



Imperial County Children and Families First Commission
MINUTES
Meeting of February 6, 2025

I. Call to Order

This Regular Meeting of First 5 Imperial was called to order by Karla Sigmond, Chairperson, at 3:32 p.m. The meeting was held at the First 5 Imperial, Training Center, at 1240 State Street, El Centro, CA.

II. Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Barbara Deol

Becky Green

Paula Llanas

Joong Kim

Fred Miramontes

Karla Sigmond

Commissioners Absent:

Yurii Camacho

Danila Vargas

Michael Kelley

Staff:

Julio C. Rodriguez

Fernando Valenzuela

III. Public Comment

Mr. Alex Cardenas, the Executive Director for the Imperial County Court Appointed Advocates (CASA) addressed the Commission, noting that they had received funding from the Commission for over 15 years, and wanted to highlight the Commission's site visit program. He indicated that a recipient of a First 5 Imperial grant is guaranteed at least one site visitation, and Mr. Valenzuela is the individual responsible for conducting site visits to funded programs. Mr. Cardenas noted that he wanted to recognize his work as Mr. Valenzuela had visited their program previously and had a very productive site visit where CASA was able to explain what their educational surrogacy program does with children under the custody of the juvenile court system that are 0-5 years of age, and their work with the Department of Social Services. He indicated that these site visits are part of the rigorous quarterly reporting process required by First 5 Imperial. Mr. Cardenas stated that he appreciated the regular sit visits and wanted to recognize Mr. Valenzuela for the sites visits and professionalism that he has demonstrated, and by helping them stay focused on the objectives of the program.

IV. Adoption of Minutes

A motion to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 5, 2024, 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.

V. Consent Calendar Items

The consent calendar items consisted of the monthly financial reports for August 2024. A motion to approve the consent calendar items was made by Commissioner Deol, and seconded by Commissioner Miramontes, and having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

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

1. Request to Approve the Release of the Request for Proposal General Grant Guidelines 2025-2028: Commissioner Sigmond asked Mr. Rodriguez for a summary of the request for proposal for the First 5 Imperial General Grant that is being considered for release, whereby Mr. Rodriguez began by indicating that Commissioner Green had just joined the meeting and indicated that the Commission was currently reviewing the first item on the agenda. He then provided a brief summary of the request for proposal, indicating that the document for consideration had previously been presented to the Commission, and that recommended changes to the proposal had been incorporated from those discussions. There is a summary of the process that was provided and noted that one important matter that had not been discussed previously was the fact the process depends on prospective proposers submitting their complete RFP packages to the Imperial County Purchasing Department, though this part of the process has been complicated in a sense due to the fact that the Purchasing Department location is closed due to construction, and the department does not know when the office would re-open, particularly for the interest of having RFPs delivered to their location as has always been the case. Mr. Granados, from the purchasing department, indicated that they were not sure when the work would be complete and that he recommended that the RFPs be delivered to First 5 Imperial's offices this time around.

Mr. Rodriguez indicated that the letter of intent for the RFP would be due on March 6th, and the proposal itself would be due on the 31st of March, and therefore it would not be worth the risk of relying on the construction being complete and the Purchasing Department to be open by those dates. He noted that the First 5 Imperial Office would work best at this point, and that this change in location is already reflected in the RFP application and Timetable. He noted that the recommendation was for the Commission to accept this change along with the others that had previously been included in previous discussions in order to ensure that the process is not affected by this circumstance, and that once the Purchasing Department is open then the need to have time sensitive documents submitted for competitive funding purposes then the Commission will once again go with that process.

