



EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE IN SOLANO COUNTY

HOW ARE WE DOING?



FY2020/21 Report



Helping People Build Better Communities

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December 2015, the First 5 Solano Commission approved a 2016 Strategic Plan Update, which adopted a new priority area of *Systems Change* to improve how early childhood systems operate in order to make the best use of increasingly limited resources available across the state. First 5 Solano's Systems Change goal is that *early childhood systems are strengthened, integrated, expanded, and sustained*. To achieve this goal, First 5 Solano adopted an ambitious action plan to address four aspects of systems change in Solano County, and has continued to make progress in each of these areas. Since the plan's adoption, staff have refined the original action plan to include the most feasible and relevant efforts. The following is a summary of the key outcomes for FY2020/21 for each of the four systems change result areas.

Systems are strengthened with the increased capacity of providers.

- First 5 Solano, in partnership with Solano County Health and Social Services, Employment and Eligibility, hosted poverty trainings delivered by Aha! Process, Inc.: "Bridges out of Poverty", attended by 221 participants, and "Emotional Poverty", attended by 173 participants.
- First 5 Solano participated in the Solano County Community Action for Racial Equity (CARE) team, who presented six trainings on "Advancing Racial Equity in Government", and the Solano County Equity Collaborative, which organized a Solano Equity Summit via Zoom.
- Eight professionals in the county, including First 5 Solano's Health and Education Specialist, were certified to provide trauma-informed trainings, and delivered 12 trainings in FY2020/21.
- First 5 Solano sponsored a Results Based Accountability (RBA) training for 35 professionals to help them communicate their programs' contribution toward the health of the community.
- First 5 Solano implemented a Request for Applications (RFA) process for its annual grants that encouraged and supported new community partners to apply. This resulted in a significant increase in the number and quality of applications over previous years.
- First 5 Solano supported the professional development of early care and education (ECE) providers through 21 professional development trainings and a virtual ECE conference.
- Twenty-seven providers were trained and accredited to provide the evidence-based Triple P parent education program with fidelity.

Systems are expanded and sustained with leveraged or new financial resources.

- First 5 Solano met regularly with funders and successfully submitted or supported the submission of 11 grants, totaling \$4.8 million, in FY2020/21. Since July 2016, over \$16 million has been brought into the county through the efforts of First 5 Solano and its partners.

- First 5 Solano received an earmark of \$2 million in the FY2021/22 California State Budget as a result of Assemblymember Jim Frazier’s advocacy on its behalf. This earmark supports tenant improvements and initial operations of a First 5 Center in Fairfield.
- First 5 Solano received over \$600,000 in matching funding from the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) for parent education, developmental services, and mental health trainings.
- First 5 Solano successfully requested over \$1 million in funding from the CARES Act to support child care slots, stipends for licensed child care providers, and COVID-19 supplies for agencies serving children 0-5 and their families. In addition to COVID-19 supplies funded through the CARES Act, First 5 Solano received \$135,000 worth of diapers, wipes, and other health and safety supplies from First 5 California and community partners, including Kaiser Permanente, Touro University, and Baby2Baby.
- The Vallejo First 5 Center operated using blended funding from the following sources: Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, First 5 Solano, Solano County MHSA, and Kaiser Permanente Northern California Community Benefit Programs (Kaiser Permanente).

Systems are integrated with increased cross-systems understanding, resource sharing, referral, and collaboration.

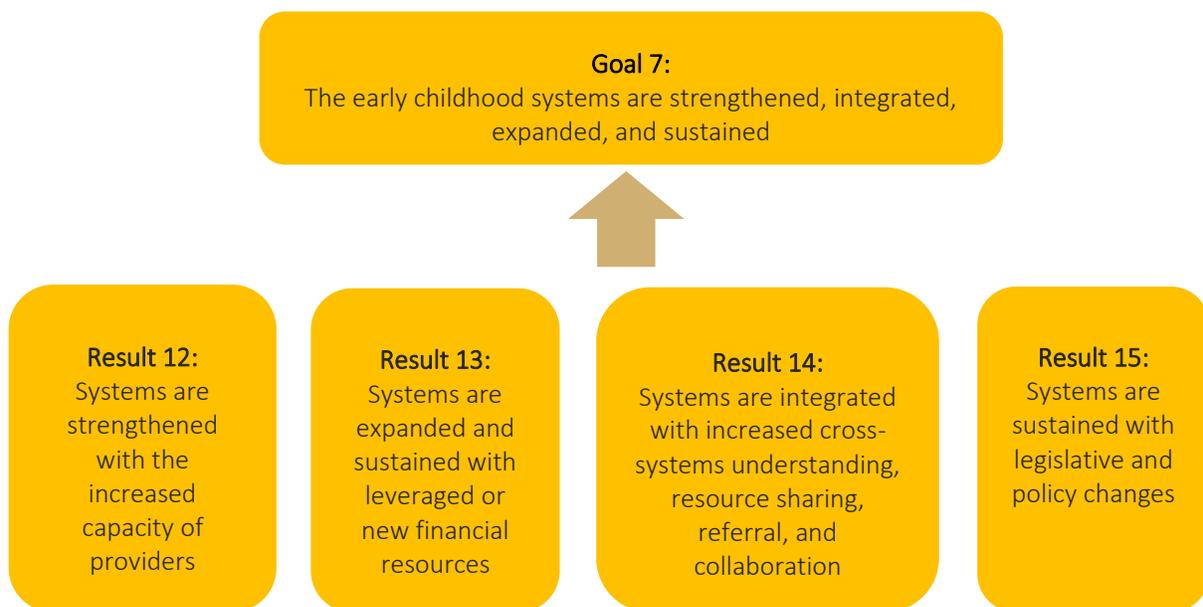
- Solano Kids Thrive (SKT), a county-wide collaboration funded by First 5 Solano, sponsored eight screenings of the film *Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope* and developed the Resilient Solano website, a web-based hub for the Solano community to understand the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
- First 5 Solano convened or played a key role in five cross-sector collaboratives to promote service coordination and alignment among providers serving young children and families.
- Help Me Grow (HMG) Solano’s steering committee met three times, and the HMG Solano call center received 2,031 calls, with approximately 78% of callers receiving a referral.
- The Vallejo First 5 Center’s Community Resource Specialist provided 214 families with consultations, assistance with linkages to multiple resources, and follow-up services. The First 5 Center also offered 68 six-week classes and distributed basic needs items.

