Peer Support Groups for Parents
Curriculum Development/Training and Technical Assistance Provider
Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

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

RELEASE DATE: December 14, 2012
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I. TIMELINE FOR SELECTION PROCESS**

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<td>December 14, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Session/Webinar*</td>
<td>December 20, 2012, 10am-12noon</td>
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<td>• One (1) original and signed copy of First 5 LA’s “Signature Authorization” and “Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties” forms sent or delivered to First 5 LA</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 RFQ must be received in writing by First 5 LA by 5:00 p.m. on December 20, 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 for information session can be submitted to:

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Program Development Department
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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.
In the Strategic Plan, the Commission identified a pathway (Figure 1) 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 practices 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.

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within each of the 14 communities. 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**
First 5 LA is seeking proposals from qualified contractors or firms to serve as a Curriculum Developer/Technical Assistance and Training Provider for the Peer Support Groups for Parents Project, as outlined in this RFQ.

On November 18, 2010, the Commission approved a countywide project for $2.2 million for the establishment of community peer support groups for parents of young 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. These allocations were approved to support the FY 2009-2015 Strategic Plan goal areas of Children Maintain a Healthy Weight and Children are Safe from Abuse and Neglect.

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

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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.”

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. A brief discussion of each of these topics is provided below for consideration in developing the parent support groups curriculum. The actual topics to be addressed within each support group will be determined by a needs assessment, which the Curriculum Development/Training and Technical Assistance Provider will conduct during the first six months of the project so the curriculum will be relevant to the needs of the local community and the members of the group itself. The selection of the topics should also be informed by empirical research findings demonstrating the efficacy of peer support groups such as in promoting breastfeeding and preventing post-partum depression. Thus, the Commission requires the Curriculum Development/Training and Technical Assistance Provider to include breastfeeding promotion and prevention of post-partum depression as two topical areas in the curriculum and add 3-4 more topical areas, as determined by the needs.

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

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multiple babies.\textsuperscript{5} The prevalence of PPD is also higher among African-American and Latino women than for women of other ethnic backgrounds.\textsuperscript{5} 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.\textsuperscript{6} Women may also experience cultural barriers to receiving care for PPD.\textsuperscript{7} 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. 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.\textsuperscript{7} 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.\textsuperscript{7}

Treatment for PPD may include medication, counseling, and community support groups.\textsuperscript{8} In addition to appropriate screenings and treatment, studies have shown that adequate social support is an important determinant of postpartum depression (PPD).\textsuperscript{4,5,6,7} Receiving social support through friends, peer groups and relatives during stressful times is thought to be a protective factor against developing depression.\textsuperscript{9} 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.\textsuperscript{2,3}. The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology recommends providing social support through friends, peer groups and relatives during stressful times is thought to be a protective factor against developing depression.\textsuperscript{9} 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.\textsuperscript{2,3}. 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.\textsuperscript{10} 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 may benefit from peer support. Peer support groups can provide a sense of community and belonging, as well as a supportive environment in which to share experiences and emotions.


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 pediatric obesity in children. Exclusive breastfeeding also appears to have an even stronger protective effect.

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. 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. Peer support groups can be an effective means to increase breastfeeding rates among all mothers and improve health outcomes for their children. 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.

**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.  

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14 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.


19 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.

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. Often, these children are at higher risk of developing future health problems that may affect their future quality of life.

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. 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. Peer support groups for parents may be effective forums to discuss childhood nutrition and strategies to attain healthy weight for their children.

**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.

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.

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. 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. 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. Families of children with special needs often have to

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22 PHFE-WIC Administrative Data Provided to First 5 LA, 2011.
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).

D. 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: Increased 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: Increase in the type and quantity of resources used by parents

III. STATEMENT OF WORK

First 5 LA is seeking proposals from qualified applicants or firms to serve as the Curriculum Developer/Technical Assistance and Training Provider which will enhance and modify the implementation of the Peer Support Groups for Parents project by developing core competencies, and providing training and technical assistance to local community based organizations who will in turn convene and facilitate 20 peer support groups in each of the five Supervisorial Districts for a Countywide total of 100.

