



Imperial County Children and Families First Commission
MINUTES
Meeting of June 4, 2026

I. Call to Order

Commission Chairperson, Karla Sigmond called the June 4, 2026 Regular Meeting of First 5 Imperial to order at 3:37 p.m. The meeting was held at the First 5 Imperial, Training Center, at 1240 State Street, El Centro, CA.

II. Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Barbara Deol

Rebecca Green

Joong Kim

Karla Sigmond

Danila Vargas

Fred Miramontes

Commissioners Absent:

John Hawk

Yurii Camacho

Paula Llanas

Staff:

Julio C. Rodriguez

Fernando Valenzuela

III. Public Comment

Commissioner Sigmond asked the for a moment of silence to honor Mr. Roger Tubach, the Commission's previous auditor that had recently passed away. She then asked that if there was anyone from the public that wished to make a public comment or address anything on the agenda, then that person is given the opportunity to do so.

The Director from the Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council took a moment to address the Commission. She proceeded to thank the Commission for all of the years of funding, and that they are hopeful to continue with the mini-grant that is currently up for consideration by the Commission. She noted that at the current moment everyone is facing difficult times and decisions, particularly nonprofits, and therefore wanted the Commission to consider investing in the organization and support the services they provide to families.

IV. Adoption of Minutes for the Regular Meeting of April 2, 2026

A motion to approve the Minutes of the regular meetings of the Commission for April 2, 2026 was made by Commissioner Green, seconded by Commissioner Miramontes, and having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

V. Consent Calendar Items

The consent calendar items consisted of the First 5 Imperial Meeting Schedule for FY 2026-2027 and approval of monthly financial reports for January 2026 through April 2026. A motion to approve the consent calendar items was made by Commissioner Miramontes, and seconded by Commissioner Deol, and having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

VI. Administrative Report (Julio C. Rodriguez, Executive Director)

1. Request to Select and Approve Community Development Mini-Grant Step 2 Applicant Awards for FY 2026-2027: Mr. Rodriguez indicated that the Commission would be reviewing six applicants that submitted the Community Development Mini-Grant Step 2 application. Before reviewing the Step 2 mini-grant Statements of Interest to apply. Commissioner Deol asked if they were going to go over conflicts of interest at this time. Mr. Rodriguez noted that he had already had indicated that there were no conflicts of interest for Commission members that were present during the previous meeting , and that the only member that was not present at that time was Commissioner Miramontes. Therefore, Mr. Rodriguez asked him if he had any conflicts of interest with any of the seven applicants that were going to be

discussed. Commissioner Miramontes stated that he had no conflicts of interest with any of the applicants. Mr. Rodriguez then indicated that the selection process could proceed in a number of ways, in which the Commission can discuss each of the applications and later move to approve each one individually or discuss each application and decide during that discussion whether to approve funding for the Step 2 application under consideration and whether to go with the requested or recommended amount of funding. Commissioner Green suggested to review each and decide on whether to consider the application for funding at that time. Commission members agreed with the suggestion.

Mr. Rodriguez indicated that the first mini-grant for consideration was the one submitted by the Burn Institute, and they were submitting a mini-grant titled Protecting You Family from Fires and Burns, and were requesting \$28,500, and if funded the recommended amount would be \$27,000. He noted that this is a similar project as one they have submitted in the past, where the organization would provide scald/burn prevention presentations targeting as many as 500 parents of preschool-age children and 25 providers, in addition to puppet show presentations, Let's Stay Safe from Fires Puppet Show, that would include targeting as many as 500 children. Objectives would be to provide lifesaving burn and scald prevention education to children, parents and providers, distribute fire and burn prevention literature in both English and Spanish, and work to engage more preschool sites to provide these services. The presentations consist of a 30-minute session facilitated by the Community Outreach Worker at selected partner sites, such as preschools or community organizations. He indicated that before the Commission proceeds with discussion of the application that he would like to provide a report on the status of the Burn Institute's operations in Imperial County. He stated that due to cost cutting and savings measures of the organization approved of by their board, the Burn Institute's representative had let the Commission know that they would be shutting down the office in Imperial and laying off staff working locally at the end of June 2026, and that if they were funded, they would be sending staff to Imperial County quarterly to provide the presentations. He indicated that upon speaking to the representative from the Burn Institute, he let them know that this may affect the decision of the Commission, and that he did appreciate the update given the timing of decisions on funding for the Community Development Mini-Grant round. He further noted that this would affect their ability to serve the targeted number of parents and families as more time would be necessary to reach the target population, in addition to planning and working with preschool sites without having someone here locally. Commissioner Green indicated that it would be important for them to have a presence in the County, and that it would be challenging for them to serve our county from San Diego. Commissioner Sigmond agreed, and further acknowledged that the fire and burn prevention program is an important project and has been funded by the Commission for a number of years. Commissioner Miramontes ask if the organization was closing everything, where Mr. Rodriguez noted that as of June 30, 2026 the offices in Imperial would be closed, and staff would be laid off based on decisions made by their board to cut costs. Commissioner Deol then asked that even if they are funded through this project, has the decision been made to close the offices. Mr. Rodriguez confirmed that even with Commission funding it would not influence their decision. Commissioner Green noted that many programs that begin offering services in Imperial County that are based here, and later move to San Diego, do not tend to work out well for our community, and services tend to fall short of the expectations, primarily due to the distance and other priorities, and didn't feel that it would work. Commissioner Sigmond asked if someone wanted to place a motion for consideration of funding for the Burn Institute's project. Commission Deol made the motion to not fund the Burn Institute at this time, and Commissioner Miramontes seconded the motion. After no additional discussion, the motion passed with all in favor.

