programs~~, or property during a declared local, state, or national emergency, and time is of the essence, the Executive Director may waive the requirements of this Policy for a given purchase following consultation with the Commission Chair, and shall provide written notice of such waiver to all Commissioners as soon as practicable following the purchase.

E. State or County Vendor – If the Commission determines there would be no increased benefit of going through ~~the a local~~ competitive ~~veon~~ process, the Commission may procure goods or services from a vendor currently under contract with the State, County or other public agency ~~First 5 Commission~~, without a competitive selection process if the State, County or First 5 Commission contract was procured by a competitive selection process and the vendor agrees to extend ~~accepts~~ the same terms of the contract to the Commission.

F. Compliance with Section 22150 of the Public Contract Code - First 5 San Luis Obispo shall purchase recycled products, instead of non-recycled products, whenever recycled products are available at the same or lesser total cost than non-recycled items, and fitness and quality are equal.

G. Compliance with Section 3410 of the Public Contracts Code - First 5 of San Luis Obispo shall give preference to United States-grown produce and United States processed foods when there is a choice and it is economically feasible to do so. Spending in any category must stay within the current adopted ~~budgetary~~ guidelines and this Policy.



To: First 5 Commissioners
From: Wendy Wendt
Date: January 28, 2026
Re: Item 5: 2026 First 5 Association Policy Priorities

Recommended Action:

Staff recommends Commission Endorsement of all or part of the First 5 Association 2026 Policy Priorities as a guide for local First 5 public education and advocacy activities that align with the First 5 SLO County Strategic Plan.

Background:

The First 5 Association of California cultivates a network of county-level First 5 agencies for a combination of technical assistance, shared learning, and alignment of policy development and shared advocacy opportunities.

Each year, the Association issues a platform of Policy Priorities that are shaped by the collective input of its members, fine-tuned through the Association Policy Committee and ratified by the Association Board.

For 2026, First 5 SLO County staff is requesting Commission review and formal endorsement of these state-level Policy Priorities as a mechanism for connecting state and local messaging and public education, and a streamlined approach to confirming an annual focus for First 5 SLO County’s advocacy activities.

The attached First 5 Association 2026 Priorities are organized across four categories, three of which are closely related to First 5 SLO County’s Strategic Plan Goals:

First 5 Association 2026 “Policy Priority” Areas	First 5 SLO County Strategic Plan “High Priority” Areas
Comprehensive Care and Development	Improve Early Childhood Health Foundations
Economically Secure Families	Increase Parent Engagement, Connection, and Education
Early Care and Education	Expand Early Learning and Child Care
Thriving First 5 Commissions & System of Care	



2026 POLICY PRIORITIES

First 5 Association works to advance state and federal public policies and funding that support California's young children and families. Our policy work is informed by local communities and local First 5 Commissions and is grounded in a whole child / whole family lens. We do this while centering the fact that low-income communities, communities of color, and historically marginalized Californians face disproportionate impacts due to systemic racism, wealth inequality, and environmental hazards.

Our goal is to have public policies and investments in place that center equity, prevention, systems building, and coordination to build comprehensive and integrated early childhood systems of care.

Policy Priorities



THRIVING FIRST 5 COMMISSIONS AND SYSTEM OF CARE

- Ensure First 5s are identified and prioritized as fund administrators, innovators, intermediaries, and systems partners in securing and safeguarding dedicated funding for early childhood systems.
- Protect and leverage health, family, and child development investments with a shared goal of removing barriers to accessing systems of care.
- Secure stabilization and ongoing funding sources for First 5 Commissions, prioritizing counties that need financial support most, to ensure continued positive child outcomes.



COMPREHENSIVE CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

- Preserve access to essential health and social services for young children and their families.
- Improve prevention, care coordination, screenings, navigation, and re-certification supports for Medi-Cal and other systems of care.
- Increase access to and timeliness of early intervention and infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH) services, including assessments and validated developmental screening tools.
- Improve maternal and infant health outcomes in communities of color impacted by disparate outcomes* by dismantling racist practices and developing culturally safe systems in partnership with health providers and systems of care.



ECONOMICALLY SECURE FAMILIES

- Advocate for culturally responsive, trauma-informed, healing-centered family support services that recognize and build parents' strength, wisdom, and capacity to support their children's optimal development.
- Increase economic supports that empower families to meet the basic needs of children.
- Increase access to affordable, safe, and nurturing early care and education.



EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

- Prioritize and scale early care and education mixed-delivery opportunities, with a focus on infant and toddler care.
- Support quality training and professional growth pathways for early educators and childcare providers, with a focus on infant and toddler care.
- Promote recruitment and retention of the early educator and childcare workforce by uniting with statewide partners to advocate for increased benefits and true cost-of-care wages.

*Black, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native, Indigenous, and multiracial

To: First 5 Commissioners

From: Wendy Wendt (in consultation with Legal Counsel Craig Steele)

Date: January 28, 2026

Re: Item 7: Executive Director Evaluation for 2025

Summary

Each year, the Commission conducts an evaluation process for the Executive Director. This provides an opportunity for Commissioners to engage in a conversation and provide an assessment and feedback for the Executive Director.

On behalf of the Chair, Commission Counsel has historically facilitated this process, as outlined below:

1. The Executive Director completes a self-assessment, including the status of any goals from the previous year and draft goals for the upcoming year.
2. In February, Counsel circulates the Executive Director's self-assessment with a rubric for Commission feedback.*
3. Counsel aggregates all Commissioner feedback into a summary document.
4. At the following Commission meeting (in March), the Commission receives the summary document in closed session and discusses the collective results internally.
5. The Executive Director is invited into the closed session to receive the results of the evaluation verbally and to engage in a conversation with the Commission. The Commission may choose to provide a written evaluation.

** The Commission on occasion has opted to solicit feedback from partner agencies and/or First 5 staff but has chosen not to in recent years.*

It should be noted that as newly-hired Legal Counsel, Mr. Craig Steele of Richards Watson & Gershon will discuss with the Commission possible minor modifications to the established process.

Recommended Action

1. Discuss and provide direction to staff regarding the evaluation process for the Executive Director for the 2025 calendar year.
2. Direct staff to add a closed session item to the March meeting agenda for the annual performance evaluation of the Executive Director.



To: First 5 Commission
From: Staff
Date: January 28, 2026
Re: Agenda Item 8: Election of 2026 Officers

Recommended Action

Identification and Approval of 2026 Chair and Vice Chair positions

Background

First 5 San Luis Obispo County Bylaws require the annual assignment of a Commission Chair and Vice Chair. It is the annual responsibility of Commissioners to identify and confirm these two positions from among their members. These positions are not bound by term limits.