

**Community Opportunities Fund
Cycle 4
Organizational Capacity Building RFP
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

Application

1. How is First 5 LA differentiating between direct services and organizational capacity building?

Direct services are activities done directly with organization's target population. Examples of direct services include case management, childcare services, and parent education activities. Organizational capacity building can include enhancing the organizations capacity to provide direct services. For example, implementing a new electronic case management system to increase the effectiveness of case manager's efforts with clients would represent this type of capacity building. Organizational capacity building, as described in the COF 4 RFP, includes activities that result in increasing the organization's capacity to pursue programmatic, operational, and policy and advocacy objectives. Examples of organizational capacity building activities include creating a sustainability plan for program outcomes (programmatic), developing planning and budgeting tools (operational), and increasing policy analysis skills (policy and advocacy).

2. How long can my grant last? Is there any benefit or detriment to a 2-year project term versus a 3-year term?

Applicants may apply for a maximum grant period of three years. To be successful, applicants must justify that the work proposed in their application requires the length of time proposed.

3. Can applicants apply to address more than one First 5 LA goal?

Yes, provided the applicant demonstrates how their project helps to support at least one of the goals to be considered for COF funding.

4. If an applicant has applied to COF before but did not receive a grant, can they apply again?

Yes. Organizations that have been denied funding in previous cycles may reapply.

5. Are new marketing and outreach strategies to better reach your target population acceptable for COF Cycle 4?

Developing the capacity to create marketing and outreach strategies is a fundable COF 4 activity, however, implementing those activities is not.

6. Can your proposed project include both programmatic and organizational components?

Yes. Projects can include programmatic and organizational components as long as there is demonstrated linkage and both are part of the same overall project design.

7. Is there a page limit in any part of the application?

Yes, the Project Narrative is limited to 10 pages (or 5000 words).

8. Is this an eligible activity: Building IT infrastructure to provide web-based education to Perinatal healthcare providers?

The portion of IT infrastructure costs in the proposed project that are not capital expenses are eligible for funding under COF Cycle 4.

9. Is an agency with contracts with Los Angeles County and housed within a state-run university eligible?

Yes, as long as the applicant is a 501(c)3 organization.

10. Can you give examples of previously funded projects?

Please see the Cycles 1 and 2 Board Reports on the COF 4 website (<http://www.first5la.org/COF+Cycle+Four>) for examples of previously funded capacity building projects.

11. Can the fiscal agent be a municipality or city department?

No. A fiscal agent must be a 501(c)3 organization.

12. Can an organization submit more than one application?

No. Only one application will be considered per agency per grant cycle.

13. Must the \$150,000 grant be spread over three years or can it be expended in less time – 1 or 2 years?

No. The \$150,000 grant can be expended in less time, for example \$75,000 per year for 2 years or \$150,000 for 1 year. Applicants must be mindful that application budgets will be closely reviewed at the proposal stage to determine whether the amount requested matches the needs identified in the proposed project. Applicants should also justify that the work proposed in their application requires the length of time proposed.

14. How does First 5 LA support smaller and/or newer organizations?

First 5 LA is committed to providing grants to agencies of all sizes. The review process is designed to consider organizations that understand and have strong connections to their target communities and show alignment with the First 5 LA goals. These organizations may include grassroots organizations that have developed out of the communities they serve, or emerging organizations that are still developing their internal infrastructure. Additionally, in the interest of distributing First 5 LA funding to a broader number of agencies in Los Angeles County, at least 60% of funding will be allocated to applicants who 1) have not received a prior grant from First 5 LA, or 2) are partnering with an organization without First 5 LA funding history.

15. Is collaboration between organizations required? Or highly encouraged?

Collaborations are not required through COF. No additional consideration is given to collaborative proposals during this cycle of funding. However, organizations may apply as part of a collaborative, with one agency serving as the fiscal agent and responsible party for the entire collaborative, as long as strengthening the capacity of the collaborative is the focus.

16. If an agency is funded by LAUP for preschool can the agency also apply for COF Cycle 4?

Yes.

17. What format should Resumes be submitted in?

Resumes should be submitted in either Standard or Bio format.

18. Are there plans to release direct services/programmatic funding cycles in 2010?

Starting in July 2010, First 5 LA funding approaches will be based on the new Countywide and Place-Based strategies as described in the FY 2009-2015 Strategic Plan

(http://www.first5la.org/files/F5LA_STRATEGIC_PLAN_2009-15.pdf).

19. Can we hire a licensed practitioner/consultant to specifically develop trauma-based services for the child victims of our domestic violence clients?

Yes, as long as the consultant's activities were limited to developing the capacity to provide these services.

20. In regards to duplication, if we replicate another agency's program in a different service area, is that considered duplication?

No, this is not considered duplication as long as the same program in a different service was not developed with First 5 LA funding.

21. We serve families (not specifically prenatal to 5): will our capacity building application (i.e. development director) be considered less competitive?

No, but it is critical that the applicant reflect a clear understanding of how the proposed project will impact both their own organization and the selected First 5 LA goal(s).

22. If your organization has received recent First 5 LA ARRA funding, can the capacity building proposal building upon that Early Head Start project?

Yes, as long as the applicant is proposing a new project and it fits the COF definition of organizational capacity building.

23. What is the relevance of First 5 LA's "place-based" approach to COF's Cycle 4? Will there be a preference for certain parts of Los Angeles?

