



*Center for*  
Health Program  
Management  
SIERRA HEALTH FOUNDATION

# Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths

Implementation Plan for  
Sacramento County 2015-2020



SEPTEMBER 2015



Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to share with you the Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths' (RAACD) implementation plan to reduce the disproportionate African American child mortality rate in Sacramento County. This implementation plan, which is a follow up to the Steering Committee's strategic plan, provides detailed programmatic steps to be undertaken to reduce the number of African American child deaths by 10% to 20% over a five-year period.

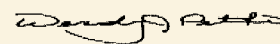
For far too long, African American children have died at a higher rate than other children in Sacramento County. But over the past two years, the community, with leadership from the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, has come together to address this longstanding inequity. A strategic plan, *African American Children Matter: What We Must Do Now*, was created by the Steering Committee to address the structural issues we believe limit Sacramento County's ability to reduce African American child mortality rates. This plan is rooted in the belief that while all of our children matter, to successfully address health and well-being disparities affecting vulnerable children, targeted resources and systemic changes are required.

Moving forward, our priority is to operationalize the strategic plan by identifying and strengthening underutilized community assets – people, neighborhood associations and institutions – and strategically investing in their capacity to generate a reduction in

the African American child mortality rate. The following implementation plan sets forth tangible steps toward this goal. It provides a roadmap for the establishment of six intra-neighborhood collaboratives to support the delivery of community-based, culturally relevant services; strategically connects the six neighborhoods to create a learning community network and generate the scale required to achieve the identified countywide goal; and then links the network to an interagency policymaking body responsible for understanding, planning and acting to promote the health and well-being of all children in Sacramento County.

We passionately believe that Sacramento County's ability to address disproportionate African American child death is only possible if we can more effectively partner with the most affected communities. We also believe we can simultaneously set in place a structure for improving the county's ability to ensure all children have the opportunity to thrive regardless of the zip code they reside in. Through this process of creating the strategic and implementation plans, we have seen the African American community, and Sacramento County, come together to contribute to this multiyear community planning and development effort. The incredible leadership and partnerships that have emerged inspire us, and we look forward to their continuation as we enter this next critical phase. Together we can and we will make a difference.

Respectfully,



Wendy Petko  
Co-Chairperson



Chet P. Hewitt  
Co-Chairperson

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*The Steering Committee is funded by the County of Sacramento  
and First 5 Sacramento, and is managed by Sierra Health Foundation  
Center for Health Program Management.*





