Children & Families
Commission of Orange County

Agenda Item No. 1
January 2, 2008 Meeting

DATE: December 17, 2007

TO: Children and Families Commission of Orange County

FROM: Michael M. Ruane, Executive Director

SUBJECT: **National Demonstration Project- Longitudinal Evaluation of the HABLA Early Literacy Program**

SUMMARY:
At a prior planning retreat, the Commission received presentations by speakers representing nationally known organizations that had the potential to partner with the Commission and move successful programs impacting the health and early education of young children to national models. One of the presentations was made by Ron Haskins, Ph.D., from the Brookings Institution. Following a facilitated discussion, the Commission identified priorities for further consideration including the desire to sponsor a national demonstration project with Brookings Institution and other prominent researchers. Today's agenda item provides an update of the relationship with Brookings and requests authorization to evaluate the Home-Based Activities Building Language Acquisition (HABLA) early literacy program.

Background - In follow-up to the Commission planning retreat, Ron Haskins, Ph.D., of the Brookings Institution and Nicholas Zill, Ph.D., of Westat, Inc visited Orange County and several key programs funded by the Commission. The Brookings Institution is a private nonprofit organization devoted to independent research and innovative policy solutions for emerging public issues. Because of this focus, an area of national significance of interest to the investigators was the reading-readiness of children in Spanish-speaking families. The Commission's strategy to address this challenge is the HABLA Program. In 2006, the Commission authorized funds for Drs. Haskins and Zill to develop a proposal for a comprehensive evaluation of the HABLA program and staff is in the process of executing Agreement PS-52 for the evaluation proposal. The evaluation plan is now complete and key components are presented for Commission consideration (Attachment 1). Additional funding is recommended for the first year of the evaluation. Staff would return to the Commission at a later date with an update on project implementation and future funding recommendations.

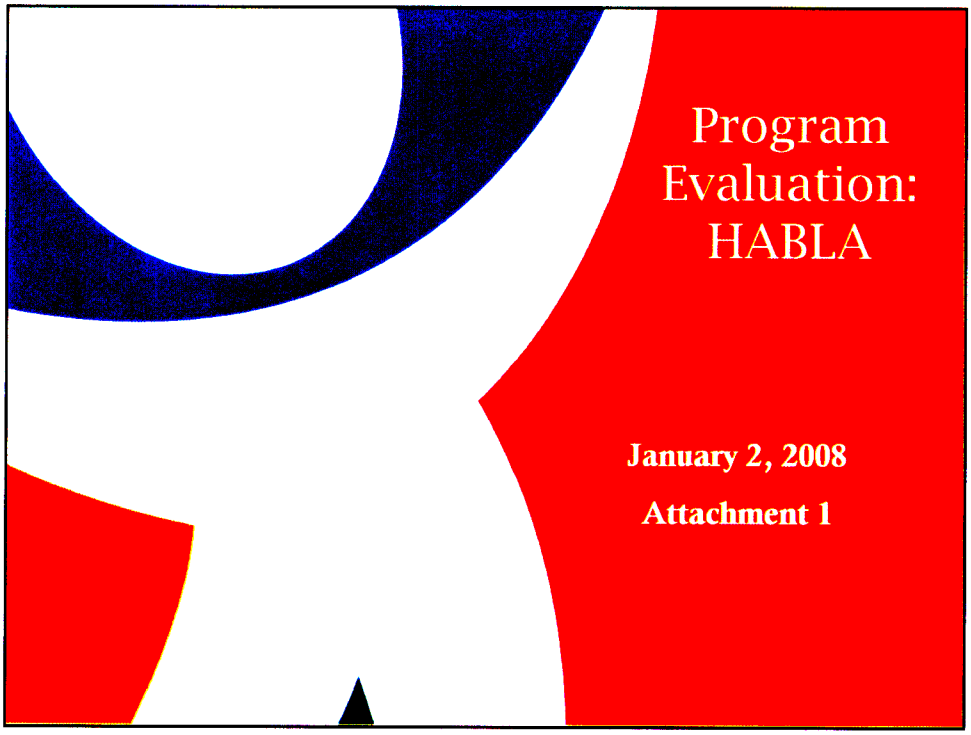
STRATEGIC PLAN & FISCAL SUMMARY:
The proposed Amendment to Agreement has been specifically reviewed in relation to the Strategic Plan and is consistent with the Capacity Building goal. This funding request is for the amount of $150,000 and to extend the term through December 31, 2008. Funding for this item is included in the FY 07/08 Budget within the Capacity Building, Performance Outcomes Measurement System budget category.

