



Strategic Plan 2021-2024



First 5 Nevada County Children and Families First Commission
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STRATEGIC PLAN

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This report was written and prepared by the Executive Director with guidance from the Commission.

Introduction

In November 1998, the California voters passed Proposition 10, the California Children and Families First Initiative which added a 50 cent-per-pack tax on tobacco products. Revenue from the tax is intended to promote, support and improve early development of children from the prenatal stage to five years of age. Proposition 10 echoes what many parents and caregivers have long known and, in the 1990s was being proven by scientific advances—that the first five years of a child’s life are the most important for brain development.

Proposition 10 created a trust fund for revenues collected. Eighty percent (80%) of these revenues are distributed to the 58 individual California Counties annually to benefit children aged zero to five years old. Each local Commission has control over their own funds and by law is empowered to make local decisions about how funds should be spent. The remaining 20% of the revenues supports statewide programs and research.

On December 15, 1998, the Nevada County Board of Supervisors created the Nevada County Children and Families First Commission (later named First 5 Nevada County), and work began on *“the creation and implementation of an integrated, comprehensive, and collaborative system of information and services to enhance optimal early childhood development”* (California Health and Safety Code Section 130100). The five-member Commission is charged with administering and allocating the County’s portion of the Proposition 10 funds. By ordinance, the Commissioners are drawn from the Board of Supervisors, the county Health and Human Services Department, the Truckee community, and the field of education.

The First 5 California Commission has created a Small Population County Funding Augmentation that commenced on July 1, 2014. Under this agreement, First 5 Nevada County will receive funds from First 5 California to bring our annual revenues to \$650,000 a year for three years – FY 2014/15 through FY 2016/2017. The First 5 California Commission voted to extend that agreement for an additional four years – FY2017/18 through FY2020/21, with trigger language that allows for a 2% annual decline in baseline funding if First 5 California revenues fall more than 7% in the prior year beginning with FY2018/19.

To date, First 5 Nevada County has invested more than \$8 million into early child development in Nevada County. State law directs First 5 Nevada County to distribute this money in accordance with this Strategic Plan, which has been reviewed by the public in at least one public hearing. Visit our website at www.first5nevco.com to learn more about First 5 Nevada County.

About Nevada County

Stretching from the Sierra Nevada foothills to the Nevada state line, Nevada County encompasses an area of 958 square miles and a population of 97,820 in 2020¹. Our county has 4,924 children under age 6 in 2020, up from 4,799 children under age 6 in 2015².

The eastern and western portions of the county are divided by the Sierra Nevada Mountains, thus creating two diverse regions, which are relatively isolated from each other. Western Nevada County includes two of the three major population areas, including the cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City. Truckee is the population center of eastern Nevada County, which is geographically and socially connected with the Lake Tahoe portions of Placer County and the state of Nevada.

Nevada County has a very high mean age, with fewer households with children than in the state overall: 22% of households had children in 2017, compared with 35.5% of households statewide³.

Nevada County is predominantly white, non-Hispanic but the demographics are shifting, with the Hispanic population growing most significantly: in 2019, 9.8% of the population was Hispanic⁴. Among children 0 to 17 years, the percentages are significantly higher: 17.4% identified as Hispanic in 2020⁵.

Families with young children are impacted by the gap between wages and housing costs and the availability of employment. According to the Center for Community Economic Development⁶, the self-sufficiency wage for a single parent in Nevada County with an infant and a preschooler rose is \$77,000. In 2016, it was reported that 46.1% of families in Nevada and Sierra Counties were living below the self-sufficiency wage. The annual cost of child care ranges from an average of \$8,393 for a preschooler in a family child care setting to \$13,693 for an infant in a child care center⁷. Ninety-five percent of children ages 0-5 are currently insured and 80.3% of kindergarteners have their required immunizations.

In Nevada County, the rate of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect is 5.9 per 1,000 children, compared to a rate of 8.9 for the state overall; most of this (83%) is for

¹ State of California, Department of Finance, *E-1 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State with Annual Percent Change — January 1, 2018 and 2095*. Sacramento, California, May 2020.

² Kidsdata.org <https://www.kidsdata.org/region/334/nevada-county/summary#6/demographics>

³ Kidsdata.org. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/40/households-with-children250/>

⁴ Census.gov Quickfacts Nevada County

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/nevadacountycalifornia,CA/PST045219>

⁵ California Dept. of Finance, Race/Ethnic Population with Age and Sex Detail, 1990-1999, 2000-2010, 2010-2060 (Jan. 2018); U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates, Vintage 2017 (Jul. 2018).

