



Dear Community Partners,

As the pandemic continues to take its toll on Palm Beach County families, we have seen many new needs emerge – and persistent ones worsen. The Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures Alliance and our partners have been working on addressing the gaps, and we wanted to share with you some of our progress. A few exciting examples include work supporting tutoring, mentoring, summer camps and ensuring more dollars for community-driven supports and programming.

Tutoring and mentoring: Various teams have been working diligently to support children in the dependency and delinquency systems, who represent a segment of our community hit extremely hard by the pandemic. Stay tuned to the next newsletter where we hope to share more about the models developed.

Summer camps: Our children and youth are being challenged not only with what is commonly known as the summer slide, but now we have the Covid slide. The learning loss has been devastating. We are exploring creative ways to address the issues, all while allowing kids to have a break from virtual learning and have some fun.

Staying true to our equity mission, many community partners have taken the lead on establishing community-driven supports and programming. Who knows the community challenges, and how to solve them, better than the residents themselves? Local funders have made some great grant opportunities available directly to community members to do just that.

In closing, with so much hardship within our community, the Birth to 22 Alliance members continue to show up and tackle these thorny issues. We take our mission seriously and nothing will stop our drive to ensure that every child succeeds.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lisa Williams-Taylor
CEO, Children's Services Council

Tammy K. Fields
Director, Palm Beach County Youth Services Department



Birth to 22 United for Brighter Futures NEWSLETTER

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Legislative Agenda

The Birth to 22 Alliance provides an overview of its focus for 2021 in its legislative agenda.

Continuing the Conversation

The voices of youth and the adults who care about them, are vital to implementing the Youth Master Plan and ensuring that a difference is made in our community.

Alliance Spotlights

Since its inception, Birth to 22 and its community alliances, have been working towards providing youth and young adults resources to reach their fullest potential.

Share Feedback & Stories!

Do you have feedback or have an inspiring story to share? We'd love to hear from you!

Contact us at, pbcbirthto22@pbcgov.org

2021 Legislative Agenda

1. A Stronger Pathway to Kindergarten Readiness

a. Strengthen Florida's VPK program by aligning VPK standards and assessments, focusing on positive teacher-child interactions, valuing social-emotional development in a child, and providing for a timely and comprehensive evaluation for the betterment of the child and VPK provider. By investing in VPK through these efforts and incentivizing effective VPK providers, the Florida VPK program could become the model for the country.

b. Find ways to expand programs that support families who barely miss the subsidized child care threshold. Throughout Florida, child care often costs more than rent for a 2-bedroom apartment. Parents are struggling to cover the cost of care, and when that decisive moment materializes, it is the children who miss out on valuable early learning experiences.

2. Expand access and opportunities for mental and behavioral services to children and young adults when and where they need it.

a. Help children and young adults cope and prevail over traumatic experiences—advocate for the expansion of mental health services via telehealth.

b. Support Florida's need for more behavioral and mental health specialists in a variety of settings.

c. Support and fund mental health and well-being initiatives on college campuses. Recognize the biggest culprit that hinders higher education completion is directly related to mental and behavioral health.

3. Juvenile Justice Reform

a. Amid the largest civil rights movement our nation has seen since the '60s, recognize that the juvenile justice criminal system needs to transform. The juvenile population in Florida is 21% Black, 43.8% White, and 31.8% Latinx, yet juveniles of color make up almost 66% of arrests.

b. Support reform measures aimed at racial equity and front-end programs to support Florida's youth in positive life-enhancing ways.

4. Focus on Two-Generations to Interrupt the Cycle of Poverty

a. Support Two-Generation (2gen) policies, which address two generations simultaneously and provide opportunities for and meet the needs of low-income children and their parents simultaneously.

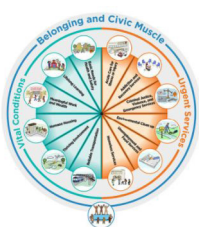
b. Review and modernize Florida's policies, so well-intended programs do not disincentivize economic progression.

c. Recognize a child's development is directly related to their family's economic stability.

