FIRST 5 LA COUNTYWIDE SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

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

RELEASE DATE: JUNE 20, 2013
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I. TIMELINE FOR SELECTION PROCESS

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All questions and requests for additional information regarding this RFP must be received in writing by First 5 LA via email before 5 p.m. on July 8, 2013. 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:

Melinda Leidy, Research Analyst
First 5 LA
750 N. Alameda Street, Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Phone: 213. 482. 7533
E-mail: mleidy@first5la.org

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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.

**Figure 1: First 5 LA Prioritized Pathway**

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. 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 within each of the 14 communities. The expectation is that each community partnership will submit proposals to the First 5 LA commissioners for future investments that target community-identified priorities that will help advance Best Start’s primary goals that children in each community grow up safe, healthy and ready to learn.

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

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. 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.

III. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Research and Evaluation Department is charged with evaluating the implementation of First 5 LA’s countywide strategies. Our workforce investments are complex enough to require their own set of evaluations, which are being contracted separately. We are tracking the information referral and health access strategies separately through their performance matrices. We expect to evaluate our data systems integration work in a subsequent evaluation plan.

The remaining three strategies are particularly intertwined: public education, policy and advocacy, and resource mobilization. Closely connected with them is First 5 LA’s work in organizational capacity building, which also takes place at the countywide level. These strategies are fundamentally about building relationships, influencing others to change, and improving the quality and quantity of services available to children 0-5.

These four strategies are defined as follows:
Public Education: Using mass media and/or more targeted outreach methods (brochures, posters, community presentations, etc.) to create awareness of specific issues affecting children and families or to motivate people to change their behavior.

Policy and Advocacy: Improving the rules, standards, guidelines and laws that a) set priorities and b) allocate resources. Systems change that may take place at the county and local community level is also a component of policy change.

Resource Mobilization: Leveraging fiscal and non-fiscal resources to secure the financial viability of a strategy. This includes facilitating the ability of grantees to leverage fiscal and non-fiscal resources through increasing their social capital and improving their ability to mobilize resources.

Organizational Capacity Building: Strengthening and increasing an organization’s performance and/or effectiveness. First 5 LA’s role in capacity building is to support organizations in becoming more effective through technical assistance provision, organizational and leadership development trainings, and sustainability planning.

First 5 LA is seeking a contractor to design and implement a comprehensive evaluation of our countywide systems improvement (CSI) strategies, focused on these four key areas. This study will assess First 5 LA’s CSI efforts from July 2009 through December 2014. The first part of this study will seek to measure increased public knowledge, behavior changes and improved public policies to keep children ages 0-5 healthy, safe and ready for school, as well as a greater quantity and quality of services available for children ages 0-5 and their families.

The second part of the study will look at the four intermediate outcomes and how they have led to those changes: Relationships, Influence, Leverage and Capacity Building.

The logic model below shows theory underlying our investments in Countywide Systems Improvement. It is our expectation that the time period covered by the CSI Comprehensive Evaluation (2009-2014) will not be adequate to see change at the population level. Long-term outcomes are also unlikely within the time period covered, although we will ask the evaluation contractor to include them in the study. The bulk of the contractor’s work will focus on intermediate outcomes. Specifically, we seek to know what changed in those areas, and what was First 5 LA’s role in and contribution to that change.
The purpose of this study is to aid First 5 LA in understanding what strategies have been most/least effective, so that we can work more effectively to make change in countywide systems in the future. Specifically, we will seek to understand how the four strategies have contributed to changes in policy, public knowledge, and resources available to serve children 0-5 and their families throughout LA County. In addition, we want to know:

1. What kinds of relationships has First 5 LA built during the current strategic plan in support of children 0-5 and their families?
2. How has First 5 LA influenced others to act in support of children 0-5 in LA County?
3. What additional resources has First 5 LA leveraged for children 0-5 in LA County, from internal and external sources?
4. How has the capacity of organizations serving children 0-5 in LA County been improved?
5. How have these countywide strategies contributed to or supported First 5 LA’s place-based efforts?
IV. PERFORMANCE MATRIX / STATEMENT OF WORK

In order to successfully fulfill the role of Countywide Systems Improvement (CSI) Comprehensive Evaluation contractor, First 5 LA expects the contractor to complete the tasks outlined below, within an 18-month timeline.