Commissioner Llanas had asked if the Commission had ever considered using the County's electronic process for submitting competitive applications, as the County has moved away from paper submissions and has implemented a process for electronic submission. Mr. Rodriguez noted that since the Commission is a separate entity from the County, and though we do use some of the County's services, this process has not been made available through the Purchasing Department. He stated that historically this is the process that County Purchasing has offered to the Commission, though he indicated that he would inquire into the matter as that may be more feasible for future RFP cycles, though he did indicate that the current process has been set, and if approved, making that type of change at this time may affect some proposer's ability to comply, in addition to making any changes in timely manner, ensuring that these changes are correct and would cover all basis to ensure submitting proposals electronically without problems would take time. Mr. Rodriguez asked Commissioner Llanas about the process, where she had indicated that in the past County Departments that solicited competitive bids for RFPs would also request hard copies, though recently all of the departments that use the system have gone electronically, though since the Commission is not a County department this may be why the service has not been offered. Mr. Rodriguez appreciated the information from

Commissioner Llanas and indicated that he would look into the process. Commissioner Green noted that if the applications were submitted electronically that it would be so much easier, and Commissioner Deol stated that if the Commission checks in with the County it may work or if the Commission can have its own system. Mr. Rodriguez noted that currently the way this RFP is set up it would work better to leave it as it is, because moving to set up a new system to receive electronic submission could have its complications for the Commission, and there may be issues for interested proposers in actually submitting an application. In addition, he stated that as the process is too short at this time, incorporating the County's electronic portal may also have complications, such as training for staff and ensuring that all information is included in the RFP application. Also, he indicated that the County may not be able to support the Commission this way, noting the decision by the County to remove First 5 Imperial from accessing the Auditor's web-based system to view financial statements and other general ledger information. Commissioner Sigmond recommended that this may be something the Commission would consider for the next general grant cycle, and that First 5 should stay with the current process.

Commissioner Kim inquired about how the Commission backs up data, due to any problems that there could be with computers. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the Commission stores hard copies of all data and information related to grantee data and other Commission information, in addition to regularly backing up computer files. Commissioner Kim noted that it is important to have this type of backup system in case something happens to our computers, such as a virus or anything else.

Commissioner Sigmond reiterated that the Commission will proceed by using the First 5 Office as the location to submit RFP applications and therefore move forward with the process. She then proceeded to ask if there was anything else related to the RFP process or any questions from Commissioners. Noting no further Comment she asked for motion. Commissioner Miramontes made a motion to approve the release of the First 5 General Grant Request for Proposal Application, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Deol. Commissioner Sigmond asked for any further discussion on the request for proposal, and with no additional questions or comments the motion carried with all in favor.

2. Request to Approve the Release of the Community Development Mini-Grant Request for Proposal 2025-2026: Commissioner Sigmond introduced the Community Development Mini-Grant Request for Proposal for FY 2025-2026 as the next item under consideration and asked Mr. Rodriguez for a summary and to provide any updates or proposed changes. Mr. Rodriguez noted that a copy of the mini-grant application had been provided in the agenda packet and that there were no major changes in the application other than, as with the general grant application previously discussed, the change in the location where the application would be submitted, which is the Commission office. He highlighted the fact that one of the concerns of the Commission had been releasing both the general grant and the mini-grant application at the same time, where he further noted that the release dates are different, with the general grant being released on March 6th, and the mini-grant application being released on March 13th. In addition, he noted that there were no conflicts in the time schedules and referred to the timeline on the mini-grant application.

He then proceeded to provide a summary of the application, noting that the mini-grant application is a two-step process, and the first consideration is for the release of Step 1, which would require applicants to submit a Statement of Interest to Apply form for consideration to

move forward to Step 2 of the process, which would then entail submitting a complete mini-grant application. He noted that the complete mini-grant application process under Step 2 is not complicated, and only requires a maximum of six pages of narrative, some basic agency information and a copy of their annual audit report. He stated that Step 1 would be released on February 13, 2025 and that the Statement of Interest to Apply form deadline is March 13, 2025 by 4:00 pm, and must be submitted to the Commission office on or before that time, regardless of the postmark date, for consideration for Step 2 of the process. Commissioner Deol asked if \$150,000 is the amount reserved for the mini-grant application with a maximum request of \$25,000. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the \$150,000 was the amount reserved for mini-grants, though \$25,000 maximum was from previous years, as the Commission had agreed to increase the maximum award to \$30,000 due to increases in costs. He noted that with the amount reserved the Commission may be able to award between 5 to 7 mini-grants.

