

2025-2028

Strategic Plan

July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2028



Updated October 13, 2025



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First 5 El Dorado Commission

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Background

The First 5 El Dorado Children and Families Commission (First 5 El Dorado) was formed following the passage of California Proposition 10 (Prop 10). The Prop 10 initiative added taxes on cigarette and other tobacco products to fund programs promoting early childhood development for children birth through 5 and their families. Prop 10 also led to the creation of the California Children and Families Act, which recognizes that there is a compelling need in California to create and implement a comprehensive, collaborative, and integrated system of information and services for children prenatal through age five. Through Prop 10 funds, First 5 El Dorado leads these efforts within El Dorado County, working closely with county agencies and community-based partners to achieve its vision and mission.

Vision

All children will live in nurturing communities and are ready to succeed in life.

Mission

First 5 El Dorado Children and Families Commission is committed to strengthening children and families by promoting and enhancing comprehensive systems.

First 5 El Dorado receives about \$800,000 annually through revenues generated by Prop 10. The Commission continually evaluates and aligns its strategic approach to identify how to best utilize these funds to meet community needs given the resources available. Key to these efforts is the development of a Strategic Plan, which is also a requirement to receive Prop 10 funds; all First 5 county commissions must:

“adopt an adequate and complete county strategic plan for the support and improvement of early childhood development within the county... The county strategic plan shall, at a minimum, include the following: a description of the goals and objectives proposed to be attained; a description of the programs, services, and projects proposed to be provided, sponsored, or facilitated; and a description of how measurable outcomes of such programs, services, and projects will be determined by the county commission using appropriate reliable indicators.”¹

This document summarizes First 5 El Dorado’s 2025-2028 Strategic Plan, describing the process by which the plan was developed, outlining areas of focus for upcoming Commission activities, and ensuring a transparent and explicit approach to utilizing Commission funds and resources over the next three years.

¹ California Children and Families Program [130100 - 130158]. Available at https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=HSC§ionNum=130140

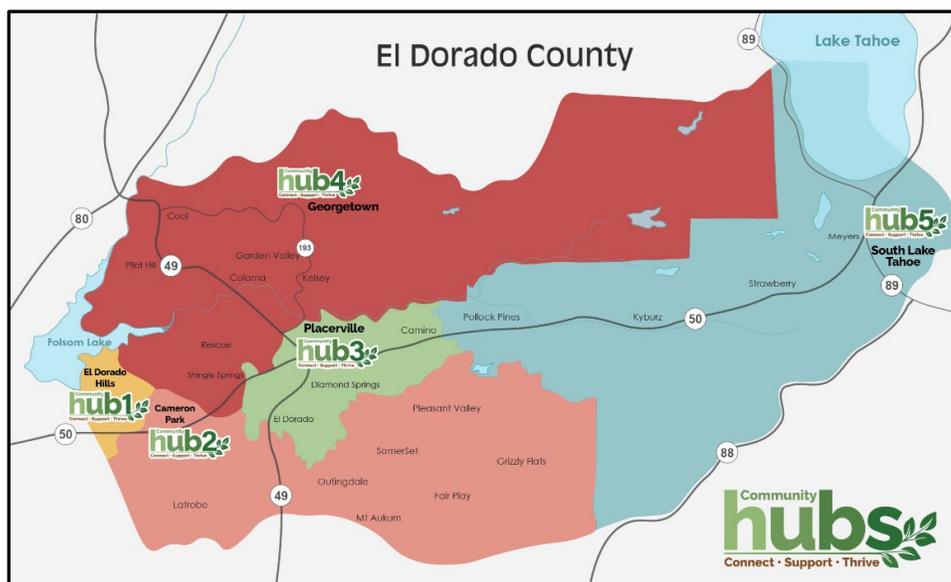
Focus of Recent Commission Investments

First 5 El Dorado has always taken a regional approach to planning and service delivery, recognizing that different areas in El Dorado County have unique resources and needs. Within this framework, the Commission identified **Community Hubs** as the primary strategy for achieving its mission and vision from 2016 to 2025.

History of Hubs Implementation in El Dorado County

The 2016-2021 First 5 El Dorado Strategic Plan established Community Hubs in each of the county's Education and Supervisorial Districts to increase access to services and build family skills in navigating those services. Five Hubs were formed, one within each district, where local library branches served as the primary service delivery location.

