Early Identification of and Referrals to Early Intervention Services for Autism and Other Developmental Delays Training and Technical Assistance Provider REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)
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I. TIMELINE FOR SELECTION PROCESS

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<td>RFQ Released</td>
<td>July 31, 2013</td>
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<td>Information Session</td>
<td>August 14, 2013</td>
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<td>Final date to submit questions regarding RFQ</td>
<td>August 23, 2103</td>
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<td>Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) posted</td>
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<td>October 7 – 11, 2013</td>
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<td>October 14 – 31, 2013</td>
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<td>November 14, 2013</td>
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<td>Contracts start date</td>
<td>December 1, 2013</td>
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*Dates listed in timeline are subject to change at First 5 LA’s sole discretion.

All questions and requests for additional information regarding this RFP must be received by First 5 LA in writing by 5:00 p.m. on August 23, 2013. 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 can be submitted to:

Lee Werbel, Senior Program Officer
Program Development Department
First 5 LA
750 N. Alameda Street, Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Phone: 213.482.7553
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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 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*, 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 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 support the sustainability of those efforts over time. The strategic plan (as amended) 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**

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

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. The research and promising practices\(^1\) 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. The expectation is that each community partnership will submit proposals to the First 5 LA commissioners for future investments that target community-identified priorities that will help advance Best Start’s primary goals that children in each community grow up safe, healthy and ready to learn.

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To learn more about Best Start, visit www.beststartla.org.

**Countywide Approach**
The 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 L.A. County, as well as less formalized systems. By focusing on countywide systems improvement and change, countywide investments can have an impact beyond the children in the 14 Best Start communities. At the same time, this approach will help 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 — community-based experience and concrete evidence regarding models that strengthen families and improve outcomes for children, 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. The strategic plan (as amended) incorporates seven specific countywide strategies, including 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. 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. PROJECT OVERVIEW**

**Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Developmental Delays (DD)**
Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) are a group of developmental disabilities—caused by disorder—in the brain that can result in major social, communication and behavioral challenges. Autism is the most severe developmental disorder on the spectrum, which includes Asperger and Rett syndromes, and is the fastest-growing developmental disability with a 1,148% growth rate across California.\(^2\) In March 2013, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) announced that 1 out of 50 children aged 6 to 17 years has an Autism spectrum disorder diagnosis, a significantly higher rate than the previous year of 1 in 88 children and an exponential increase from 1993 where 1 in 10,000 children were being

Prevalence of an ASD is 5 times more common among boys (1 in 54) than among girls (1 in 252). Across California, there are 72,000 individuals who have been diagnosed with Autism. There is a higher percentage of children with Autism in Los Angeles County (1.46%) who are K-5 public education students than across all of California (1.1%).

Onset of ASD symptoms can occur between 12 and 36 months of age. The most common early symptoms, which present as early as 18 months, include: fleeting eye contact; limited gesturing (pointing, waving good-bye); limited pretend play; difficulty reading nonverbal cues; difficulty understanding others' perspectives; odd language; repetitive motor and object play; or difficulties with changes in environment/routine.

A. Developmental Screening, Identification, and Early Intervention

As with any developmental disability, the earlier a delay is detected, the earlier treatment can begin and better the life prospects for a diagnosed child. Early identification and intervention can help a child access services and learn new skills. Research has shown that a diagnosis of Autism at age 2 can be reliable, valid and stable. However, most children are not identified until after they reach age 4. Thus, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all children be screened—using evidence-based assessment tools such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 (ASQ-3); Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional (ASQ: SE); Parents Evaluation of Development Status (PEDS); and Developmental Milestones and the Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT)—Autism at their 18- and 24-month well baby check-ups. Physicians and various health-care and early care and education practitioners also encourage parents and caregivers to learn about key developmental milestones as well as the signs and symptoms of delay so they can bring any developmental concerns to professionals as soon as any suspected delays are observed.

Once detected, therapists have had success treating ASD and DD symptoms through behavioral therapy, and to a smaller extent, pharmacological treatments, including antipsychotics, antidepressants, anticonvulsants/mood stabilizers, stimulants and hypnotics have found to be effective (Memari, et. al., 2011). The current treatment is intensive comprehensive behavioral intervention including speech, occupational, and physical therapy, and communication/social skills training starting ideally in early childhood.

