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FIRST 5 Santa Clara County Announces 2024-2027 Strategic Plan

SANTA CLARA, CA. – FIRST 5 Santa Clara County is pleased to announce its 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, which centers a commitment to the principles of equity as the agency prioritizes the physical, developmental, and behavioral needs of children prenatal through age five and their families and caregivers in Santa Clara County. To view the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan: <https://www.first5kids.org/about-us/strategic-plan/>.

A Challenging Time

There has been a steep decline in First 5 California’s primary funding source, Proposition 10 tobacco tax dollars. Since 1998, when Proposition 10 was passed by voters, California has contributed \$0.50 from every cigarette pack sold to fund child development programs, services, and supports in every county based on birth rate. While a steady reduction in cigarette smoking across California means people are living healthier lives, it also represents an unprecedented challenge to First 5 commissions across the state. In addition, a 2022 state law was passed that prohibits retailers from selling most flavored tobacco products, like menthol cigarettes, which has triggered another reduction in tobacco tax dollars.

An Equitable Effort

FIRST 5 Santa Clara County’s Strategic Plan is the result of a ten-month effort that enlisted FIRST 5 Commissioners, staff, community partners, grantees, and parents who contributed their knowledge, time, feedback, and support to develop key priorities, desired outcomes, and achievable goals. "We appreciate FIRST 5's willingness to engage and have real conversations about the future of FIRST 5 and, more importantly, the support our children and families need. Your strategic process was true to your organizational values," stated a representative of SOMOS Mayfair, a community partner of FIRST 5 Santa Clara County.

The 2024-2027 Strategic Plan centers equitable outcomes by uplifting inequities and scaling effective strategies for children to reach their full potential, particularly those who are marginalized and historically under-resourced. "Our equity-centered priorities, outcomes, and goals can only be achieved in close collaboration with a diversity of parents, caregivers, community organizations, and system partners – through this partnership, we are confident this plan will guide our critical work for the next three years," said Jennifer Kelleher Cloyd, FIRST 5 Executive Director.

Equity Goals for Sustainable Impact

The foundation for this Strategic Plan involved a collaborative process that included individual interviews, focus groups, and an extensive community survey completed in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese by nearly 3,000 parents and caregivers across Santa Clara County. Based on the outcomes of this important work, FIRST 5 staff developed four main areas of focus for the agency over the next three years, including:

- 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.

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

- Expanding funding opportunities to include foundation and grant support;
- 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.

FIRST 5 is currently evaluating its programs and initiatives to maximize impact on the needs of children prenatal through age five and their families. “After a robust process, the Commission is proud to adopt this strategic plan. We look forward to embarking on this first phase of implementation as it prioritizes our areas of focus to align with the current Proposition 10 funding allocation,” said Susan Ellenberg, FIRST 5 Commissioner and President of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors.

About FIRST 5 Santa Clara County

FIRST 5 Santa Clara County is the catalyst for ensuring that the developmental needs of children prenatal through age five are a priority in all sectors of the community. FIRST 5 makes a difference for local children by investing millions of Proposition 10 tobacco tax dollars each year towards effective programs in early education, health, and family support. To learn more about FIRST 5 visit www.first5kids.org.

CONTACT:

FIRST 5 Communications
communications@first5kids.org

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