Each Hub deployed a multidisciplinary team consisting of a public health nurse, community health advocate, family engagement specialist, and an early childhood literacy specialist, offering activities to promote early literacy, child development, parenting, and preventative health activities for expectant parents and families with children birth through five years of age. Evaluation activities between 2016 and 2021 found that Community Hubs were effective at engaging these populations. However, many of the families reached had high protective factor scores before engaging with Hubs, indicating an opportunity to focus future efforts on those who may have been marginalized by the service delivery system. Previous evaluation recommendations also indicated that structural adjustments and supplemental funding were necessary to increase the efficacy of the Hubs in creating meaningful outcomes for children, individuals, and families, particularly those most in need of supports. The Commission also learned that active engagement of community partners, diversified sustainable funding, and a consistent and open feedback loop with the community, providers, and leadership are essential to ensuring the future success of the Hubs.



El Dorado County Supervisorial District boundaries shown with Library locations (2023). One Hub is located at the Library within each district.

Implementation of Hubs 2.0²

Informed by evaluation results and findings, as well as a better understanding of the needs experienced by families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, First 5 El Dorado redesigned and reaffirmed its commitment to the Hub model within its 2021-2023 Amended Strategic Plan and again within its 2021-2025 Strategic Plan Extension, adopted in October 2022 and amended in March 2023. The result is the Hubs 2.0 model, which builds upon the original Hubs' focus on providing system navigational supports and expands its reach to all children, families, and individuals in the county. **The Hubs 2.0 model moved the First 5 El Dorado Children and Families Commission toward systems-level changes and away from program-specific investments.**

The primary assumption of this revised model was that expectant parents and families with children birth through five years of age will realize greater results from investments in service connection and coordination, rather than siloed, program-specific investments. This model sought to increase partnerships and collaboration and provide a more robust and connected service system for families, utilizing the following key elements:

- Prioritizing access to **services, referral, and navigation.**
- Increasing access so community members could **access a Hub by walking into a Hub location, by calling an 800 number, or by referral** from another parent, caregiver, or community partner.
- **Positioning Navigators in each Hub to build relationships with people** who are marginalized or experiencing barriers to services.
- **Forming Community Advisories to encourage local input on services, supports, and solutions;** to place a focus on identifying populations who are marginalized by the system; and to develop strategies to better engage those populations in their community.

Work to implement the Hubs 2.0 model began in fall 2020 and continues through June 2025 in alignment with the First 5 El Dorado 2021-2025 Amended Strategic Plan. Following eight years of focusing Commission investments in establishing this navigational system to ensure expectant parents and families with children birth through five years of age have access to services and supports prior to crisis, the Commission is now expanding upon this system-level work as they continue to serve as a primary convener, driver, and advocate within the county.

² More information on Hubs 2.0 can be found in the 2021-25 Amended Strategic Plan and annual evaluation reports. These documents are available as attachments presented at previous First 5 El Dorado meetings. To access the materials associated with these meetings, visit <https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/edcoe/Board.nsf/vpublic?open#> and select "First 5 El Dorado Commission" from the upper right dropdown.

Development of the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan

Understanding Community Need

To guide development of their new Strategic Plan, First 5 El Dorado conducted a Community Needs Assessment in 2024.³ This assessment was designed to seek a better understanding of the needs of expectant parents, children, and families in El Dorado, and focused on exploring data for 15 indicators tied to family functioning, child development, and child health, three primary areas in which First 5 El Dorado seeks to affect change.

Family Functioning	Adverse Childhood Experiences
	Positive Childhood Experiences
	Substantiated Child Abuse Rates
	Lead Levels
Child Development	Child Care Availability
	Transitional Kindergarten Attendance
Child Health	Prenatal Care
	Adolescent Birth Rate
	Maternal Mental Health
	Prenatal Substance Use
	Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome
	Low Birthweight
	Infant Mortality
	Child Health Insurance
	Immunizations

The Commission reviewed the data available for each indicator and participated in a discussion to explore what the results indicated for El Dorado County, both alone and in comparison to California, and what the impact of improving outcomes within the indicator could be for children and families.

