FIRST 5 LA
Consultants Pool
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

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

RELEASE DATE: October 21, 2013
TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. TIMELINE FOR SELECTION PROCESS ................................................................. 3
II. BACKGROUND ...................................................................................................... 4
III. ELIGIBILITY .......................................................................................................... 8
IV. TERMS OF PARTICIPATION .................................................................................. 8
V. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS ....................................................................................... 9
VI. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS ........................................................................... 10
VII. SELECTION PROCESS AND REVIEW CRITERIA .............................................. 11
VIII. CONTRACTUAL CONSIDERATIONS ................................................................. 12
IX. APPEALS POLICY ............................................................................................... 15
X. APPENDICES ...................................................................................................... 15
I. TIMELINE FOR SELECTION PROCESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RFQ Released</td>
<td>Thursday, October 21, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application Due</td>
<td>Accepted anytime through December 31, 2014</td>
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<td>Award and Declination Notices</td>
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Applications submitted in response to this RFQ will be reviewed monthly through December 31, 2014. 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 can be submitted to:

Marsha Ellis, Assistant Director  
Best Start Communities Department  
First 5 LA  
750 N. Alameda Street, Suite 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Phone: 213. 482.7547  
E-mail: mellis@first5la.org

1 Note: Dates are subject to change at First 5 LA’s sole discretion.
II. BACKGROUND

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

The First 5 LA FY 2009-2015 Strategic Plan

In 2009, First 5 LA’s Board of Commissioners adopted a new strategic plan (as amended) 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. It was later amended by the Commission to include additional countywide initiatives developed in 2010. In addition to a countywide approach that focuses on policy change, public education, workforce development and other strategies, the strategic plan (as amended) 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 the influential role of safe and supportive neighborhoods in a young child’s quality of life.

This combined place-based and countywide approach is intended to concentrate First 5 LA’s limited resources in areas of high need and to support the sustainability of those efforts over time. The strategic plan (as amended) 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.
The strategic plan (as amended) identified a pathway for First 5 LA investments that leads to our desired outcomes for children, families and communities in our four goal areas.

The Place-Based Approach, Best Start

First 5 LA’s place-based approach focuses on the places where families live — combining strategies to strengthen families with those that build community capacity to create and sustain thriving and healthy environments for all children. Focused on 14 traditionally underserved communities in LA County, Best Start is an important part of First 5 LA’s Strategic Plan for 2009-15. Through Best Start, First 5 LA seeks to help improve the lives of young children and their families by positively impacting the systems they participate in and the environments in which they live, learn and play.

In late June of 2013, the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners endorsed the Building Stronger Families (BSF) framework to sharpen the focus of the work of Best Start as it moves forward. The BSF framework is strongly supported by research and promising practices and makes clear the results being sought and how to achieve those results through place-based work.
At the heart of the framework is the belief that if families are strong and communities are family-supporting, children will have better long-term outcomes.

"Strong families” are those that support and promote optimal child well-being. Research and evidence-based practices have identified key characteristics of a “strong family.” These characteristics, which relate to parents and expectant parents, are also known as family strengthening “protective factors”. Rooted in these protective factors, three core family results of the BSF framework are:

- Families demonstrate resilience, parental knowledge, and positive relationships that support their children’s social and emotional competence.
- Families participate in positive social networks that provide multiple opportunities for mutual support and leadership development.
- Families access concrete supports in times of need.

Strategies that promote strong families are those that build and support the ability of parents to effectively care for and promote the healthy development, school readiness and well-being of young children.

“Family-supporting communities” are communities that engage parents, residents, CBOs, businesses and other community partners to support families and optimal child development. The three core community results of the BSF framework are:

- Neighborhoods and communities establish a common vision and act collectively to:
  - Improve the policies, services and environments that build family protective factors.
  - Influence the availability and quality of concrete services.
- Neighborhoods and communities support and sustain environments that:
  - Promote positive, regular social interaction for families
  - Encourage social interaction and promote healthy living.
- Neighborhoods and communities develop and sustain services and supports that meet family needs.

