Peer Support Groups for Parents
Lead Agency
Request for Proposals (RFP)

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

RELEASE DATE: July 18, 2012
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I.  **TIMELINE FOR SELECTION PROCESS**

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<tr>
<td>RFP Released</td>
<td>July 18, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Session*</td>
<td>August 1, 2012, 10am-12noon</td>
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<td>Final date to submit questions regarding RFP</td>
<td>August 15, 2012</td>
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<td>Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) posted</td>
<td>August 17, 2012</td>
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<td>Application Due:</td>
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<td>- Online applications plus all required forms</td>
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<td>- 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</td>
<td>August 27, 2012, by 5pm</td>
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<td>Application Review</td>
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<td>Contract negotiations begin</td>
<td>September 24 – November 7, 2012</td>
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<td>Negotiated contract approved by Commission</td>
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<td>Contracts Start Date *</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 in writing by First 5 LA by 5:00 p.m. on **August 15, 2012**. 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, information requests, and RSVP’s to information session can be submitted to:*

Reena John, Senior Program Officer  
Program Development Department  
First 5 LA  
750 N. Alameda Street, Suite 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Phone: 213.482.7506  
Fax: 213.482.5903 E-mail: rjohn@first5la.org
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, 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

B. The First 5 LA FY 2009-2015 Strategic Plan
In 2009, First 5 LA’s Board of Commissioners adopted a new strategic plan 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. In addition to a countywide approach that focuses on policy change, public education, workforce development and other strategies, the strategic plan 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 that the role of safe and supportive neighborhoods is just as important to a young child’s quality of life as supportive and informed parents and caregivers.

This combined place-based and countywide approach allows the Commission to concentrate its limited resources in areas of high need and to sustain those efforts over time. The strategic plan 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

In the Strategic Plan, the Commission identified a pathway for our investments that leads to our desired outcomes for children, families and communities in our four goal areas.

The Place-Based Approach, *Best Start*

The First 5 LA commissioners’ place-based approach focuses on the *places* where families live combining efforts to strengthen families with those that build community capacity to create and sustain thriving and healthy environments for all children. The research and promising practices¹ 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. By FY 2012 - 2013, each community partnership will have submitted proposals to the First 5 LA commissioners for future investments.

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

Countywide Approach

The strategic plan also outlines 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, strategic plan investments can have a widespread impact on children across the county, while, at the same time, helping to 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 close-to-the-ground, culturally competent, community-based and resident-driven models for strengthening families, 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. For example, First 5 LA is launching nearly two dozen commissioner-developed investments in areas such as autism identification and service referrals; early child care and education workforce development; nutrition and physical activity programs for families and 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.

C. Project Description

Peer Support Groups for Parents Background

Effective parent education and support programs have been linked to decreased rates of child abuse and neglect, better physical, cognitive and emotional development in children, increased parent knowledge of child development and parenting skills, and more effective parenting.² These support programs may include an educational component which may be designed to address important topics to strengthen families by reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors. The National Parenting Education Network (NPEN) describes the goal of this type of education as “strengthening families by providing relevant, effective education and support and encouraging an optimal environment for healthy growth and development of parent/caregiver and children.”³

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Topics that may be relevant to parents of newborns and children under five years of age include general parenting education and support, postpartum depression, breastfeeding, childhood nutrition and healthy weight, oral health and hygiene, and parenting children with special needs. The actual topics that are identified as relevant within each support group should be determined by considering the needs of the local community and the members of the group itself. By meeting these needs, support opportunities may assist parents in having a more positive mental outlook over the long term. Outlined below is a review of the existing evidence for some possible support group topics.

Support Group Topics

**Postpartum Depression**
As many as one in seven new mothers will experience postpartum depression. After childbirth, new mothers may undergo a variety of changes that affect their physical, emotional, and psychosocial health. In the first few months following delivery of their newborn, new mothers endure fatigue, tiredness, and experience physical discomfort that may impede the ability to sleep, breastfeed, or respond to the needs of their babies. This time, known as the postpartum period, is also the time where new mothers are assuming their maternal identity, which includes attaching with their babies. In adapting to this new maternal role, mothers may experience a variety of emotional changes that range from transient postpartum blues to postpartum depression (PPD), and postpartum psychosis. These disorders exist along a continuum, where postpartum blues is the mildest and postpartum psychosis is the most severe form of postpartum psychiatric illness. It is important that women receive treatment if symptoms appear, persist, and/or worsen over time. The consequences of untreated PPD may include mothers being unable to attach to their new babies which could lead to neglect or minimal responsiveness to the child. For these children, impairment in future cognitive, social, behavioral, and emotional development may ensue.