⁶ Self-Sufficiency Standard for California. (n.d.). Retrieved May 24, 2015, from <http://www.insightcced.org/calculator.html>

⁷ The California Child Care Portfolio, California Child Care Resource & Referral Network. Accessed at <http://www.rnetwork.org> (May 2019).

general neglect⁸. The rate for domestic violence calls for assistance is similar: 3.5 per 1,000 adults compared to a state rate of 5.9⁹. A total of 99 children were in foster care in 2013, down from 115 in 2012; the median length of time in foster care was 11 months, down from a high of 21.9 months in 2008 (the current state median is 14.1 months)¹⁰.

Overall, Nevada County schools have consistently ranked among the best in the state, achieving excellent marks in statewide academic performance tests. But the achievement gap between socioeconomically disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children is growing: county-wide, second-grade language arts scores grew from a disparity between those two groups of 16% in 2001 to 28% in 2013; county-wide, second-grade math scores grew in disparity from 15% to 22%¹¹. Students are considered "economically disadvantaged" if they are eligible for the free/reduced price lunch program or if neither parent graduated from high school. Research has shown that this "achievement gap" between rich and poor begins in early childhood¹².

Many of Nevada County's children are geographically isolated, making access to services difficult. Providers encounter funding and staffing challenges related to economies of scale. In eastern Nevada County the families also have tough winter weather to contend with. The most recently available data, for 2015, show that seventeen percent of our children overall live in poverty, up from 9.1% in 2009¹³, and that poverty is often complicated by geographic isolation. Poverty for children in "female householder, no husband present" households is significantly higher, with 43.4% of children in those households living in poverty; most of those are single-adult households, with only 24.9% of them including an unmarried partner of the householder. Families in Nevada County continue to struggle with access to care issues that are often a result of our rural landscape. All of this makes the locally designed, comprehensive and integrated system of care offered by Proposition 10 all the more important for Nevada County.

⁸ Needell, B., et al. (May 2014). Child Welfare Services Reports for California, UC Berkeley [Center for Social Services Research](#); U.S. data come from Child Trends analysis of Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System data through the National Data Archive on Child Abuse & Neglect, as cited on [KIDS COUNT](#) (Apr. 2013).

⁹ California Dept. of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center, [Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance Database \(1998-2003\) and Online Query System](#) (October 2014).

¹⁰ Needell, B., et al. (May 2014). Child Welfare Services Reports for California, U.C. Berkeley [Center for Social Services Research](#).

¹¹ Author calculations based on data from the California Department of Education

¹² Hall, T. et al. (2009). *The Achievement Gap Begins Early: Disparities in Early Learning and Development: Lessons from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort (ECLS-B)*, Child Trends

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau, [2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates](#) (Nov. 2017).

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Our strategic plan is the road map to a long-term, cyclical implementation and evaluation process during which we regularly measure desired results. Since 2000, the First 5 Nevada County Commission has regularly sought out family, service provider, and other stakeholder perspectives and reviewed research and data to ensure the continued relevance of the Strategic Plan. The Commission regularly discusses the focus and future of the Commission.

In 2019, the Commission engaged in a series of community input, stakeholder interviews with the help of a local evaluator. The evaluator met individually, or in small groups, with local community service providers and other stakeholders. She found that, *“Local service providers are working hard to address the needs of children ages 0-5 and their families, and often with great effect. Due to its small size, Nevada County is a place where relationships are easily made and maintained, facilitating collaborations across agencies to better support clients. Nevertheless, many families are struggling and many needs go unmet.”*

Identified community needs were much the same as past surveys.

