Los Angeles County Children and Families First – Proposition 10 Commission (aka First 5 LA)

RELEASE DATE: December 20, 2013
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I. TIMELINE FOR SELECTION PROCESS

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All questions and requests for additional information regarding this RFQ must be received in writing by mail or email before January 10, 2014. 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:

Jessica Kaczmarek, Senior Program Officer
First 5 LA
750 N Alameda Street, Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Email: Jkaczmarek@first5la.org

¹ The review tool for this phase of the application process will be shared with applicants during the bidders’ conference held on January 29, 2014.
II. BACKGROUND

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 (First 5 LA) 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

The First 5 LA FY 2009-2015 Strategic Plan
In 2009, First 5 LA’s Board of Commissioners adopted a new strategic plan (as amended) to guide its investments through June 2015. The plan, *Strengthening Families and Communities in L.A. County* (Appendix A), marked a significant evolution in First 5 LA’s approach to grantmaking. It was later amended by the Commission to include additional countywide initiatives developed in 2010. In addition to a countywide approach that focuses on policy change, public education, workforce development and other strategies, the strategic plan (as amended) 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 investments and research which shows the influential role of safe and supportive neighborhoods in a young child’s quality of life.

This combined place-based and countywide approach is intended to concentrate First 5 LA’s limited resources in areas of high need and to improve the sustainability of those efforts over time. The strategic plan (as amended) allows 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

The strategic plan (as amended) identified a pathway for First 5 LA investments that leads to our desired outcomes for children, families and communities in our four goal areas.

The Place-Based Approach, Best Start Communities and the Building Stronger Families Framework

First 5 LA’s place-based approach focuses on the places where families live — combining strategies to strengthen families with those that build community capacity to create and sustain thriving and healthy environments for all children. Focused on 14 traditionally underserved communities in LA County, Best Start is an important part of First 5 LA’s Strategic Plan for 2009-15. Through Best Start, First 5 LA seeks to help improve the lives of young children and their families by positively impacting the systems they participate in and the environments in which they live, learn and play.
In the spring of 2013, staff undertook steps to sharpen the focus of the work of *Best Start* as it moves forward through the remainder of the strategic plan. By late June of 2013, the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners endorsed the Building Stronger Families (BSF) framework (see Appendix B). The BSF framework is strongly supported by research and promising practices and makes clear the results being sought and how to achieve those results through place-based work.

At the heart of the framework is the belief that if families are strong and communities are family-supporting, children will have better long-term outcomes.

"Strong families” are those that support and promote optimal child well-being. Research and evidence-based practices have identified key characteristics of a “strong family.” These characteristics, which relate to parents and expectant parents, are also known as family strengthening “protective factors”. Rooted in these protective factors, First 5 LA’s BSF framework focuses on three core family results:

- Families demonstrate resilience, parental knowledge, and positive relationships that support their children’s social and emotional competence.
- Families participate in positive social networks that provide multiple opportunities for mutual support and leadership development.
- Families access concrete supports in times of need.

Strategies that promote strong families are those that build and support the ability of parents to effectively care for and promote the healthy development, school readiness and well-being of young children.

“Family-supporting communities” are communities that engage parents, residents, community-based organizations (CBOs), businesses and other community partners to support families and optimal child development. The three core community results of the BSF framework are:

- Neighborhoods and communities establish a common vision and act collectively to:
  - Improve the policies, services and environments that build family protective factors.
  - Influence the availability and quality of concrete services.
- Neighborhood and communities support and sustain environments that:
  - Promote positive, regular social interaction for families.
  - Encourage social interaction and promote healthy living.
- Neighborhoods and communities develop and sustain services and supports that meet family needs.

Informed by resident leaders in the *Best Start* communities, in June of 2013, the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners approved criteria to guide the selection of activities to support community progress toward the BSF framework’s three core family and three core community results:

- Alignment with the current strategic plan’s defined investment areas:
  - Direct Services (Family Strengthening)
  - Community Capacity Building
o Systems Improvement
- Evidence-based or promising practices related to the Building Stronger Families Framework core family and community results.
- Outcomes of the activity are achievable in 5-10 years.
- The activity offers the potential to mobilize resources and enhance sustainability.