5. Increase Financial Support for Higher Education Institutions

a. Support increased recurring operational funding for Florida College and Universities Systems to ensure continued quality education and degrees for students. This includes workforce training focused on meeting industry needs and boosting Florida's competitiveness in creating a skilled labor force.

Supporting Vital Conditions through EJS Project



In November 2019, five partner organizations came together to form the ReThink Core Team. The partners include BeWell, Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County, PalmHealth Foundation, Palm Beach County Youth Services,

and Community Services Departments. The ReThink Core Team has been engaged in a process to think about how we each individually and collectively fill the role of stewardship of resources. In this effort, they have been considering how funds are allocated to urgent services in comparison to vital conditions. Urgent services, which receive the bulk of resources, are those programs and services that address

immediate care needs for families and children who are experiencing increased risks for poor outcomes. Vital conditions are those areas that support and foster thriving communities and families.

Our capacity to thrive depends on having a consistent set of vital conditions, such as clean air, fair pay, humane housing, early education, routine health care, and other necessities. Vital conditions shape the exposures, choices, opportunities, and adversities that we each encounter throughout our lives. Personal experiences may rise and fall from birth to death. However, vital conditions persist over generations. Building civic muscle and a sense of belonging are two of the vital conditions for well-being that are of particular interest to the ReThink Core Team.

Belonging and civic muscle are about having fulfilling relationships and social support that people need to thrive. It is about being part of a community and contributing to its vibrancy. Social support through friends, family, and other networks contributes to our practical and emotional needs, enhances mental well-being, helps us navigate the challenges of life, and reinforces healthy behaviors. As people in a community feel valued and cared for, they become more confident and willing to participate in the community, contributing to its vibrancy and affecting change.

Using language from the Racial Equity Institute (REI) and Groundwater Analysis, much of our collective efforts are focused on the fish and we need to address the lake and the groundwater feeding into the lake. Civic muscle and a sense of belonging are important levers in directing the attention to the groundwater and the lake.

The ReThink Core Team had an opportunity to provide a grant to an organization who is already hard at work on building a sense of belonging and civic muscle, with a focus on our youth. The intent behind the funding was to amplify work that is already underway- not to create a new program or initiative. The EJS Project is the recipient of those grant dollars.

Founded in 2014 by Emanuel “Dupree” Jackson, Jr., the organization was created to give power back to the

youth. The EJS Project’s mission is rooted in their desire to see every teen succeed, regardless of their zip code. In the organization’s own words, “At the EJS Project we believe if we focus on our youth’s strengths, we can empower them to write their own narrative. We believe our teen’s deserve equity of opportunity and that strong supportive relationships promote change in individuals, organizations, and systems. The EJS Project acknowledges racial discrimination and the barriers it has created in communities of color. We are dedicated to teaching truth, challenging systems, and fighting for our youth’s access to opportunity. It is our aim to surround our youth with as many positive and forward-thinking adults as possible.

The EJS project challenges perceptions of the community and its youth by inspiring leadership, equity of opportunity, and supporting stewardship. Together the EJS Project promotes success in teen’s day-to-day and school lives, enables them to serve as catalysts for positive change in their community, and encourages them to dream big as they plan for their future.”

In the simplest of terms, funding of this initiative increases our community’s investment in building a sense of belonging and civic muscle, which we believe are essential elements of having a thriving community. Thriving communities are necessary for the long-term attainment of the child and youth outcomes we have established for Birth to 22. It represents one tiny step in a long journey.

Equity & Child Welfare

Led by the Department of Children and Families and ChildNet, a group of Palm Beach County community leaders and organizations have come together to look at disproportionality in the child welfare system. We know that African-American children represent 28.9 percent of children under age five in Palm Beach County, but they represent 45.04 percent of the victims of verified child abuse. In fact, at every intersection within the system, Black children and families are faring much worse.

Corey Best, from Casey Family Programs, facilitated this focused work in Broward County and they have already begun seeing significant impacts within their child welfare system. He is now working with a team in Palm Beach County. The Palm Beach County team has already established their guiding principles, are currently reading and learning together, are all attending the Racial Equity Institute, and are building relationships that will prepare them to have difficult conversations and dig deep into inequities and institutional racism.

