

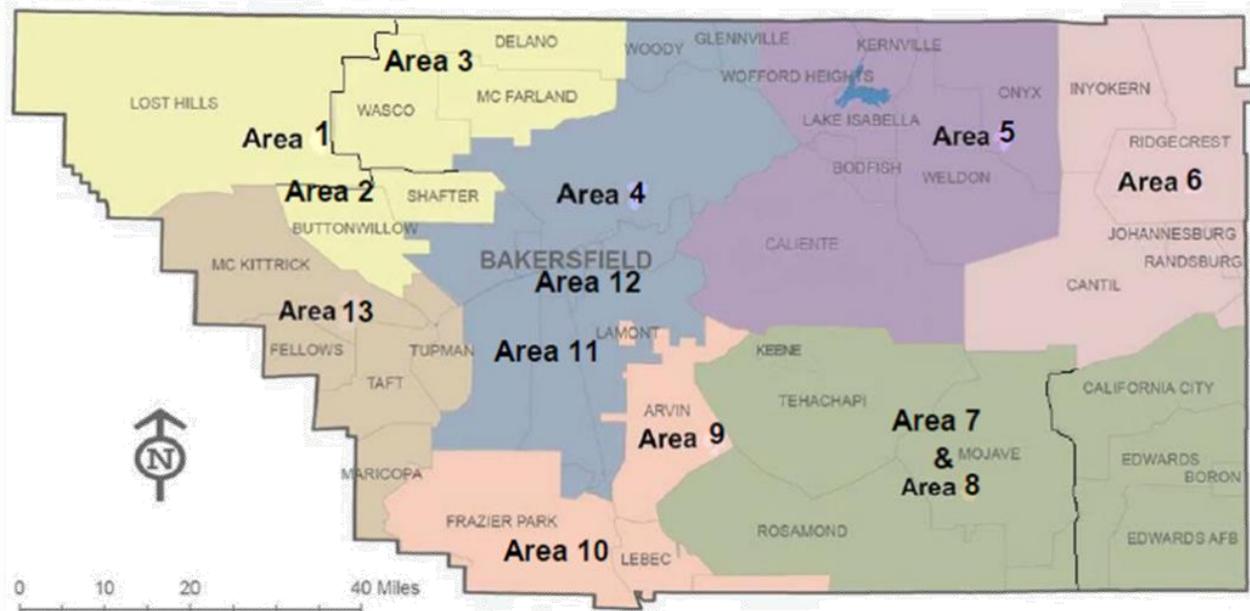


2017 Town Hall Meeting **RECAP**

Purpose

The First 5 Kern Commission is beginning the 2020 Strategic Plan effort and the launch of the next 'Request for Proposal' effort. In preparation, staff met with communities across the county, hosting 12 Town Hall meetings for the purpose of:

1. Sharing First 5 Kern's history and planning steps for the next funding cycle beginning 2020;
2. Identifying priority needs and gaps in services that First 5 Kern can address in the next funding cycle;
3. Utilizing direct discussions with residents to better understand the needs throughout Kern County; and
4. Gathering attendee input, ideas and priorities to share with First 5 Kern Commission.



Meetings

Town Hall meetings were held in the following cities and surrounding communities (not in order of priority):

1. **Lost Hills** – Area 1
2. **Shafter** – Area 2
3. **Delano** – Area 3
4. **Bakersfield - Oildale** – Area 4
5. **Kern River Valley** – Area 5
6. **Ridgecrest** – Area 6
7. **Mojave** – Areas 7 and 8
8. **Arvin / Lamont** – Area 9
9. **Mountain Communities** – Area 10
10. **Bakersfield - Greenfield** – Area 11
11. **Bakersfield - Southeast** – Area 12
12. **Taft** – Area 13

First 5 Kern’s Vision

All Kern County children will be born into and thrive in supportive, safe, loving homes and neighborhoods and will enter school healthy and ready to learn.

First 5 Kern’s Mission

To strengthen and support the children of Kern County prenatal to five and their families by empowering our providers through the integration of services with an emphasis on health and wellness, parent education, and early childcare and education.

The Process

Meetings were advertised throughout the County of Kern via flyers, networking and public service announcements. All meetings were open to the public.

Attendees were asked to share how they view programs and services in their surrounding region based on First 5 Kern’s focus areas: (I) Health and Wellness, (II) Parent Education and Support Services and (III) Early Childcare and Education.

DELANO TOWN HALL MEETING – AREA 3

First 5 Kern staff met with six residents of the Delano, McFarland and Wasco areas; including parents and early childcare providers. The two-hour event was held at the Albany Park Elementary School Auditorium in Delano on Thursday, April 20, 2017. Five children were provided with childcare.

Town Hall Hosted By:

- Delano School Readiness (Delano SR)
Delano Union Elementary School District
1842 Norwalk Street
Delano, CA 93215

Mike Bledsoe, Program Coordinator
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Delano SR provides direct services through:

- a. Case management.
- b. Parenting classes.
- c. Health screenings and referrals.
- d. Promoting parents' knowledge of developmental milestones and norms.
- e. Center-based and kindergarten transition activities.

Discussion Results

I. Health and Wellness

- There is good access to local pediatricians.
- Additional child mental health services are needed.
 - a. Child Guidance Clinic in Delano does a good job but is the only facility.
 - b. More child and parent counseling services are needed to address early childhood behavioral concerns including services for children before they reach kindergarten.
 - c. Anger management classes for children.
 - d. More one-on-one counseling for parents is needed to better address parenting styles and behavior issues.

II. Parent Education and Support Services

- Parenting classes using the Nurturing Parenting curriculum are offered in ten-week sessions by the Delano SR staff. These classes are well received by local residents.
 - a. The classes provide a link to case management services.
 - b. The generational and cultural differences between parents should be addressed during parenting classes.
- The Nurse Family Partnership program does a good job in the area but is restricted to new mothers.
 - a. Offer similar programs to mothers with more than one child.

- A parenting support program for parents with older children is lacking.

III. Early Childcare and Education

- Residents reported that Delano SR program provides excellent early childhood education which they wish to see continue.
- Delano SR provides screenings using Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 (ASQ-3) to help parents determine if their child’s development is on track for their age.
- Attendees recommended that income eligibility requirements should increase to allow middle class families to access affordable daycare for their children.
 - a. Current income restrictions do not consider the impact of the high cost of living, often requiring both parents to work (even in low wage jobs which push household incomes just over the low income/poverty line).
- Increased preschool capacity is needed to:
 - a. Include infant/toddler program programs before age three.
 - b. Adjust staff/child ratios and teacher/staff salaries so that infant care is not prohibitively costly to operate.
 - c. Alleviate shortages that cause waiting lists.

IV. Other Comments

- More early intervention services are needed to avoid issues when children reach kindergarten.
 - a. Children with Individual Education Plans (IEP’s for special education) have access to additional services. However, non-IEP children who also have behavior issues are not afforded the same services.

--- END DELANO ---