Treatment of ASD has been a particular challenge, as symptoms of the disorders often include significant behavior issues that impede therapeutic progress (Pizur-Barnekow, et. al., 2010). These behavioral issues also affect children's overall academic performances and school success. Key skills that determine kindergarten readiness include the ability to stay within an instructional area, the ability to follow directions, pre-reading skills, basic social functioning, gross and fine motor skills, and self-control (Grissmer, et. al., 2010). Children

4 http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss6103a1.htm?s_cid=ss6103a1_w
6 http://spreadsheets.latimes.com/Autism-california-elementary-schools/
with ASD, as part of their symptomatic makeup, tend to demonstrate impulsivity, lack of awareness for the environment, lack of empathy and social awareness, rigidity to their own routines and expectations, language delays, gross and/or fine motor delays, social skills delays, and struggles with self-control (Pizur-Barnekow, et. al., 2010). These characteristics directly impact a child's readiness for kindergarten, making early detection and intervention vital for school success.

B. Disparities in Early Identification and Intervention Services
A major obstacle in early detection of developmental delays is the lack of uniformity in the screening, diagnostic, and treatment procedures and services among various cultural groups. Differences in detection and intervention have been associated with a number of socioeconomic factors including race/ethnicity, household income, and parental education (Hamilton, 2010). Studies have shown that white children are diagnosed with Autism and other developmental delays much earlier than African American children (on average, 1.6 years earlier), and are generally brought in for screening and diagnostic testing by their parents at an earlier age (Mandell, et. al., 2002). African American children are also much more likely than white children to receive diagnoses of global behavioral problems or conduct disorders before being correctly diagnosed with ASD (Mandell, et. al., 2007). In 2011, the California Department of Developmental Services spent an average of $11,723 on services for white children, $11,063 on Asian children, $7,634 on Latino children, and $6,593 on African American children (Zarembo, 2011). In the Los Angeles Unified School District, white elementary students from the affluent west side of the County were found to have behavioral aides, which cost as much as $60,000 annually to accompany them daily throughout their school day at 10 times the rate of Latino students from the eastside of the County. Moreover, Regional Centers located in Northern Los Angeles County, a primarily white region with a majority of residents completing some college and a majority of households earning between $60,000 and $125,000 per year, were found to have spent an average of $17,803 per child for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Developmental Delays. In contrast, averaging per child expenditures by Regional Centers in South Central Los Angeles, a highly culturally- and linguistically-diverse region with a majority of residents who have not completed high school and a majority of households making less than $20,000 per year, were found to be only $1,991 per child for similar services for their children (Zarembo, 2011).

Other factors contributing to disparities in early identification and intervention services include language barriers, cultural stigmas related to having a child with Autism or developmental delays, and/or lack of parental awareness and understanding of developmental delays.

Language barriers between parents and providers have compromised both parents and providers. For providers, it has made it difficult for them to receive clear descriptions from parents regarding their children’s symptoms and unusual behaviors when screening for developmental delays. For parents, it has limited their opportunities to learn about healthy child development, symptoms of delay and unusual behavior(s), and the importance of early developmental screening, identification, and initiation of early intervention (Zarembo, 2011). Also, parents’ feelings of inadequacy and shame have made some parents reluctant to seek assistance and services for their special needs child (CNN Health, 1997; Memari, et. al.)
al., 2011). Thus, having a significant network of culturally competent professionals with linguistic capacities to communicate in a culturally sensitive manner with families in the heart of Los Angeles County’s most disadvantage communities is imperative. Addressing language-related barriers is critically important for the Los Angeles County child and family service communities given that there are 224 different languages spoken throughout Los Angeles County (not counting dialects). English is a primary spoken language in less than 50% (43.59%) of the County’s households while 39.38% of the households’ primary language is Spanish.\(^8\)

C. Parent Education and Advocacy

Despite the advances with increased public education and advocacy, traditional views of ASD and DDs as products of poor or ineffective parenting still exist, and often there is little community support within a number of cultures for children and families affected by ASD and DDs (You & McGraw, 2011). Studies have found that parent peer support groups and parent education on the medical nature of ASD and DDs have significantly increased parents’ abilities to advocate for services on behalf of their children, in addition to reducing anxiety and shame related to parenting a child with special needs (You & McGraw, 2011). Parents who had received information and were educated on the medical nature of ASD and DDs prior to having a child with special needs were also more likely to seek assistance earlier after identifying unusual behavior in their children (You & McGraw, 2011).

