

Attendees: Lisa Colvig-Niclai, Alex Hildebrand, Rafael Gomez, Sean Hughes, Genaro Mauricio, Jenna Garde, Janice LeRoux, Darcy Roenspie

Janice LeRoux (00:02):

Thank you everybody for coming. I am Janice LeRoux, the Executive Director for First 5 Placer.

Darcy Roenspie (00:13):

And I'm Darcy Roenspie. I am program manager here with Early Childhood Education, and I'm the Placer County Childcare coordinator.

Janice LeRoux (00:22):

Thank you all for your interest. We are recording this video, and this'll be up on the website. There is a list of questions and answers that have started to come in, and we will update that every Wednesday. It's currently listed in reverse date order. Today we wanted mostly to be available to answer any questions that you have. The First 5 Placer strategic planning process for the plan under which we're operating now, began six, seven years ago with some pretty extensive data collection and community input.

(01:34):

And the current strategies being used really began about three years ago. The strategic plan was in two sections. The first one we provided funding via an RFP, directed on those four focus areas. Then we switched to a much different kind of process that involved more community engagement, together with our partners and stakeholders. We developed an implementation plan. We did not do RFPs. The programs, the strategies that were funded, the activities at the commission level - not just what we were funding, but what we spent our time on, what we wrote grants for, what we did with respect to advocacy - came out of that process. And we really liked that. It felt much more organic. It felt more strategic, and it felt more responsive. They're very fond of that strategic plan and that process.

(02:44):

But one of the things that we recognized is we could and should incorporate more parent and community voice. Not that it wasn't there but in drafting it and spending as much time as we did, we recognize that we spent a lot of time really dealing with publicly available data and then working with our stakeholders, our providers, our subject matter experts are key informants in drafting the current plan. So we consider this 2024-2030 Plan will probably be more of a refinement of our strategic plan in that we're looking to elevate provider and family voice. Now, when you do that, all sorts of things can happen. So we understand at the same time that, strategies might change, especially given COVID, which just changed the world for so many people, especially for early care and education.

(04:00):

The Commission knew adding early care and education to this plan would be paramount even before Darcy and I discussed partnering - because what we had seen, what we had heard on the ground was just the field has been decimated, and it is the number one concern of families. And so then, Darcy approached me because they, the LPC had to do their needs assessment and essentially their strategic plan for childcare. We thought this is a perfect partnership - that we look at combining our efforts and creating a portion of the First 5 strategic plan that also meets the needs of the LPC in creating the master plan for childcare. So, and then at the same time, our county agencies are going through a lot of planning : MHSa is undergoing a planning process, and then we're also undergoing one for the Families First Prevention Services Act.

(05:08):

So we've potentially got a lot of access to really current data and initiatives that are going on. I think that in terms of the, the data that are going to be available and the kinds of directions that, for example, our county partners are going in can help as well us to refine and leverage those efforts. So that's kind of it in a nutshell. Do you have anything to add, Darcy?

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Darcy:

No. I think you really captured it. I can't think of anything.

Janice

There aren't a lot of forms to this strategic plan quite deliberately, because when I do grant applications, I hate forms - being confined to a specific form. So the only form that I need you to complete is a cover page, because I need a legal signature. Other than that, with respect to scope of work, whatever works for you, a budget format and justification. I can't imagine your budget forms are going to be pretty complicated because it's all services: who's providing the services, at what rate of pay and for how many hours - that's likely going to be what most of your budgets will look like, right?

Lisa (06:45):

Yeah, that was one of the questions I had. We typically don't do our budgets that way. We do rather picture a scope of work with categories of tasks and, and line items, and then a loaded budget, a loaded rate per task, rather than here's the amount per staff and here's the amount for direct admin indirect. So that way you really see exactly what you're getting.

Janice LeRoux (07:09):

Okay. That's fine. However it works for you. That's a great example for why following a budget format doesn't work. Also, please do not attach samples of your work. If, you can provide a website link to samples, that's fine. I just don't want to hand the people who are on that committee a huge stack of paper. Describe your work if you want and give us a link. Resumes are a good idea for key staff. I think that's in the RFP.

Lisa (08:05):

I appreciate that you said that you're thinking that this next round will pretty much stay in the same broad areas with the addition of the early learning area. Do you think that this plan is seeking to affirm the kind of kinds of investments then that you're making within those areas? Or do you think you're pretty good on that, but it's more the strategy or the way in which those things are rolled out?