The Palm Beach County Team includes the following organizations:

Casey Family Programs	Florida Atlantic University	Legal Aid Society
ChildNet South Florida	Florida Department of Children and Families, Circuit 15	Palm Beach County Youth Services Department
Children’s Services Council of Palm Beach County	Guardian ad Litem Program	Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel, Fourth District
Department of Juvenile Justice	Juvenile Justice Court System	Urban League of Palm Beach County

Birth to 22: Continuing the Conversation



The voices of youth and the adults who care about them, are vital to implementing the Youth Master Plan and ensuring that a difference is made in our community. Palm Beach County Youth Services Department's Outreach and Community Programming Division engaged our communities by holding four Community Conversations in 2021. These virtual events were held weekly via Zoom in February. Each Conversation highlighted two action teams in the breakout discussions. These conversations were open to the public and structured to support community input while providing information about relevant data regarding children outcomes and services.

The Conversations evolved as they continued based on feedback received. A moderator was added to each breakout to engage the virtual participants and assist with facilitation of the activity. The activity identifies areas of concern, if the work the team is doing is on track, and

recommendations for improvement. The action teams then use this feedback to guide their work over the next year.

The virtual platform also utilized videos to disseminate information and mentimeter to poll participants and increase involvement. The first menti poll each conversation asked "as a community member, what three specific issues are you concerned about?" While the participants changed in each conversation, the results always highlighted mental health, racism, and safety.

In total, 291 participants attended the four Community Conversations. Many students attended multiple conversations and provided feedback to several action teams. They became increasingly more comfortable presenting information and sharing their thoughts and opinions. The overwhelming response to how to improve future conversations is by gaining more parental involvement.

For additional information, visit Birth to 22's Engagement Team [website](#).

Culture of Health Prize Finalist



Palm Beach County has been chosen as a finalist for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Prize. As a 2021 finalist, Palm Beach County is one step closer to the national prize, which honors communities

working at the forefront of advancing health, opportunity, and equity for all.

The Palm Beach County Youth Services Department, Palm Health Foundation and Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County collaborated on the application process for the prize that shared the county's collective commitment to the social determinants of health, including Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures, an alliance of over 300 organizations supporting the healthy growth, development and education of children and youth prenatally through young adulthood.

To get to this stage, communities had to showcase the work and collaboration happening across sectors to expand health opportunities for residents. To become a finalist, Palm Beach County had to demonstrate how its efforts

reflect the six prize criteria:

- Defining health in the broadest possible terms
- Committing to sustainable systems changes and policy-oriented long-term solutions
- Creating conditions that give everyone a fair and just opportunity to reach their best possible health
- Maximizing the collective power of leaders, partners, and community members
- Securing and making the most of available resources
- Measuring and sharing progress and results

"The coordination in our community as exhibited through the Birth to 22 Alliance has been extraordinary," said Youth Services Department Director Tammy K. Fields.

If selected as a winner, Palm Beach County will receive a \$25,000 prize and a national platform to share its story and lessons learned. The community will join with and learn from other national and community change leaders, including past prize-winning communities.

Palm Beach County is one of nine finalist communities nationally. Winners will be announced this fall.

COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Update

Since the start of the pandemic, and building on efforts in past disasters, the funders in Palm Beach County have coordinated their relief and recovery efforts. A group of local foundations, the United Way of Palm Beach County, and Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County released a joint application in March 2020. The Palm Beach County COVID-19 Relief and Recovery funding process received more than 570 applications from local nonprofit organizations.

The application process closed in November 2020 as the funders focused on determining specific gaps and need areas, and coordinating with Palm Beach County Youth Services and Community Services Departments in the distribution of federal CARES Act funds. Collectively, the local participating funders provided over \$9 million in local funding and helped coordinate over \$12 million in federal funding to nonprofits to help county residents.