Mr. Rodriguez noted that the second application for consideration was submitted by the Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council, which is the Little Steps project. He noted that the agency was asking for \$30,000, which is also the recommended amount. He stated that the agency is proposing to serve 125 parents through referral and walk-in services, and will target "high risk" parents that include parents that are CPS-referred, court ordered, probation referrals, Behavioral Health referrals, expectant parents, single-parents and families seeking support. He noted that the Incredible Years sessions consist of 10-to-14-week periods with each session being 2 hours per week, where each group can accommodate 20 parents, and sessions are based on 3 distinct age-appropriate groups. He indicated that the curriculum used by the Child Abuse Prevention Council is evidence-based and topics include areas of focus like

building positive relationships and bonding; understanding temperament, developmental milestones and expectations; and encouraging positive communication. He also stated that the agency will use a Family Fun-Early Literacy Kit that will be provided to parents; and facilitators will use pre/post assessments to evaluate knowledge gains in parenting. Commissioner Green asked if there was any data collection on how the parenting classes are going and if there are outcomes. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the Child Abuse Prevention Council uses a pre/post test provided by Incredible Years and they report on that comparison of scores back to the Commission, and that in some areas the agency is looking for growth, such as in positive parenting practices, or a decline in the scores, such as harsh discipline. He noted that perhaps the only area that could be improved on the reports is to focus on what the intended outcome is, such as targets for growth in level of understanding for topic areas. Commissioner Deol asked if there was a potential for going from six months to a year later to evaluate how parents are doing? She addressed the representative from the Child Abuse Prevention Council on trying to collect that type of data, and that even if they are not able to get everyone, if they would work to obtain a representative sample. Ms. Garcia, from the Child Abuse Prevention Council, agreed that they could try to do that. Commissioner Deol suggested that they could create a survey that would be used to collect this information. Commissioner Sigmond asked if most of the parents are referred. Ms. Garcia noted that at least half are referred from CPS or similar areas, and others may be referred from schools, organizations or even self-referred. Commissioner Green noted that those that are court ordered or have cases where the referral is mandated, then it may be possible to follow-up with that group, and look to see if they have a re-entry into the system for child abuse or neglect. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the services are open to any parent interested in parenting classes, and that the agency could also work to provide data collection on the type of parents served, such as if they are court ordered, or single parents, low-income. Commissioner Sigmond noted that the good thing about the project is that the parenting classes are offered at no cost to families, which is a big help to many of the families in our community, and that sometimes a parent is referred and their case is closed half-way through the courses and then parents are left without any other support or resources. Commissioner Green noted that it will be important to collect different types of data that may show the effectiveness of the program and it may be the case that finding may support looking for something, another program, that may work better. Ms. Garcia stated that they do collect the information, and sometimes there is not a big change between the pre/post test though that they would work to look into this request. Commissioner Deol noted that an important matter would be to be able to check further down the road to see if there is a change or not, that that is something that may be evident, because it is hard to break habits that one has been doing their entire life, and this would particularly helpful for the families that need parenting services to change habits related to raising their children. Commissioner Green then made the motion to fund the Little Steps Project through the Child Abuse Prevention Council with the recommendations. Commissioner Miramontes seconded the motion. With no further discussion the motion passed with all in favor.

Commissioner Sigmond noted that the next applicant was the applicant was submitted by the County Office of Education, the Special Education Local Plan Area or SELPA. Mr. Rodriguez then noted that they would be considering the PEERS for Preschoolers Friendship Skill Program Project, and the agency was asking for \$10,000 and that the Commission was recommending \$9,270. He stated that the recommendation for the reduction in funding was based on the fact that the agency had requested \$730 for administrative costs, though that type of expense is not permitted under the rules governing the mini-grant application, therefore that amount would need to be eliminated if considered for funding. He said that the Commission could leave the awarded amount at \$10,000, though the agency would need to identify how they would use the \$730 in a manner that is not related to administrative costs. Commissioner Sigmond stated that the recommended amount would work, and Commissioner Green agreed based on the costs already established in the mini-grant application. Mr. Rodriguez then noted that the project intends to meet a need to offer interventions for children with special needs that have been assessed as having a social-emotional delay through the implementation of the PEERS program, an evidence-based approach designed to address social-emotional delays in development for young children and positive interaction with their preschool peers. Mr. Rodriguez stated that services entail a 16-week program, offered at two El Centro preschool sites, which will be implemented as a push-in model to support social-emotional development for 48 children. He also indicated that monthly workshops will be

offered to help guide parents to support their child's social-emotional development, and that the project will measure outcomes by using the Social-Emotional Domain in the DRDP, progress in individual IEPs, and increased parent understanding. He indicated that this project is highly recommended for funding due to the important services being offered and the amount is clearly based on the service proposed. Commissioner Green made a motion to accept the application and award funding at the recommended amount. Commissioner Deol seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with all in favor.