Systems are sustained with legislative and policy changes.

- First 5 Solano continued to advance the Commission’s Legislative Platform by engaging state and local policymakers and submitting or signing on to letters and emails to state leaders. One statewide request advocated for \$20 million from the state budget for First 5 agencies to play an early childhood systems convener role. While it was not ultimately funded, First 5 Solano’s Vallejo First 5 Center was highlighted statewide as a prime example of systems integration.
- In June 2019, the Solano County Board of Supervisors established a data-driven Community Investment Fund (CIF) of \$2 million annually. In FY2020/21, First 5 Solano managed the RFP process for the Transitional Age Youth and annual grants, and managed contracts for mental health, housing, homelessness, and annual grants.

INTRODUCTION

In December 2015, the First 5 Solano Commission approved a 2016 Strategic Plan Update, which added the priority area of *Systems Change* to First 5 Solano’s strategic framework. At that time, First 5 Commissions across the state, including First 5 Solano, were facing a decline in Proposition 10 tobacco tax funding. First 5 Solano also operates in a county that has limited sources of funding outside of government. The county ranks last of all Bay Area counties when it comes to foundation funding: just \$6 per capita was given in Solano in 2016, compared to \$93 per Napa resident, the closest comparable county.¹ In that context, First 5 Solano found itself needing to find new, more efficient ways to provide the same level of high-quality services with fewer resources. Over the last five years, the importance of transforming how early childhood systems operate and work with one another has only increased as the COVID-19 pandemic and deep-seated systemic inequities have significantly impacted children, families, and service providers in Solano County. First 5 Solano’s efforts in this area have been guided by a goal to strengthen, integrate, expand, and sustain early childhood systems, with four distinct result areas (see graphic below).



In 2016, First 5 Solano adopted an ambitious action plan to achieve these results, and each year since, it has developed an implementation plan and tracked and reported progress towards achieving the objectives in the plan. This report summarizes the progress First 5 Solano has made towards early childhood systems change in FY2020/21.

RESULT: STRENGTHENED SYSTEMS

Result 12: Systems are strengthened with the increased capacity of providers.

Strategy 1: Increase the service delivery capacity of providers to ensure more equitable access, experiences, and outcomes regardless of class, race, sexual orientation, disability, age, or prior life experiences.

As in other communities in the state and nation, children and families in Solano County face different experiences, opportunities, and outcomes based on factors like socioeconomic status, race, sexual orientation, disability, and where they live. These long-standing disparities are the result of systems – including education, health, housing, and employment – that were not created to produce equitable outcomes or experiences and in fact can perpetuate inequity in their design.ⁱⁱ First 5 Solano has engaged in capacity building efforts in the county to address discrimination, disparities, and marginalization and promote equitable service access.

Achievements in FY2020/21:

Key Activity: Explore strategies to increase cultural competency of service providers.

- First 5 Solano, in partnership with Solano County Employment and Eligibility, hosted seven poverty trainings delivered by Aha! Process, Inc. for non-profit, for-profit, education, government, healthcare, and other community-based organizations, and Solano County departments:
 - Four virtual one-day “Bridges Out of Poverty” trainings were held for 221 attendees. “Bridges Out of Poverty” provided tools and strategies to prevent, reduce, and alleviate poverty. Attendees gave the trainings an overall rating of 9.6 out of 10 and rated the sessions 6.6 out of 7 in terms of how it helped them build their knowledge and skills.
 - Three one-day virtual “Emotional Poverty” trainings were held for 173 total attendees. This training helped attendees understand the origins of and learn how to reduce anger, anxiety, and avoidance. Attendees rated the trainings 9.2 out of 10 overall and rated the sessions 6.5 out of 7 with regards to how well it helped them build their knowledge and skills.
- First 5 Solano staff has been participating in the Solano County CARE team monthly meetings since FY2018/19, and a First 5 Solano Program Manager is one of the trainers for the group’s “Advancing Racial Equity in Government” trainings. This training is designed to build awareness of the history of race; implicit and explicit bias; individual, institutional, and structural racism; and how the lives of both providers and clients are impacted by racism. Members of the CARE team presented six “Advancing Racial Equity” trainings to 98 people from Solano County Health and Social Services (H&SS), other county departments, and nonprofits. First 5 Solano hosted a training in March 2021 for First 5 Solano Commissioners and staff.

- First 5 Solano also continued to participate in quarterly meetings with the Solano County Equity Collaborative, which brings together staff from Solano County, other government agencies, nonprofits, and community-based organizations to foster equity, diversity, and inclusion through education, advocacy, policy, and systems change. The team organized the first of two Solano Equity Summits for partners and community members via Zoom in October 2020. The agenda included sessions on “Why Equity Matters”; “Equity, Trauma, and the Educational System”; “Race and the Criminal Justice System: Healing Through Community Building”; “Youth Led Intergenerational Activism”; and “How Can We Speak to Elected Officials to Move Equity Forward”.

Key Activity: Lead a trauma-informed systems approach.

