August 8, 2008

Dear Prospective Applicant:

First 5 LA is issuing this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to individuals and groups interested in a facilitator’s role for an evaluation workgroup that is expected to provide evaluation design recommendations related to the Commission's School Readiness Initiative (SRI). Our goal is to strengthen organizational capacity to build and maintain high quality and sustainable efforts for children ages 0 to 5 and their families. Applicants must have experience in facilitating evaluation efforts for programs serving young children.

In response to this RFQ, applicants are required to submit a complete application packet to First 5 LA no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 12, 2008. No faxed or email submissions will be accepted. Following a review of all submitted materials, qualified applicants will be invited for an in-person or phone interview during the week of September 22, 2008.

Please submit 1 original, three (3) copies and all materials on a CD to:

Evelyn V. Martinez, Executive Director
First 5 LA
750 N. Alameda Street, Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: School Readiness Initiative Facilitation Consultant

For additional information or further questions, please contact Bill Gould, Research Analyst, at 213.482.7550 or bgould@first5la.org.

Thank you for your dedication to children and families and for supporting the vision and mission of First 5 LA.

Sincerely,

Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
SCHOOL READINESS INITIATIVE
FACILITATION CONSULTANT
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)
TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. TIMELINE FOR SELECTION PROCESS ...............................................................4
II. BACKGROUND ..................................................................................................5
III. ELIGIBILITY ....................................................................................................6
IV. DELIVERABLES AND SCOPE OF WORK .....................................................7
V. TERMS OF PROJECT .........................................................................................9
VI. STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS ..............................................................10
VII. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS ....................................................................11
VIII. SELECTION PROCESS AND REVIEW CRITERIA ........................................12
IX. CONTRACTUAL CONSIDERATIONS .............................................................14
X. APPLICATION CHECKLIST .............................................................................16
XI. APPENDICES .................................................................................................17

Appendix 1: Sample Budget Form and Budget Narrative
Appendix 2: Applicant Reference Form
Appendix 3: Sample Memorandum of Understanding
Appendix 4: Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties
Appendix 5: Signature Authorization Form
Appendix 6: Sample Board Resolution
Appendix 7: List of School Readiness Programs
Appendix 8: Sample Contract
Appendix 9: School readiness Evaluation Results Materials (Parent and Child Outcomes Study & Collaboration Case Study)
I. TIMELINE FOR SELECTION PROCESS\textsuperscript{1}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RFQ Release</td>
<td>August 29, 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application Due</td>
<td>September 12, 2008 by 5pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applicants Notified</td>
<td>September 19, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with Final Applicants (if applicable)</td>
<td>September 22, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractor Selected</td>
<td>September 29, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Start Date\textsuperscript{1}</td>
<td>October 30, 2008</td>
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All questions and requests for additional information regarding this RFQ must be received in writing by First 5 LA no later than Monday, September 8, 2008. 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 and information requests can be submitted to:

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

Phone: 213.482.7550
Fax: 213.482.5903
E-mail: bgould@first5la.org

\textsuperscript{1} Note: While it is First 5 LA's desire to execute the Facilitation Consultant Contract for an October 30, 2008 start date, all 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, First 5 LA was formed as a public entity to develop and oversee various early childhood initiatives and to manage the funding from Proposition 10. To address the needs of communities, in 2004 the Commission adopted The Next Five Strategic Plan (FY 2004-2009), focusing on the goal areas of Early Learning, Health and Safety. Since 1998, First 5 LA has invested over $800 million to support initiatives in these areas. Additional information regarding First 5 LA can be found at http://www.first5la.org/.

The School Readiness Initiative

Initiated in 2001, the School Readiness Initiative (SRI) is a joint funding partnership between First 5 California and the 58 County Commissions. SRI engages families, community members, and educators in the important work of preparing children, birth to age five, for elementary school. First 5 LA currently funds 42 School Readiness (SR) Programs throughout Los Angeles County that are each comprised of a lead agency and multiple collaborative partners.