Educating and empowering parents on their children’s rights to available treatment services even when service providers were hesitant to offer it in the face of constricting budgets have been found to result in parents successfully obtaining services for their children (Zarembo, 2011).

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In September 2011, First 5 LA approved a $900,000 allocation to focus on the early identification of Autism and Other Developmental Delays to increase the number of children from underserved communities that are screened, receive referrals to early intervention services if needed, and are integrated into Los Angeles County’s various systems of care. In May 2013, First 5 LA approved an additional $1.6 million, bringing the total allocation to $2.5 million.

With the overall goal of increasing developmental screening and referrals to early services for children identified as being developmentally delayed or autistic in underserved communities, First 5 LA’s investment will aim to: 1) raise the competencies of local community-based providers’ capacities to conduct developmental screenings, identify developmental delay(s), and refer identified children and families to culturally and linguistically appropriate early intervention services and support as early as possible; 2) improve young children and families’ access to developmental screenings and early

intervention services; 3) increase parents’ knowledge about healthy development and developmental delays to ensure young children are screened for meeting critical developmental milestones; and 4) strengthen support for parents with special needs children.

First 5 LA’s Early Identification to and Referrals to Early Identification Services for Autism and Other Developmental Delays funding opportunity will support: 1) the development and implementation of six pilot projects with culturally and linguistically competent community-based providers to address systemic barriers and reduce racial/ethnic disparities in developmental screening and access to early intervention services faced by underserved children; and 2) raising the competencies of the six community based providers’ capacities to conduct developmental screenings, identify developmental delays, and refer identified children and families to appropriate early intervention services.

Objectives and Outcomes
In achieving the above stated goal, the Early Identification of and Referrals to Early Intervention Services for Autism and Other Developmental Delays project will support the development and implementation of pilot projects in underserved communities over a 3-year period to realize the following objectives:

Objective 1: Raise the competencies of local community-based providers’ capacities to conduct developmental screenings, identify developmental delay(s), and refer identified children and families to culturally and linguistically appropriate early intervention services and support as early as possible
- Outcome 1: Number of culturally competent community-based providers trained evidence-based developmental screening tools such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3).
- Outcome 2: Number of providers who gain competency in conducting developmental screening and referring families with young children to early intervention services.
- Outcome 3: Sustained practice in conducting developmental screenings and making referrals to early intervention services for appropriate children

Objective 2: Improve young children and families’ access to developmental screenings and early intervention services
- Outcome 1: Number of culturally competent community-based providers trained on evidence-based developmental screening tools such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3).
- Outcome 2: Number of children who receive a developmental screening in targeted community.
- Outcome 3: Time for children to receive early intervention services.
- Outcome 4: Number of children who receive early intervention services.
- Outcome 5: Results of early intervention services.

Objective 3: Increase parents’ knowledge about healthy development and developmental delays to ensure young children are screened for meeting critical developmental milestones
- Outcome 1: Parental knowledge of child’s development including the developmental milestones and availability of community services.
Objective 4: Strengthen support for parents with special needs children.

- Outcome 1: Parental connection to community resources such as, but not limited to, faith based, health care providers, informal peer support groups, and preschool and childcare providers.
- Outcome 2: Parents’ satisfaction with services provided by community-based organization.

First 5 LA will issue a separate Request for Proposals to support the development and implementation of six pilot projects, with each pilot project receiving up to $345,000 over a three year period. The primary tasks for the six pilot projects include:

- Initiating and/or continuing to conduct developmental screenings for infants and toddlers;
- Conducting outreach to parents and families to promote awareness of Autism and Other Developmental Delays
- Creating support for parents and families;
- Educating parents on child development, developmental delays, and the importance of developmental screening, early identification and initiation of early intervention service;
- Providing referrals and guidance on finding resources for intervention services and treatment related to Autism and Other Developmental Delays; and
- Working with the Technical Assistance and Training provider to build their capacities to conduct developmental screenings, identify developmental delay(s), provide referrals and follow-up to early intervention services programs, leverage fiscal and non-fiscal resources beyond First 5 LA funding.

