

EMPOWERED FAMILIES PRIORITY / COMMUNITY BUILDING

R18: Increase family connections in neighborhoods

R19: Increase family and community self-advocacy to make change

Results

R18: Increase Family Connections in Neighborhoods

“An increase in social capital has been shown to produce positive benefits for children and their families, including improved health, safety, and school performance. This result recognizes the need for families to connect with their communities for support and resources, to provide positive environments for their children, and have a safety network to help them thrive.”¹

R19: Increase Family and Community Self-Advocacy to Make Change

“Families can advocate within systems to improve conditions for their own families and community members can advocate changing systems for the good of all. Through integrated approaches, advocacy can be a powerful tool for making change in many result areas. This result provides parents with the tools, resources and support to drive change in their community.”²

Community Assessment

Research shows child outcomes are primarily a result of upbringing and parental involvement. The Family Strengthening Policy Center, a part of the National Human Services Assembly alliance of leading national nonprofit health and human service organizations, reports that universal access to affordable, quality services and support networks are an imperative component to a family's economic success and general well being. These critical elements are also essential for positive child and youth outcomes.³ The Community Building Initiative (CBI) provides opportunities for parents and caregivers of children ages zero to five to build support networks (social capital) and involve parents in child-centered activities.

Target Population

All families and communities within Sacramento County are eligible to participate in the CBI, regardless of income as everyone benefits from social capital. CBI funded activities must benefit children zero to five and their families.

Background and Best and Promising Practices

Since the inception of CBI in 2003, a variety of grants have been made available to informal parent and community groups to plan and implement activities and projects that increase social capital in neighborhoods and communities. Social Capital refers to connections among individuals – the social networks and the norms of reciprocity

¹ Source: First 5 Sacramento Commission, 2009 Strategic Plan Update For Fiscal Years 2010-2015

² Ibid.

³ National Human Services Assembly, Family Strengthening Policy Center. Retrieved March 1, 2009 from <http://www.nassembly.org/fspsc/aboutus.html#Top>

and trustworthiness that arise from them.⁴ Strong connections in a community encourage residents to help one another and can be especially beneficial to families with young children.

Increasing social capital continues to be important as ‘a growing body of evidence has emerged since the early 1990s, which says that certain kinds of social networks enable citizens and communities to access resources they can use to work together to tackle problems for themselves. Examples might include using your contacts to help a friend find a job, or cooperating with your neighbors to address nuisance behavior at a near-by residence’.⁵

Creating social capital can take a variety of forms. When a group of neighbors informally keeps an eye on one another's homes, that's social capital in action. Barn-raising on the frontier was social capital in action, and so too are e-mail exchanges among members of a cancer support group. Social capital can be found in friendship networks, schools, neighborhoods, churches, bridge clubs, civic associations, and even clubs.⁶

Social capital has been shown, by a large number of studies, to extend collective well-being in a variety of different and complex ways. The quality and quantity of social capital in a community plays a crucial role in the ability of its members to solve their issues, act for the future and participate in decision making.⁷

Family is the most fundamental factor influencing the lives and outcomes of children. Aside from a child's physical needs, such as food and clothing, young children also need an emotionally healthy home environment combined with stable and reliable relationships with adults and caregivers. Families are strong when they are supported by safe and thriving neighborhoods. Strong neighborhoods offer an almost seamless web of vital resources and opportunities such as formal and informal social networks, employers and public services. By making these networks, economic opportunities and services more accessible to families, neighborhoods thrive and families have the supports they need to succeed.⁸

As our county, state and nation face a current recession and uncertain economic times, strengthening support networks for families with young children through increased social capital takes on an even more important role. Social capital offers many benefits to both individuals and communities. People with high social capital tend to know their neighbors, socialize with friends and co-workers more, belong to community organizations, and are more likely to sign petitions and show

⁴ Smith, M. K. (2007) 'Social capital', *the encyclopedia of informal education*. Retrieved April 8, 2009 from www.infed.org/biblio/social_capital.htm

⁵ Skidmore, P., Bound, K., et al. (16 November 2006). *Community Participation – Who benefits?* Joseph Rowntree Foundation. [Electronic version available at <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/1802-community-network-governance.pdf>]

⁶ The Saguaro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America. Social Capital Primer. Retrieved March 1, 2009 from www.hks.harvard.edu/saguaro/primer.htm .