COF Cycle 4 funding is available to organizations throughout Los Angeles County and is not prioritized for agencies in potential place-based communities.

24. Will there be a preference for organizations that have not been First 5 LA grantees in the past?

In the interest of distributing First 5 LA funding to a broader number of agencies in Los Angeles County, at least 60% of funding will be allocated to applicants who 1) have not received a prior grant from First 5 LA, or 2) are partnering with an organization without First 5 LA funding history.

25. Can a proposal include more than one capacity building activity (e.g., resource development and strategic planning)?

Yes.

26. What is your definition of “advocacy”?

For the purposes of COF, advocacy is defined as the effort to raise public or policymaker awareness in order to achieve one of the policy goals at the organizational, community, city, county, state, or federal level. First 5 LA will fund organizational policy and advocacy capacity building projects aimed at increasing the organization’s ability to effectively impact policy and raise public awareness through advocacy.

Submission

27. What is the deadline for receipt of the two paper forms? Do the hard copies need to be received or just post-marked by April 16th?

Two original copies (signed in blue in) of the Signature Authorization Form (Appendix C) and the Organization Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties (Appendix D) must be received by 5:00p.m. on April 16th and not merely post-marked.

28. Can you save in the middle of the online application before you submit?

Yes.

29. Please explain more of Annual Registration Renewal Fee report to Attorney General.

To ensure compliance with State of California statutory requirements for charitable organizations, applicants will need to provide documentation of their current filing status with the Attorney General’s office in the form of an Annual Registration Renewal Fee Report. Additional information about this filing can found at:

http://ag.ca.gov/charities/forms/charitable/rrf1_instructs_05.pdf.

Budget

30. You ask for 3 years budgets. Budgets can differ significantly from actuals each year. Do you really want past budgets as opposed to actuals?

Yes. We need budgets for the most recent three fiscal years and audited financials (“actuals”) for one year (most recent).

31. “Restrictive funds – no salary funding”, but capacity building includes employees. Can you explain this?

Restricted salaries are those salaries for new or existing staff to provide direct services.

32. For regional chapters of national organizations (all under one 501(c)(3), are entire organizational budgets sufficient or will a regional chapter budget also be required?

Submit the budgets for the entire organization unless the regional chapter is a separate 501(c)(3) organization.

33. Do the audit and 990 need to be for the same year?

Yes. Both the IRS Form 990 and the audited financial statements need to be the same year in order to provide a basis of comparison. If you have not completed your most recent audited financial statements or Form 990, please submit the audited financial statements and IRS Form 990 for the prior year along with a written explanation as to why your most recent audited financials or Form 990 has not been completed.

34. Is there any alternative to submitting audited financial statements?

Yes. You will need to submit a written explanation as to why your organization does not have audited financial statements along with IRS Form 990s for the last three years.

35. Can funds be used for creating infrastructure and training staff to conduct program evaluation and retool our products and services?

Yes, as long as all other requirements are met.

36. Can we use funding to hire staff to build capacity so long as those people aren’t providing direct services? (e.g., a Community Liaison

to build collaborations as part of a Policy & Advocacy Capacity Building Proposal).

Yes, however, this distinction would need to be clearly supported in your proposal.

37. Can you explain more: “if applicable, demonstrate the availability of matching resources needed to implement the project.”

If you include matching funds in your budget, you will need to demonstrate that they are available for this use.

38. Can the dollars be used to pay for substitute teachers to give release time for staff development?

Yes. Staff release time will only be funded if the project requires dedicated time for capacity building activities outside of the classroom as part of the proposed project.

39. Can the grant funds be used for stipends for current employees to attend staff development outside of regular working hours?

No, unless sufficient justification can be made in the case of non-exempt employees whose salaries would not be supplanted with COF 4 funding.

40. Can some funding be used for incentives or rewards?

Not in most cases. Incentives or rewards cannot be used as part of providing direct services. Incentives or awards associated with target population focus groups, conducted for the purpose of building capacity, would need to be fully justified in the proposal. Incentives or rewards for employees, as part of a capacity building project, would receive a high degree of scrutiny to ensure that they were not supplanting current salaries and benefits.

Evaluation

41. Regarding the 8% allocated to project evaluation: does this need to be an outside evaluator?

No. Funded agencies will need to decide if the evaluation component of their project will be conducted by internal staff and/or an external evaluator.

42. Will First 5 LA be choosing/directing evaluators?

No. Funded agencies will be asked to assess whether they have the capacity to conduct their project evaluation internally or will need to identify an external evaluator.

43. Does applicant need to specify who the evaluator will be on the budget narrative?

No. The name of the evaluator can be left as “to be determined.”

44. Do we have to redo our CCAT if we have already completed one in the past year? Should we submit our CCAT report with the application if we have one?

No. If your organization has taken the CCAT within the past year, you will be asked to submit your CCAT report to the COF Technical Assistance provider for review at the start of project implementation.

Review

45. Will every applicant receive a site visit?

No. Qualified proposal applicants who have reached the final stage of the review process and meet all criteria will receive a site visit. Staff will conduct site visits to gain additional knowledge regarding questions that may arise during programmatic or financial review.

46. If an organization is a regional chapter of a national 501(c)3, can interviews with some senior staff (CFO) be done telephonically?

This will be determined on a case by case basis.