On July 18, 2012, First 5 LA released a separate Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking proposals from qualified organizations to serve as a Lead Agency to develop and manage the peer support groups for parents Program 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. 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.

Figure 2 below illustrates the relationships between 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 Partnerships**

First 5 LA expects the selected contractor to perform the following tasks over the 2-1/2 year contracted period which include, but are not limited to:

- Work collaboratively with the Lead Agency and CBOs to complete the following tasks in the first 6 months of the contract:
  - Plan for and conduct focus groups of parents from the target population identified within the appropriate District and key informant interviews with CBO providers. The exact methodology to be utilized should be proposed by the applicant. At minimum, one parent focus group should be conducted per district, along with a representative set of key informant interviews. Note that recruitment of focus group participants is the primary responsibility of the Lead Agency.
  - Compile information from the focus groups to determine topics of highest priority for parents within the appropriate District.
  - Design the curriculum for the educational components of the Peer Support Groups based on the documented needs of the target population. This may include developing a new curriculum or adapting an existing curriculum. The selected entity will be required to develop curriculum on two topical areas -
breastfeeding promotion and prevention of post-partum depression. This entity will also be required to develop curriculum on an additional 3-4 topical areas for all Districts, as determined by the needs assessment during the first six months of the project.
- Ensure that the design of the curriculum aims to meet the objectives and outcomes of the Peer Support Groups for Parents program
- Ensure the design of the curriculum includes culturally and linguistically appropriate materials as required.
- Provide training to the Lead Agency and CBOs in the best practices related to peer support group facilitation and education.
- Provide ongoing support to the Lead Agency and CBOs in the areas of training and outreach.
- Monitor and provide ongoing support related to the use of the curriculum and fidelity to the model.
- Consult and coordinate with First 5 LA’s Research and Evaluation department and the Lead Agency on the design and implementation of the program evaluation. The Lead Agency will be responsible for data collection, and First 5 LA’s Research and Evaluation department will be responsible for ensuring the following is completed: developing the evaluation plan, conducting analysis, and producing the evaluation report. The Curriculum Development/Training and Technical Assistance Provider will provide input into and review of the evaluation tools to ensure they correspond to the learning objectives of the curriculum.
- Work closely with First 5 LA and the Lead Agency in the first six months of the project to develop and implement the needs assessment, design the curriculum, and provide training and technical assistance to prepare for the 2-year implementation phase of the project. Provide less intensive but continued support to Lead Agency as needed in the areas of training and technical assistance during the implementation phase.

Additional Activities

First 5 LA reserves the right to request the selected contractor/s to perform additional activities related to the work described above. These activities will be incorporated in a revised work plan, budget, and scope of work as necessary. The contractor will furnish the necessary personnel, materials, and services, unless otherwise stated in this document.

IV. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must have the qualifications, experience, and ability to successfully carry out the above mentioned Statement of Work for the Peer Support Group for Parents Curriculum Development/Training and Technical Assistance Provider. The ideal applicant(s) will be familiar with and have extensive experience to fulfill the required tasks identified in Section III Statement of Work and Section V Summary of Desired Qualifications.

First 5 LA provides funding to projects and services that benefit children prenaturally to age 5. To be eligible for funding, applicants for this Peer Support Groups for Parents
Curriculum Development/Training and Technical Assistance Provider RFQ must be in good standing with existing or previous First 5 LA grants and contracts.

