FIRST 5 LA
PUBLIC AFFAIRS VENDOR POOL
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

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

RELEASE DATE: March 2, 2011
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I. TIMELINE FOR SELECTION PROCESS\(^1\)

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<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RFQ Released</td>
<td>March 2, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final date to submit questions and requests for additional information.</td>
<td>March 15, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applications are due.</td>
<td>March 22, 2011 by 5:00 p.m.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>April 1, 2011 by 5:00 p.m. PST</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO EXCEPTIONS</td>
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<tr>
<td>External Review of Applications</td>
<td>March 22-29, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April 4-8, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notifications of vendor acceptance into the Public Affairs vendor pool</td>
<td>March 30, 2011</td>
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<td></td>
<td>April 13, 2011</td>
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All questions and requests for additional information regarding this RFQ must be received in writing by First 5 LA via mail, fax, or email before 5 p.m. on March 15, 2011. 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:

Mayra Gomez, Public Affairs Officer  
First 5 LA  
750 N. Alameda Street, Suite 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  

Phone: 213.482.7578  
Fax: 213.482.5552  
E-mail: MGomez@first5la.org

\(^1\) Note: While it is First 5 LA’s desire to send out notification of vendor acceptance into the vendor pool by March 30, 2011 April 13, 2011, all dates are subject to change at First 5 LA’s sole discretion.
II. BACKGROUND

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

In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10, which levied a 50-cent per pack tax on all tobacco products. The resulting tax revenues were earmarked for the creation of a comprehensive system of information and services to advance early childhood development and school readiness within each county in California. In Los Angeles County, 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 over $800 million to support initiatives in all three of its goal areas. Additional information regarding First 5 LA can be found at http://www.first5la.org/.

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

In June 2009, the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners adopted its FY 2009–2015 Strategic Plan entitled Strengthening Families and Communities in L.A. County. This Plan incorporates lessons learned from the first 10 years of First 5 LA’s grantmaking and research, which reveal not only the importance of supportive and informed parents and caregivers to a young child’s quality of life, but also the role of safe and supportive neighborhoods, or places, to that child’s development.

As a result, this new plan represents a major shift in First 5 LA’s grantmaking from an initiative-based to a place-based approach. This new approach will allow First 5 LA to focus on strengthening families while fostering the communities’ ability to create and sustain safe and nurturing places for children to grow and thrive.

In the Plan, the Commission established four specific outcomes that it seeks for young children in L.A. County. These outcomes are defined in the Plan as four long-term goals of ensuring that children:

- Are born healthy
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Are safe from abuse and neglect
- Are ready for Kindergarten

All of First 5 LA’s investments will be focused on changing outcomes in these areas.

In order to support the efforts of the Commission in the four goal areas of the Plan, the Board of Commission approved a public education allocation budget for countywide strategies and place-based efforts. The vendors selected to participate in the vendor pool will support First 5 LA’s public education campaign through their services.
III. ELIGIBILITY

The First 5 LA Public Affairs (PA) department is seeking applicants to be included in a pool of approved vendors which will be used to produce promotional items (books, tote bags, pens, pencils, pad folios, frisbees, etc.) in a timely and budget conscious manner. To that end, we are seeking a diverse range of vendors to be represented in the pool.

This Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will serve to identify vendors with the necessary resources to fulfill any or all of First 5 LA’s promotional items’ needs, including vendors that have a group of subcontractors that can provide specific products desired.

Applicants must have qualifications, competency, experience, business integrity and capacity to successfully execute the promotional items’ needs of First 5 LA.

IV. SUMMARY OF DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

An ideal vendor will have all or some of the following qualifications:

- Ability to evaluate product requests from First 5 LA and make product suggestions, keeping in mind budgetary needs and a timely delivery of products.
- Ability to customize promotional items in a manner that is consistent with First 5 LA’s look and feel.
- Consistent record of delivering high-quality materials on time and on budget.
- Currently provide promotional items for clients such as, but not limited to, tote bags, pencils, pens, water bottles, erasers, etc.

V. TERMS OF PROJECT

When the Public Affairs department identifies a need for promotional items, PA will solicit quotes and timelines for job execution from any or all qualified vendors in this pool.

Selected vendors may be required to submit additional documentation at the time of the solicitation in order to complete the contracting process. If the contracting process takes more than ten business days, First 5 LA reserves the right to select another consultant from the pool. A contract will not be issued with any member of the pool until work has been solicited.

Funds will be granted through monthly invoices based on services rendered and actual expenses.

Contract Period

In June 2010, the First 5 LA Board of Commission approved an overall public education allocation budget for fiscal year 2010-2011 of $2,7000,000 ($1,150,000 for public education countywide investments and $1,550,000 for place-based investments). The total amount of funding available for the vendor pool will not exceed $250,000 for a contract period of
approximately twelve (12) months, contingent upon First 5 LA approval and submission of documents by the selected vendors. (Final length of contract and available funding will be determined by the contract execution date.) First 5 LA has the right to issue one contract for the full amount, or several contracts for any given amount based on the deliverables and at the sole discretion of the Commission.