Task A: Develop an evaluation plan
The Countywide Systems Improvement evaluator will work with First 5 LA to finalize an evaluation plan. This step will include review of related documents and an analysis of data from the following sources:

1. Grantee data collected through performance reporting and the First 5 LA data reporting system
2. Other relevant studies, including the Edelman study of perception of First 5 LA that is currently being conducted
3. Reports from the Community Opportunities Fund and Policy Advocacy Fund Evaluation
4. Reports for the Listening, Learning, and Leading (L3) Contractor and Grantee Surveys

In addition to outlining the work to be done, the evaluation plan should list any anticipated challenges or problems and how they will be addressed or avoided, as well as any potential unintended consequences of the evaluation.

Task B: Conduct an evaluation
The CSI Evaluation contractor will conduct an evaluation of First 5 LA’s efforts in the areas of public education, policy and advocacy, resource mobilization and organizational capacity building. Data collection methods that may be used include document review, interviews, focus groups or surveys. Other methods may be proposed.

Data sources may include any or all of the following:
- First 5 LA staff
- First 5 LA Board of Commissioners
- External stakeholders
- Grantees and contractors
- Policymakers
- Experts in the fields of public education, policy and advocacy, resource mobilization and organizational capacity building
- Internal First 5 LA documents (i.e. reports, memos, etc.)

Task C: Conduct a social network analysis
The CSI Evaluation contractor will conduct a social network analysis as part of the evaluation. In an exploratory study conducted prior to this RFP, it was determined that fostering relationships is a key cornerstone to achieving results in our countywide strategies. Given that social network analysis is good at detecting and analyzing social relationships, we believe this should be integrated into the overall evaluation plan, and coordinated with other data collection and analysis.

Task D: Report findings
The CSI Evaluation contractor will report interim findings at six months and twelve months, and will submit a final, summative report at the end of the contract (18 months). The interim reports will provide tentative findings to date. The final report will provide summative findings. Assumptions and limitations will also be included in the reports. The Evaluator also will provide a presentation in PowerPoint format that summarizes the final report.

**Task E: Maintain communications and report progress to First 5 LA**
The Evaluator will report progress to First 5 LA through monthly phone conferences, followed by written notes of the calls.

The list of tasks includes the methods we consider most likely to be effective in measuring progress and outcomes for our Countywide Systems Improvement efforts. However, we welcome other ideas and recommendations for how we can answer the evaluation questions outlined in the Project Overview section. Any applicant who would like to recommend alternative methods or approaches is encouraged to outline them in their proposal. The full proposal must fit within the parameters described in this RFP, including those for length and budget.

The following is a list of likely deliverables related to the overarching tasks summarized above. Other deliverables may be proposed, as appropriate.

- Finalized evaluation plan
- Draft and final interview and focus group protocols
- Draft and final surveys
- Full list of all individuals interviewed
- List of all documents reviewed
- Interview/focus group notes
- Social network diagrams
- Six month interim report
- Twelve month interim report
- Final report
- PowerPoint summary of final report
- Monthly notes from conference calls
- Data codebook(s) (as appropriate)
- Publication/dissemination plan and timeline, which includes a list of dissemination products and a list of stakeholders for dissemination

The contractor will also be responsible for obtaining IRB approval if necessary as determined by the methods and design of the final evaluation plan.

**V. ELIGIBILITY**

Applicants must have the qualifications, experience, and ability to successfully carry out the CSI Comprehensive Evaluation, from planning to preparation of reports and project management (See the list of qualifications in Section VIII below, Review Criteria and Selection Process). Applicants should have the capacity to work throughout LA County.
The ideal applicant(s) will have knowledge of evaluations in the fields of public education, policy and advocacy, resource mobilization and/or capacity building, and should demonstrate that experience in the materials submitted.

VI. TERMS OF PROJECT

Available Funding
The contractor will be compensated based on the project budget developed during the contracting period. Pending Commission approval of the Program Budget each fiscal year, the total budget for the work described in this RFP is expected to be up to $250,000. It is expected that the applicants’ budgets will be clearly justified in the budget narrative and will be appropriate to the work proposed.

Deliverables-Based Payment Structure
The contractor will be paid according to deliverables. That is, this study will be contracted on a fixed-price, deliverables-based basis. The selected contractor will be paid per deliverable, contingent on First 5 LA approval of the deliverable [see a description of the QA and QA dispute resolution processes in Appendix A of this document]. The contractor will assume any risk from contract or project delays. If any deliverable is only partially achieved, First 5 LA reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to prorate the contract price accordingly, but only to the extent such partial deliverable meets the approval of First 5 LA and is useful to First 5 LA.

