



STRATEGIC PLAN 2019 - 2021

First 5 Commission and Staff

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Proposition 10

Proposition 10, passed by California voters in November 1998, imposes a fifty-cent-per-pack state sales tax on tobacco to fund a comprehensive, integrated system of early childhood development services for California children ages 0-5. The overall intent of the initiative is to prepare all California children to enter school healthy and ready to learn. The funding activities address three primary strategic results (outcomes for improvement) derived directly from the Act:

- Improved Family Functioning: Strong Families
- Improved Child Development: Children Learning and Ready for School
- Improved Child Health: Healthy Children

First 5 Amador

First 5 Amador (previously called the Amador County Children & Families Commission) was formed in December 1998 by the Amador County Board of Supervisors in accordance with the California Children and Families First Act (Proposition 10). First 5 Amador adopted its first strategic plan in 2000 and since then the Commission has met monthly to implement the plan. Three main goal areas were identified: Child Care, Family Violence Reduction, and Health Education. Three additional areas, Family Resource Centers – access to services, School Readiness, and Family Strengthening were later added. The commission maintains an open and welcoming atmosphere during its meetings, which are open to the public in compliance with the Brown Act.

First 5 Amador's key roles:

- Grant Making – Provide funding opportunities
- Direct Service – Select services, programs, and activities that are developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate for children and families / caregivers in Amador County.
- Communication, Community Education, and Advocacy – Raise awareness among community members, policy makers, providers, and parents about the importance of early childhood investments.
- Building Community Capacity – Support grantees, partner agencies, and other groups to strengthen their ability to provide services to families and early childhood educators.
- Convening Community Partners – Bring stakeholders together for the purposes of planning, collaboration, and communication to improve systems.
- Explore local, regional, and state opportunities for sharing and leveraging resources and funding.

First 5 Amador's guiding principles direct decision-making. Our focus is in preventing problems before they begin. These guiding principles assure the likelihood of achieving success.

Accessible

High Quality

Sustainable

Strategic Plan Goals and Focus Areas

Children have optimal health and wellbeing:

- Children have access to preventive oral health, mental health, and health education opportunities.

Children are ready for school / School are ready for children

- Children have access to quality early education opportunities.
- Children with social / emotional issues and special needs are identified early and receive support.
- Schools are prepared for children and linked with the community.

Families and Caregivers have support and access to information:

- Families / caregivers have access to information, quality early education opportunities, and support to protect and promote the social and emotional development and school readiness of their children.

Systems are integrated and sustainable:

- Systems for essential services that support and strengthen families will be linked, efficient, high-quality, and sustainable.

Activities: (Examples)

➤ Community Education

- The Commission will utilize social marketing and traditional outreach to provide ongoing information to the public regarding the importance of investing in early childhood.
- Disseminate information regarding the overall wellbeing of children and families.
- Partner with agencies and organizations to further their mission through information dissemination.
- Host or support events and educational forums to raise awareness and provide education.

➤ Capacity Building

- The Commission will continue to act as a catalyst, capacity builder, and convener to:
 - Encourage parent groups, local organizations and the business community to assist in the promotion and delivery of services that support children 0 – 5 and their families / caregivers.
 - Promote implementation of quality practices in local settings, early learning environments, and programs.
 - Coordinate systems change to improve the availability, delivery, and sustainability of essential services (i.e. Perinatal Wellness, Early Identification and Referral, and Oral Health Initiatives).

➤ Early Learning and Family / Caregiver Support

- The Commission will support programs / systems that strengthen families and encourage parents to take an active role as their child's first teacher (i.e. Imagination Library – early literacy, Playgroups, Family Violence Reduction, Newborn Home Visiting, and Father Engagement – Dad and Me).
- Summer Bridge pre-kindergarten classes and other opportunities for preschool and social-skills building.
- Early Childhood Mental Health services and developmental screenings.
- Collaborate with community partners to strengthen the capacity of early care and education providers by leading and participating in initiatives such as First 5 California's IMPACT.

First 5 Amador's evaluation seeks to:

Guide program implementation and ongoing improvement
Communicate key findings and successful approaches for supporting children ages 0 – 5
Inform decision-making
Provide accountability and visibility to Amador County residents

The Commission will evaluate grantees' progress twice per year and use this information to identify and share successes and lessons learned with its grantees and the community. When programs or projects encounter unexpected delays or obstacles, the bi-annual evaluation process will allow the Commission to provide technical assistance and support the grantee in a timely, proactive manner. A common aspect of all evaluation processes is the inclusion of customer and/or client feedback, whether through focus groups, surveys, or other avenues.

