

From: Moira Kenney <moira@first5association.org>
Date: December 12, 2016 at 10:40:00 AM PST
To: Camille Maben <cmaben@ccfc.ca.gov>
Cc: Sean Casey <scasey@first5coco.org>
Subject: Small Population Counties Augmentations

Dear Camille

I'm emailing to update you on the discussions we have been having as an Association regarding the upcoming First 5 CA decision about small county augmentations for the period beginning this July 2017.

On behalf of the small counties, I want to thank you for your willingness to meet with me and with representatives from the small county First 5s to explore the current agreement and future funding. As always, these conversations are very enlightening, focusing, as they do, on the many shared programmatic and system goals of the entire First 5 movement. It's been particularly helpful to hear some of the issues your staff have raised, about evaluation and reporting, and to have our counties share their experiences with the IMPACT effort.

The larger context for the small county augmentations discussion is, of course, the future of First 5 as the critical hub for early childhood systems building across California. As you and I discuss frequently, California is leading the nation in building early childhood systems that bridge local communities and state infrastructure. The role our 58 public agencies play in ensuring that every community in California is deeply engaged in, and committed to, integrated early childhood systems of care cannot be underestimated. Our many achievements at the state level - a statewide QRIS, the California Home Visiting Program, the commitment to children's oral health in the 1115 Waiver, and the growing recognition of early intervention system gaps and solutions - is very much the result of the "statewide-ness" of First 5.

Despite our successes, however, California's children have deep and complex needs. Together, we are pursuing a policy agenda that will address many of our state's most pressing agendas.

Recognizing the importance of our statewide reach, the Association's Executive Committee met last week to discuss this issue. After lengthy discussion, the Executive Committee indicated its strong support for continued small county augmentation and indicated that they would stand opposed to any attempt to discontinue it. While our large counties have indeed experienced the decline in funding as result of shrinking tobacco usage in CA, we stand united in support of the small and rural counties. We have heard from our colleagues across the north that any reduction in the critical support provided by First 5 CA will necessitate cuts to vital programs and services and, in some cases, threaten the very existence of the Commissions themselves.

We recognize that our statute - the Children and Families Act - neglected to include the same protections for small counties that exist in other funding streams. The role of First 5 CA in resolving this inequity is, we believe, the highest and best use of the relatively small investment that the State Commission has made in small counties since 1999.

As you know, the Association stands ready to provide you and your staff with any additional information you may need as you prepare for the January Commission meeting.

Thank you, again, for the spirit of collaboration that you bring to each and every endeavor.

Moira



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