What are you changing potentially?

Janice LeRoux (08:32):

Some of them are going to change, you know, Well, hmm. I don't know. I was going to say, "Well, vaccination's not an issue because of Dr. Pan." And then I realized, Oh, wait, COVID! So, let's see what the, the publicly available data tell us. Last time, that's what kind of honed us into the big red flag areas. But my gut is saying probably not, probably not big changes. It's possible, but what, what my gut says is that what we're going to find out is related to disparities--that those problems that we had are much worse for those populations that were adversely impacted originally.

(09:30):

And that the situation, we need to do more targeted interventions and strategies than we did. That's kind of what I'm thinking. That being said, you know, once we start to talk to families, I don't know. I don't know. I'll tell you one of the concerns that I have - what I never in my career want to do is to lead people on. And so in terms of community engagement, to have an open process - where anything is fair game - concerns me because, for example, we cannot afford to pay for childcare for everybody. I would love to, but I can't. And so I don't want to go into community engagement process and say to parents, "So what do you need help with? First 5 is here to rescue you!"

(10:30):

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I do not want to create that potential promise unfulfilled. That's probably one of our main concerns. But given that, what can we do with the kind of funding restrictions that we have. What is possible from the Commission and the LPC – because the LPC doesn't have any money. But what they can do is provide sunshine and advocacy, right? In terms of highlighting what issues are of most concern in the county and providing us for opportunities for advocacy and potential opportunities for leveraging funding. So, what sorts of things might come out of that.

Lisa ([11:44](#)):

Yeah, so a follow up to that then. So if I'm hearing you correctly, so the broad goal areas, those are probably good, The general types of strategies in terms of your investments may be good, but maybe it's more about the approach or the service delivery. If, for instance, we're having disparities, like that's maybe what you're looking at to retool or to just make sure that it's the best it can be.

Janice LeRoux ([12:05](#)):

Yeah.

Lisa ([12:06](#)):

And if so, then that brings us to kind of performance data, program performance data. And so the next question is the relationship with Harder+Company. I did look, take a look at your website to see could I see what some of your past eval reports look like to see the level of data that's available. And I saw a great PowerPoint, I think but it wasn't super detailed. So do you think that Harder+Company provide program performance and populations reach through the current strategies?

Janice LeRoux ([12:37](#)):

Sure. They are our evaluator and they'll make available whatever, whatever needs to be done on the local program level.

Rafael ([13:08](#)):

Obviously community engagement is a big emphasis here. I'm sure that it's been a part of prior strategic planning efforts and there's things that you've taken away that, hey, this is something that we've really liked. This is something that we see that has been missing. And, you know, it's, it looks like getting access to the right people. And, you know, the folks that we haven't reached historically is a big emphasis. But tell me a little bit more about what you guys are hoping for in terms of this community engagement piece, and if there are particular strategies that you're tied to or that, you know, you don't want to repeat?

Janice LeRoux ([13:52](#)):

We had done it in a couple of different ways last time. Some were really successful, for example, not this strategic plan, but the strategic plan prior. We were up at the lake at Tahoe, Kings Beach, and we used one of their ELAC meetings, so their English language parent committee meetings. And we provided facilitation. We provided meals, we provided childcare, and we had about a hundred people attend. That was an extraordinarily successful one. It took a lot of work to pull it off. But that was extremely successful. You know, our partners can be really great at getting people to engage. One of the caveats is that people who attend are in a mindset of a service specific engagement. So, if we interview people who are in our Mothers in Recovery program

([15:07](#)):

We may have a very substance abuse treatment mindset versus somebody who's doing playgroups and early education. So what needs and concerns are coming up may be influenced by a provider and setting. Getting them to think beyond what they're thinking in a service provider's place may be struggle (what are the larger needs). Providing opportunities for parents to provide input at a time where they're together that's convenient for them is important. We did find with some communities like our Native

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American community were not open to talking to us directly. So one of the strategies that we used there was providing the questions that interested us. And the leaders of their community went to their constituents and facilitated a process that was culturally relevant to them. And so we may not have gotten answers to the kinds of specific questions that we had, but we got questions and answers that were important to them in a way that they weren't threatened, They didn't feel like it was government overreach. So those kinds of culturally relevant engagement techniques, I think work worked really well for us.

(17:04):

That's great.

