



FY2023-24

Pathways Home Visiting Program

LOCAL EVALUATION REPORT

Funding for the Pathways Home Visiting program and this report is provided by the First 5 Lassen County Children and Families Commission



First 5 Lassen FY2023-24 Local Evaluation Report

Purpose of this Report

As a component of Proposition 10 funding, First 5 Lassen is required to demonstrate results. The results-based accountability model, as adopted by First 5 California, requires the collection and analysis of data and the reporting of findings in order to evaluate the effectiveness of investments.

In the spring of 2023, the First 5 Lassen Commission adopted their *2024-2028 First 5 Lassen Strategic and Long-Range Financial Plan*. Immediately following, the Commission engaged Social Entrepreneurs, Inc. (SEI), its long-term external evaluator, to update the evaluation framework used to assess progress on implementation of strategic plan initiatives. This is the first report that utilizes this revised evaluation framework to understand the impact of the Pathways Home Visiting program as the primary funding investment and mechanism by which the First 5 Lassen Commission achieves its stated goals.

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Executive Summary

First 5 Lassen was formed following the passage of California Proposition 10 (Prop 10). The Prop 10 initiative added a 50-cent-per-pack tax on cigarette sales to fund programs promoting early childhood development for children ages zero through five and their families. First 5 Lassen operates on an annual budget of approximately \$415,795 made up of Prop 10 funds and Small Population County Funding Augmentation (SPCFA) provided by First 5 California. It also draws upon its fund balance to fully fund efforts to achieve its strategic plan. First 5 Lassen is accountable for measuring results and adjusting funding investment priorities to best achieve outcomes for children and families. First 5 Lassen is guided by the Lassen County Children and Families Commission as well as an Executive Director, its strategic plan, and its stated vision and mission.

The Commission invests funds and supports programs within Lassen County to achieve the following goals:

- Every child served by First 5 funded programs, prenatal through five will reach his or her developmental potential and be ready for school.
- Families and other caregivers of children prenatal through five served by First 5 funded programs will provide optimal parenting and a healthy environment.
- Every child prenatal through age five served through First 5 funded programs will improve their optimal health potential.
- First 5 funded programs participate in comprehensive, coordinated, and efficient systems of care for children prenatal through five.

First 5 Lassen invests in the **Pathways Home Visiting program** as its primary mechanism for achieving these goals. The program's primary service population is families with high-need characteristics such as teen or first-time parents, parents with mental health or substance use issues, low-income families, families that include individuals who were not born in the United States, families that include individuals with low literacy, families at risk for child abuse, and families who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability.

Primary services provided through Pathways in FY2023-24 included:

- **Parent education and child development lessons** using the Parents as Teachers curriculum
- **Screenings and assessments** on both children and parents to determine an individualized approach to addressing child, parent, and family needs
- **Referrals to community service providers** to ensure families know about and can access other available support services

First 5 Lassen is accountable for measuring results and adjusting funding investment priorities to best achieve results for children and families. The primary purpose of this evaluation report is to assess the impact of the Pathways Home Visiting program within the framework of the Commission's Strategic Plan.

During FY2023-24, First 5 Lassen investments in Pathways home visiting resulted in the following accomplishments:

People are being offered family strengthening activities to support optimal parenting and healthy environments.

- **28 families** were provided with home visiting services.
- **497 home visits** were conducted.
- **24 referrals** to other community resources were provided to families through home visiting services, 23 of which resulted in follow-up appointments that were kept.
- **622 additional services** were provided to families, the majority of which were focused on facilitating access to basic needs, such as food and hygiene supplies, or supporting families involved in the child welfare system through visitation and family reunification activities.

Children aged zero to five are being served in ways that support optimal development and health.

- The program reported that **all children received a physical and dental exam** as recommended for their age.
- **32 children received a screening for developmental delays** through administration of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ).
- On average, **children participating in home visiting experienced growth** in the areas of communication, motor skills, problem solving, social-emotional, and regulation, as demonstrated by the Life Skills Progression (LSP) tool.

Families are satisfied with home visiting services.

100% of individuals who completed the participant satisfaction survey agreed or strongly agreed that

- their **satisfaction with the program was very good;**
- **their home visitor explained things to them about the program**, arrived on time to visits, and responded professionally to questions and concerns; and
- **they learned something new about child development** and that they have knowledge about how to parent their child as a result of the program.

First 5 Lassen FY2023-24 Local Evaluation Report

Lassen County Children and Families Commission

First 5 Lassen was formed following the passage of California Proposition 10 (Prop 10). The Prop 10 initiative added a 50-cent-per-pack tax on cigarette sales to fund programs promoting early childhood development for children ages 0 through five and their families. First 5 Lassen operates on an annual budget of approximately \$415,795 made up of Prop 10 funds and Small Population County Funding Augmentation (SPCFA) provided by First 5 California. It also draws upon its fund balance to fully fund efforts to achieve its strategic plan. First 5 Lassen is accountable for measuring results and adjusting funding investment priorities to best achieve outcomes for children and families. First 5 Lassen is guided by the Lassen County Children and Families Commission as well as an Executive Director, its strategic plan, and its stated vision and mission.

VISION

All Lassen County children will thrive in supportive, nurturing and loving environments; enter school healthy and ready to learn; and become productive, well-adjusted members of society.

MISSION

The Lassen County Children and Families Commission supports and encourages a comprehensive, integrated, coordinated system of early childhood development services countywide. The Commission focuses on quality health care, family strengthening, and early childhood education through prevention and intervention programs for children, prenatal through five years of age, and their families.

GOALS

The Commission invests funds and supports programs within Lassen County to achieve the following goals and achieve its vision and mission:

- Every child served by First 5 funded programs, prenatal through five will reach his or her developmental potential and be ready for school.
- Families and other caregivers of children prenatal through five served by First 5 funded programs will provide optimal parenting and a healthy environment.
- Every child prenatal through age five served through First 5 funded programs will improve their optimal health potential.
- First 5 funded programs participate in comprehensive, coordinated, and efficient systems of care for children prenatal through five.

First 5 Lassen FY2023-24 Local Evaluation Report

Lassen County Context

The following section includes information regarding Lassen County's geography, demographics, economy, early education, and population health and is intended to provide additional context to evaluation report findings. Note that various data sources are used throughout the report and caution should be taken when comparing similar data (i.e., population) between subsections. It should also be noted that due to Lassen County's small population size, data on key indicators that could inform child health (e.g., breastfeeding) are not always available for inclusion.

Geography

Lassen County is located in northeastern California along the Cascade mountain range. Though distinctively rural, Lassen County's varied terrain encompasses forested plateaus, green mountain meadows, snow-capped peaks, and vast open agricultural valleys. The county is approximately the size of the state of Connecticut, covering 4,557 square miles. To the north of Lassen is Modoc County; Shasta County is to the west; Plumas County and Sierra County are to the south. The state of Nevada borders Lassen County to the east, and state Routes 44 and 36 connect the county to the greater Sacramento Valley and the City of Redding, while Reno is an 85-mile drive via Highway 395.



Demographics

Population

Although sizeable, Lassen County is sparsely populated with over half of its estimated residents (16,728 or 59%) residing in Susanville, the county seat.^{1,2} Lassen County's population and demographic profile have historically been influenced by its prison population; in past years, incarcerated individuals have accounted for approximately 14% of the total population. With the deactivation of the California Correctional Center (CCC) in Susanville as of June 30, 2023,³ this percentage and the overall number of people in the county is anticipated to decrease due to the relocation of inmates and of staff who had previously resided in the county.

Understanding Lassen County's Population

Estimated Population, 2023²	28,563
Estimated Prison Population, 2023³	-2,535
Estimated Non-Incarcerated Population	26,028

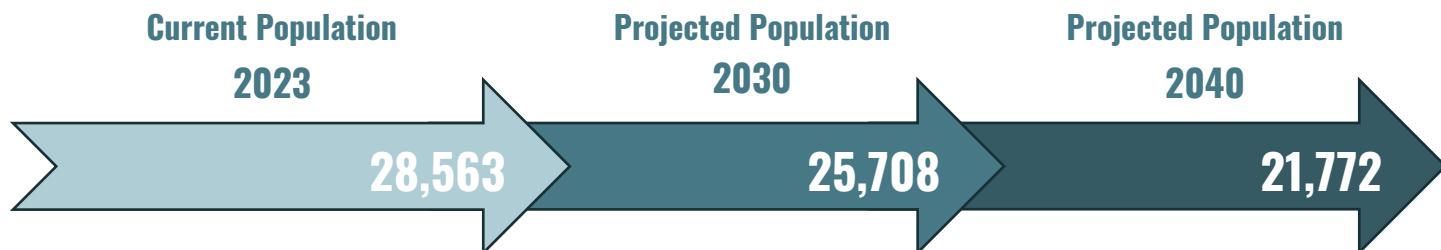
¹ Susanville City, California. United States Census Bureau. Accessed August 22, 2024, at <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=16000000US0677364>.

² State of California Department of Finance. P-2A Total Population for California and Counties. Accessed August 22, 2024, at www.dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/Projections/.

³ California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. California Correctional Center (CCC). Accessed October 10, 2023, at <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/facility-locator/ccc/>.

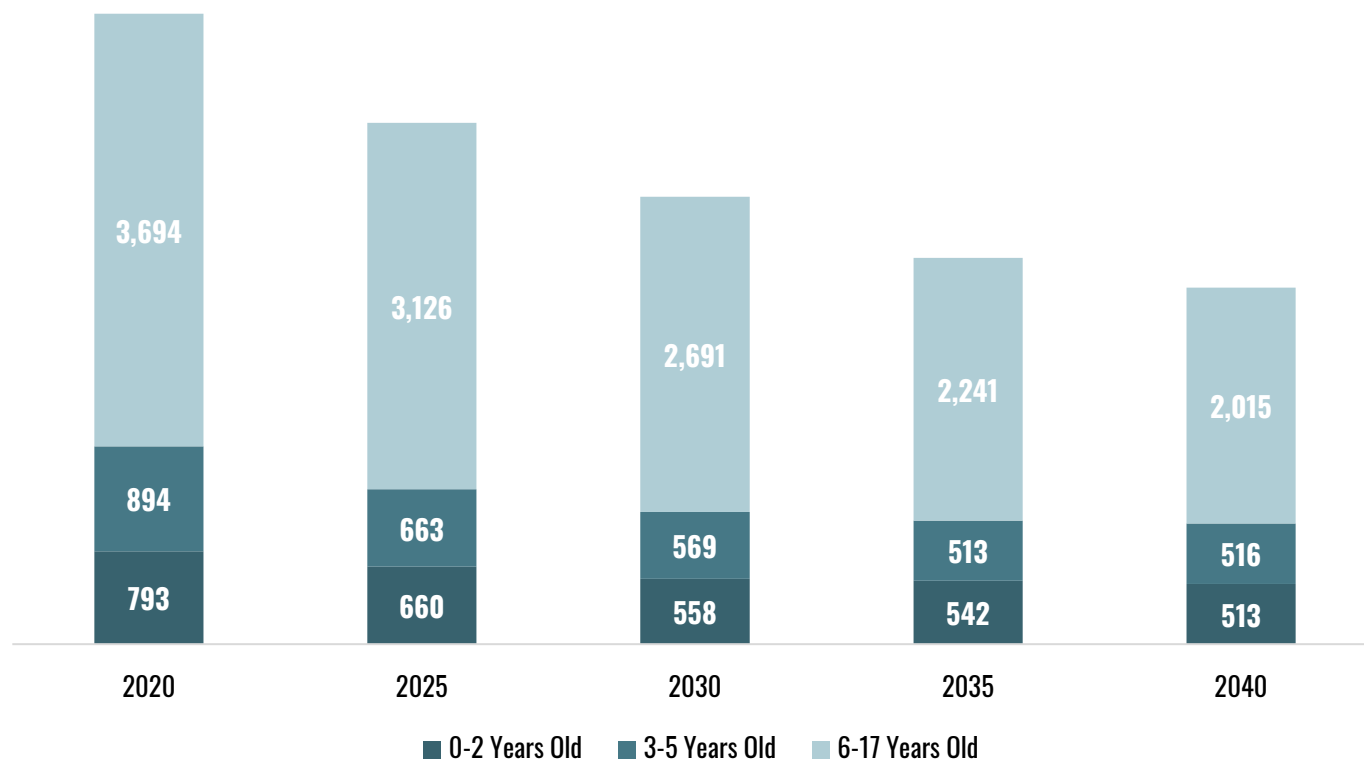
Because demographic data for the prison population is not available separately, the following sections provide demographic data for Lassen County with the prison population included.