Mothers particularly at risk for PPD include teen parents, women in poverty, women who experienced depression during their pregnancy, and mothers who have given birth to multiple babies. Additionally, the prevalence of PPD is higher among African-American and Latino women than for women of other ethnic backgrounds. Although PPD may potentially impact many women and their families, women in general tend not to seek professional treatment for PPD. This may occur for a variety of reasons. Women sometimes have difficulty finding medical and/or mental health professionals who specialize in PPD, or if they do they are faced with an unsupportive response or attitude toward their symptoms. Women may also experience cultural barriers to receiving care for PPD. If mothers do not receive needed support, signs of PPD may begin to show in her behavior. PPD symptoms may become present as early as two weeks or sometimes up to one year following delivery.

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Symptoms can include but are not limited to having anxiety, a short temper, a lack of interest in the newborn baby, and a decreased appetite. The new mother’s relationships may also become strained as the mother’s PPD can cause experiences that are overwhelming and frustrating, ultimately causing conflict in their relationships. Complicating matters more, women may sometimes be blamed or punished for their emotional state.

Treatment for PPD may include medication, counseling, and community support groups. In addition to appropriate screenings and treatment, studies have shown that adequate social support is an important determinant of postpartum depression (PPD). Receiving social support through friends, peer groups and relatives during stressful times is thought to be a protective factor against developing depression. Many women who receive treatment have reported improvements in their relationships with their partners, their social support network, and with their infants. They have also reported improvements in their mood. The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology recommends providing social support to reassure new mothers about depression, suicidal thoughts and other feelings that women may be reluctant to discuss.

A practical approach to increasing access to social support for new parents is the implementation of the peer support group model. It is ideal not only in terms of cost, but has been shown to assist with coping skills and can play a pivotal role in the process of mental health recovery. A peer support group can provide several therapeutic benefits for mothers during the postpartum period. Many leading health agencies such as the National Institutes of Health and U.S Department of Health and Human Services’ Office on Women’s Health, suggest that mothers who are experiencing symptoms of postpartum depression join a support group. Studies show that participating in a group can help reduce social isolation and feelings of loneliness by being in the company of others. Peer support groups may also be instrumental in assisting women in finding additional sources for treatment and/or community resources as needed for participants.

**Breastfeeding**

Breastfeeding is well documented as providing a variety of health benefits to both mothers and their babies. Aside from the short-term physiological health benefits, breastfeeding provides bonding opportunities because of the frequent mother/infant interaction, which can positively impact how mothers and infants respond to each other. Breastfeeding may indirectly reduce the risk for maternal postpartum depression. Breastfeeding also provides essential nutrients and antibodies to babies and has been associated with a reduced risk for

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pediatric obesity in children. Exclusive breastfeeding also appears to have an even stronger protective effect.\textsuperscript{15}

Breastfeeding rates have been increasing across the country and California has one of the highest rates of mothers reporting having ever breastfed and still breastfeeding at 6 months, however, the rates can vary widely by ethnic background.\textsuperscript{16} In Los Angeles County, the 2007 Los Angeles Mommy and Baby (LAMB) Surveillance Report revealed that only 79\% of Latina and 83\% of African American mothers reported any breastfeeding compared to almost 90\% of White and 92\% of Pacific Islander mothers.\textsuperscript{17} Peer support groups can be an effective means to increase breastfeeding rates among all mothers and improve health outcomes for their children.\textsuperscript{18} These groups can encourage pregnant women and support those who currently breastfeed. This strategy has been found to be effective in increasing the initiation and duration of breastfeeding for women from diverse backgrounds.\textsuperscript{19, 20}

\textit{Childhood Nutrition and Healthy Weight}

Nationally, over 10\% of toddlers between ages two and five years are identified as overweight or obese, with African American girls and Latino boys with the highest rates.\textsuperscript{21} First 5 LA recognizes the rise in diabetes and other obesity related health issues among Los Angeles County children. In Los Angeles County, 21\% of three year olds and 22\% of four year olds receiving WIC services are classified as overweight.\textsuperscript{22} Often, these children are at higher risk of developing future health problems that may affect their future quality of life.\textsuperscript{23}

The American Diabetes Association has projected that if the obesity epidemic is not reversed, one in three children born today will develop diabetes in their lifetimes.\textsuperscript{24} Latino and African American communities are hardest hit with over 11\% of adults already suffering from diabetes and an even higher percentage showing signs of pre-diabetes.\textsuperscript{25} Peer support groups for parents may be effective forums to discuss childhood nutrition and strategies to attain healthy weight for their children.