The Commission then moved on to discuss the fourth application under consideration. Commissioner Sigmond noted that the Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program had submitted Project CARE for consideration. Mr. Rodriguez noted that this proposal is asking for \$30,000 and the recommendation is to fund at \$28,900. He indicated that the agency would work to enhance services that are already being provided under the major grant were by increasing the number of children that are not enrolled in preschool programs or reside in high-need areas for the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Age Youth (HIPPY) Program. He reiterated that the Commission presently funds Project NENES, that serves families of 70 children in HIPPY home instruction, and that through the mini-grant funds would be used to include 1 home visitor that will support 12 parents through a 30-week home instruction period with role-playing techniques for specific child development activities to use for children 2 to 5 years of age on a daily basis. Parents will also participate in support group meetings, where participants are exposed to information on distinct topics. He further noted that objectives for the project include, increasing by 75% children demonstrating school readiness; increasing parenting skills by 90% for participating parents; and working to provide developmental screening services to all children using the ASQ. He noted that pre/post surveys will be used for assessment purposes, and services are offered in English and Spanish. Mr. Rodriguez stated that the Commission had previously raised concerns about funding certain programs and how these programs are working to leverage funds, which is one of the considerations to address with respect to this particular application. He noted that if funded, staff will need to meet with the HIPPY Coordinator to establish how the agency will work to leverage funds for the project, and/or how they would work to increase serving children aside from Commission funding, as they do have the capacity to provide these services. Commissioner Sigmond agreed that they have the capacity to do the work, and that they do it very well. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the agency does a good job of realizing parent participation, and provided an example of a site visit that was currently completed by the Commission's Compliance Coordinator for one of the parent group meetings. He noted that aside from the home instruction component, the parent group meetings are a different component and are not required for participation by the project, but they always get a very good turnout of HIPPY parents for these group meetings, which are offered up to 8 times per year. Commissioner Green asked if the Commission was funding the same children that are already being funded. Commissioner Sigmond noted that they will be additional children, families that are new to the program. Commissioner Deol agreed, and stated that the total number of children served will be increased by 12 to 15, which is going to be the recommendation. Commissioner Vargas clarified that funds will be used to hire a new parent educator to provide the home instruction services to 12 new children that are not already being served by the other grant. Commissioner Green asked if it was 12 or 15 children that would be added through the mini-grant. Mr. Rodriguez stated that they were asking to increase it by 12 children, though they would be recommending 15 unless there is good rationale for only increasing by 12. He noted that the HIPPY USA caseload is up to 15 children per parent home visitor, it can be less, but not more than that due to the nature of the home visitations and the overall workload to complete 30 visits in the year. Commissioner Green then asked if they have been able to obtain any other funding for this project. Mr. Rodriguez noted that they had not leveraged any new funds to support the home visitation program other than additional donations they receive to support the services offered. He indicated that there were no additional funds that may be considered a match, and used, for example, to hire new personnel or purchase materials. Commissioner Sigmond then asked if there was a motion to fund the project. Commissioner Deol made a motion to fund Project CARES at the recommended amount and to address the matter on serving from 12 to 15 children, and provide rationale if the project cannot serve 15 children. Commissioner Miramontes seconded the motion. Commissioner Miramontes asked about the amount that would be award if funded. Commissioner Green noted that it would be \$28,900. Commissioner Vargas indicated that she felt that

the number of children that is recommended by the home visiting program is probably a range related to the case load, and that she felt they were going with the lowest end of the range in order to meet it. Other Commission members agreed that that may be the case, and Commissioner Deol stated that the Commission could encourage them to try to increase the number to 15 as the number may not seem high, but when you think about working with 15 families for 30 weeks, that is a significant workload. With no additional comments, the motion passed with all in favor.

Mr. Rodriguez then went on to provide a summary of application number 5, the Little Artists, Big Mentors Project, submitted by Jefferson Elementary School, and the school was asking for \$30,000 for this project, and the recommended amount was \$24,000. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the school will work with 40 children 3-5 years of age and their families through an art project with the Rainforest Art Project, and will offer structured arts programming intended to promote early brain development, social-emotional growth and kindergarten readiness. He indicated that children and their families will be involved in weekly sessions, guided by adults and older children that serve as mentors, that will offer arts-based early learning experiences, and children will actively participate in professional mosaic training, receive instructional resources and materials necessary for being part of the creative process. In addition, the school will offer six parent workshops designed to support early childhood development, creativity and kinder-readiness. He then noted that the Rainforest Art Project is an organization that is dedicated to arts programming activities primarily in school districts and they are based out of the San Diego area, and that they have worked with a number of elementary schools in the area. Commissioner Green noted that it was not clear if the younger children are the focus or if it the mentor students that will be the ones doing the bulk of the work, and that it will be important to ensure that the 3–5-year-olds are the focus. Mr. Rodriguez noted that that was a concern, and if awarded by the Commission, this matter would need to be clarified before the agreement for services or contract is signed by both parties, and that it will be important to meet with representatives from the school district to ensure that 3–5-year-old children are the focus of the Little Artists, Big Mentors Project. He further noted that there were no clear objectives, and how children 3-5 will be working with older “mentor” children from the school. Therefore, the school would need to identify the roles that children will have in the development of the project, and that these roles would be something that the Commission is comfortable with, versus having only 40 names of young children and presenting those as the participants in the project. He indicated that it will be important to understand the expectations for all age groups and that it is clear that the major activities revolve around children 3-5 years of age, including the creation of the mosaic. Commissioner Vargas noted that she was involved in a similar project for the community center in Imperial, where her 7-year-old was heavily involved in the activities. She noted that the activities were held on weekends, and the parent and student essentially spent the morning working on arts-based activities, and the school-age children were working on the project together, and even her younger child, a 4-year-old, was involved. She indicated that the project was great because each child’s name was included in the mosaic, and that added some pride and ownership to the activities that were realized at the time. Commissioner Green highlighted that one of the problems might be our restrictions on the focus on the ages of children, and Mr. Rodriguez agreed that this would be something that needs to be made clear up front and that individuals representing both the school district and the Rain Forest Art Project have to understand and be okay with. He further noted that the Commission does feel comfortable with the outcome, then the mini-grant proposal will be brought back to the Commission for further discussion and consideration. He also provided an update on the recommendations related to a reduction in operating supplies, as the feeling was the amount that was being requested was not clear, and the balance between in kind and what was being requested was very different, and they did indicate some training, though under contractual services the budget had also identified training, therefore the training was reduced. Barbara Deol then made a motion to approve awarding the Little Artists, Big Mentors Project funding in the amount that was being recommended with clarification on the target population. Commissioner Green seconded the motion. Noting no further discussion, the motion passed with all in favor.