PRIOR ACTION:
On July 2, 2006, the Commission authorized funds to develop a comprehensive evaluation of the HABLA program.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
1. Adopt resolution (Attachment 2) authorizing the Executive Director or designee to amend existing Agreement # PS-52 with Westat, Inc. for the project described in Attachment 1, for an extended term through December 31, 2008, and an additional amount not to exceed $150,000 for a total Maximum Payment Obligation of $200,000..

Attachments:
1. Program Evaluation: HABLA
2. Resolution to amend Agreement #PS-52 with Westat, Inc. for evaluation of HABLA.

Contact: Alyce Mastrianni



Early Literacy – A Critical Component of School Readiness

Children are more likely to become good readers if they start school with:

- Oral language skills and phonological awareness
- Print awareness and letter knowledge
- Motivation to learn and appreciation for literary forms

(Excerpted from American Library Association, Born to Read).

- Low literacy is linked to lack of health access, health usage and low health outcomes.
- Growing disparity in literacy development between low and middle-income families.
  - lower income - 500 words spoken per hour, 10 million words by school entry
  - middle & upper income - over 3,000 words spoken per hour), 50 million words by school entry

  (Hart & Risley 1995)
- Success in reading is an important determinant of later school success.

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1

What is HABLA?

(Home-Based Activities Building Language Acquisition)

- An intensive community-based model of intervention for pre-school aged children that may be hard-to-reach.
- An adaptation of the Parent-Child Home Program developed for use with Orange County's growing Spanish-speaking population.
- Program seeks to develop children's language and literacy skills, to strengthen the parent-child bond, and to enhance parenting skills.

2

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HABLA Service Model

Home-based training for low-income, low-education Spanish speaking parents of children from two through four years of age living in cities of Santa Ana, Tustin, and Anaheim.

- Bi-weekly home visits over the course of 2 years
- Focus on increasing verbal interaction and promoting child learning and expressive language
- Culturally appropriate mentors serve as coaches /role models for parents
- AmeriCorp members provide core staff
- Targeted sites include high density apartments

Program results suggest improvements in receptive and expressive language.

3

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Key Dates

- 2000 – Commission awarded funds for the development and implementation of HABLA.
- July 2003 - "Parent Child Home Program," HABLA's national sponsor, visited Orange County to establish HABLA as a replication site
- 2004 - HABLA selected as First 5 California's case study of promising practices in literacy development.
- May 2005 – HABLA selected by Commission as Peter Hartman award recipient
- July 2006 - Commission authorized funds to develop an evaluation of the HABLA

Evaluation of HABLA: a Replicable Model

July 2006 - Given the significance of the local program adaptation, the Commission was given the opportunity to collaborate with The Brookings Institution (Ron Haskins, Ph.D.) and Westat (Nick Zill, Ph.D.), premier national research and policy institutions, to develop a comprehensive evaluation of Orange County's HABLA program.

The evaluation plan is now complete and is being filed for Commission consideration.

Proposed Methodology

- Random-assignment evaluation of the effectiveness of HABLA for bolstering emergent literacy needs of young children from low-income, non-English-speaking families.
- Study to be conducted between Jan. 2008 and Dec. 2012.
- Study will include 500 families: half will be randomly assigned to the intervention and half to the control. Control families will have access to all literacy materials and services otherwise available in Orange County.
- Westat will assess children's oral language, literacy and early math skills at initial enrollment and annually for 4 or 5 years.
- Westat will also collect parent ratings of children's behavior, approaches to learning, and social skills.
- Westat will attempt to collect information from preschool program / school.
- HABLA will provide related program information.

6

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Evaluation is Dependent on:

- Ability to move forward on HABLA program expansion.
- Ability to recruit 500 study participants.
- Support from school districts in information sharing.

7

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Anticipated Budget

*** Funding recommended for current Commission action**

2008 *	$150,000
2009	$175,000
2010	$180,000
2011	$195,000
2012	$130,000
Total Project	$830,000

8

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Early Interventions are Cost Effective

With the educational spotlight currently focused on testing and achievement in public schools, and with Hispanics the largest and fastest growing population in the United States, the reading-readiness of children in Spanish-speaking families is important to educators, families, service providers, and payors.

