

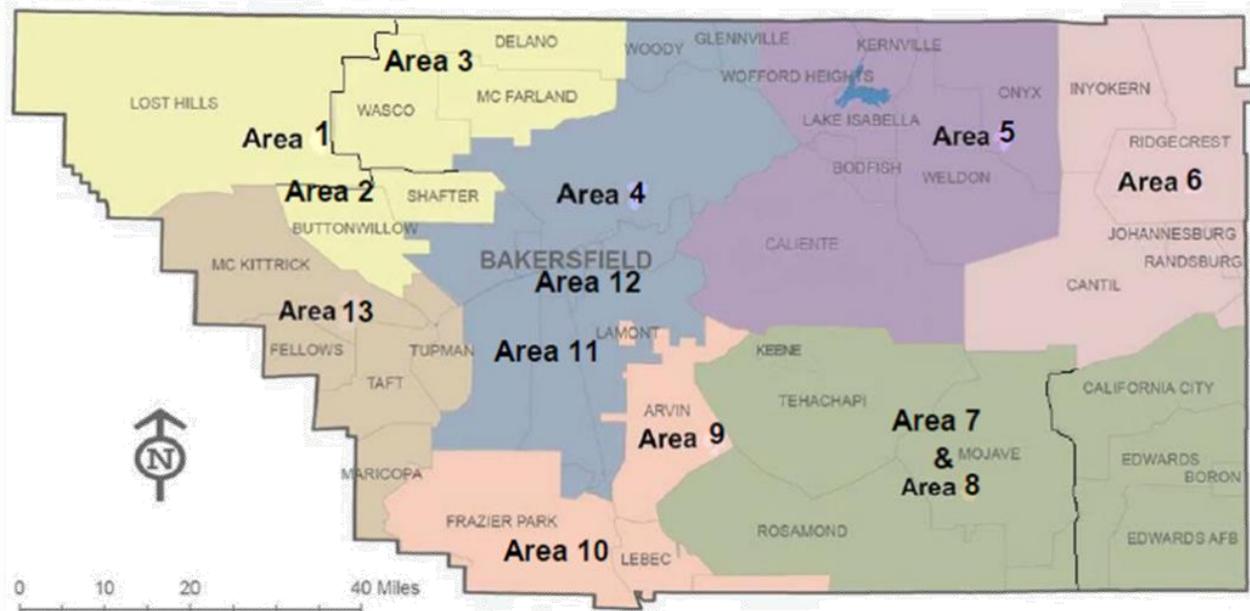


## 2017 Town Hall Meeting **RECAP**

### 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.

## MOJAVE TOWN HALL MEETING – AREAS 7 AND 8

First 5 Kern staff met with 10 residents of the Mojave area, including parents and early childcare providers. The two-hour event was held at the Mojave Elementary School, Tuesday, April 11, 2017.

### **Town Hall Hosted By:**

- East Kern Family Resource Center (EK FRC)  
Community Action Partnership of Kern  
16804 Highway 14, Unit C  
Mojave, CA 93501

Whitney Hughes, Supervisor  
661-824-4118  
[whughes@capk.org](mailto:whughes@capk.org)

The EK FRC provides direct family support 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**

- Lack of quality health care as identified by:
  - a. Minimal local access to prenatal and pediatric well child visits, especially for children on Medi-Cal.
  - b. Few providers serving children and families, including a family practitioner in Rural Health Clinic in Mojave and a pediatrician in Tehachapi; and the necessity to travel to Lancaster and downtown Bakersfield for specialists.
  - c. Access to vision services.
  - d. Lack of dental care. The mobile dental van, funded through First 5 Kern, visits Boron and Mojave three times each year.
  - e. Immunization services are needed.
- Wider and more frequent transportation services are needed for medical and dental appointments and other services to support regular preventative care.
  - f. It would be useful to have a "one stop shop" for services with a transportation hub.
  - g. There are only two stops each in community: Boron, Mojave, and California City.  
Note: Kern Transit will be hosting a meeting in April at Veterans Hall to discuss unmet needs in the Mojave service area. [Kern Council of Governments is coordinating these meetings in each community.]
- Increased mental health services are needed in the area, especially face-to-face therapy
  - h. College Community Services is the only approved vendor for the area from the County.

## II. Parent Education and Support Services

- Parenting classes using the Nurturing Parenting court-mandated classes are offered in twelve-week sessions by the EK FRC. These classes are well received by local residents because they help understand child development stages, parenting styles, discipline techniques and much more.
- The classes provide a link to case management services through the EK FRC, including home visits. They assess educational concerns, parenting techniques, and provide resources.

## III. Early Childcare and Education

- EK FRC provides 15 quality center-based childcare slots in its ‘Play and Learn’ site, co-located at the Mojave Elementary School, and:
  - a. Offers a natural transition for children between preschool and elementary.
- Increased preschool capacity is needed to alleviate shortages that cause waiting lists.
- Head Start has quality childcare but is income-based, thus eliminating some families from being able to access more expensive childcare.
  - a. California City has limited options and a two-year waiting list at Head Start locations.
  - b. Boron has 18 morning preschool slots and can add an afternoon session.
    - i. Tuition assistance is needed in Boron.
- It was recommended that funding be increased to expedite certifications for preschool staff, to attract more preschool teachers.
- Provide longer hours per preschool day.

## IV. Other Comments

- EK FRC has regular office schedules with provider partners who co-locate at the EK FRC including Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance and the Women’s Center-High Desert.
- The Public Health Nurse (PHN) recently retired and getting a new PHN will take about six months for recruitment and training.
- Kern County Department of Human Services (DHS) is re-locating to the Mojave court house where Differential Response will be located along with DHS social workers and other services.
- Many issues confront the area that require coordination and collaboration:
  - a. Drug addiction counseling is needed as are classes and more [low barrier] opportunities without income requirements.
  - b. Homelessness is a concern.
  - c. Food assistance and access is limited. More help needs to be provided during the drought. It is unknown what happens to food resources as the drought is declared over.
    - i. EK FRC and Salvation Army provide weekly food assistance.

- ii. Signing up for CalFresh is impacted by using gross income vs. net income because of high cost of living.
- d. Housing assistance is needed due to the high number of low income renters and limited housing capacity.
- e. Foster parents are limited in the area.

**--- END MOJAVE ---**