⁷ Pascal International. (2009). Social Capital & Community Resilience. Retrieved March 1, 2009 from <http://www.obs-pascal.com/node/928> .

⁸ National Human Services Assembly, Family Strengthening Policy Center. Retrieved March 1, 2009 from <http://www.nassembly.org/fspsc/aboutus.html#Top>

up at voting booths.⁹ There is evidence that communities with more social capital are more likely to benefit from lower crime, better health, higher educational achievement, and better economic growth.¹⁰

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, 'findings suggest that social capital may have an impact on children's well-being as early as the preschool years. In these years it seems to be the parents' social capital that confers benefits on their offspring, just as children benefit from their parents' financial and human capital'.¹¹ Additional study results published in the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics showed that increased social capital meant better outcomes for 2 to 5-year-old children.¹² Another study demonstrated that increasing social capital decreases the odds of neglectful parenting, psychologically harsh parenting, and domestic violence.¹³

In Sacramento County, CBI grant funded projects and activities provide a vehicle that families, neighborhoods and communities can use to build social capital in a way that is beneficial to their families and their neighborhood or community situation. The grant activities and projects take many shapes and forms because no two communities are alike.

Results have shown that small grants can have a positive effect on individuals and their communities. The North East Empowerment Partnerships Small Grants project from 2004 to 2006 reported these outcomes for individuals participating in small community grants: 63% felt their self-confidence had increased as a result of the project; 70% said they were more likely to take part in community activity in the future; 81% would take future action to improve their local community; and, 98% indicated a willingness to volunteer in the future.¹⁴

As part of the First 5 Sacramento Report On Evaluation of Fiscal Year 2007-08 Services, evaluators reported that CBI event attendees were more connected to their community, had a greater sense of trust and investment in their neighborhoods, and had an increased sense of efficacy compared with other randomly selected parents.¹⁵ These results are very encouraging and supportive; CBI grants are having a positive impact on families and the community, and increasing the valuable support networks families need to thrive.

⁹ USF Collaborative for Children, Families and Communities. Social Capital. Retrieved March 2, 2009 from <http://www.usfcollab.usf.edu/socialcapital.cfm>

¹⁰ Smith, M. K. (2007) 'Social capital', *the encyclopedia of informal education*. Retrieved April 8, 2009 from www.infed.org/biblio/social_capital.htm

¹¹ American Academy of Pediatrics. 'Children Who Prosper in Unfavorable Environments: The Relationship to Social Capital' Pediatrics Vol. 101 No. 1 January 1998, pp.12-18. Retrieved March 2, 2009 from <http://pediatrics.aapublications.org>

¹² American Academy of Pediatrics. 'Children Who Prosper in Unfavorable Environments: The Relationship to Social Capital' Pediatrics Vol. 101 No. 1 January 1998, pp.12-18. Retrieved March 2, 2009 from <http://pediatrics.aapublications.org>

¹³ American Academy of Pediatrics. 'Social Capital, Family Violence, and Neglect' Pediatrics Vol. 117 No. 6 June 2006, pp. e1124-e1131. Retrieved January 21, 2009 from <http://pediatrics.aapublications.org>

¹⁴ National Empowerment Partnership. 'Empowerment and Small Grants to Individuals 2004 to 2006 – Research Findings and Case Studies' March 2008 Retrieved May 12, 2009 from

<http://www.cdf.org.uk/SITE/UPLOAD/DOCUMENT/Policy/NEP%20materials/NE01.pdf>

¹⁵ Ibid., pg 71.

Implementation Strategies

CBI will continue to offer a series of grants and activities to meet the desired results of the Empowered Families priority. By connecting and building relationships – social capital – while engaged in family-friendly activities and parent support networks, the projects and activities will bring people together to benefit children zero to five and for the betterment of Sacramento County's neighborhoods and communities.

Strategy #1: Continue to **support existing grants and grantees** from the Fiscal Year 2007-10 funding cycle whose projects are still in progress. Up to 60 grants will have project deadlines that extend beyond June 30, 2010. These grantees will need both administrative and program support, including technical assistance, grantee trainings, and contract management.