The application submitted by the San Diego State University Research Foundation was reviewed next by the Commission. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the university was asking for \$30,000, and if funded there were no recommendations on changes to the budget, though staff were not recommending the

Commission to consider this project for an award at this time, and he stated that the Commission can move to award funding if it deemed the project merits an award. He then provided a brief overview of the proposal noting that the project proposes to conduct research with children 0-5 and their parents, which will consist of two programs, the first component is to support expectant mothers and promote exclusive breastfeeding for up to 6 months, and the second component is a nutrition and vegetable consumption study with young children. He indicated that these components will use information based on previous research and incorporate this in the County. The first component will recruit 50 expectant mothers to participate in activities to promote lactation duration to 6 months by a trained researcher, either in-home or via Zoom meetings, and follow-up will be completed post birth to track breastfeeding duration, and the second component will target 150 families with children 4-5 years of age, and will work to support increasing vegetable and fruit consumption through trained research assistants, and could happen one-on-one or via Zoom. He stated that workshops will be offered at the end of the program to collect feedback and experiences and that services will be offered in English and Spanish. Mr. Rodriguez noted that his could be a good program, though being a research-based proposal, the individuals that drafted the proposal did not include any objectives or success measures related to what the university researchers were intending to accomplish. He noted that Dr. Barragan is a professor at the Imperial Valley campus for San Diego State University and has completed a number of research projects, though the research he has done is not specifically related to these two areas. Commissioner Green noted that it did not seem as if he had done anything with breastfeeding and not clear what his experience with nutrition may be. Mr. Rodriguez also noted that the project does not indicate if there are any individuals that are certified in the two component areas or that are content experts in lactation or nutrition. He noted that there would be research assistants working on the project with Dr. Barragan, though they may be part of the psychology department and virtually have no experience in the area. In addition, he noted that it is possible that the bulk of the outreach to families will be completed on-line, whereas it may be important to provide these services via an in-person format. Commissioner Green also noted that there may be a concern with using children in this type of research with the amount of funds that were available. Mr. Rodriguez noted that staff would have to have a meeting with Dr. Barragan and his team and have them draw down the specifics of how this research project, which should at the minimum include a specific plan for recruiting expectant mothers and mothers interested in nutrition education for their children, where the priority is that these families begin participating early in the term of the contract year, which entails working with OB-GYNs, clinics, preschool sites and other locations that work with young children, as they have not really established any viable partners. Commissioner Deol indicated that it would be even better if they would move to recruited families in their second trimester versus the third, that getting them early would be much better. Mr. Rodriguez agreed. (For the record, Commissioner Kim just joined the meeting). Commissioner Deol noted that because they did not mention those type of contacts or partnerships, that that is why she thought it was not a good project, because for this to be successful they would need the target population to participate, and not having that in a plan with viable partners would make it very difficult, particularly if they have no experience with these areas. She noted that there was not indication that they have any relationships with anyone working in these fields, and there was plenty of room for additional narrative to spell this out in the proposal, as an example, they don't indicate that they have someone with a nutrition background listed, nothing was listed that would support a good outreach and direct services strategy. Commissioner Vargas noted that a concern that she also noted was the when looking at recruiting expectant women to participate in the lactation component, the narrative indicates that they are going to the local libraries, that they are going to put up announcements, which, from experience, does not work. She then indicated that the second matter of concern is the fact that they are going to have research assistants working with these expectant mothers, and there is no indication that they have experience in lactation education, and, again, based on experience research assistants are just that, they are not necessarily professionals that are certified in a specialized area and may only be students learning about research, which was certainly not addressed in the application. Commissioner Miramontes agreed that that would not work, and that they probably don't have the experience in working to increase the rates. Commissioner Vargas also noted that for the nutrition component they talked about reading stories to young kids about vegetables, and again these would be research assistants that are doing this, and that she would be very hesitant to support this type of project. Also, she noted that the proposal read as if a student had written the narrative. Mr. Rodriguez agreed, also pointing out that there was a lot of