## Introduction

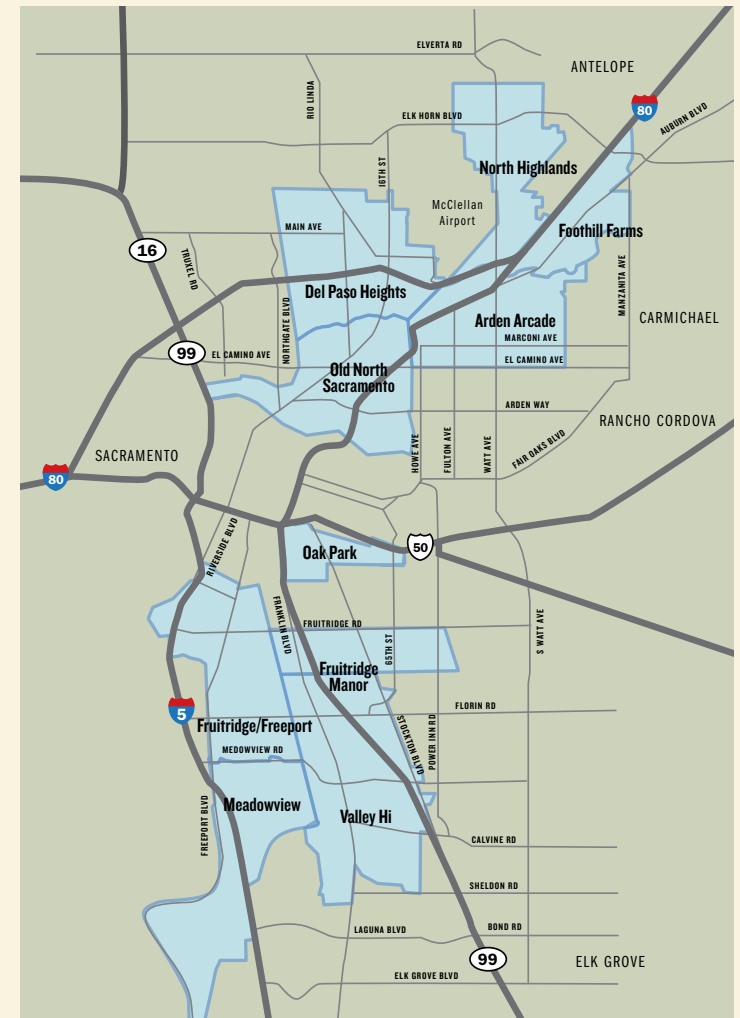
In April 2013, the Sacramento Blue Ribbon Commission Report on *Disproportionate African American Child Deaths* described the 20-year problem of disproportionate African American child mortality in Sacramento County, recommended the adoption of the goal of reducing African American child deaths by at least 10% to 20% by 2020, outlined potential approaches to achieving the goal and established the Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths (RAACD). The report identified four primary causes of death that have the most disproportionate impact on African American children in Sacramento County. Those causes are:

1. Infant sleep-related deaths
2. Perinatal conditions
3. Child abuse and neglect homicides
4. Third-party homicides

It also identified six neighborhoods that have the highest numbers of African American child deaths in the county. The six neighborhoods have become the focus of the RAACD efforts and include:

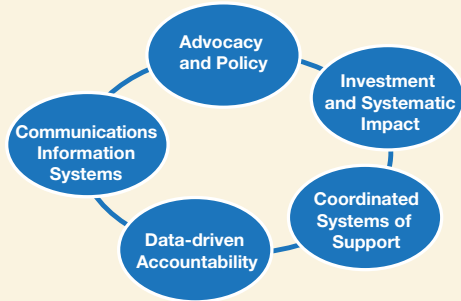
1. Valley Hi/Meadowview
2. Arden-Arcade
3. North Sacramento/Del Paso Heights
4. Oak Park
5. North Highlands/Foothill
6. Fruitridge/Stockton Boulevard

In March 2015, following an intensive and passionate community process driven by core values of collaboration, community engagement, accountability, innovation, sustainability and service, the Steering Committee on RAACD created a strategic plan, *African American Children Matter: What We Must Do Now*, outlining five priority strategies to transform public systems and foster meaningful community engagement to achieve a 10% to 20% reduction goal.



The strategies included a focus on:

1. Advocacy and Policy
2. Equitable Investment and Systematic Impact
3. Coordinated Systems of Support
4. Data-driven Accountability and Collective Impact
5. Communications and Information Systems



At the June 2015 Sacramento County Board of Supervisors meeting, nearly 300 advocates, many from neighborhoods most impacted by disproportionate rates of African American child mortality, voiced their support for the strategies proposed in the plan. The Board of Supervisors agreed with the community advocates and voted to approve \$1.5 million annually for five years to implement the plan. This commitment is in addition to those made by the county's First 5 Sacramento Commission and its public health, child welfare and probation departments. It is unique and complementary to these efforts because it expressly focuses on facilitating unprecedented levels of community capacity, engagement and action to reduce African American child deaths.

Accordingly, this implementation plan is a living document. It is designed to adapt to meet the dynamic environment in which it will operate.

