



Early Childhood Evaluation Advisory Subcommittee

November 9, 2015
3:30- 5:00 p.m.

MEETING LOCATION CHANGE: Sequoia Healthcare District
525 Veterans Boulevard
Redwood City, CA 94063

Committee Members F5SMC Commissioners: Lee Michelson (Chair), Pam Frisella, Michael Garb, Neel Patel

Staff: Kitty Lopez, Michelle Blakely, Jenifer Clark

Minutes: Jenifer Clark

AGENDA

	Item	Presenter
1.	Agenda Review & Announcements	Michelson
2.	Approval of the October 6, 2015 Early Childhood Evaluation Advisory Subcommittee Meeting Minutes (Attachment 2)	Michelson/All
3.	Updates: Research & Evaluation Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Big Data” Project• Online Grants Management System	Clark
4.	Discussion: Evaluation Purpose and Planning (Attachment 4)	Clark
5.	Next Steps	Michelson/All
6.	Adjourn	Michelson
Next Meeting Date(s): <i>TBD</i>		

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FIRST 5 SAN MATEO COUNTY
Early Childhood Evaluation Advisory Subcommittee
MEETING MINUTES
October 6, 2015

PRESENT:

- COMMISSIONERS: Lee Michelson (Chair), Michael Garb, Neel Patel
- GUEST: Pam Frisella
- STAFF: Kitty Lopez, Michelle Blakely, Jenifer Clark
- MINUTES: Jenifer Clark

1. Agenda Review/Announcements

The agenda was approved with no changes.

2. Approval of the April 20, 2015 Early Childhood Evaluation Advisory Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Minutes were approved with no changes, with Commissioner Patel abstaining.

3. Updates: Ongoing Research & Evaluation Activities

Big Data Project. Staff provided information on the planning process for the Big Data Project. This project will be jointly funded by F5SMC and the Bella Vista Foundation, and conducted by the John G. Gardner Center at Stanford University. The project will use administrative data from public agencies and non-profit organizations supporting low-income pregnant women and families with children ages 0-3 to examine the array of services used by this population, how programs and sectors work together to support these families, locate gaps in the service array, and identify opportunities for improved collaboration and integration across programs, agencies, and sectors.

On-line Grants Management Systems: F5SMC staff recently received demonstrations of two online grants-management systems. Moving to an online system will streamline grants-management activities such as contracting, scope of work and budget development, invoicing, budget revisions, and program reporting. The ability to do this work online will reduce paper usage and expedite our internal review process for grantee invoices and reports. Subcommittee members had recommendations for additional resources that may be beneficial in this area; staff will follow up on those suggestions.

2015-15 Annual Report to First 5 California: The F5SMC 2014-15 Annual Report to First 5 California is due by November 1st. Normally this report is presented to the ECEA Subcommittee (which typically meets on the third Monday in October) for review prior to being approved by the Commission. However, since scheduling conflicts required an early meeting this month, the data to build the annual report was not available in time to develop the report for ECEA's review. Subcommittee members felt that having the report presented to the Commission without their review was appropriate under the circumstances. The group took the opportunity to look at 6 years of trend data from the Comprehensive Evaluation, and was pleased to see improvement

over time in areas where F5SMC has invested its resources, such as oral health care for young children. Members were excited about the possibility of presenting this type of information to stakeholders such as pediatricians and city councils.

4. Discussion: Evaluation Purpose and Planning

The Subcommittee also discussed the possibility of restructuring our comprehensive evaluation activities to reduce data collection burden on grantees, improve the utility of the data collection for use by both F5SMC and grantees in policy, advocacy, and communications activities, and leverage rigorous evaluations underway through other efforts, particularly in the Early Learning sector (e.g. The Big Lift, Race to the Top, IMPACT). Although we did release an RFP earlier this year to identify an external evaluation contractor, the review panel recommended that F5SMC engage in a more robust evaluation planning process to refine and prioritize what we hope to accomplish prior to engaging a consultant to do the work. ECEA subcommittee members felt that this was acceptable as long as reporting and accountability requirements set by Prop 10 and the State are met by both F5SMC and our grantees. They are also interested in revisiting the new indicators included in the Strategic Plan, now that new programs are in place

5. Next Steps

- F5SMC Annual Report to First 5 California to be presented for review and approval to the Commission at its October 26th meeting and submitted to the State subsequent to approval
- Staff to develop a draft evaluation planning process and bring it to the next meeting of the Subcommittee for review and feedback
- Commissioners and staff to work together on developing a slide deck appropriate to share with external stakeholders such as pediatric residents and city council members

Next Meeting Dates:

- November 9, 2015

DATE: October 6, 2015
TO: F5SMC Early Childhood Evaluation Advisory Subcommittee
FROM: Jenifer Clark, Research & Evaluation Specialist
RE: Discussion: Evaluation Purpose & Planning

