FIRST 5 LA PROGRAMS DIVISION POOL
OF EXTERNAL REVIEWERS REQUEST
FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)
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I. RFQ TIMELINE¹

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<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RFQ Released</td>
<td>September 19, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications Due</td>
<td>October 5, 2012 at 5:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Review</td>
<td>October 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notification of Acceptance</td>
<td>October 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reviewer Eligibility Period</td>
<td>12 months (renewable)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First 5 LA reserves the sole right to determine the timing and content of the responses to all questions and requests for additional information.

Questions and information requests may be submitted to:

Joshua Kruskol, Policy Analyst  
First 5 LA  
750 N. Alameda Street, Suite 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Phone: 213-482-7822  
Email: jkruskol@first5la.org

¹ Note: All dates are subject to change at the sole discretion of First 5 LA.
II. BACKGROUND

A. First 5 LA — “Champions for Our Children”

In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10, which levied a 50-cent per pack tax on all tobacco products. The resulting tax revenues were earmarked for the creation of a comprehensive system of information and services to advance early childhood development and school readiness within each county in California. In Los Angeles County, the First 5 LA Commission was formed as a public entity to develop and oversee various early childhood initiatives and to manage the funding from Proposition 10. Since 1998, First 5 LA has invested more than $1 billion to support programs, initiatives, research, partnerships, public education and other endeavors in all four of its goal areas:

- Children are born healthy
- Children maintain a healthy weight
- Children are safe from abuse and neglect
- Children are ready for kindergarten

B. The First 5 LA FY 2009-2015 Strategic Plan

In 2009, First 5 LA’s Board of Commissioners adopted a new strategic plan to guide its investments through June 2015. The plan, *Strengthening Families and Communities in L.A. County*, marked a significant evolution in First 5 LA’s approach to grantmaking. In addition to a countywide approach that focuses on policy change, public education, workforce development and other strategies, the strategic plan also commits a sizeable portion of funds to improve the well-being of children in specific geographic communities.

The Commission selected 14 *Best Start* communities based on lessons learned from First 5 LA’s first decade and research, which shows that the role of safe and supportive neighborhoods is just as important to a young child’s quality of life as supportive and informed parents and caregivers.

This combined place-based and countywide approach allows the Commission to concentrate its limited resources in areas of high need and to sustain those efforts over time. The strategic plan will allow First 5 LA to continue focusing on strengthening families while deepening our commitment to fostering a community’s ability to create and sustain safe and nurturing places for children to grow.

**Figure 1: First 5 LA Prioritized Pathway**

In the Strategic Plan, the Commission identified a pathway for our investments that leads to our desired outcomes for children, families and communities in our four goal areas.
C. The Place-Based Approach, Best Start

The First 5 LA commissioners’ place-based approach focuses on the places where families live — combining efforts to strengthen families with those that build community capacity to create and sustain thriving and healthy environments for all children. The research and promising practices emerging from decades of place-based efforts make a strong case for First 5 LA’s shifting a significant amount of resources to this funding strategy. The place-based approach allows First 5 LA to focus on families most in need, creating a seamless pipeline to effectively serve families along the continuum of a child’s development. This approach also creates unique partnerships with families, community residents and other funders, resulting in a better measure of our impact.

Parents, civic and business leaders, members of the clergy, representatives from community-based organizations and others are working together to develop partnerships within each of the 14 communities. By Fall 2012, each community partnership will have submitted proposals to the First 5 LA commissioners for future investments. These can

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include building safe parks, providing early childhood education programs or supporting other strategies that achieve Best Start’s primary goals that children in each community grow up safe, healthy and ready to learn.

