



The First 5 years.  
Make them count.

## Community Investment Strategy Frequently Asked Questions

- **What are the changes happening at FIRST 5?**

FIRST 5 is currently developing and designing a broad scope of work for the next three years that directly aligns with its new strategic priorities, outcomes, and goals as set forth in the [2024 - 2027 Strategic Plan](#). This in-depth process will result in a realignment of FIRST 5 funding allocations towards programs and services that help achieve its community-informed impact goals.

- **Why are things changing?**

This change is preceded by FIRST 5 internal and external factors. On the internal side, FIRST 5 has identified priorities, outcomes, and goals that focus our work on the needs of Santa Clara County's most vulnerable families and children, prenatal through age five. Externally, FIRST 5 is experiencing a steep decline in revenue that inevitably affects our capacity to fund programs and services.

- **How did FIRST 5 identify their priorities, outcomes, and goals?**

For the past year, FIRST 5 Santa Clara County embarked on a collaborative effort to develop a [2024-2027 Strategic Plan](#) – a plan that will guide our work over the next three years.

- **Who was involved in this process? I did not hear about it.**

FIRST 5 Commissioners, families, staff, and community partners participated in a ten-month strategic planning process that included individual interviews, focus groups, an internal strategic planning committee, and several community partner retreats. In addition, FIRST 5 launched a parent and caregiver survey that received more than 2,800 responses in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. You can learn more about the Parent/Caregiver Survey results [HERE](#).

- **Why is FIRST 5 funding being reduced?**

First 5 California came into existence in 1998, supported by Proposition 10 (Prop 10), a statewide initiative that imposed a \$0.50 cent tax on every cigarette pack sold. These funds are then distributed to the 58 California counties to support families with children prenatal through age five.

The steady decline in California's smoking rate and a recent ban on flavored tobacco products means that FIRST 5 is receiving fewer and fewer state dollars. In past years, total revenues averaged \$30 million per year, with expenses averaging \$23 million. Next fiscal year 2023-24, Santa Clara County's Prop 10 revenue is estimated by First 5 California to be about \$10.8 million annually – a steep decline in revenue for FIRST 5 Santa Clara County's programs and services.

- **When are things changing?**

At this time, FIRST 5 is fully engaged in the design of a new community investment strategy, which will determine what will be funded over the next three years. FIRST 5 intends to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) in January, 2024. Please check our website for updates: <https://www.first5kids.org/>.

- As FIRST 5 begins its implementation of a new Strategic Plan, all current contracts supported with Prop 10 dollars will end on June 30, 2024.

- **What does this mean to families living in Santa Clara County?**

We anticipate that some of the current FIRST 5-funded community services and supports will be reduced and may even end on June 30, 2024. We recognize this is a challenging time for our community organizations and the families they serve. We are using this opportunity to reframe and refresh our approach to focus on priority populations that are currently under-resourced and underserved.

- **How does FIRST 5 decide what programs stay and which programs will be going away?**

FIRST 5 is currently developing and designing a broad scope of work for the next three years that directly aligns with our new strategic priorities, outcomes, and goals. This in-depth process will result in a realignment of FIRST 5 funding allocations towards programs and services that help achieve our community-informed impact goals.

- **What are these programs going to be?**

All future programs will directly align with FIRST 5 strategic priorities, outcomes, and goals as stated in the [2024 - 2027 Strategic Plan](#). In January 2024, community organizations will have an opportunity to apply for FIRST 5 funding through a competitive bidding process called an RFP (Request for Proposals). Programs that are directly aligned with FIRST 5 new scope(s) of work will be prioritized.

- **Am I still going to be served by your organization?**

The statewide decline in FIRST 5 funding will fundamentally impact our organization and the work we do in Santa Clara County. Even as Prop 10 revenue declines, however, FIRST 5 remains committed to identifying and obtaining additional funding sources to continue this important work.

While FIRST 5 has to adjust its spending plan more rapidly than previously expected, and this adjustment will inevitably impact our community partnerships, FIRST 5 is committed to ongoing support for our county's most vulnerable families with young children, prenatal through age five.

- **What do I need to do?**

Continue elevating your voice as an advocate for families with young children! Share your story and your struggle to access resources, services, and supports with local community organizations and with local elected officials.

We remain committed to addressing inequities and scaling effective strategies that transform the lives of Santa Clara County's families, and we will continue to update the community with more information about the upcoming competitive bidding process and its outcome.

- **What are these focus areas that FIRST 5 is considering as a priority?**

FIRST 5 focus areas include:

- Connecting families to affordable, quality supports and services that meet children's basic needs and safety;
- Engaging families in our work, including advocacy and leadership opportunities;
- Promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging at FIRST 5; and
- Strengthening the diverse workforce that supports young children and their families.

- **What does “Priority Populations” mean?**

Based on ten months of strategic planning, including focus groups, interviews, community partner meetings, and a community survey in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese that resulted in 2,800 responses from parents and caregivers, FIRST 5 identified the following priority populations:

- Families who have children with disabilities and behavioral health needs;
- Immigrant families, prioritizing new arrivals and those without or with mixed documentation;
- Families who have unstable housing;
- Under-resourced families, including low-income and “gap” families not eligible for government-funded programs; and
- Court-impacted families affected by justice and child welfare systems, incarceration, court-monitored programs (including probation and parole), and child and family reunification process

- **Why were these populations identified? Aren’t we all a priority for FIRST 5?**

FIRST 5 seeks to prioritize community investments that increase equitable access to programs and services. By identifying priority populations, FIRST 5 strive to reduce inequities in health, social, and educational conditions. FIRST 5 understands that some families might experience an intersection of identities and social categorizations. These are not eligibility criteria for community investments, but rather a way for FIRST 5 to focus collective efforts on Santa Clara County’s most vulnerable families.

- **What is FIRST 5 doing to address revenue decline?**

To address a climate of declining revenue and in support of a successful implementation of this strategic plan, FIRST 5 adopted strategic priorities for financial sustainability, including:

- Expanding outreach to a broad range of funding opportunities, grants, and philanthropic organizations that support this work;
- Prioritizing programs and services that maximize community impact;
- Supporting FIRST 5 grantees to seek additional, sustainable funding sources;
- Prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all community investment decisions.