SR Programs work to achieve outcomes in the following four Result Areas:

1. **Improved Family Functioning**
   - Adult education, parenting classes, and job training conducted in partnership with adult schools and community colleges

2. **Improved Child Development**
   - Access to quality preschools or early care and education centers
   - Home visitation programs for children not enrolled in early education centers

3. **Improved Health**
   - Enrollment in free and low cost health insurance programs
   - Care/case management to ensure that children receive preventative health services

4. **Improved Systems of Care**
   - Facilitation of children’s transition from home and preschool to kindergarten
   - Articulation of kindergarten standards between kindergarten teachers and early education providers
   - Funding streams that support school readiness efforts

In January 2008, First 5 LA Commissioners approved additional funding to support SR Programs through June 30, 2011.
III. ELIGIBILITY

Applicants responding to this RFQ must have the qualifications, experience, competency, and ability to successfully facilitate a group of experienced evaluators from the School Readiness Initiative to produce evaluation design recommendations. Applications will be considered from not-for-profit and for-profit agencies, public and private organizations as well as collaboratives, and academic groups. Applicants must have a presence in Southern California, the capacity to work throughout Los Angeles County, and demonstrated evaluation expertise.

Summary of Desired Qualifications

- Knowledge of and experience with early care and education/child development field.
- Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of research and evaluation methodology, participatory techniques, and community-friendly approaches.
- Ability to communicate complex concepts, stimulate creative thinking, negotiate differences and facilitate conflict resolution with an evaluation workgroup.
- Understanding and ability to work with diverse community perspectives around issues affecting school readiness outcomes in Los Angeles County.
- Proven experience working with evaluators from community-based organizations and/or schools that are working with young children’s programs.
- Experience in facilitating multi-stakeholder evaluation efforts.
- Experience and ability to conduct quantitative and qualitative evaluation with multidisciplinary groups.
- Ability to develop and apply a decision making structure or framework.
- Ability to be accessible and flexible in accordance with product timelines and activities.
- Ability to synthesize information from multiple sources and form recommendations.
- Strong time management and team building skills.
- Strong written and oral communication skills.
IV. DELIVERABLES AND SCOPE OF WORK

First 5 LA is seeking a Facilitation Consultant to work closely with a First 5 LA School Readiness Research and Evaluation Advisory Committee (SREvalC) over the course of 12 months. This Committee will provide technical input, ideas and recommendations to First 5 LA relevant to evaluating the School Readiness Initiative.

The 12-person SREvalC will consist of experienced evaluators, researchers and program directors that are staff members and/or consultants in some of First 5 LA’s funded School Readiness Initiative programs. This varied group will provide First 5 LA with a breadth of early childhood research and related expertise and experience, including a balance of evaluators for community-based and school-lead representatives. Additionally, the group will represent the distinctive high-need geographies that SR programs serve.

The Facilitation Consultant will lead this SREvalC through an iterative process, such that their input will be incorporated by First 5 LA into an overall long-term research and evaluation plan that will provide a framework for tracking the School Readiness Initiative's program implementation and measuring its effectiveness and impact.

The Facilitation Consultant will also be expected to interact with First 5 LA staff, grantees, Commissioners, consultants and other key stakeholders that will inform the development of the School Readiness Initiative evaluation. It is expected that the consultant has experience in facilitating multi-stakeholder evaluation efforts. Additionally, the Consultant should have strong skills in group dynamics management, guiding team development, recording relevant meeting information, being prepared for and leading discussions. Finally, it is important that the Consultant be highly qualified in analysis and synthesis.

The Facilitation Consultant will work closely with First 5 LA staff and SREvalC in carrying out the following tasks:

- Identify comprehensive needs of our various stakeholders (i.e., the SREvalC, SR grantees, First 5 LA staff and Commissioners) as it relates to the evaluation of the School Readiness Initiative.
- Develop and utilize an evaluation action plan which includes tasks and a timeline associated with the project and that identifies clear priorities and benchmarks of success.
- Determine the specific topics and evaluation questions that will be addressed by the evaluation and select high priority questions to be addressed in the evaluation design.
- Identify, prioritize and focus the intended uses and users of the SRI evaluation and ensure that questions are relevant to our key stakeholders.
- Develop a set of criteria that will be utilized by the SREvalC to inform the feasibility and utility of the evaluation approach (i.e., design, cost, timeliness, etc.).
- Review existing School Readiness Initiative Evaluation reports and recommendations to inform the development of the evaluation of the initiative. This includes consideration of the levels of impact on children, families, communities, systems and policy.
- Selection of methods appropriate to the questions being asked.
• Consider use of past SR evaluation activities/design i.e., Parent and Child Outcomes Studies (See Appendix 9)
• Determine research and evaluation linkages between the School Readiness Initiative and other First 5 LA initiatives as well as the organization’s strategic planning efforts.
• Provide recommendations for future and/or further exploration related to evaluation of SR Initiative.
• Develop a plan for improving the use of the existing School Readiness Initiative web based data collection system.
• Create a written final report that includes the information, decisions and recommendations discussed by the SREvalC and key stakeholders. The report will include the following:
  • Background and/or overview of the process that was used by the SREvalC to develop the evaluation plan;
  • The final agreed upon evaluation questions, methodology, and analysis plan;
  • Recommendations on specific studies and/or approaches to the work moving forward.
V. TERMS OF PROJECT

Available Funding

The total amount of funding available for the Facilitation Consultant will not exceed $20,000 over a 9 to 12 month period. A final Budget and a Scope of Work will be negotiated once a Facilitation Consultant has been selected. Funds will be granted through monthly invoices based on actual services rendered and incurred expenses as spelled out in the approved budget.