BACKGROUND

- Prop 10 requires that the activities and investments of County Commissions are evaluated, and that data on clients served, services delivered, and evaluation results are reported to the State each year.
- Prior to 2009, F5SMC met this evaluation mandate by requiring that each funded program allocate a portion of its grant amount towards a program-level evaluation. Programs were free to design and implement whatever type of evaluation they deemed appropriate.
 - This approach to program evaluation led to evaluations of varying scope and rigor. Some programs invested significant resources in hiring external evaluation firms to conduct controlled trials of their services; others provided counts of clients served and customer satisfaction data. This situation made it difficult for F5SMC to compare the efficacy of different service strategies, and impossible for us to derive uniform information about the impact of our funding on children and families.
 - Totaling up the dollars allocated to evaluation activities within each grant, F5SMC spent approximately \$360,000 per year.
- During the 2009-2015 Strategic Plan, F5SMC moved to a Comprehensive Evaluation approach. This type of approach utilizes common data collection tools and common indicators across funded programs.
 - A Request for Proposals process led to the selection of SRI International as the external evaluator. SRI worked with F5SMC staff and grantees to develop a Comprehensive Evaluation including common indicators, data collection tools, and data collection protocols. SRI also developed and managed a database for the F5SMC Comprehensive Evaluation.
 - During the first three-year funding cycle of the 2009-15 Strategic Plan, F5SMC budgeted approximately \$300,000 per year for evaluation services. During the second three-year funding cycle, we budgeted approximately \$250,000 per year.
- During the Strategic Planning process for 2015-2020, the Commission decided to maintain a comprehensive approach to evaluation. Staff released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Comprehensive Evaluation Services in April 2015. The funds allocated for these services totaled \$672,000 over three years (\$224,000 per year).

RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION RFP PROCESS

- We received one proposal from SRI International.
- The review committee consisted of F5SMC staff, evaluation staff from F5SMC grantees, and Evaluation Specialists from other Bay Area First 5 County Commissions. After much discussion, the panel recommended that F5SMC conduct an evaluation planning process prior to awarding funds to an external contractor. Goals of the planning process will include:
 - Clarifying the priorities around data collection and evaluation of F5SMC Commissioners, staff, and funded partners
 - Determining how best to leverage other rigorous research and evaluation efforts currently underway (e.g. the Social Innovation Fund evaluation of the Big Lift; the Race to the Top evaluation of Early Learning quality; the F5CA IMPACT evaluation; the Big Data project)
 - Identifying technological solutions that may reduce the resources needed for client-level data collection and database maintenance
- Once the planning process is complete, the agency will be in a better position to move forward with securing vendors for evaluation and/or database services focused on what we aim to achieve with these activities.
- In the interim, require funded programs to collect aggregate data that will allow F5SMC to meet its reporting mandates for First 5 California

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Evaluation data can be used for many purposes. The specific ways in which the information will be used can require different types of data to be collected, as well as different data collection strategies. F5SMC may want to use evaluation data in the following ways:

- **Accountability:** Are F5SMC dollars being spent in accordance with contract and scope of work requirements? Are goals such as number of clients served and services provided met by funded partners?
- **Efficacy:** Are activities supported by Prop 10 dollars effective in attaining their desired outcomes? Are F5SMC investments as a whole achieving the results identified in the Strategic Plan?
- **Program Quality Improvement:** Are there specific aspects of programs that can be improved in identifiable ways that will result in better outcomes for clients?
- **Strategic Planning and Resource Allocation:** Can we identify more effective or efficient services strategies or modalities, or particular client populations that should be prioritized when determining future funding or activities? Can we identify unmet needs within our target population that can be addressed with our resources?
- **Communications:** Can we use the data to communicate with stakeholders about what we do and why it matters?

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE CURRENT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION

- Common indicators are a valuable resource for needs assessments and communications purposes.
- Collecting the same data across programs serving similar populations through similar service modalities does allow for an examination of which service strategies are most effective for what populations.
- There are some serious drawbacks to relying on the data collection and database maintenance system that we have been using.
 - Data are updated only twice per year, and by the time the data are available they are several months out of date.
 - There is no easy way for those who generate the data (programs) to access the data. They can't query the database, design or pull their own reports, etc.
 - Resources end up being dedicated to data collection and management, rather than data analysis.

RECOMMENDED PLANNING ACTIVITIES

1. Focused conversations with Commissioners, staff, grantees, and other stakeholders to specify how F5SMC evaluation data can add the most value to the Commission and the larger community.
2. Gathering information on other evaluation efforts that F5SMC can leverage in order to better tailor our evaluation activities and make the most of our resources.
3. Exploring the feasibility of linking information from our grantees' existing case management systems as a technological solution to the problem of onerous data collection requirements.
4. The Early Childhood Evaluation Advisory Subcommittee should meet monthly during the planning process to receive regular updates and to provide guidance to staff.

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DRAFT Evaluation Planning Time Line

Time Frame	Desired Outcome	Activities	Online Grants/ Data System
Nov-Dec 2015	Defining Goals and Priorities of F5SMC Evaluation	Reviewing State Mandates about Prop 10 Evaluation	Gathering information on technological capability and cost of various systems
		Reviewing what we've learned from the Comprehensive Evaluation	
		Stakeholder Input <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F5SMC Staff • Commissioners • Funded Partners 	Developing an understanding of partners' data systems
Jan 2016	Understanding Other Local Research and Evaluation Efforts	Document Review and Key Informant Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big Lift/SIF Grant • Big Data Project • IMPACT and RTT • Program Quality Improvement and Evaluation done by grantees 	Determining best option for F5SMC
Feb 2016	Refining Vision of F5SMC Evaluation	Stakeholder Input <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F5SMC Staff • Commissioners 	
Mar 2016	Presenting Evaluation Approach	Presentations to Commission, Funded Partners	