He then completed the summary of the mini-grant and the application process. Ms. Sigmond asked Commissioners if there were any other questions. No questions regarding the Community Development Mini-Grant Application or process were noted, and therefore she asked for a motion to approve release of the application for a new round of mini-grant awards. A motion to approve the mini-grant application and release for new round of funding was made by Commissioner Deol and seconded by Commissioner Green. With no further discussion or public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

3. Request to Approve Agreement for Special Services for General Request for Proposal Evaluator:

Mr. Rodriguez stated that the Commission will move to contract with individuals to form the evaluation team that is used to score and provide comments or insight into general grants submitted to the Commission for consideration. He noted that the agreement or contract that the Commission uses was included in the agenda packet for consideration. Evaluators that are contracted to score and assess proposals are from outside of Imperial County and have experience in evaluating proposals and are familiar with issues relevant to children 0-5 years of age; generally these 0-5 years old issues are consistent with the Commission's strategic plan, such as child development issues in general.

He noted that the contract provide is an updated version of the agreement that has previously been used to contract evaluators to review RFPs. He noted that a request was being made for the Commission to approve of the agreement/contract and that the only changes that were made to the documents were the dates that would be used and an increase in the hourly reimbursement rate. He noted that previously the rate was \$65.00 per hour, and the recommendation being made is to increase the rate to \$75.00 per hour. Commissioner Miramontes asked if, other than the change in hourly rate, the contract was essentially the same. Mr. Rodriguez noted that it was the same contract, and that it is one that has worked well for the Commission over a number of funding cycles. Commissioner Miramontes noted that he felt that the contract would serve the process well.

Commissioner Sigmond then asked members if there were any other questions or comments regarding the agreement. With no further questions, she then asked for a motion to approve of the Agreement for Special Services for RFP evaluators. A motion to approve of the agreement for special services to contract with RFP evaluators was made by Commissioner Green and seconded by Commissioner Deol. With no further discussion or public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

4. Request to Approve Administrative Costs Report FY 2023-2024: Ms. Sigmond stated that the next item was the request to approve of the administrative costs report for 2023-2024 and asked Mr. Rodriguez to go over the report. He then noted that on page 80 was a copy of the administrative costs report for FY 2023-2024 that is being presented to Commissioners for approval. He noted that the administrative costs report is in line with the Commission's annual report submitted to First 5 California and the numbers were provided to the Commission by Mr. Roger Tubach, the CPA currently conducting the FY 2023-2024 audit of the Commission's financial statements. He noted that the breakdown of the report is consistent with the information asked for by First 5 California and the annual audit. He further stated that primarily, the Commission is required under the Children and Families Act of 1998, and as a result of expanded audits, to report on costs associated with administrative costs both budgeted and expensed by the Commission, and these costs must be approved of by the Commission during an open meeting. He noted that during the yearly audit process, this report is presented to the Commission for approval, and that the Commission has approved of a policy that include the maximum proportion of the budget that may be used for administrative costs, which is 15% and includes a definition of administrative costs. He stated that the report being presented at this time for approval is the Administrative Costs report that reflects actual expenses for FY 2023-2024.

Mr. Rodriguez noted that the actual expenses reflect three categories of costs identified by the Commission that a relative to determining administrative cost totals, which are Administrative Costs, Program Costs and Evaluation Cost. He then indicated that the report included in the packet and the executive summary show that Administrative Costs represented almost 9.5%, more specifically 9.47% of the total expenditures reported for FY 2023-2024, and that additionally, Program Costs represented 81.84%, and Evaluation Costs 8.69%. Commissioner Green asked what the total percentage of administrative costs that may be authorized by the Commission, where Mr. Rodriguez noted that the maximum again was 15%, where the Commission had approved of this cap during the 2005-2006 fiscal year, when all Commissions were required to adopt an administrative costs police as a result of the expanded audits for First 5s; he noted that all Commissions are required to do this, though the amount set for administrative costs will vary due to the size of the County Commission; small counties may have a higher percentage of their budget going to administrative costs, where it may be very different for a medium to larger County Commission. Therefore, he stated that when the Commission set the policy, 15% was the recommendation due to the size of Imperial County and the revenue it receives through Proposition 10, but that Commissions can revise their policy based on needs and fiscal issues impacting a Commission, which could entail amending the policy or amount. Commissioner Llanas noted that the amount seemed low compared to the policy, where Commissioner Green agreed, and Mr. Rodriguez noted that when planning the Commission works to keep these costs low. Commissioner Deol noted that at one point the total expenses for these costs were around 11% but now these do seem lower. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the primary reason for these costs being lower now is based on staff reductions, since the fiscal analyst and office supervisor positions were eliminated, and were mostly administrative costs associated with them.

