



Imperial County Children and Families First Commission
MINUTES
Meeting of June 2, 2022

I. Call to Order

This Regular Meeting of First 5 Imperial was called to order by Karla Sigmond, Chairperson, at 3:38 p.m. The meeting was held via a video conferencing webinar hosted through Zoom.

II. Roll Call

Commissioners Present:
Ray Castillo
Barbara Deol
Fred Miramontes
Karla Sigmond
Danila Vargas

Commissioners Absent:
Yurii Camacho
Becky Green
Joong Kim
Veronica Rodriguez

Staff:
Julio C. Rodriguez
Bea Duran

III. Public Comment

No public comments were noted.

IV. Adoption of Minutes

A motion to approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting held on May 19, 2022 was made by Commissioner Deol, seconded by Commissioner Castillo, and having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

V. Consent Calendar Items

The consent calendar items consisted of the Schedule of Meetings for the 2022-2023 fiscal year and the March and April monthly financial reports. A motion to approve the consent calendar items was made by Commissioner Castillo, seconded by Commissioner Deol, and having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

VI. Request to Approve Final Award Announcement of Request For Proposal for General Grant FY 2022-2025

Mr. Rodriguez advised that the Commission office did not receive any protests in response to the RFP Notice of Intent to Make an Award; all agencies were given an opportunity to do so prior to the final selections. At this time, the Commission has selected to award seven major projects over a three-year cycle for a total award of \$1,224,719.

A motion approving the Final Award Announcement of the Request For Proposal for General Grant FY 2022-2025 was made by Commissioner Deol, seconded by Commissioner Castillo, and having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

VII. Administrative Report (Julio C. Rodriguez, Executive Director)

**1. Request to Select and Approve Community Development Mini-Grant Step 2 Applicant Awards**

**FY 2022-2023:** Mr. Rodriguez stated that seven mini-grant applications were received in response to Step 2 of the Community Development Mini-Grant application process. A register of the seven mini-grant applications that were received was included in the packet.

Prior to discussing Mini-Grant applications, Commissioners moved forward with the disclosure of conflicts of interest; one conflict was disclosed. Commissioner Sigmond advised that she will abstain during the review of the Imperial Valley College Developmental Preschool application.

Heber Elementary School District: Proyecto LISTOS proposes to offer an after-school intensive parenting program that will benefit incoming Transitional Kindergarten students at 3-5 classrooms within the Heber Elementary School District. The district will use the Incredible Years Preschool Program and offer an additional school readiness component. The district plans to offer a 20 to 25-week program, 2 hour sessions per week with services in English and/or Spanish. The HESD will offer sessions over Zoom and will offer “make-up” sessions to support maximum participation. In addition, the Commission is recommending for the Proyecto LISTOS to implement a home visitation component for the targeted children from the school district or increase the sessions offered to new families during the year.

A motion to award the mini-grant project submitted by the Heber Elementary School District in the amount of \$25,000 was made by Commissioner Miramontes, seconded by Commissioner Deol. The Heber Elementary School District should work on developing a clearer recruitment plan of the families, and add a home visitation component or work to increase the number of families served. Having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

Imperial County Office of Education: The Early Start Inclusion Program for Special Education project intends to promote inclusion opportunities for 18 children with special needs. The goal intended is to support children with special needs by offering the least restrictive environment and helping them to transition into a general education K-12 setting. Students will initially participate in dual-enrollment between a special education preschool and a state preschool program. Professional development efforts and specialized training will also be provided to preschool teachers to support their goal of integrating the children into a classroom setting. The training includes modifying classroom work, the implementation of lesson plans, implementing special behavioral skills, and the development of student objectives to support IEPs.

Commissioners are recommending funding of this project; however, would like the agency to ensure that criteria are developed to track the strategies as they relate to IEPs of the children served by the project, and to address how the training of staff intends to progress. The project should also ensure non-duplication of training for teachers with other resources offered by the County Office of Education, particularly the general grant awarded by the Commission for the FY2022-2025 funding cycle.

A motion to award the mini-grant project submitted by Imperial County Office of Education in the amount of \$25,000 was made by Commissioner Deol, seconded by Commissioner Vargas, and having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council: The Little Steps project will provide intensive parenting support services to 125 parents using the Incredible Years curriculum over the course of 12 to 14-week sessions. The sessions will be offered using age-appropriate components, sessions will be offered in English and/or Spanish, and the project will incorporate the use of the Kit for New Parents as an added resource to parents. The Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council has been providing parenting support services in the community for over 30 years, and these services have evolved over time. Sustainability of these services continues to be an issue of concern, which Commissioners have discussed over previous funding cycles.