First 5 LA’s place-based efforts, known as Best Start, are being implemented in the following target communities:

1. Central Long Beach
2. Compton, East Compton
3. East Los Angeles (includes City Terrace, Commerce and parts of Monterey Park)
4. South El Monte/El Monte
5. Lancaster
6. Metro LA
7. Pacoima
8. Palmdale
9. Panorama City
10. South Los Angeles/Broadway-Manchester
11. South Los Angeles/West Athens
12. Southeast L.A. County Cities (including Bell, Cudahy, Bell Gardens and Maywood)
13. Watts, Willowbrook
14. Wilmington

For more information about Best Start and the selected Best Start Communities, applicants may refer to the following resources:

- General information about the Best Start investment and community webpages, [http://beststartla.org/](http://beststartla.org/)

D. Countywide Approach

The strategic plan also outlines the critical role of strong, coordinated and responsive systems in supporting families and improving outcomes for children prenatal through age 5. These systems include the actual structures through which health and human services are provided in L.A. County, as well as less formalized systems. By focusing on countywide systems improvement and change, strategic plan investments can have a widespread impact on children across the county, while, at the same time, helping to improve the sustainability of the place-based approach and outcomes. First 5 LA understands that enduring systems changes are most successful when they are informed by — and grow out of — close-to-the ground, culturally competent, community-based and resident-driven models for strengthening families, such as those we will be supporting in the Best Start communities.

The countywide approach is a comprehensive effort through a variety of programs, strategies and initiatives. For example, First 5 LA is launching nearly two dozen commissioner-developed investments in areas such as autism identification and service referrals; early child care and education workforce development; nutrition and physical activity programs for families and child care facilities and parental support projects. In
addition, among other strategies, First 5 LA continues to strive for increased access to health care and insurance for pregnant women, children and their families; provide telephonic or online and printed resource directories for families and support and enhance the impact of our investments with effective, strategic partnerships and leveraging social and financial capital via our newly-developed Community Investments Department.

III. POOL OF REVIEWERS FOR THE PROGRAMS DIVISION

First 5 LA is committed to ensuring transparency and an unbiased process when procuring services and/or products purchased on behalf of the Commission and when reviewing applications for projects and contractors. As a proactive approach, the Commission creates a Pool of External Reviewers to provide a thorough and objective evaluation of applications in response to its solicitations.

First 5 LA seeks qualified proposal reviewers to periodically review and score proposals and/or applications submitted in response to First 5 LA’s Programs Division funding announcements. Within the Programs Division there are six departments with distinct roles and responsibilities.

- The Program Development Department is responsible for the design and initial implementation of most of the organization's programs/initiatives.
- The Community Investments Department leverages fiscal and non-fiscal resources to maximize F5LA's investments through grantmaking, relationship building and information sharing activities.
- The Policy Department works to build support for public policies that benefit children 0-5 and their families in Los Angeles County.
- The Research and Evaluation Department evaluates First 5 LA's investments and supports research activities relevant to children 0-5 and their families.
- The Public Affairs Department is responsible for promoting First 5 LA’s mission and its investments.
- The Best Start Communities Department implements First 5 LA’s place-based initiative in which the Commission has targeted fourteen communities to promote the development of those communities around the organization’s four strategic goals.

First 5 LA periodically issues funding announcements through these departments to hire organizations and/or individuals to conduct a range of projects as outlined in the First 5 LA Strategic Plan and Commission-approved initiatives.

For twelve (12) months, selected applicants will be part of a pool of reviewers, who will be asked to participate in reviews that may include letters of intent, proposals, or statements of qualifications that will range in length depending on the project. Reviewers will be contacted when a specific department’s project is posted on the First 5 LA website, if a reviewer’s skills and knowledge are relevant for that project. Reviewers will have the option of declining to participate. Reviewers accepted into the pool can be reconsidered when the initial 12-month period has expired.

In accordance with First 5 LA policy, all reviewers must sign a Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement. Reviewers will be required to notify First 5 LA, in writing, of
any connection or interest to an applicant, which could result in a conflict, or potential conflict of interest. This does not preclude an applicant from being selected for the external reviewer pool if they, or their organization, plan on applying for First 5 LA funding during the year. They simply will not be able to review proposals for that particular funding opportunity. If a reviewer is unsure as to whether an interest should be disclosed, they should discuss the matter with First 5 LA staff.