Commissioner Sigmond asked if there was any further discussion, and with none noted, she then asked for a motion to approve of the Administrative Costs Report for FY 2023-2025. A

motion to approve was made by Commissioner Deol and seconded by Commissioner Miramontes; with no further discussion the motion carried with all in favor.

5. Request to Approve IMPACT Legacy Program Budget Revision FY 2024-2025: Commissioner Sigmond asked Mr. Rodriguez to address the item to approve the budget revision for the IMPACT Legacy Program. He noted that what was being asked was for approval to change the budget for the IMPACT Legacy Program for FY 2024-2025 which is a grant from First 5 California. He stated that for the previous year, FY 2023-2024, there were funds for IMPACT Legacy that were not expensed, which totaled \$32,185.64. He noted that First 5 California permitted Commissions to present a budget for FY 2024-2025 that would include carryover funds from the previous year. First 5 Imperial submitted a new budget for this request to First 5 California, through the Region 9 Hub, for consideration that includes the carryover amount. He noted that on page 83 there was the GAN Amendment document which was submitted for this request. He noted that the second column represents the annual budget for IMPACT Legacy allocated by First 5 California, and the column shows a revised budget, which actually represents expenditures for the year, and then the next, 4th column represents the original FY 2024-2025 budget totaling \$288,010.50, and then the 5th column is the revised new budget, which indicates what will change in the budget by adding the \$32,185.64 in carryover, which would increase the annual budget for this year to \$320,196.14. He further noted that the request is being made for the Commission to approve of these changes, as they were already approved at the State level, and that this information will be presented to the Imperial County Auditor's Department for changes to the current budget to reflect the revisions.

Commissioner Green moved to approve of the revisions to the IMPACT Legacy Program Budget for FY 2024-2025, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Miramontes. Commissioner Sigmond noted that there was a motion, and asked if there were any other questions or discussion over the revision. With no further discussion noted, the motion carried with all in favor.

6. Annual Audit Report FY 2023-2024 Update: Mr. Rodriguez proceeded to provide an update of the annual audit report of the Commission's financial statement for FY 2023-2024, where he indicated all County Commissions are required to submit an annual audit report, where the due date for this report is October 31, 2024, and that this report will be submitted significantly late this year. He noted that the primary reason for this is based on the fact that the auditor that was originally contracted to complete the report notified the Commission that they would no longer be able to contract with the Commission, therefore the Commission worked to contract for accounting services from CPA that would be available, charge a reasonable rate, and that has the capacity to do government audits. The Commission then contracted with Mr. Roger Tubach, a CPA that had previously audited the Commission's financial statements, and that he is currently working on completing that report. Staff did request an original extension to submit the report through December 7th, 2024, though Mr. Tubach has not been able to complete the report, namely due to previous engagements that he would need to complete and the peer review process that he would be going through before being able to draft an audit report for the Commission. He noted that the Commission did ask for another extension through February 6, 2025. In addition a plan has been submitted to First 5 California on completion of the audit report, though the request through February 6, 2025 had already been acknowledged by the First 5 Audits Oversight Unit for the State Controller's office, and the plan was also submitted.

He further indicated that Mr. Tubach should be completing the report soon, as he has already compiled the total revenue and expense summaries for the year, which he provided for the annual report and for identification of administrative costs that were presented to the Commission. At this point he only has to complete drafting the report, though he had reported to the office that he was ill this week and would need more time to complete the first draft of the document for our review. Staff were scheduled to meet with Mr. Tubach, though because of his health that meeting was rescheduled via text. Therefore because of these circumstances the Commission did request another short extension to submit the report and they could contact Mr. Tubach if they need an update on the process. He noted that there was an email from the State Commission regarding the report, and that some Commissioner's may have received it as well; the email was related to the request to submit the plan to have the audit report completed. He noted that this is where we are at this time, and that the report should be ready within the next few days. Commissioner Deol asked what would happen if the report were not submitted. He stated that if the report is not in but the due date the Commission may not be included in the annual report, and if the audit is not submitted then revenue may be withheld until the report is and approved of by the State Controller's office. He did note that the information submitted for the annual report was accepted, and that at this point it will be important to finish the report because June is right around the corner, and therefore would need to begin preparing for the FY 2024-2025 annual audit as well. Therefore, he felt that it would be important to provide the update to the Commission, and that he is working with Mr. Tubach to try to get the report completed as soon as possible.