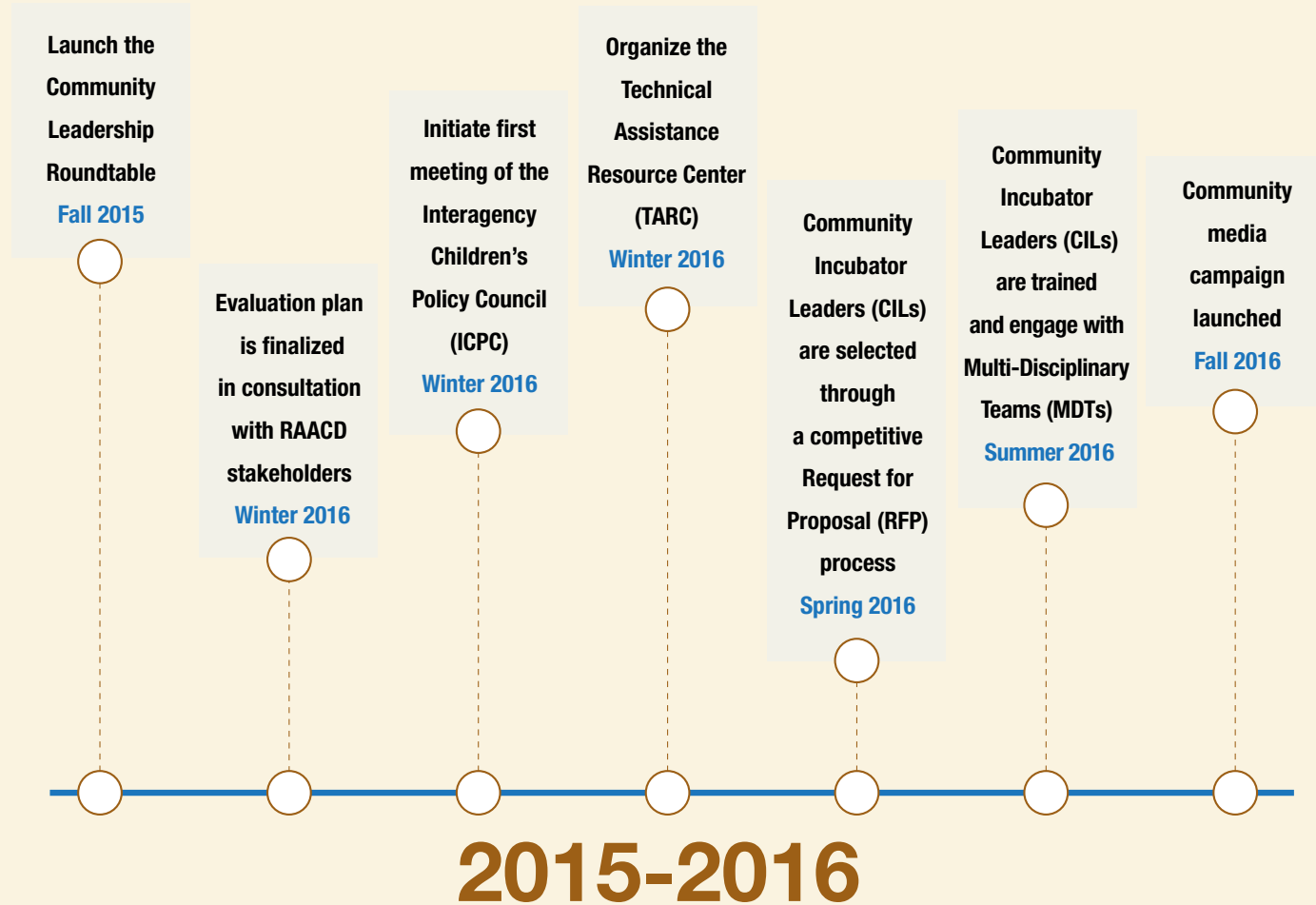
## Core Objectives for the RAACD Implementation Plan

Six core objectives, based on the principles outlined in the strategic plan, will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation process. The objectives, listed below, will continually be refined through an ongoing community engagement process and analysis of new information and data as it becomes available.