To support raising the competencies of the selected community-based providers’ capacity, $400,000 of the overall $2.5 million allocation is dedicated for a Training and Technical Assistance provider. Details of the proposed scope of work for the Training and Technical Assistance provider is describe below.

IV. STATEMENT OF WORK

Through this Request for Qualifications, First 5 LA will select a Training and Technical Assistance provider who will support the selected community-based providers by developing guidelines for screening tools adherence and providing training and technical assistance to the six selected pilot organizations.

Recognizing that the implementation of developmental screenings requires adequate preparation, communication, and follow through, the Training and Technical Assistance provider will support the six selected pilot organizations by strengthening their abilities to:

- Conduct developmental screenings effectively;
- Score questionnaires, interpret results, and identify developmental risk factors;
• Understand the referral process (including diagnosis and early intervention services) for diagnosing screened children, and provide parents with follow-up to make sure the referral was completed;
• Work with families from diverse cultural backgrounds;
• Understand parents’ role in the screening process;
• Discuss screening results sensitively with families;
• Identify existing resources to support implementation of a developmental screenings program;
• Assist selected pilot projects in identifying and overcoming systemic challenges for families to receive early intervention services;
• Assist selected pilot projects in identifying and following through with leveraging opportunities (fiscal and non-fiscal resources) beyond First 5 LA funding; and
• Work with the Los Angeles County 211 telephone system to form a Developmental Screening Task Force to inform the program and provide a platform for sharing common challenges/issues, lessons learned, and promote systemic changes.

**Training and Technical Assistance Provider Tasks**

Specifically, in order to support the six selected pilot organizations as listed above, First 5 LA expects the selected Training and Technical Assistance provider to complete five tasks outlined below:

**Task 1: Review Background Data on the Availability of early identification of and referrals to early identification services for autism and other developmental delays in six pilot communities.**

The selected contractor will be expected to review and analyze the prevalence and accessibility of early identification of and referrals to early identification services for autism and other developmental delays in Los Angeles County and specifically the availability of services for First 5 LA’s target population children ages 0-5. Analysis of available data should inform the planning process outlined in tasks three and five.

**Task 2: Develop a Technical Assistance Plan and Curriculum for the six pilot projects.**

- Screening tool identified
- Recommended curriculum and number of technical assistance sessions
- Participation requirements
- Strategy, platform, and format for delivering the technical assistance
- Timeline

A draft plan will be submitted to First 5 LA for review and comment once the contract has commenced. A final plan will then be updated and issued to reflect any input from First 5 LA, as appropriate.

**Task 3: Execute Technical Assistance Plan.**

The selected contractor will be expected to execute the technical assistance program according to the approved plan.

**Task 4: Provide quarterly implementation reports.**
The contractor will be responsible for providing quarterly implementation status reports. The status reports should minimally include:

- Number of staff and agencies who participated in Technical Assistance activities
- Number staff and agencies who have completed the Technical Assistance activities
- Implementation challenges and recommendations for future Technical Assistance activities
- Actual implementation status versus planned implementation and report on any relevant issues that warrant consideration by First 5 LA

**Task 5: Prepare an evaluation report annually**

The contractor is expected to submit annually an evaluation report on the overall progress on the Technical Assistance strategy and implementation. The report should highlight:

- Process data
- The degree to which project implementation achieved the desired expansion of Early Identification of and Referrals to Early Identification Services for Autism and Other Developmental Delays project
- Recommendations for future years’ implementation

The selected contractor will also be expected to support and participate in First 5 LA’s evaluation of the program and may be asked to participate in special studies related to the project.

**V. ELIGIBILITY**

Applicants must have the qualification, experience, and ability to successfully carry out the above mentioned Statement of Work for the Early Identification of Autism and Other Developmental Delays Training and Technical Assistance Provider project. The ideal applicant(s) will be familiar with and have extensive experience to fulfill the required tasks outlined in Section IV Statement of Work and Section VI Summary of Desired Qualifications.

