

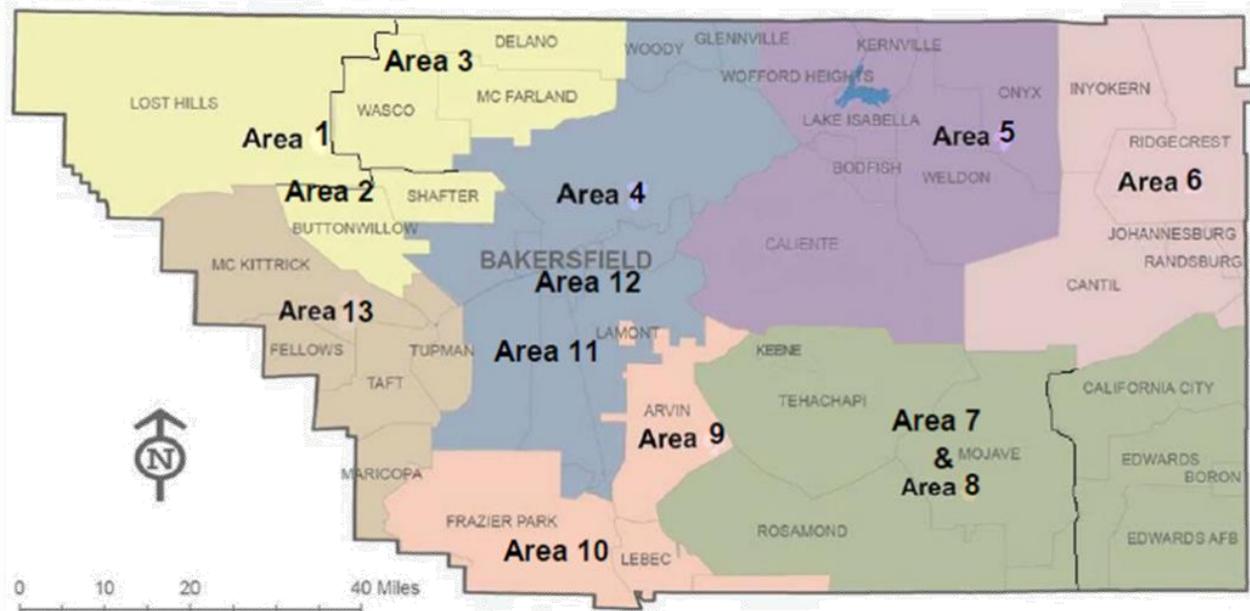


2017 Town Hall Meeting **RECAP**

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.

KERN RIVER VALLEY TOWN HALL MEETING – AREA 5

First 5 Kern staff met with 35 residents of the Kern River Valley area, including parents and early child care providers. The two-hour event was held at the Senior Center in Lake Isabella Thursday, March 23, 2017.

Town Hall Hosted By:

- Kern River Valley Family Resource Center Great Beginnings Program (KRV FRC)
Kernville Union School District
5109 Lake Isabella Blvd.
Lake Isabella, CA 93240

Sherry Lanza, Coordinator
760-379-2556
slanza@kernvilleusd.org

The KRV FRC provides direct family support services through:

- a. Case management.
- b. Parenting classes.
- c. Family support with concerns (medical, dental, parenting, nutritional issues).
- d. School readiness assistance.
- e. Utility referrals.
- f. Promoting parents' knowledge of developmental milestones and norms.

Discussion Results

I. Health and Wellness

- Randy Fieber, RN, BSN, PHN, is a great resource in Kern River Valley, well known and well respected. Randy is employed through the Kernville Unified School District and partially funded through First 5 Kern.
- The public health district nurse (PHN) serving the area recently retired. It will take at least six months to recruit and train a new PHN.
- There is a lack of a single pediatrician in the Kern River Valley. Only family practitioners are available.
 - a. Developmental guidance and further referrals to specialists would be helpful.
- A local hospital provides child medical materials but most babies are born in Bakersfield.
- Medi-Cal option for dental or vision services and appointments are difficult to make. Currently there are no options in the area.
 - a. Just 4 Kids Dental in Bakersfield is excellent.
- The First 5 funded dental and immunization vans are excellent. Dental comes twice a year and immunizations are once a year. Because of distance issues and the narrow Kern River Valley road, they require planning well in advance.

- Kern Valley Aquatics Program assists in education and swim lessons along with CPR classes. There are transportation limitations to accommodate all children who need to receive swim classes.
- Early childhood development screenings are conducted using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 (ASQ-3) through KRV FRC staff.
 - a. First 5 Kern staff announced that ‘Help Me Grow’, a national development screening initiative, has recently been launched through its contract with 2-1-1 of Kern County.

II. Parent Education and Support Services

- Parenting classes using the Nurturing Parenting court-mandated curriculum are great for first time parents. The classes provide a link to case management services through the KRV FRC. Classes are a great help in overcoming generational challenges in parenting. Classes are currently offered twice a year for 12 weeks. Schools refer parents to the classes and they often attend more than one set of classes. Needs identified were:
 - a. Classes to include daycare and childcare to help parents attend and complete them.
 - b. A bigger location is needed for parenting classes.
 - b. The length of classes should be extended beyond twelve weeks to cover more information.
- More services for prenatal to three-years-old. Only the KRV FRC provides direct services and is the only organization offering case management services in the area.

III. Early Childcare and Education

- Increased home visits for the Great Beginnings Program, beyond one hour for covering early childhood development, childhood literacy, and parenting topics.
- Increased preschool capacity to alleviate shortages that cause waiting lists.
- Extended day, past 3:30 p.m., at South Fork Preschool to accommodate parents’ work schedules; and add an employee daycare component.
- Maintain school bus transportation for three to four-year-olds.
- Kernville transportation:
 - a. Currently children must be income eligible for state funded preschools.
 - b. Guidelines should be reviewed to provide more flexibility, especially for rural areas.
- View the Kern River Valley through a poverty lens, to assist in decision making and program investments.

--- END KERN RIVER VALLEY ---