1. Engage residents and a select group of community institutions in RAACD priority neighborhoods and establish them as an inter-neighborhood network to reduce African American child deaths
2. Design a community/grassroots messaging and marketing campaign and deploy it through a saturation strategy in the focus neighborhoods
3. Increase the level of investment in high-quality and evidenced-based programs and services for children, youth and families in the focus neighborhoods
4. Improve access to services through the co-location of multidisciplinary social services teams in the RAACD-focused neighborhoods
5. Align county policy discussions and practice changes with identified neighborhood network priorities
6. Monitor the quality of implementation, evaluate effectiveness and report on progress toward the ultimate goal of reducing African American child deaths and promoting the well-being of all children in Sacramento County



## Key Implementation Milestones and Timeline



## Overview of the RAACD Implementation Structure

The operations structure laid out in the implementation plan will be overseen by the Steering Committee (SC) and managed by Sierra Health Foundation Center for Health Program Management (CHPM). The structure is designed to accomplish the plan's goals by:

1. **Creating, managing and supporting a community network:** organize a high-performing, cohesive network at both the neighborhood and county levels and connect this network to public sector efforts to reduce African American child deaths
2. **Connecting neighborhoods to resources:** assist community organizations located in the six focus neighborhoods by identifying and connecting them with new financial in-kind and human resources, while helping them to strategize and understand the benefits of forming a partnership with government, private funders and their peers
3. **Improving organizational sustainability and capacity:** provide essential skill-building training and technical assistance to help community organizations build the necessary capacity to implement and maintain efforts to improve child health and well-being in their communities over time
4. **Distributing best practices:** identify, gather and disseminate relevant information, lessons learned and promising practices to create a conduit for ideas drawn from sources outside the network, such as academics, policymakers and advocacy groups
5. **Publicizing successes and “hard lessons”:** announce the impact and results of the implementation effort to build new knowledge and advance the efficacy of our work

## Community Network Design

Figure 1 on the following page outlines the components of the community network structure called for in the Blue Ribbon Commission's report and the SC's strategic plan. These components include the following entities:

1. **Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths (SC):** The SC will provide coordination and oversight for all implementation activities, as well as evaluate and report progress toward reducing the disproportionate number of African American child deaths in Sacramento County.
2. **Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC):** The TARC is the SC's independent operational partner that works directly with community stakeholders to build neighborhood capacity and identify resources to address issues that arise during implementation. The TARC will be managed by CHPM and be comprised of faculty that will include academics, consultants and community leaders with experience designing programs that strengthen the operational capacity of community institutions on an as-needed basis.
3. **Community Leadership Roundtable (CLR):** The CLR is a group of individuals who speak directly with the SC. The CLR, which will include representatives from each of the neighborhood Community Incubator Leads (see following page), will have responsibility for relaying information from the SC to community residents and for bringing community concerns and questions to the attention of the SC. The broader CLR membership will include civic leaders, policymakers, journalists, practitioners, youth and researchers, among others.



4. **Community Incubator Lead (CIL):** A CIL is an organization within the community that will be the focus of TARC efforts to engage and build the capacity of smaller, grassroots organizations. In each of the six focus neighborhoods, CIL(s) will be selected through a competitive process managed by the SC. CIL leadership will also serve as members of the CLR and will meet monthly as a professional learning community facilitated by the TARC.
5. **Sacramento County Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT):** MDTs are co-located county agencies within each of the six neighborhoods. MDTs are county staff, working in tandem with CILs to offer culturally appropriate services and facilitate access to health insurance, rental subsidies, health care and other resources. Differing from a one-stop-shop, members of the MDT will work together to assist community members with their needs.
6. **Interagency Children's Policy Council (ICPC):** ICPC is a senior leadership body brought together to identify trends, set policy and ensure accountability for issues that affect child health and well-being. It will be made up of county and non-county agency executives and department directors who have impact on prevention and reduction of African American child deaths in Sacramento County, as well as representatives from nongovernmental organizations that impact the lives of low-income and vulnerable children and families in the county. The ICPC will be directly accountable to the Board of Supervisors for the development of an integrated services delivery system strategy consistent with the Blue Ribbon Commission report's recommendations to improve the lives of children, youth and their families.