**Best Start Community Partnerships** represent an important First 5 LA-supported activity to promote relationship- and capacity-building among parents and diverse community stakeholders to improve outcomes for children in Best Start communities. These partnerships consist of parents, civic and business leaders, members of the clergy, representatives from community-based organizations and others working together in support of young children and families in each of the 14 Best Start communities.

**The Systems Connection**
First 5 LA’s approach to building stronger families – grounded in evidence-based attributes known as the “protective factors” – represents a systematic way to impact large numbers of young children and their families. By working to incorporate these factors into existing programs and services – such as early childhood education - First 5 LA and its Best Start community partners can contribute to change in organizational policy and practice across different systems and settings at the community level and county-wide. By working collaboratively with both county agencies and Best Start community partners, First 5 LA can help facilitate and promote learning and linkages at multiple levels to better align positive results for families.

Best Start communities exist in and are supported by a broader context of systems, policy and funding. This includes the mandates and structures through which health and human services are provided in Los Angeles County, as well as the economic, philanthropic, and policy environment - and the public will - around issues related to children and families. Strong, coordinated and responsive systems and investments are critical to responding to gaps in services and supports that meet family needs, including high quality services and opportunities for economic and educational success. Informed by the work of Best Start community partnerships, First 5 LA grantees and its governmental, philanthropic, business and other partners are working together to ensure that the systems, policy and funding context more effectively supports Best Start’s contributions and, together, “move the needle” to strengthen families and improve results for children.

**Countywide Approach**
The 2009-15 Strategic Plan (as amended) recognizes 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 Los Angeles County, as well as less formalized systems. By focusing on countywide systems improvement, countywide investments can have an impact beyond the children in the 14 Best Start communities. At the same time, this approach will help reinforce 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 — community-based experience and concrete evidence regarding models that strengthen families and improve outcomes for children, such as those First 5 LA will be supporting in the Best Start communities.
The countywide approach is a comprehensive effort that includes a variety of programs, strategies and initiatives. The 2009-15 Strategic Plan (as amended) incorporates seven specific countywide strategies: public policy, public education, resource mobilization, workforce development, data systems integration and health access. In addition, First 5 LA is supporting an array of countywide investments in areas such as universal screening and assessment of newborns, early care and education workforce development, nutrition and physical activity programs for families and in child care facilities, and parental support projects. Among other strategies, First 5 LA supports efforts to increase access to health care and insurance for pregnant women, children and their families; provide telephonic or online and printed resource directories for families; and enhance the impact of our investments through effective, strategic partnerships.

Listening, Learning and Leading (L3)

In January 2013, as First 5 LA entered the mid-point of its current strategic plan, a new senior leadership team assumed responsibility for the organization. Under the direction of the new Executive Director, the organization embarked on a six-month assessment process known as “Listening, Learning and Leading (L3)” to explore and better understand the progress First 5 LA has made in achieving its goals and the organization’s role in improving outcomes for LA County’s young children.

The work of L3 included three prongs:

- A review First 5 LA’s work to date and progress toward reaching stated program goals. This included internal and external stakeholder listening sessions and a review of evaluation materials.
- An examination of First 5 LA’s internal processes and procedures to determine the organization’s capacity to achieve its strategic goals. This review included a preliminary assessment of First 5 LA’s organizational structure, financial management and administrative systems, contracting processes and grantee technical assistance/support.
- An environmental scan examining the landscape of programs, organizations, collaborative, policies and demographic trends affecting the 0 to 5 population and their families at the local, state and national levels.

L3 was informed by stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and staff and external stakeholder surveys. Additionally, several other reports contributed to the analysis including First 5 LA’s Accountability and Learning Report, the P-3 Environmental Scan, a branding study and a funding analysis. The findings from the L3 process provided a wealth of information about the strategic issues and opportunities facing First 5 LA. One of the major findings pertained to the need for First 5 LA to sharpen its strategic focus and specificity as an organization in order to increase its impact. Additionally, stakeholders identified the need for First 5 LA to bring greater clarity to its role within LA County. In terms of its initiatives, it was acknowledged that First 5 LA is making an important contribution to the well-being of children, but the impact is at the participant level rather than the broader community level.

Overall, grantees and contractors were positive in describing their experiences with First 5 LA; however, some stakeholders felt that the Commission is sometimes “rigid” in how it
works with others. It was noted that greater consistency in processes and procedures is needed.