Individuals Already Part of an External Reviewer Pool

Reviewers currently part of a First 5 LA external reviewer pool who are interested in being considered for this RFQ must fill out the online application, however they do not need to resubmit any additional paperwork. Once they have completed the application, their qualifications will be reviewed using the criteria set out in this RFQ based on the materials they already have on file. If a reviewer already in a pool would like to resubmit an updated resume for consideration as part of this pool, they are free to do that through the online application. Those reviewers currently part of pool that do not fill out an application for this RFQ will remain eligible until the 12 month anniversary of their original acceptance date.

Reviewers will be paid according to the external reviewer rates

The compensation rates for reviewing proposals will vary depending on the technicality of the proposal to be reviewed. First 5 LA staff will make the determination as to the level of technicality involved in a proposal along with the reviewer compensation rate and communicate that to external reviewers when engaging their services.

III. SUMMARY OF DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

Applicants will be assessed based on their work experience, educational experience and content knowledge. Specifically applicants will be reviewed based on relevant work experience and education in a field or fields related to the types of work done by the various departments within the First 5 LA Programs Division. Content knowledge refers to areas of expertise directly related to First 5 LA’s four organizational goals:

- Babies are born healthy
- Children maintain a healthy weight
- Children are safe from abuse and neglect
- Children are ready for kindergarten

A. Work Experience and Education – The following are the work experience and educational backgrounds that First 5 LA is looking for when considering an applicant’s suitability for the External Reviewer Pool. Examples of the criteria considered relevant to each category are also included below. Please note, applicants are only required to possess the required work experience or educational background in one or more of the areas listed below.
Policy and Advocacy
- Experience with policy advocacy and development around early childhood issues related to First 5 LA’s Strategic Plan at the local, state or federal levels
- Experience developing public policy initiatives on the issue areas contained in First 5 LA’s Public Policy Agenda
- Familiarity with policy stakeholders in Los Angeles County, Sacramento / CA and Washington, DC
- Familiarity with the federal, state and county legislative processes
- Familiarity with administrative agencies on the federal, state and county levels
- Experience working with and developing coalitions
- Experience with state and federal budgets

Organizational Capacity / Funding or Leveraging
- Assessing of organizational financial health and management
- Assessing of management team and individual skills and experience
- Awareness of capacity building issues and approaches
- Assessment of individual or organizational capacity to implement programs or tasks on a timely basis
- Familiarity with facility development and capital budgeting
- Sustainability planning
- Development (including donor development)
- Financial management
- Strategic planning
- Expertise around the state of funding available (public and private dollars) for specific programs that fall within the First 5 LA Strategic Plan
- Familiarity with federal, state and county, fiscal leveraging opportunities related to programs for young children
- Leveraging public funds including county, state and federal funds

Community Development / Planning
- Urban planning experience specific to park development/upgrades, open space, community gardens, landscape design, and Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility issues
- Spatial analysis of geographic communities including demographics, trends, gaps, land use, traffic and safety, transportation and other data
- Experience mapping communities including demographics, trends, gaps, land use, traffic and safety, transportation and other data
- Knowledge of urban planning principles including: land acquisition, urban zoning, land use and development regulations
- Real estate law
- Community development, built environment, and joint use projects
- Familiarity with community-based system change models and peer support group approaches to improving protective factors
- Community capacity building, including systems change
Research and Evaluation
- Assessment of families & children (0-5) from diverse cultural/linguistic backgrounds
- Experience conducting research in Los Angeles County
- Research with cultural & linguistic groups
- Process and outcome evaluation
- Longitudinal research
- Study design and analysis
- Data systems and integration
- Social network mapping /analysis
- Developing Logic Models & Theories of Change
- Quantitative and Qualitative Research

Program Development and Implementation
- Experience developing programs that address the need of young children and their families
- Experience developing Logic Models and/or Scopes of Work
- Experience developing program budgets that incorporate direct and indirect costs, including performance-based, deliverables-based and line item budgets
- Knowledge of programs and systems that address the early childhood development needs of children ages 0-5 and their families, in Los Angeles County
- Knowledge of evidence-based early childhood development programs
- Knowledge of public and private service delivery system concepts that include young children and their families
- Knowledge of general trends and policies related to children and families such as childcare issues, access to healthcare providers, parent education, literacy programs, and programs related to child abuse, substance abuse and teen pregnancy
- Knowledge of program evaluation