V. SUMMARY OF DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

Applicants for the Peer Support Groups for Parents Curriculum Development/Training and Technical Assistance Provider RFQ should meet the training and technical assistance requirements as well as have the general project administration and management experiences as listed below:

Training
- Best practices in the development of peer support groups
- Recruitment and retention of peer leaders and participants
- Strategies to promote peers support groups
- Orientation and training for peer support group leaders
- Cultural competency in the development of community-based programs

Technical Assistance
- Establishment of countywide plans to reach communities most in need
- Development of tools, methods, and procedures to best assess community needs and implement the project.
- Provision of region-specific consultation to CBOs in developing outreach plans
- Group facilitation or training as required
- Development of participant retention strategies
- Determination of a strategy, along with key partners, that will increase the awareness of and access to parenting resources throughout Los Angeles County

Project Administration and Management Experience
- Provision of fiscal and programmatic oversight to public funds
- Development of adult training curriculum for lay educators serving culturally and linguistically diverse underserved populations
- Development of curriculum and/or health education materials in multiple languages
- Staff resources, expertise and ability to provide training and technical assistance

Applicants should also carefully review Section VIII - SELECTION PROCESS AND REVIEW CRITERIA. This section identifies how the applicant’s experience, knowledge and skills will be evaluated. Applicants must submit evidence of individual and firm qualifications in the requested areas as part of the Proposal Narrative.

VI. PROJECT TERMS

Available Funding
One contractor will be compensated based upon the project budget developed during the contracting period. Funding for the Peer Support Groups for Parents Curriculum Developer/Training and Technical Assistance Provider contract is not to exceed $300,000 over 2-1/2 years. Renewal of the contract will be subject to annual review based on performance. The budget will be expected to be detailed and justified upon the successful
award to a contractor. The Scope of Work and Budget 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 March, 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 a fully executed contract with 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. (Hourly rates should be consistent with First 5 LA's Consultant/Contractor Rate Table posted under Important Documents. Please see Section IX, “Contractual Considerations,” sub-section, C, “Contract Information,” point 9 to review Commission policies and guidelines concerning rates.

**VII. PROPOSAL CONTENT**

Applicants for the First 5 LA Peer Support Groups for Parents Curriculum Development/Training and Technical Assistance Provider must include the following required documents as part of the proposal. Documents must be submitted using First 5 LA's online application system. Please refer to Section X. Application Submission Process for details on submission.

All required documents must be submitted through the online application which is accessible from the First 5 LA website. The online application includes an application form which must be completed online. The form requests the Executive Director’s name, address and other information regarding the applicant. Additionally, a proposal checklist is posted online as a helpful tool for applicants.

For complete submission of an application, the following documents are required:

1. **Proposal Narrative:** The Project Narrative must be uploaded in a Word or PDF document using the online application. No hard copies of the proposal narrative will be accepted. Responses shall not exceed 20 pages in length double-spaced (12 point font size). The proposal narrative should include:
   a. Applicant’s and/or consulting firm’s relevant qualifications and experience and plan for design and implementation of the project proposed.
   b. Proposed project team and each team member’s role on the project. The Proposer must identify all staff that will work on and/or participate in this project, including their titles, each person’s role, responsibilities, and expertise as it relates to this project.
2. Scope of Work (Appendix A): Scope of Work, describe the objectives and related key activities expected for this RFQ. The Scope of Work should be inclusive of the 2 ½ years of the project. Activities and subtasks leading to the fulfillment of the objective should also have sufficient details (i.e., benchmarks or milestones in chronological order. Include the appropriate quantity or frequency of the associated activities or subtasks). Staff assignments should be detailed (i.e., consultants and/or subcontractors responsible for the respective activity or subtask). Finally, all deliverables need to be described and specific due dates need to be provided.