In terms of leadership and governance, the Commission was recognized for the role it plays as an advocate for children. Questions were also raised regarding the extent to which the First 5 LA Board uses the strategic plan as a basis for its decision making. Although staff was identified as a major asset to the organization because of its passion and experience in supporting the mission of First 5 LA, stakeholders noted that staff needs to do a better job of working with and informing the First 5 LA Board of the broader implications of their decisions.

The final L3 report was very optimistic about the future of First 5 LA, recognizing the opportunity the organization has to have a greater impact on LA County’s children and families. But as resources decline, First 5 LA will be forced to think more strategically about its role and focus in order to remain a leader in this field at the county, state and national levels.

Organizational Transition Team
The various work products undertaken in 2013, as noted above, provided First 5 LA with valuable information about the organization’s progress in achieving its goals and the role it plays and can play within LA County. Because of this review, a number of internal realignment activities were launched in the last few months to improve First 5 LA’s organizational effectiveness. These efforts focus on developing new business systems, assessing staff compensation and benefits, and reviewing internal policies and procedures. To better manage and coordinate these efforts, an interdepartmental Organizational Transition Team (OTT) was created to translate and leverage baseline learning from L3, the Building Stronger Families framework (BSFF), and other inputs – Where we are today – to a concrete set of recommendations and administrative action agenda. Through OTT, First 5 LA also identified a set of activities staff can incorporate into their daily work to better align the place-based and countywide investments in support of the principles outlined in the FY 2009-2015 Strategic Plan (as amended).

III. PROJECT OVERVIEW: FIRST 5 LA’S NEXT STRATEGIC PLAN

First 5 LA is seeking a consultant to work with staff in the development of its next strategic plan. This strategic plan will build upon the FY 2009-2015 Strategic Plan (as amended) as well as the information collected from the learning and assessments initiated in 2013, which brought clarity and focus to the First 5 LA’s mission, goals and investments for the future. Given the reviews completed in 2013 and the assumption that the 2014 planning process should focus on rebalancing the FY 2009-15 Strategic Plan (as amended), an accelerated and streamlined timeline is both desired and possible. All work associated with producing this strategic plan must be completed during 2014. Staff expects eight months of synthesis, gap analyses and strategic conversations with the Board and staff, culminating in the approval of the plan by First 5 LA’s Board in November 2014. An additional 4-7 months following approval of the next strategic plan are expected to partner with staff and existing organizational development experts in identifying implementation implications for the organization.
The following list represents key activities expected to occur during this accelerated timeline. The information is not exhaustive, but represents important analyses staff expects a consultant team will need to complete in order to support First 5 LA in finalizing and adopting a comprehensive strategic plan. First 5 LA will look to a prospective consultant to inform, revise and enhance these suggestions, as needed. The list includes but is not limited to the following:

a) Managing an abbreviated review period during which the consultant team will analyze and synthesize information from materials produced as part of the 2013 internal assessment period. Updates or refinements to these reports or scans will be considered if they are needed to affirm findings or test assumptions. As part of this learning period, the consultant team will work with staff to identify ways to coordinate strategic planning efforts with work currently underway through BSFF implementation as well as activities staff identified through OTT to align the organization’s place-based and countywide efforts.

b) Developing a framework for the strategic planning period and its implementation. The consultant team will be expected to work with staff to present a strategic planning framework to the Board of Commissioners (Board) and/or the Board designated committee tasked with overseeing the strategic planning process early in the proposed contract period. The framework will guide the planning process for its duration. Included in this framework will be a comprehensive timeline noting key milestones and progress markers throughout the year as well as decision-making criteria for the Board to use during its deliberation of strategic options. These criteria will be used during facilitated conversations regarding the organization’s mission and vision, desired outcomes/impact, programmatic focus and funding allocations.

c) Reviewing with the Board or the Board designated committee First 5 LA’s current mission and vision statements to reaffirm or modify, if needed. The consultant team in partnership with staff will then assess the extent to which the current strategic plan (as amended) provides a foundation to achieve the mission of the organization. Additionally, the Board is expected to review prior initiatives to decide what contribution they make to the organization’s goals in 2015 and beyond. The Board will use decision-making criteria as it considers the possibility of folding these “legacy” initiatives into the next strategic plan or allow them to expire according to their original terms. Analysis of opportunities to enhance the current strategic plan (as amended) so it better aligns with the organization’s mission and goals will also be considered. The consultant team will work with staff to test programmatic decisions against decision-making criteria, develop possible scenarios for the Board to consider and make recommendations.