Marketing and Communications
- Marketing and public relations editorial experience
- Knowledge of graphic design
- Experience with project and production management
- Public education/social marketing project design experience
- Knowledge of multimedia and internet production
- Strategic communications experience
- Knowledge of management of marketing agencies
- Experience hiring of freelance marketing consultants
- Experience with media buying and the management of media buying agencies
B. **Content Knowledge** – The following are the various areas related to First 5 LA’s four organizational goals that will be considered relevant content knowledge and used to evaluate applicants in this area. *Again, please note, applicants are only required to possess the required content knowledge areas in one or more of the areas listed below:*

- Early Childhood Workforce Development
- Early Care and Education
- Childhood Obesity
- Nutrition and Physical Activity
- Oral Health
- Mental Health / Mental Health Training
- Maternal and Child Health
- Health Care / Health Insurance (HIV / AIDS, Etc)
- Public Health
- Food Policy / Food Deserts
- Home Visitation Programs
- Breastfeeding Support and Education
- Community Gardens / Sustainable Landscape Design
- Park Design for Young Children
- Child Abuse and Neglect / Strengthening Families Program Models
- Substance Abuse Prevention
- Quality Rating Systems (QRS)
- Data Sharing and Integration
- Improving the Quality of the Parent-Child Relationship
- Early Identification and Intervention
- Special Needs Children (Autism, Developmental Delays)
- Injury Prevention (Home Safety and Injury Prevention Education)
- Foster Care Issues (Adoptions, Emancipations, Teen Mothers)
- Homelessness and Homelessness Services
- Trauma Survivor Assistance, Victim-Offender Mediation and Batterers’ Intervention Programs
- Research and Evaluation Design and Implementation
- Assessment and Treatment of Juvenile Offenders
- Delivery of Early Childhood Literacy Programs
- Knowledge of Cultural Competencies and Culturally Diverse Populations
- Marketing / Communications
- Graphic or Internet Design
- Public Education Campaigns

IV. **SELECTION PROCESS**

First 5 LA staff will review each application to ensure that basic requirements are met including: timely receipt, format as required, inclusion of all appropriate attachments, etc. Applications will be reviewed by First 5 LA staff with relevant expertise employing the Level II Review Tool posted with the RFQ. Applicants approved for inclusion in the Pool of Reviewers will be contacted according to the schedule indicated in the Timeline.
V. STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS (Submission Instructions)

In order to respond to this RFQ, please complete and submit your proposal and all required documents to First 5 LA as instructed no later than 5:00 PM by October 5, 2012.

Applications, including all required attachments, must be submitted online at http://www.first5la.org/Funding-Center.

In addition to the electronic versions of the Signature Authorization and Agency Litigation Forms, please mail an original of these two signed forms (signed in blue ink) along with a cover letter stating that you are applying to the External Reviewer Pool to:

Craig A. Steele, Interim Chief Executive Officer
First 5 LA
750 N Alameda Street, Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Attention: Joshua Kruskol, Policy Analyst
External Reviewer Pool

Required Items:

1. Completed Pool of Reviewers Application: Complete the online application form accessible at http://www.first5la.org/Funding-Center

2. Résumé or Curriculum Vitae

3. Signature Authorization Form (Appendix C): This form is required to verify signature authority to enter into any contractual agreement. If not outlined in the By-laws, a Board Resolution, Partnership Agreement or Business License must be submitted, as applicable, that indicates signature authority. Applicants must submit one original form signed in blue ink. An unsigned form or omission of this signed form will constitute an incomplete application and grounds for disqualification from consideration.

4. Disclosure Regarding Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties (Appendix D): Please read, complete and provide an authorized signature in blue ink on the Disclosure Regarding Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties form. An unsigned form or omission of this signed form will constitute an incomplete application and grounds for disqualification from consideration.

5. W-9 Form

6. Criteria for External Reviewer Selection Checklist: Complete and upload through the online application system.
VI. LIMITATIONS

1. **Acceptance into the external reviewer pool is not a guarantee of work.** For those reviewers who are accepted into the pool, work will be solicited based on First 5 LA needs. First 5 LA staff will select a reviewer from the pool based on qualifications and availability, and other criteria as specified at the time of the solicitation.