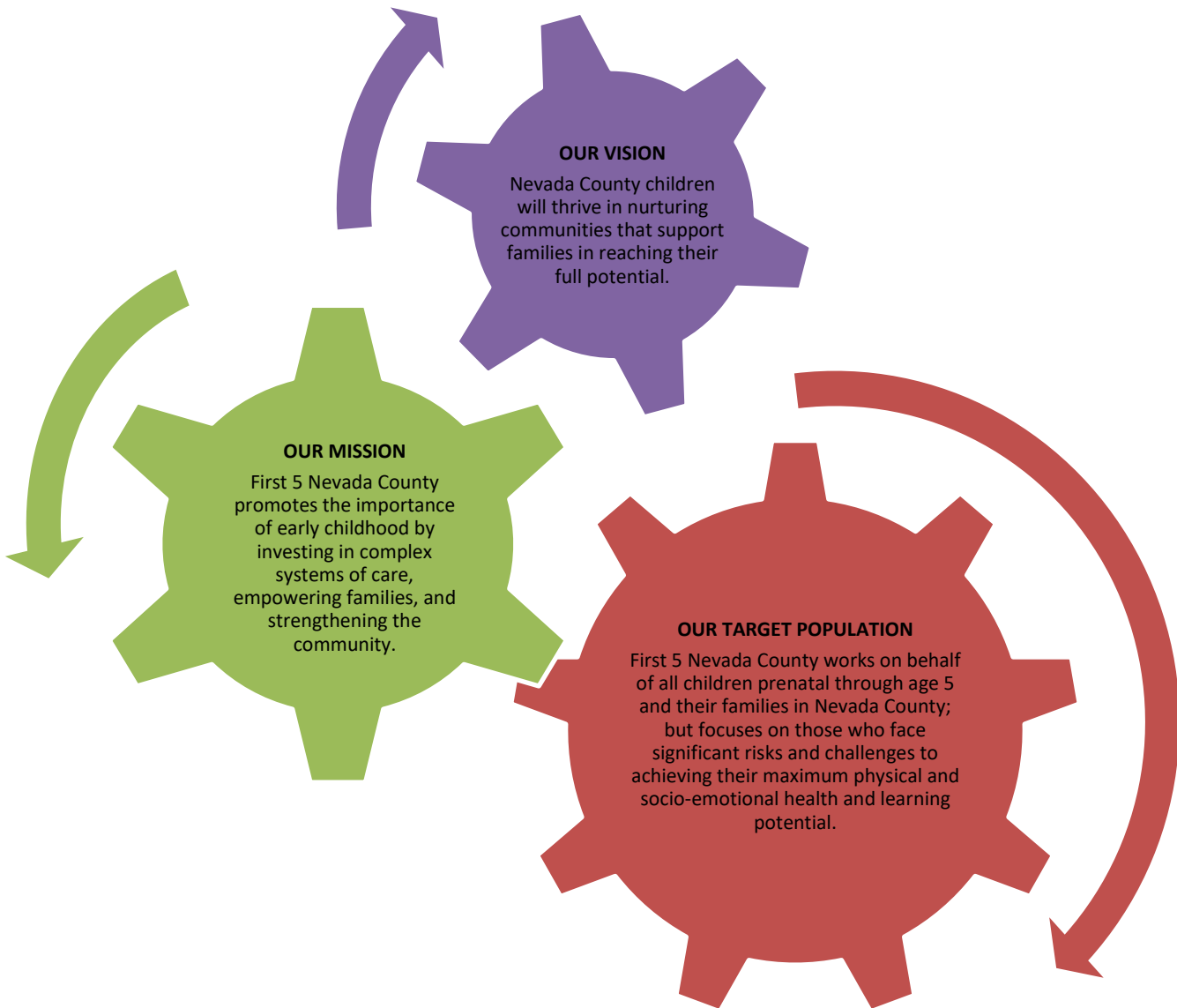
Identified Community Needs

The top needs that the Commission identified for children birth to 5 years old and their families were:

- Parenting support
- Behavioral health care access
- Support for children’s social-emotional development
- Support for the development of children’s school readiness skills
- More exposure to pre-literacy activities
- Support for children’s health and wellness including dental, obesity prevention, developmental screening, and immunization
- Higher quality child care
- Increased service coordination and collaboration
- Bilingual access to services for families

The Commission took into consideration the array of existing service providers, the extent of each need, the existing infrastructure to address that need, the potential impact of Commission dollars on that need, and the potential to evaluate that impact; they also took into consideration their past funding allocations and the impact of those projects and programs.

Who We Are



Guiding Principles

The funds entrusted to First 5 Nevada County are intended to produce measurable outcomes that better the lives of young children and their families. The Children and Families First Act gives the Commission the opportunity to allocate resources and invest money in a comprehensive and flexible manner to further the purposes of the Act and the Mission of our Strategic Plan.