Projects funded through the RFP/RFA process will participate in evaluation as follows:

Semi-annually, grantees will be expected to include updates to their project budget and the number of persons served and services delivered. This will provide First 5 staff the information necessary to help the grantee "course correct" if necessary.

First 5 staff and/or Commissioners will visit with grantees to learn first-hand how the programs and services are being delivered, and what results the grantees are seeing. This provides an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about the communities' efforts on behalf of First 5 goals.

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Financial Plan

From the beginning, Prop 10 revenues were expected to decrease as tobacco use declined. For this reason, the Commission also developed a Fiscal Plan as a companion to the Strategic Plan. The Fiscal Plan was issued as a separate document.

- First 5 Amador will invest where we can leverage other financial and technical resources.
- Use financial and human resources with a view toward influencing systems change and engaging the community.
- Support training, assistance, and educational forums to promote the adoption of quality practices or programs.
- Continue to update and disseminate data to educate the community and secure financial resources.

Trends and Other Considerations for the Strategic Plan

At multiple meetings, the First 5 Amador Commission reviewed and discussed community needs, successful programs and outreach, and funding considerations. As a result of the discussions, the following considerations influenced development of the goals, focus areas, and strategies.

The inability to reach various target populations remains an issue (e.g. doctors and others in areas outside Amador County), and needs to be taken into consideration in all aspects of plan development and implementation.

- The dissolution of a health insurance contract between Anthem Blue Cross MediCal and most local Sutter-affiliated offices has created a gap in services for families.
- The Maternal Child Health Assessment is currently underway.
Areas of concern include:
 - Substance use during pregnancy.
 - Smoking during pregnancy.
 - Prenatal and postpartum depressive symptoms and mood disorder hospitalizations.
 - Food insecurity during pregnancy.
 - Tdap in Pregnancy (Immunization).
 - Uninsured / Children without a healthcare provider.
- Collaborative efforts have led to systems changes (i.e. oral health services). First 5 needs to build on current successes, which are attributed to (1) providing high contact between First 5 staff and community groups, organizations, medical staff, councils, etc.; (2) bringing people “to the table” – the best successes have come from the ground up and are community generated; (3) First 5 is largely neutral and not in competition with other community organizations; and, (4) having the “Right People” in the “Right Venue” makes a huge difference in results achieved.
- First 5 Amador needs the ability to be flexible while still achieving results, and remaining able to staff and manage the work it takes on. To this end, it needs to test the reasonableness of the goals, focus areas and strategies, and implement a more regular review of programs and workload.
- Using First 5 as an initiator/incubator has worked well. Examples include the countywide information dissemination program that is now available to agencies, organizations, and businesses.
- Off-hour and infant care continue to be needs in Amador County.
- The growing population base of older residents without children, or with grown children and consequently no/low interest in children’s issues, has the potential to negatively impact policy development related to children / family issues. Continued participation in the county through organizations such as the Rotary, Kiwanis, and Chamber of Commerce is important to the First 5 mission.
- State and local issues continue to have significant influences on First 5 Amador decisions.

- First 5 needs the ability to be proactive in leveraging funding; must be able to conform to State criteria to get funding and support when it aligns with goals and focus areas, while continuing to build bridges to ensure priorities are being driven from the “ground up” and are community supported.
- When considering proposed services and projects, First 5 needs to question how people will learn about, become aware of, access, and ultimately be impacted by those services and projects. Effective communications to target population, meeting people “where they live and work,” must be considered.

Five Protective Factors

To support the overarching principles of Family Strengthening, First 5 introduced the Five Protective Factors to our grantees to establish a consistent framework. First 5 has encouraged the Mental Health Services Act, Child Abuse Prevention Council and partner agency / organization to incorporate the framework to establish consistency throughout the county. Outreach efforts through First 5 Amador's social media, monthly e-newsletter, etc. reinforce the Protective Factors messaging.

The Five Protective Factors are:

1. Parent Resilience
2. Social Connections
3. Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
4. Concrete Support in Times of Need
5. Social and Emotional Stability of Children

Examples of how the Five Protective Factors have been addressed:

- Mobile Outreach / Toddler Playgroups– Social Connections, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Behavioral Specialist Services – Social and Emotional Competence of Children, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Home Visiting / Parent Kit Distribution – Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development, Concrete Support in Times of Need, Social and Emotional Competence of Children
- Family Resource / Community Centers – Concrete Support in Times of Need, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Dad and Me Playgroups– Social Connections, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

***Children NOW – 2018 -19
California County Scorecard
of Children’s Wellbeing***