**Figure 1: RAACD Community Network Structure**





## Implementation of the Five Priority Strategies

The following sections explain the relationship among the five priority strategies outlined in the strategic plan, and the structure and activities being developed to support their implementation.

### 1. Promoting Advocacy and Policy Transformation

Successful, long-term change stems from empowering community members to promote and advocate for resources they need to ensure that children and youth from 0 to 17 years of age are emotionally and physically safe. Engaging residents in all six neighborhoods will help define and prioritize communication strategies and identify key audiences so messaging can influence, saturate, unite and drive the appropriate action. The implementation steps described below are intended to achieve outcomes of: (a) increasing awareness and community participation, (b) identifying resources to support effective interventions, and (c) creating a sustainable infrastructure of community leadership.

Efforts to promote advocacy and create policy change include:

- Establishing a Community Leadership Roundtable
- Educating community members
- Identifying partners for change

#### *Community Leadership Roundtable (CLR)*

The creation of the CLR will involve the following actions:

- Identify up to 20 community organizations to undergo comprehensive community outreach planning and communication training regarding RAACD prevention strategies
- Develop messages and a communication plan for the CLR

#### *Community Outreach and Education*

To communicate the messages about how to prevent African American child deaths and how the community is involved, the CLR will:

- Partner with local community-based organizations to co-host neighborhood town hall meetings in the six neighborhoods
- Educate the community on at least 10 separate occasions about RAACD strategies (e.g. sponsor community forums, ads in traditional and social media)

#### *Partnership for Change*

The CLR will connect with other organizations in order to generate new resources for the work in the communities. To this end it will:

- Leverage existing partnerships with health, wellness and child advocacy groups in Sacramento County to develop convening venues and publications
- Identify business and philanthropic community partners to provide financial and non-financial support that will assist in connecting the effort to reduce African American child deaths to other relevant efforts
- Work with the ICPC to create a fund development plan that fosters public investment in best and promising practices in RAACD neighborhoods

**Goal:** Consistent community leadership and resources to advocate for the changes needed to prevent African American child deaths.

**Goal:** A coordinated system of public resources and services that promotes safe and stable families and positive options for youth.

## 2. Equitable Investment and Systematic Impact

Public and private institutional stakeholders have increasingly relied on targeted investments to promote equity, address disparities and increase systemic impact, such as the reduction of African American child deaths. In April 2015, in response to the strategic plan, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors supported, in concept, the creation of an Interagency Children's Policy Council (ICPC). The policy council's role is to make recommendations that will create an overarching health and well-being strategy for all children in Sacramento County. It is our hope that the policy council will accomplish this by ensuring that strategic investments are made to facilitate (a) an integrated family and child service delivery system that promotes safe and stable families, (b) expansion of culturally sensitive services, and (c) greater access to child and family services and support.

### *Interagency Children's Policy Council (ICPC)*

The SC will continue to work with the Sacramento County CEO's office to establish an ICPC charter and policy principles that include the mission, vision, values and goals, as well as a process of member appointment, nominations and terms for review by the Board of Supervisors. The reduction of African American child deaths will be a central effort of the ICPC's initial work.

The ICPC will:

- Convene key elected policymakers, a representative of the Office of the County Executive, representation from the SC, and executive leadership from the following agencies that impact the lives of low-income and vulnerable children and families, including at least one representative from:
  - County Office of Education
  - Department of Health and Human Services
  - Probation
  - Juvenile Court
  - Department of Human Assistance
  - District Attorney
  - First 5 Sacramento
  - Sacramento Employment and Training Agency
  - Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency

The ICPC will be staffed by the CHPM in coordination with county staff.