repetition in the application, though no substance, and narrative to convince the Commission that it would be a great project was lacking. Commissioner Vargas also agreed, further noting that if the narrative had identified how the project would be working with certain agencies and that they already had commitments for certain professionals in the area and were working on agreements, then perhaps it would have been more convincing. Commissioner Deol also stated that it would have been better if they would have focused on only one of the two components, such as the lactation piece, and then perhaps submit a nutrition piece in the proximate year. Commissioner Vargas noted that Pioneers is down to one parttime lactation consultant and that is the only maternal-child hospital in the area, and then there is WIC, stating that there is more of a need to be able to certify individuals that are lactation consultants locally, that would be a better investment of time and money at this point. Mr. Rodriguez noted that he could work to bring something like that back to the Commission for consideration. Commissioner Sigmond ask if any Commissioner wanted to make a motion on the Community Engagement Research on Infant and Child Nutrition Project. Commissioner Green made a motion to not fund the Project, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Miramontes. Noting no further discussion the motion carried with all in favor.

Mr. Rodriguez noted that there was one final proposal to consider, and indicated that Volunteers of America Southwest California Inc. submitted the Bright Beginnings-Early Learning Kits & Parent Coaching Project and that they were asking for \$29,870 for an early childhood development project, and the Commission was recommending \$25,700. He stated that the proposed project identified a gap in access to books, early learning materials and parental guidance, and if funded will incorporate three integrated components to promote language-rich environments in the home for families with children 0-5. He noted that the three components are, first, Early Learning Starter Kits that will be distributed to 175 families. Kits will include developmentally appropriate books, sensory play materials, activity cards and parent guides. The Kits will be introduced during the other 2 components; the second component is parent education sessions through coaching on parental guidance (300 Sessions, each family will receive 2 to 3 structured sessions). These sessions will be 15 to 20 minutes each and conducted through home visits, scheduled encounters and community-based interactions; may consist of the following education sessions: "Growing Brains: What Your Child Needs Most", "Language, Plan and Early Literacy in Daily Routines" and "Social-Emotional Development and Positive Routines"; and the third component would include hosting 4 pop-up early learning workshops, that would include 10-15 families per event, that are accessible through community-based locations, are 90 minutes long and will focus on the 3 topics listed above, in addition to "Getting Ready for Preschool and Kindergarten". Staff from the agency will receive project-specific training, which includes ECE milestones, adult learning strategies, strengths-based coaching techniques, engagement practices and the use of the Kit. He noted that the services seem much like what the Medi-Cal enhanced care managers would be doing with families. He indicated that it will be important for the project to provide objectives related to the services they intend to offer with success measures, and that due to the nature of Volunteers of America and the services they provide, the agency certainly has the capacity to provide these services, though it will be important for it to show how these services are not being duplicated and that they are new services that would clearly enhance services offered by addressing a need. He further noted, that in the manner that the application was written, the project should reach the 150 parents through the parent education sessions, and that the pop of workshops may not be necessary, and noted that one concern is that the parent workshops may compromise the number of parents targeted through the parent education sessions. Commissioner Sigmond indicated that the Commission can award them for the work they said they would do. In addition, Commissioner Deol noted that they should provide a clearer plan with the two components and how they propose to serve parents, and that it would be better that they do the one-on-one parent education sessions than the workshops. She also noted that there may be a possibility that there is duplication of services, because the agency is already providing some types of services that target the parents of young children, and therefore it will be good for the plan to be clear and address these things. Commissioner Sigmond agreed that it will be important to avoid duplication, then she asked if there was a motion to award the Bright Beginnings – Early Learning Kits & Parent Coaching Project. Commissioner Deal made a motion to award funding on the condition that there is a plan that clearly addresses the

parent education session and pop-up workshops for the recommended amount. Commissioner Green seconded the motion. With no further discussion the motion passed with all in favor.

2. Request to Approve Agreement for Services of Independent Contractor for General and Mini-Grants for FY 2026-2027: Mr. Rodriguez noted that First 5 Imperial awards funding to a number of agencies that offer services to children 0-5 years of age, their parents/families and/or providers serving young children, and these are based on commitments approved of by the Commission during a regular meeting that may consist of a general grant (RFP) or mini-grant (MG RFP) submitted for consideration and subsequently approved of for an award. He also indicated that all agencies selected for an award are identified as independent contractors that will offer services that were outlined in their respective RFP or MG RFP proposal and that may have been modified by the Commission through the selection process. the Commission will contract with these agencies via the Agreement for Independent Contractor Services and that the Commission uses two, slightly different, contracts for this process of engaging in services with other agencies and are specifically drafted to address contracting via the RFP or MG award process. He stated that Contracts include general agency information, the term and award amount, it identifies the scope of work and any changes to it, rules and regulations applicable to the awards such as nonsupplantation of funds, insurance requirements, or statements of nondiscrimination compliance. In addition, the Contract includes payment schedules, reporting requirements, documents ownership information and a copy of the complete budget approved of for the fiscal year. He noted that a copy of both contract, the RFP and MG RFP Contracts, were enclosed in the packet for Commission members, and asked there were any questions related to the request for approval of these contracts.

