

**Agenda Item 8
September 3, 2014 Meeting**

DATE: August 21, 2014
TO: Children and Families Commission of Orange County
FROM: Christina Altmayer, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Annual Planning Meeting Status Report

SUMMARY:

The Children and Families Commission's annual planning meeting was held on June 4, 2014. The meeting provided an opportunity to reflect on the programs and projects that achieve the Commission's vision that *all children are healthy and ready for school*, and to plan for the upcoming fiscal year. This report provides an update on Commission direction from the June Planning Session related to evaluation of the Early Literacy and Math Programs and continued efforts on sustainability.

DISCUSSION:

The June annual planning meetings focused on two topics: evaluating the impact of early literacy and math programs; and, strategies to support sustainability. The Commission-approved Business Plan has set a strong focus on sustainability efforts and the June meeting included a discussion on the multiple strategies staff is employing.

Early Literacy & Math Programs:

Since the June meeting, Commission staff has held several meetings with researchers and faculty from the UCI School of Education organized by Dr. Greg Duncan. These meetings have focused on how the UCI School of Education could partner with the Commission to strengthen evaluation efforts, leverage university research, and improve program results. The faculty has expressed interest in serving as a resource to the Commission and providing technical assistance in structuring program evaluations. In turn, Commission staff can serve as a resource connecting school districts personnel with faculty that share a common focus.

The UCI team may be helpful in supporting the evaluation of the Learning Link program. The Learning Link model was developed at the Capistrano Unified School District and then expanded to 16 school districts throughout the County. Additionally, a summary report of the Commission's early learning program investments is being developed to show the systems and services supported against targeted outcomes. The goal is to provide a report to the Commission this fall. Dr. Deborah Vandell, Dean of the School of Education participated in the last planning session and expressed her commitment to working with the Commission and specifically supporting the Young Children's Summit scheduled for fall 2015 as described in Agenda Item 7.

Sustainability Strategies & Philanthropy:

The anticipated decline in Proposition 10 revenue requires that the Commission proactively develop strategies to sustain the proven programs that are positively impacting children in Orange County's

health and readiness for school. At the June Planning Meeting, the Commission received presentations on internal efforts that staff has employed as well as potential partnerships that can support program sustainability. In response to Commission direction at the June Planning Meeting, work has continued on the following strategies:

- *Develop a process to actively identify and evaluate federal and national foundation grant opportunities* – Commission staff has worked with The Olin Group, the Commission’s fund development consulting firm, to redesign their scope of work to regularly identify and vet national and federal funding opportunities that align with Commission priorities. As grant opportunities are identified, The Olin Group prepares one to two page “opportunity briefs” that are designed for quick review and for easy forwarding to potential partners and grantees as identified by Commission staff. Commission staff then reviews and prioritizes potential projects that may be pursued by the Commission directly, in partnership with other grantees, and/or referred to other agencies or research institutions. Since implementing this process, multiple grant opportunities have been prioritized and referred to partners. The Olin Group will provide both grant writing assistance, as directed by Commission staff, as well as maintain a database of large grants identified, grants pursued, and grants awarded to measure the return on the investment in this effort. They will also gauge the percentage of opportunities that result in submitted applications from Orange County organizations.
- *Develop a strategy to use the Commission’s Capacity Building granting process to strengthen nonprofit organizations’ ability to collect and report outcomes to better position local agencies to compete for national funding* - The Olin Group has developed a survey to assess the skills, capacity and knowledge of Commission grantees related to outcome reporting, replication and expansion of programs, and collective impact. In addition, the survey asks questions related to perceived challenges in pursuing federal funding, including cultural or infrastructural obstacles. The survey data will inform the developing recommendations on the Commission’s capacity building grant program. Survey results will also be shared with other local funders that have expressed interest in supporting nonprofit capacity building efforts.
- *Submit a joint application the Nonprofit Finance Fund by August 2014* - The Commission’s joint application for the Bridges Maternal Child Health Network and the First 5 LA Welcome Baby program, modeled after the Bridges Network, was approved for funding in August as described in Agenda Item 4. These programs are innovative strategies to implement a Pay for Success model and transition to a sustainable model for funding. The Commission’s partnerships with CalOptima, the Orange County Health Care Agency, and the Hospital Association of Southern California were critical to the success of this proposal. The technical assistance will help develop a sustainable funding model for the Bridges Maternal Child Health Network.

STRATEGIC PLAN & FISCAL SUMMARY

The recommended action has been specifically reviewed in relation to the Commission’s Strategic Plan and is consistent with applicable outcome goals. There is no funding action proposed for this item.

PRIOR COMMISSION ACTIONS:

- June 4, 2014 – Held Annual Planning Commission Meeting
- July 2, 2014 – Update on Annual Planning Meeting

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive Annual Planning Meeting status report and approve follow-up actions.

Contact: Christina Altmayer