\textsuperscript{15} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity. Research to Practice Series, No. 4: Does breastfeeding reduce the risk of pediatric overweight?, 2007.


\textsuperscript{17} Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Programs (MCAH), Los Angeles Mommy and Baby Project, 2007 Surveillance Report.


\textsuperscript{20} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, Maternal and Child Nutrition Branch. The CDC Guide to Breastfeeding Interventions, 2005.


\textsuperscript{22} PHFE-WIC Administrative Data Provided to First 5 LA, 2011.


Oral Health & Hygiene
Currently, tooth decay affects children more than any other chronic infectious disease. Failure to treat tooth decay can contribute to problems with eating, talking, playing, and even learning. Most dental decay has an early onset and by the time children are in kindergarten, more than 70% already have dental decay, and 40% have rampant decay.26

In pregnant mothers, failure to treat tooth decay can result in one or more bacterial infections which can increase the chances of an unhealthy pregnancy. Good nutrition can be critical to preventing decay and disease.27

In Los Angeles County, findings from the 2009 Oral Health Needs Assessment indicated that the majority of parents (86%) were not following the recommendations by the American Association of Pediatric Dentistry. These recommendations include that children should visit the dentist by their first birthday.27 Parents who have not been educated on the importance of these recommendations may not seek dental care because they do not know about prevention or treatment options.28 In peer support groups, oral health and hygiene may be an important topic of education as dental disease is an infectious, progressive, transmissible, and largely preventable disease.

Children with Special Needs
According to the Strengthening Families Framework, peer support is a critical protective factor for social connections.29 Families of children with special needs often have to understand complex medical information, make difficult medical decisions, while balancing the day-to-day activities of raising their families. Social support is an effective coping tool for parents with special needs children and may help to create an environment of trust, allowing parents to build a forum for mutual support. Support offered by parents for parents can help parents become more confident in their abilities to manage the many challenges that are part of parenting children with special needs (Hartman et al., 1992).31

D. Rationale for Funding
On November 18, 2010, the Commission approved $2.2 million for the establishment of community peer support groups for parents of children prenatal through age 5 in communities where support, social cohesion, and connection to neighborhood peers are weak or lacking. On September 8, 2011, the Commission approved an additional $300,000 for a Curriculum Developer/Training and Technical Assistance Provider, which will

enhance and modify the implementation of this project by including the development of core competencies, training, and technical assistance.

E. **Objectives and Outcomes**

First 5 LA’s investment in Peer Support Groups for Parents aims to accomplish the following objectives and produce the outcomes listed below:

**Objective 1: Increase social connectedness of parents in Los Angeles County:**
- **Outcome 1A:** Increase numbers of peers with whom parents have access for support
- **Outcome 1B:** Decrease participants’ sense of social isolation
- **Outcome 1C:** Availability of culturally and/or linguistically appropriate structured peer support groups for target population

**Objective 2: Increase parents’ knowledge, confidence, and efficacy in parenting skills:**
- **Outcome 2A:** Demonstrated use of effective parenting techniques
- **Outcome 2B:** Increase parents’ knowledge regarding healthy child development
- **Outcome 2C:** Greater number of parents reporting using positive coping skills
- **Outcome 2D:** Fewer numbers of parents reporting parenting-related stress

**Objective 3: Raise parents’ awareness and use of resources available to support them as parents:**
- **Outcome 3A:** Greater parents’ awareness of opportunities for parenting education
- **Outcome 3B:** Greater parents’ awareness of support systems in times of need
- **Outcome 3C:** Increased number of parents reporting to have more peers to turn to when needed
- **Outcome 3D:** Increased use of resources by parents

III. **STATEMENT OF WORK**

The goal of this funding opportunity is to support the development of countywide opportunities that foster social connections, reduce isolation, and encourage sharing knowledge and skills among parents within each local community. These needs will be assessed early in the project so that topics to be covered within the peer support groups will be relevant to participants.