Equity and Inclusion

- Promote equal access to services for all children under age 6 in Nevada County
- Respond to the linguistic, cultural, geographic, and economic diversity of families
- Promote inclusion of families based on the needs of our diverse community; including, but not limited to children with disabilities and special needs

Collaboration

- Promote activities and programs that have been shaped by community participation and collaborative efforts

Systems Change

- Leveraging resources that build on the strengths of our families and the social capital in our communities
- Reduce fragmentation, build sustainable community capacity, and support shared decision-making and resources amongst partners

Data Collection

- All investments are made to programs or activities that are able to objectively demonstrate their cost-effectiveness and overall efficacy
- All investments comply with the requirements of the Commission to ensure accountability of funds

Investment Guidelines for First 5 Nevada County Commission

We create strategic impact by funding programs and activities that support the goals in our strategic plan, show evidence of effectiveness, avoid duplication, and need Proposition 10 funding in order to meet those goals.

We ensure that our investments for children are used in the most effective manner. Therefore:

- ❖ All investments are made in accordance with a Goal contained in the Strategic Plan adopted by the Commission.
- ❖ All investments are made to programs or activities that are able to objectively demonstrate their cost-effectiveness and overall efficacy and that comply with other requirements of the Commission to ensure accountability of funds.
- ❖ Funds may be allocated for leveraging other county, state and federal governmental revenue as well as private foundation, corporate and community funding.
- ❖ Expenditures are made in accordance with the First 5 Nevada County Contracts and Procurement Policy and the Expenditure Plan. Funds may be allocated on a sole source basis if the Commission determines there is only one natural provider of a priority service, based on a key objective, within the County; or funds may be designated for a particular geographic area.
- ❖ Funds may be allocated on a one-time basis, on a continuing basis, or in allotments based on performance, as required by the Commission, but in no case, shall commit the Commission beyond funds already realized in the First 5 Nevada County funds.
- ❖ All Commission spending will be made in accordance with the First 5 Nevada County Long Range Financial Plan, which is updated annually.

These Investment Guidelines represent policy guidance the Commission approved to inform investment decisions for the 2021-2024 funding period. The “home positions” articulated below express the organization’s point of view about how and where it can realistically have the most impact. To create a road-map for future Commissions, the rationale for each home position is included. The following table summarizes these Commission-directed policy guidelines.

Investment Guidelines – Home Positions

Prevention vs. Intervention

First 5 NC strives to fund about twice as much in prevention services as in intervention services

Research in child development points to the importance and efficacy of prevention; the Commission recognizes this but also acknowledges that when prevention doesn't happen, early intervention is the most efficacious alternative. Because of the plasticity of young brains, the earlier the intervention, the larger the impact. The Commission also recognizes that their limited dollars are sometimes a key source for community response for an emergent problem for young children and their families.

Direct Services vs. Systems Change

First 5 NC will continue to fund direct services; though is also continuing to advocate for a coherent system of services.

Systems change is complex work. Meaningful and sustained change requires the collaborative efforts of multiple partners, across multiple sectors, working on the multiple elements inherent in systems change. The Commission recognizes that funding direct services provides leverage for the Commission to encourage collaboration and integration of services. The Commission remains committed to supporting community collaboratives and to using executive director time to work on systems change.

Individual Focus vs. Family/Community Focus

Whenever possible, First 5 NC will fund services that focus on the contextualized client (in other words, the individual within a family and/or community context) or on community change.

Research has shown that services that target the child within the family context are more efficacious. This is especially true for behavioral health treatment. Some services, such as kindergarten readiness camps, have shown efficacy when targeted at the individual level; with these types of services, the Commission will encourage parent-outreach and education components. Some services, such as parenting classes, are targeted at the individual but impact the larger family system.

Local Models vs. Evidence-based Models

Whenever possible, First 5 NC will fund evidence-based or best- or promising-practices.

Evidence-based practices have proven impact and therefore are used whenever possible. The Commission recognizes that these are sometimes cost-prohibitive; that they are sometimes not adapted for a given target population; that sometimes there are no proven practices that address a priority issue. As such, the Commission will consider funding best- or promising-practices or locally developed models.

First 5 Nevada County Initiatives

In the past, the Commission reviewed their funding patterns and looked at several frameworks that articulate theories of change for early childhood programs. These included the Center for the Study of Social Policy's Pathways Mapping Initiative (both the Pathway to Children Ready for School and Succeeding in Third Grade¹⁴ and the Pathway to Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect¹⁵), and their Strengthening Families Approach¹⁶.