### 3. Coordinated Systems of Support

To integrate community engagement throughout the actions described in this plan, a coordinated system of community support, capacity development and empowerment will be established. The system will be made up of a network of established community organizations partnering with and acting as incubators for smaller organizations and grassroots groups. The organizations, known as Community Incubator Leads (CILs), will build local capacity to obtain and deploy resources that engage and empower residents in the work of preventing African American child deaths. The CILs will also help coordinate public services that will be located in the neighborhoods in the form of teams made up of service providers from multiple agencies, known as Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs). To ensure that technical assistance and activities within and across neighborhoods are available and coordinated, a Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC) will be created.

Outcomes of the connections among the CILs, MDTs and TARC include (a) established partnerships between public agencies and the community, (b) institutionalized public agency policies and practices that result in culturally responsive services and supports, and (c) increased engagement of community residents in activities that support the well-being of children and their families.

Implementing the coordinated system of support will require:

- Creating a Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC)

- Establishing Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs)
- Selecting Community Incubator Leads (CILs)

#### **Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC)**

By serving as a facilitator and clearinghouse of resources, the TARC will connect partners working in the six focus neighborhoods to each other and to the best research, policies and practices related to reducing African American child deaths. The TARC will also have responsibility for coordinating evaluation and reporting. The TARC, overseen by the SC, will be responsible for the following action steps:

- Assemble resources, such as case studies and background sources, related to specific aspects of RAACD implementation
- Develop a training and technical assistance plan that links the efforts across the six neighborhoods, while also providing technical assistance that is tailored to the needs of the individual neighborhoods
- Work with the CILs (described below) to coordinate the technical assistance within and across the six neighborhoods

#### **Community Incubator Leads (CILs)**

Each CIL will be responsible for (a) coordinating the network of RAACD efforts in its neighborhood, including cultural brokers, trauma-informed care, community grassroots messaging, youth leadership and engagement, (b) building and strengthening community relationships, and (c) managing regranting

**Goal:** A community-based infrastructure of services and supports that empowers residents to improve the health and well-being of their children.

programs for small local organizations involved in the RAACD activities. The CILs will be responsible for the following action steps:

- Identify needed technical assistance and other resources to support their ability to carry out their charge
- Conduct an assets and needs scan of existing service providers and facilities in these service areas
- Identify small local providers that can be coordinated to deliver focused neighborhood-based services
- Participate in a learning community to share learnings and coordinate communication, evaluation and partnership activities
- House and coordinate the MDTs that address the needs identified in the scan
- Propose new programs based on gaps revealed in the scan
- Participate in the CLR



## ***Sacramento County Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)***

The coordination and delivery of county services will target African American families, but will be provided to the community at large. Implementation steps carried out by the MDTs are:

- Develop a RAACD case management system that allows the MDTs to provide wrap-around services, such as:
  - Employment services
  - Counseling
  - Food and nutrition assistance
  - Health insurance
  - Health care (Black Infant Health Network, Nurse Family Partnership)
  - Housing
  - Behavioral health and substance abuse treatment
- Share information and resources to ensure culturally appropriate, effective services and resources that improve the health and well-being of African American children and their families
- Provide data to a shared data system that will be used to monitor progress toward the prevention of African American child death



#### 4. Data-driven Accountability and Collective Impact

With multiple agencies, organizations and individuals using diverse strategies to work toward the common goal of reducing African American child deaths, the RAACD effort requires an evaluation based on a framework of collective impact. Collective impact transpires when different sectors set out to solve an issue and includes a commitment to using the same measurement practices and an agreement to use data to improve policy and program decisions, hold decision-makers accountable and build public will. The implementation steps described below are intended to create and support (a) a sustained system for the collection and dissemination of information about quality and outcomes of the RAACD effort, (b) a transparent system for accountability for progress, (c) ongoing quality improvements to increase effectiveness of interventions, and (d) documentation of effective practices for reducing African American child deaths to support replication in other jurisdictions.