- As part of the Resilient Solano Strategic Plan, First 5 Solano and Solano County Public Health continued to partner with Trauma Transformed to lead the Trauma Informed Systems (TIS) Initiative. The Initiative includes training on trauma and its effects as well as policy and environmental changes that can mitigate the experience of trauma among program staff and clients. Fifteen participants completed a TIS “train-the-trainer” session on trauma-informed principles and practices in July 2020. Since completing the TIS training, eight of these participants, including First 5 Solano’s Health and Education Specialist, were certified to provide trauma-informed trainings to promote healing systems of care. In FY2020/21, these new trainers provided 12 trainings to agencies and departments in the county, such as Solano HEALS, Solano County Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Solano County Employment and Eligibility, and Miracle Math Coaching.

12 trauma-informed trainings were provided to agencies and departments in Solano County.

Strategy 2: Increase the organizational capacity of local providers serving young children and families.

Solano County already had fewer nonprofits per capita than other Bay Area counties prior to COVID-19, and many of them operated with limited organizational capacity.ⁱⁱⁱ The COVID-19 pandemic added to the organizational challenges facing agencies serving young children and families, particularly providers within the early care and education industry. To address these needs, First 5 Solano invested in developing the organizational capacity of the nonprofits in the county who serve young children and their families.

Achievements in FY2020/21:

Key Activity: Implement priorities identified in the 2018 Nonprofit Capacity Needs Assessment: vision and impact model; board governance and leadership; and internal evaluation and learning.

- On April 12, 2021, First 5 Solano partnered with ASR to conduct a Results Based Accountability (RBA) training over Zoom to help organizations and programs communicate their contribution toward the health of the community. Thirty-five people, whose work impacts children 0-5 and their families in Solano County, attended the training. All participants said the topics covered were relevant to them, and 83% said they could apply what they learned to their work. For a

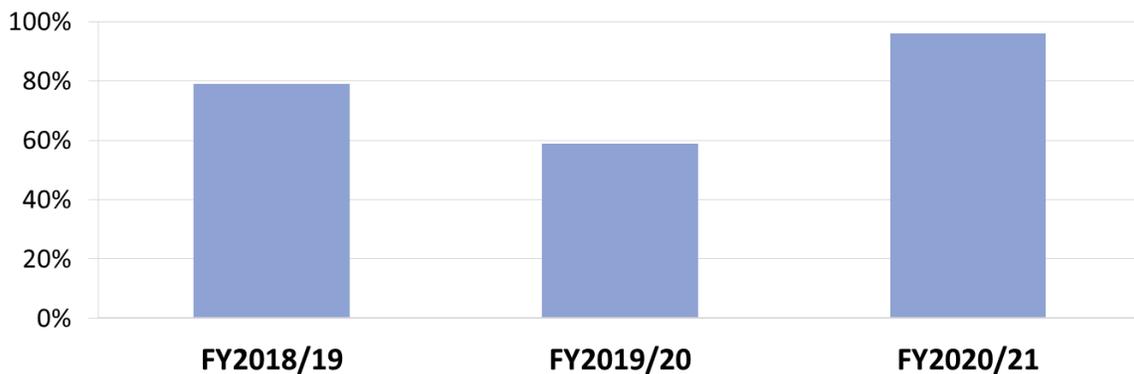
select group of five First 5 Solano grantees, ASR provided a second training session a month later to offer more individualized support.

Key Activity: Support the capacity of agencies serving children 0-5 to successfully apply for funding.

- The First 5 Solano Commission dedicated \$200,000 toward its 4th year of annual grants with the goals of:
 - Providing flexibility in responding to community needs between funding cycles;
 - Filling gaps in the community with small grants;
 - Piloting new and innovative ideas; and
 - Engaging with new community partners.

From March through May 2021, First 5 Solano implemented an RFA process that supported agencies to develop a successful application. Staff notified the public of the RFA through emails, press releases, community newsletters, the Workforce Development Board, KUIC Radio, and Facebook, and received 67 letters of intent. Applicants who submitted letters of intent were required to attend a 30-minute grant development session with teams of two First 5 Solano staff members. Staff met virtually with 49 applicants to discuss the problems they wanted to address, how the proposed projects would solve the problems, their intended outcomes, and their proposed budget. This resulted in a significant increase in the number of applications over previous years (27 in 2021 compared to 17 in 2020 and 24 in 2019), the proportion that met the grant qualifications (96% in 2021, compared to 59% in 2020 and 79% in 2019), and the total amount of funding recommended or awarded (\$199,782 recommended in 2021, compared to \$140,000 awarded in 2020 and \$152,200 awarded in 2019).

Figure 1: Percent of First 5 Solano Annual Grant Applications Meeting Qualifications, FY2018/19-FY2020/21



- In June 2021, First 5 Solano released the Community Responsive Mini-Grant opportunity. The Commission dedicated \$45,000 to this fund for FY2021/22. The fund provided small grants for a variety of activities, including outreach/community engagement, professional development, materials or equipment purchase, and limited-time programs. To make this opportunity more accessible and easier for the applicants to navigate, First 5 Solano:

- Implemented an outreach plan to inform past and potential new applicants about changes to the fund. Messages went out through Facebook, emails, and presentations at community meetings just prior to and during the launch of the new application process.
- Utilized a user-friendly Google Form application which allowed applicants to fill in the form on a variety of devices.

First 5 Solano received 50 applications from nonprofits, child care providers, and other community-based agencies in Solano County, 49 of which met the minimum criteria to be considered for funding. Ten applicants were awarded a total of \$30,000 in funding.

Strategy 3: Increase the knowledge and skills of providers serving young children and families.

