



To: First 5 Alameda County Commission

From: Mark Friedman

Date: June 25, 2009

Subject: Emergency Response Fund

REQUESTED ACTION

To discuss the establishment of an Emergency Response Fund.

BACKGROUND

Due to the unprecedented budget cuts at the state and local level, there is every likelihood that vital services for young children and their families will be reduced during the next several months. Expected state budget cuts could be coupled with borrowing from already strapped local governments. Among the programs that could experience severe cuts are: Maternal and Child Health, AFLP (Adolescent Family Life Program), Healthy Families, CALWORKS, Regional Centers, and Medi-Cal. In addition, many community based organizations are facing a decline in foundation and corporate giving and could see contracts and grants from state and local government slashed.

PROPOSED RESPONSE OF FIRST 5 ALAMEDA COUNTY

To respond to this crisis, we are recommending that the Commission set aside funds to potentially fill gaps in funding for critical services for children 0 to 5 and their families.

AMONG POSSIBLE CRITERIA FOR PROVIDING FUNDING ARE:

- Agencies must demonstrate a loss of funds from state or local sources
- Agencies must comply with The Proposition 10 prohibition on supplantation.
- Funded services and programs must be consistent with the Strategic Plan for 2009-2013
- Funding must be for services for children from birth to age 5 and their families.

Funding should be used for:

- direct services for young children and families that focus on early intervention/prevention leading to long term savings

- Services and programs where First 5 funds can lead to longer term sustainable funding from other sources, not just putting a First 5 finger in a dyke that will be breached as soon as First 5 funding terminates
- Programs that contribute to systems change/collaboration and greater efficiency
- Programs that leverage our investment by using it as a match for federal or other matching funds

QUESTIONS, ISSUES AND CONCERNS:

1. We need to assure that the Emergency Response Fund works in conjunction with our Community Grants program and that whatever plan the Commission decides on does not confuse our community partners and makes clear distinctions between the two programs.
2. Staff availability and resources to design and implement the Emergency Response Fund
3. How do we ensure that emergency response funding does not create the expectation of ongoing support for programs, when the funds are likely to be only available for a limited time period.
4. Should funding be used for bridge or transition needs or for one-time investments?
5. How do we assure a fair and equitable process?
6. What will be the decision making process?
7. What documentation will applicants need to provide about cuts in their funding?
8. What is the appropriate amount of funds to put into the Emergency Response Fund and how will taking funds from the Sustainability Fund impact our long range financial plan?
9. What should the maximum amount of funds be for any individual award?
10. Can we set up the fund in a timely manner and begin implementation during the summer or will we need to wait until the September 24th Commission meeting to move forward? Will we need to schedule a special Commission meeting over the summer?
11. With so many financial challenges for our public and community based organization partners how do we prioritize where the emergency response funds are directed?

PROPOSED PROCESS AND TIMELINE FOR ADMINISTRATION OF FUNDS

Appoint a joint Commission-Staff task force to develop the program and make recommendations during the summer of 2009. The task force would have two Commissioners appointed by the Chair of the Commission and three staff members appointed by the Chief Executive Officer.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact will depend upon the level of funding the Commission decides upon for the Emergency Response Fund. Any funds allocated for this fund will have to come out of the Sustainability Fund and will impact the Commission's long range financial plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission approve the establishment of an Emergency Response Fund and the appointment of a task force to develop the program.

Submitted by:

Mark Friedman, Chief Executive Officer