First 5 LA provides funding to projects and services that benefit children prenatally to age 5. To be eligible for funding, applicants for Early Identification of Autism and Other Developmental Delays Training and Technical Assistance Provider RFQ must be in good standing with existing or previous First 5 LA grants and contracts.

**VI. SUMMARY OF DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS**

Applicants for the Early Identification of Autism and Other Developmental Delays Training and Technical Assistance Provider RFQ should meet the training and technical assistance requirements, as well as have the general project administration and management experience as listed below:
Training and Technical Assistance

- Best practices in the development and implementation of an effective developmental screening program, including referral procedures
- Assessment of a developmental screening process
- Strategies to provide staff training for all aspects of an effective developmental screening program
- Cultural competency in the development of community-based developmental screening programs and working with families from diverse cultural backgrounds
- Determination of steps involved in the documentation of the screening results (whether that involves putting results in children’s files or entering them into a registry, for example)
- Selecting evidence-based screening tool(s)
- Provision of information regarding scoring questionnaires, interpreting results, and identifying developmental risk factors
- Provision of information regarding common terminology (i.e., developmental delay, developmental disorder, surveillance, screening, evaluation)
- Training for staff regarding who, what, when, and where of communicating both the positive and negative results to parents
- Identification of community resources before screening begins
- Group facilitation or training as required
- Involving and educating parents about their roles in the screening process
- Determination of a strategy to develop a network of the selected community based organizations to ensure the necessary sharing of screening results and learning

Project Administration and Management Experience

- Provision of fiscal and programmatic oversight to public funds
- Development of guidelines for screening tools adherence
- Development of materials in multiple languages
- Staff resources, expertise and ability to provide training and technical assistance

Applicants that meet initial eligibility criteria (See VIII. SELECTION PROCESS AND REVIEW CRITERIA) may be invited for an in-person interview with First 5 LA staff.

VII. TERMS OF PROJECT

Available Funding
The total 3-year amount for the selected Training and Technical Assistance contractor will not exceed $400,000. The selected Training and Technical Assistance contractor will be compensated based upon the annual approved budget for each year of the project.

The scope of work and budget for the first year will be finalized during the contract negotiation process. The applicant’s budget should reflect verified and realistic costs. Payment will be made to contractor’s submission of monthly invoices based on actual expenses. It is expected that applicants’ budgets will be clearly justified in the budget
narrative and will be aligned with the outcomes and the work proposed.

Consistent with the intent of the 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.

**Project Period**
First 5 LA expects to enter into and execute the first year of the 3-year project with the selected applicant by December 1, 2013. Contracts for years two and three of the project will be subject to satisfactory performance of the prior years. First 5 LA contracts are executed annually, and at the end of each contract year, the selected applicant will be required to submit a proposed scope of work and budget for the following year.

Until contracts are executed, selected contractors are not authorized to deliver or commence performance of their services as described in the application until final execution of the contract (contract must be signed by both parties). Any performance of services commenced prior to the selected contractor obtaining all written approvals by First 5 LA shall be considered voluntary.

**Contractual Obligation**
The selected applicant is required by law to adhere to all contractual obligations as outlined in this document, including the First 5 LA Contract (*Appendix G*).

**VIII. APPLICATION PROCESS AND PROPOSAL CONTENT**

In order to respond to this RFP, applicants are required to submit the following materials to First 5 LA no later than **5:00 p.m. on September 16, 2013** via First 5 LA's online system accessed from the Applicant website at: [http://www.first5la.org](http://www.first5la.org). Only proposals received online will be eligible for funding. Emailed, mailed or delivered proposals **WILL NOT** be considered, excluding forms requiring original signatures.

Applications received after this deadline **will not** be considered.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to participate in the information session before submitting a proposal where information about how to use this system and proposal requirements will be reviewed. Information about the information session is listed in the next section. Please review carefully the following requirements for proposal content.

1. **Online Application Form:** This online form is accessible from the RFQ website and must be completed to submit a proposal. Enter Executive Director’s name, address, and other requested information of the lead agency.

