Community Opportunities Fund Cycle 3: Policy and Advocacy RFP
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

September 4, 2009

**Application**

1. Are proposed Cycle 3 projects required to take place within place-based communities selected as a result of First 5 LA’s 2009-2015 Strategic Plan?

   No. Placed-based criteria from First 5 LA’s 2009-2015 Strategic Plan do not apply to COF Cycle 3. It is anticipated that these placed-based criteria will apply in COF Cycle 4 as Cycle 4 relates to organizational capacity building.

2. Is submission of a financial audit required for eligibility? Will an official Financial Review or Compilation suffice?

   Recent audited financial statements are required for the application. If audited financial statements are not required by law for your organization, and your organization is a nonprofit, you will need to submit your organization’s most recent IRS 990 Form. In this case, your organization should also submit an explanation of why audited financial statements have not been completed.

3. Can my organization receive more than one grant from the Community Opportunities Fund?

   No. An organization may receive only one Community Opportunities Fund grant. Organizations that receive a grant in one cycle will not be eligible for any subsequent cycle.

4. Can the subcontractor of a current or previous COF grantee apply for COF funding?

   Yes, if they are not a current or previous COF grantee (lead agency) themselves.

5. My organization has another grant from First 5 LA. Can my organization apply for funding from the Community Opportunities Fund?

   Yes.

6. Can applicants who have been denied COF funding apply again?

   Yes. Previously denied applicants are encouraged to learn from the process and re-apply for the next COF cycle of funding.

7. Can applicants apply to address more than one COF policy goal?
8. What is meant by place-based vs. countywide strategies?

*The new strategic plan moves the Commission’s investment strategy to a “place-based” approach. This means that First 5 LA will select a specific number of target communities as places where we will focus our funding. We have selected this approach because it will allow us to fund more intentionally in communities with the highest level of need, to better integrate our current efforts in communities, and to better assess how our investments are improving children’s lives.*

*In addition to the place-based approach, the Commission will continue to fund some strategies that have the potential to impact all children across the county. These strategies may include policy and advocacy, public education, health access, workforce development and other strategies that will support our ability to impact target communities.*

9. Can existing collaborations apply or does it have to be a new collaboration established for the COF application?

*As long as the applicant is proposing a new project, existing collaborations may apply.*

10. Will First 5 LA select the same target communities as The California Endowment?

*Many factors will be considered in the selection of target communities, including the communities targeted by other funders. No decisions have been made at this time.*

11. Do applicants need to identify one of the three policy goal areas or one of the 16 specific COF policy goals?

*Applicants must select one of 16 specific COF policy goals located on pages 7 and 8 of the RFP.*

12. Is it necessary to apply for all five years of COF Cycle 3’s implementation?

*No. The proposed project period can be less than 5 years.*

13. If applying as a collaboration, do all partners need to submit financial information?

*Only the lead agency or fiscal sponsor needs to submit financial statements.*

14. How many partners can be included in a collaborative proposal?
There is no limit, as long as there is a “meaningful” collaboration in which each partner has a clear role. Partners should be complementary to each other. They need not each receive grant funds.

15. Can “for profit” agencies apply?

No. They can however participate in a collaborative as a subcontractor.

16. If there were compliance or implementation issues in a past grant, would that be considered in the application review?

If the applicant has current or previous First 5 LA funding, compliance with and successful implementation of those prior and/or current grants will be considered.

Evaluation

17. Is a Logic Model required?

Not for the application, but successful applicants will be required to develop one during the contract negotiation phase.

18. Is there flexibility in the proposed program evaluation?

Yes. During the application stage, it is expected that the applicant will propose what they consider to be the most effective approach to evaluating the project. Grantees will also be expected to participate in an evaluation done for the entire COF initiative.

19. Are applicants required to have an external evaluator already identified at the time the application is submitted?

No. Applicants also have the option of not using an external evaluator as long as it is demonstrated that evaluation activities will be sufficiently supported internally.

Budget

20. Is there a specific amount that needs to be budgeted for evaluation?

Yes. 8% minimum cumulatively over the project duration.

21. Is there a requirement for the applicant to provide matching funds for the project?

No.

22. Appendix A, Instruction for Budget Forms, states that Section 3: Equipment is “NOT APPLICABLE.” Does this mean that equipment expenses cannot be included in the Budget?
Equipment expenses under $5000 per item are allowable and can be included in the Budget Form. If your organization/collaborative identifies that equipment is needed for the proposed project, those expenses may be included in Section 3 of the Budget Form. Provide a description of each item and its cost.

23. Is the budget form on the web site correct?

The Budget Form on the First 5 LA web site provided for the COF Cycle 3 RFP has been updated as of 8/25/09.

24. Can the applicant list any in-kind staff time on budget form?

Yes, under “Personnel Expenses” on page 2.

25. Are indirect expenses permitted, and at what percentage?

Yes. Maximum indirect is 10% of personnel costs (not including fringe benefits)

26. What time period does the budget form cover?

Pages 1-10 of the Budget Form cover the first year of the project. The Budget Narrative is also done for the first year. Any important spending details for subsequent years, however, can also be noted in the Budget Narrative. The Projected Budget Form (All Years Combined), located on the last tab of the Budget Form spreadsheet, should be completed for all project years.

27. Should the budget form include the entire project cost or just the portion of the project cost requested from First 5 LA?

Entire project cost. Resources for the project sought or acquired from other sources should be indicated as such on the forms (in the right-hand columns).

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Questions Added on September 4, 2009

28. Are city governments able to apply for COF Cycle 3 funding?

Yes. Governments can apply as lead agencies or as part of a collaboration led by another organization.

29. Does an applicant need to submit organizational budgets for the last three years or would submitting an IRS Form 990 suffice?

All applicants are required to submit organizational budgets for the last three years. These are budgets that would have been approved by your organization’s Board of Directors.
Are you aware of any sources of statistical data and research on Abuse and Neglect of Children 0-5 (and prevention of the same) for LA County and at the SPA level?

Statistical data to support your grant proposal may come from a variety of sources, including: data collected by government agencies, nonprofit organizations, academic researchers, or even your own organization. Healthy City (www.healthy.city.org) is an example of an organization that collects data at the county and sub-county level. ICAN (http://ican.co.la.ca.us/dataD_loads.htm) is also a potential source of data related to abuse and neglect of children 0-5. When using research, please cite sources and be clear about how the data supports your proposal.