



## Conceptual Overview of Organizational Capacity Building

### Overview

First 5 San Bernardino is committed to building regional capacity and working with providers to support their organizational effectiveness and impact in creating positive outcomes for very young children and their families. Through the First 5 San Bernardino Capacity Building Academy, the Commission seeks to support the development of strong, adaptive and sustainable organizations that serve the 0 to 5 population. Current and former First 5 San Bernardino funded agencies are eligible to apply and participate in the Capacity Building Academy which will include organizational assessments, structured training, peer learning, coaching and tailored technical assistance.

The “Sustainability Project” is the first component to be piloted as part of an ongoing series to help build organizational capacity and effectiveness over time. The Sustainability Project supports agencies (current or former grantees) in developing and implementing plans to sustain high-quality outcomes for children ages 0-5 in San Bernardino County. Through a structured ten-month, team-based curriculum, agencies strategically plan how they can build their internal capacity to pursue and secure resources to address their agency’s long-term needs. Throughout the process, teams identify not only critical financial needs, but also essential political, technical, collaborative, and administrative resources required to achieve long-term sustainability.

Monthly full-day workshops are designed to walk sustainability teams through each step of the sustainability planning process with the ultimate goal of creating and implementing a comprehensive sustainability plan. Teams assess organizational and program strengths and weaknesses; identify resource needs and program goals; target potential funding sources and partnerships; and develop strategies to build community support, organizational capacity and sustainable collaboratives.

Agencies that successfully complete a written sustainability plan are eligible to receive a \$5,000 stipend to fund some of the staff time needed to develop and implement their plans. The project culminates with a Resource Forum which brings programs together with representatives from local private and corporate foundations, county offices and nonprofit agencies. Participating grantees present their sustainability plans, receive feedback on these plans and work to build new relationships with the panelists.

First 5 San Bernardino will be piloting the Sustainability Project in FY 2010-2011, with approximately 8 to 10 agencies successfully completing the program and producing sustainability plans. Sustainability teams from each agency consist of 2 to 4 people, which may include the executive director, finance officer, program director, development director and board members.

### Strategic Outcomes & Desired Results

The First 5 San Bernardino strategic plan seeks to support “systems and services that adequately support and engage children, families and communities.” Organizational capacity building is a key strategy under the System Integration and Community Engagement Cluster. The commission-level outcomes include:

- Systems support families
- Systems are results-based
- Families, providers, and stakeholders collaborate on the wellbeing of a child

- Systems sustain programs and services that achieve desired results
- Community-based providers have the capacity to address diverse community needs

Over the years, there has been an increased investment in capacity building by the First 5 community and many other funders nationwide. While First 5 San Bernardino and other Commissions have been providing a range of trainings, conferences and workshops, many are looking for opportunities to deepen the impact of capacity building assistance to agencies serving the 0-5 population. The First 5 San Bernardino Capacity Building Academy builds upon many of these models as well as a growing body of research that points to the need for a comprehensive multi-pronged approach that goes beyond individual trainings to include coaching, tailored technical assistance, peer learning and a more intensive training series.

## **Definitions and Key Terms**

**Sustainability:** First 5 San Bernardino defines sustainability as *the ability to support positive outcomes for young children and parents over time and ensure long-term results through financial and non-financial resources*. In other words, the capacity of organizations to sustain their work relies upon their leaders' ability to leverage and effectively use a range of resources to ensure long-term success.

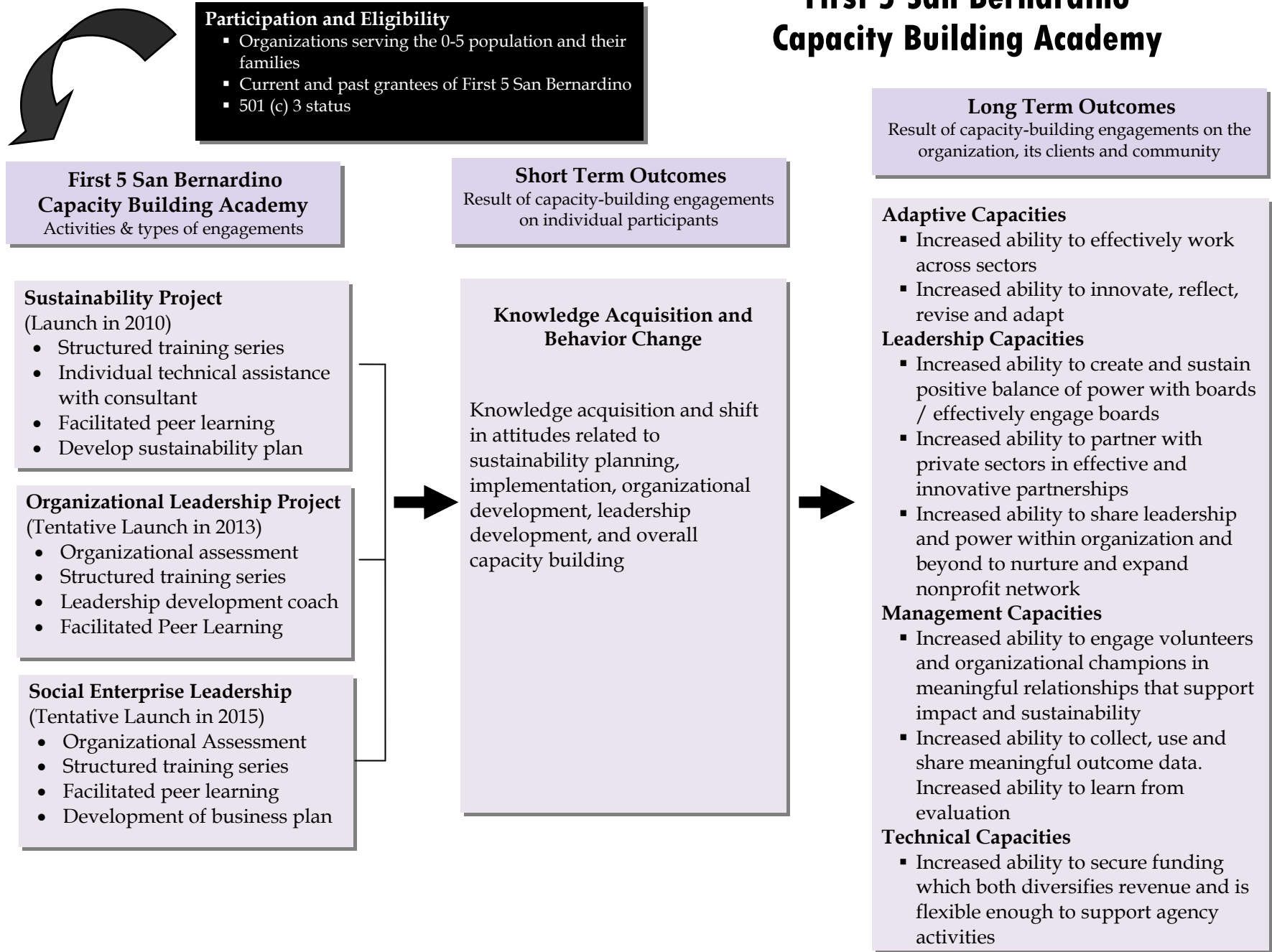
The Finance Project has identified eight elements that are key to sustainability.<sup>1</sup> These critical elements include:

- **Vision:** Have a clear picture of what needs to be sustained starting with a clear articulation of what the organization wants to achieve through its work and the strategies and activities that will get them there.
- **Results Orientation:** Define success, measure progress over time, and adjust work based on what is learned
- **Strategic Financing Orientation:** Estimate the resources the organization will need and develop financing strategies and funding sources to provide stable base of resources over time
- **Broad-Based Community Support:** Consider whose support is needed and develop appropriate outreach efforts and vehicles for community involvement
- **Key Champions:** Rally leaders from business, faith-based institutions, government agencies, and other parts of the community and persuade them to use their power and influence to generate support
- **Adaptability to Changing Conditions:** Be proactive in the policy environment and adjust to changing social, economic, and political trends in the community
- **Strong Internal Systems:** Build strong systems and structures, such as fiscal management, information, personnel and governance.
- **Sustainability Plan:** Create a written plan the organization can use to manage and market its work

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<sup>1</sup> Cheryl D. Hayes, Sustaining Comprehensive Community Initiatives: Key Elements for Success (Washington, D.C.: The Finance Project, April 2002).

# First 5 San Bernardino Capacity Building Academy



## Capacity Building Activities & Services

This opportunity includes a capacity building, technical assistance and peer learning component designed to promote continuous quality improvement.

These trainings will be approximate 2 to 4 hours in length and will be held on a quarterly basis. They will also create opportunities for peer learning. The tentative Capacity Building activities for 2010-11 are outlined below:

Proposed Capacity Building Activities for 2010-11	Tentative Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Participant Orientation Meeting:</b> At least a half day meeting to provide general orientation to participating agencies</li> </ul>	July/Aug 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Introduction to the Planning Process</b></li> </ul>	Summer 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Developing a Vision &amp; Results Orientation</b></li> </ul>	Summer 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Creating a Strategic Financing Plan</b></li> </ul>	Fall 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Building Organizational Capacity &amp; Community Support</b></li> </ul>	Winter 2010-11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Writing and Marketing Your Plan</b></li> </ul>	Spring 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Due Date for Final Written Sustainability Plans</b></li> </ul>	Spring 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Resource Forum</b></li> </ul>	Spring 2011

To help meet the technical assistance needs of participating agencies, First 5 San Bernardino is developing a pool of pre-qualified consultants to provide tailored one-on-one technical assistance on an as needed basis. Consultants included in the pre-approved directory will be knowledgeable about best practices in the field and committed to relationship-based learning. Applicants who anticipate needing technical consultations may include a line item in their budget however they must provide detail about the type of assistance needed

## Organizational Assessment Tools

There are a variety of assessment tools designed to help both funders and nonprofit organizations assess their organizational capacity. The workgroup has considered tools that are widely used by capacity building programs and funders and are readily available at no cost. These tools could be used and/or adapted for local use. Some tools to consider include:

- **The McKinsey Capacity Assessment Grid (Venture Philanthropy):** The grid asks the reader to score the organization on various elements of organizational capacity which include 1) aspirations (mission, vision), 2) strategy, 3) organizational skills, 4) human resources, 5) systems and infrastructure, 6) organizational structure, and 7) culture. It is free, relatively easy to use and can be adapted.
- **Marguerite Casey Foundation Organizational Assessment:** This tool is adapted from the McKinsey and is a comprehensive tool that evaluates organizations on 60 capacity dimensions that fall into four critical elements: 1) leadership capacity, 2) adaptive capacity, 3) management capacity and 4) operational

capacity. This tool was adapted from the McKinsey and was expanded to include questions on community organizing. The foundation also strengthened questions in the area of evaluation, marketing, communications, fundraising and cultural competency. It is free and readily available on the internet.

- **Investing in Sustainability - An Assessment Tool for Funders (The Finance Project):** This tool is specifically designed to assess sustainability and could be used by First 5 staff and consultant (collaboratively with funded partners) as part of the first training segment (Sustainability Project). It is framed around 8 critical elements of sustainability and can be adapted.