The contractor is responsible for all expenses related to any subcontracted services. Details related to any services that will be subcontracted must be outlined in the SOW and work plan. The contractor will also be responsible for purchasing any incentives to provide to participants. The amount and kind of incentive should be proposed to First 5 LA and approved before they are purchased.

The final Performance Matrix and Budget will be determined during the contract development and negotiation process. Funds will be disbursed through invoices based on deliverables.

Contract Period
The contractor shall not be authorized to deliver or commence performance of services as described in the application until final execution of the contract (contract must be signed by both parties). Any performance of services commenced prior to obtaining all written approvals by First 5 LA shall be considered voluntary. This RFP is for an 18-month contract period.

VII. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS
In order to respond to this RFP, please complete and submit your proposal and all required documents to First 5 LA no later than 5:00 PM PST on July 22, 2013. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.
The proposal, including all required attachments, must be submitted online at www.first5la.org/Funding-Center. In addition to the electronic documents applicants must also submit a signed copy of the application cover letter, First 5 LA’s Signature Authorization Form, and Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties Form, to:

**Attention: Countywide Systems Improvement Comprehensive Evaluation RFP**
Kim Belshé, Executive Director
First 5 LA
750 N Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**A. Submission Instructions**

1. **Online Application Form:** Applicants must submit an online application form.

2. **Cover Letter:** This document introduces the applicant(s) and should clearly show the applicant’s name and/or organization name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, the date, and a statement that the letter is in response to the RFP for the Countywide Systems Improvement Comprehensive Evaluation. One (1) original SIGNED with **BLUE INK** copy of the cover letter must be received by First 5 LA by the application deadline. Additionally, applicants will be required to upload a copy of the cover letter to the online application system.

3. **Proposal Narrative:** (may not exceed 25 single spaced pages using at least 10pt font with 1 inch margins): The proposal narrative should describe how the applicant would approach this evaluation, including potential indicators of change for each of the four strategies, data collection methods, key deliverables, timeline of activities, and staffing. The applicant should describe the proposed process to complete each task outlined in the RFP and whether there are any tasks they would add or omit. Proposals should also list any potential challenges or problems, and how those would be addressed or avoided. If the applicant would like to replace or add additional tasks to those put forth in this RFP by First 5 LA, you may do so with explanation justifying the change. The proposal should also include an explanation of roles and responsibilities of each of the team members for each task. Please note that a key consideration in reviewing proposals will be the applicants’ evaluation and staffing capacity.

4. **Sample Evaluation Report:** Please include the findings section from a prior evaluation report completed within the past three years, *not to exceed ten pages.*

5. **Performance Matrix:** The performance matrix specifies the work to be performed under the contract. The performance matrix should be organized by deliverable and include a deadline for each activity. Please see Appendix B for the Performance Matrix template.

6. **Résumé(s) or Curriculum Vitae(s):** Please submit one résumé or CV of no more than 5 pages for members of the team outlining all relevant work history, educational attainment, publications, prior research projects, etc. All résumés and CVs should be combined into a single document when uploading the application. It is not necessary to
submit résumés or CVs for all team members, only the key members of the team.

7. **Proposed Budget and Budget Narrative:** Applicants should create a detailed budget organized by task. The budget for this project may not exceed $250,000 although it is anticipated that proposed budgets may be substantially below that amount. The required budget form is included in Appendix C of this document. In addition to this form, the application must include a budget narrative, not to exceed 5 pages, to accompany the proposed budget. The narrative should describe what will be included in each deliverable.

8. **Client Reference Form:** Please complete the information outlined in the instructions for Appendix D for at least three (3) and no more than five (5) references. Clients must be organizations and/or individuals for whom the applicant has provided similar services, and must be able to provide information regarding the applicant’s capacity and performance regarding the provision of such services. Please be sure to provide current contact information for those clients who have agreed to serve as references.

9. **Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties:** Please read the information on the required Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties form (see Appendix E) thoroughly. Submit the original SIGNED with **BLUE INK** to First 5 LA by the application deadline. An electronic copy must also be uploaded with the online application. An unsigned form or omission of the form will constitute an incomplete proposal and may be grounds for disqualification.