There are common competencies that service providers need, such as the ability to provide trauma-informed care, implement evidence-based models of service with fidelity, and create inclusive environments for children with special needs. In partnership with other entities in the county, First 5 Solano supported the development of these competencies so providers could offer high-quality services to young children and families.

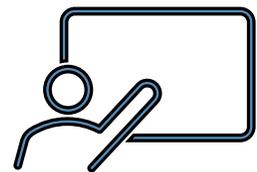
Achievements in FY2020/21:

Key Activity: Provide trainings to expand agency capacity for quality service delivery.

- Solano County Office of Education (SCOE) provided 21 virtual professional development trainings for ECE providers in English and Spanish with an average of 38 participants attending each. Workshops included a series of “Family Child Care at Its Best” seminars and California Preschool Instructional Network (CPIN) early learning virtual workshops.
- First 5 Solano cohosted a virtual conference for ECE professionals in September 2020 with 105 participants attending. Workshops were held on a variety of topics, including trauma-informed practices and self-care strategies for child care providers.
- Triple P Positive Parenting Program is an evidence-based parenting program funded by First 5 Solano to strengthen families and improve children’s developmental outcomes. To implement the program with fidelity, First 5 Solano hosted Triple P Level 2 and Level 3 trainings for a total of 27 new providers. According to pre-post surveys, participants showed significant improvement in their self-efficacy around conducting behavioral family interventions with parents. Ninety-four percent of practitioners indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with training.

Key Activity: Refer providers to other organizational development trainings.

- First 5 Solano sent out 39 informational emails throughout the year to a distribution list of 416 recipients made up of First 5 Solano grantees, community-based organizations, Solano County staff, child care providers, policymakers, and community members. These emails included information on training opportunities, highlighted when those opportunities were free, and encouraged the further sharing of training opportunities, as appropriate.



RESULT: EXPANDED SYSTEMS

Result 13: Systems are expanded and sustained with leveraged or new financial resources.

Strategy 1: Find new funding for services for young children and families.

Strategy 2: Maximize resources to fund services for children and families.

First 5 Commissions across the state, including First 5 Solano, continued to face declining revenue from Proposition 10 tobacco tax funding, and yet there are limited alternative sources of funding in Solano County. The 2016 study *Foundation Giving in the Bay Area: Who Wins and Who's Left Behind?* and its 2018 update found that the rate of foundation giving per capita in Solano was the lowest among all Bay Area counties.^{iv} To expand and sustain early childhood systems, First 5 Solano engaged in activities to raise Solano's profile and build relationships with potential funders and leaders at the state, region, county, and city levels.

Achievements in FY2020/21:

Key Activity: Raise Solano County's profile with funders.

- First 5 Solano staff continued a quarterly funders' forum for those who expressed an interest in supporting the efforts of First 5 Solano and its partners.
 - Participating funders in the forum in FY2020/21 included First 5 Solano, Kaiser Permanente, Solano Community Foundation, Solano County Public Health and Employment and Eligibility, Travis Credit Union Foundation, and Wells Fargo.
 - In the fall of 2020, the forum held three one-hour sessions to discuss the potential for funding a cash aid program for members of immigrant communities in Solano. These discussions were led by staff from Solano County Public Health and Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII) and informed by the *Bay Area Undocumented Cash Relief Network* report by ReWork the Bay. The report found that over 24,000 people in Solano are undocumented, and Solano is the only Bay Area county that does not have cash aid assistance (outside of state funds) directed toward this population. The report also confirmed Solano gets the least philanthropic attention compared to other Bay Area counties. The funders' forum assisted Catholic Charities in successfully applying for a \$25,000 grant from Genentech to start a cash aid program, and Kaiser Permanente contributed an additional \$20,000.

Key Activity: Apply for competitive funding opportunities from local, state, federal, and private funders, and track and report success of grant-seeking activities.

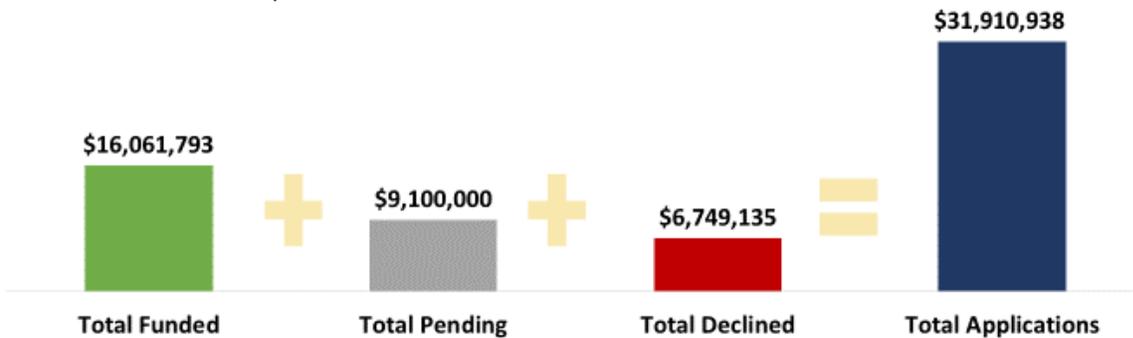
■ In FY2020/21, First 5 Solano submitted or supported the submission of 14 grants, for a total of \$15,717,210. As of June 30, 2021, 11 of these grants, totaling \$4,832,210, have been awarded, and two grants totaling \$9,100,000 are pending, with the remaining \$1,785,000 not funded. Selected grants awarded in FY2020/21 include the following:

In FY2020/21, First 5 Solano submitted or supported the submission of 14 grants. As of June 30, 2021, 11 of these grants, totaling \$4.8M have been awarded.