d) Involving external stakeholders in the planning process. Internal and external stakeholders such as staff, key partners and constituents will be expected to provide feedback into the proposed goals of the next strategic plan before it is finalized. These stakeholders will also be able to inform a conversation about First 5 LA’s role in the county, state and national level. A process or communication mechanism will need to be created to allow for that input.
e) Informing ongoing First 5 LA-led efforts to improve the existing business systems and operational infrastructure needed to ensure the agency is a high-performing, effective organization. Staff is currently reviewing, modifying and strengthening the organization’s internal business systems, contracting and budgeting processes and organizational policies and procedures. As the organization clarifies its strategic focus through strategic planning, the consultant team will need to coordinate with staff leading these efforts, as well as any organizational development consultant the agency has acquired, to identify the possible implications to operations resulting from strategic decisions approved by the Board.

IV. ELIGIBILITY AND QUALIFICATIONS

A. Eligibility: Proposals will be considered from public and private entities and/or collaboratives. Applicants should have an established staff presence and office in California, have the capacity to work in Los Angeles County, and have extensive experience in conducting multi-year strategic planning efforts for large organizations. The top four, highly-qualified applicants will be invited for a bidders’ conference with staff as well as an interview.

B. Consultant Qualifications: Applicants must have the experience, knowledge, skill and time necessary to execute a successful strategic planning effort. These qualities include:

1. EXPERIENCE
   - Experience working with organizations similar in size, structure or complexity to First 5 LA (e.g. other First 5 Commissions or similar public organizations with commissions or politically appointed boards) on strategic planning efforts is preferable;
   - Strong history of working on large scale initiatives involving community and systems change efforts;
   - Demonstrated success in facilitating and building consensus amongst an expansive and diverse array of stakeholders with varied interests;
   - Experience scanning, analyzing and synthesizing the socio-economic, political, philanthropic, programmatic trends affecting young children and their families is desired, but not required;
   - Experience with drafting, revising, implementing and monitoring strategic plans;
   - Experience working with key informants such as funders, policy and decision makers and agency and community leaders in LA County;

2. KNOWLEDGE
   - Strong knowledge of the funding and political environment in California and Los Angeles County;
   - Understanding of issues facing First 5 LA, First 5 California and other Commissions across the State as they relate to First 5 LA;
   - General understanding of issues facing young children and families in California and LA County, especially in the areas of health, early learning and safety of children and families with young children;
• Basic knowledge of research and evaluation methodologies, and theoretical models and approaches;
• Working knowledge of grant-making and public and private funding institutions;
• Basic understanding of organizational development, including the ability to assess organizational challenges and facilitate dialogues and processes toward policy recommendations, if necessary;

3. **SKILLS**
• Ability to bring in the expertise needed to produce high quality deliverables;
• Capable of working with diverse community perspectives around issues affecting the children and families;
• Ability to galvanize individuals, groups and communities, with a variety of interests, to build consensus around a shared vision;
• Ability to communicate complex issues, stimulate creative thinking and negotiate differences to resolve conflicts;
• Ability to initiate and facilitate conversations with key informants, lead and facilitate public hearings and mediate public forums;
• Strong written and oral communication skills; ability to synthesize information from multiple sources and form recommendations to report to the First 5 LA staff and Commission;
• Ability to be accessible and flexible in accordance with product timelines and activities;
• Strong management and team building skills.

4. **AVAILABILITY**
The timeline for this project will be intense. In order to be considered, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have the capacity to complete all deliverables within the 12-15 month timeframe.

V. **STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS**

A. Required Documents:
Interested applicants are encouraged to participate in the Information Session for this RFQ, scheduled for January 8, 2014. Following this information session, all required documents must be submitted through the online application which can be found at [www.first5la.org/Funding-Center](http://www.first5la.org/Funding-Center). The deadline for submitting these materials is no later than January 21, 2014 5 p.m. PST.