A motion to award the mini-grant project submitted by the Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council in the amount of \$25,000 was made by Commissioner Castillo, seconded by Commissioner Deol. A recommendation was made encouraging the Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council to establish partnerships with local school districts to help recruit families and for the possibility of leveraging additional funds. Having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

Imperial Public Library: The Little Hands Say Big Words project is proposing to offer sessions in American Sign Language/baby sign language to parents so that they may communicate with their infants or younger children. The Imperial Public Library intends to enhance services related to the "SPROUT" program funded through another grant and leverage state funds for this activity. Baby sign language classes will be hosted by the library monthly and activities will include an interactive storytime, song and theme words, in addition to providing books and resources.

Commissioners agreed the proposal is innovative and it is clear the library can manage the project efficiently. However, the Imperial Public Library did not submit an audit or bank statements, which were one of the requirements for consideration for a Community Development Mini-Grant award; thus making the application non-compliant.

A motion to not fund the mini-grant project submitted by the Imperial Public Library was made by Commissioner Deol, seconded by Commissioner Miramontes. Commissioner Sigmond stated that she supports the library's innovative proposal and she wishes the Commission could do more to support the project. Commissioner Deol agreed that the library's project was a good idea but advises that the Commission needs to be consistent in the way they follow application processes.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that a Professional Development grant could help support the library's training efforts; the application is available for their submittal with the Commission. He also mentioned that he had a conversation with the library's administrator about the missing audit/bank statements that was needed in the application.

Commissioner Sigmond moved for the vote, and the motion carried with all in favor.

At this time, it was noted that Commissioner Sigmond handed the governance to Commissioner Deol.

Imperial Valley College Developmental Preschool: The Imperial Community College District's Developmental Preschool intends to host an outdoor community concert in the month of March

featuring “Greg and Steve”. The agency is estimating the participation of 200 children 0-5 years, and 300 parents and family members. Children will engage in concert themed activities and will receive a booklet and CD by the artists. The goal of the project is to inspire families and children to engage in music as a fun learning resource. This activity will also provide families with an opportunity to socialize and engage with other families in an outdoor setting, which was difficult during as a result of the measures implemented during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Imperial Community College District Preschool is proposing to cover major expenses for the event such as contract fees and equipment that is needed for the concert.

Commissioners are recommending funding with the caveat that the agency establishes a clear methodology for reaching out to parents; that they consider using a service like Eventbrite in order to register and track participation of the families; and that the project should promote First 5 California’s “Talk, Read and Sing” campaign during the event.

A motion to award the mini-grant project submitted by the Imperial Community College District Developmental Preschool in the amount of \$25,000 was made by Commissioner Castillo, seconded by Commissioner Vargas, and having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried in favor with 1 abstention (K.Sigmond).

Commissioner Sigmond joined the discussion at this time.

Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program: IVROP’s Project CARE plans to increase their Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youth (HIPPY) Program services offered through Project NENES to 15 additional children. The HIPPY curriculum supports the school readiness of children by providing age-appropriate lessons over thirty weeks instruction which are designed to develop early literacy, language and communication, math, science and physical development in children. The children will be recruited from families living within the catchment areas of program improvement school districts or school districts identified by the First 5 Imperial Special Programs Unit, they will not have had any type of preschool support, and they will include 2-year-olds.

A motion to award the mini-grant project submitted by the Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program in the amount of \$24,408 was made by Commissioner Deol, seconded by Commissioner Miramontes, noting that the Commission does not fund administrative costs; the motion carried with all in favor.

UC Desert Research and Extension Center: The UC Desert Research and Extension Center plans to host a “Farm to Preschool Festival” that will offer activities focused on influencing good eating habits, creating healthy lifestyles through the dissemination of nutrition information, and by offering experiential opportunities in gardening, produce harvesting, and food preparation activities that target young children and their families. For this event, the UC Desert Research and Extension Center anticipates the participation of 250-300 children 0-5 years, and 300-400 parents and 50 providers. The project intends to develop methods that can be used to evaluate the success of the Project through assessment, qualitative information, and feedback from participants. The facility is adequately equipped for this event and staff is well-experienced in the areas of planting and harvesting.

The Commission is recommending funding and would like the agency to focus on the completion of its evaluation component; on developing a plan for the recruitment of children and families, and partnering with preschool sites on outreach efforts. The agency should also focus on establishing strategies designed to support families who may not have access to transportation to the event.

A motion to award the mini-grant submitted by the UC Desert Research and Extension Center in the amount of \$15,000 was made by Commissioner Deol, seconded by Commissioner Castillo, and having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

- 2. Request to Approve the General Grant and Community Development Mini-Grant Agreement for Services for Independent Contractor for FY 2022-2023:** Mr. Rodriguez is seeking approval of the Agreements that intend to be used for the RFP projects and the mini-grant projects that were just awarded funding by the Commission. He explained that the Commission enters into these contracts with grantees on a year-to-year basis, starting with the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the contracts are similar; however, the mini-grant contract does not require the submittal of an audit for the project.