The vendor pool will be updated annually in the month of April. At that point, vendors in the pool will be offered the opportunity to renew their contracts for the following fiscal year up to an additional one year at the sole discretion of the Commission. Additionally, an RFQ will be posted for additional applicants to the pool.

A contract will not be issued with any member of the pool until work has been solicited. Membership in the pool is not a guarantee of a contract with First 5 LA, and vendors in the pool may exit at any time.

VI. STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

In order to respond to this RFQ, applicants are required to submit the following materials to First 5 LA no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 22, 2011

All applications must be submitted online (see submission requirements).

Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

A. Cover Letter (maximum two pages): Each applicant is required to include a cover letter on the organization’s letterhead addressed to Evelyn V. Martinez, Chief Executive Officer, First 5 LA, containing the following:

- The date.
- The applicant’s name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address.
- The primary contact person’s name, title, and address, telephone, fax, and e-mail address (if different from organization’s information).
- A statement indicating that the submission is in response to an RFQ for the Public Affairs Promotional Item vendor pool.
- A general overview of the applicant’s qualifications.

Please Note: The applicant’s cover letter must be signed by a person authorized to bind the applicant to the terms of the application.

B. Expertise and Experience as a Vendor (maximum five pages):

- General qualifications, competency, experience, business integrity, and capacity to produce promotional items.
- Select list of clients and list of any awards or accommodations the applicant has received.
C. **Samples of Promotional Items:**
   Include a wide range of promotional items samples including, but not limited to, canvas bags, pencils, pens, water bottles, children’s toothbrushes, books and any other item that will give a fair representation of the range of products available through your services. If available, include production quotes and schedules.

   **Please submit four (4) copies of all samples.**

D. **Sample Quotes:**
   Please include quotes and production schedules for the following materials.
   
   i) **Tote Bags:** Provide a quote for 3,500 tote bags, made in the USA, imprinted on one side with a 2-color logo. (N/A for book vendors)

   ii) **Frisbees / “Flyers”:** Provide a quote for 2,500 frisbees, imprinted on one side with a 2-color logo. (N/A for book vendors)

   iii) **Balloons:** Provide a quote for 3,000 9” multi-color balloons, imprinted on one side with a 1-color logo. (N/A for book vendors)

   iv) **Books (only applicable for book vendors):** Provide a quote broken down by cover types (board books, cloth and bath books, and hardcover) for the following quantities (all based on the average cost of a book, or may be specific titles): 250; 500; 1,000

E. **References (maximum of three):** References should be from current or former clients. 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.

F. **Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties (Appendix D):** 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.

G. **Signature Authorization Form (Appendix E):** 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. Applicants must submit one original form signed in blue ink.

H. **Board Resolution (Appendix F):** Include, if needed, to support the authority of persons listed on Signature Authorization Form.

I. **Applicant should include a completed W9 (Appendix G).**

J. **Copy of business license.**
VII. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All applications must be submitted online.

Applicants are required to submit their qualifications online at http://www.first5la.org/PA+Vendor+Pool+RFQ+2011, as well as submit one (1) original and signed copy of the application cover letter, the First 5 LA’s “Signature Authorization,” and the “Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties,” forms. In addition, each applicant must deliver four (4) hard copies of their samples.

Written submissions must meet the following criteria:

☐ All forms that require signatures must be signed in blue ink. Signature stamps are not acceptable.

☐ All supporting materials must include the name of the applicant.

Please deliver original and signed materials and samples to:

Evelyn V. Martinez, Chief Executive Officer
First 5 LA
750 N. Alameda Street, Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Attention: Mayra Gomez/Public Affairs Vendor Pool RFQ

Applicants must complete online application and deliver all materials to First 5 LA no later than March 14, 2011 at 5 p.m.

VIII. REVIEW CRITERIA AND SELECTION PROCESS

General
Applicants must review the First 5 LA Contract Boilerplate in Appendix E. It is imperative that all applicants review the contract language in detail and fully understand contractual obligations should they be selected as a vendor for a project. Applicants will be required to accept the contract language as specified in this boilerplate at the time of their submission of qualifications.

Selection Process
1. 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 (Page 14) as an aid in preparing the application. Please note that the Application Checklist is merely an aid.
2. After initial review, applicant’s qualifications will be evaluated and scored by a panel of external reviewers (please see Appendix H for Qualification Review Tool). As part of this review process, the panel may contact an applicant’s references.

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

4. Some or all of the applicants who have submitted complete and responsive applications may be interviewed. If applicants are interviewed, the interviews are scheduled to be held on dates shown in Section I (Timeline for Selection Process). These dates are subject to change at First 5 LA’s sole discretion. All applicants must advise First 5 LA staff of their availability during these days. Interviews will be held either at First 5 LA or via phone. Further written materials regarding qualifications may be requested prior to the interview.