2. The term of membership in this pool is one year. The reviewers in the pool will be offered the opportunity to renew their membership at the end of their 12 month period at the sole discretion of the Commission.

3. Reviewers will not be bound to remain in the pool and may exit at any time by mailing a signed, original letter to First 5 LA. Accepted reviewers are not bound to accept work solicited by First 5 LA. However, reviewers in the pool will be required to abide by the contractual considerations.

4. The Commission may, at its sole discretion, reject any or all submissions in response to this RFQ.

5. The Commission also reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to cancel this RFQ at any time. The Commission shall not be liable for any costs incurred in connection with the preparation of any submissions in response to this RFQ. Any cover letters, résumés and/or curriculum vita, including supplementary materials, submitted in response to this RFQ shall become property of the Commission and are subject to public disclosure.

6. The individual/organization submitting an application agrees that by submitting an application, the Commission is given authorization to verify any or all information and/or references given in the application.

7. The Commission reserves the right to amend the external reviewer pool as needed to best meet the needs of all parties. At the Commission’s discretion, consultants may be revised or removed.

VII. CONTRACTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Specific contractual considerations, including but not limited to the following, apply to RFQ submission process and project implementation and to any contracts that result from the submission and implementation of the project/proposal. The contractor will need to comply with all of the provisions in the attached sample contract (See Sample Contract).

A. **Conflict of Interest**
The selected Contractor will be required to comply with the COMMISSION’s Conflict of Interest provisions, as outlined in the contract, and as applicable under California Law. Contractor acknowledges that he/she/it is acting as public official pursuant to the Contract and shall therefore avoid undertaking any activity or accepting any payment, employment or gift from any third party that could create a legal conflict of interest or the appearance of any such conflict. A conflict of interest exists when one has the opportunity to advance or protect one’s own interest or private interest of others, with whom one has a relationship, in a way that is detrimental to the interest, or potentially harmful for the integrity or fundamental mission of the COMMISSION. Contractor shall maintain the confidentiality of any confidential information obtained from the COMMISSION during the Contract and shall not use such information for personal or commercial gain outside the Contract. By agreeing to the Contract and accepting financial compensation for services rendered hereunder, Contractor agrees that he/she/it will not subsequently solicit or accept employment or compensation under any program, grant or service that results from or arises out of the funded project and related initiative(s). During the term of the Contract and for one year thereafter, Contractor will not knowingly solicit or accept employment and/or compensation from any COMMISSION collaborator or Contractor without the prior written consent of the COMMISSION.

B. Compliance

Current/Former grantees and/or Contractors must be in good standing and in compliance with all aspects of their contract with the COMMISSION in order to be eligible to apply for the current Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The COMMISSION may deem an applicant ineligible if it finds in its reasonable discretion, that applicant has done any of the following, including but not limited to: (1) violated any significant terms or conditions of Grant Agreement/Contract; (2) committed any act or omission which negatively reflects on Applicant’s quality, fitness or capacity to perform services listed in RFQ with the COMMISSION or any other public entity, or engaged in a pattern or practice which negatively reflects on the same; (3) committed an act or offense which indicates a lack of business integrity or business dishonesty; or (4) made or submitted a false claim against the COMMISSION or any other public entity.

C. Contract Information

1. The COMMISSION may, at its sole discretion, reject any or all submissions in response to this RFQ. The COMMISSION also reserves the right to cancel this RFQ, at its sole discretion, at any time before execution of a contract. The COMMISSION shall not be liable for any costs incurred in connection with the preparation of any submissions in response to this RFQ. Any cover letters, résumés and/or curriculum vita, including attached materials, submitted in response to this RFQ shall become property of the COMMISSION and subject to public disclosure.

2. The agency/organization submitting an application agrees that by submitting an application it authorizes the COMMISSION to verify any or all information and/or references given in the application.
3. The COMMISSION reserves the right, after contract award, to amend the resulting contract, scope of work, and any other exhibits as needed throughout the term of the contract to best meet the needs of the COMMISSION.

