



MINUTES
April 7, 2016

I. Call to Order

This Regular Meeting of the Imperial County Children and Families First Commission was called to order at 3:37 p.m. by Karla Sigmond, Commission Chair. The meeting was held at the County Administration Center, Conference Room C/D which is located at 940 West Main Street in El Centro, California, whereby a quorum was established.

II. Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Miguel Colón, Jr.
Barbara Deol
Robin Hodgkin
Joong Kim
Peggy Price
Karla Sigmond

Commissioners Absent:

Yurii Camacho
Ray Castillo
Becky Green

Staff:

Julio C. Rodriguez, Exec. Director
Christian Hernandez
Bea Duran

III. Public Comment

None was noted.

IV. Adoption of Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Deol and it was seconded by Commissioner Price approving the Minutes for the Regular Meeting of February 11, 2016; having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

V. Consent Calendar Items

A motion was made by Commissioner Deol and it was seconded by Commissioner Hodgkin approving the Consent Calendar Items as presented; having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

VI. Presentations (2)

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Imperial County: Alex Cardenas from Court Appointed Special Advocates provided a summary of Project SHEANE. He explained that the Project's purpose is to address the needs of foster children ages zero through five years, and to

support their growth and development. He summarized the role of the CASA volunteers which is to serve as foster child advocates, serve as officers of the court, provide direct case management experience, and serve as mandated reporters. He emphasized that advocates must make an 18 month commitment to the program before being engaged. He reported on the project's milestones, provided data and demographics, and briefly talked about Project SHEANE's collaborative partners.

Judge Juan Ulloa, who was in attendance, noted that Judge Quan was tied up with a case and unable to be present. Judge Ulloa briefly spoke on the fact that CASA volunteers are the eyes and ears of the court; that the court is fully cognizant of the reports provided by CASA advocates and that they rely on the advocates to be information gatherers and presenters. He noted that CASA advocates fill the gap that exists among collaborating services.

There was a brief session of questions and answers and Mr. Cardenas emphasized that CASA's role is not to supplant but rather to supplement and help facilitate services for foster children.

March of Dimes Foundation: Cheryl Anderson from the March of Dimes Foundation presented on the Healthy Babies Are Worth the Wait Project. She stated that the program focuses on a collaborative approach to decreasing preventable preterm births. She talked about problems related to premature births and the efforts the March of Dimes is taking to preventing preterm births. Ms. Anderson reported that thanks to the efforts by the March of Dimes as well as their community and professional partners, preterm births in Imperial County have been on a continuing decline from 12% in 2003 to 8% in 2013.

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

1. Selection of Community Development Mini-Grant Statements of Interest to Apply: Commissioners were asked to disclose conflicts of interest in reference to the Statements of Interest to Apply that were received. No conflicts were declared by the Commissioners present.

Mr. Rodriguez advised that eight Statements were received, and the Commission has allocated \$100,000 total for mini-grant awards. At a maximum award of \$25,000 each, the Commission may be able to fund between 4-6 applications. Discussion was held regarding the process for non-selection of Projects to continue onto Step 2 of the process, or thereby a process of elimination.

American Red Cross – Home Fire Campaign: This Project will provide new smoke alarms to families with young children; and proposes to provide fire prevention education and evacuation plan guidelines. The Project has indicated that it has established a partnership with WIC to identify children 0-5; it also mentions a door-to-door campaign. Does not indicate how many families will be served; and it will be difficult to certify whether the number of smoke alarms provided is cost effective. Proposed Project doesn't address a goal identified within the Commission's Strategic Plan.

Burn Institute – Safe Children and Families Initiative: Funds will be used to support a scald prevention campaign and for fire safety puppet shows. The Commission has funded the puppet shows in the past. Project will be working with preschools and address quality improvement in the preschools; however, this is a gray area due to children’s ages. In addition, the proposal falls outside the Commission’s scope-of-work to a certain extent.

Neighborhood House of Calexico – Books for Children: Project proposes to hire a Coordinator to coordinate volunteers to provide literacy services to children at home, to help create a home library, and to establish accessible resources for parents and caregivers. No benchmarks were included or additional information identifying families.

Calexico Unified School District – Parents First Institute: The Project proposes to provide two parent training components. The first component will target parents who have children 0-3 years of age using the The First Three Years parenting curriculum; and the second component will target parents who have children 4 to 5 years of age using the Parenting Now curriculum. The Project is requesting \$10,000.

Court Appointed Special Advocates – System Enhancement for Infants 0-3: Funds for this project will support parents and/or caregivers of children ages 0 to 5 through the process of having their child receive a behavioral assessment through the San Diego Regional Center. Volunteers will help educate parents and/or caregivers, serve as “content experts” and guide all involved through the referral process. The Project proposes to hire a part-time Coordinator who will train volunteers, parents and caregivers.

Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council – Little Steps: The Project is proposing to provide parent education courses using the Incredible Years curriculum over the course of 12 to 15 weeks, 2 hour sessions. This Project will target 125 parents with children under five years of age. Childcare will be available and snacks will be provided during the sessions. The CAP Council has worked with the Commission on integrating a new curriculum specific for young children.

