

Project Abstract

Project objectives and activities

First 5 Ventura County (F5VC), in partnership with the Ventura County Office of Education as the fiscal agent, is proposing the completion of a Pay for Success (PFS) Feasibility Study pilot grant to determine the viability of using PFS financing to expand high-quality preschool to the nearly 50 percent of Ventura County children who currently do not have access. F5VC has created a comprehensive strategic plan for early learning services based on extensive needs assessments. This process resulted in the prioritization of school readiness by improving the quality and availability of preschool experiences.

During F5VC's history, approximately 1,600 additional preschool spaces for 3- and 4-year olds have been made available annually through partnerships with community organizations and school districts. F5VC uses a mixed-delivery, collaborative model with funding traditionally provided by Proposition 10 tobacco tax revenues. F5VC has become less reliant on this funding as revenues continue to decline and F5VC recognizes that alternative funding streams are required to sustain its investment in preschool. Additionally, the Pay for Success feasibility study would identify strategies for expanding preschool access to the nearly 6,500 children in Ventura County whose families' income meets eligibility requirements for a publicly funded space but can't access such a space due to lack of capacity. By prioritizing high-quality preschool slots for children with risk factors associated with lower academic achievement, children can be prepared for productive lives while enabling their parents to work or attend school. Pay for Success financing, therefore, is viewed by the PFS partnership as a potential strategy to maintain and expand publicly funded high-quality preschool. Furthermore, the proposed feasibility study allows Ventura County the chance to evaluate and strengthen data systems and infrastructure needed to better track children's outcomes.

First 5 Ventura County has established strong partnerships that will be the base of the Pay for Success Preschool Partnership. The PFS Partnership will be formed around partners in

the County Departments of Child Welfare and Health; an evaluator; a consultant with extensive early childhood PFS experience who conducts the feasibility study process; early childhood service providers; and other philanthropic and civic organizations.

The proposed project will be made up of the following activities: identification of outcome(s) sought; assessment of community needs, assets, and capacity; identification of a challenge(s) or barrier(s) for serving the particular population; determination of the total costs associated with the lack of intervention; identification of interventions that can achieve the desired outcome(s); projection of the potential public value; determination of the willingness and capacity of stakeholders to implement a PFS project; and development of a rigorous evaluation methodology to determine if the selected outcome measures have been achieved. Throughout the process, the Partnership will engage stakeholders to ensure buy-in to the PFS project, gather their expertise, and receive feedback on the feasibility study. Strategies to achieve these goals and activities are outlined in detail in the application.

Applicable priorities

This project will focus on the applicable priority of completing a Preschool PFS Feasibility Study and the competitive preference priority of including social and emotional outcome measures.

Proposed project outcomes

The project would focus on improved kindergarten readiness across the domains of language and literacy, mathematics, self-regulation, and English language development, among others. F5VC has a demonstrated track record of preparing children for kindergarten, with 70 percent of enrollees deemed “school ready” across all domains of the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP). Students’ growth on the multi-domain measure indicates the success of the preschool programs in fully preparing children for school. The domains measured by the DRDP are potential project outcomes. In addition, proposed outcomes include improved math, language and literacy skills by 3rd grade.