These frameworks provided the rationale for choosing goals, objectives and strategies that would support First 5 Nevada County's mission and lead to its vision that children thrive in nurturing communities that support families in reaching their full potential. The Commission noted that previous funding processes focused on funding direct service programming. With declining revenues, the Commission has chosen to focus more on community-wide systems change; supporting direct services programming in serving the community, while also seeking out additional opportunities for sustainability. The Commission articulated four initiatives and their relationship to one another that better captured their work. The four initiatives are:

- Early learning
- Family strengthening
- Communication and outreach
- Capacity building and systems change

The initiatives, their components, and their relationships to one another are described on the following page. An Implementation Plan will serve as a companion document to the Strategic Plan; outlining the funded programs and their alignment with the Commission's priority initiatives.

¹⁴ Schorr, L., & Marchand, V. (2007, June). Pathway to Children Ready for School and Succeeding in Third Grade. Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Social Policy.

¹⁵ Schorr, L., & Marchand, V. (2007, June). Pathway to Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Social Policy.

¹⁶ Harper Browne, C. (2014, September). The Strengthening Families Approach and Protective Factors Framework: Branching out and reaching deeper. Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Social Policy.

If we invest in these **priority areas...**

we anticipate these outcomes...

will lead to achieving these goals.

Family Strengthening

- Enhanced parenting support to promote strong families, including enhancement of parent knowledge of child development
- Opportunities for parents to receive concrete support in times of need
- Enhanced social connections among parents
- Enhanced parental resilience
- Enhanced social-emotional competence of children
- Consistent messaging on early learning and development

Goal 1
Nevada County children will live with supported, nurturing parents.

Early Learning

- Improved child care quality
- Enhanced knowledge, skills, materials, and capacity of providers who serve children 0 to 5
- Increased developmental screening of children, including Kindergarten entry assessments
- Supports for child health & wellness (behavioral, physical, and dental health and child safety)
- Improved family literacy
- Improved school readiness
- Increased opportunities for child socialization
- Decreased achievement gap for culturally diverse and socioeconomically disadvantaged populations

Goal 2
Nevada County children are ready to enter school.

Communications and Outreach

- Commission engagement in advocacy for and education about children 0 to 5 and their families
- Increased community knowledge of and engagement in the needs of children 0 to 5
- Consistent messaging on early development and learning

Goal 3
Nevada County children are represented in the larger community.