Contract Period

The contract period will be for 12 months contingent upon First 5 LA approval and submission of contractual documents by the selected Facilitation Consultant. It is projected that the contract begins on October 30, 2008.

The Facilitation Consultant shall not be authorized to deliver or commence performance of services as described in the application until written approval has been obtained from First 5 LA. Any performance of services commenced prior to obtaining all written approvals by First 5 LA shall be considered voluntary.

Contractual Obligation

The selected Facilitation Consultant is required by law to adhere to all contractual obligations as outlined in this document, including the First 5 LA Contract. (See Sample Contract, Appendix 8)
VI. STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

In order to respond to this RFQ, applicants are required to submit the following documents to First 5 LA no later than **5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 12, 2008.** Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

Cover Letter *(maximum 1 page):* Each applicant is required to include a cover letter addressed to Evelyn Martinez, Executive Director of First 5 LA, specifying the following: introduction of the applicant, clearly showing the applicant’s name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, the date, stating that the letter is in response to an RFQ for the School Readiness Facilitation Consultant. The applicant’s cover letter must be signed by a person authorized to bind the applicant to the terms of the application.

Professional Experience and Approach *(maximum 10 pages):*

1) *Professional Experience and Expertise:* Systematically describe the applicant’s demonstrated ability, based on qualifications and experience, to accomplish the deliverables outlined above. Applicants must provide narrative examples of at least three similar past or current projects, and identify their role in these projects. Applicants must also specify qualifications of all other individuals and/or organizations, if any that will be included as subcontractors.

2) *Proposed Approach to Deliverables and Scope of Work:* Discuss and present a sequence of key actions, activities, or events necessary to accomplish the Scope of Work and produce the Deliverables on page 7. Include a description of relevant strategies to be employed in carrying out the specified functions of a Facilitation Consultant. *(REFER TO THE SELECTION CRITERIA ON PAGE 12)*

Proposed Budget and Budget Narrative *(Appendix 1):* The proposed 12-month Budget must include costs broken down by hourly rate for all staff and subcontractors. Provide a Budget Narrative justifying all included costs.

Résumé or Curriculum Vitae for Applicant: Provide a detailed professional résumé for key staff expected to work on the project, outlining all relevant work history, educational attainment, publications, prior research projects, etc. Include the résumé for subcontractors as well. All subcontractors must be clearly identified in the application and approved by First 5 LA prior to commencing work.

References Form *(Appendix 2):* Provide the names, titles, addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers of at least three (3) references. References must be from organizations and/or individuals for whom the applicant has provided similar services, and must be able to provide information regarding the applicant’s skills and performance regarding the provision of such services.

Memorandum of Understanding *(Appendix 3):* If a subcontractor or un-paid collaborator will be used to render any of the services under this application, the applicant must submit an MOU. MOUs may also be submitted after the Contract for the TA Provider has been executed.

Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties *(Appendix 4):* Please read the information on the required Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or
Contract Compliance Difficulties form thoroughly. An unsigned form or its omission will constitute an incomplete application and will be grounds for disqualification.

Signature Authorization Form (Appendix 5): This form is required in order to verify signature authority to enter into contractual agreement with First 5 LA. If not outlined in the applicant’s Bylaws, a Board Resolution or Partnership Agreement must be submitted, as applicable, that indicates signature authority. Applicants must submit two original forms signed in blue ink.

Board Resolution (Appendix 6): Include, as needed, to support the authority of persons listed on the Signature Authorization Form (Appendix 5).

Independent Financial Audit: The applicant must include the most recent independent financial audit including the following:

- Management Letter
- Auditor’s Report
- Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)
- Statement of Activities (P/L, Income and Expenses Report)
- Statement of Cash Flow
- Functional Expense Report
- Notes to Financial Statements
- Federal “Single Audit” (if applicable)

Optional: Supplemental materials such as Tool Kits, reports, Video/DVD of a recent workshop, convening or training, may be helpful in evaluating the application and may be included as attachments. If submitted, one copy is sufficient. Written supplemental materials may not exceed 30 pages in length. Please also note that First 5 LA will not return supplemental materials including videos/DVDs to the applicant.