In addition to the joint application process, funders have been collaborating to address emerging issues caused by the pandemic. Collaborative funding projects include:

- Digital Divide Project - A collaboration among 40 government, business, philanthropy, and community organizations to increase access to, and usage of, technology for residents. The primary impetus was the 25,000 students from low income areas who lacked internet access at the time that school sites closed and classrooms instruction went virtual.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - Purchase and distribution of masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, cleaning products, and thermometers for nonprofit organizations. The funders distributed PPE to more than 120 organizations, including over 12,300 reusable masks for children.
- Rapid Response Eviction Assistance Program (RREAP) - Grants provided to Legal Aid Society paid for legal assistance and helping residents pay past due and future rent and utilities, giving clients time to come up with additional rental funds or find employment.
- United Farmers Alliance – A collaboration of farmers committed to bring agricultural goods directly to the end consumer via sustainable distribution and a sales market platform. The alliance created distribution channels for fresh produce that supported both farmers and families in need of food.
- Help the Helpers – Funders are pooling funds to create an opportunity for nonprofits to provide an employee wellness opportunity for their staff.
- Community Health Worker Program - With a mission to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 through education, outreach, and contact tracing, the program will be deployed in 2021 to continue COVID-19 outreach, vaccination education, and convalescent plasma donation.

Restorative Justice



The Circuit 15 Racial Equity and Disparity/Disproportionate Minority Contact Committee (RED/DMC) participated in the Florida Youth Justice Commission initiative on Race, Equity and Inclusion Solutions initiative with the focus of restorative justice for youth on probation.

The project is called Bridge to Justice. On April 12, 13, 19 and 20, twenty-four people attended training by the River Phoenix enter for Peace Building on how to facilitate restorative justice circles. The training was sponsored by the Palm Beach County Youth Services Department. Training participants included representatives of the Palm Beach County School Police, Children's Services Council, Department of Juvenile Justice, Center for Child Counseling, Pace Center for Girls, Families First, Choice to Change, Palm Beach County Youth Services Department and Rep. Kelly Skidmore's office.

Restorative practices focus on building, maintaining and, when necessary, repairing relationships not just for

those involved, but among all members of a community. Restorative Justice supports and restores balance and is likely to lead to more effective accountability as it centers the personal responsibility of the offender and support reclaiming of humanity.

In Palm Beach County, the intent is to ensure that Restorative Justice practices utilize a racial equity lens and a trauma-informed approach. Implementation of Restorative Justice practices in the county will bring together persons harmed with persons responsible for harm in a safe and respectful space, promoting dialogue, accountability, and a stronger sense of community.

While Restorative Justice is important, it isn't ripe for all cases especially if there hasn't already been some acceptance that a harm has been perpetrated. It is the hope of the RED/DMC that with success in the probation population, they will be able to expand the reach of restorative justice into other areas such as diversion programs.

Family First Prevention Services Act

Dr. Lisa Williams-Taylor, CEO of Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County, and Tammy K. Fields, Director of Palm Beach County Youth Services Department have been selected to serve on the Family First Prevention Services Act Community Prevention Subcommittee for the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF).

DCF is collaborating with a large cross-section of community stakeholders to establish a human-centered continuum of services that aims to Promote community and family strengths through primary prevention and the expansion of evidence-based services, Safeguard children and families by controlling active danger threats, enhancing caregiver protective capacities, and Restore family conditions with complex dynamics through trauma-informed, evidence-based interventions. In addition, the model will support focused post-intervention and aftercare support to build Resilience for families who have been in crisis and to prevent re-entry.

The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) was signed into law February 9, 2018. The act aims to keep children and youth safely with their families and emphasizes the importance of children and youth being placed in the

least restrictive, most family-like setting. Florida's planning and initial implementation of FFPSA began in March 2018 with the engaging of stakeholders from across the state to understand the requirements and impact of the act on Florida's child welfare system of care.

Florida has successfully implemented several of the FFPSA provisions and is currently moving toward the implementation of evidence-based services and ensuring children are placed in the most appropriate and family-like setting when removal is necessary. FFPSA planning and implementation efforts will continue through the successful completion of all implementation tasks and post-implementation support.

The FFPSA Community Prevention Sub-Committee will serve to make recommendations to the Florida Department of Children and Families to help guide the planning and implementation efforts necessary to implement the section of the Continuum that aims to promote community and family strengths by fostering and maximizing the implementation of evidence-based prevention services within local communities.