He noted that the General RFP Contracts will be approved for the 2nd year of the 3-year cycle, and MG RFP Contract will be for the “new” approved mini-grants for FY 2026-2027, and stated that a significant proportion of the Contracts for RFPs and MG RFRs are consistent for both, but there are a few differences. He pointed out that the MG RFP Contract does not have a requirement for a plan for leveraging funds, and only the RFP contract requires agencies to submit an annual audit report. He further indicated that there were no significant changes to these documents being recommended at this time, only the update on dates, and that for each separate project awarded by the Commission a section related to the changes in the scope of work will be updated individually for each contract and will be consistent with the determinations and approved modifications that were previously approved of by Commission members, and may further address recommendations based on services from previous funding cycles. He then asked if there were any questions regarding the contracts.

Commissioner Deol then made the motion to approve of the agreement for independent contractor services for both the mini-grant and major grant. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Miramontes. With no further discussion the motion carried with all in favor.

3. Request to Approve Engagement for Services with Independent Auditor for the Annual Audit of First 5 Imperial’s Financial Statements FY 2025-2026: Mr. Rodriguez stated that all First 5 Commissions are required to conduct an annual audit of their financial statements and submit the completed audit report to the State Controller’s Office and First 5 California. He indicated that the report must be completed in accordance with guidelines established specifically for First 5 Commissions by the State Controller’s Office and must be consistent with the California Children and Families Act of 1998. He noted that First 5 Imperial will undertake all necessary steps to ensure compliance with the annual audit requirement and the timely submission of all required financial reporting documentation and will engage with an independent Certified Public Accounting firm to conduct the annual audit of the Commission’s financial statements on a yearly basis, and forward a copy of the audit report once it is finalized to First 5 California and the State Controller’s Office, in addition to forwarding a copy of the Annual Audit Report to the Imperial County Auditor. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the Commission will be working with the accounting agency retained by the Commission from the previous year, and will begin preparing information, and will communicate with the firm in order to initiate the process.

He indicated that the Commission will want to initiate the process for retaining these services through a letter of engagement with the independent auditor to perform these services for FY 2025-2026, and that that firm is Jensen Smith CPAs and therefore the Chairperson and Director for the Commission will need to be authorized to sign the engagement letter in order to formally begin working with representatives from Jensen Smith CPAs. He noted that the office intends to begin the process during the month of July 2026 and therefore will need to ensure that an engagement letter is signed with Jensen Smith CPAs prior to this date in order for this work to begin and determine the scope of the audit and preliminary documents that may be required by our auditor. He highlighted that the final audit report is due on October 31, 2026.

With no further remarks, Commissioner Sigmond asked if there was a motion to approve the request for engagement for services with the independent auditor for the Annual Audit of First 5 Imperial's Financial Statements of the annual audit of financial statements for the Imperial County Children and Families First Commission for FY 2024-2025. Commissioner Green then made the motion to approve engaging for audit services with Jensen Smith CPAs to conduct the FY 2025-2026 the annual audit report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Deol. With no further discussion the motion carried with all in favor.

4. Request to Approve the First 5 Imperial Budget for FY 2026-2027: Mr. Rodriguez indicated that First 5 Imperial develops an annual budget to address spending for all services and agreements on a fiscal year basis. He stated that the FY2026-2027 budget is being presented to the Commission for discussion and approval, and that a draft of the First 5 Imperial Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 is included in the packet and a summary of the request with comparison to the previous year's budget can be found on page 16. He noted that these budget documents represent an aggregate Budget for all Commission activities projected for FY 2026-2027 and include a breakdown of expenses for the Commission Office (management and administration), First 5 Special Programs, such as the School Readiness, First 5 IMPACT and PACES Programs. He also stated that the summary shows that First 5 Imperial funding reserved for grantees, including general grants, mini-grants, or subcontracts), totals \$1,133,299.00; and Commission Administrative, Management and Evaluation costs are totaled \$471,443.55. Whereas he further stated that the Special Programs component administered through the Commission totals \$456,174.45 and this amount includes First 5 IMPACT, School Readiness, and the PACES Stipend Programs. He noted that funds reserved for Community Outreach Support and Professional Development total \$30,000 and that the proposed budget allocation for FY 2026-2027 is \$2,104,217.00, pending any changes or future funds allocated for services. Mr. Rodriguez indicated that the overall budget is similar to the budget proposed for the previous year with the only changes reflected in the budget being an increase of \$10,000 and a decrease in Community Development Mini-Grants by \$2,900. Commissioner Green asked the rationale for the change in IMPACT. Mr. Rodriguez indicated that the increase reflects the \$10,000 from the First 5 Region 9 HUB that are provided for the Early Care and Education Conference, and the \$2,900 was based on the difference in mini-grant awards between the previous year and the current funding cycle, which will be adjusted to reflect the decisions made by the Commission. He noted that a request is being sought for the approval of First 5 Imperial's Budget Fiscal Year 2026-2027 in the amount of \$2,104,217.00. Commissioner Green moved to approve the FY 2026-2027 Budget, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Deol. With no further discussion the motion passed with all in favor.
5. Request for Approval of Administrative Costs Breakdown Report for FY 2026-2027: Commissioner Sigmond introduced the request for approval of the Administrative Costs Breakdown, though Mr. Rodriguez noted that there is a copy of the report on page 76 of the packet and what the report does offer a breakdown of the budget presented to the Commission with the budget line-times further separated by administrative, program and evaluation costs. He then recommended that it may be best to table the report for the next Commission meeting so that adjustments can be made related to the mini-grant awards and Commissioners can approve of the exact report given changes in mini-grant funding and a potential application for lactation education certification. Commissioner Green then asked if they had to do anything at this time. Mr. Rodriguez noted that he would just recommend tabling the item. Commission members agreed to table the item. No action was taken at this time.