7. Second Quarter First 5 Imperial Funded Projects for FY 2024-2025: Mr. Rodriguez had noted that funds had been awarded to a number of agencies at a local level for FY 2024-2025, and that this includes 6 general or major grants and 6 mini-grant projects that are serving children, their families or caregivers throughout the County. He noted that there was a summary provided in the packet on the second quarter progress, and highlighted that Mr. Cardenas, during the public comment, had indicated that the Commission has a rigorous process for grantees to report back to the Commission, including site visits and everything else that entails oversight. He stated that on January 15th, 2025 the second quarter reports were due from funded projects, and that as of today 5 of 6 major grant reports, and 4 of 6 mini-grant reports, noting that one mini-grant had requested that their contract be terminated and the project was never realized because the UC system did not sign the agreement to engage in services for FY 2024-2025 due to staffing issues related to realizing the project goals and objectives. They did let the Commission know that they did not have the staffing capacity to complete the services. He also noted that he did provide, in the summary, an expense report for grantees, indicating that the only one that is not accurate is the one for the Burn Institute as they had not submitted their second quarter report yet, and that currently the report shows that they have only spent 18%, where the actual total may be closer to 40% for the second quarter.

He also stated that though the other expense reports are included they may change as the internal review of grantee expenses has not begun yet, but that as today those are the expenses that have been reported by grantees. Commissioner Deol asked if the report would be submitted, and Mr. Rodriguez noted that it would, and asked Mr. Valenzuela, the Compliance Coordinator, if the Burn Institute has submitted anything as of yet. Mr. Valenzuela affirmed that they had not submitted anything to the Commission office as of today. Commissioner Deol asked if we had gone to their office to request the information, where Mr. Rodriguez noted that

their offices are in San Diego, though that they do have a local office, but the individual that works there is engaged in providing the services and does not draft the reports to the Commission. That the young lady that works in the office for the Burn Institute is really good, though would not be able to take care of authorizing submitting a report or providing any financial backup required by the Commission. Commissioner Sigmond thanked Mr. Rodriguez for the update and asked Commission members if there were any more questions regarding the second quarter report update.

8. Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan Memorandum of Understanding: Mr. Rodriguez reported on the current status of the Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that is currently being negotiated with First 5 Imperial through the local Managed Care Plans. He noted, that as previously reported, that Managed Care Plans are required to attempt to engage with specific agencies through MOU templates developed by the California Department of Health Care Services, which includes all First 5 Commissions. He noted that a copy of the MOU Template is contained in the packet for Commission members, and that currently he has been meeting with the individual Managed Care Plans that are working in Imperial County which include the Community Healthcare Plan of Imperial Valley and Kaiser-Permanente. He noted that Health Net is the contractor for the Community Healthcare Plan of Imperial Valley, and would be working through them on this process. He stated that these meetings would be coming in the next week or two, in addition to identifying what the role of Kaiser-Permanente would be here in Imperial County since their presence here is new. Also, he indicated that it will be critical to establish the scope of work in the MOU with these plans, in addition to expectations considering that the Commission has limited staff that will be available to work on this, though of course if these services are intended to support the families that our grantees serve then we can work something out.

He indicated that these meetings would be to go over the MOUs with the Managed care plans, in addition, it will be important to check in with other County Commissions to see where they are with their Managed Care Plans, particularly if any other Commissions have already completed their negotiations with their local Managed Care Plans. Commissioner Deol noted that these services are important, even though we don't really know what they are doing and how it will work out, though possibly we will be able to refer families to these plans for services and get more families registered for their programs. Mr. Rodriguez agreed, and noted that the State of California is moving to ensure that quality improvement efforts are implemented within these plans and how they provide services to their members, in addition to taking advantage of the new CalAIM benefits, and services provided by Community Health Workers or Enhanced Care Managers. He noted that these individuals go out and work individually or in groups with members of these plans and there would be possibilities for reimbursement.