10. **Signature Authorization Form (1 original SIGNED with BLUE INK):** This form (see Appendix F) 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 also submitted, as applicable, that indicates signature authority.** Submit the original SIGNED with **BLUE INK** to First 5 LA by the application deadline. An electronic copy must also be uploaded with the online application. Omission of the form will constitute an incomplete proposal and may be grounds for disqualification.

11. **Annual Independent Audit:** The applicant must include the most recent independent audit report. Additional documents regarding the financial stability of the agency may be requested by our finance department during or prior to the review.

12. **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (if applicable):** If a subcontractor will be used on this project, please submit a formal MOU along with the proposal. Applicants with identified subcontractors should include in their proposal a description of previous collaborations with the identified subcontractors.

13. **Bylaws (if applicable)**

14. **Articles of Incorporation (if applicable)**
15. Business License (if applicable)

16. IRS letter of determination (if applicable)

17. Board of Directors or List of Partners (if applicable)

VIII. REVIEW CRITERIA AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. General Requirements
Agencies with experience evaluating public education, policy and advocacy, resource mobilization and/or capacity building are encouraged to apply. In order for applications to be considered acceptable and eligible for award they must be prepared in accordance with the instructions given in this solicitation. In addition, Applicants must review the First 5 LA Sample Contract in Appendix H. It is imperative that all applicants review the contract language in detail and fully understand contractual obligations should they be selected as the contractor for this project. The selected applicant shall be expected to execute the contract without substantive alteration. All data and information collected in the course of this contract, in whatever form, shall be the sole property of the First 5 LA.

B. Review Criteria
The criteria identified below will serve as the standard against which the proposal will be evaluated and lists the significant factors which the applicant should address in the proposal. The evaluation will also be based upon the completeness and thoroughness of the proposal submitted. The applicant should demonstrate that the objectives of the project are understood and the proposal offers a logical approach for their achievement. The following criteria will be used to review and score proposals (See the review tool Appendix I for further detail):

1. Understanding of the Performance Matrix

   This criterion reflects the extent to which the applicant’s proposal demonstrates understanding of the scope and complexity of this project, that it includes all four of the countywide components we wish to study.
   a. The proposal demonstrates a thorough understanding of the scope and complexity of the project, as well as anticipated challenges of the CSI Comprehensive Evaluation.
   b. The proposal includes a thorough evaluation plan which incorporates the areas of public education, policy and advocacy, resource mobilization and organizational capacity building.
   c. The proposal details plans to incorporate a social network analysis component into the evaluation.

2. Technical Approach

   The applicant will be evaluated by the extent to which the proposed technical approach contains the following:
a. The proposal has a logical and clear conceptual design and the methods are appropriate and consistent with various tasks to be accomplished.
b. A thorough description of how each of the specific tasks in the RFP should be approached, including any suggested modifications.
c. A thorough discussion of how the data analyses will be conducted.
d. Examples of the problems that might occur in the proposed approach and a sufficiently-detailed description of how each problem would be addressed or avoided.

3. Organizational Experience and Proposed Personnel

The applicant’s organizational experience as reflected in the proposal must demonstrate the following:

a. Extensive knowledge of a variety of evaluation methods in the fields of public education, policy and advocacy, resource mobilization, and/or capacity building.
b. Demonstrated experience planning and conducting evaluations (including data collection and analysis), preferably both quantitative and qualitative.
c. Demonstrated experience conducting social network analyses.
d. Inclusion of full résumés of up to five key proposed staff in the proposal which clearly reflect the range and depth of the requirements outlined above, including any publications in relevant professional refereed journals.
e. Demonstrated experience working in Southern California, preferably in Los Angeles County, as well as knowledge and understanding of the cultural, linguistic, regional, community, and demographic experience of LA County.

4. Budget

Applicants submitting proposals must develop budgets that are in line with common business practices. The applicant’s budget and budget narrative should reflect the following:

a. A reasonable price per task (as justified in the budget narrative).
b. A composite hourly rate for all personnel that does not exceed $150/hour (see detail in Contracting Considerations, number 9).
c. Tasks assigned to appropriate personnel so as to minimize the cost per deliverable while also maximizing the quality of the output (as explained in the budget narrative).
d. An awareness of the realities of fixed-price budgeting reflected in an appropriate financial accommodation of risk, particularly related to protracted revisions and delayed start dates (as explained in the budget narrative).
e. A project budget that does not exceed $250,000.