4. The COMMISSION reserves the right to request additional financial information to verify applicant’s past and current financial status. This information includes, but is not limited to: the most recent independent audit, Cash Flow Statement, Statement of Activities (Income Statement), and Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet).

5. Consistent with the intent of Proposition 10: California Children and Families Act of 1998, no monies for this Project may be used to supplant Federal, State, County and/or other monies available to the organization for any purpose. Activities funded under this proposal must be new or enhancements to existing activities.

6. The award of a contract by the COMMISSION to an individual/agency/organization that proposes to use subcontractors for the performance of work under the contract resulting from this application process shall not be interpreted to limit the COMMISSION’s right to approve subcontractors, assemble teams and/or assign leads. Each applicant will be evaluated independently for added value to the overall team. A copy of executed subcontract(s) related to Program funding must be provided to the COMMISSION.

7. The selected Contractor will be required to sign the contract at least two (2) weeks prior to the intended start date of the contract, as outlined in Terms of Contract/Grant section, to assure the timely completion of the signature process by all parties. If the contract is not signed prior to the intended start date, the commencement of any activities under the Exhibit A – Scope of Work will not begin until the contract execution date (the date all parties have signed the contract) and Contractor will not be eligible to obtain reimbursement for any costs incurred prior to the contract execution date, unless otherwise approved in writing by the COMMISSION. If this Contract is not signed within the thirty-day (30) period from the intended start date, the COMMISSION has the right to withdraw the contract award. The COMMISSION reserves the right to revise the effective date prior to final execution of the contract.

   The contractor shall not be authorized to deliver or commence performance of services as described in this RFQ until final execution of the contract (contract must be signed by both parties). Final execution of the contract is contingent on First 5 LA’s Board approval of the negotiated scope of work and budget. Any performance of services commenced prior to obtaining all written approvals by First 5 LA shall be considered voluntary.

8. Unless otherwise submitted during the application process, the selected Contractor will be required to submit the required documentation listed on the Contractor Checklist, which includes, but not limited to, the following documents before the Contract can be fully executed:
   - Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties Form
   - By-laws (if applicable)
   - Articles of Incorporation (if applicable)
   - Board of Directors or List of Partners (as applicable)
- Signature Authorization Form
- Annual Independent Audit for prior fiscal year or calendar year (if applicable)
- Appropriate business licenses (for vendors or private organizations)
- IRS Letter of Determination (if applicable)
- Completed IRS Form W-9
- Memorandums of Understanding (for any sub-contractors, collaborators, and/or partners listed under Contracted Services and Evaluation sections of Exhibit B – Budget Forms)
- Certificates of Insurance for all insurance requirements outlined in the contract.

9. Per the COMMISSION’s Policy and Guidelines for Hiring Consultants, the total composite rate, which includes labor and other costs, for a Consultant may not exceed $150-$200 an hour, depending on the type of expertise. A blended rate is allowable. For example, for a contract totaling $150,000, a consultant may bill 500 hours for Consultant A at $200/hour, and 500 hours for Consultant B at $100/hour, with a total composite rate of $150/hour (1,000 total hours divided by $150,000 in billable hours = $150/hour).

10. The selected contractor/s will be required to adhere to all contractual obligations as outlined in this document, including the First 5 LA Contract (See Sample Contract). The selected applicant shall be expected to execute the contract without substantive alteration. If applicant cannot accept the terms of the contract without substantive alterations, the applicant should refrain from applying. It is imperative that all applicants review the contract language in detail and fully understand contractual obligations should they be selected.

VIII. APPEALS POLICY

First 5 LA reserves the right, without prejudice, to reject any or all submitted applications. An Appeal shall be permitted only on the grounds that the decision violated applicable law, First 5 LA policies and procedures, or the terms of the bid, RFP or RFQ. Appeals challenging First 5 LA’s decision on the merits or qualifications of bidders or proposers or the scoring of proposals shall not be permitted. An appeal of a First 5 LA decision shall be in writing and filed with the office of the CEO within ten (10) business days following the date the notification of decision is made by First 5 LA. For more information, please see First 5 LA’s Appeals Policy.