The evaluation of the RAACD effort has three components:

- Community-based evaluation of implementation quality
- Shared outcome measurement
- Monitoring of trends in African American child deaths

The three components will feed into a data system housed at the TARC. The system, or data hub, will compile and organize data from multiple sources so that it can be analyzed and reported at regular intervals

to the public and policymakers. A task force will be created to develop shared measurement and reporting plans.

##### **Community-based Evaluation of Implementation Quality**

— Through interviews, observations, document reviews and other methods, community residents, with the support of the CILs and the TARC, will engage in participatory action research that will improve the implementation process. The research will be guided by a quality assessment tool based on quality dimensions and indicators developed by the SC (see Appendix for the dimensions).

The steps to complete the implementation of community-based evaluation are:

- Finalize the quality assessment tool
- Train CILs in participatory action research and the use of action research methods in the quality assessment, interpreting outcomes and making recommendations for improvements
- Recruit and train youth and other community residents in carrying out quality assessments
- Provide supervision and support for community members engaged in quality assessment
- Compile quality assessment results so that they can be shared with the public in multiple forms, including through the CLR and other messengers
- Report findings and make recommendations for improvements to the RAACD activities, as needed

**Goal:** Ongoing system for collecting, sharing and using information about the quality of the activities and the extent to which they are achieving changes that will prevent African American child deaths.

**Shared Outcome Measurement** — Data are already collected on programs and services intended to improve the health and well-being of Sacramento County children. However, there are no agreed-upon intermediate measures of progress toward the goal of reducing African American child deaths, and thus no way to monitor the extent to which the interventions are or are not changing the conditions that lead to the disproportionate death rate of African American children. To evaluate the outcomes of the RAACD effort, a framework that identifies agreed-upon measures of progress must be developed. To ensure buy-in to the framework, a task force made up of representatives from the ICPC agencies, CILs and the SC will be created.

The specific actions needed to develop and implement the framework for shared measurement of outcomes are:

- Create the task force and provide training on developing a shared measurement plan
- Identify indicators that accurately reflect progress toward changing conditions in ways that will reduce African American child deaths, relying to the extent possible on existing data
- Develop a plan and memoranda of understanding for compiling data on the agreed-upon indicators in the data hub
- Ensure ongoing submission of data to the data hub, where it will be organized into easy-to-read reports

## **Monitoring Trends in African American**

**Child Deaths** — To keep attention focused on the ultimate goal of the RAACD effort, reducing the disproportionate African American child death rate in Sacramento County by at least 10% to 20%, the Child Death Review Team will continue its annual reporting on the deaths of African American children relative to the rate of deaths of other children.





## 5. Communications and Information Systems

Significant attention will be paid to communications to foster connection between focus neighborhoods and Sacramento County residents on the importance of the initiative and its status. This strategy is aimed at increasing awareness of the disproportionate number of African American child deaths in Sacramento County, particularly in the six focus neighborhoods, and empowering community members to create change. The implementation steps described below are intended to have outcomes of (a) increased community awareness in a culturally sensitive and appropriate way on how best to support healthy development of children and youth, and where to access necessary resources, and (b) an informed community that is engaged in activities that support the well-being of children and their families.