Strategy #2: Offer **Phase 1 Community Grants** up to three times per year to groups of parents and community members seeking to build social capital to benefit children ages zero to five and create networks in their neighborhoods or communities.

Strategy #3: Offer **Phase 2 Community Grants or alternate CBI grants** to continue the momentum of CBI grantee community building efforts. For Fiscal Year 2010-11, continue to offer Phase 2 Community Grants to grantee groups that have successfully completed a Phase 1 Community Grant and wish to take their community building efforts to the next level. The Phase 2 grants are relatively new and it would be imprudent to plan an additional five years of these grants without a review or assessment of their effectiveness. Staff will carefully monitor the successes, challenges, and lessons learned by both the grantees and staff with the Phase 2 grants to determine their effectiveness and efficacy. By the end of Fiscal Year 2010-11, staff anticipates making recommendations regarding the Phase 2 grants and the funding set aside for Fiscal Years 2011-12 – 2014 -15 for either Phase 2 grants or alternate CBI grants or activities.

Strategy #4: Contracts for Professional Services. Contract with a **public relations or marketing organization** to continue marketing and outreach efforts. Contract with qualified firms to provide **fiscal agent services** for grantees as needed.

Strategy #5: Provide Technical Assistance and Training Opportunities. Staff will continue to **provide technical assistance** to applicants and grantees of CBI. CBI will continue to **supply trainings** for families and community members to provide them with additional information and tools to support their community building efforts and their grant projects.

Strategy #6: Provide program support activities and supplies. Obtain services and supplies needed for program activities and to support the grantees in their community building efforts.

Funding Process

Phase 1 Community Grants:

Funding for fifteen (15) Phase 1 Community Grants of up to \$5,000 each will be available three times per year for a total funding of \$1,125,000 during this Implementation Plan.

As before, a simplified application process will be used. At a minimum, applications will need to:

- Clearly benefit children ages zero to five and their families with a majority of activities including children ages zero to five.
- Build and strengthen relationships, or social capital, in the community.
- Be community driven. Grantees must clearly indicate that there is a group of individuals working together on the project rather than just a single individual. Group and community ownership of a project is an important factor in developing social capital.
- Apply for funding for a project under at least one of the funded results of the Empowered Families priority:
- Pick a project or topic that ties to one of the Commission's other result areas. Applicants will be provided a 'menu' of projects or topics that will tie to one or more of the Commission's other result areas.

With this updated approach, grantee activities will still have a primary focus on building relationships and connections between families (social capital) while doing project activities that tie to and underscore the importance of the Commission's other result areas identified in this Implementation Plan Framework.

Phase 2 Community Grants / Alternate Grants:

A total of \$990,000 will be available for Phase 2 grants and/or other alternate grants during this five-year plan.

For Fiscal Year 2010-11, Phase 2 Community Grants will be available. Applicants will need to, at a minimum:

- Demonstrate successful completion of a Phase 1 Community Grant or CBI mini grant.
- Plan activities that benefit children ages zero to five and build social capital with a majority of activities including children ages zero to five.
- Choose a project or topic for the grant activities that also ties to one or more of the Commission's other result areas.
- The activities must include a significant increase in the involvement of the community from the previous grant
- Plan to collaborate with other parent/community associations to plan and implement activities.
- Plan and hold a community service project that builds relationships and benefits children ages zero to five and their families.

For Fiscal Year 2010-11, a total of \$150,000 will be available to fund Phase 2 grants in amounts up to \$30,000 for grants lasting from 12-24 months. One to two deadlines for submission of applications will occur in Fiscal Year 2010-11. For Fiscal Years 2011-12 – 2014-15, a total of \$210,000 per year will be available for funding Phase 2 grants or other alternate CBI grants or activities.

CBI staff will look at efficacy of the Phase 2 grants as they progress while exploring existing social capital or community building grant programs in other communities for their potential applicability to Sacramento County's diverse population and the needs of families with children ages zero to five. By the end of Fiscal Year 2010-11, staff anticipates making recommendations regarding the funding set aside for Phase 2 grants or other alternate CBI grants for Fiscal Years 2011-12 – 2014-15.