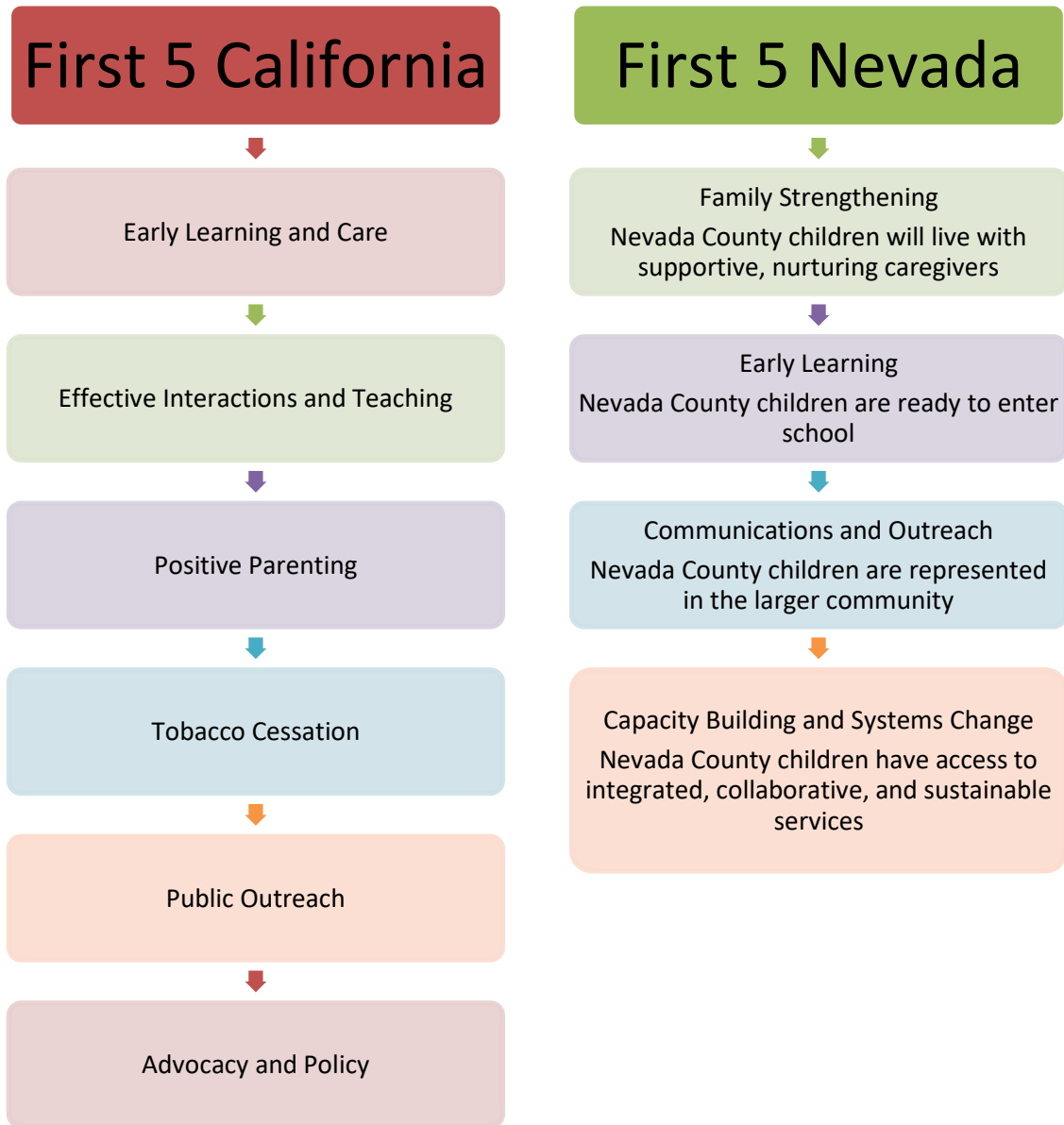
Capacity Building and Systems Change

- Increased communication and collaboration among agencies and organizations that serve the 0 to 5 population
- Increased numbers of agencies and programs leveraging private, state and federal dollars
- Increased sharing of funds, resources, and evaluations among agencies and programs
- Strengthened evaluation practices and communication of those findings
- Increased access to linguistically and culturally appropriate services for families

Goal 4
Nevada County families have access to integrated, collaborative, and sustainable services.

Link to First 5 California Focus Areas and Strategic Results

The following chart shows how the First 5 Nevada County Initiatives coordinate with the First 5 California Focus Areas and Strategic Results:



EVALUATION PLAN

PURPOSE

The purpose of the First 5 Nevada County Evaluation Plan is to provide information to stakeholders, including the Commission and those who contract with First 5, about progress on our statutory mandate to create a system to support, promote and improve the early development of children 0 to 5 years of age. The California Health and Safety Act requires First 5 Commissions to “...*measure the outcomes of county funded programs through the use of applicable, reliable indicators and review that information on a periodic basis as part of the public review of its strategic plan.*”

This plan will comply with state reporting requirements. In addition, this Evaluation Plan is intended to explain how Nevada County will collect data and measure outcomes in a manner that provides adequate information to the Commission about the value of their investments. Contractors will gain information about their programs as well.

STRUCTURE

Countywide Data on the Well-being of Children

First 5 Nevada County will continue to measure the well-being of children, using key countywide data points, parent and provider surveys, focus groups, and community conversations. Annually, the Commission will review a set of key countywide data points.

Annual Evaluation of First 5 Investments by the Commission

The Commission will review the progress and outcomes of each funded program annually. Beginning July 2020, grantees will be required to complete quarterly programmatic and expenditure reports in order to receive expense reimbursements. Commissioners will be provided with a high level overview following each reporting period; with a comprehensive summary provided at the end of the program year. Each grantee will submit a one-page overview of their funded program by July 31 of each year for the prior funding year (**see IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**). These overviews will appear in the Commissioners’ meeting binders throughout the year. Additionally, grantees will provide a presentation about their progress and outcomes at a Commission meeting at least once during their granting period. Finally, at least once during each granting period, the Executive Director and representatives of the Commission will conduct a site visit to view program delivery, record keeping, and/or fiscal procedures. Any or all of these modes of evaluation will be used by the Commission in making future funding decisions.