First 5 LA is seeking proposals from qualified organizations to develop peer support groups for parents Countywide. One Lead Agency will be identified to build upon existing partnerships or develop new ones with community based organizations (CBOs) in each of the five Supervisorial Districts to create and implement peer support groups for parents. The Lead Agency shall be responsible for the overall project and oversee the work of the CBOs.

The designated Lead Agency will ensure the oversight of the various strategies necessary to accomplish the objectives and outcomes in a timely manner. Selected applicants will also work with a Curriculum Developer/Technical Assistance and Training Provider, which is being solicited under a separate Request For Qualifications. Figure 2 below illustrates the
relationships among the Lead Agency, the Curriculum Development / Training and Technical Assistance Provider, and the CBOs that will work as partners in this project.

**Figure 2: Structure of Peer Support Groups for Parents Project**

Within the first six months of the contract term, the Lead Agency shall select up to five CBOs through a self-determined selection process to conduct the work of creating and implementing peer support groups for parents in all five Supervisorial Districts. Applicants who submit the proposal with up to five CBO partners already selected and secured with a completed Memorandum of Understanding will be awarded bonus points in the review process (see Section VIII Selection Process and Review Criteria and Appendix J, the complete Review Tool). First 5 LA expects the selected Lead Agency to perform the following tasks over the 2 ½ year project period which include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying and partnering with up to five CBOs (one in each Supervisorial District), ensuring that 20 Peer Support Groups for Parents are created in each District, for a total of 100 groups countywide. Groups should be comprised of a minimum of five participants per group.
- Working with the Curriculum Development/Training and Technical Assistance provider to ensure the successful implementation of the project.
- Ensuring that within the first six months of funding, a needs assessment is conducted in the form of focus groups, and the information used to determine and prioritize child development/parent support curriculum topics.
- Ensuring that the design of the Peer Support Groups is tailored to the existing needs within each Supervisorial District.
- Managing the CBO subcontracts including workplans and budgets.
- Ensuring evaluation plans are implemented and appropriate data is being collected.
- Effectively assessing and communicating the capacity needs of CBOs to the
Technical Assistance provider which may include training, evaluation, and marketing needs

The work of the subcontractor CBOs selected by the Lead Agency shall include but is not limited to the following:

- Assisting with recruiting participants in local community focus groups to determine the support and education needs of parents within each District
- Identifying outreach and recruitment methods for attracting participation in support groups
- Recruiting and retaining peer support group leaders
- Working with Lead Agency in the identification of training, evaluation, and outreach needs required to facilitate the development and implementation of these support groups
- Implementing evaluation procedures and program curricula as developed by the Curriculum Development/Training and Technical Assistance Provider, which is being solicited under a separate RFQ.

The Lead Agency must provide programmatic oversight to the project. This will include establishing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the CBOs in each of the five Supervisorial Districts. The Lead Agency and subcontracting CBOs that establish MOUs under this project must also follow contracting policies established by First 5 LA. They must meet the rigorous requirements regarding contract documentation, and be prepared with detailed paperwork should First 5 LA need to conduct an audit.

Applicants responding to this RFP should clearly indicate in the Proposal Narrative the qualifications of the individuals and the organization which demonstrate the ability to effectively oversee the CBOs. Proposers should also carefully review Section VIII. - SELECTION PROCESS AND REVIEW CRITERIA. This section identifies how proposers experience, knowledge and skills will be evaluated.

IV. ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must have the qualifications, experience, and ability to successfully carry out the Peer Support Group for Parents Lead Agency project. The ideal applicant(s) will be familiar with and have extensive experience to fulfill the required tasks identified 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 this Peer Support Groups for Parents Lead Agency RFP must be:

- A qualified nonprofit organization with tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code
- Must be in good standing with existing or previous First 5 LA grants and contracts
- Must have an established presence and/or office in Los Angeles County
V. SUMMARY OF DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

Applicants for the Lead Agency must have the qualifications, experience, and ability to successfully carry out the Peer Support Group for Parents project. As such, First 5 LA expects the selected Lead Agency to have the following qualifications:

- Possession of significant expertise and recognized as a leader in the area of work for which funds have been allocated.
- Demonstrated experience providing fiscal and programmatic oversight to public funds.
- Demonstrates culturally and linguistically competent proposal, if implemented, meets the needs of the designated population(s) and overall objectives and intended outcomes of First 5 LA’s Peer Support Group for Parents investment.
- Demonstrated history and ability of working effectively and collaboratively with community organizations throughout the County.
- Demonstrated successful capacity to serve as the Lead Agency.
- Demonstrated experience and current capacity to provide an administrative infrastructure and support for the five CBOs and a parent support network comprised of 100 groups.
- Prior experience developing, administering, and monitoring community partnerships.
- Have existing partnerships with community agencies throughout Los Angeles County.

VI. TERMS OF THE PROJECT

Available Funding
The contractor(s) will be compensated based upon the project budget developed during the contracting period. Funding for this project is not to exceed $2.2 million for the Peer Support Groups for Parents Lead Agency contract. This funding shall include stipends for each support group (100 in total across the county/20 per District) up to $7,500 per year for two years. Renewal of the contract will be subject to annual review based on performance. The Scope of Work and Budget for the first year and thereafter will be finalized upon successful negotiation between the selected applicant and First 5 LA for a specific contract period.

Project Period
The Commission anticipates the project to be approximately 2-1/2 years, with an intended start date of January 15, 2013. The contractor shall not be authorized to deliver or commence performance of 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 obtaining all written approvals by First 5 LA shall be considered voluntary.

Contractual Obligation
The selected contractor/s will be required to adhere to all contractual obligations as outlined in this document, including the First 5 LA Contract (see Sample Contract). It is
imperative that all applicants review the contract language in detail and fully understand contractual obligations should they be selected as a contractor for a project.

VII. PROPOSAL CONTENT

First 5 LA requires submission of proposals using First 5 LA’s online system accessed from the First 5 LA website: www.first5la.org/Funding-Center. Carefully review the following requirements for 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. PST on August 27, 2012. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

The proposal, including all required attachments, must be submitted online at www.first5la.org/Funding-Center. In addition to the electronic version of the Proposal Package Checklist, Signature Authorization and Agency Litigation Forms, please mail an original of the Cover Letter and these three signed forms to:

Craig A. Steele, Interim Chief Executive Officer
First 5 LA
750 North Alameda Street, Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Attention: Peer Support Groups for Parents Lead Agency RFP

Required Submission:

1. Proposal Package Checklist (See Appendix A): Submit one original form signed in blue ink.

2. Cover Letter: Introduce the applicant and/or firm, clearly providing the contractor’s name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, date and stating that the letter and materials provided are in response to the RFP for Peer Support Groups for Parents.

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

4. Proposal Narrative (maximum 20 pages double-spaced): Please provide a narrative outlining the contractor’s relevant qualifications and experience and plan for the programmatic oversight of the project, along with selection of up to five CBOs to conduct the work. The proposal narrative should be as detailed as possible, including strategies and relevant experience. The applicant should describe the proposed process to complete the tasks listed above 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 RFP will involve substantial work, and a key consideration in reviewing proposals will be the applicants technical and workforce capacity. The
applicants proposal will be reviewed according to the review criteria outlined in the Review Tool. (See Appendix J.)

The Proposal Narrative must be uploaded in a Word or PDF document using the online proposal system on the Applicant website. No hard copies of the Proposal Narrative or electronic copies received via email will be accepted. Please refer to Section VIII for an outline of the review criteria that will be used in scoring this narrative.

The narrative must describe the following:

**Applicant Background, Expertise and Experience (maximum 10 pages):**
- Number of years serving in a similar role
- Prior experience working in Los Angeles County.
- General and project specific qualifications, competency, experience, business integrity, and capacity to successfully execute a competitive applicant project
- Established presence and/or office in Los Angeles County.
- 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 organization’s work to be performed through this contract
- Prior experience working in culturally and linguistically diverse, low-income, and urban communities.

**Partnerships and Programs (maximum 10 pages):**
- Previous experiences of working in partnership with other organizations to complete large scale projects.
- Examples of leadership capabilities demonstrated in previously delivered community-based projects.
- Descriptions of community based programs conducted that required extensive experience in program planning, implementation and evaluation.
- Examples of experience in successfully engaging community members in the planning and implementation of community based programs.