Alliance Spotlights



The Fiscal Benefits Cliff occurs when an individual earns just a couple dollars more per hour but will lose thousands of dollars' worth of SNAP, childcare, or other benefits. For example, a full-time employee earning a \$1 per hour raise will earn approximately \$2,000 annually but could lose upwards of \$7,000 in childcare services. This is clearly a disincentive to earn more and become more self-sufficient. There is a disconnect between income levels and benefit eligibility.

The Florida House and Senate identified this disconnect and each wrote a bill to study the effects of the Fiscal Benefits Cliff - Senate Bill 414 and House Bill 1349. After a long and arduous season, House Bill 1349 passed through three House Subcommittees, the House Chamber, and the Senate Chamber with bi-partisan support.

House Bill 1349 requires the Office of Early Learning to collaborate with the University of Florida Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies to conduct an analysis of the Fiscal Benefits Cliff in Florida. The analysis

will look into eligibility requirements, the number of people that qualify for services compared to the number of people actually receiving services, frequency of eligibility determinations, and the process used to determine eligibility and disbursement. The bill will focus on five state financial assistance programs: Medicaid, Temporary Cash Assistance (TANF), School Readiness, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP), and Housing Choice Voucher programs.

This bill also makes changes to service delivery. Families that are involved in intensive services or families that receive multiple services are given priority for participation in School Readiness Programs. This will allow more children in families of low-income to obtain resources to allow them to be on track when they start kindergarten, leveling the field for many children experiencing poverty. The Bill also deletes the terms "earned income" and "unearned income" in current eligibility requirements for school readiness, ensuring more families qualify.

Click [here](#) For more information on this initiative.



Each April, blue and silver pinwheel gardens pop up across the state as part of the Pinwheels for Prevention campaign in observance of Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The blue and silver pinwheel is the national symbol that represents a vision of health and happiness for all children.

Research shows that children who face adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including child abuse and neglect, also face a wide range of health and social consequences which can have a tremendous, lifelong impact on a child's health and quality of life.

Supporting the needs of children is one of our most important responsibilities and is a key to a bright future for our state. Parents and caregivers with good social support and effective strategies to cope with stress are better able to provide safe environments and nurturing experiences for their children.

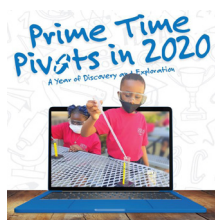
During the Pinwheels for Prevention campaign, individuals were urged to take modest but meaningful actions to promote healthy child development and help prevent child abuse and neglect. You don't have to have special skills or hold a certain position in the community to help make great childhoods happen. Each of us has something we can contribute that will help reduce the stress and strain on parents and help them provide an environment where children can grow healthy, happy and safe.

Each of us can make simple contributions such as volunteering in a school, becoming a mentor with Big Brothers Big Sisters or becoming a Guardian ad Litem. When you volunteer with a youth sports team, you can teach kids the value of teamwork so they learn how to trust their teammates and, perhaps more importantly, themselves. Notice families around you who may be experiencing stress and offer to help them through challenges. For example, give a family a break by bringing over dinner. The time they recoup from your kindness can be used as quality time with their children or even time for them to practice a little self-care. Even these ordinary actions can make a big difference in the lives of children and families.

As child advocates and partners across the state planted blue and silver pinwheels in April, We want to remind everyone that we all play a role in providing hope to children. Remember, working together, we can show children a glimpse at a bright future where they worry less about negative experiences and live in a positive and nurturing environment where their own hopes and dreams can be realized.



Chris Lolley is the Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse Florida which leads the statewide Pinwheels for Prevention campaign in partnership with the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida and the Florida Department of Children and Families.



Prime Time Palm Beach County shares their 2019-2020 Annual Report, a publication dedicated to our essential workers, the out-of-school time practitioners who are on the front lines every

day with our children and youth ensuring that their physical and mental health is a top priority.

Click [here](#) for Prime Time Palm Beach County's Annual Report. Make sure to check out their [Annual Impact video](#) that supplements their Annual Report.

Collective Impact Pledge



importantly, young people.

Birth to 22 is committed to a common agenda, we are an alliance of community partners that engages and aligns existing coalitions, networks, systems and youth-serving organizations as well as connecting families, community members, and most

Take the *Pledge*, be listed as a Collective Impact Partner of the Birth to 22 Alliance to improve outcomes from cradle to career for all Palm Beach County children, youth and families.