He did state that the purpose of the MOU itself would be to coordinate services between agencies, and not related to subcontracting for any other services, such as the Community Health Workers or Enhanced Care Management, though that there are other possibilities for subcontract. Mr. Rodriguez noted that some agencies are already subcontracting for these services, such as Volunteers of America, where they have a Community Health Worker and Enhanced Care Manager providing services to member families and billing the managed Care Plans for these services. Commissioner Llanas noted that Social Services receives monies from one of the Managed Care Plans for specific services to homeless individuals, and the services are quite extensive. She also noted that it is not clear what the services are that Kaiser will be

providing, and they do not offer a lot in Imperial County, and wanting to know what the propose to offer members. Also, she indicated their programs are heavily impacts because of the needs that they also have contracts with DCFS and IHFS where they have to go into an MOU with both programs, though have questions about the services they were providing. She indicated that they wanted something more robust and with Health Net it is possible that where would be more services they would be able to deploy quicker, and Mr. Rodriguez indicated that it would be easier to work with them at this point since they are established and serving on a countywide basis. Commissioner Green noted that it is very difficult to get and Kaiser services here in Imperial County, and was not aware of where they had any agreements with local providers, therefore those health plans may end up requiring their members to go to the San Diego or Riverside areas for services. Othe Commission members agreed, and Commissioner Llanas noted that it was difficult to ensure and that getting services from them in the County would be challenging. Mr. Rodriguez affirmed that they did not have a clear presence, though noted that hey did have a presence in at least 32 Counties stateside at this point for Managed Care Plan services. Commissioner Llanas indicated that they should be in all counties at this point. Commissioner Kim asked if Kaiser only serves members through their own hospitals or clinics, and noted that we do not have any. Perhaps they are trying to open the door for this. Mr. Rodriguez noted that since it is a Managed Care Plan contracting with the State of California, then they may only be required to reimburse for Medi-Cal services in general, as long as the providers working with individuals is able to provide the services. In addition, Commissioner Llanas noted that there would also be an issue with transportation due to the nature of the families in the County that are part of the Medi-Cal system, where we may agree to something that we are unable to provide. Ms. Green noted that in her dealings with Kaiser, she needs to travel for any services to San Diego, and that for our populations that will be very difficult. Commissioner Kim noted that from what he understood the local hospital was taken over by UC San Diego, and that they use the location to ensure that families that go for services are transferred to San Diego, though he was not sure if that was the case with Kaiser.

Mr. Rodriguez noted that there is still no MOU, and that an MOU would not be ratified until the Commission approved for staff to move forward and engage in an MOU with the local Managed Care Plans.

VII. Commissioner Comments

Commission Kim noted that the oil he provided to everyone was an anti-viral oil, which would be good for the flu season, and for each to use at night and that they would sleep well. He also stated that the oil would help sooth the throat, which tends to get sore at night. That this oil should be used on the throat every night, especially during the flu season or there is some coughing. Commissioners agreed that there was something going around. Commissioner Sigmond thanked him for his generosity, and Commissioner Deol agreed that it may help.

Commissioner Sigmond noted that the ICOE Child Development Conference was a success and wanted to thank everyone that was involved, including First 5 and the Imperial Valley Community College. She noted that First 5 provided the mini-grant funds to support the conference and that the event was in both newspapers. She felt that the support of the mini-grant really supported the event.

Commissioner Green noted the Imperial Valley Community College has begun providing instruction on the CLASS classroom observation tool. She noted that they would be able to pass the support for this on to others, and that the College was able to get it at no cost. Two individuals had already completed the training and two additional ones would be participating soon. Mr. Rodriguez noted that if there would be an issue with funding then to check with the Commission office to see how it could be supported.

VIII. Adjournment

Having no further business to discuss, Commissioner Green motioned to adjourn, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Vargas. The meeting was adjourned at 5:19 pm. With all in favor.