Imperial County Free Library – Family Place Libraries: Funds for this Project will be used to re-design the library’s environment conducive to young children, to provide training for staff, and to provide developmentally appropriate parent and child workshops. Project proposes to establish Family Place Libraries in the existing libraries of Calipatria and Holtville.

Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program – Project CARE: This Project will enhance the HIPPY Program managed by Project Nenes by serving an additional 15 new children not attending preschool. The Project will target children living within underperforming school areas.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colón and it was seconded by Commissioner Deol to eliminate the American Red Cross and the Burn Institute from proceeding on to Step 2 of the Mini-grant application phase. Projects do not meet the funding priority established within the

Commission's Strategic Plan. Having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried; 1-opposed (R.Hodgkin).

A motion was made by Commissioner Colón and it was seconded by Commissioner Deol to eliminate Neighborhood House of Calexico. Commissioner Colón noted that project is a good idea but the bulk of the funds will be spent to hire a Coordinator, not for direct services. Commissioner Kim argued that agencies need to hire staff in order to manage the programs; he questioned why the Commission cannot pay salaries and whether this is a policy they will follow. Commissioner Hodgkin stated that the description did not mention number of families or children being served other than hiring a Coordinator; she commented that mini-grants should ideally have an Immediate impact. Having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried; 2-opposed (J.Kim, R.Hodgkin).

A motion was made by Commissioner Deol and it was seconded by Commissioner Hodgkin to invite the Calexico Unified School District to submit a Mini-Grant application for the Parents First Institute. Commissioner Deol noted that they will use appropriate-aged curriculums, and they are trying to help the parents with a small amount of money. Having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colón and it was seconded by Commissioner Kim to invite the Court Appointed Special Advocates to submit a Mini-Grant application for the System Enhancement for Infants 0-3 Project. Having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

A motion was made by Commissioner Deol and it was seconded by Commissioner Colón to invite the Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council to submit a Mini-Grant application for the Little Steps Project. Commissioners noted that the Project will be using a good curriculum; and parenting instruction is something the agency has been doing for many years. Having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kim to eliminate the Imperial County Free Library; however, it failed for lack of a second. Commissioner Kim commented that funds will be spent on purchases for the library and does not have a direct impact on children.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hodgkin and it was seconded by Commissioner Deol to invite the Imperial County Free Library to submit a Mini-Grant application for the Family Place Libraries Project. Funds will be used to enhance the environment within the libraries, for staff development, and to partner with specialists. Having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried; 1-Abstention (M.Colón) and 1-Opposed (J.Kim).

A motion was made by Commissioner Colón and it was seconded by Commissioner Price to invite the Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program to submit a Mini-Grant application for Project CARE. Commissioner Hodgkin noted that she has an issue funding Projects that are an extension to or supplement other bigger Projects; her preference is that mini-grant funding

focus more on special projects. Having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried; 1-Opposed (R.Hodgkin).

2. Request to Approve First 5 California Annual Report 2014-2015: The First 5 California Annual Report for FY 2014-2015 titled Early Investments for Lifelong Results was presented and briefly discussed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Deol and it was seconded by Commissioner Kim to accept and approve the First 5 California Annual Report 2014-2015. Having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried; 1-Abstention (M.Colon)

3. Request to Approve First 5 IMPACT Budget FY 2015-2016: Mr. Rodriguez explained that First 5 California is still in the process of reviewing the Request For Application that was submitted by the Commission for the First 5 Impact Program; however, they have approved the budget for this current fiscal year. Mr. Rodriguez noted that not all funds will be expensed during this fiscal year; however, we need to incorporate the budget. First 5 California is suggesting that they may approve a carry-over of funds. Mr. Rodriguez further talked about matching funds for this program, about how the PACES Stipend program will be affected, and the role of other agencies contributing as part of the match that is needed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Deol and it was seconded by Commissioner Kim approving the First 5 Impact Budget for FY 2015-2016 as presented. Having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

4. First 5 IMPACT Program Update: Mr. Rodriguez noted that the Commission submitted the First 5 Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive (IMPACT) Request for Application, and the application is currently under review by First 5 California. One item within the application that required further clarification was to “describe how the Commission will recruit and engage centers that serve infants and toddlers.” First 5 California also noted that we are exceeding the targets that they had identified for us. There may be additional funds later on that we may be eligible for; however, this is still not finalized. At this point, we are waiting to finalize the RFA and to amend the contract we signed earlier in the year.
5. Second Quarter Progress Reports FY 2015-2016: Data for Second Quarter Reports are not yet finalized and staff is currently working with one of the Projects in order to complete the report. Based on preliminary data, projects have expensed 42% of their budgets, and they have served an estimated 6,500 individuals with the majority being children 0 to 5. Once completed the reports will be sent to Commissioners via email.

VIII. Commissioner Comments

No comments were made at this time.

IX. Adjournment

A motion adjourning the Commission meeting was made by Commissioner Deol and it was seconded by Commissioner Colon. Having noted no further comments and by unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for June 2, 2016.