5. **Performance Based Matrix:** Using the attached Performance Based Matrix template (Appendix B), list the outcome statements, outcome targets, performance measures and process milestones.

6. **Proposed Budget, Projected Budget Summary and Budget Narrative:** Using the attached budget worksheet (Appendix C), provide a 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 (Appendix D) which covers the full 2-1/2 year contract period. Please include all anticipated costs for planning and implementation not to exceed the amounts as described in the RFP. Payments will be based on monthly invoices submitted for expenses incurred.
7. Résumé or Curriculum Vitae for Applicant(s): 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.

8. Letter(s) of Intent or Memo(s) of Understanding: Obtain and submit for all collaborative partners and/or sub-contractors. Document must specify proposed responsibilities of and between each of the partners and/or sub-contractors.

9. References and/or Letters of Support (minimum of 3, 6 maximum): Provide letters of support from organizations, governments, and other stakeholders. 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.

Additional Required Attachments:

1. Signature Authorization Form (Appendix E): 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.

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

3. Audited Financial Statements including management letter and IRS Form 990 (if applicable): The applicant must include the most recent independent financial audit.

4. IRS Letter of Determination

5. Business License (if applicable)

6. Articles of Incorporation

7. Bylaws

8. Board of Directors

Please note: Selected applicant will be required to provide Certificates of Insurance for all insurance requirements outlined in the contract.
VIII. SELECTION PROCESS AND REVIEW CRITERIA

Selection Process
First 5 LA will award a contract to the applicant that demonstrates the expertise and qualifications outlined in the RFP. The review process is outlined below. First 5 LA reserves the right to modify the review process at any time, if necessary. Proposals with omissions of any required documentation are subject to disqualification. Please note that reviewers at all levels are required to sign Conflict of Interest Forms, prior to their review.

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.

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 in (Appendix J—Review Tool).

3. Project Budget Review – Project budgets will be reviewed for thoroughness, cost effectiveness, and appropriateness based on the proposed activities and timeline.

4. 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 will 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.

5. References – As part of this review process, the panel may contact an applicant’s references.

6. Interview – Staff may conduct interviews for selected proposal applicants to gain additional knowledge 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. These dates are subject to change at First 5 LA’s sole discretion. Interviews will be held either at First 5 LA or via telephone. An interview is not a guarantee of funding approval.

7. Funding Announcement – All applicants will be notified in writing of the status of their submitted proposal. Contract negotiations will be conducted with all approved awardees. Execution of the contract will be based upon successful contract negotiation.
8. **Feedback Process** – Proposal applicants who are declined 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 the 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 J for the complete Review Tool.)

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 Lead Agency for the Peer Support Groups for Parents project. The combination of the project team members’ resume history, project history, and narrative explanation of experience should convey a depth of understanding and/or skill in their identified areas of expertise. Additionally, this section should demonstrate the technical skills, availability and capacity for the proposed staff to successfully execute the scope of services, including the following:

- Possession of significant experience in creating, implementing and evaluating community based programs.
- Possession of significant partnerships with local community agencies that provide programs and services that meet the needs of children prenatal to age 5 and their parents.
- Experience recruiting and conducting outreach to diverse communities throughout the county
- Demonstrated experience in outreach and/or educational programming
- Demonstrated ability to access the target population and has experience engaging with this group.

**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 the following:

- Possession of significant expertise and recognized as a leader in the area of work for which funds have been allocated.
- Demonstrated experience providing fiscal and programmatic oversight to public funds.
- Demonstrated history and ability of working effectively and collaboratively with community organizations throughout the county.
- Demonstrated successful capacity to serve as the Lead Agency.
• Demonstrated ability of having local reach within service area to the First 5’s target population.

**Performance Based Matrix**

The proposal narrative should demonstrate the proposer’s understanding of the scope and objectives and propose a plan to successfully execute the requested performance based matrix. The proposal will be reviewed to evaluate each of the following:

• Outcome(s)
• Outcome Targets
• Performance Measures
• Process Milestones

**Budget**

Applicants must submit budgets that are in line with common business practices. The budget, projected budget summary and budget narrative should reflect the following:

• Overall appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of the proposal budget. Budget narrative conveys costs appropriately.
• Reasonable price per outcomes and tasks based on the reviewer’s experience including an awareness of risk that may arise as part of fixed-price budgeting.
• 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 $2.2 million over 2-1/2 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.
• Capacity to support First 5 LA’s evaluation of the proposed program.
• The contractor’s abilities in project planning and management.
• An understanding of effective strategies to engage the community and conduct outreach.