³ The full 2024 Community Needs Assessment is available at [https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/edcoe/Board.nsf/files/D7WP85635148/\\$file/Item%206.1%20Community%20Needs%20Assessment.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/edcoe/Board.nsf/files/D7WP85635148/$file/Item%206.1%20Community%20Needs%20Assessment.pdf)

Identifying Priority Areas

Through review of Community Needs Assessment data, the Commission identified the following six priority areas to be addressed in the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan:

 **Increase Early Prenatal Care:** Prenatal care is essential for monitoring the health of both the pregnant individual and the developing baby. Early and regular check-ups can identify and manage potential health issues, and healthy pregnancies can lead to fewer developmental problems in children and better maternal health post-delivery. Access to comprehensive prenatal care is linked to better long-term health outcomes for both birthing people and children, and investing in prenatal care can also reduce the need for more intensive medical interventions during and after pregnancy.

 **Decrease Prenatal Substance Use:** Substance use during pregnancy can have serious and long-lasting effects on the developing baby, as well as on the health of the pregnant individual. Early exposure to substances can lead to physical, cognitive, and behavioral issues that can persist throughout a child's life, and prenatal substance use is associated with a range of maternal health risks, including high blood pressure, gestational diabetes, and complications during labor. Decreasing prenatal substance use helps to ensure that all children are given an equal opportunity for a healthy and successful start in life.

 **Increase Timely Immunizations:** Timely immunizations are crucial for protecting children from preventable, sometimes life threatening, diseases. Vaccinating on schedule ensures optimal protection during critical periods of development, promoting healthier growth and learning outcomes, and reduces the need for costly medical treatments, hospitalizations, and long-term care.

 **Increase Child Care Availability:** Child care is essential to supporting working parents, allowing them to balance their careers and family responsibilities. High-quality child care programs provide young children with a safe and enriching environment where they can develop critical social, cognitive, and emotional skills during their formative years and allow parents to maintain their jobs or pursue educational opportunities, promoting financial stability and career growth.

 **Increase Enrollment in Transitional Kindergarten (TK):** TK provides young children with a strong academic and social-emotional foundation, preparing them for success in later grades by teaching essential skills such as literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving. Expanding TK enrollment can help ensure that all children have access to early learning opportunities, helping to close achievement gaps and promote equality in education.

 **Decrease Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs):** Adverse experiences can have long-lasting negative effects on a child's physical, emotional, and mental health. ACEs, such as maltreatment, violence, behavioral health concerns, or household dysfunction, are linked to an increased risk of chronic diseases, mental health disorders, and substance misuse later in life. Reducing ACEs helps promote healthier, more resilient children, improves long-term well-being, and contributes to stronger, more supportive communities.

By focusing on these critical areas over the next three years, **the Commission will invest in services and supports that can lead to significant long-term benefits for children, families, and communities.**

Building the Plan

First 5 El Dorado developed four objectives to support the overarching goal to **engage the community to improve early childhood outcomes and systems for young children**. Each of the four objectives is designed to be flexible, to be applicable to multiple priority areas, and to be broad enough to allow for nimble development of strategies in response to changing conditions and opportunities in the community. These objectives were also designed to align with the Spectrum of Public Participation framework⁴, which measures the extent to which public engagement and influence inform decision-making. This alignment reinforces First 5 El Dorado’s commitment to the principle that “those affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.”⁵

Examples of anticipated strategies within each objective are included in the matrix on the following page but are not meant to be prescriptive or limit the inclusion of other strategies in the future.

Objective 1. **Promote awareness**

Objective 2. **Join existing initiatives**

Objective 3. **Create new initiatives**

Objective 4. **Lead systems change**

In fall/winter 2024, the six priority areas were presented to the public via a series of convenings. During these sessions, community members were invited to help interpret the data, providing insights into the potential impact of addressing each priority area and valuable context for how to effectively implement strategies to reach community members. In February 2025, First 5 El Dorado solicited additional input from community members via an electronic survey, also designed to gather information that could inform the implementation of strategies. Results of the survey overall supported the objectives and strategies previously drafted, specifically those related to promoting awareness as a mechanism for driving change within the priority areas.

As appropriate, the information provided by the community as described above has been incorporated into the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan Action Planning Matrix, which comprises a more robust version of the matrix on the following page, including potential partners, sample action steps, and proposed timelines.⁶ This document will be utilized by First 5 El Dorado staff to support future Strategic Plan implementation and has been provided to the Commission under separate cover.