6. Request for Approval of the First 5 Imperial Strategic Plan: Next, Mr. Rodriguez noted that the First 5 Imperial Strategic Plan must align with the intent and priorities of the Children and Families Act of 1998 and ensure that funded strategies, activities, and services support the health, development, and overall well-being of young children at the County level. He further noted that priorities identified by the plan should address demonstrated community needs, including gaps in resources, the severity of identified issues, and other factors affecting the well-being of children and families within Imperial County. He highlighted that First 5 Imperial is required to annually review and take action to either adopt a new strategic plan, approve modifications to the current plan, or reaffirm the existing plan without changes. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the current Strategic Plan was adopted in February 2022 and this plan establishes broad, population-based goals that are organized into three Result Areas. He noted that the Result Areas represent a comprehensive set of strategies adopted by the Commission to address critical factors influencing the health, development, and overall well-being of young children, and that collectively, the three Result Areas are intended to support the optimal development of children from the prenatal stage through Kindergarten entry and reflect key areas of focus identified as essential to improving outcomes for children and families in Imperial County. He noted that there is a copy of the First 5 Strategic Plan in the packet and that at this time they were requesting for the Commission to approve of the plan as presented with no changes. Commissioner Sigmond asked if there was a motion to approve of the First 5 Imperial Strategic Plan with no changes. Commissioner Deol asked if the work that the Commission may do related to the lactation education/certification program, if it will change the Strategic Plan. Mr. Rodriguez noted that it would not as lactation education is already addressed in the current plan, and any program the Commission adopts that supports lactation would fall under one of the priorities in the plan. Commissioner Miramontes stated that if something changes greatly it could always be amended. Mr. Rodriguez also added that the funding for lactation education would support those strategies and that Commissioner Miramontes is correct, that if we need to change strategies we can amend or update the plan. Commissioner Deol then moved to approve of the plan as it is with no changes. Commissioner Green seconded the motion. And with no further discussion, the motion passed with all in favor.
7. Request to Approve Joint Powers Agreement, Public Risk, Innovation, Solutions and Management: Mr. Rodriguez First 5 Imperial stated that the Commission contracts with Public Risk Innovation, Solutions and Management, through Alliant Insurance, for the Master Crime Insurance Program. He stated that they now require a signed Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the current program for which the Commission participates in as an entity of the County of Imperial, and part of the requirement is that members of the governing board, in this case First 5 Imperial Commissioners, formally approve of the JPA. He stated that the JPA will have to be submitted by June 30, 2026, and that the agreement notes that member public entities, such as the Commission, enter into the agreement in order to jointly develop and fund insurance programs as determined, which may include programs that include self-insurance claims and losses, purchased insurance, including reinsurance and the provision of necessary administrative services. Mr. Rodriguez indicated that First 5 Imperial is designated as a Member Public Entity, and we are required to certify that we intend to contract with other parties of JPA, and members that may later be added as part of the agreement. He indicated that as a public entity the Commission would not be viewed as a separate party to this JPA, and any added member will also not affect our standing in the agreement. In addition, the JPA provides a listing of the Powers of PRISM, its duties and make of its Board of Directors, Meetings, Committees, and Staff. He noted that on page 77 Commissioners may find a copy of the JPA, and that at this time a request was being asked to approve of the Commission to enter into this JPA. Commissioner Deol made a motion to approve entering into the Joint Powers Agreement. Then Commissioner Miramontes moved to second the motions. With no additional discussion, the members voted all in favor for the request.
8. Request to Approve MOU Public Risk, Innovation, Solutions and Management: Mr. Rodriguez noted that as with the JPA agreement with PRISM identified in the previous agenda item, members of the Master Crime Program through PRISM must execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and part of the requirement is that members of the governing board, in this case First 5 Imperial Commissioners, formally approve of, and sign, the MOU. He highlighted the fact that the MOU must also be submitted by June 30,

2026 to PRISM. He indicated that the MOU identified the purpose and creation of the program, the JPA agreement with the Commission, PRISM's governance and program oversight, program participation, how annual premiums are established, cost allocation on annual premiums, coverage documents, claims and reporting, claims administration, withdrawal or cancellation, and other elements in a basic agreement. Enclosed is a copy of the MOU for reference. Mr. Rodriguez noted that a copy of the MOU document can be found on page 98 of the Commission packet. Commissioner Green moved to approve entering into the MOU with PRISM, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Kim.