2. **Proposal Narrative:** A maximum of 20 pages, the Proposal Narrative must be uploaded in a Word or PDF document using the online proposal system on the RFQ website. No hard copies of the Proposal Narrative or electric copies received via email will be accepted. The narrative must describe the following:
Applicant Background, Expertise and Experience:

- Applicant’s and/or consulting firm’s relevant qualifications and experience and plan for design and implementation of the project proposed.
- Proposed project team and each team member’s role on the project. The Proposer must identify all staff that will work on and/or participate in this project, including their titles, each person’s role, responsibilities, and expertise as it relates to this project.
- Description of the proposed work plan for developing and implementing the contractor’s Statement of Work listed in Section IV., over the three years of this project. The proposal should be as detailed as possible, including discussions of the contractor’s plans to meet the proposed Objectives and Outcomes, and proposed training format and structure. In the narrative, the applicant should describe the proposed process to complete each task listed in the Scope of Work, and whether there are any tasks that they would add or omit based upon their expertise. If the applicant would like to propose changes to tasks or assumptions put forth by First 5 LA, they may do so with explanation of the proposed changes. Please note that the project specified in this RFQ will involve substantial work, and a key consideration in reviewing proposals will be the applicant’s technical and workforce capacity. The applicant’s proposal will be reviewed according to the review criteria outlined below:
  - Number of years serving in a similar role.
  - Prior experience working on strategies for children 0-5.
  - General and project specific qualifications, competency, experience, business integrity.
  - Examples of types of contracts applicant has previously entered into, including the name and type of contracting entity, location of the work, purpose of the work, and general types of services provided.
  - Estimated percentage of the overall agency’s work to be performed through this contract.
  - Cost-effectiveness of the training and technical assistance approach
  - Culturally and linguistically appropriateness to the training and technical assistance approach.

The following materials are also required:

1. Application Checklist: *(Appendix E)*

2. Scope of Work:
   Using *Appendix A*, Scope of Work, describe the outcomes, activities and major deliverables expected for this RFQ for the three year project. Activities and subtasks leading to the fulfillment of the outcome(s) should also have sufficient details (i.e. benchmarks or milestones in chronological order. Include the appropriate quantity or frequency of the associated activities). Staff assignments should be detailed (i.e., consultants and/or subcontractors responsible for the
respective activity). Finally, all performance milestones deliverables need to be described and specific due dates need to be provided.

3. **Proposed Budget and Budget Narrative:**
   Using the attached budget worksheet (*Appendix B*), provide an itemized budget that details expenses for the proposed projects and a budget narrative justifying all costs included in the budget worksheet. In addition, complete a projected budget summary which covers the full three-year contract period.

4. **Résumé or Curriculum Vitae for Applicant(s) (limit to 10 most recent years and relevant experience. Maximum of 5 pages per key staff):** Provide a detailed professional résumé for each key staff person expected to work on the project, outlining all relevant work history, educational attainment, publications, prior research projects, etc. Include résumés for sub-contractors as well. All sub-applicants must be clearly identified and approved by First 5 LA prior to commencing work.

5. **Letter(s) of Intent or Memo(s) of Understanding:**
   Obtain and submit for all collaborative partners and/or sub-contractors listed in Budget for Contracted Services. Document must specify proposed responsibilities of and between each of the partners and/or sub-contractors.

6. **References and/or Letters of Support (three):**
   Provide letters of support from formal and informal provider networks and other members of the local community. Provide references from colleagues, current or former clients, or peers. Each reference should include name, company, address, phone number, email, length of time known, and a short statement about your relationship. In addition, written statements from each reference may be included. First 5 LA must be able to contact at least two (2) of the references provided by the applicant. If two (2) references cannot be reached within a timely manner (no more than three attempts, no longer than one week), First 5 LA may deem the applicant ineligible for this opportunity.

7. **Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties (*Appendix D*):**
   Read the information in 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. Applicants must submit one original form signed in blue ink.

8. **Signature Authorization Form (*Appendix C*):**
   Submit this form 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. Applicants must submit one original form signed in blue ink.

