



2008 SYSTEM CHANGE SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS: GRANTEES



jdcPartnerships
integrating information for change

Prepared for:

First 5 San Francisco
Theresa Zighera
1390 Market St., Suite 318
San Francisco, CA 94102
ph. 415.934.4873
fax 415.565.0494

Prepared by:

jdcPartnerships
5711 Santa Cruz Ave
Richmond, CA 94804
510.525.6662

Contact:

Jara Dean-Coffey, Principal
jara@jdcPartnerships.com

Submitted:

March 2009

BACKGROUND

The mission of the San Francisco Children and Families Commission (First 5 San Francisco) is to instill an enduring obligation in San Francisco residents and government to ensure the opportunity for optimal health and development for every child living in this county. This means a commitment to support young children and their families from prenatal to five years of age through abundant opportunities to be healthy, learn, and grow. In this way, children will reach their full potential and families empowered and engaged civic partners in the work of the Commission.

It was the Commission's intent that strategies funded through Proposition 10 would integrate and coordinate services, supports and activities so that families, providers, agencies and communities could come together to provide great beginnings for San Francisco's children. The Commission believed that through weaving together existing services, funding new and innovative strategies, developing policy and promoting system change, San Francisco could approach the real collaboration that would make a difference for families and their young children.

With this mission and strategies in mind, First 5 San Francisco, in consultation with jdcPartnerships, developed a comprehensive survey designed to provide feedback from grantee organizations about their experiences with First 5 San Francisco. Specifically, First 5 San Francisco wanted grantee opinions about their RFP/RFQ and project start-up experience, grant monitoring activities, interactions with First 5 San Francisco staff and feedback about the benefits and challenges of being First 5 San Francisco grant recipient.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Approximately 80% of First 5 San Francisco's 38 grantees responded to the survey; the majority of these respondents (69%) have been working with First 5 San Francisco for four or more years. For most grantees (67%) First 5 San Francisco funding comprises less than 19% of their overall budget and tends to focus on enhanced child development and improved family functioning.

GRANT PROPOSAL PROCESS

"First 5 is very complete and helpful with their process"

Asked about various aspects of the funding process, grantees most strongly agreed that the greatest strength of the funding proposal process was the usefulness of the information they received from First 5 San Francisco regarding the proposal process. Grantees' average ratings for the other aspects of the proposal process (i.e., adequate time for completion, feedback on proposal useful in project start-up, guidelines and forms are clear) were also positive, with each receiving an average rating of approximately 3.0 on a 4-point scale. Furthermore, grantees who have partnered with First 5 for many years tended to have the most positive perceptions, suggesting that the process becomes easier as grantees and First 5 San Francisco establish working relationships.

GRANT MANAGEMENT & MONITORING ACTIVITIES

"The support we've needed has been timely, thorough and courteously provided. We've received excellent support so far!"

First 5 San Francisco received significant praise for their conscientious management and monitoring of funded programs. Although approximately one third of grantees expressed that First 5 San Francisco reporting and monitoring requirements could be more burdensome than other funders, 100% "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that First 5 San Francisco demonstrated conscientiousness in managing and overseeing funded programs and most, 93%, agreed that monitoring activities were overall appropriate. As this grantee surmised, "[First 5 Staff] is critical in a positive and constructive way, he/she supports us but keeps us on our toes, which is motivating and inspiring."

INTERACTION WITH FIRST 5 SAN FRANCISCO STAFF

"I value their availability and their sensitivity to working with my project's unique aspects. Our project is not forced to conform to preconceived ideas or "one size fits all" reporting requirements."

Grantees appreciated the fact that First 5 San Francisco staff is prepared and on-time for scheduled meetings, appointments, and phone calls. They also praised staff for having a genuine interest in the work of the grantees and providing honest feedback. Overall, at least 82% and up to 100% of grantees provided positive ratings for each aspect of interactions with First 5 San Francisco staff.

BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH FIRST 5 SAN FRANCISCO

"First 5 has its pulse on the services and strategies applied to children aged 0-5 and offers a unique perspective in any and all feedback First 5 provides us."

The greatest benefit of working with First 5 San Francisco according to grantees is the access to funding not available anywhere else. Grantees also praised First 5 San Francisco for its commitment to the community and its ability to facilitate networking opportunities amongst funded organizations, noting most positively the impact on their ability to communicate with others about what they are doing and have accomplished, and promoting the exchange of information with colleagues in other organizations around effective practices and lessons learned.

THE IMPACT OF FUNDING OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

"First 5 has enabled us to extend services to a nearly invisible population--the silent majority of non-system-involved families--and allowed us to highlight the needs of children who are very often presumed healthy and whole, and therefore not proactively networked into child health and developmental services. First 5 (funding) has permitted us to sustain professional Counseling, School Readiness, and Parent Education services for underserved populations--the impact of which cannot be underestimated."

The most strongly realized impact across grantees was expanded scope of programming, with almost three-quarters of grantees reporting that First 5 San Francisco funds contributed "a lot" in this area. With mean ratings of nearly 3.5 on a 4-point scale, other areas where grantees reported First 5 San Francisco's funding contributed greatly included: promoting professional development of agency/program staff; improving the quality of programming; and developing an awareness of promising practices, evidence-based models, and standards of quality.

First 5 San Francisco has begun to offer evaluation and data collection support to grantees as part of a comprehensive evaluation framework; because of the support already offered, at least 70% of grantees have improved their ability to measure activity impact, communicate activities and outcomes to others, and use this data to make programmatic decisions.

PROGRESS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Overall, grantees feel that First 5 San Francisco is doing a good job of supporting them to meet funding requirements and expand quality programming. Grantee feedback also provided guidance about how First 5 San Francisco can more effectively work with grantees in the future. In response to survey results and internal planning discussions, First 5 San Francisco has identified the following areas for ongoing improvement:

- ✓ Continue to improve the clarity of funding proposal forms and start-up expectations;
- ✓ Develop strategies to provide enhanced support in the early phases of program implementation;
- ✓ Develop strategies to communicate results of monitoring activities back to grantees in a more timely manner; and
- ✓ Continue to streamline site visit protocols, monitoring forms, data collection procedures, and quarterly reporting.