

**Agenda Item 9
February 3, 2016**

DATE: January 27, 2016

TO: Children and Families Commission of Orange County

FROM: Christina Altmayer, Executive Director 

SUBJECT: Champions for Children's Literacy Pooled Funding Model

ACTION: Receive Report on the Champions for Children's Literacy Pooled Funding Model and Authorize Matching Funds

SUMMARY:

The Children and Families Commission of Orange County, Orange County United Way, and the Orange County Community Foundation, have developed a concept to create a pooled funding model to improve early literacy outcomes in Orange County. The proposed concept pools each organization's funds to support the implementation of evidence-based early literacy programs. This agenda item requests approval of the partnership and the allocation of funds to the pool.

DISCUSSION:

A volunteer leadership team that includes representatives from the Commission, United Way of Orange County, and the Orange County Community Foundation convened under the umbrella of Champions for Children's Literacy to serve as catalysts to expand and improve upon evidence-based literacy programs and interventions. The Commission had previously authorized the collective funding of a consultant to work with this leadership group in partnership with United Way. The leadership team has prioritized developing programs and strategies to ensure that all Orange County children are reading at grade level by third grade. The proposed funding would focus on children most at-risk of achieving the outcome of reading at grade level by third grade.

Funder Contributions

The Commission, United Way, and Community Foundation would be the initial funders for the first round of funding, pending approvals by each organization's leadership. The funds will be allocated through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process managed by the Champions for Children's Literacy. The fiscal agent for the pooled funds will be confirmed prior to launching the RFP process. Champions for Children's Literacy will be responsible to recruit additional funders to improve upon these efforts and expand the program countywide.

Commission approval is requested to allocate \$150,000 annually for three years to the early literacy funding pool. Funding for this program is available in the unallocated catalytic match funds (Partnership for Children's Health). These catalytic funds were specifically designated to serve as match funds to leverage Commission investments. Specific recommendations to enter agreements with qualified school districts will be presented for Commission approval following the RFP process.

Funder	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Restrictions
Children & Families Commission	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	Children 0-5
OC Community Foundation	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	Gift to educational institutions
OC United Way	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	Children 0-8
Total	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$350,000	

Funding Process and Eligibility

The Champions for Children’s Literacy will manage a Request for Proposal (RFP) process in spring 2016. School districts with the greatest percentage of children at risk for achieving this outcome will be invited to respond with a plan to provide young children and families with education and interventions in the area of literacy. School districts eligible to apply will be determined by the Early Development Index (EDI) data and the Smarter Balance Test scores. Six school districts currently meet the criteria: Garden Grove, La Habra, Ocean View, Orange, and Santa Ana. The grant awards will range from \$35,000 to \$125,000 and require a \$1:\$1 match. Grantees will be eligible to request a renewal of their grant after the term concludes and the award would be based on performance meeting the proposed outcome.

The applicants will be required to create a collaborative model using proven evidence-based literacy programs and interventions. Applicants will be expected to partner with libraries, cities, and other services in the community to implement their plan to improve literacy outcomes. Applicants must also comply with evaluation reporting requirements. The goal is to create programs and intervention strategies that are sustainable, measurable, and scalable. The successful models could be replicated and expanded into other vulnerable communities that lack literacy success.

Champions for Children’s Literacy

The Commission and United Way co-fund the Champions for Children’s Literacy program. The mission of the program is to expand literacy interventions for young children ages 0-8. To accomplish the mission, Champions for Children’s Literacy is:

- Identifying vulnerable communities with children with a literacy achievement gap
- Developing a repository of evidence-based literacy programs and services with proven child outcomes
- Increasing community awareness of the importance of early literacy and early grade reading with funders and parents/caregivers of young children
- Expanding the pool of funds available for delivering literacy services in Orange County
- Expanding proven literacy programs into vulnerable, at-risk communities

STRATEGIC PLAN & FISCAL SUMMARY:

This program has been specifically reviewed in relation to the Strategic Plan and is consistent with all goal areas. The total funding request is for \$450,000 over three-years. The funds are included in the Partnership for Children’s Health Catalytic Budget.

PRIOR COMMISSION ACTIONS:

- July 2015 - Adopted resolution authorizing agreement for project management consultant services for the Champions for Children's Early Literacy program
- March 2015 - Authorized receipt of funds from Orange County United Way to share the costs of the consultant agreement

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive report on the Champions for Children's Literacy Pooled Funding Model and authorize an annual amount of \$150,000 for three years, for a total amount not to exceed \$450,000 for the pooled fund with the Orange County Community Foundation and the Orange County United Way.

Contact: Kelly Pijl