In general, it is projected that California's population will continue to grow. Conversely, Lassen County's population is projected to decrease by 2040.⁴



Population of Children in Lassen County

The total number of children has decreased in recent years and is projected to generally continue this slow decline in keeping with projected county-wide decreases in population.⁵ This may impact First 5 Lassen's future funding and service population.

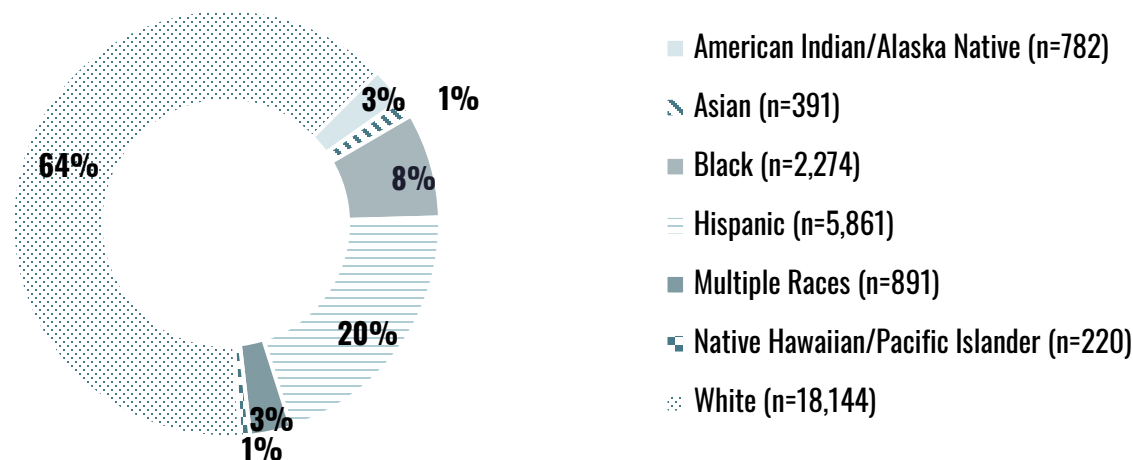


⁴ State of California Department of Finance. P-2A Total Population for California and Counties. Accessed August 22, 2024, at www.dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/Projections/.

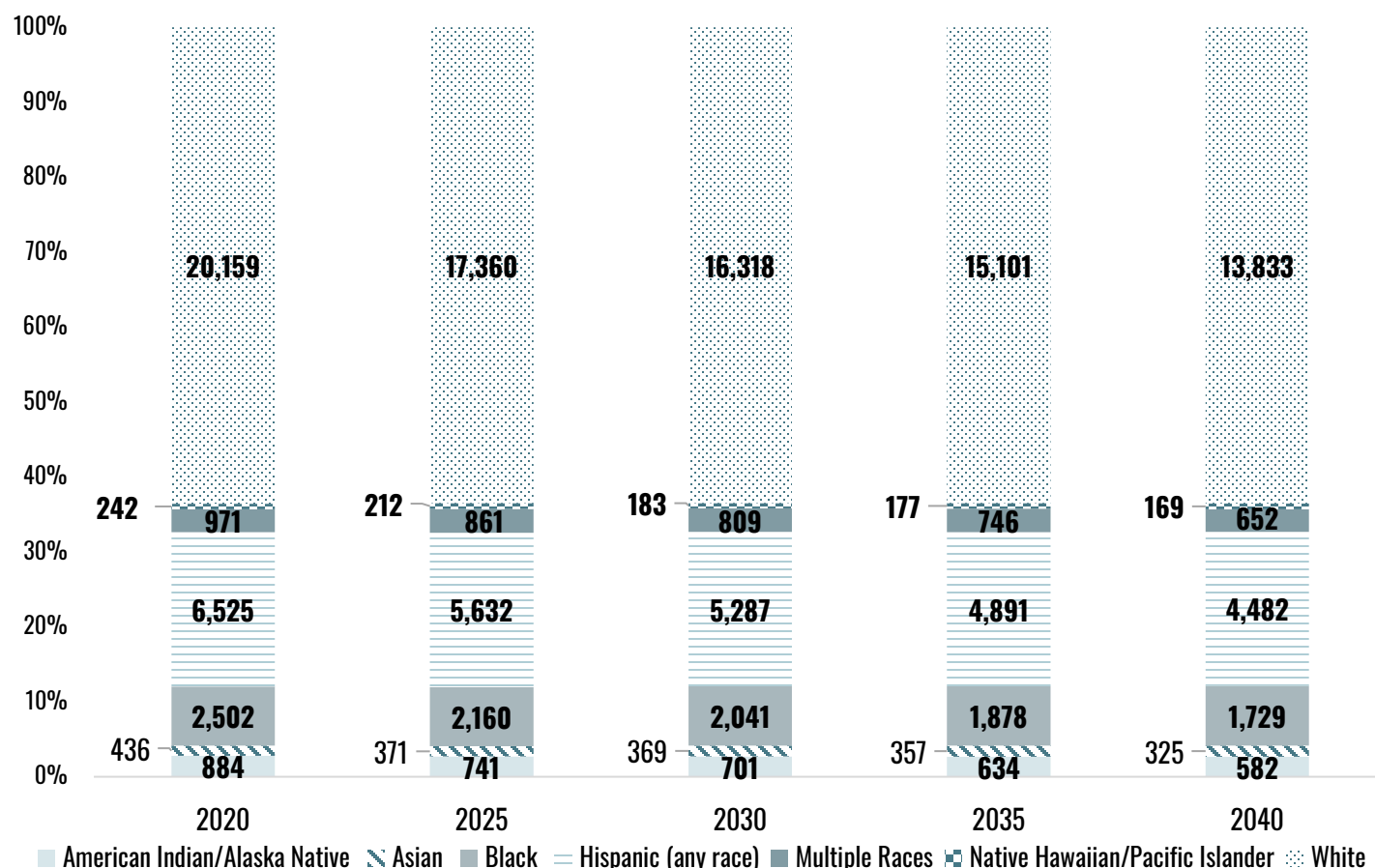
⁵ State of California Department of Finance. P-2B County Population by Age. Accessed August 22, 2024, at www.dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/Projections/.

Race and Ethnicity

As of 2023 estimates, White individuals comprise the largest racial group in Lassen County, followed by Hispanic or Latino (of any race), and Black or African American, as demonstrated in the figure below.⁶



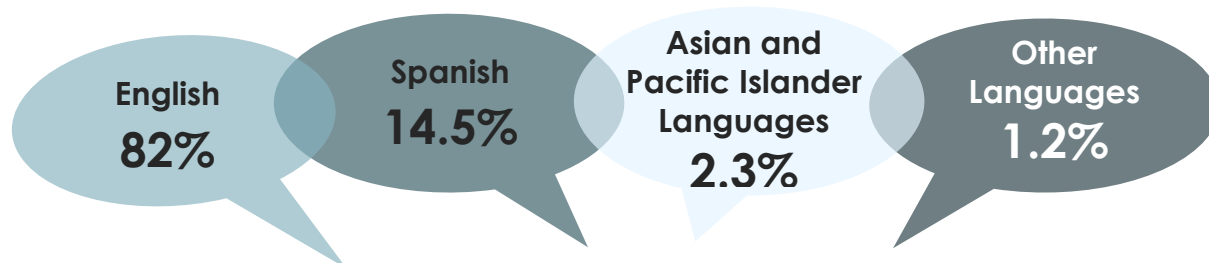
Population projections through 2040 estimate that the racial and ethnic distribution will remain relatively stable in Lassen County.⁶



⁶ State of California Department of Finance. P-2D County Population by Total Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Race. Accessed August 22, 2024, at www.dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/Projections/.

Primary Language Spoken at Home

The majority of Lassen County residents speak English at home, followed by Spanish and by Asian and Pacific Islander languages.⁷



Education

Early Education and Childcare

A growing body of research has found that early learning programs—if they include certain qualities such as appropriate teacher qualifications, family engagement activities, and small class sizes—help prepare children for school academically, socially and emotionally and improve their economic prospects.

As of 2021, it was estimated that licensed childcare spaces were available for only 31% of children aged 0-12 with parents in the labor force.⁸ Although recent publicly available data regarding the number of children in Lassen County who are eligible but not enrolled in preschool is limited, recent state legislation may help support increased access to early care and education for young children in the county. As noted by the California Department of Education, “in 2021, legislation was passed that requires any local educational agency (LEA) operating a Kindergarten to also provide a TK [Transitional Kindergarten] program for all 4-year-old children by 2025–26”, meaning that every child in California, including within Lassen County, will have access to TK as a quality learning experience the year before Kindergarten.⁹ In 2025, the number of four-year-old children is projected to be 214.¹⁰

School Enrollment

Enrollment in public schools can also help to determine population changes and inform future programming for school-aged children. Lassen County is expected to see a slight decline in their K-12 school enrollment over the next ten years, which is aligned with the overall decline in the number of children 0-18 in the county.¹¹



⁷ Lassen County, California. United States Census Bureau. Accessed August 22, 2024 at <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=0500000US06035>.

⁸ California Child Care Resource & Referral Network. “Child Care Data Tool.” Accessed September 12, 2024, at <https://rrnetwork.org/research/child-care-data-tool#!0>.

⁹ California Department of Education. “Universal Prekindergarten FAQs.” Accessed October 10, 2023, at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kinderfaq.asp#what-is-upk-and-how-is-it-related-to-universal-transitional-kindergarten-utk-updated-27-may-2022>.