⁴ More information on the Spectrum of Public Participation is available at <https://iap2usa.org/cvs>

⁵ “IAP2 Core Values.” International Association for Public Participation. Available at <https://www.iap2.org/page/corevalues>

⁶ Some of the information gathered from the survey was too detailed for inclusion in the Action Planning Matrix. However, to ensure community voices continue to shape strategy implementation, the electronic survey results have been summarized and documented. These findings have been provided to the Commission under separate cover and will remain available for review and use by the First 5 El Dorado team and key partners throughout the duration of this strategic plan.

Strategic Plan Goal

Engage the community to improve early childhood outcomes and systems for young children

Potential Strategies and Alignment with Priority Areas

Objective 1 Promote awareness	Objective 2 Join existing initiatives	Objective 3 Create new initiatives	Objective 4 Lead systems change		
<p>The Commission will engage in collaborative communications campaigns for expectant individuals and parents with children birth through five years of age</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;">       </div>	<p>The Commission will participate in or join local groups to seek potential collaborative opportunities</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;">       </div>	<p>The Commission will partner with existing networks to design a volunteer mentor network that builds caregiver/child resiliency using family literacy strategies</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>This strategy was updated by the Commission at the August 2025 Action Planning Retreat</i></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; margin-top: 10px;">  </div>	<p>The Commission, with partners, will design a sustainable Community Health Worker Network that provides individualized, community-based services and supports for expectant individuals and parents with children birth through five years of age</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;">       </div>		
<p>The Commission will design a caregiver/child resiliency strategy that incorporates a family strengthening protective factors approach within a universal developmental screening model</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;">       </div>	<p>The Commission will partner to design a collaborative strategy that reduces prenatal substance use</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; margin-top: 10px;">   </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; margin-top: 10px;">   </div>			
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 5px;">Increase Early Prenatal Care</div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 5px;">Decrease Prenatal Substance Use</div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 5px;">Increase Timely Immunizations</div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 5px;">Increase Child Care Availability</div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 5px;">Increase Enrollment in TK</div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 5px;">Decrease Adverse Childhood Experiences</div> </div>

Activities resulting from the Strategic Plan align with the Commission’s Decision-Making Guidelines, specifically that the Commission will:

- Advocate for children and families within their community.
- Employ a collaborative, transparent and inclusionary process.
- Respect the diversity, strength, identity, and potential of all children, families, and communities.
- Solicit and listen to the ideas of stakeholders and others, encouraging a reflective and open dialogue.
- Address the structural and institutional practices that marginalize children, families, and communities.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Plan

Monitoring and Updating

The 2025-2028 Strategic Plan will serve as a guide for Commission activities. It is intended to be a living document that is adjusted as necessary to respond to community need or changing conditions. As such, the Strategic Plan will be reviewed by community members, partners, and Commissioners on a regular basis in the following ways.

- Community members will be engaged on a regular basis to inquire about the conditions for expectant parents and children birth through five years of age. These sessions will be held in a format designed by the community, including virtual or email communication. Participants must live in El Dorado County and be expecting or raising a child under the age of 13 years old. Sessions will be held in English and Spanish. Participants will be compensated for their expertise.
- Partners will be engaged on a regular basis to inquire about the conditions for expecting parents and children birth through five years of age. These sessions will be held in a format designed by partners, including virtual or email communication. Partners must provide services for expectant parents or children under the age of 13 years old in El Dorado County.
- The First 5 El Dorado website will be updated to receive information on an ongoing basis. Social media will be used to promote this opportunity.
- All First 5 El Dorado staff and contractors providing direct services will have individualized rounding sessions monthly to ensure alignment between activities and the plan.
- Commissioners will receive a presentation from First 5 El Dorado staff semi-annually at the January and August Commission meetings to assess feedback, data, and direction.

Evaluating Progress

As a component of Prop 10 funding, First 5 El Dorado is required to demonstrate results. The Results-Based Accountability model as adopted by the state First 5 Commission requires the collection and analysis of data and the reporting of findings in order to evaluate the effectiveness of programs. Evaluation activities also support the Commission in tracking progress towards goals and continuously improving efforts to positively impact the community.

In recent years, the Commission has utilized a process evaluation framework to determine whether strategic plan objectives have or have not been met. As an iterative approach, process evaluation allowed the Commission to identify areas of Hubs 2.0 implementation that could be improved or strengthened to increase success at meeting outcomes and objectives.

It is intended that a similar process will be utilized to evaluate 2025-2028 Strategic Plan implementation.