- First 5 Solano was awarded \$2,000,000 from the State Budget (via Assemblymember Jim Frazier) to provide funding for site selection and tenant improvements for a First 5 Center in Fairfield.
- The Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation awarded \$750,000 to Solano County: \$500,000 for the Vallejo First 5 Center and support for basic needs across the county, \$230,000 to Solano County Health & Social Services, and \$20,000 to Solano County Probation.
- The California Air Resources Board awarded Solano Transportation Authority an approximately \$300,000 Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (STEP) grant for planning and capacity building to reduce transportation disparities and pursue environmental justice in Vallejo. A First 5 Solano Commissioner is participating on the workgroup to support this effort.

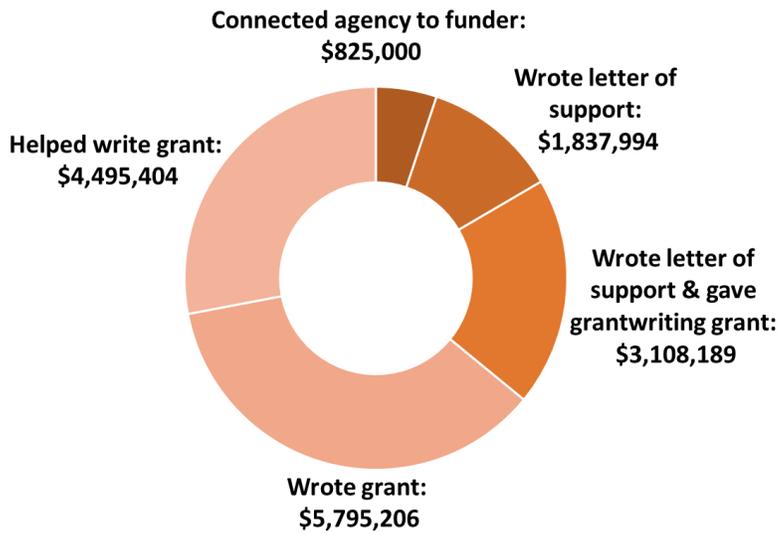
The chart below summarizes the outcome of First 5 Solano’s fundraising efforts as of June 30, 2021. Since July 2016, over \$16 million has been brought into the county through these efforts.

Figure 2: Outcome of Grants Submitted or Supported by First 5 Solano, FY2016/17-FY2020/21



The following chart indicates the roles First 5 Solano played in helping to bring in the funds awarded to agencies in Solano County since 2016. First 5 Solano either wrote or helped to write the grant proposals for about \$10.3 million dollars of the funds awarded.

Figure 3: First 5 Solano’s Contribution to Grants Received, FY2016/17-FY2020/21



Key Activity: Continue to find alternative sources to fund services.

- Since 2008, First 5 Solano has continuously received annual matching funding from MHSA. In FY2020/21, MHSA provided \$680,000 to support the Triple P program, Help Me Grow Solano, and Early Childhood Mental Health trainings. This included funding for the Help Me Grow Solano developmental screening program, which comprises a countywide system of regional screeners. Help Me Grow Solano also continued to implement online developmental screenings.
- To address the needs of child care providers, who were significantly impacted by the pandemic, First 5 Solano successfully requested the Board of Supervisors provide over \$1 million in funding from the CARES Act. The funding was allocated in the following ways:
 - Approximately \$300,000 to support child care for essential workers as part of the efforts of the Office of Emergency Services. This funding supported 76 families and a total of 124 children in accessing child care. As of December 2020, all children were transitioned from the Cooper Elementary Pop-up Child Care site in Vallejo to providers who could provide care beyond the CARES Act funding.
 - \$300,000 to provide stipends for licensed child care providers to cover increased costs due to operating at lower capacity to incorporate new social distancing requirements and increased staffing for health screenings and rigorous cleaning protocols. As of December 2020, 129 child care providers serving a total of 1,056 children were enrolled in the stipend program, preserving their ability to stay open despite increased costs in providing care.
 - \$400,000 to provide grants for social distancing equipment, individual learning supplies, cleaning supplies, and other supports through the First 5 Solano Emergency

First 5 Solano successfully requested over \$1 million in funding from the CARES Act to support child care services.

Response Fund, to increase the capacity of community providers, including child care providers, to operate during COVID-19 pandemic.

- In addition to supplies funded through the CARES Act, First 5 Solano received donations of diapers, wipes, and other health and safety supplies from First 5 California and community partners, including Kaiser Permanente, Touro University, and Baby2Baby. The total estimated value of the donated supplies distributed was \$135,000.

Key Activity: Support Census outreach to increase federal funding for Solano County.

- In FY2020/21, First 5 Solano partnered with the Solano County Complete Count Committee, the Solano County Economic Development Corporation, and the Children’s Network to lead the Census 2020 efforts to include all Solano residents. They emphasized improving the numbers counted in hard-to-count census tracts and populations, including children 0-5. This Solano Kids Count outreach campaign adapted to COVID-19-related challenges by implementing Facebook Live events, social media outreach, phone banking, and mailings. Community partners also distributed Census outreach materials directly to families. As a result of these efforts Solano County’s Census 2020 self-response rate was 74.1%, higher than the 67.9% rate for Solano County’s Census 2010. The California Statewide Census 2020 self-response rate was 69.6%, versus 68.2% in 2010.

Key Activity: Implement blended funding models and/or co-located staff to support children and families.

- In February 2020, First 5 Solano launched the Vallejo First 5 Center, an innovative service hub in Solano County’s highest-need ZIP Code. During the first year of operation, the Vallejo First 5 Center had four main sources of blended funding: Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, First 5 Solano, Solano County MHSA, and Kaiser Permanente. Yocha Dehe and First 5 Solano provided funds for general operation; Kaiser Permanente provided funds for a nutrition education/obesity prevention education program; and MHSA provided funds for a new developmental screening position. Some smaller donations were received during COVID-19, including \$4,110 from Ball Corporation to fund basic needs support. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of the blended funding streams.