(17:09):

And I would say probably most of the agencies that serve children and families are funded by First Five: all of our family resource centers, counseling. P C O E, the Placer County Office of Education (which funds work with all of our family, childcare, state preschools, head starts, and so on). We're good partners with our child welfare, our public health those are even human services. We do the CalWORKs home visiting program, so we have good relationships with all of our county partners.

Rafael (19:03):

Janice? I, I have one more question in regards to the planning process. I, I know you have a, small staff, but always a question of how, how would you like to balance none of the depth of involvement of your staff and the commissioners, Right. As you approach planning and, you know, we went through this and other projects that we've had together. So when you think about the role of staff and the expectations of the commission in terms of, you know, depth and level of involvement, can you share a little bit about just the expectations in your, in your organization?

Janice LeRoux (19:44):

Sure, sure. And actually, I do have to say, Rafael led the strategic planning for our First 5 association, and I kind of envision it very similar in that, we'll, first of all, the contract will be administered by first five. It's going to be a sole source contract through us. The invoices will come through us, and I'll be the chief contact. We have a working committee, much like an executive committee made of a couple of First 5 commissioners, Darcy, myself, and a member of the LPC that will be the on the ground working with decision points and moving the process along. The commission and the LPC at major decision points in the process, we'll have a joint meeting. So I suspect, like when we have the data reveal that'll be a joint meeting for a presentation.

(20:45):

The First 5 commission wants to have a retreat so that they can talk about what they're going to look at funding, what did the data tell us, how are we thinking about moving forward and creating our implementation plan, because we're not going to do an RFP. And then the commission and the LPC will have to meet when the final documents are produced. Because this (funding for activities) is not going to be an RFP, we need to do in at least two phases. So we'll do a public meeting to provide an airing of our recommendations in a public hearing. And then at the following meeting, the commission and the LPC will make the final decision based on the results of that public hearing. But, so in terms of actual big commission and LPC engagement in terms of the full bodies, we're expecting joint meetings really only a couple maybe three times. Darcy and I will do most of the work. But in terms of moving the process along, getting us through what is going to go before the commission and the LPC, you've got a, a group of chief members that'll lead the work forward. Does that answer your question?

Rafael (22:15):

That was really helpful. Thank you.

Janice LeRoux (22:15):

Okay. Anybody else? Hi Alex. Sure.

Alex ([22:24](#)):

Hey, Janice. I have a question about the addressing disparities little subsection RFP. I'm just curious if there's anything you can share about if the commission has an entity or an initiative kind of formally looking at how to advance DEI within the First 5's work. But I'm just wondering if there's, other than you know reaching parents and, and hearing from them about their needs, if there are other ways that you're thinking about integrating DEI into the plan in terms of ways to identify and address disparities through the commission's work.

Janice LeRoux ([23:09](#)):

That is such a good question. So in the current Plan, we spent quite some time figuring out what communities were multiply impacted. And when I say that, I mean by health, child welfare poverty - those kinds of things where we had seen that geographically and then also just in the system. We found our English language learners especially in language arts and math in third grade, really, really falling behind their peers. Latina women having horrible access to prenatal care. And so when we looked at that, when we looked at those disparities, there were deliberate attempts to fund strategies that would address those. So, for example, we funded a promotora program that was specifically targeting pregnant Latina, so that we could make sure that they got their well baby checks, or that they got the prenatal care that they needed.

([24:31](#)):

Navigating them through that whole process. Likewise, understanding the over representation of our Native families in the child welfare system. We funded the Sierra Native Alliance to do positive parenting and support for our native families. And we also wrote a grant to the Office of Child Abuse Prevention for a Road to Resilience program that addresses moms who are pregnant or parenting a child up to age two who have a history of substance abuse. And one of our very intentional partners in that grant was also the Sierra Native Alliance to it, because that of overrepresentation in the substance abuse service sector. So when we talk about addressing disparities, that's been the way. I don't want to say there has been a policy decision - there's not like a formal mission statement to do that - but recognizing that the commission has made steps to advance or address those disparities in a very intentional way.

Alex ([25:56](#)):

Thanks,

Janice LeRoux ([25:57](#)):

Janice. Yep. Any other questions?

Lisa ([26:06](#)):

Had another question, Janice. Are you facing a decline in revenue from your last period? Or are you holding pretty steady?