In June of 2013, the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners approved criteria to guide the selection of activities to support community progress toward the BSF framework’s three core family and three core community results:

- Alignment with the current strategic plan’s defined investment areas
  - Direct Services (Family Strengthening)
  - Community Capacity Building
  - Systems Improvement
- Evidence-based or promising practices related to the Building Stronger Families framework core family and community results
- Outcomes of the activity are achievable in 5-10 years
- The activity offers the potential to mobilize resources and enhance sustainability.
The Best Start Community Partnerships represent an important First 5 LA-supported activity to promote relationship- and capacity-building among parents and diverse community stakeholders to improve outcomes for children in Best Start communities. These partnerships consist of parents, civic and business leaders, members of the clergy, representatives from community-based organizations and others working together in support of young children and families in each of the 14 Best Start Communities.

The Systems Connection

First 5 LA’s approach to building stronger families – grounded in evidence-based attributes known as the “protective factors” – represents a systematic way to impact large numbers of young children and their families. By working to incorporate these factors into existing programs and services – such as early childhood education - First 5 LA and its Best Start community partners can contribute to change in organizational policy and practice across different systems and settings community- and county-wide. By working collaboratively with both county agency and Best Start community partners, First 5 LA can help facilitate and promote learning and linkages across communities and systems and alignment of results for families.

Best Start communities exist in and are supported by a broader context of systems, policy and funding. This includes the mandates and structures through which health and human services are provided in LA County, as well as the economic, philanthropic, and policy environment and the public will around issues related to children and families. Strong, coordinated and responsive systems and investments are critical to responding to gaps in services and supports that meet family needs, including high quality services and opportunities for economic and educational success. Informed by the work of Best Start community partnerships, First 5 LA’s grantees and its governmental, philanthropic, business and other partners will work together to ensure that the systems, policy and funding context supports Best Start’s contributions and, together, “move the needle” to strengthen families and improve results for children.

Countywide Approach

The strategic plan (as amended) recognizes 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, countywide investments can have an impact beyond the children in the 14 Best Start communities. At the same time, this approach will help 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 — community-based experience and concrete evidence regarding models that strengthen families and improve outcomes for children, 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. The strategic plan (as amended) incorporates seven specific countywide strategies, including public policy, public education, resource mobilization, workforce development, data systems integration and health access. In addition, First 5 LA
is supporting an array of countywide investments in areas such as universal screening and assessment of newborns, early care and education workforce development, nutrition and physical activity programs for families and in child care facilities, and parental support projects. Among other strategies, First 5 LA supports efforts to increase access to health care and insurance for pregnant women, children and their families; provide telephonic or online and printed resource directories for families; and enhance the impact of our investments with effective, strategic partnerships.

III. ELIGIBILITY

First 5 LA is seeking applicants for consultant work with several of First 5 LA’s departments. Admittance into the Pool will allow members to receive solicitations for contract opportunities with First 5 LA. First 5 LA will issue solicitations to pool members on a project by project basis based on areas of expertise. Pool members may respond to the solicitations that fit their areas of expertise and experience while considering availability and capacity to execute the project. Selected consultants may be required to submit additional documentation in order to complete the contracting process. If the contracting process takes more than ten business days, First 5 LA reserves the right to select another consultant from the pool. Please see Section IV - Terms of Participation & Section VIII Contractual Considerations for more details.

Please note that consultants/organizations will be accepted into the pool for up to one year (please see terms of participation below). However, the consultant pool will be open for new applicants on an as needed basis, with applications accepted at additional times during the year. Consultants will be offered the opportunity to renew their participation in the pool upon expiration at the sole discretion of the Commission. Consultants in the pool may exit at any time. A contract will not be issued with any member of the pool until work has been solicited.

Eligible applicants must demonstrate the qualifications, experience, competency, and ability to successfully provide professional counsel, technical assistance and related program and/or organizational support. Applications will be considered from individuals and/or groups with the capacity to work throughout Los Angeles County.

