Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can you please share more context in terms of what led to this RFQ and managing a program in this way for First 5 LA?
A: In June 2010, Commissioners approved First 5 LA’s FY 2009 – 2015 Strategic Plan Implementation Plan, which created a new department called Community Investments (CI). The goal of the CI Department is to mobilize resources to support and sustain First 5 LA’s investments. The CI Department identified matching grants and social enterprise ventures as viable strategies for mobilizing resources, and determined that partnering with an intermediary to administer the CG and SE grant programs will be the most supportive and efficient method for administering the grant programs.

Q: Are both of these new programs for First 5 LA?
A: Yes, both the CG and SE grant programs are new, but draw upon lessons learned from First 5 LA’s ARRA Matching Grant Program and the Social Enterprise Institute.

Q: How many applicants do you expect will apply to the CG and SE grant programs?
A: The number of applicants will be influenced by the specific criteria for each grant program. Based on responses to the First 5 LA Matching Funds Grant Program, we expect a minimum of 100 CG applicants. The SE application pool may be smaller than the CG applicant pool (less than 100), depending on whether the opportunity is open to organizations seeking funding to support new and/or existing social enterprise strategies. At a minimum, the applicants must demonstrate that their programs are on the First 5 LA Theory of Change/Full Pathway (RFQ Appendix L) and directly impact the First 5 LA target audience.

Q: Is there a pre-determined amount and range for each grant program?
A: No. First 5 LA will work with the Program Administrator to determine the appropriate amount and grant range for the CG and SE grant programs. The amount of available grant funds will be dependent on the allocation of funds to direct and indirect program costs.

Q: Must the Program Administrator have an office in LA County?
A: No. The Program Administrator is not required to have a physical office in LA County, but preference will be given to LA-based organizations. In the application, the Program Administrator must demonstrate that staff that are familiar with and able to work with grantees throughout LA County.

Q: Must the program administrator be a 501c3?
A: No. For-profit agencies and private businesses are eligible to apply. These applicants must submit a business license with their application.
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Q: Can an individual consultant who is not part of an organization or larger company apply? If so, what financial documents are required in lieu of an annual independent audit?
A: Yes. An individual consultant may apply. However, the applicant must demonstrate that they have the capacity, infrastructure and experience to administer the CG and SE grant programs.

In lieu of an independent audit, independent consultants must submit a copy of their most recent year’s IRS Tax Return and supporting financial statements.

Q: I will be out of the country during July 11-13. Does that disqualify me?
A: No. Those applicants who are unavailable will not be disqualified. Once your application is submitted, please inform Jennifer Cowan, First 5 LA Program Officer (jcowan@first5la.org) of your conflict.

Q: Is there a separate budget, in addition to the $2 million, to cover the Program Administrator’s expenses?
A: No. The total budget available for the two grant programs is $2 million. This amount includes all expenses associated with the program including administrative costs (direct and indirect) and grants.

Q: Is there a maximum administrative rate or indirect cost?
A: First 5 LA does not have a limit on administrative costs. However, staff will review proposed budgets to ensure that the direct costs included are reasonable, reflect the SOW, and are in-line with industry standards. First 5 LA does limit indirect costs to 10% of total personnel costs (excluding fringe). This is explained in the Budget Instructions (RFQ Appendix D).

Q: What kind of TA are you looking for the Program Administrator to provide?
A: The breadth and depth of technical assistance will be determined during the planning process with the Program Administrator. Given the total budget for the CG and SE grant programs, we do not expect every grantee will receive intensive TA and support.

Challenge grantees will be assessed to determine their fundraising capacity and TA needs in order to meet their challenge goal. Customized TA will then be provided to grantees to support them in their fundraising efforts.

Social enterprise grantees are likely to receive one-on-one coaching and consulting to make their social enterprise successful.
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Q: Can any technical assistance (TA) be offered before grants are awarded?
A: CG and SE grantees must be selected and issued award letters before any TA is provided. However, TA may be provided to grantees before funds are dispersed (i.e., before a CG recipient raises the challenge matching funds).

Q: As a part of the TA for CG recipients, is it expected the Program Administrator will ensure challenge goals are met? What happens if the grantee does not secure the matching funds?
A: The Program Administrator is responsible for tracking all challenge matching funds secured by grantees and providing TA to grantees to help grantees in meeting those goals. CG funds will be awarded to grantees as they raise matching funds and meet predetermined benchmarks. No grant funds will be advanced, so there is not a need for a pay-back requirement if fundraising goals are not achieved.

Q: Will the Program Administrator’s responsibilities include marketing both the CG and SE grant opportunities?
A: Yes. The Program Administrator is expected to promote both the CG and SE grant opportunities among their networks. In addition, the Program Administrator will coordinate with First 5 LA to promote the grant opportunities in the First 5 LA Monday Morning Report and on the First 5 LA website’s Funding Center.

Q: On page 7 of the RFQ, it refers to the Program Administrator as providing "support First 5 evaluation of the grant programs". Will First 5 LA contract a third-party evaluator?
A: We do not plan to contract with a third-party to evaluate the CG and SE grant programs. The Program Administrator is expected to collaborate with First 5 LA to track agreed upon measures.

Q: For the challenge grants, have you already defined "new" money?
A: First 5 LA will work with the Program Administrator to determine what is considered “new” money and eligible match to draw down First 5 LA matching funds. At a minimum, First 5 LA considers “new” money as funding that has not already been committed, awarded or secured. New money would not need to be from a new funder. Existing funders may contribute new money to meet the challenge goal.

Q: What are the social enterprise grants aimed to do?
A: The SE grants will provide grantees with the capital to build, grow and diversify their earned income strategy, including fee-for-service and for-profit ventures. The goal of the SE grants is to help facilitate long term financial stability for non-profits. First 5 LA may provide seed money to organizations to execute or expand existing social enterprise strategies, which may or may not be currently in full operation. First 5 LA will work with the Program Administrator to further define the goals and eligibility criteria for the SE grant program.