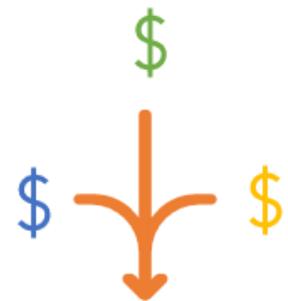
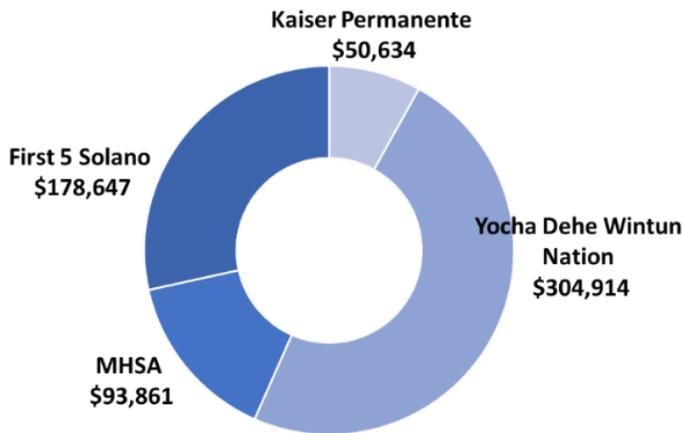


Figure 4: Vallejo First 5 Center Blended Funding Streams, FY2020/21

- Other agencies in the county have also blended funding from First 5 Solano with other funding sources to improve their sustainability, reach, and systems of care:
 - SCOE supports a robust early learning system in the county with over \$1.4 million annually from the following funding sources:
 - \$221,402 from First 5 California for the IMPACT (Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive) program, with a local match of \$40,000 from First 5 Solano, which supports the professional development of early learning and care professionals.
 - \$91,789 from the California Department of Education (CDE) for the Quality Counts California (QCC) Workforce Pathways program, which supports local early learning workforce needs across all care setting types.
 - \$324,274 from the CDE for the California State Preschool Program (CSPP) to increase the availability of subsidized early learning services for eligible children.
 - \$175,823 from the CDE for QCC (known locally as Quality Counts Solano) to support local early learning and care programs and to increase the number of low-income children in high-quality early learning and care settings.
 - \$543,378 from the CDE for Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program (IEEEP) to increase access to inclusive early learning and care programs for children with disabilities, including children with severe disabilities.
 - \$31,953 from the California Health & Human Services Agency for the Preschool Development Grant-Renewal (PDG-R) program, which intends to improve the early learning and care system by building cross-system capacity, strengthening parent connections to the system, developing a unified professional development system, and increasing the supply and quality of early learning and care opportunities.
 - With a grant from First 5 California, First 5 Solano is supporting a home visiting coordination project. Many of the programs in the project operate with a blend of funding streams, including Medi-Cal, local/county funds, CalWORKs Home Visiting Program (HVP), Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting.

RESULT: INTEGRATED SYSTEMS

Result 14: Systems are integrated with increased cross-systems understanding, resource sharing, referral, and collaboration.

Strategy 1: Utilize First 5 Solano's unique position as a multi-sector convener to increase systems integration.

Strategy 2: Enhance cross-systems understanding and procedures.

In a county with significant needs and a shortage of financial and organizational resources, the integration of service delivery is essential to avoid duplication of efforts and make the best use of scarce resources. Too often, programs and systems of care are siloed, and families are unable to access the support they need. First 5 Solano engaged in several strategies to connect, integrate, and align systems to improve service access and service quality in the county.

Achievements in FY2020/21:

Key Activity: Leverage Solano Kids Thrive Collective Impact Initiative as a vehicle to develop and implement the countywide Resiliency Plan.

- First 5 Solano continued to support Solano Kids Thrive (SKT), a collective impact initiative, in implementing the Resilient Solano Strategic Plan developed in FY2017/18. Activities this past fiscal year included the following:
 - Reviewed SKT's goals and discussed potential strategies to improve the early childhood system in Solano through 2022. The priority that rose to the top was the development of a web-based Resilient Solano portal.
 - Developed the Resilient Solano website (<https://www.acesconnection.com/g/resilient-solano>), a web-based hub for the Solano community to understand the impact of ACEs. The website, hosted by PACEs Connection, provides a calendar of trainings and events where both parents and professionals can find resources for preventing and healing trauma and for learning about ACEs and Resilience. SKT also maintained a speaker's bureau of experts who can train and raise awareness in the community.
 - Continued to support agencies to host screenings of the film *Resilience*; eight were offered in FY2020/21.
- SKT participated in six advisory group meetings for Fighting Back Partnership's Road to Resilience" project, an effort to provide intensive case management support to pregnant people with current or known history of substance use.
- In February of 2021, First 5 Solano awarded \$10,000 to Innovative Health Solutions to deliver a trauma-informed nutrition education intervention to pregnant and postnatal women to increase food knowledge and resilience.

Key Activity: Convene and participate in multi-sector meetings and collaboratives devoted to issues aligned with First 5 Solano’s mission to develop the necessary tools and procedures to mitigate system fragmentation.

