



**Los Angeles Best Babies Collaborative**  
*Building Blocks for Better Babies*  
A Program of First 5 LA

# **Los Angeles Best Babies Collaborative**

## **First 5 LA: Healthy Births Initiative**

### **Approach 1**

### **Policy and Advocacy**



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## Approach (1)

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### Policy and Advocacy

**Goal:** To promote healthy births in Los Angeles County through local and countywide policy and advocacy initiatives.

**Objectives:**

- To foster and promote healthy births through grassroots policy and advocacy initiatives
  - To participate with local community experts in networks and coalitions that support improved pregnancy and birth through policy and advocacy initiatives
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### Rationale

Institutional and public policy can have a profound impact on birth outcomes and shape the community that cares for pregnant women and their families. While “all politics are local,” many policy issues are decided at the state or county levels leaving little voice at the local level to determine the services that are needed in each community. Throughout the HBLC meetings, community members gave rise to the concerns that their voices were not heard and that policy and decision makers were frequently missing from the conversation of how to improve the circumstances that impact maternal and child outcomes. The community identified a clear need for establishment and/or strengthening of linkages between community and decision-makers as a means to improve pregnancy and birth outcomes in Los Angeles County. To accomplish these linkages the community expressed the need for knowledge about how policy decisions are made and how to best influence them.

### Implementation

Policy and advocacy efforts exist at two levels: those addressing Federal, State and local decision making and those at the grassroots level. Examples of the former include the traditional policy processes of legislation, regulation, budget formulation and administrative rule making. Examples of grassroots policy and advocacy may include:

- Workplace initiatives that focus on policy changes to enhance working conditions, safety, the reduction of toxic exposures, or the provision of adequate family leave.
- Clinic or medical practice based policies that limit office hours to the standard work week or lack of support for bringing young siblings to prenatal care visits.
- Local efforts to restrict the dispensing of liquor licenses to reduce the communities’ exposure to alcohol, domestic violence, and neighborhood violence.

Both levels of policy and advocacy are critical and must build upon and support each other through coordination of efforts between the grassroots and countywide levels.

#### Local policy and advocacy initiative

The following steps are needed to address a local policy initiative:

- Define public problems and issues in a precise manner
- Obtain facts and data on the issue and its impact on the community
- Determine a strategy for problem and/or conflict resolution
- Engage with various decision and policy makers to influence local process
- Evaluate outcome

Countywide policy and advocacy coordination

The LABBC will serve to connect public policy initiatives conducted by the HBLCs to existing countywide policy efforts. Functions may include:

- Disseminating relevant local, State and Federal policy information
- Serving as a linkage to local stakeholders and coalitions working on the various priority issues that impact pregnancy and birth outcomes
- Providing education on the mechanisms necessary to influence public policy and community-based advocacy

A brief for implementation of policy and advocacy can be found under Resources.