5. Qualified vendors that pass the review and agree to First 5 LA’s contract terms will be accepted into the vendor pool. The following are the selection criteria that will be used to evaluate applicants to the First 5 LA consultant pool:

Review Criteria
First 5 LA will accept into the vendor pool those vendors that have the expertise and qualifications outlined in the RFQ. Applicants will initially be evaluated by a panel of external reviewers. Following this evaluation, First 5 LA staff may conduct interviews (either in person or on the phone) with the applicants recommended by the reviewers. Vendor(s) selections will be based on, but not limited to, evaluation of the following factors:

- Quality and range of samples
- Breadth and experience as a vendor
- Quotes submitted
- References from clients
- Interview answers (if applicable)

First 5 LA reserves the right, without prejudice, to reject any or all submitted qualifications. An appeals process is not available — all decisions of First 5 LA are final.

IX. TERMS OF PARTICIPATION & CONTRACTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

1) Terms of Participation

1. Acceptance into the vendor pool is not a guarantee of work. For those vendors who are accepted into the vendor pool, work will be solicited based on First 5 LA needs. PA staff will select a vendor from the pool based on qualifications and availability, and other criteria as specified at the time of the solicitation. The selected vendor and PA staff will negotiate a scope of work and final budget during the contracting process.
2. The term of membership in this pool, and the term of any contracts issued to members of this pool is 12 months. The vendor pool will be reassessed every year in the month of April from the time of contract enactment. During reassessment, vendors in the pool will be offered the opportunity to renew their contracts for the following fiscal year for an additional one year at the sole discretion of the Commission. Additionally, an RFQ will be posted for additional applicants to the pool.

3. Vendors will not be bound to remain in the pool, and vendors may exit at any time by mailing a signed, original letter to First 5 LA. Accepted vendors are not bound to accept work solicited by First 5 LA. However, vendors in the pool will be required to abide by the contractual considerations outlined in the First 5 LA contract boilerplate language (see Appendix E).

4. The Commission may, at its sole discretion, reject any or all submissions in response to this RFQ. An appeals process is not available, but declined applicants may reapply the following year.

5. The Commission reserves the right to amend the Public Affairs Vendor Pool as needed to best meet the needs of all parties. At the Commission’s discretion, consultants may be revised or removed.

6. All work solicited from the vendor, including promotional items, artwork, any data collected, or any analysis in the course of any project, in whatever form, shall be the sole property of the Commission.

2) Contractual Considerations

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

A. Conflict of Interest

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

B. Compliance

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

C. Contract Information

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

2. The agency/organization submitting an application agrees that by submitting an application it authorizes the COMMISSION to verify any or all information and/or references given in the application.

3. The COMMISSION reserves the right, after contract award, to amend the resulting contract, scope of work, and any other exhibits as needed throughout the term of the contract to best meet the needs of all parties.

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 ending Calendar Year 2010 Fiscal Year June 30, 2010, 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 within seven (7) days of the intended start date of the contract, as outlined in Terms of Contract 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 by the COMMISSION in writing. 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. Any agreed upon changes to the intended start date must be confirmed in writing by both parties.

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
- Form RRF-1 (required and filed annually with the California Attorney General’s Registry of Charitable Trusts) and IRS Form 990 (if applicable)
- 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) or 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 (Section 7), the total composite rate for a Consultant may not exceed $150 an hour. This means that the total cost of billable hours associated with a contract divided by the total number of
hours billed must be equal to or less than $150. 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 sample contract and contracting requirements are attached (See Sample Contract). If successful, the Contractor will be required to meet all of the terms and provisions set forth in these documents and within the timeframe identified.

X. LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix D: Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties (pdf)
- Appendix E: Contractor Signature Authorization Form (pdf)
- Appendix F: Sample Board Resolution (if applicable) (pdf)
- Appendix G: W-9
- Appendix H: Qualification Review Tool
- Appendix J: Sample Contract (pdf)
XI. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Applicants should refer to Section VI (Statement of Qualifications) and Section VII (Submission Requirements) for complete information about required application content and submission guidelines. Both online application and paper originals must be submitted to First 5 LA by the deadline outlined in Section I.

Failure to submit any required items will result in disqualification.

☐ Cover letter (2 pages maximum. 1 original, signed in blue ink)

☐ Expertise and experience as a vendor (5 pages maximum)

☐ Samples of promotional items, including production schedules and budgets, if available. NOTE: applicants must submit four (4) hard copies of their samples.

☐ Sample quotes for tote bags, frisbees / “fliers,” balloons, and books (details in section VI, “D” above).

☐ References (maximum of three, 2 pages maximum):

☐ Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties (Appendix D) (1 original, signed in blue ink)

☐ Signature Authorization Form (Appendix E) (1 original, signed in blue ink)

☐ Board Resolution, if applicable (Appendix F)

☐ W-9 (Appendix G)

☐ Business License

All applications must be submitted online at: http://www.first5la.org/PA+Vendor+Pool+RFQ+2011.

Applicants must also submit one (1) original and signed copy of the application cover letter, First 5 LA’s “Signature Authorization,” and “Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties” forms, as well as any supporting documentation or samples in print form you deem appropriate, to:

Evelyn V. Martinez, Chief Executive Officer
First 5 LA
750 N. Alameda Street, Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Attention: Mayra Gomez/Public Affairs Vendor Pool RFQ