- First 5 Solano convened or played a key role (i.e., as a funder and/or part of the planning team) in five countywide collaboratives to ensure services for young children and families are coordinated. Goals for these collaboratives included increasing cross-system referrals, decreasing duplication of services, and addressing gaps and barriers to services:
 1. Triple P Provider Collaborative - A collaborative of agencies and practitioners, funded to provide Triple P services, who convene to streamline referrals and outreach and provide peer support relating to the delivery of services.
 2. First 5 Solano Grantees - A meeting of First 5 Solano staff and grantees to discuss and present information on First 5 Solano funding, services provided by grantee organizations, and other information related to children 0-5.
 3. Road to Resilience Advisory Committee - A collaborative that supports the implementation of the Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) “Road to Resilience” grant, which funds services for pregnant women with substance abuse issues and mothers with substance-exposed infants.
 4. Solano Kids Thrive - A collaborative that is working to ensure residents, agencies, and the community are aware of the effects of ACEs and are taking steps to prevent and heal from trauma.
 5. Quality Counts Early Learning Consortium - A consortium to review progress and make decisions related to improving and supporting the quality of early care and education programs in Solano County.
- First 5 Solano also participated in 13 other cross-system collaboratives held throughout the county:
 1. Child Abuse Prevention Council - A collaborative to improve the quality and integration of services for children and families, specifically focusing on child abuse prevention.
 2. Local Child Care Planning Council - A council to plan and review progress for child care and development services based on the needs of families in the local community.
 3. Healthy Solano Collaborative - A community steering committee to identify health needs of residents and strategies to address them.
 4. Solano College Child Development and Family Studies Advisory Council - A council that meets to share and discuss early learning workforce educational attainment needs and requirements.
 5. Solano Partnership Against Violence - A collaborative devoted to developing a more comprehensive and systematic approach to ending family violence in Solano County.
 6. Home Visiting Advisory Board - A collaborative coordinating home visiting programs serving children 0-5 throughout the county.

7. Solano HEALS - A coalition promoting equity in healthy births for Black babies and their families in Solano County and identifying and addressing inequities in their communities through discussion, collaboration, action, and evaluation.
 8. System of Care Interagency Team – A team that coordinates interagency services for children affected by the Child Welfare System as part of the county’s Continuum of Care Reform.
 9. Mental Health Services Act Grantee Meeting - A collaborative to discuss, present information, and provide feedback as related to MHS funding and services provided by grantee organizations.
 10. Solano Oral Health Advisory Committee - A subcommittee of the VibeSolano Alliance to guide and advise on system-level changes to improve oral health outcomes for all residents of Solano County, especially the most vulnerable.
 11. Prenatal Care Network & Learning Collaborative - A collaborative to discuss system-wide issues, share resources, streamline referrals, receive training, and plan activities to improve access and quality of prenatal care.
 12. Solano Connex Advisory and Emotional Services Teams - A team to ensure the Solano Connex web-based portal that connects community members to mental health services is meeting the needs of the community and making appropriate referrals.
 13. Committee of Land and People - A committee to promote policies, funding, and programs that support healthy communities, including access to trails and natural parks, outdoor education, and local agriculture.
- First 5 Solano sponsors Help Me Grow (HMG) Solano, a centralized access point designed to provide families with seamless connections to essential child development and family support services. HMG Solano efforts in FY2020/21 included the following:
- The HMG Solano Steering Committee met virtually three times to discuss and plan improvements to services to ensure families are connected.
 - HMG Solano held two “Get Connected” meetings to bring together Solano County resource organizations that serve children 0-5 and their families.
 - HMG Solano’s call center received 2,031 calls in FY2020/21, with approximately 78% of callers receiving at least one service referral. Of the families who received a referral, 91% were successfully connected to services at follow-up.
 - HMG Solano implemented a three-tiered system for Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) screenings. The call center provided electronic screenings and sent tip sheets for families with children deemed “Low-Risk” (i.e., those with no developmental concerns). For the families with children deemed “Medium-Risk” (i.e., because they had some developmental concerns or were referred by a practitioner), the call center provided in-person screenings

**Help Me Grow
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and referrals to appropriate services. For the children considered “High-Risk” (i.e., those referred by a practitioner or child care provider for significant concerns), call center staff directly referred them to North Bay Regional Center or their school district for developmental services.

- First 5 Solano is sponsoring a home visiting coordination project led by Solano County Public Health to align and coordinate the services of home visiting programs. Project activities this fiscal year included meetings of a subcommittee of the Home Visiting Advisory Board and a comprehensive environmental scan to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in the local home visiting service system. An action plan to address areas for improvement was developed in February 2021 and updated in June 2021.

Key Activity: Develop, fund, and launch the First 5 Center in Vallejo.

- The Vallejo First 5 Center launched in February 2020 and provides a range of integrated services to children and families under one roof in Solano’s highest need zip code. In FY2020/21, 219 families made up of 1,156 individuals participated in at least one class, activity, or event.
- The Center offered a total of 68 six-week class series. Classes for families included STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) programs as well as movement and dance classes. Drop-in activities included workshops on topics like infant massage and kindergarten readiness. Triple P Positive Parenting classes, Parent Cafés, and Parent Advisory Council meetings were offered starting in fall 2020.
- The Center’s Community Resource Specialist (CRS) provided 214 families with consultations, assistance with linkages to multiple resources, and follow-up services via phone, Zoom, or in-person appointments. Common referrals were for housing, employment, child care, and preschool. The First 5 Center also gave out many basic needs items, with car seats and strollers being the most requested items. The Center continued the monthly diaper bank program, which gave the CRS the opportunity to check in with each family when they picked up their diapers to see if they had any other needs.
- Surveys of participants found families were very satisfied with their experiences at the Center:
 - All families who completed a post-class series survey demonstrated increased knowledge and awareness of healthy behaviors and activities such as increased awareness of healthy eating for kids and ability to provide age-appropriate preschool and kindergarten readiness activities at home.
 - A participant survey found 98% of families receiving CRS services (N=214) said that the Center met their resource or referral needs. The virtual meeting format did not hinder the navigation process, and many families found it more convenient to have a consultation over the phone or on Zoom.
 - In a satisfaction survey conducted in February 2021, Center participants rated their satisfaction with the Center at 4.9 out of 5 (N=37).

