



2008 SYSTEM CHANGE SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS: STAKEHOLDERS



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integrating information for change

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INTRODUCTION

The San Francisco Children and Families Commission (First 5 San Francisco) is part of the statewide First 5 California movement to assist public agencies, non-profit organizations and families in supporting early education, pediatric healthcare, family support and systems change. First 5 San Francisco has identified the following vision for all young children living in the City and County of San Francisco:

All children will thrive in supportive, nurturing and loving families and communities. Children from birth to five years of age will be safe, healthy and stimulated. They will be supported in their physical, emotional and cognitive development. They will start school eager to continue to learn and grow with confidence and connections to families, community and society.

Every five years First 5 San Francisco initiates an inclusive community planning process to develop a comprehensive Strategic Plan that will guide achievement of this vision. 2007-08 marked the first full implementation year of First 5 San Francisco's new 2007-2012 Strategic Plan and therefore the close of the fiscal year seemed an opportune time to re-engage and solicit input from community stakeholders.

With the strategic plan and mission in mind, First 5 San Francisco, in consultation with jdcPartnerships, developed a survey intended to gain feedback from key stakeholders about the progress First 5 San Francisco is making in communicating its activities and goals to the community. Stakeholders were also asked to elicit suggestions on how to increase visibility and effective communication with all First 5 San Francisco partners. Following are the results of that survey.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Twenty six key stakeholders responded to this survey, their self-identified affiliations with First 5 San Francisco are as follows: 44% Partners, 20% Commissioners, 20% Interested Community Members and 16% Grantees. Over half (54%) of the respondents have had a connection of 4 years or longer with First 5 San Francisco.

First 5 San Francisco's Strategic Plan (2007-2012)

The vast majority of surveyed stakeholders (89%) have a clear understanding of the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan. Most respondents (92%) also have an excellent understanding of First 5 San Francisco's desired outcomes for children and families. Additionally, more than one-half of stakeholders have a good sense of the progress First 5 San Francisco is making toward the desired outcomes for children and families.

The Visibility of First 5 San Francisco in the Community

More than half of respondents reported that First 5 San Francisco's visibility within the community is good, if not excellent. Stakeholders suggested that increased community partnerships and media outreach efforts would continue to elevate this visibility.

Rating the Effectiveness of Communication Strategies

Three quarters of survey participants felt well informed about First 5 San Francisco's general activities through its publications and website. Additionally, the vast majority of stakeholders (89%), found conversations with First 5 San Francisco staff to be a highly effective communication strategy, and, when asked about other effective communication strategies, several stakeholders mentioned the commission meetings. Stakeholders also indicated that they are interested in knowing more about funded programs, evaluation efforts, and advocacy and policy work; and noted that a wider audience might still be reached through broader email communication efforts. As one stakeholder noted, *"It's more about improving the reach of the communication strategies than the strategies, themselves."*

The Strengths of First 5 San Francisco's Grant Making Activities

Stakeholders felt that First 5 San Francisco's greatest strengths with regard to grant making are its strategic and purposeful funding choices and its emphasis on community collaboration, noting the "focus and clarity of purpose", consideration of the "needs of the community" and the use of "community input" and community review panels. The following stakeholders described appreciation of the way in which First 5 San Francisco has approached grant making:

Grant making is in alignment with the strategic plan and four result areas (linked with logic models). Transparent, clear process. Good monitoring and accountability.

First 5 SF staff is very collaborative and transparent in their grant making activities, expectations, and truly try to work as collaboratively as possible with the grantee.

PROGRESS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Overall, stakeholders are impressed with the way in which First 5 San Francisco approaches grant making, highlighting the strategic alignment, collaborative nature, involvement of and responsiveness to the community, as well as the overall transparency of the grant making process. Stakeholders are aware of and understand First 5 San Francisco's strategic plan and desired outcomes for children and families and most report a good sense of the progress being made toward these desired outcomes. Rating First 5 San Francisco's current visibility and communication strategies effective and acknowledging their own interest in knowing more about key aspects of First 5 San Francisco's work, stakeholders noted potential for broader reach and more regular dissemination of information. In response to these survey results and internal planning conversations, First 5 San Francisco will be undertaking a communications audit in 2008-09 in order to set the foundation for a more comprehensive communication and stakeholder engagement strategy.