Compliance with First 5 California Evaluation Framework

First 5 Nevada County staff and contractors shall comply with the First 5 California Evaluation Framework. As such, the Service Data Elements for each funded program must be reported. These are: the number, age, language and ethnicity of children, the number, language and ethnicity of primary caregivers, other family members served, and information about who provided the service. Staff and contractors shall report outcomes on all investments, and staff will report them to the state by result area.

Reporting Requirements

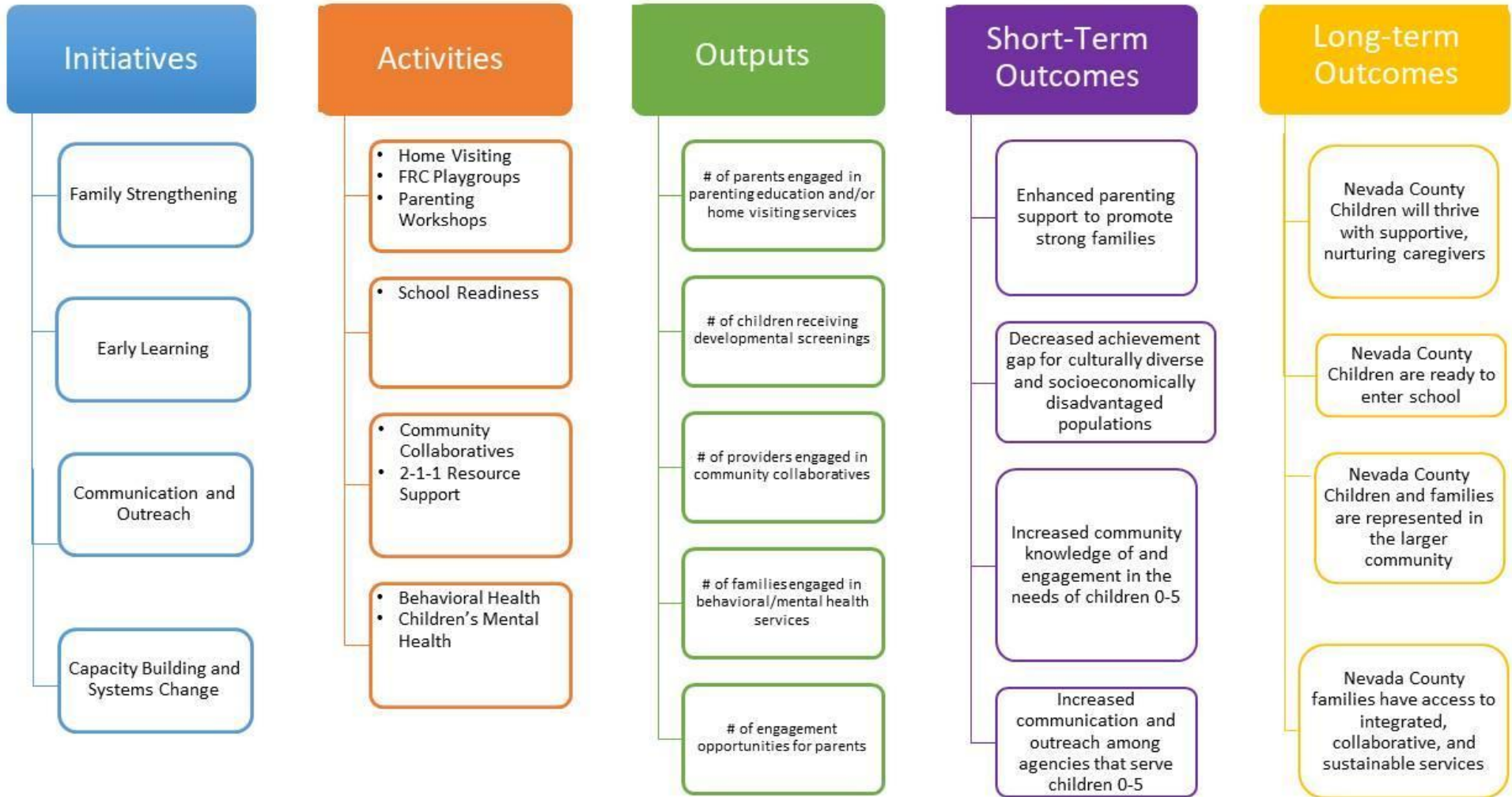
All investments shall be tied to a Goal, Objective, and Strategy in the First 5 Nevada County Strategic Plan. The “Funded Program or Project Mandatory Reporting Requirements” description contains data collection requirements, definitions and a methodology for outlining the Evaluation Plan for each funded program (**see IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**).

