Memo

To: Commissioners, First 5 Ventura County

From: Petra Puls, Executive Director

Date: March 20, 2025

Re: **Recommendation to select Strategic Planning Consultant to Design, Lead and Facilitate Key Strategic Planning Activities**

Background

Due to the substantial shifts in implementation strategies, moving from funded partners implementing key initiatives to First 5 Ventura County (F5VC) managing implementation and the unique needs accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission decided to adopt an extension of the FY 2020-22 Strategic Plan through FY 2026. This extension allowed the Commission to evaluate our investments and the changing conditions impacting children prenatal to age 5 and their families before determining any program changes for future years. The extension maintained strategic priorities, desired outcomes, evaluation measures, and key initiatives for FY2023-2026. The FY2020-2026 Strategic Plan's implementation timeline is slated to end in June 2026.

F5VC solicited proposals for a consultant/firm to provide the guidance, coordination, and support needed to develop and implement a process that leads to the delivery of a Strategic Plan and Executive Summary by no later than March 2026. The Commission's next Strategic Plan will begin July 1, 2026 and run for a yet-undetermined length of time. Eight proposals were received by the due date. The Commission's procurement procedures for selecting vendors call for 2 staff members and at least 1 external reviewer with expertise in the subject matter. Proposals were independently reviewed and rated by 2 staff members and 2 external community members without a conflict of interest. Reviewers considered each proposal based on score, completeness of the proposal, expertise, experience, and approaches to carrying out the scope of work.

Ultimately, the review committee recommends selecting Applied Survey Research (ASR) as the contractor. ASR has an extensive background and experience with community driven strategic planning, including with multiple First 5 agencies from throughout the State. Committee members appreciated ASR's data driven approach which includes qualitative components, sound strategies, a realistic timeline, and very cost-effective fees.

Recommendation

Recommended action would select Applied Survey Research as the contractor to provide professional consulting services to design, lead and facilitate key strategic planning activities, culminating in a strategic plan that will begin July 1, 2026 and authorize the Executive Director to enter into an agreement for April 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026, for a total contract amount not to exceed $52,500.