Individuals and agencies with current First 5 LA contracts must be in compliance with the terms of those contracts in order to participate in the First 5 LA Consultants Pool. Applicants should refer to Appendix B for a complete list of Areas of Expertise.

IV. TERMS OF PARTICIPATION

1. Acceptance into the consultant pool does not guarantee a contract with First 5 LA. For those consultants who are accepted into the consultant pool, work will be solicited based on First 5 LA needs. Staff will select a consultant from the pool based on the criteria specified at the time of the solicitation. The selected consultant and staff will negotiate a scope of work and final budget during the contracting process.
2. The term of membership in this pool is up to one year. Consultants in the pool will be offered the opportunity to renew their membership upon expiration at the sole discretion of First 5 LA. Additionally, applications will be accepted for additional applicants to the pool on an as needed basis.

3. Consultants may exit the pool at any time by mailing a signed, original letter to First 5 LA. Accepted consultants are not bound to accept work solicited by First 5 LA. However, consultants in the pool must agree to adhere to the contractual considerations in this RFQ.

4. The Commission reserves the right to amend the Pool as needed to best meet the needs of all parties. At the Commission’s discretion, consultants in the pool may be removed from the pool at any time.

V. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Required documents to respond to this RFQ:

1. Application Checklist (Appendix A): The checklist must be included with the application and needs to indicate which documents are being submitted.

2. Areas of Expertise (Appendix B): Please identify a maximum of five (5) areas in which you have the strongest expertise and/or in-depth experience as a consultant and indicate your responses in the appropriate location on the online application form.

3. Resume: Provide resume(s) or curriculum vitae for up to three (3) principals of the consulting firm, outlining relevant work and/or consulting history, education, publications, prior research projects, etc. Maximum six (6) pages per person.

4. Narrative (Appendix C): Please provide a brief narrative for each Area of Expertise selected on Appendix B. The information provided in the Narrative will be used for reference checks if necessary at the sole discretion of First 5 LA. Narratives for each area of expertise should describe previous client engagements, be no more than two (2) pages and include the following:
   - Client/Agency Name
   - Description of the client agency
   - Contact Person
   - Contact Person’s Phone Number
   - Dates of project (include start and end dates)
   - Purpose of the project
   - Consultant’s role in developing, implementing and/or evaluating the project
   - Deliverables and/or outcomes of the engagement

5. Hourly Budget Form (Appendix D): Applicants must submit a form detailing their hourly rate. Only complete Agency Name, Title/Name and Hourly Rate columns. 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).

6. **Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance (Appendix E) (1 original SIGNED with BLUE INK):** Please read the information on the required Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties form thoroughly and include one (1) original SIGNED with BLUE INK by the application deadline. If you checked Yes to any of the questions on this form, please explain whether this will impact the project on this solicitation. An unsigned form or its omission will constitute an incomplete application and will be grounds for disqualification.

7. **Signature Authorization Form (Appendix F) (1 original SIGNED with BLUE INK):** This form is required in order to verify signature authority to enter into contractual agreement with First 5 LA. If not outlined in the Bylaws, a Board Resolution or Partnership Agreement must be submitted, as applicable, that indicates signature authority. Applicants must submit one original form signed in blue ink. Omission of the form will constitute an incomplete proposal and may be grounds for disqualification.

8. **W-9 Form (Appendix G):** Applicants must submit a completed W-9 form signed by an authorized signatory.

9. **Business License (if applicable)**

10. **IRS Account Determination Letter (if applicable)**

Failure to submit all required attachments and original documents will constitute an incomplete proposal and may be grounds for disqualification. In order to respond to this RFQ, please complete and submit your application and all required documents below to First 5 LA no later than December 31, 2014. **Applications** received after this deadline **may not** be considered. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure, prior to submission, that their proposal reflects the requirements of this solicitation.