¹⁰ State of California Department of Finance. P-2B County Population by Age. Accessed August 22, 2024, at www.dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/Projections/.

¹¹ State of California Department of Finance. California Public K-12 Graded Enrollment Projections Table, 2023 Series. Accessed August 22, 2024, at <https://dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/public-k-12-graded-enrollment/>.

Economy

The following sections detail economic indicators for Lassen County.

Median Income¹²

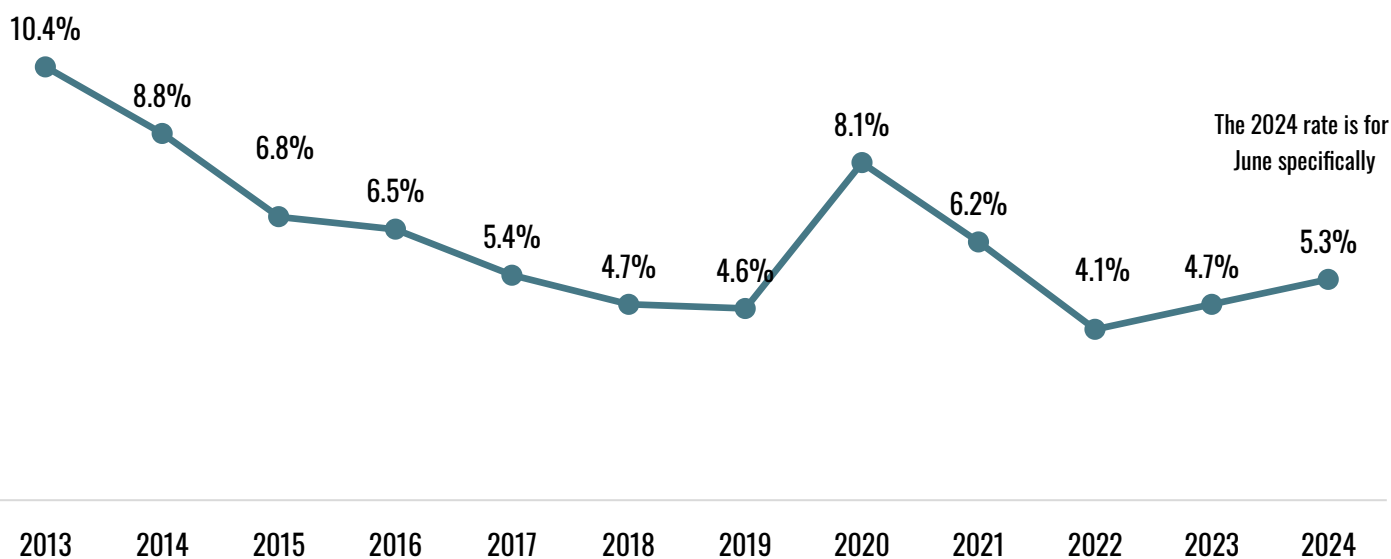
The median household income in Lassen County is approximately \$59,515. Lassen County's median household income remains substantially lower than California's median income of \$91,905.



Employment and Labor Force

Unemployment and labor force participation are important indicators of the economic health of a region.

The unemployment rate in Lassen County had been declining overall since 2013, with substantial increases in 2020, likely a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, after a ten-year low of 4.1% in 2022, the rate has been steadily increasing, reaching 5.3% in June 2024, the same as that of California (5.3%).¹³



The labor force in Lassen County in June 2024 was estimated at 8,580, approximately 30% of the total population; in comparison, approximately 50% of California's population was in the labor force.¹⁴

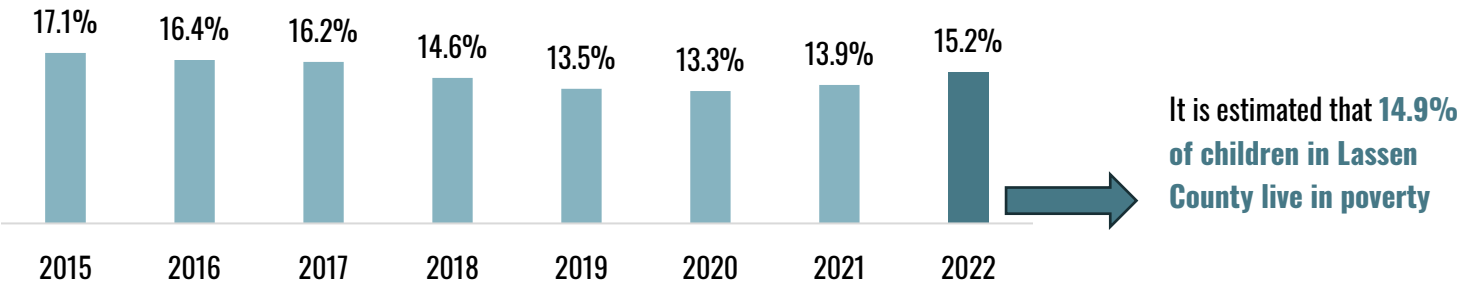
¹² Quick Facts: California and Lassen County. United States Census Bureau. Accessed August 22, 2024, at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/lassencountycalifornia,CA/BZA210222>.

¹³ U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics. Local Area Unemployment Statistics Map. Accessed September 12, 2024, at <https://data.bls.gov/lausmap/showMap.jsp>.

¹⁴ State of California Employment Development Department. Compare Areas. Accessed September 12, 2024, at <https://labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/cgi/databrowsing/LocalAreaProfileComQSResults.asp?menuChoice=localAreaCom&selectedindex=18&area1=0604000035&countyName=&area2=0601000000&countyName=&area3=0604000031&countyName=&submitIt=Compare+Areas>.

Poverty

The poverty threshold, calculated by the U.S. Census, is a standardized measure used nationwide. Approximately 15.2% of Lassen County’s population live in poverty, compared to 12% of people in California.¹⁵ The following graph demonstrates this trend from 2015-2022, the most recent year for which data was available.



Housing and Homelessness

Housing is yet another factor that can influence families’ well-being and demonstrate the economic health of a region. The rate of home ownership in Lassen County was 68.7% in 2022 (the most recent year the data was available), higher than the state’s rate of 55.9%.¹⁶

For renters, the picture is a little different. In Lassen County, the FY2024 fair market rent for a two-bedroom space was \$1,121/month, up from \$972 in 2023.¹⁷ A household is traditionally considered rent-burdened if they spend more than 30% of their income on rent. The 2023 Point in Time Report estimated that 46% of households who rent in Lassen County are rent-burdened, up from 27% in the 2022 Point in Time Report.¹⁸



2024 Fair Market Rent for Two-Bedroom	\$1,121/Month
Minimum Income Required for Household to Not be Rent Overburdened	\$44,840/Year

Individuals who are unable to afford housing may end up experiencing homelessness, living in weekly motels, or finding housing arrangements not fit for long-term living. While homelessness is most closely linked to poverty, increasing rents may be the “tipping point” for individuals or families. In January 2023, Lassen County counted 96 individuals as utilizing emergency shelter or transitional housing (i.e., experiencing sheltered homelessness) and 38 individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness.¹⁹

¹⁵ Lassen County, California. United States Census Bureau. Accessed August 22, 2024 at <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=05000000US06035>.
¹⁶ Ibid.
¹⁷ US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, FY 2024 Fair Market Rent Documentation System. Accessed August 23, 2024, at https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr/fmrs/FY2024_code/2024summary.odn.
¹⁸ 2022 Point in Time Count Report and 2023 Point in Time Count. NorCal Continuum of Care. Accessed June 29, 2023, at <https://co.lassen.ca.us/dept/housing-and-grants/documents>. *Note: The 2024 Point in Time Count Report was not available as of September 12, 2024.
¹⁹ Ibid.

Health

Healthy families and children are the center of First 5 Lassen’s work. Changes to both the state and national health care landscape have influenced children’s health in Lassen County.

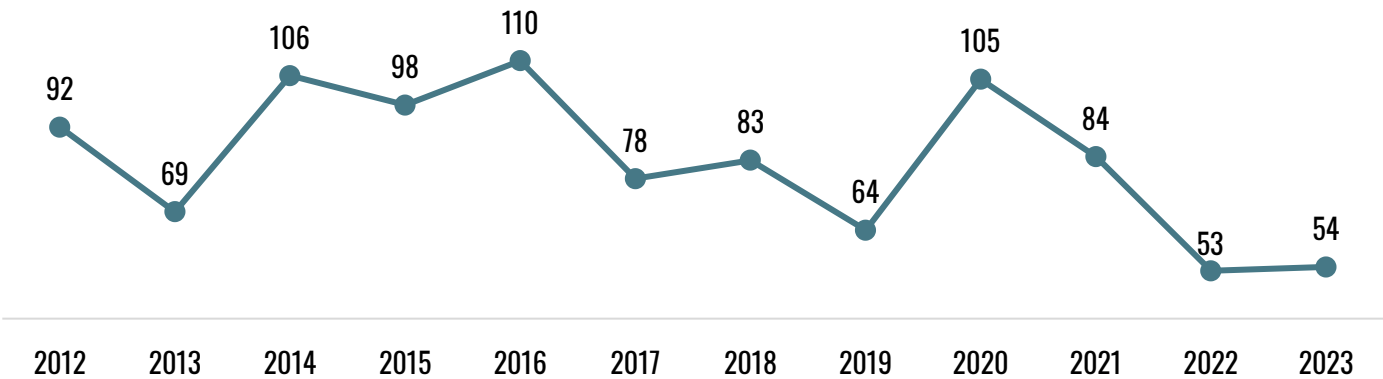
In May 2016, Medi-Cal expanded access to health insurance for children across the state via the Health4AllKids implementation. As of 2022 (the most recent year for which data are available), approximately 94% of children in Lassen County were estimated to have health insurance.²⁰

Oral health can also be an important health indicator. Less frequent dental visits lead to disruption of a child’s learning, diminished nutrition, and poor sleeping habits. For every dollar spent on preventative oral health care, as much as \$50 is saved on restorative and emergency oral health procedures.²¹ Recent data on dental care access for young children is not publicly available for Lassen County, but prior First 5 Lassen Evaluation Reports noted that only 36% of children ages zero through five who are low income had visited a dentist in 2018.



Child Maltreatment

In 2023, 476 children had maltreatment allegations in Lassen County; of these, 54 (11.3%) were substantiated.²² Given the impact that a substantiated child maltreatment allegation can have on a child and their family, this is an important metric to monitor over time. As the figure below illustrates, this indicator has trended downward over recent years, with the exception of 2020, when increases may be partially attributable to circumstances caused by the pandemic.



²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. Selected Characteristics of Health Insurance Coverage, S2701: Lassen County. Accessed August 22, 2024, at <https://data.census.gov/table?g=050XX00US06035&tid=ACST5Y2021.S2701>.

²¹ American Dental Education Association. <http://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Swift.pdf>.

²² Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Hammond, I., Ayat, N., Gomez, A., Jeffrey, K., Prakash, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Flamson, T., Gonzalez, A. & Ensele, P. (2024). CCWIP reports. Retrieved August 22, 2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <https://ccwip.berkeley.edu>.

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Evaluation Framework

The primary purpose of the First 5 Lassen FY2023-24 evaluation is to assess the impact of home visiting services within three of the four result areas documented in the *2024-2028 First 5 Lassen Strategic and Long-Range Financial Plan*. The Pathways Home Visiting program is required to provide services that are responsive to the strategic plan and to corresponding indicators that help to determine outcome achievement. These indicators make up the basis of the evaluation report and include an examination of the following:²³

Who was provided with family strengthening activities through home visiting services, and how did services offered support optimal parenting and a healthy environment?

- ✓ Number and demographics of families and individuals participating in family strengthening activities through home visiting services (pgs. 16).
- ✓ Number and types of services offered through the home visiting program (pgs. 17).
- ✓ Number of families participating in Pathways Home Visiting services who report increased positive behaviors, knowledge, and practices in parenting skills and healthy lifestyles (pgs. 19-23).
- ✓ Number of families participating in Pathways Home Visiting services who report satisfaction with the program and services offered (pgs. 23).

How did the program support children in reaching their developmental potential?

- ✓ Number of children participating in Pathways Home Visiting services who received a developmental screening (pg. 18).
- ✓ Number of children identified as needing additional supports for developmental growth (pg. 18).
- ✓ Number of children identified as needing additional supports for developmental growth that received a referral (pg. 18).

How did the program support children in reaching their optimal health potential?

- ✓ Number of children participating in Pathways Home Visiting services who received an annual physical health exam (pg. 18).
- ✓ Number of children participating in Pathways Home Visiting services who received an age-appropriate oral health screening (pg. 18).
- ✓ Number of children who received a referral for a health or dental-related service (pg. 18).
- ✓ Total number of referrals provided for health or dental related services (pg. 18).

In addition, First 5 Lassen encourages activities that are intended to support an improved system of care. A description of those efforts is provided in this report on pages 25-26.

²³ The full evaluation framework is available within the *F5 Lassen FY23-24 Evaluation Framework* document, approved by First 5 Lassen in spring 2023.

First 5 Lassen FY2023-24 Local Evaluation Report

Methodology

This evaluation is focused on the services provided by the Pathways Home Visiting program and the people participating in the program, as well as the system-strengthening activities conducted or supported by First 5 Lassen and its funded programs. The following types of data were collected to evaluate First 5 Lassen efforts in FY2023-24:

Administrative Data

Demographic and service data is collected and recorded for every family that participates in home visiting services. Every family completes an intake packet upon program entry. Additionally, home visitors record the number and type of services and referrals that are provided to families. Case management notes, contact logs, and referral follow-up tracking forms are used to document progress with families in the program. Most of this information is collected and recorded in an online database, managed by the Pathways Director.

Parent Satisfaction Surveys

Surveys are collected from parents regarding their participation in the program. Parents are also asked to assess their satisfaction with the referrals they received. This information is collected by Pathways staff and recorded in the online database.

Life Skills Progression (LSP) Assessments

LSP assessments are completed by home visitors based on a variety of different data sources, as well as their individual observations about a family. Results of these assessments are recorded in the online database.

Developmental and Health Screening

Home visitors utilize the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to conduct developmental screenings with families. The ASQ is a general tool that is used with parents to assess age-specific development in five domains. There is also a separate tool that is used to measure social-emotional development of children called the ASQ:SE. Results of screenings are recorded to the Brookes online database.

The Pathways Home Visiting program also tracks whether children served by the program receive an annual physical exam and an age-appropriate oral health screening. The number of children who received these exams or screenings are reported to the evaluation team directly by the Pathways Director.

Interviews and Communication with Program Staff

Qualitative data was gathered through interviews with the First 5 Executive Director and the Pathways Program Director to better understand implementation efforts and systems-change activities.

All of these data sources combined make up the content of this evaluation report. Data included in this report was collected from the databases or other sources as described above by the SEI evaluation team. These data are summarized within the body of this report (i.e., pages 16-26) and presented to the First 5 Lassen Executive Director and Pathways Director for review and validation before the report was finalized and distributed.

Considerations and Limitations

The following considerations and limitations should be considered during review of the data included in this report:

- The majority of data was provided directly by Pathways Home Visiting staff to the evaluation team or exported in aggregate from the Pathways Home Visiting database. Some of the data are not available at the client-level and therefore aggregate counts could not always be validated by the evaluation team. It should also be noted that First 5 Lassen, Pathways, and external evaluation staff have been in discussions with the database developer to better understand the data being presented via the aggregate count reports generated by the system; based on these discussions, it is possible that some data (i.e., service and referral counts) may be underreported in prior annual evaluation reports.
- Ratings for child development domains within the LSP should be based on a developmental screening or assessment, such as an ASQ or ASQ:SE. These development screenings are not available for children under the age of two months, meaning that home visitors cannot provide scores for children under two months in the LSP areas of communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and social-emotional.
- Prior to the FY2019-20 Local Evaluation Report, reports in this series reported LSP scores using a scale of 0-12 rather than the 1-5 scale provided in the LSP scoring sheet and associated instructions. This was updated in the FY2019-20 and subsequent reports and briefs so that figures used to illustrate average changes in LSP scores for Pathways' participants matched the LSP rubric. A concordance table illustrating the differences between the rubric provided in the LSP instructions ("assessment score") and those used in prior reports ("report score") is provided below for reference.

ASSESSMENT SCORE	No selection, data, or N/A	Low	1.0	1.5	2	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	High
REPORT SCORE	0	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

Due to this change in score presentation, caution should be taken when comparing LSP data before and after FY2019-20. The concordance table may be helpful in aligning scores year-to-year. However, it should be noted that while the change in scoring presentation may impact the scale or extent of change experienced by families participating in the program, it does not negate the presence of growth overall; higher scores in both scoring methodologies equate better circumstances for the families being assessed.

Pathways Home Visiting Program

Program Description

First 5 Lassen County supports achievement of its strategic plan through its primary investment in the Pathways to Child & Family Excellence Home Visiting program (herein referred to as Pathways or Pathways Home Visiting program). This program utilizes the Parents as Teachers (PAT) approach, an evidence-based early childhood home visiting service delivery model. While the program is open to all Lassen County families with children prenatal through age five, it targets families with high-need characteristics such as first-time parents, low-income families, teen parents, immigrant families, low-literate families, and families that include children with special needs.

Primary services provided through Pathways include:

- **Parent education and child development** lessons that are offered on a regular basis using the PAT curriculum. PAT is a nationally recognized program with a philosophy of providing parents with child development knowledge and support.
- **Screenings and assessments** that are completed on both children and parents to determine an individualized approach to addressing child, parent, and family needs. Each child is screened for developmental progress using the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ & ASQ:Social-Emotional), and simple PAT health screenings are used for hearing and vision. The Life Skills Progression Tool (LSP) is used with each family enrolled in home visiting.
- **Referrals to community service providers** that are offered to families to ensure they know about and can access other available support services. Needs are identified by families directly as well as through the screenings and assessments completed with each family served.
- **Group meetings and interactive playgroups** that are provided to complement home visiting services. *Due to staffing and budget constraints, as well as COVID-19 restrictions, these meetings have been held infrequently and informally in recent years.*

A Note on Terminology

Pathways serves clients through “**Home Visits**,” one-on-one visits during which the parent educator meets with the family in their home or a mutually agreeable alternative location. In this report, **the number of home visits refers to the number of times that a parent educator provided this service to a family**. It is determined by calculating the number of times that the primary adult service recipient in the household participated in a visit. This is different from “**Points of Contact**,” which is **the number of times a service recipient participated in a home visit**. For example, if a parent educator provided a home visit to a family on November 9, 2023, and three family members were present at that visit, that would be counted as 1 home visit and 3 points of contact.



Parent educator provides services where three family members are present

=

1 Home Visit & 3 Points of Contact

Pathways Home Visiting Program

People Served Through Home Visiting

Between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024, the Pathways Program provided home visits to



28 Families*
*All families served included a child prenatal through age 5 and had at least one high-needs characteristic at intake.

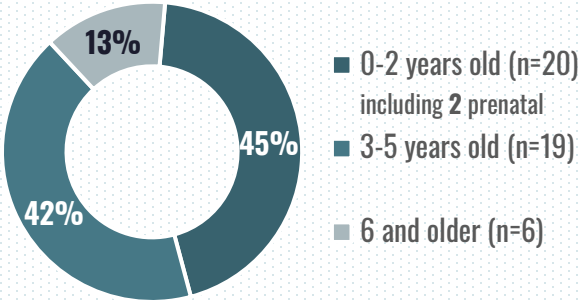


41 Parents and Caregivers



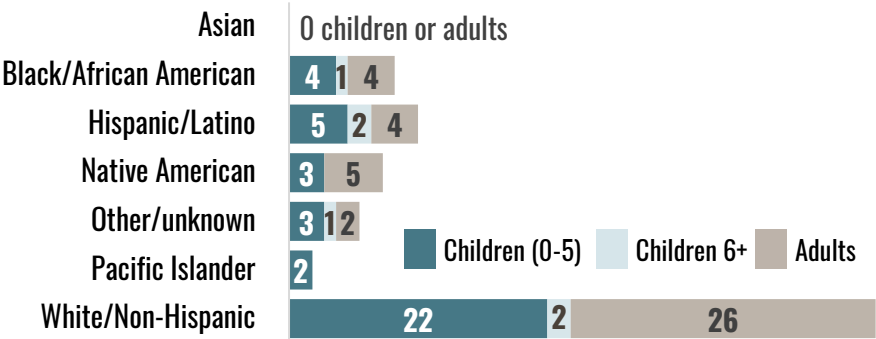
45 Children
3 children zero through five had a special need at intake.

Ages of Children Served



Demographics of People Served

Race/Ethnicity of People Served

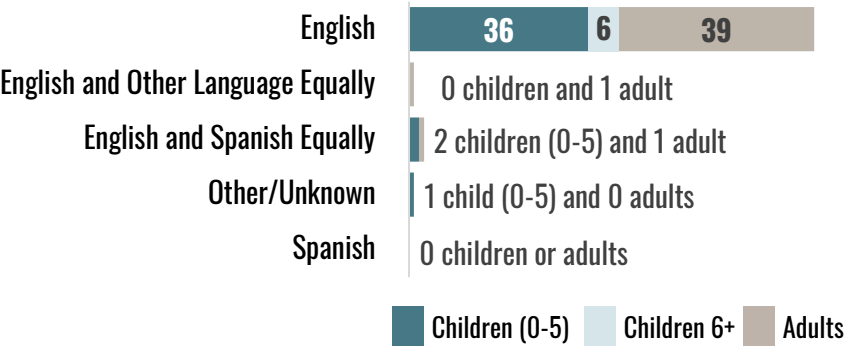


Geographic Location of Families Served

based on residence of primary adult service recipient in the household



Primary Language Spoken in the Home of People Served

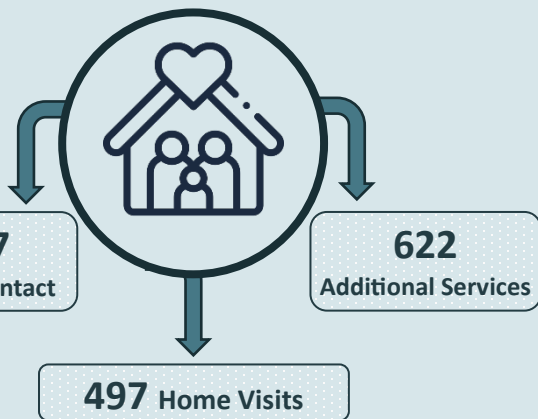


Pathways Home Visiting Program

Number and Types of Services Provided

During every home visit, a variety of standard services are provided including parenting education, family support, and case planning. In addition to these services, home visitors also provide additional direct services to families in the program on an as-needed basis via separate interactions.