3. Proposed Budget for 2 ½ years (Appendix B): Please include all anticipated costs for planning and implementation not to exceed the amounts as described in the RFQ. Year 1 will include the first 12 months of the project, Year 2 will include the subsequent 12 months of the project, and Year 3 should include the final 6 months of the project (a total of 2 ½ years). The contractor will assume any risk from contract or project delays. The budget should be created based upon the approximate number of hours to complete the tasks and deliverables set forth in this RFQ. First 5 LA and the selected contractor will negotiate final budget and scope of work. See Appendix B for form. Hourly rates should be consistent with First 5 LA’s Consultant/Contractor Rate Table (posted under Important Documents). Please see Section IX, “Contractual Considerations,” sub-section, C, “Contract Information,” point 9 to review Commission policies and guidelines concerning rates. (The Budget Request Form will not be included as part of the twenty (20) page proposal maximum.) Identify costs over the 2-1/2 year project term and number of hours personnel will be assigned to the Project, including a brief description of the services, the rate of pay and the formula used to determine the total amount. Identify and provide a general description of all other non-personnel costs (for example, equipment, printing, copying, space, telephone, supplies, etc.) required to complete the deliverables. Specifying the quantity, cost per unit, duration of use, and purpose of these items.

4. Budget Narrative for 2 ½ years: Please include a budget narrative justifying each of the line items in the Budget Request Form for Year 1 through Year 3. Year 1 will include the first 12 months of the project, Year 2 will include the subsequent 12 months of the project, and Year 3 should include the final 6 months of the project (a total of 2 ½ years).
5. Résumés or Curriculum Vitae(s) for Key Staff and Subcontractor(s): Include résumé(s) or Curriculum Vitae(s) for all staff who will be involved in the proposed project design and implementation, outlining relevant work and/or project history, education, publications, prior research projects, etc., including those that will be working on the project as subcontractors, if possible and as appropriate. Please include information specific to work in Los Angeles County. Resumes will not be included as part of the 20 page proposal maximum. All resumes should not exceed 10 pages total (12 point font size).

6. 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. All references and Letters of Support should not exceed 10 pages total (12 point font size).

7. Letters of Intent (if applicable): 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. Letters of Intent should not exceed 7 pages total (12 point font size).

Additional Required Attachments:

1. 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 omission will constitute an incomplete application and grounds for disqualification. Applicants must submit one original form signed in blue ink. See Appendix D.

2. Signature Authorization Form (Appendix C): This form is required in order to verify signature authority to enter into contractual agreement with First 5 LA. If not outlined in the By-laws, a Board Resolution, Partnership Agreement or Business License must be submitted, as applicable, that indicates signature authority. Applicants must submit one original form signed in blue ink. See Appendix C.

3. Audited Financial Statements: The applicant must include the most recent independent financial audit.

4. IRS Letter of Determination (if applicable)

5. Business License (if applicable)
6. By-laws (if applicable)

7. Articles of Incorporation (if applicable)

8. Board of Directors List or List of Partners (as applicable)

**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**

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

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

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

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

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

5. **Financial Review** – As a public entity, the Commission has a responsibility to the public to ensure that the organizations selected are financially stable to provide services. Applicants may be reviewed to assess fiscal health in relationship to their capacity to implement the proposed project and manage the proposed budget. Further written materials regarding the financial stability of the agency may be requested by our finance department prior to the review.
6. **References** – As part of this review process, the panel may contact an applicant’s references.

7. **Funding Announcement** – All applicants will be notified in writing of the status of their submitted proposal. Contract negotiations will be conducted with the approved awardee. Execution of the contract will be based upon successful contract negotiation.

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

**Review Criteria**

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

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

**Qualifications of Proposed Personnel**

The proposed project personnel should demonstrate the skill and experience to carry out the role of Curriculum Development/Training & Technical Assistance Provider for the Peer Support Groups for Parents project. The combination of the project team members’ resume history, history of working together, and narrative explanation of relevant experience should convey a depth of understanding and skill in their identified areas of expertise. Additionally, this section should demonstrate the technical skills, availability and capacities of the proposed staff to successfully execute the scope of work and discuss the project team’s demonstrated experience, capacity, ability or expertise in:

- Providing fiscal and programmatic oversight to public funds.
- Developing adult training curriculum for lay educators serving culturally and linguistically diverse underserved populations.
- Developing curriculum and/or health education materials in multiple languages.
- Providing training and technical assistance sufficient to meet the requirements of the RFQ.
- Providing appropriate training and technical assistance as mentioned.