The Vallejo First 5 Center participants rated their satisfaction with the Center at 4.9 out of 5.

RESULT: SUSTAINED SYSTEMS

Result 15: Systems are sustained with legislative and policy changes.

Strategy 1: Increase policymakers' awareness of issues facing Solano County children and families, and advocate for changes pursuant to First 5 Solano's Legislative Platform.

To sustain early childhood systems, First 5 Solano has engaged leaders at the state, region, county, and city levels, communicating to them the value of investing in early childhood; sharing data on community needs and the impact First 5 Solano and its partners have in the county; and advocating for funding and legislative or policy changes that support children 0-5 and their families. This section discusses First 5 Solano's efforts in pursuit of legislative and policy changes.

Achievements in FY2020/21:

Key Activity: Monitor and respond to emerging policy issues for Solano County children and families, conduct outreach and briefings to policymakers, and continue implementing First 5 Solano's Legislative Platform.

- Throughout the year, First 5 Solano outreached and responded to policy issues, and continued to advance the Commission's Legislative Platform by engaging in numerous legislative and policy efforts on behalf of Solano County children and families, including the following:
 - In October and November 2020, First 5 Solano staff participated in the development of the 2020 Solano County State and Federal Legislative Platform.
 - In November 2020, the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) approved a new policy platform that includes early childhood development priorities. First 5 Solano Commissioner Erin Hannigan has a leadership role with CSAC and advocated for these changes.
 - A year-end update was sent to all of Solano County's state legislators in December 2020, along with a 2021 First 5 Solano calendar. The update included highlights from the First 5 Solano Annual Report and a "success story" of a family from the legislator's District.
 - As a result of the advocacy efforts of the Triple P Positive Parenting Program, First 5 Solano, and other First 5's across the state, the California Legislature proclaimed January as Positive Parenting Awareness Month for the second year in 2021. Additionally, the Solano County Board of Supervisors, First 5 Solano, Solano County Office of Education, and Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District presented a resolution recognizing Positive Parenting Awareness month.

- In April 2021, First 5 Solano Commissioner Erin Hannigan and a First 5 Solano Program Manager held a virtual legislative visit with Senator Bill Dodd to provide updates on the Vallejo First 5 Center and countywide funding needs.
- First 5 Solano participated in the First 5 Virtual Advocacy Day on April 27, 2021 and joined staff from First 5 Contra Costa for virtual visits with Assemblymember Jim Frazier’s team and Assemblymember Tim Grayson’s team. Discussion items included statewide requests for funding for early childhood and continued challenges of the pandemic.
- Assemblymember Jim Frazier and his team secured \$2 million in the state budget to fund the tenant improvements and initial operations for a First 5 Center in Fairfield. This was a result of First 5 Solano staff meeting with Assemblymember Frazier and subsequently submitting a proposal to the Solano County Legislative Committee with a request for \$3 million. (Please note: The Commission approved receiving these funds at their August 18, 2021 meeting.)
- First 5 Solano staff reviewed and edited the 2021 First 5 Solano Legislative Platform, including the addition of an introduction regarding the landscape for 2021 COVID-19 prevention, protection, and recovery. The First 5 Solano Commission reviewed and approved the platform in March 2021.
- First 5 Solano weighed in on over ten state policy issues, including prioritizing children in the California State Budget, utilizing funding from a tax on vaping products to fund First 5 agencies, improving access to and the quality of healthcare for children, and expanding the existing Diaper Bank program. One policy win was the passage of SB395, which imposes a 12.5% tax on vape products; 15% of the revenue will go to First 5 agencies, providing First 5 Solano with a predictable, ongoing revenue source to improve its sustainability. Another letter to state leaders advocated for \$20 million from the state budget for First 5 agencies to play an early childhood systems convener role across the state. While it was not ultimately funded, First 5 Solano’s Vallejo First 5 Center was highlighted as a prime example of how systems are integrated for the benefit of children and families.

First 5 Solano continued to advance the Commission’s Legislative Platform through outreach to state leaders regarding bills and policies affecting children 0-5.

Key Activity: Develop and implement data-driven funding policies.

- In June 2019, the Solano County Board of Supervisors established a Community Investment Fund (CIF). This CIF was the result of a comprehensive assessment process to identify the top human service needs in the county. First 5 Solano staff have assisted with the implementation of the \$2 million annual CIF by managing the RFP process, including releasing the RFPs, managing the review process, and managing the approval and contracting process. In FY2020/21, First 5 Solano issued RFPs for grants to support homeless Transitional Age Youth and annual grants, and managed contracts for mental health, housing, homelessness, and annual grants.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

In 2016, First 5 Solano adopted an ambitious action plan to address four aspects of systems change in Solano County. Each year, the original action plan has been refined in an implementation plan and progress on activities in the plan have been tracked and reported. This report summarized the activities and achievements for FY2020/21.

Since 2016, early childhood systems of care have evolved, and COVID-19 and systemic inequities have significantly impacted communities nationwide, including Solano County. In response to the national landscape and the increasing awareness that many systems and structures are not equitable to all populations, First 5 Solano is updating its systems change goal and results in FY2021/22 to underscore its commitment to prioritize equity in efforts to transform early childhood systems. Following the approval of this new plan, First 5 Solano will update its implementation plan to include systems change activities that are most needed to improve the lives of Solano County's young children and families and achieve more equitable outcomes for the community.



ENDNOTES

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^{iv} Ibid.