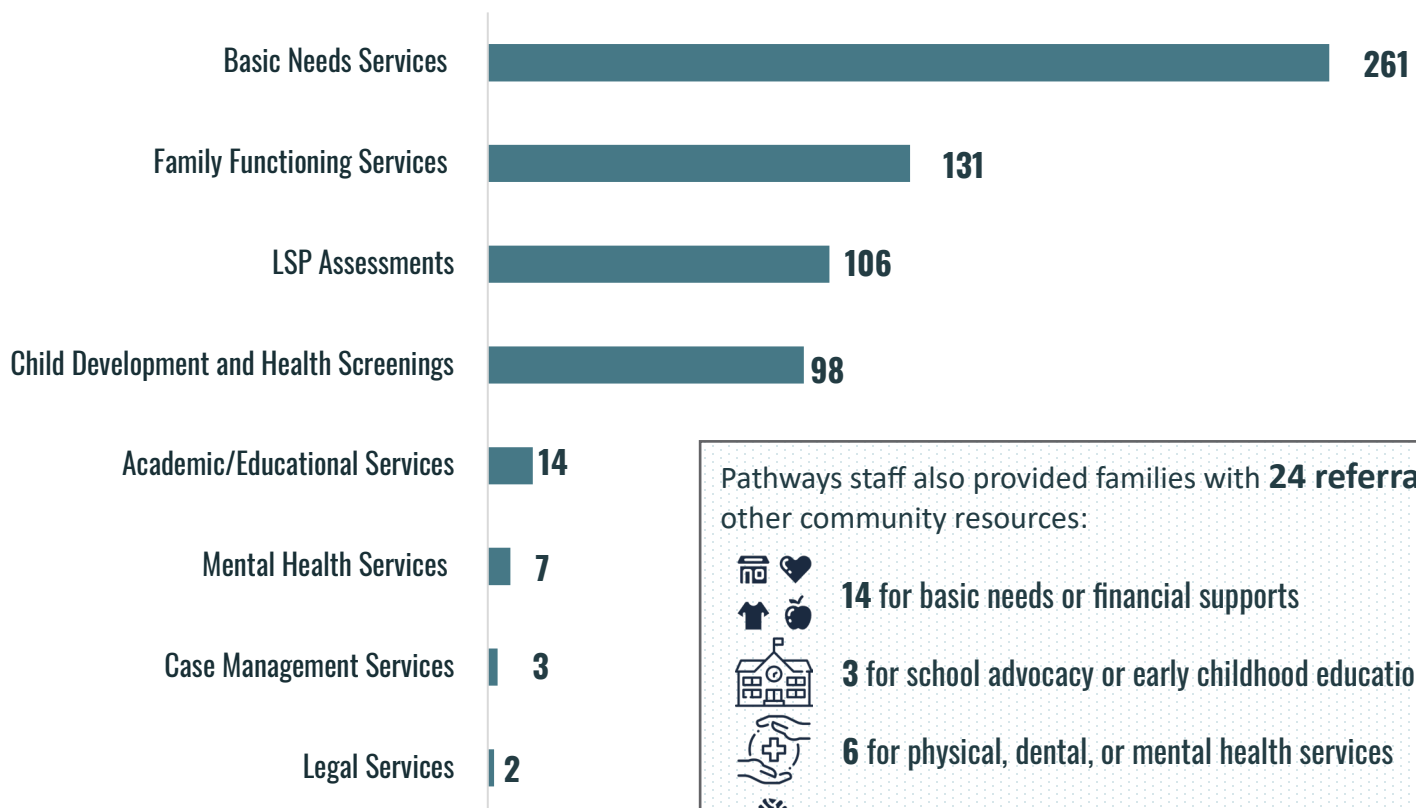
Between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024, the Pathways Program provided 497 home visits.



The Parents as Teachers (PAT) model requires that affiliates offer a minimum of 12 home visits annually to families with one or no high-needs characteristics and a minimum of 24 home visits annually to families with two or more high-needs characteristics. While not all families accessed the prescribed number of visits in FY2023-24, Pathways has met the PAT Measurement Criteria that at least 60% of families receive at least 75% of the required number of visits in a program year.

¹ Retrieved on September 10, 2024 from: https://patillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/PER_BecomingAParentsAsTeachersAffiliate-U-002-.pdf

The chart below indicates what type of additional services were provided to families, either during a home visit or during a separate interaction.



Pathways staff also provided families with **24 referrals** to other community resources:



14 for basic needs or financial supports



3 for school advocacy or early childhood education



6 for physical, dental, or mental health services



1 for other advocacy support

Pathways Home Visiting Program

Developmental and Health Screenings

Developmental Screenings

To ensure that children receive early screening and intervention for developmental delays and other special needs, the Pathways Home Visiting program utilizes the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire for Social Emotional Needs (ASQ:SE).

Between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024, the Pathways Program conducted a total of 68 developmental screenings

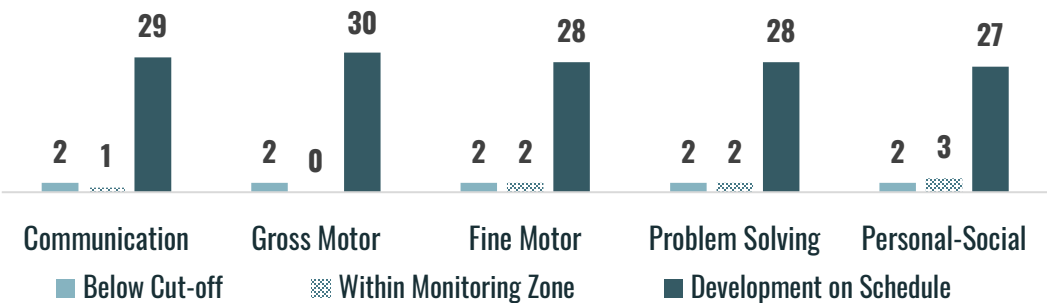
32 children (ages 0 through 5) were screened using the ASQ, a tool that pinpoints developmental progress in children under the age of 66 months. A total of 55 screenings were completed, as 18 children received two or more screenings during the program year.

12 of these children were also screened using the ASQ:SE, a tool that screens specifically for a child’s social-emotional growth and development. A total of 13 ASQ:SE screens were conducted, with one child receiving two.

Based on their ages, a total of 37 children were eligible to receive an ASQ during the program year. ASQs were not completed with the remaining 5 children due to family unavailability or exiting of the program, timing of family entrance to the program (i.e., toward the end of FY23-24), or because the screenings were not appropriate for the child.

Pathways program protocol does not require ASQ:SE screens for all participating children.

This figure illustrates that most children had development that was on schedule during their most recent ASQ screen.



Six children were below the cut-off for at least one domain during one or more ASQ screens, indicating that further assessment with a professional may be needed. Families were provided with referrals for three of these children, and the families of two additional children declined a referral to an outside agency and are instead electing to work with Pathways staff directly and/or monitoring the child until the next ASQ interval. The family of the sixth child declined additional supports and has since exited the Pathways program.

Of the 13 ASQ:SE screens completed, one indicated an area of possible concern (not pictured in the figure); the family of that child moved out of the Lassen County area following the screen and was provided with contact information for a home visiting program in their new area.



Health Screenings

The Pathways Home Visiting program tracks whether children served by the program receive an annual physical exam and an age-appropriate oral health screening. The program reported that all children received these services. Additionally, two children received a total of four referrals for physical or dental related services.

Pathways Home Visiting Program

Improved Family Functioning

The Life Skills Progression (LSP) tool is used by home visitors to develop a profile of family strengths and needs, establish service plans, and monitor progress in outcomes. The tool is used upon program entry and regularly throughout the program with the primary adult service recipient and any children under age 6. The tool describes individual parent and child progress using 43 types of life skills, which are grouped into the six scales depicted to the right.

Adult Scales

- Relationships
- Education & Employment
- Health & Medical Care
- Basic Essentials
- Mental Health & Substance Abuse

Child Scale

- Child Development

Between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024, the Pathways Program conducted a total of 106 LSPs

Pathways home visitors are expected to complete an LSP with participating families at program entry and every six months thereafter. **Home visitors completed at least one LSP with 25 out of the 28 participating families** during the period covered by this report. Staff reported that LSPs were not conducted with the other three families because the family exited immediately after intake, the home visitor was waiting to conduct an LSP until after trust had been established with the family, or the LSP could not be completed until after the birth of the child that facilitated family eligibility in the program.