9. First 5 Imperial FY 2025-2026 Funded Programs 3rd Quarter Update: Mr. Rodriguez provided a brief update on 3rd quarter reports for projects funded by the Commission. He noted that projects awarded funding for the FY 2025-2026 had completed the 3rd quarter reporting cycle. He indicated that the reporting period covered services, activities, and expenses, from January 1, 2026 through March 31, 2026, of which these reports were due on April 15, 2026 for all Major and Mini-Grant Projects awarded during the fiscal year, and all funded programs intend to support the development, health, and well-being of children 0-5 years of age and their families. He noted that funded projects fall within at least one of the 3 Result Areas identified in the First 5 Imperial Strategic Plan, and are designed to establish community programs and build partnerships in order to improve outcomes for young children, their families and/or providers that serve young children. All Major and Mini-Grant Projects have presented reports or requested extensions to submit reports for the third quarter, and a review of these reports is in progress. Mr. Rodriguez provided Commission members with a copy of the 3rd quarter expense summary and proceeded to highlight a number of projects that were awarded. He noted that on the expense sheet of the report, that projects in general have presented expenses that were approximately 70% of their budgets as of the end of the 3rd quarter, which is mostly in line with the time lapsed though the 3rd quarter. He then proceeded to highlight the project awarded to the Neighborhood House of Calexico. He noted that the agency did not start providing any services until the 3rd quarter due to the need to obtain the necessary licensing, though as the project has been moving along, they have been acquiring more expenses. He noted that a second matter related to this project is that there were some expenses that were contingent to the agency's ability to meet licensing requirements from Community Care Licensing, though some of those expenses are not reflected yet in the report due to the need to submit a budget revision. He also stated that the infant & toddler preschool has just started up and that they are able to serve 8 children and are looking to increase their license to serve up to eleven children, though one problem is that they currently only have 5 children enrolled in the infant & toddler program. He stated that the Commission will want to ensure that they are maximizing the number of available slots, as they had presented a need related to this issue for the Calexico area, and therefore they will need to work harder to serve as many children as possible. Mr. Rodriguez noted that one option would be to contract in the coming year to serve children based on an average daily attendance rate, similar to what other programs do, particularly as serving a total of 8 children would be relatively easy to meet. He indicated that there are 3 staff persons assigned to the infant & toddler program, and they may serve up to 9 children at this time. He reiterated that the preschool just opened and the agency is new to infant & toddler care, even though they have been providing preschool services for over 30 years, as serving infants and toddlers would be new territory for the agency, and at the end of the 4th quarter staff will provide the Commission with an update.

Mr. Rodriguez then noted that the next project that he would like to address is the Imperial Valley Healthcare District. He indicated that as for the report the agency is in line with the proportion of 3rd quarter expenditures, though what has been reported to the Commission is not complete, and the project is deemed as being out-of-compliance. The Commission has received second and third quarter reports, though the report a missing information, and staff responsible for reporting have taken prolonged leaves of absence and therefore have been difficult to contact. The latest communication indicated that the agency would be providing the reports to the Commission by June 8, 2026, and we did let them know that they need to submit all of the information that is required and that all forms should be submitted or the agency will continue to be out-of-compliance. Mr. Rodriguez provided an example based on the budget expense report, where the agency reports an expense of \$101,918.92 as their expenses for purchasing the Panda Beds that would be used in the hospital to provide resuscitation services for newborns, though in

the report the invoice that was submitted was for just around \$83,000, and which is actually a purchase order. He noted that a request to correct the information was made to the Imperial Valley Health Care District's representative, though there has been no follow-up on the matter. He noted that the Commission has been withholding payments to the agency as far back as the 2nd quarter, which is the only recourse the Commission has at this point to get them to comply with the reporting process. He further noted that the agency had proposed to provide the resuscitation services to children that need them, that training would be provided to staff, and that they would work to minimize the number of children that have to be flown out of the local hospital for these types of services. He indicated that the Commission has requested data related to these components, which were part of the RFP submitted by the hospital, though the representative for the hospital indicated that that is not information they could provide because of the nature of the request. Mr. Rodriguez assured the Commission that staff is only interested in aggregate data related to the matter, not any type of personal identifier information. Commissioner Deol noted that it is reasonable to ask for the baseline data even if the Panda Beds are not set up yet, as it would be important to know how many children were in need of the service and how many received it promptly. Mr. Rodriguez agreed, and stated that obviously there is a disconnect in communicating what is needed and what is available. He assured the Commission that staff would work with the hospital to clear up the issues, and once reports are received on June 18, 2026 then staff can proceed with next steps. He noted that it is a 3-year project, and that the Commission believes that it is an important and meaningful program, and that the hospital will take the proposed services seriously for the benefit of children that are in need of those services. He also noted that part of the matter may be the current status of the union with the two hospitals, which may be adding to their workload. Then Mr. Rodriguez noted that the Commission has a mini-grant as well with the Imperial Valley Healthcare District to provide asthma management and education services, though as of the end of the 3rd quarter there have been no expenses reported, in addition to a lack of narrative reports and data collection tools that are incomplete and inconsistent. He indicated that one of the concerns here is that there is only one quarter left to provide services to children with asthma or asthma-like symptoms. As of the third quarter there is no indication that any children 0-5 years of age with asthma or asthma-like symptoms have been served at the hospital, and as a result of the reports submitted it is not clear why this is the case. He noted that the other projects funded by the Commission are working well, and that the one funded through the County Office of Education may not show expenses, though services have been offered, and it is just a matter of WestEd billing the County Office of Education. Commissioner Sigmond thanks Mr. Rodriguez for the update and the work staff was doing for the Commission.

VII. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Sigmond thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and asked if there were any Commissioner comments. She then took the time to congratulate Commissioner Deol for completing her Doctor of Education Degree, and that she knew how difficult a process that can be and that she should be proud of herself for the accomplishment. Commission members and staff joined in congratulating Commissioner Deol.

VIII. Adjournment

Having no further business to discuss, Commissioner Sigmond noted that the next Commission meeting is scheduled for September 4, 2026 and thanked everyone for coming and Commissioner Miramontes motioned to adjourn the meeting, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Kim. The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 pm. with all in favor.