**VI. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants are required to submit all required documents online at [http://www.first5la.org/Funding-Center](http://www.first5la.org/Funding-Center) In addition to the electronic documents; applicants **must** also submit the following original signed documents: First 5 LA’s Signature Authorization Form and Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties Form within two weeks after submitting the online application. Please mail originals to:
Written submissions must meet the following criteria:

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

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

**VII. SELECTION PROCESS AND REVIEW CRITERIA**

Applicants must review the First 5 LA Sample Contract – Appendix I. It is imperative that all applicants review the contract language in detail and fully understand contractual obligations should they be selected as a consultant for a project.

**Selection Process**

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

2. After initial review, applicant qualifications will be evaluated and scored by a panel of three (3) external reviewers. Review tools are adhered to by external reviewers to alleviate the potential for bias. External reviewers are also required to sign a Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement.

3. When necessary and applicable, First 5 LA will conduct reference checks for reference agencies listed under the Narrative. Reference checks will be completed as necessary to complement results from the external review process. First 5 LA must be able to contact all references provided by the applicant. If a reference cannot be reached, First 5 LA may deem the applicant ineligible for this opportunity.

4. All consultants that pass the external review (and reference checks if applicable), and agree to First 5 LA’s contract terms will be accepted into the Consultants Pool. Following acceptance to the Consultant Pool, some applicants may be required to participate in an interview with First 5 LA to determine their ability and capacity for work.
5. Depending on the type of service and extent to which a Contractor must have good/healthy cash flow, financial stability may also be reviewed. If such a determination is made, the financial review may be a factor in the selection process, and applicant(s) may be required to submit financial statements or other additional information upon request.

Review Criteria
First 5 LA will consider accepting those consultants who have the expertise outlined in the Areas of Expertise – Appendix B. Consultant(s) will be selected to enter into the pool based on, but not limited to, evaluation of the following factors:

1. **Relevant knowledge and expertise:** This criterion reflects the extent to which the applicant’s project narrative reflects skill in their declared area of expertise. The combination of the applicant’s resume, project history, and narrative explanation of experience should convey a depth of understanding and/or skill of their identified areas of expertise. Furthermore, the area of expertise should be directly relevant to the work being undertaken by First 5 LA, and this relevance should be reflected in the applicant’s response to the online application.

The applicant’s Narratives should reflect a history of engagement with organizations with missions similar to that of First 5 LA, and the applicant’s role on those projects should be in the capacity in which they might be employed by First 5 LA.

2. **Narratives:** The applicant must submit one (1) Narrative for each declared Area of Expertise. These Narratives will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

   a. The role of the applicant in the project: The applicant’s role in the project should be clear, and should conform to the role which First 5 LA would expect them to play should they be necessary for project support;
   b. The relevance of the project to the applicant’s declared area of expertise and to First 5 LA’s needs.
   c. References from current and/or former clients.

First 5 LA reserves the right, without prejudice, to reject any or all submitted qualifications. The Commission does have an appeals process. Please refer to Section IX Appeals Policy for more information.

**VIII. 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 s/he 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 reserves the right to reject all bids and re-advertise for bids. Failure to comply with bid specification shall be grounds for disqualification of bids. Each bidder or proposer shall be required to honor the price and specifications quoted for a minimum of sixty (60) calendar days following submission of the bid. 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/activity/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/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, the total composite rate, which includes labor and other costs, for a Consultant may not exceed $150 an hour, depending on the type of expertise. 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.

IX. 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 or his/her designee within ten (10) business days following the date the notification of decision is made by First 5 LA. For more information, please refer to the Appeals Policy located at [http://www.first5la.org/About-Us/Policies](http://www.first5la.org/About-Us/Policies).

X. APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Application Checklist
- Appendix B: Areas of Expertise (up to 5)
- Appendix C: Narrative (1 required for each Area of Expertise)
- Appendix D: Hourly Budget Form
- Appendix E: Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties
- Appendix F: Contractor Signature Authorization Form
- Appendix G: W-9
- Appendix H: Qualifications Review Tool
- Appendix I: Sample Consultant Agreement