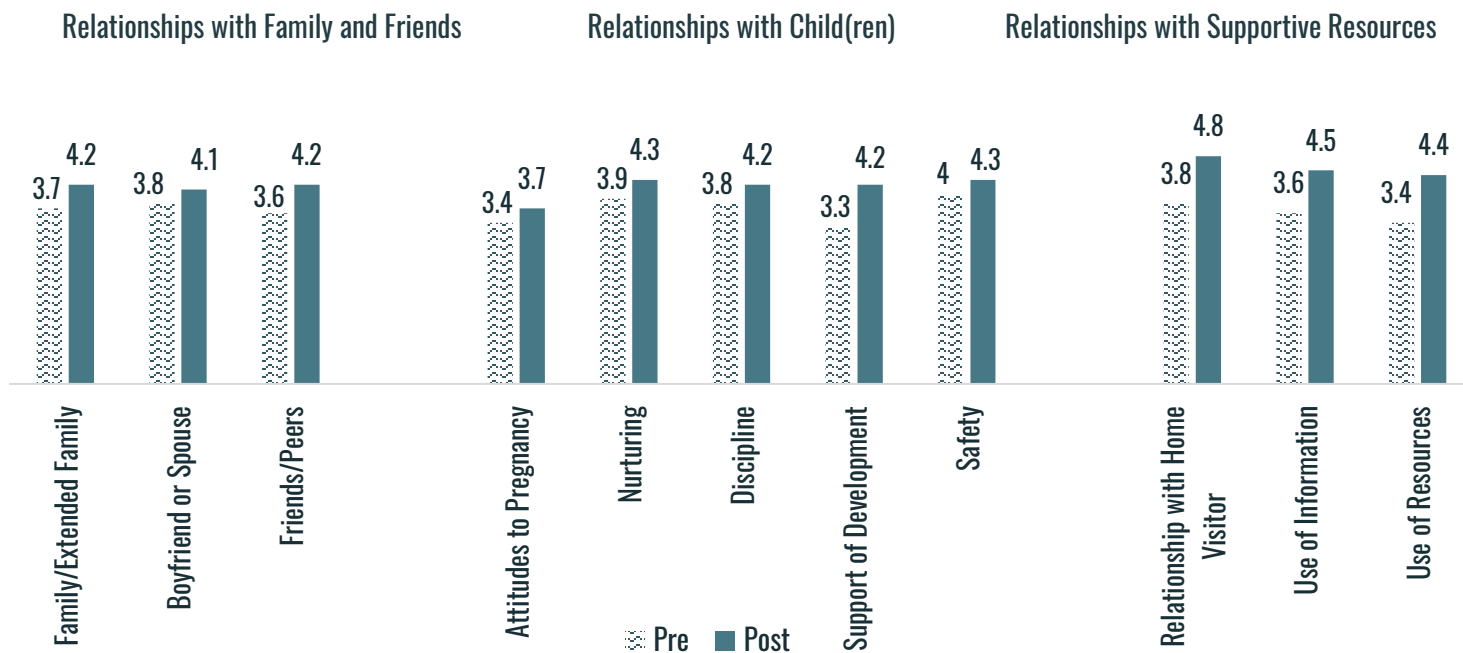
Comparing the results of the LSP conducted at program entry with the most recent six-month follow-up LSP can provide information on improvements in family functioning. Higher numbers within each life skill category indicate a stronger score and better circumstances for the families being assessed.

The figures beginning on the following page include aggregate information on families that had both a pre-LSP (completed at program entry) and a post-LSP completed sometime during the period covered by this report. A stronger average post-score within a domain or skill compared to a pre-score represents positive aggregate change for all families included in the dataset; individual results of families may differ from these averages. Caution should be taken when generalizing the results given the small number of families for which pre- and post-data is available.

A total of 20 adults and 30 children had both pre-assessments from any time period and post assessments that fell within the time period for this report and are included in the figures beginning on the following page. Due to issues with the data system that manages LSP data, not all families are included in the pre-post analysis presented on the following pages. The ways in which the data system calculates child participant age also accounts for why the number of children included in the pre-post LSP figures exceeds the number of children aged zero through five served by the program in FY23-24.

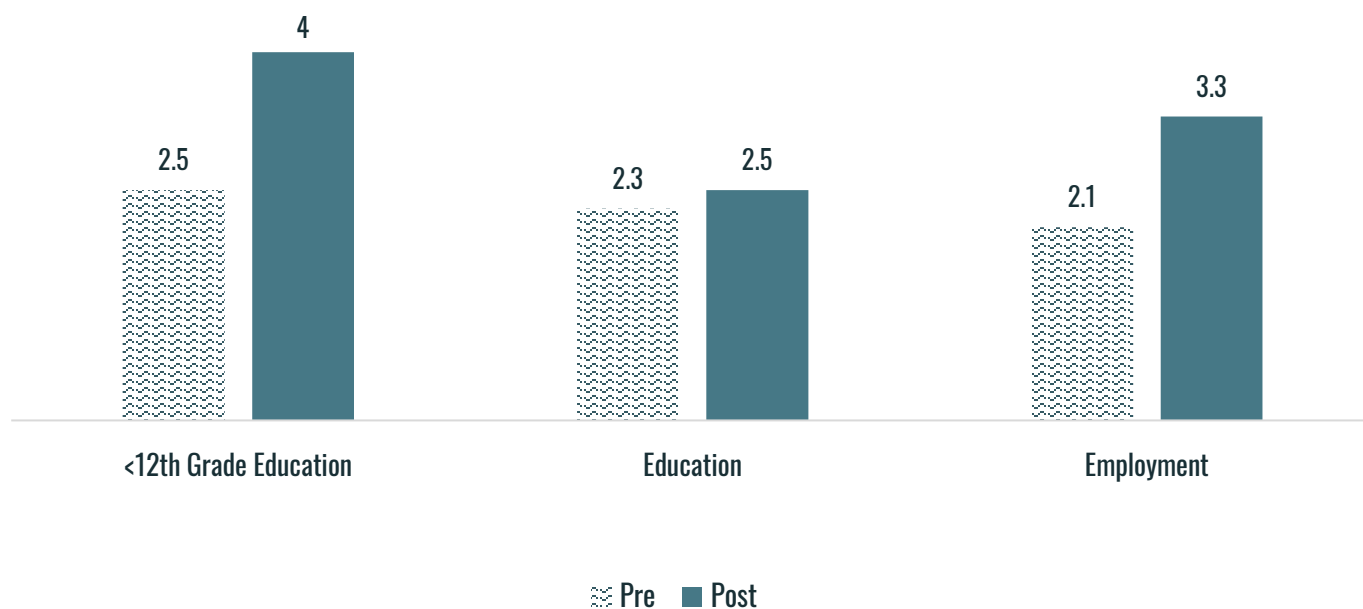
Relationships

Adult LSP completers, in aggregate, had increased scores in all areas related to relationships, with the most growth seen within the Relationships with Supportive Resources domain. Increases in these skill areas indicate increased trust and connections with the home visitor, interest in/acceptance of information provided, and identification and utilization of available community resources.



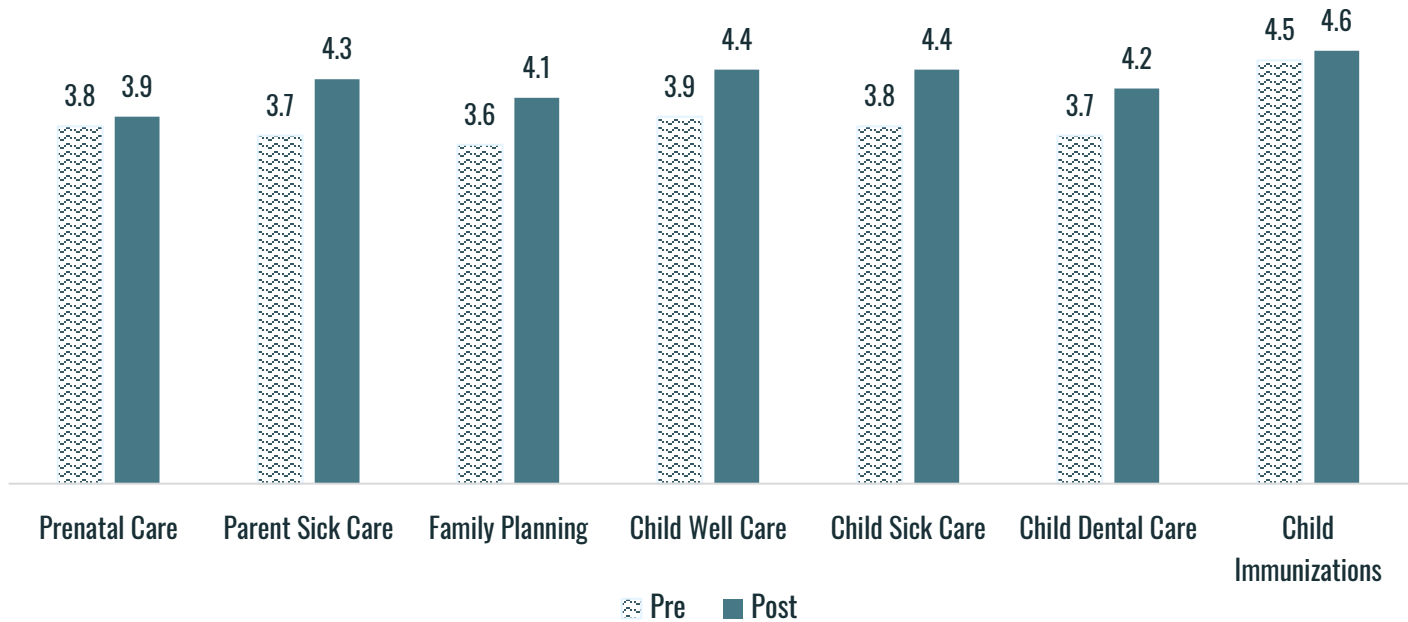
Education & Employment

Adult LSP completers, in aggregate, experienced gains in the Education and Employment areas, representing increased education, more stable employment, and increased earning potential.



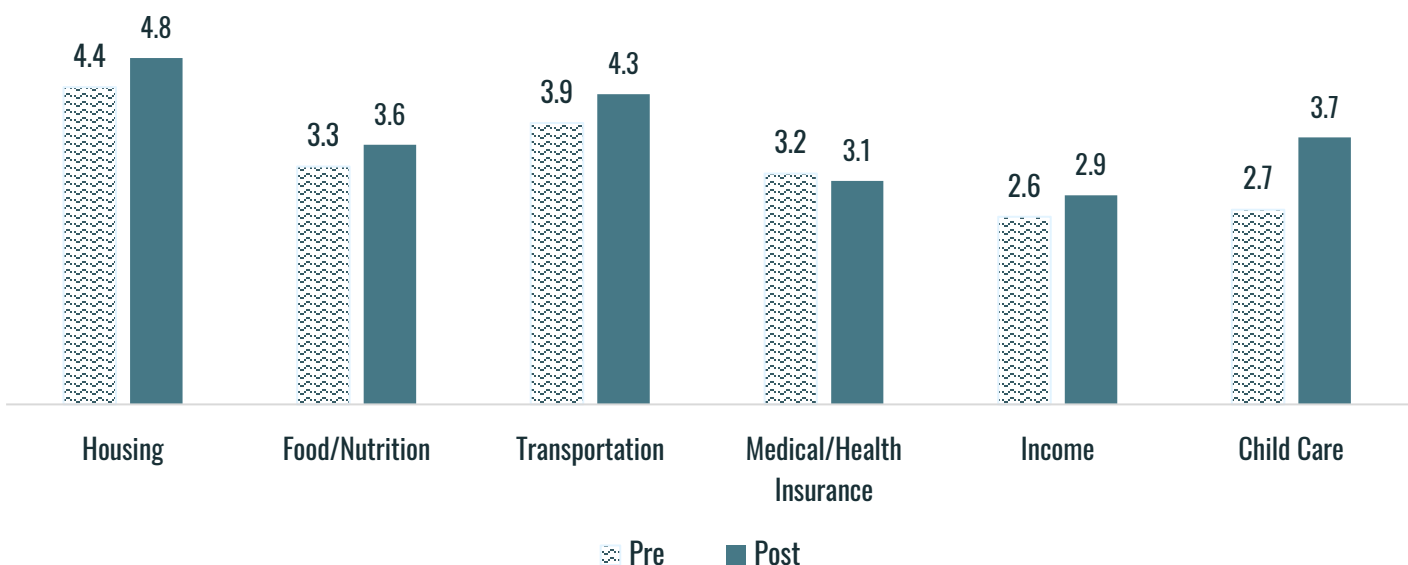
Health & Medical Care

Adult LSP completers, in aggregate, experienced gains in all measurements related to health and medical care. Higher scores in this area represent more access to care and more use of preventative care.