1. **Online Application:** Applicants are required to complete an online application, noting contact information for the organization applying as well as the project lead.

2. **Narrative application:** Please provide the requested information in one separate document and attach it to your online application. There is an eight page maximum for this portion of your application. The narrative must be 12-point font, double spaced.

   a. Given the information presented in this RFQ, as well as what the applicant knows about First 5 LA, interested parties are asked to submit a narrative describing their
experience in conducting large scale strategic planning for an organization similar in complexity to First 5 LA. The narrative will need to demonstrate the experience, knowledge, and skills the applicant will bring to the project, paying particular attention to the type of team that will be assembled. A successful application will provide a general description of the approach the consultant and their proposed team will use to complete the work outlined in Section III of this RFQ. This description should explain how the applicant will leverage and enhance the extensive learning and organizational improvements First 5 LA completed during 2013, as well as any additional analyses the applicant believes are essential to inform the process. To that end, please recommend methods and strategies that can be used to ensure completion and approval of the strategic plan by November 2014.

3. **Resume(s):** Include the resume(s) for the key staff leading, managing or participating on the project with First 5 LA (3-4 page maximum per resume).

4. **Work samples:** Two (2) samples of applicant’s completed work products that are most applicable to the work the consultant will be undertaking in this project and that best demonstrates the applicants’ competency in their declared area of expertise or knowledge domain.

5. **Signature Authorization Form:** This form is required in order to verify signature authority to enter into contractual agreement with First 5 LA. If not outlined in the Bylaws, a Board Resolution or Partnership Agreement must be submitted, as applicable, that indicates signature authority (see Appendix E). An unsigned form or its omission will constitute an incomplete application and will be grounds for disqualification.

6. **Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties:** Please read the information on the required Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties form thoroughly. An unsigned form or its omission will constitute an incomplete application and will be grounds for disqualification (Appendix F).

All documents must be submitted through the online application system by **January 21, 2014 at 5 p.m. PST.**

**VI. PROJECT PROPOSALS REQUIRED FOR TOP FOUR APPLICANTS**

Following submission of the materials described in Section V, external reviewers will evaluate and score the applicant’s qualifications and initial narrative against the experience, skills, knowledge and availability expectations outlined in Section IV of this RFQ. The top four applicants meeting First 5 LA's desired qualifications will be invited to participate in a mandatory bidders’ conference, scheduled for January 29, 2014. During this bidders’ conference, applicants will meet with staff and learn additional details about the baseline assessments First 5 LA completed in 2013. Applicants will then be invited to revise their written narrative, if necessary, and submit a scope of work outlining specific activities and deliverables the team will complete to ensure the next
strategic plan is approved by November 2014. A proposed budget and budget narrative will be submitted at that time.

1. **Revised narrative application:** Applicants will have the opportunity to revise the written narrative submitted in the first round review. This updated narrative will describe how the proposed team will build upon existing information First 5 LA acquired in 2013 as it reviewed its progress and focus in meeting the objectives of the current strategic plan. The revised narrative should discuss additional specifics about the approach the consultant team will use to support staff in its engagement with the Board and external stakeholders to achieve consensus on strategic focus.

2. **Scope of Work:** Using Appendix C, Scope of Work, describe the objectives, activities and related deliverables based on the response in the Revised Narrative Application section for a 12-15 month period beginning March 14, 2014. As noted above, the first eight months of this timeframe will be devoted to strategic planning, so the SOW will need to outline specific activities and deliverables expected during that period. The SOW will also note specific analyses that will be updated and identify engagement points with the Board and external stakeholders. The remaining 4-7 months of the SOW will identify steps to achieving full implementation of the strategic plan, highlighting decision points and opportunities to link and inform internal operational efforts that will affect successful implementation of the next strategic plan. *This version of the Scope of Work is for application scoring purposes and may serve as the starting point for the final contract. The final Scope of Work will be negotiated with First 5 LA upon selection of the finalist.*

3. **Hourly budget:** Using Appendix D, Hourly Budget Forms, provide your hourly rate (not to exceed a composite rate of $150/hour) and detail personnel and supporting expenses for the proposed deliverables outlined in your Scope of Work.