A motion approving the Agreement for Services for Independent Contractor was made by Commissioner Castillo, seconded by Commissioner Miramontes, and having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion passed with all in favor.

- 3. Request to Approve First 5 Imperial Budget FY 2022-2023:** Commissioners received copies of the proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 and Mr. Rodriguez advised that the total budget, which will be modified to include mini-grant awards, is \$2,666,357 for the fiscal year.

Mr. Rodriguez noted that there was an increase in rent expenses due to the 5% increase set by the new owner and there was also an increase of expenses for hiring new staff. The IMPACT Program budget this year was increased to \$376,589 whereas last year it was \$320,110; during the previous year the HUB Region 9 budget increased from 10,000 to 20,000 and this new year the HUB Region 9 budget proposed will also be set at \$20,000. The Home Visiting Coordination Budget will operate at \$81,257; noting that a third year was extended on this contract. Major grant awards for the first year of funding total \$1,224,719; and mini-grant awards which were approved by Commissioners during this meeting will be included in the budget. First 5 Imperial will also offer Community Outreach Support grants at a maximum total of \$15,000; Professional Development grants at \$15,000; PACES educational childcare stipends at \$60,000 and Covid-19 Relief Support in the amount of \$30,000 for the year.

A motion to approve the First 5 Imperial Budget FY 2022-2023 was made by Commissioner Miramontes, seconded by Commissioner Vargas, and having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

- 4. Request to Approve First 5 Imperial's Administrative Costs FY 2022-2023:** Mr. Rodriguez explained that the Administrative Costs report reflects the proposed expenses based on the Commission's annual Budget and per the Cost Allocation Plan. These costs, by policy of the Commission, have been limited not to exceed 15% of the total budget. For fiscal year 2022-2023, the Budget expenses total of \$2,666,357 are proportioned as 8.11% for administrative

costs, 81.86% program costs, and 10.3% for evaluation costs. This report will be brought again at the end-of-the year with the actual expenses for the year.

A motion to approve the First 5 Imperial Administrative Costs was made by Commissioner Deol, seconded by Commissioner Castillo, and having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

5. **Request for Approval to Engage in Services for the First 5 Imperial FY 2021-2022 Annual Audit Report:** Mr. Rodriguez is seeking approval from the Commission to engage the services of Fechter and Company to conduct the annual audit of financial statements ending June 30, 2022. The audit is due to the State Controller's Office and First 5 California on October 31<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the auditor is drafting an engagement letter and is proposing to start their work of the audit in mid-July. The contract amounts are set and similar to those of last year; and if approved, Mr. Rodriguez will sign the engagement letter on behalf of the Commission and commence gathering all requested documents requested by the auditor.

A motion to engage the services of Fechter and Company in order to conduct the First 5 Imperial FY 2021-2022 Annual Audit was made by Commissioner Miramontes, seconded by Commissioner Deol, and having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

6. **Update on Collaborative Partnership for the "State of Young Children Report" with First 5 Riverside and First 5 San Bernardino:** Mr. Rodriguez explained that the partnership had established a contract with the University of California, Riverside, Center for Social Innovations (UCR) in order to create a report on the status of young children residing in the three counties. Through participation in this effort, the intention was to identify findings from the report and incorporate suggestions into the Commission's Strategic Plan in addition to benefitting local agencies. Mr. Rodriguez stated that the Commissions will not be receiving the "State of Young Children Report" because the partnership dissolved the agreement with UCR Center for Social Innovations due to performance and issues related to data collection. Costs to First 5 Imperial were initially identified at 10%; however, the Commission has not received any type of billing for services.
7. **Grantees 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Status Report FY 2021-2022:** Mr. Rodriguez provided a summary of the 10 general grants, 7 Community Development Mini-Grants, and 2 Parent Support Initiative mini-grants funded by the Commission for services provided up through March 2022. He also stated that this is the last year of funding of the 3-year cycle for the RFP general grants. Projects provided direct service contacts to 28.5% participants under family functioning, 32.9% under early care and education and 38.6% under child health services. Community strengthening efforts resulted in having reached up to 742 individuals through four community events during the reporting period. Provider capacity building efforts included providing trainings to 233 early care and education providers, and 9 family support caregivers. During this quarter, projects provided services to 58% of children 0-5, 33.6% of parents and 8.8% of family members. Budget summaries indicate that RFP general grants spent 63% of their budgets, Community Development Mini-Grants spent 66% of their budgets, and Parent Support Initiative mini-grants expensed 83% of their budgets.

## VIII. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Castillo provided an update on efforts the County is taking with regard to the progress in bringing the lithium industry to the valley, and the creation of new jobs in the County.

Commissioner Sigmond provided an update on a public forum she attended in Calipatria, and talked about creating partnerships with Imperial Valley College and San Diego State University as it relates to career building in support of the job expansion.

**IX. Adjournment**

Having no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 4:51 pm.