9

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION OF ORANGE COUNTY

RESOLUTION NO. ___-08-C&FC

January 2, 2008

A RESOLUTION OF THE CHILDREN & FAMILIES COMMISSION OF ORANGE COUNTY AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND COMMISSION COUNSEL TO PREPARE AND ENTER INTO AN AMENDMENT TO AGREEMENT NO. PS-52 WITH WESTAT, INC.; AND MAKING CERTAIN FINDINGS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH

WHEREAS, in order to facilitate the creation and implementation of an integrated, comprehensive, and collaborative system of information and services to enhance optimal early childhood development, the legislature adopted legislation set forth in the California Children and Families Act of 1998, Health and Safety Code Section 130100, *et seq.* (as amended, the "Act") implementing the Children and Families First Initiative passed by the California electorate in November, 1998 and establishing the California Children and Families Commission and County Children and Families Commissions, including this Children and Families Commission of Orange County ("Commission"); and

WHEREAS, Commission adopted its Strategic Plan to define how funds authorized under the Act and allocated to the Commission should best be used to meet the critical needs of Orange County's children prenatal to five years of age as codified in the Act; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Director authorized agreement PS-52 in the amount of $50,000 through authority granted by the Commission on July 6, 2005 for the period July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008 with Westat, Inc., to provide a comprehensive evaluation proposal for the Home-based Activities Building Language Acquisition (HABLA) Project promoting the purposes of the Act and the Strategic Plan; and

WHEREAS, Commission desires to authorize the Executive Director or designee to negotiate the terms and final form of an Amendment to Agreement PS-52 with Westat, Inc. for an additional amount not to exceed $150,000, and a new maximum payment obligation of $200,000 and extend the term of the Agreement to December 31, 2008 to perform a comprehensive evaluation of the HABLA project in support of the Commission's early literacy program; and

WHEREAS, Commission has reviewed the staff report for the January 2, 2008 Commission meeting relating to the scope of services to be provided and hereby finds and determines that the proposed Amendment is in furtherance of and consistent with the Commission's Strategic Plan; and

WHEREAS, Commission desires to authorize the Commission Chair and Commission Clerk to execute the Amendment to Agreement No. PS-52 for an additional amount not to exceed $150,000 and a new maximum payment obligation of $200,000 and to extend the term of the Agreement to December 31, 2008.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION OF ORANGE COUNTY AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1 Commission finds and determines the foregoing Recitals are true and correct and are a substantive part of this Resolution.

Section 2 Commission authorizes the Executive Director to prepare and negotiate the final form of an Amendment to Agreement PS-52 with Westat, Inc., for an additional amount not to exceed $150,000, and a new maximum payment obligation of $200,000 and extend the term of the Agreement to December 31, 2008 consistent with the staff report for the January 2, 2008 Commission meeting and the scope of services referenced therein;

Section 3 Commission hereby approves the Amendment to Agreement PS-52 with Westat, Inc., for an additional amount not to exceed $150,000 and a new maximum payment obligation of $200,000 to continue to perform a comprehensive evaluation of the HABLA project in support of the Commission's early literacy program as specified in the staff report.

Section 4 The Commission Chair and the Clerk of the Commission are hereby authorized to execute and attest, respectively, the Amendment on behalf of the Commission.

Section 5 A copy of the final Amendment to Agreement with Westat, Inc., when executed by the Commission Chair and attested by the Clerk of the Commission shall be appended hereto as a part of Exhibit A to this Resolution. Exhibit A is hereby fully incorporated as a part of this Resolution by this reference and made a part hereof. The final executed Amendment to Agreement shall be placed on file in the office of the Clerk of the Commission.

Section 6 In addition to the authorization of Section 2 above, the Executive Director (or his designee) is hereby authorized, on behalf of the Commission, (i) to sign all documents necessary and appropriate to carry out and implement the Agreement, (ii) to cause the issuance of warrants, (iii) to administer the Commission's obligations, responsibilities, and duties to be performed under such agreement, and (iv) during the term thereof to provide waivers, administrative interpretations, and minor modifications of the provisions of such agreement in the furtherance thereof.

Section 7 The Clerk of the Commission shall certify to the adoption of this Resolution.

The foregoing resolution was passed and adopted by the following vote of the Children and Families Commission of Orange County on January 2, 2008 to wit:

AYES Commissioners: _____

NOES: Commissioner(s): _____

EXCUSED: Commissioner(s): _____

ABSTAINED: Commissioner(s) _____

_____
CHAIR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
)
COUNTY OF ORANGE)

I, DARLENE J. BLOOM, Clerk of the Commission of Orange County, California, hereby certify that a copy of this document has been delivered to the Chair of the Commission and that the above and foregoing Resolution was duly and regularly adopted by the Children and Families Commission of Orange County.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereto set my hand and seal.

_____
DARLENE J. BLOOM
Clerk of the Commission, Children and Families Commission of Orange County, County of Orange, State of California

Resolution No: __-08--C&FC

Agenda Date: January 2, 2008

Item No.

I certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Resolution adopted by the

DARLENE J. BLOOM, Clerk of the Commission

By:_____
Deputy

EXHIBIT A TO RESOLUTION OF COMMISSION

(Attach copy of final executed Amendment to Agreement PS-52 with Westat, Inc.)