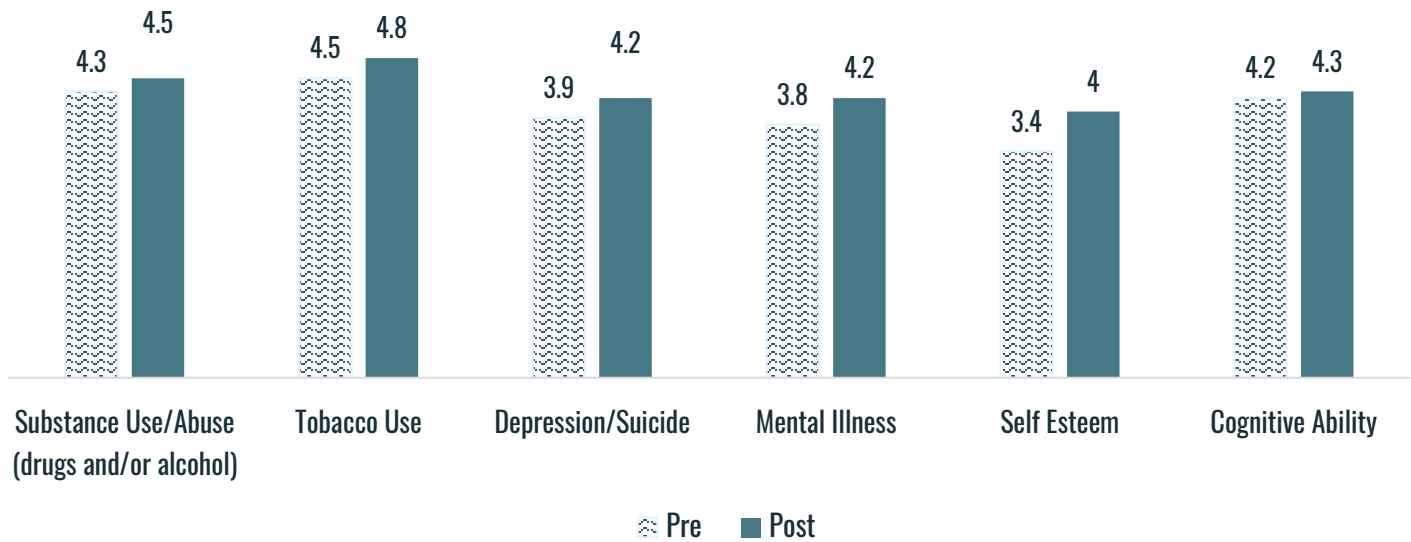
Basic Essentials

Adult LSP completers, in aggregate, experienced gains in most measurements related to access of basic essentials. Higher scores in this area represent more stable housing, adequate income, increased access to food and transportation, and more reliable and/or safe and supportive childcare. The decrease in the medical/health insurance measurement may indicate reduced access to insurance in general or to the types of insurance that cover larger portions of co-pays.



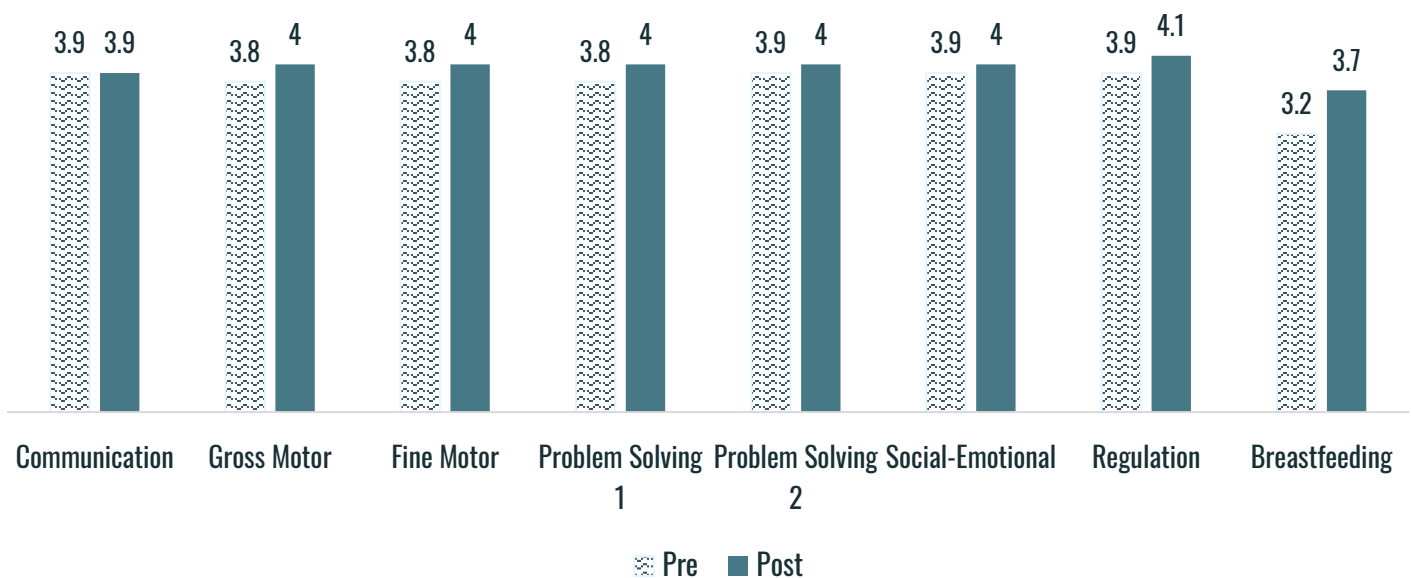
Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Adult LSP completers, in aggregate, experienced gains in all measurements related to mental health and substance abuse. Higher scores in this area represent reduced reports of substance use/misuse and lower reports of depression and mental illness and/or better management of depression and mental illness.



Child Development

Pre- and post-LSP data was available for 30 children. Ratings for child development domains are based on a developmental screening or assessment, such as an ASQ or ASQ:SE. These development screenings are not available for children under the age of two months, meaning that home visitors cannot provide scores for children under two months in the LSP areas of communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and social-emotional. The data available indicate maintenance or minor growth of children in all areas of assessment, with the most growth demonstrated in the area of breastfeeding.



Pathways Home Visiting Program

Participant Satisfaction and Knowledge Gains

Between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024, 21 families provided feedback on the Pathways program

A total of 35 satisfaction surveys were completed during the period covered by this report, with some families completing more than one survey during this time. The data management system utilized by the program only reports survey results in aggregate, and therefore it is not possible to include only one survey per family. As such, the results of all 35 surveys completed during this time are included below.

100% (35/35)

completed satisfaction surveys indicated that completers would rate their satisfaction with the program as very good.



35/35 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their home visitor explains the program, the weekly activities, and what they should expect during their visits.

35/35 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their home visitor arrives on time to visits and is flexible in arranging visits that work with their schedule.

35/35 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their home visitor responds professionally to their questions and concerns.

Respondents also indicated increased positive behaviors, knowledge, and practices because of the program, with 100% (35/35) respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they:

- **learned something new about their child and/or child development** as a result of their involvement in the program
- **have a good understanding of how children develop** and the range of typical development in children as a result of the program
- **have a good understanding of a variety of activities to do with their child** to help them develop and learn new skills as a result of the program
- **have knowledge about how to parent** their child as a result of the program
- **feel more confident in their role as a parent** as a result of what they learned from their home visitor
- **have used what they learned** with their child/family since they started the program

Satisfaction with Referrals

23 individuals kept referral appointments facilitated by Pathways staff

100% (23/23) indicated that they were treated well.

61% (14/23) indicated that their needs were fully met. Three indicated that their needs were partially met, and six indicated that their needs were not met.

61% (14/23) indicated they would recommend this [referral] service. Three were neutral and six indicated they would not recommend the service.

Members of the evaluation team attempted to interview referral recipients to better understand how the service could better meet their needs. However, due to the low number of recipients available to participate, the results of that data collection activity are not presented in this report.

Pathways Home Visiting Program

Participant Voices

“

This was really cool stuff and I had a lot of fun learning new things about how to be a better parent. The home visitor made it even more interesting with discussion and answering our questions.”

This program has helped so much to prepare our oldest daughter for Kindergarten. We are so thankful for Pathways and our home visitor. We are now preparing our youngest daughter to enter school. This has been so good for them.



“

This program and my home visitor helped me get my life back on track.”

I have learned so much from Pathways Home Visiting... I was given confidence and support from my home visitor and she always believed in me.



“

We are having so much fun with home visiting and we look forward to it every week.”

“

Pathways has done everything possible to get help and housing for me and my kids... I am grateful for all the help I've been given.”

This was the only place where we weren't judged and felt truly supported. We learned so much about taking a pause before responding to our child and have also learned to look at things from her point of view. This was a wonderful program and we were not looking forward to it when we were referred.



First 5 Lassen and Pathways Home Visiting Program

System Improvements

Both the Pathways Home Visiting program and First 5 Lassen invest resources to strengthen comprehensive, coordinated, and efficient systems of care for children prenatal through age five. The following section summarizes work conducted by Pathways and First 5 Lassen in support of this goal during FY2023-24.

Aligning Systems of Care

Lassen Links

Both First 5 Lassen and the Pathways Home Visiting program are members of Lassen Links, a network of local organizations serving children and families through community services, supports, referrals, and resources.

In FY2023-24, First 5 Lassen continued building and expanding the Lassen Links network to connect children, families, and individuals to services that they need. Key activities and successes include:

- Providing a total of **163 referrals**, via which **30 children zero through five were connected to services that they and their families needed**.
- Continuing to refine the referral process to make it as easy as possible, such as by moving the referral system to an online platform to provide an easier user experience and improving efficiencies in collaboration with the local CalAIM initiatives.
- Engaging in a community awareness campaign to raise awareness of the initiative, utilizing fliers, digital ads on Susanville Stuff, and emergency contact number magnets.
- Enhancing the Lassen Links website (Lassenlinks.org) with promotional videos to better describe the intent of Lassen Links and highlight partners and individuals who have participated with the referral system.
- Providing training and outreach to new partners to increase awareness and utilization of the referral system.
- Attending webinars and other collaborative meetings to explore leveraging Partnership Health Plans Community Health Workers and Enhanced Care Management services to further expand and sustain Lassen Links.
- Leveraging the network to start hosting pop-up resource fairs in Westwood and Herlong, two areas that experience a lack of local, available services.
- Exploring how the Family First Prevention Services program can use the Lassen Links referral system to help connect participating families and individuals to services that they need.
- Collaborating with California Assemblywoman Megan Dehale's Communications Director to help highlight some of the difficulties of living in rural CA.