Efforts to create effective communication include:

- Community Media Campaign
- Social Marketing Plan

**Community Media Campaign** — To help develop and disseminate media materials focused on the prevention and reduction of African American child deaths to key local audiences using both traditional media and social media outlets, the SC will:

- Conduct community focus group discussions to identify resident opinions, attitudes and levels of awareness key audiences have about African American child deaths in Sacramento County
- Develop RAACD communication funding strategy to support all six neighborhoods in RAACD programs, resources and services

- Select grantees through a competitive RFP process for RAACD integrated grassroots community media campaigns
- Through the TARC, facilitate media and communication trainings with lead media grantee, CILs and stakeholders engaged in grassroots community campaign
- Facilitate quarterly meetings with the RAACD CLR and media partners
- Develop media partnerships to publicize accomplishments in a timely manner, and celebrate wins and accomplishments publicly

**Social Marketing Plan** — Grassroots partners will:

- Review existing research to examine similar social marketing health campaigns, networks and collective impact models
- Utilize research findings to develop and launch a strategically focused social marketing plan that utilizes social media and traditional media, advertising, public relations and community outreach efforts that focus on key audiences throughout Sacramento County
- Engage youth through paid positions to take the lead on social marketing activities

## Conclusion

Sacramento County is positioned to catalyze creative neighborhood-led problem solving to reduce African American child deaths. This plan is the result of collaboration among public agencies, grassroots organizations, community residents and many others. It serves as a call to action to all those committed to preventing African American child deaths and improving the lives of all children.

**Goal:** Messages about how to prevent African American child deaths and improve the health and well-being of children that are provided using culturally appropriate methods and messengers.

## APPENDIX — Quality Dimensions

Dimensions	General Definition
Mission focus	Activities associated with implementing the strategic plan are consistently focused on the mission of reducing African American child deaths.
Engaged leadership	Leaders and decision-makers from the various stakeholders demonstrate commitment to RAACD by being actively involved in implementing the strategic plan.
Partnerships (with community-based organizations (CBOs, private sector, philanthropy, etc.)	Diverse constituencies are effectively represented so that diverse perspectives are included in the implementation of the strategic plan.
Community engagement	Activities intended to engage the community in the implementation of the strategic plan are authentic and effective.
Community capacity building	Existing community capacity is recognized and built on using effective practices to maximize inclusion in implementing the strategic plan.
Youth-centered	Youth are recognized as assets in the process of implementing the strategic plan.
Transparency and fairness	Decisions, plans, etc. involved in implementing the strategic plan are documented, shared and judged to be fair by stakeholders.
Communications	Communications associated with implementing the strategic plan (e.g., messages about infant health, urgency of reducing African American child deaths, positive youth development) are clear to intended audiences.
Data collection, sharing and use	High-quality data about the strategic plan implementation and outcomes are collected; interpretation of findings is participatory; and findings are shared and used for multiple purposes (accountability, course correction, contribution to knowledge).



## Acknowledgments

The Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths (RAACD) was established by a resolution of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors in June 2013 with a goal of reducing the disproportionate African American child death rate by at least 10% to 20% by 2020. This 25-member committee is comprised of representatives from county agencies, education, health systems, civic groups, faith-based organizations, parent and youth groups, and policy advocates. It will provide oversight of the implementation of this effort, and is funded by the County of Sacramento and First 5 Sacramento, and managed by Sierra Health Foundation Center for Health Program Management.

### Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths Members

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*Thank you to the RAACD Strategic Implementation Team (SIT) members for contributing their expertise to the development of this plan. (SIT members are designated by \* above and below.)*

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*Thank you to the RAACD Evaluation Workgroup members for their continued work on our collective impact framework. (Evaluation Workgroup members noted above and below.)*

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Steering Committee members at the April 14, 2015, Sacramento County Board of Supervisors RAACD workshop. Not all members are shown.



## Sierra Health Foundation Center for Health Program Management

Sierra Health Foundation Center for Health Program Management will staff the Steering Committee and manage the day-to-day activities of the RAACD effort to ensure that a coordinated and collaborative process will result in community transformation.

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- District 1: Phil Serna – Chair
- District 2: Patrick Kennedy
- District 3: Susan Peters
- District 4: Roberta MacGlashan – Vice Chair
- District 5: Don Nottoli

We also thank our community partners and stakeholders as we embark on this journey together toward reducing African American child deaths.



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