9. **IRS Letter of Determination**

10. **Business License (if applicable)**
11. Articles of Incorporation

12. Bylaws

13. Board of Directors

14. Annual Independent Audit: The applicant must include the most recent independent financial audit including the following:
   • Management Letter
   • Auditor’s Report
   • Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)
   • Statement of Activities (P/L, Income and Expenses Report)
   • Statement of Cash Flow
   • Functional Expense Report
   • Notes to Financial Statements
   • Federal “Single Audit” (if applicable)

APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCESS

Applicants are required to submit one application in the following manner:

- All documents listed on the Application Checklist (Appendix E) should be uploaded with the online application at http://www.first5la.org/
- All forms that require signatures must be signed in blue ink. Signature stamps are not acceptable. Please submit one (1) original and signed copy of First 5 LA’s “Application Checklist”, “Signature Authorization” and “Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties” forms sent or delivered to First 5 LA on or before the submission deadline.
- All supporting materials must include the name of the applicant

Please register early online in order to become familiar with the system. It is highly recommended that after submitting your proposal you print a “printer-friendly version” of the online proposal form and review it carefully prior to submission. The printed version should be kept for your records, and will include a list of the proposal components that were attached. If the attachment is not listed, it was not successfully submitted.

If you experience any technical difficulties with submission of the proposal, you should first check this page http://www.first5la.org/Online-Application-Help or email Online_Application@first5la.org if your issue is not resolved. First 5 LA is not responsible for delays due to computer malfunction. Late proposals due to technical difficulties of the applicant will be considered late and will be ineligible for review. Please allow additional time to account for unexpected delays.

Applications must be submitted online at www.first5la.org/FundingCenter, by the deadline of September 16, 2013, 5:00 p.m.
Applicants must also submit the Application Checklist, one (1) original signed copy of the application cover letter, the First 5 LA “Signature Authorization,” and “Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties” forms to:

Lee Werbel, Senior Program Officer  
First 5 LA  
750 North Alameda Street, Suite 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Attention: Early Identification of Autism and Other Developmental Delays

IX. SELECTION PROCESS AND REVIEW CRITERIA

First 5 LA will award a contract to one applicant with the expertise, demonstrated experience and qualifications outlined in the RFQ. The review process is outlined below. Please note that reviewers at all levels are required to sign Conflict of Interest forms, prior to their review.

1. Level 1 Review for Completeness – First 5 LA staff will evaluate all applications for completeness and minimum qualifications. Basic requirements include: timely receipt of application, inclusion of all appropriate attachments, etc. Applications with omissions of any required documentation are subject to disqualification. Applicants may use the Application Checklist as an aid in preparing the application (Appendix F).

2. Level 2 External Review Process – After initial review, a minimum of three (3) external reviewers with expertise in the field will be recruited to score applications. Review tools are strictly adhered to by external reviewers to mitigate the potential of bias. In accordance with First 5 LA policy, external reviewers sign a conflict-of-interest form. Please refer to the Review Tool that the external reviewers will use to assess proposals (Appendix F - Review Tool).

5. Interview – Staff may conduct interviews for selected applicants to gain additional information regarding the applicant’s relationship to the community, its capacity to engage in the proposed project, its relationship with proposed collaborative partners, and/or to answer questions that may arise during the programmatic or financial review. Interviews will be held either at First 5 LA or via telephone. The Commission at its sole discretion will determine which applicants will be interviewed.

6. Level 3 Financial Review – As a public entity, the Commission has a responsibility to the public to ensure that the organizations selected are financially stable to provide services. Applicants may be reviewed to assess fiscal health in relationship to their capacity to implement the proposed project and manage the proposed budget. Further written materials regarding the financial stability of the agency may be requested by our finance department prior to the review.

7. References – As part of this review process, the panel may contact an applicant’s
Funding Announcement – All applicants will be notified in writing of the status of their submitted proposal. Contract negotiations will be conducted with the approved awardee. Execution of the contract will be based upon successful contract negotiation.

Feedback Process – Declined applicants may receive feedback if requested. Further details regarding the feedback process will be provided following the proposal review. First 5 LA reserves the right, without prejudice, to reject any or all submitted qualifications.

Review Criteria
First 5 LA will award a contract to one applicant with the expertise and qualifications as outlined in this Review Criteria. Qualifications will be evaluated from a technical standpoint based on the applicant’s proven ability in their area of expertise as described in the criteria defined below. (See Appendix F for all Level 1-3 Review Tools.)