5. Management Plan
The management plans will be judged by the extent to which the plan includes the following:

a. A logical timeline that demonstrates the project (with all associated deliverables) can be completed within the contract period (18 months).

b. Demonstrates a built in system of specific procedures for maintaining quality control and conducting regular review of the quality of data collected.

c. Evidence of the ability to have a sufficient number of the staff available to accomplish the work, including a Memorandum of Understanding with any subcontractor or consultants to be utilized as well as the amount of time devoted to this contract for each person proposed on the project (as demonstrated by the labor costs in the budget).

d. Evidence of the applicant having worked with any proposed subcontractors in the past.

C. Selection Process

First 5 LA will award the Countywide Systems Improvement Comprehensive Evaluation contract to an applicant based on the following multi-stage review process:

1. **Level 1 Review**: First 5 LA staff will review each application to ensure that basic requirements are met. Basic requirements include: timely receipt of all online and hard copy application requirements, adherence to required formats, and inclusion of all applicable attachments and forms. Proposals with omissions of any required documentation are subject to disqualification. Some or all of the applicants who have submitted complete and responsive applications may be contacted for more information on or before August 12, 2013.

2. **Level 2 Review**: A minimum of three (3) external reviewers will review and score proposals using the CSI Comprehensive Evaluation Review Tool posted with the RFP (Appendix I). External reviewers will utilize the review tool exclusively to score proposals to alleviate the potential for bias. External reviewers are required to sign a Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement.

3. **Level 3**: The First 5 LA Finance Department may review a copy of audited financials or statements prepared by an independent auditor to ensure the financial capacity of applicants. As a public entity, the Commission has a responsibility to the public to ensure that the organizations that receive our funds are financially stable to provide the contracted services. Further written materials regarding the financial stability of the agency may be requested during or prior to the review.

4. **Reference Check**: If necessary reference checks will be completed for applicants with the highest ranked proposals based on the external review process. Information obtained through reference checks will complement rankings resulting from the external review process. First 5 LA must be able to contact all references provided by the applicant. If any reference cannot be reached, First 5 LA may deem the applicant ineligible for this opportunity.

5. **Presentations/Interview**: The highest scoring applicants will be interviewed. Interviews will complement rankings resulting from the external review process.
Interviews are scheduled to be held on dates shown in the RFP Timeline. These dates are subject to change at First 5 LA’s sole discretion. Interviews will be held either at First 5 LA or via phone. Further written materials regarding qualifications may be requested prior to the interview. During the interview, finalists will be asked to make a 20 minute presentation followed by Q & A.

The final award notification is anticipated to occur by August 30, 2013, with a final signed contract and projected contract start date of November 1, 2013. First 5 LA staff and/or Commission reserve the right without prejudice to reject any or all submitted proposals.

IX. CONTRACTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

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

A. Conflict of Interest

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

B. Compliance

Current/Former grantees and/or Contractors must be in good standing and in compliance with all aspects of their contract with the COMMISSION in order to be eligible to apply for the current Request for Qualifications (RFP). 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

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3 Note: While it is First 5 LA’s desire to execute the Contract for an November 1, 2013 start date, all dates are subject to change at First 5 LA’s sole discretion.
Grant Agreement/Contract; (2) committed any act or omission which negatively reflects on Applicant's quality, fitness or capacity to perform services listed in RFP 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 RFP, 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 RFP. Any cover letters, résumés and/or curriculum vita, including attached materials, submitted in response to this RFP 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, performance matrix, and any other exhibits as needed throughout the term of the contract to best meet the needs of the COMMISSION.

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

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

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

7. The selected Contractor will be required to sign the contract at least two (2) weeks prior to the intended start date of the contract, as outlined in Terms of Contract/Term of
Grant section, to assure the timely completion of the signature process by all parties. If the contract is not signed prior to the intended start date, the commencement of any activities under the Exhibit A – Performance Matrix 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 RFP 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 performance matrix 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-$200 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.

X. 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 RFP. 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.

XI. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Description of the QA and QA dispute resolution processes
Appendix B: Performance Matrix template
Appendix C: Proposed Budget and Budget Narrative Forms
Appendix D: Client Reference Form
Appendix E: Agency Involvement in Litigation and Contract Compliance Difficulties Form
Appendix F: Signature Authorization Form
Appendix G: Proposal Checklist
Appendix H: First 5 LA Sample Contract
Appendix I: Review Tool