**Organizational Experience**

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

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

Scope of Work
The proposer should demonstrate understanding of the project’s scope and objectives, and propose a plan to successfully execute the requested scope of work. The proposer’s scope of work will be evaluated relative to each of the following:

• Objectives
• Activities and Tasks
• Staff Assignments
• Timeline
• Deliverables

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

• Overall appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of the proposal budget. Budget narrative conveys costs appropriately.
• Reasonable price per task based on the reviewer’s experience including an awareness of risk that may arise as part of fixed-price budgeting.
• A composite hourly rate for all personnel that does not exceed $150/hour (see detail in Contracting Considerations, number 9).
• Tasks assigned to appropriate personnel as to minimize the cost per deliverable while also maximizing the quality of output.
• A total budget that does not exceed $300,000 for up to 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.
• The contractor’s abilities in project planning and management.
• First 5 LA reserves the right, without prejudice, to reject any or all submitted qualifications.

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 will 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 subcontractors 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 Policy

First 5 LA reserves the right, without prejudice, to reject any or all submitted applications. An Appeal shall be permitted only on the grounds that the decision violated applicable law, First 5 LA policies and procedures, or the terms of the bid, RFP or RFQ. Appeals challenging First 5 LA’s decision on the merits or qualifications of bidders or proposers or the scoring of proposals shall not be permitted. An appeal of a First 5 LA decision shall be in writing and filed with the office of the Executive Director within ten (10) business days following the date the notification of decision is made by First 5 LA. For more information, please see First 5 LA’s Appeals Policy at http://www.first5la.org/About-Us/Policies.

X. APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCESS

First 5 LA requires submission of applications for the Peer Support Groups for Parents Curriculum Development/Training and Technical Assistance Provider RFQ via First 5 LA’s online application system. Applicants must also mail or hand deliver two documents (Appendices C&D) as outlined below by the proposal due date. Carefully review Section VII. Proposal Content for instructions on completing all required documents.

Applications are due no later than 5:00 p.m. PST on Monday, January 7, 2013. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

Applicants are required to submit one application in the following manner:
1. Submit one copy of all documents listed below and on the provided Application Checklist (Appendix E) online at http://www.first5la.org/FundingCenter. All supporting materials must include the name of the applicant.
   - Proposal Narrative
   - Scope of Work (Appendix A)
   - Proposed Budget for 2 ½ years (Appendix B)
   - Budget Narrative (for 2 ½ years Proposed Budget)
   - Signature Authorization Form (Appendix C)
   - Agency Involvement in Litigation Form (Appendix D)
   - Résumé or Curriculum Vitae for Key Staff and Subcontractor(s)
   - Letters of Intent (if applicable)
   - References and/or Letters of Support (minimum of 3)
   - IRS Letter of Determination (if applicable)
   - Business license (if applicable)
   - Current Independent Financial Audit
   - By-Laws (if applicable)
   - Articles of Incorporation (if applicable)
   - Board of Directors List or List of Partners (as applicable)

2. Submit to First 5 LA offices one (1) original, signed copy of the following documents (Signatures must be in blue ink. Signature stamps are not acceptable):
   - Signature Authorization Form (Appendix C) (1 original, signed in blue ink)
   - Agency Involvement in Litigation (Appendix D) Form (1 original, signed in blue ink)

   The Signature Authorization and Agency Involvement in Litigation Form must be submitted on or before the submission deadline to:

   Nancy Watson, Program Officer
   First 5 LA
   750 North Alameda Street, Suite 300
   Los Angeles, CA 90012
   Attention: Peer Support Groups for Parents
   Curriculum Development/Training and Technical Assistance Provider RFQ

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.

XI. APPENDICES:

Appendix A:  Scope of Work
Appendix B:  Proposed Budget for 2 ½ years
Appendix C:  Signature Authorization Form
Appendix D:  Agency Involvement in Litigation Form
Appendix E:  Application Checklist
Appendix F:  Review Tools