The following represents the selection criteria that will be considered during the evaluation process:

Qualifications of Proposed Personnel
The proposed project personnel should demonstrate the skill and experience to carry out the role of Training and Technical Assistance Provider for the Early Identification of Autism and Other Developmental Delays Project as outlined in Section VI., Summary of Desired Qualifications. The combination of the project team members’ resume history, history of working together, and narrative explanation of relevant experience should convey a depth of understanding and skill in their identified areas of expertise. Additionally, this section should demonstrate the technical skills, availability and capacities of the proposed staff to successfully execute the scope of work and discuss the project team’s demonstrated experience, capacity, ability or expertise in:

- Providing fiscal and programmatic oversight to public funds.
- Providing training and technical assistance to support the implementation of developmental screening program(s).
- Developing training and technical assistance to organizations serving culturally and linguistically diverse underserved populations.
- Developing curriculum, guidelines, and other materials in multiple languages.
- Providing training and technical assistance sufficient to meet the requirements of the RFQ.

Organizational Experience
The proposer’s statement of organizational experience should demonstrate the capacity, experience, and knowledge in the areas outlined below. The statement of qualifications should demonstrate the contractor’s and/or consulting firm’s relevant qualifications and experience, and ability to carry out the proposed project. The experience outlined should include demonstrated experience in:

- Working with community based programs, recruiting and retaining volunteers and participants.
- Developing culturally competent community-based programs.
• Delivering effective training programs.
• Planning and conducting community engagement.

Scope of Work
The proposer should demonstrate understanding of the project’s scope and objectives, and propose a plan to successfully execute the requested scope of work. The proposer’s scope of work will be evaluated relative to the inclusion of each of the following: clearly stated objectives, activities and tasks, staff assignments and roles, a detailed timeline, and proposed deliverables. The Scope of Work should include the entire project period (3 years).

Budget
Applicants must submit budgets that are in line with common business practices. The budget and budget narrative should reflect the following:
• Overall appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of the proposal budget. Budget narrative conveys costs appropriately.
• Reasonable price per task based on the reviewer’s experience including an awareness of risk that may arise as part of fixed-price budgeting.
• A composite hourly rate for all personnel that does not exceed $150/hour (see detail in Contracting Considerations, number 9).
• Tasks assigned to appropriate personnel as to minimize the cost per deliverable while also maximizing the quality of output.
• A total budget that does not exceed $400,000 for up to 3 years.

Technical Approach
The proposal narrative will be evaluated to determine:
• Capacity to achieve the project objectives with the proposed training approach and plan.
• Thoroughness, viability, and quality of the contractor’s proposal.
• The contractor’s abilities in project planning and management.
• First 5 LA reserves the right, without prejudice, to reject any or all submitted applications.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS
• Demonstrates the ability to provide training and technical assistance support to agencies implementing early developmental screening programs
• Demonstrates a history and ability of working effectively with individuals and community organizations to create a common vision
• Demonstrates a proven track record as a champion for culturally competent programming and service delivery for parents of young children
• Prior experience with and knowledge of Los Angeles social services systems and demonstrated connections to agencies specializing in early detection and intervention of ASD and DD
• Demonstrates cultural and linguistic competence that meets the needs of the designated population
• Demonstrates commitment to improving early childhood development congruent with the vision and mission of First 5 LA
• Demonstrates understanding of the need addressed by the proposed early developmental screening project
• Has the ability to successfully provide fiscal, programmatic, and administrative including reporting oversight and governance to the network.
• Demonstrates prior experience working with children ages 0-5 with ASD and developmental delays

X. 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-G).

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 individualagency/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-$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 Appendix-G). 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.

XI. 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 Executive Director 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.

XII. APPENDICES

All appendices are included as separate attachments.

APPENDIX A: Scope of Work
APPENDIX B: Budget Forms
APPENDIX C: Signature Authorization Form
APPENDIX D: Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance
APPENDIX E: Application Checklist
APPENDIX F: Review Tools, Levels I, II, and III
APPENDIX G: Sample Contract
APPENDIX H: Scope of Work Instructions

XIII. WORKS CITED