Public Health Diaper and Wipes Program

First 5 Lassen partnered with Local Planning Commission to help the Public Health Diaper and Wipes program, supporting the distribution of an estimated 210 packs of diapers to 140 individuals.

Expanding Home Visiting Services to Additional Families

The Pathways Home Visiting program has continued to explore additional funding streams and models that could be used to offer home visiting services to more families in the county. In FY2022-23, Pathways contracted with the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program (HVP) to support home visiting services. In FY2023-24, Pathways also contracted with the California Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Division (MCAH) to offer services through the California Home Visiting Program (CHVP). Together with First 5 Lassen, these programs will support sustainability and expansion of home visiting services within the county. All three programs utilize the same PAT model, ensuring consistency in the services provided to families regardless of funding source.

Case Coordination Activities

First 5 Lassen encourages funded programs such as Pathways Home Visiting to engage in inter-agency case conferencing efforts. In FY2023-24, the Pathways program participated in a variety of case coordination activities including:

- Working directly with relevant agencies to support families engaged in the child welfare system with reunification and other services;
- Communicating progress and activities with relevant staff on behalf of families referred to Pathways through the court system;
- Engaging in other formal and informal conversations with local providers to determine how to best meet a family's needs; and
- Serving as a resource for families engaged in CalWorks, which requires families who are experiencing homelessness to participate in supportive programs such as Pathways in order to be eligible for services.

First 5 Lassen FY2023-24 Local Evaluation Report

Progress Towards First 5 Lassen Strategic Plan Objectives

Investing in the Pathways Home Visiting program is one of the primary ways that the First 5 Lassen Commission seeks to achieve its strategic plan goals. As such, the Commission included measurable objectives for the Pathways program within their *2024-2028 First 5 Lassen Strategic and Long-Range Financial Plan*. The table below summarizes progress made by the Pathways program towards achieving these objectives between the July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024 timeframe.

Goal 1: Every child served by First 5 funded programs, prenatal through five, will reach his or her developmental potential and be ready for school.	
Objective	FY2023-24 Results
Objective 1A: 100% of children served by First 5 home visiting will receive developmental screenings according to the funded program's accepted protocols.	<p>32 children (ages 0 through five) were screened using the ASQ, a tool that pinpoints developmental progress in children under the age of 66 months.</p> <p>Based on their ages, a total of 37 children were eligible to receive an ASQ during the program year. ASQs were not completed with five children due to family unavailability or exiting of the program, timing of family entrance to the program (i.e., toward the end of FY23-24), or because the screenings were not appropriate for the child.</p> <p>Pathways program protocol does not require ASQ:SE screens for all participating children.</p>
Objective 1B: 100% of children identified as needing additional [developmental] services through home visiting will receive referral and referral support.	<p>Six children received an ASQ screen indicating that further assessment with a professional might be needed. Families of three of these children were provided with referrals, and the families of two additional children declined a referral to an outside agency and are instead electing to work with Pathways staff directly and monitoring the child until the next ASQ interval. The family of the sixth child declined additional supports and has since exited the Pathways program.</p> <p>Of the 13 ASQ:SE screens completed, one indicated an area of possible concern. The family of that child moved out of Lassen County following the screen and was provided with contact information for a home visiting program in their new area.</p>
Objective 1C: 95% of children served through home visiting will progress along a continuum toward social emotional development and school readiness.	<p><i>Social Emotional Development</i></p> <p>12 children received a total of 13 ASQ:SE screens, which explores a child's social-emotional growth and development. The Pathways program does not screen all children using the ASQ:SE tool as part of its current protocol, instead screening children when the display of behaviors or other family circumstance indicates that an ASQ:SE screen could provide helpful information. All but one child screened was reported as having social-emotional development on schedule.</p> <p><i>School Readiness</i></p> <p>Progression towards school readiness is not an area that is assessed within the current evaluation framework. However, the Pathways program reports that their curriculum includes content that supports school readiness for children.</p>

Goal 2: Families and other caregivers of children prenatal through five served by First 5 funded programs will provide optimal parenting and a healthy environment.

Objective	FY2023-24 Results
Objective 2A: At least 95% of parents, caregivers, and providers served through home visiting will report increased positive behaviors, knowledge and practices in parenting skills and healthy lifestyles.	<p>Two different data sources are used to inform progress towards Objective 2A: parental responses to the satisfaction survey and growth in individual LSP scores.</p> <p>Not all families that were eligible to complete a satisfaction survey or receive a post-LSP did so within the period covered by this report, and not all data is able to be disaggregated at the individual level. As such, it is not possible to determine the percentage of adult home visiting participants who reported increased positive behaviors, knowledge, and parenting practices. The evaluation team and Pathways Director will continue to explore how to best collect data and report on this metric. It is possible that a new data system (described in the recommendations section) will support a more nuanced tracking and review of the data.</p>
Objective 2B: 100% families with children prenatal through five, with at least one high-needs characteristic, are provided the prescribed number of monthly home visits during their enrollment.	<p>The Parents as Teachers (PAT) model employed by the Pathways program requires that affiliates offer a minimum of 12 home visits annually to families with one or no high-needs characteristics and a minimum of 24 home visits annually to families with two or more high-needs characteristics. Not all families accessed the prescribed number of visits in FY2023-24. However, while the Pathways program did not meet the objective metric, the program did meet the PAT Measurement Criteria that at least 60% of families receive at least 75% of the required number of visits in a program year.</p>
Objective 2C: 40 to 80 children prenatal through five in families with at least one high-needs characteristic will be served through home visiting.	<p>39 children aged zero through five were provided with home visits in FY2023-24. The families of all these children reported at least one high-needs characteristic at intake.</p>

Goal 3: Every child prenatal through age five served through First 5 funded programs will improve their optimal health potential.

Objective	FY2023-24 Results
Objective 3A: 100% of children prenatal through five served by First 5 home visiting programs will either receive an annual physical health exam or receive a referral to support an annual physical health exam.	<p>The Pathways program reported that all eligible children received annual physical health exams.</p>
Objective 3B: 100% of children prenatal through five served by First 5 home visiting programs will either receive an age-appropriate oral health screening or receive a referral for an age-appropriate oral health screening.	<p>The Pathways program reported that all eligible children received age appropriate oral health screenings.</p>
Objective 3C: 100% of children prenatal through five, identified as needing additional [health] services through home visiting will receive referral and referral supports.	<p>The Pathways program reported that all children needing additional health support (two) received a total of four referrals for physical or dental related services.</p>

Goal 4: First 5 funded programs participate in comprehensive, coordinated, and efficient systems of care for children prenatal through five.

Objective	FY2023-24 Results
Objective 4A: First 5 funded programs collaborate to align systems that serve children prenatal through five.	Both First 5 Lassen and Pathways staff reported participating in several activities to support the alignment of systems that serve children in FY2023-24, including the Lassen Links collaborative, partnering on a Public Health Diaper and Wipes program, and accessing additional funding streams to expand home visiting services.
Objective 4B: First 5 funded programs participate in an inter-agency case coordination system focusing on the prenatal to five population.	The Pathways program participated in a variety of case coordination activities including working directly with relevant child welfare system agencies, engaging in formal and information conversations with local providers to determine how to best meet a family's needs; and serving as a resource for families engaged in CalWorks.

First 5 Lassen FY2023-24 Local Evaluation Report

Evaluation Recommendations

FY2023-24 represents the first year of the Commission's updated *2024-2028 Strategic and Long-Range Financial Plan* as well as the first year that the associated *FY2023-24 Evaluation Plan* was used to assess strategic plan goal progress.

The following recommendations were originally included as part of FY2022-23 *Annual Evaluation Report* produced in October 2023 to support implementation of this new evaluation plan, highlight potential areas of improvement, and establish an expanded understanding of the impact of the Pathways Home Visiting program. Through review of FY2023-24 data, it was determined that these recommendations should continue to inform the refinement of Pathways program and evaluation activities through FY2024-25. An update on status is provided following a summary of each recommendation.

- 1. Consider Use of a Participatory Evaluation Process:** It was recommended that the Commission and Pathways staff consider inclusion of participatory evaluation activities, which includes the active involvement of key partners in the evaluation process. Including service recipients specifically in the review and interpretation of program data, and in the development of evaluation recommendations, may support an increased understanding of the program's impact, ensure that the Commission is being responsive to the needs of young children and families in Lassen County, and help key partners understand the link between the Commission Strategic Plan, its programs, and evaluation efforts.
- 2. Connect with Families to Explore Potential Areas of Improvement with the Referral Process:** For the past several years families have reported less than full satisfaction with the referrals made on their behalf. Referrals to supportive resources represent a key element of the service provision provided by the Pathways program as well as of the Commission's future plans (e.g., through the Lassen Links collaborative). Therefore, it was recommended that families are asked to provide additional feedback on how the referral process and network in the county can be improved, and that this activity be designed to align with and support the inclusion of participatory evaluation activities outlined in the recommendation above.

Update: In spring 2023, the Pathways Director, First 5 Lassen Executive Director, and SEI evaluation team discussed how to engage families in a review of programmatic data, specifically with regards to satisfaction of the referral system. This included the identification of eight individuals who received referrals in FY2023-24, development of key questions to explore with people through individual interviews, and reallocation of evaluation funds to support participation incentives. Despite outreach conducted by the Pathways and SEI team and the availability of incentives, only two people elected to participate in interviews. Given this small data set, results of the interviews are not included in this report.

However, given the importance of understanding the strengths and opportunities to improve the referral network in Lassen County, both for the Pathways evaluation and to inform refinement of the Lassen Links referral system itself, it is recommended that additional interviews take place throughout FY2024-25. Results of these interviews and other data collection activities (e.g., surveys) will be included in future evaluation reports as appropriate.

3. Work with Pathways to Understand the Impact of Expanded Programming and Braided Funding on

Evaluation Activities: Pathways staff is exploring additional funding streams and resources that will allow the program to offer home visiting services to more families. It is possible that these funding streams will have evaluation requirements and data management systems that do not align with those outlined in the First 5 Lassen FY2023-24 Evaluation Framework. It was recommended the potential impact of these differences be considered to support continued assessment of program impact and reduce undue reporting burden on Pathways staff.

Update: Since this recommendation was offered, Pathways has contracted with two new funding streams: the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program (HVP) and the California Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Division (MCAH) California Home Visiting Program (CHVP). Together with First 5 Lassen, these programs will support sustainability and expansion of home visiting services within the county.

One of these programs, the CHVP, requires programs to use the cloud-based Visit Tracker platform for data management. Knowing that this requirement was likely to apply to the Pathways program in Lassen County, First 5 Lassen expanded its FY2023-24 contract with SEI to include time for the evaluation team to explore how a shift away from Pathways current data management platform to the Visit Tracker platform would impact evaluation activities and the currently approved *FY2024-25 Evaluation Plan*. Pathways, First 5 Lassen, and SEI team members have met to begin this work, and it is anticipated that a recommendation for how to best ensure data integrity while reducing undue reporting burden on Pathways staff will be provided to the Commission for review before the end of 2025.