For Both Phase 1 and Phase 2 Grants:

Applications submitted for a specific deadline will be read and scored by a review team, who will create funding recommendations for the Commission's approval. If there are more passing applications than funds available, the top scoring applications will be selected to be recommended for funding. Should there be any unused grant funds from any given application deadline, the funds will be made available for the next deadline for additional grants, including having any unused funds in a given fiscal year rollover to the next fiscal year.

It should be noted that CBI grant funds for both the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Community Grants cannot be used for the start-up costs of an organization or for programs or services provided by an agency or company. Additionally, these Community Grants are not intended to be a permanent source of funding for community building efforts for a given neighborhood or community. Beginning with this Implementation Plan, grantees will be limited to three community grants in any five-year period in one of the following configurations: a) three Phase 1 grants; b) two Phase 1 and one Phase 2 grant; or, c) one Phase 1 and two Phase 2 grants. There will be a limit of two Phase 2 grants to any specific grantee group during this five-year cycle.

Contracts for Professional Services:

Contract with a **Marketing Consultant:** A marketing strategy and campaign was developed in the previous funding cycle that assisted in getting the word out about CBI and helping citizens understand the benefits of building and strengthening social capital in their neighborhoods and community. Continuing to promote CBI grants through a variety of media and outreach efforts is important to the continued success of the Initiative.

To achieve the goal of promoting the program, a public relations or marketing organization will be hired to act as a consultant to develop and produce media/outreach materials, develop and follow up on media connections, and promote the Initiative and its successes. A competitive process through a Request For Applications (RFA) or Request For Qualifications (RFQ) will be released either

independently for CBI or in conjunction with other result areas to locate an appropriate agency/consultant to assist with this effort. Actual needs for marketing services will be re-assessed prior to releasing the RFA/RFQ and will be built on lessons learned and experiences from the current marketing efforts.

Contracts for **Fiscal Agent Services**: Applicants that are approved for funding by the Commission will be required to enter into an agreement. If the grantee is unable to fulfill the Commission's contracting requirements, a fiscal agent, whether it is self-selected or one of the Commission's contracted regular fiscal agents, will act on the grantee's behalf. The Commission currently contracts with one or more agencies to act as fiscal agents on behalf of grantees, including receiving payments for grantees and disbursing those funds to grantees, issuing needed tax documents, and providing Commission required insurance coverage. Contracts with two or more additional agencies may be added during this Plan. Contracted fiscal agents will receive an administrative fee and will be reimbursed for any actual insurance costs to provide coverage of grantee projects.

Provide Technical Assistance and Training Opportunities:

Staff will continue to **provide technical assistance** to applicants and grantees of CBI. Experience has shown that this support is needed by both groups to varying degrees. CBI will continue to **supply trainings** for families and community members to provide them with additional information and tools to support their community building efforts and their grant projects. Training topics might include: social capital, community building, advocacy efforts, event planning, facilitation, community resources, grant writing, or other topics. An estimate of three to four trainings will be offered each year and will be presented by staff or an expert in the chosen topic.

Provide program support activities and supplies:

Obtain services and supplies needed for CBI program activities including:

- Translation and interpreter services as needed for applications, trainings or materials.
- Funds for reviewer stipends and for childcare services at grantee gatherings, orientations, trainings, and other Commission sponsored events.
- Networking and sharing events for grantees and interested groups.
- Other supplies and costs for promoting CBI (outside of what the Marketing Consultant will produce), including booth fees at community events and other outreach activities.
- Other supplies and costs for providing technical assistance to grantees, including costs for grantee trainings, tools and resources for grantee capacity building, and organization supplies.

Proposed Funding Allocation

The budget over this five-year funding cycle is \$4,285,000.

Funding Timeframe

CBI will continue throughout the Fiscal Years 2010-11 – 2014/15 Commission funding cycle.

Subsequent Changes

On May 2, 2011, the Commission discontinued additional grants in response to the state budget actions. Although defunded, CBI will continue with commitments to previously approved small community grants and Phase 2 grants through the completion of these grant projects.

In addition, the Strategic Plan's Goal of "Communities connect to families" and Results "Increase family connections in neighborhoods" and "Increase family and community self-advocacy to make change" will continue to be a part of the Strategic Plan Update 2009 as per the Commission's approval on March 14, 2011.