Janice LeRoux ([26:22](#)):

So right now we're holding pretty steady. We'll see what happens if the flavor ban is enacted. The Department of Finance doesn't know exactly, but we're projecting about an 8% decline. In Placer County, people are moving here and they're having babies. So our birth rate is actually increasing. And our revenues are tied to what comes in and what your county's birth rate is. So ours has been pretty flat. So for the next strategic plan, I'm only projecting about 200 grand less a year in tobacco tax collections. So right now we're about 2.7 million. I'm thinking maybe it'll be about 2.5 million per year on average. But one third of our budget it is funded through non tobacco tax revenues. And, I don't expect that to change. I expect that only to grow.

Lisa ([27:46](#)):

That's good. So, so you're not going into this planning period with the question of what and how and where do we cut, but are these still the right things to do? How can we do them in a more effective way?

Janice LeRoux ([27:58](#)):

Correct.

([28:02](#)):

That [cliff], will be the next strategic plan. Oh, one question that that's not on the Q and A that I was asked was, am I going to see through this strategic planning process? The answer is yes. I'm not expecting to abandon this strategic planning process halfway through. I do though expect that this will probably be my last strategic plan with the commission. So I'm probably planning on retiring in or around 2030. So yeah, so I want to make this good, I want to set up the next executive director to have a good amount of data and good results going forward.

Lisa ([28:50](#)):

We've just helped a couple counties with their LPC, with their the child care needs assessment and worked with the LMA data and that usually those are fairly significant scopes just looking at that data and pulling in community voice and whatnot, and then producing the report and then some strategizing. So it looks like you, you all are joining forces, at least for the data collection piece, which is fantastic. Where will you start to part ways, or at least because I think Darcy, you'll need a whole plan, right? With priorities to submit. So are your priorities also Janice's priorities or will you look at a list of things and figure out Janice will work on these, you'll work on the others?

Janice LeRoux ([29:37](#)):

So the LPC is our official advisory body. Not knowing exactly what that's going to look like, we envisioned that the strategies that are listed, the recommendations of the LPC would be shared by the commission. I can't imagine that the commission wouldn't endorse those. Now what we would probably do is given that, you know, under those recommendations that the LPC does the master plan, what applies to First 5 Placer and its funding decisions and its own activities. So we envision it as like a section of the First 5 and a standalone component. We're going to be looking at very similar data. So why duplicate effort there.

Jenna ([30:47](#)):

I was wondering if there's any lessons learned from the last strategic planning process that informed the, the RFP that you want to uplift and share and reflect on with us just things that maybe worked really well or that in hindsight weren't so effective?

Janice LeRoux ([31:10](#)):

We probably we went into a much bigger data dive than we probably needed to. I would say that that was someplace that we spent a lot more effort than we probably needed to. I think that some of the processes, like I think having engagement with key informants was helpful. And I think that to the extent that we engaged parents and providers, it was helpful. But we did spend a lot more time engaging partners, stakeholders, providers than we did families. And so that's why I think the commission is really interested in refining what we're doing with that lens, especially since things have changed so much since COVID. Some of the people that we got really great feedback, just to give you an example. We were talking to elementary principals and kindergarten teachers to say, "What's going on?"

([32:45](#)):

What are you seeing?" And they were the first ones to kind of signal us signal to us an issue with our child welfare system. They kept saying, "We're making these reports, we're making these referrals, and we're not getting a response. Nothing's being done. I've made three reports on this kid in the last two

years.” And for me, any time a teacher makes a report that should be like, hugely elevated because no teacher wants to report a child and anger a parent - it should just raise to a high bar of concern. Then I was hearing from even other providers like, “Boy, we’re just making these reports and they’re just not going anywhere.” Well, then we looked at data for our child welfare system and we were finding that in the state we (Placer)

(33:45):

We had the lowest number of referrals that went to Substantiations - in the state. And it, my first gut feeling was, “That’s great. Kids aren’t getting to the system!” But then I had other people saying, “No, if they’re not getting referred, they’re not getting services.” And so it was by discussing those kinds of things, finding out what they were experiencing there, that we were able to look and look a little bit deeper at our child welfare to service data and whatever the situation was on their end that contributed to that. I cannot speak to whatever that was. That was something that began to ameliorate. As a, as a kind of a result of bringing that forward and saying, “Hey, this is what we’re seeing.” So, that was one of the things, Jenna, that worked where we saw kind of like a direct correlation with, on the ground community feedback with looking at different kinds of systems impacts.