**CBO Partnership Selection**

Applicants who submit the proposal with up to five CBO partners (one per Supervisorial District) already selected and secured with signed MOUs to be included with the proposal will be awarded extra points in the review process.

First 5 LA reserves the right, without prejudice, to reject any or all submitted applications.
IX. CONTRACTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Specific contractual considerations, including but not limited to the following, apply to RFQ submission process and project implementation and to any contracts that result from the submission and implementation of the project/proposal. The contractor will need to comply 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 the COMMISSION.

4. The COMMISSION reserves the right to request additional financial information to verify applicant’s past and current financial status. This information includes, but is not limited to: the most recent independent audit, Cash Flow Statement, Statement of Activities (Income Statement), and Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet).

5. Consistent with the intent of Proposition 10: California Children and Families Act of 1998, no monies for this Project may be used to supplant Federal, State, County and/or other monies available to the organization for any purpose. Activities funded under this proposal must be new or enhancements to existing activities.

6. The award of a contract by the COMMISSION to an individual/agency/organization that proposes to use sub contractors for the performance of work under the contract resulting from this application process shall not be interpreted to limit the COMMISSION’s right to approve subcontractors, assemble teams and/or assign leads. Each applicant will be evaluated independently for added value to the overall team. A copy of executed subcontract(s) related to Program funding must be provided to the COMMISSION.

7. The selected Contractor will be required to sign the contract at least two (2) weeks prior to the intended start date of the contract, as outlined in Terms of Contract/Term of Grant section, to assure the timely completion of the signature process by all parties. If the contract is not signed prior to the intended start date, the commencement of any activities under the Exhibit A – Scope of Work will not begin until the contract execution date (the date all parties have signed the contract) and Contractor will not be eligible to obtain reimbursement for any costs incurred prior to the contract execution date, unless otherwise approved in writing by the COMMISSION. If this Contract is not signed within the thirty-day (30) period from the intended start date, the COMMISSION has the right to withdraw the contract award. The COMMISSION reserves the right to revise the effective date prior to final execution of the contract.

The contractor shall not be authorized to deliver or commence performance of services as described in this RFQ until final execution of the contract (contract must be signed by both parties). Final execution of the contract is contingent on First 5 LA’s Board approval of the negotiated scope of work and budget. Any performance of services commenced prior to obtaining all written approvals by First 5 LA shall be considered voluntary.
8. Unless otherwise submitted during the application process, the selected Contractor will be required to submit the required documentation listed on the Contractor Checklist, which includes, but not limited to, the following documents before the Contract can be fully executed:

- Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties Form
- By-laws (if applicable)
- Articles of Incorporation (if applicable)
- Board of Directors or List of Partners (as applicable)
- Signature Authorization Form
- Annual Independent Audit for prior fiscal year or calendar year (if applicable)
- Appropriate business licenses (for vendors or private organizations)
- IRS Letter of Determination (if applicable)
- Completed IRS Form W-9
- Memorandums of Understanding (for any sub-contractors, collaborators, and/or partners listed under Contracted Services and Evaluation sections of Exhibit B – Budget Forms)
- Certificates of Insurance for all insurance requirements outlined in the contract.

9. Per the COMMISSION’s Policy and Guidelines for Hiring Consultants (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 selected contractor/s will be required to adhere to all contractual obligations as outlined in this document, including the First 5 LA Contract (See Sample Contract). The selected applicant shall be expected to execute the contract without substantive alteration. If applicant cannot accept the terms of the contract without substantive alterations, the applicant should refrain from applying. It is imperative that all applicants review the contract language in detail and fully understand contractual obligations should they be selected.

D. Appeals Process

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 CEO within ten (10) business days following the date the notification of decision is made by First 5 LA. For more information, please see First 5 LA’s Appeals Policy.
X. APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCESS

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

- All documents listed on the Application Checklist (Appendix A) 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

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:

Craig A. Steele, Interim Chief Executive Officer
First 5 LA
750 North Alameda Street, Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Attention: Peer Support Groups for Parents Lead Agency RFP