

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS OF PRESCHOOL AGE CHILDREN WILL VOTE TO FUND
\$170,000 TOWARDS PROJECTS THAT IMPROVE THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN
CENTRAL LONG BEACH**

***The Best Start Central Long Beach (BSCLB) network seeks Community Change Fund
proposals by May 2nd, 2023***

(LONG BEACH, CA – April 13, 2023) Long Beach parents, caregivers, and community leaders with the Best Start Central Long Beach network have launched a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to fund \$170,000 towards community-led projects that will improve the lives of (prenatal to age five) and their families through education, community building, policy change, and systems change. Best Start Central Long Beach (BSCLB) is an initiative funded by First 5 LA to create the best possible community for young children and their families. Community-led projects must advance any of the following four BSCLB Community Change Agenda goals that were identified by the BSCLB network:

1. Build community knowledge about child development and parenting skills;
2. Prevent child abuse and neglect;
3. Increase access to quality and affordable child care; and
4. Increase access to quality and affordable housing and economic security.

Applications to fund projects in the amount of \$10,000-\$50,000 are due by Tuesday, May 2, 2023 at 12:00 midnight PST and are available online in English, Spanish, and Khmer at lbforward.org/communitychange. The BSCLB community will participate in a democratic voting process in May, in order to allocate \$170,000 to winning projects, which will be funded by June 2023.

Maria Teresa Loeza, a long-time BSCLB Leadership Team member expressed, "I've been involved with the BSCLB program for years, being part of change-making for young children and their families through parent leadership development, collaborating on projects, and educational programming. I highly encourage the community to not let this wonderful opportunity pass and to submit their project proposals. Let's continue to provide families all the tools and resources they need to live healthy and safe lives."

"Best Start Central Long Beach continues to be committed to bringing together parents and community organizations to help improve local policies and resources to better support parents and create a community where children and families can thrive. The Community Change Funds, BSCLB Community Partnership Meetings, and BSCLB Leadership Team all help us work towards systemic change and education on how we can help all children in our community flourish," explained, Nubia Flores, Associate Director, Long Beach Forward.

To be eligible for this funding opportunity: 1) applicants must have programs or projects operating within the Long Beach community; 2) applicants must operate without illegal discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin or disability; 3) events that have a religious or political focus are not eligible; and 4) all projects will be required to participate in The Nonprofit Partnership's systems change evaluation process. Questions can be directed to Lidia Flores at 562-900-8692 or lidia@lbforward.org.

The Best Start team will host optional information sessions on Zoom for potential applicants to learn more and ask questions about the process and opportunity on Tuesday, April 18th in English/Spanish at 6pm, on Wednesday, April 19th in English/Khmer at 6pm, and on Thursday, April 20th in English/Spanish at 6pm. To attend, potential applicants can RSVP for the Zoom link at www.lbforward.org/collaborative/communitychange.

Previous projects funded by BSCLB have included:

- *Keeping Long Beach Tenants in their Homes*: Long Beach tenants participated in community workshops that informed them of their rights as renters, helped them build leadership skills, and expanded their civic engagement awareness on how to bring about change in the community.
- *Healthy Minds, Healthy Lives*: Attendees participated in interactive and virtual workshops focused on positive parenting and self care across the family structure, in addition to curriculum on mental wellness for parents and children.
- *Fathers First*: Participating fathers developed skills and awareness around forming and maintaining healthy father-child relationships, as well as how to cultivate positive change in their community.
- *Social Media Safety, Preventing Online Child Abuse*: Community members, parents, families and caregivers of children attended a series of online and in-person workshops that featured experts on topics related to the dangers of social media, cyberbullying, online predators, human trafficking, internet safety, healthy online behavior, digital games and apps, and digital safety do's and don'ts.

About Best Start Central Long Beach

Best Start Central Long Beach is a network that brings together parents, community organizations, and institutions to improve policies and resources to better support parents and create a community where children and families can thrive. Best Start provides skills-building and leadership opportunities to help parents, caregivers, and organizations achieve their goals and ensure that children are safe, healthy, and ready to learn by the time they enter kindergarten. Best Start Central Long Beach is an initiative funded by First 5 LA and supported by The Nonprofit Partnership and Long Beach Forward. www.lbforward.org/beststart

About Long Beach Forward

Long Beach Forward, Inc. is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization that builds community knowledge, leadership, and power with low-income communities of color to drive real change and to advance the vision that Long Beach can be a place where race and income do not determine one's future—it can be a community where everyone is safe, connected, and healthy. Established in 2010, Long Beach Forward has been rooted in community since its beginning, when it coordinated the efforts of The California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities Long Beach initiative. Currently, Long Beach Forward provides leadership, strategy, communications, and convening support to multiple coalitions; partners with numerous community-based organizations; and facilitates or participates in collaborative groups and campaigns, including the Best Start Central Long Beach network. www.lbforward.org

Web Site: www.lbforward.org/beststart

Social: Facebook / Twitter / Instagram: [@beststartclb](https://www.instagram.com/beststartclb)

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