Contractors shall report Service Data information and outcomes on agreed indicators on a quarterly basis, with a site visit planned for half way through the year. Staff shall review reports promptly and notify contractors within a reasonable time if their reports or their progress are not in compliance with the contract. Contractors shall also report their fiscal information as designated in their contracts.

Indicators

Each funded program was selected because of its ability to meet a prioritized need identified by the Commission in their needs assessment and priority setting processes. Progress on those needs will be measured by selected indicators which will be tracked by grantees as indicated in the following chart (note: outputs listed in the logic model are not all-inclusive – additional indicators are outlined in the Implementation Plan).

Logic Model



APPENDICES

Appendix A Long Range Financial Plan

First 5 Nevada County Long Range Financial Plan	Adopted Plan with FT Exec Dir and .5 FTE Admin Assist beginning July 2020 <i>Includes approval of Internal Program Investments (Car Seats \$1,000 & Step Up \$20,000) for 20/21</i>							
	actual	actual	actual	projected	projected	projected	projected	projected
Fiscal Year Ending June 30	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
REVENUE								
Annual Tobacco Tax Allocations	509,176	480,040	486,302	484,695	483,069	485,605	482,077	467,615
Small County Funding Augmentation	118,306	192,478	150,698	127,079				
Grants (1)	81,952	72,531	63,515	40,000				
Donations	5,927	5,100	8,923	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Other Income	1,000	1,076						
Interest Earnings on Reserve Fund	7,894	8,155	4,247	2,768	1,574	1,570	1,549	1,461
Funds Available	724,255	759,380	713,685	659,542	489,643	492,175	488,626	474,076
EXPENSES								
Community Projects	1,259	776	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Kids' Corner at the Fair	5,383	5,898	8,923	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Contracted Program Investments (2)				43,700	279,000	279,000	279,000	240,000
Home Visiting	153,007	150,000	150,000	150,000				
Family Resource Centers	212,318	212,318	212,318	212,318				
Cross-Agency Collaboration	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000				
Children's Behavioral Health	11,377	10,566	20,000	20,000				
School Readiness (Truckee)	38,000	26,552	38,000	38,000				
Bilingual Child Care Training	3,786	6,858	11,336	11,336				
Young Parents' Program	20,000	20,000	20,000					
Maternal Depression	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000				
Ready to Grow	22,594	24,208	23,695	23,695				
Internal Program Investments (3)								
IMPACT	16,294	6,542	29,000	29,000				
LAUNCH	20,377	20,387	10,515					
Emergency Child Care Funds			36,300					
Wages/Benefits (4)	134,485	133,093	129,959	105,244	108,402	111,654	115,003	118,454
Services/Supplies	69,097	69,122	80,275	53,781	28,980	28,980	28,980	28,980
Evaluation Investments								
Wages/Benefits (4)	7,796	7,716	7,534	6,101	6,284	6,473	6,667	6,867
Services/Supplies	1,731	4,580	7,651	6,611	6,680	6,680	6,680	6,680
Administrative Costs								
Wages/Benefits (4)	52,625	52,080	50,853	41,183	42,418	43,691	45,001	46,351
Services/Supplies	11,682	10,663	11,141	10,871	11,340	11,340	11,340	11,340
Subtotal Expenses	831,810	811,358	898,500	808,840	490,104	494,817	499,672	465,672
Revenue vs. Expenses	(107,555)	(51,978)	(184,815)	(149,298)	(461)	(2,642)	(11,046)	8,404
Beginning Fund Balance	690,378	582,823	530,845	346,030	196,732	196,271	193,629	182,583
Withdrawal from Fund Balance	107,555	51,978	184,815	149,298	461	2,642	11,046	-
Deposit to Fund Balance								8,404
Ending Fund Balance	582,823	530,845	346,030	196,732	196,271	193,629	182,583	190,987
Interest Rate Projection	1.14%	0.80%	0.80%	0.80%	0.80%	0.80%	0.80%	0.80%