4. **Budget narrative:** In the Budget Narrative, explain the included costs over a 12-15 month period for this proposed project. This includes an estimate of the number of hours personnel assigned to the project will commit on a monthly basis. Include a brief description of the individuals’ role/expertise/services, the rate of pay and the formula used to determine the total amount. Also identify and provide a general description of all other non-personnel costs (for example, equipment, printing, copying, space, telephone, supplies, etc.) required to complete the deliverables and assumptions used in estimating those costs. Specify the quantity, cost per unit, duration of use, and purpose of these items, where appropriate. The contract will be for 12-15 months for up to $250,000.

VII. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. General

In order for applications to be considered acceptable and eligible for award, they must be prepared in accordance with the instructions given in this solicitation. Provided that the application was submitted on time with all required documents, qualifications will be evaluated from a technical standpoint based on the applicant’s proven ability in their area of expertise.
B. Review Criteria & Process
Qualifications will be scored by a team of external reviewers. Please see Appendix H for a copy of the review tool that will be used to guide the scoring of applicants by the external reviewers. As discussed in the previous section, the top four qualified consultants that pass the initial external review will be invited by First 5 LA staff to participate in a mandatory bidders' conference where details from the findings of the 2013 assessments will be presented. Following this meeting with staff, applicants will be invited to update their initial narrative describing the proposed approach to facilitating the strategic planning process. A scope of work identifying objectives, activities, deliverables and timeline for completing work as well as an hourly budget and narrative explaining the hours, rate of pay and other costs associated with executing activities included will then be submitted. These materials will be reviewed by staff and will form the basis for the interviews staff will conduct with applicants before making a final selection.

The Commission reserves the right, without prejudice, to reject any or all submitted qualifications.

1. Statement of Qualifications Review Process
Level 1: First 5 LA staff will review each application to ensure that basic requirements are met. Basic requirements include: timely receipt of application, required format, inclusion of all appropriate attachments, etc. Submissions with omissions of any required documentation are subject to disqualification. (See Appendix G)

Level 2: Applications will be reviewed by a team of external reviewers using the Statement of Qualifications Review Tool posted with the RFQ (Appendix H). External reviewers are required to sign a Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement.

Level 3: The top four, highest scoring applicants will be asked to participate in a mandatory bidders’ conference led by First 5 LA staff. Following the bidders’ conference, applicants may submit a revised narrative application as well as a scope of work, budget and narrative for staff review. **The review tool for this phase of the application process will be shared with applicants during the bidders’ conference held on January 29, 2014.**

As a public entity, the Commission has a responsibility to the public to ensure that the contractors who receive our funds are financially stable to provide the contracted services. Further written materials regarding the financial stability of the agency may be requested by our finance department prior to the interview.

Level 4: Finalists will be interviewed by a team of First 5 LA staff members.

Award and declination notifications are anticipated to be sent out to consultants in late February/early March 2014.

VIII. TERMS OF PROJECT

A. Available Funding
The Commission expects to enter into a 12-15 month contract with the selected consultant/organization. The contract may be eligible for renewal at the end of the contract period. The total contract amount for the first 12-15 months is not to exceed $250,000.

B. Contract Period
The contract period is expected to start on March 14, 2014 for 12-15 months.

IX. 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 will all of the provisions in the attached sample contract (See Appendix I).

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 reserves the right to reject all bids and re-advertise for bids. Failure to comply with bid specification shall be grounds for disqualification of bids. Each bidder or proposer shall be required to honor the price and specifications quoted for a minimum of sixty (60) calendar days following submission of the bid. 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 sub-contractors 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/Term of 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 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).

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.

X. 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, RFQ or RFP. 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 Executive Director or his/her designee within ten
(10) business days following the date the notification of decision is made by First 5 LA. For more information, please refer to the Appeals Policy located at http://www.first5la.org/About-Us/Policies.

XI. APPENDICES
All Appendices are available on the RFQ website

Appendix A. First 5 FY 2009-2015 Strategic Plan (as amended)
Appendix B. Best Start Building Stronger Families Framework
Appendix C. Scope of Work Instructions/Template (for top four applicants, only)
Appendix D. Hourly Budget Form (for top four applicants, only)
Appendix E. Signature Authorization Form
Appendix F. Agency Involvement in Litigation Form
Appendix G. Level One Review Tool
Appendix H. Level Two Review Tool
Appendix I. Sample Contract