Jenna (35:02):

Thank you. Thank you. So that’s super helpful. And I have a quick follow-up question then. I know that Sean added a question in the chat as well, but, and again, I’m sorry if this was asked already, but I heard you say, and I saw in the RFP that this is likely going to just be a refinement of the existing strategic plan. Something that I guess I’m holding with curiosity is, you know, if there is deeper family community engagement in this process, and it turns out that there’s an opportunity for more than refinement that there’s maybe like really big gaps that Emerge or what have you, Do you see there being concerns with that? Just to get expectations set at the onset?

Janice LeRoux (35:45):

Right. So this is, this is a little bit something I’ve got angst about. I think we have to moderate expectations to the sense that, like, I know childcare is a huge concern for families, and I also know that we can’t establish an entitlement program. We don’t have the money for it to pay for childcare. So I don’t want us to go and engage families saying, “What do you want? What’s really important to you?” And then setting us up to the point where we can’t address that need. I want to engage to the extent that we’re able to meet their expectations. That being said, if just like with our current strategic plan we didn’t know that we were going to have such a focus on the Native American population and that we were going to adopt strategies to really affect the access to prenatal care was of such a concern in the Latina community

(37:12):

So that established priorities, the commission, I think is very much open to shifting strategies, shifting areas if something comes up right. They’re not unreasonable, it’s just kind of like gut feeling is the major areas probably aren’t going to change a whole lot. But we may be looking at different strategies or different nuances within that category. But I think the commission is open to really seriously addressing needs as they come up. We had that, we had a great meeting, Jenna, the one with the youth, and you know, one of the things that came out of that that I thought, we might be looking at an investment area is on reproductive health. The focus on making sure that our young people of reproductive age have access. Especially considering that if you’re a Medi-Cal participant in this county, you’re not going to have terrific access to obstetrics.

(38:28):

, there aren’t that many opportunities. If you’re on Medi-Cal, you’re probably going to have to go up to Grass Valley or down to Sacramento to live your baby unless you’re lucky enough to be a Kaiser participant. So given that if we’re looking at access to reproductive care, that might be something that we look at funding, whether it’s through navigation or, you know, something like that. So the issues that we might be able to address, we might be able to address, but maybe not exactly in the way that families

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like: I can't pay for reproductive care, but we can pay for navigators to help people access care. And facilitate potentially funding streams that will be coming down (Cal aim). Funding streams that would support that ongoing.

[\(39:25\)](#):

Sean Hughes:

I heard you mentioning leveraging other funding sources - what emphasis are you placing on limiting the First 5 resources to short-term investments and prioritizing programs that can transition onto other public streams? Are the Commissioners seeing First 5 resources as a bridge rather than as a sustainable funding source, for example?

Janice:

That is a really good question. Placer County is a medium- sized county, but kind of on the small side in other ways. There are some things that we work to absolutely finding sustainable sources. For example, we engaged the county to support medical administrative activities, and we've helped our funded programs make sure that they build their medical administrative activities. So they have a revenue stream there that's unrestricted. The commission has also supported sustainability in other ways.

[\(40:40\)](#):

For example, we had a series of agencies up at the lake that merged into one entity, and so we helped support that so that they have, shared administrative functions, shared data, a single source of resource and referral in that kind of integrated system. So we supported that financially. We've supported agencies who provide therapeutic interventions and wanted to be able to bill Medi-Cal directly. So there's an interest in using First 5 funds in that means. That being said, there are some agencies that we fund that are so small and provide such a unique service that First 5 has provided them with funding for some time, and they may continue to provide some funding for some time. So I think that there, it's kind of a balance of both to the extent that we push for sustainability

[\(41:47\)](#):

to the extent that we can we do that. I've let my staff know that a lot of our role is to help the nonprofits do what they do best. And so we've applied for grants on behalf of the nonprofits. For example, we did a California Family Resource Association grant that we administered that gave them all support during COVID for staff functions and supplies and so on. That was basically operating support for some of them. The Road to Resilience program that we're doing is one that provides support for family home visiting and some navigation services. And so ones that are tied to our mission we augment funding through funding sources that are appropriate. So that's one of the ways in which we see our role. And then certainly as I'd said to the extent that we can help them establish their own sustainable revenue, we do that. But there is no policy - like I know some commissions require say 20% of your revenue or 20% of the project has to be funded through other than First 5 funding- we don't have any requirements like that. That's a really good question.

[\(43:26\)](#):

Okay. Anything else? Okay. Well I will end this then. And we'll post this to the website and include, I'll include a transcript as well as the Q&A.