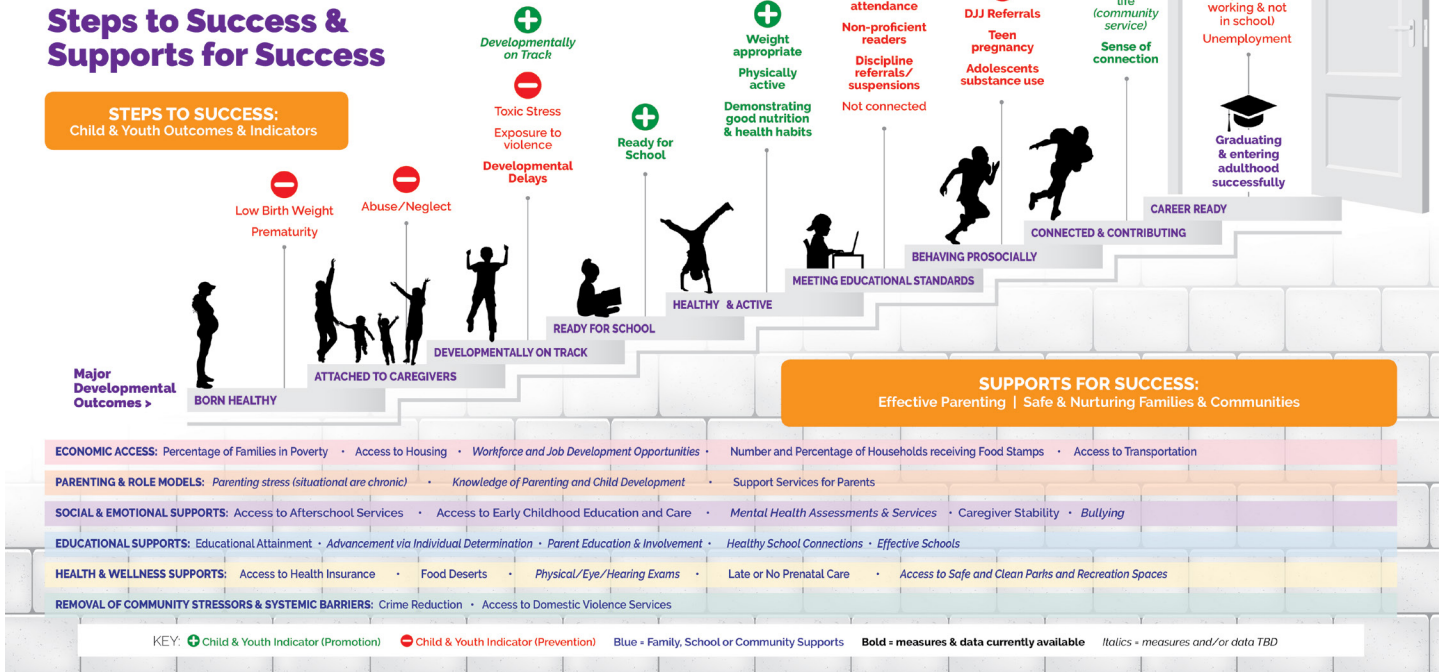
Click [here](#) to join us in envisioning and creating a culture that values our youth from cradle to career.

Steps to Success

The Steps to Success represent 6 domains of child and youth development – physical health, behavioral health, academic readiness, social/emotional well-being, career readiness and connection and contribution to community and society. These steps represent key markers of success that allows us to access developmental outcomes. As children and youth make their way up these stairs, we are able to track their progress or lack thereof. The indicators, or measures, for these different areas are shown above the stair steps in the green text (for things we are trying to promote) and orange text (for things we are trying to prevent). Understanding what this data looks like for different subpopulations within Palm Beach County is also essential. In order to achieve those outcomes, children and youth need key supports along the way, through a combination of effective parenting and safe and nurturing families and communities. A sample of possible measures are listed below.

Steps to Success & Supports for Success

STEPS TO SUCCESS: Child & Youth Outcomes & Indicators



Editor/Graphics
Erin Baker

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