

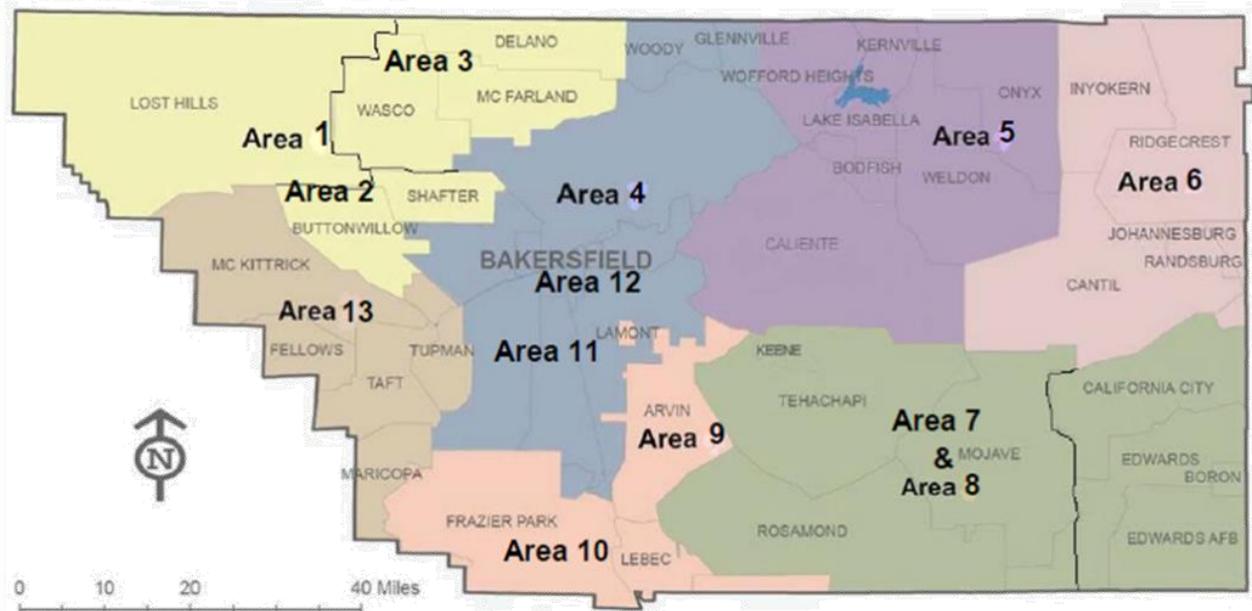


2017 Town Hall Meeting **RECAP**

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.

RIDGECREST TOWN HALL MEETING – AREA 6

First 5 Kern staff met with 41 residents of the Ridgecrest area, including parents and early childcare providers. The two-hour event was held at the Salvation Army, Wednesday, March 8, 2017.

Town Hall Hosted By:

- Indian Wells Valley Family Resource Center (IWV FRC)
Clinica Sierra Vista
825 N. Downs
Ridgecrest CA 93555

Kandi Smith, Coordinator
760-375-4357
kandi.smith@clinicasierravista.com

IWV FRC provides direct family support services through:

- a. Case management and home visitation.
- b. Nutrition and fitness education.
- c. Screenings and referrals.
- d. Parent education classes.
- e. Court mandated classes.
- f. Summer Bridge Program.
- g. Transportation to social service appointments.
- h. Hosts collaborative meetings.

Discussion Results

I. Health and Wellness

- Attendees suggested expanding the number of children and families served by Managed Medi-Cal.
- Increased local access to prenatal and pediatric well-child visits, especially for children on Medi-Cal, is a need.
- Increase the number of dentists who accept Denti-Cal in Ridgecrest.
- Enhanced access to specialty care is needed.
- Attendees requested that home health providers “be brought back.”
- Increased mental health services, especially face to face therapy, are needed.
- Broader and more frequent transportation services for medical appointments, dental appointments, and other services are needed.
 - a. Kern Transit will be hosting a meeting in April, at the Library, to discuss unmet needs. [Kern Council of Governments is coordinating these meetings in each community.]

II. Parent Education and Support Services

- Single dads' and grandparents' support groups are needed.
- Pre-parenting education services, including family life education, are requested.

III. Early Childcare and Education

- Increased preschool funding and capacity is needed to alleviate shortages that cause waiting lists. Other needs identified and recommended were:
 - a. Developing an infant to three-year-old child care center.
 - b. Expedited certifications for preschool staff would attract more preschool teachers.
 - c. Facilitating the Community Connection for Child Care licensing for new childcare centers.
 - d. Establish a sick child daycare to allow parents to go to work while their child has a minor illness.
 - e. Provide temporary child care services for children in shelters.
- Afterschool care with tutoring for older children is needed.
- Foster youth services need a presence to assist foster parents.

--- END RIDGECREST ---