By-laws (if applicable)

Articles of Incorporation (if applicable)

VII. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants are required to submit an application that meets the following criteria:

- White, 8½” by 11”, paper only
- Times New Roman font, no less than 12-point
- Single-sided pages only
- No less than 1-inch margins, with no less than 1.5 line spacing
- All pages and page numbers must be numbered sequentially with the name of the applicant clearly indicated on each page. Materials must not be bound, although a heavy clasp or thick rubber band is acceptable.
- All forms that require a signature (i.e., Cover Letter, Signature Authorization Form, etc.) must be signed in blue ink. Signature stamps are not acceptable.
VIII. SELECTION PROCESS AND REVIEW CRITERIA

Selection Process

1. Applications will be evaluated by a panel to be determined by First 5 LA.
2. First 5 LA will evaluate all applications for completeness and minimum qualifications. Basic requirements include: timely receipt of application, formatted as required, inclusion of all appropriate attachments, etc. Applications with omissions of any required documentation are subject to disqualification. Applicants may use the Application Checklist on page 16 as an aid in preparing the application. Please note that the Application Checklist is merely an aid. Each applicant is solely responsible for ensuring that all information requested in Section VI (Statement of Qualifications) and Section VII (Submission Requirements), is submitted even if it does not appear on the Application Checklist.
3. First 5 LA staff will contact references. First 5 LA must be able to contact at least two (2) of the three (3) references provided by the applicant. If two (2) references cannot be reached, First 5 LA may deem the applicant ineligible for this opportunity.
4. All or some of the applicants who have submitted complete and responsive applications may be interviewed. Interviews are scheduled to be held on dates shown in Section I (Timeline for Selection Process). These dates are subject to change at First 5 LA’s sole discretion. All applicants must advise First 5 LA staff of their availability during these days. Interviews will be held either at First 5 LA or via phone. Further written materials regarding qualifications may be requested prior to the interview.

Selection Criteria

First 5 LA will award a Contract to one or more applicant(s) with the expertise and qualifications outlined in this RFQ. First 5 LA staff will select Consultant(s) based on, but not limited to, evaluation of the following factors:

Section I (Desired Qualifications)

1. Experience performing comparable work.
2. Knowledge of and experience with early care and education/child development field.
3. Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of research and evaluation methodology, participatory techniques, and community-friendly approaches.
4. Ability to communicate complex concepts, stimulate creative thinking, negotiate differences and facilitate conflict resolution with an evaluation workgroup.
5. Understanding and ability to work with diverse community perspectives around issues affecting school readiness outcomes in Los Angeles County.
6. Proven experience working with evaluators from community-based organizations and/or schools that are working with young children’s programs.
7. Experience in facilitating multi-stakeholder evaluation efforts.
8. Experience and ability to conduct quantitative and qualitative evaluation with multidisciplinary groups.
Section II (Proposed Approach)

1. Provides a clear overall approach and methodology of working with staff to engage SREvalC in a planning process.
2. Provides a clear methodology of facilitating the SREvalC during a 9-12 month period.
3. Describes approaches to eliciting the expertise of various workgroup members.
4. Outlines how agreements would be systematically carried out among the SREvalC.
5. Provides a detailed description of previous experiences that are directly relevant to how the work will be carried out.
6. Describes a logical and sequential series of actions and activities necessary to address scope of work and produce deliverables.
7. Provides a detailed description of relevant methods and effective strategies for carrying out the specified functions of a Facilitation Consultant.
8. Demonstrates ability to develop and apply a decision making structure or framework.
9. Ability to develop criteria and/or approaches to prioritize evaluation questions and manage stakeholder expectations.
10. Demonstrates ability to synthesize information discussed at workgroup meetings and communicate progress, findings and suggestions to diverse stakeholders i.e., grantees, First 5 LA staff, board members, etc.
11. Ability to synthesize information from multiple sources and form recommendations.
12. Describes an approach to developing a plan for improving the School Readiness Initiative web-based data collection system.
13. References from agencies for which the applicant has provided similar services.

Specifically, submitted applications will be reviewed using an assessment tool based on qualifications listed above and proposed approach in (1) addressing scope of work and (2) producing deliverables. Commission staff will develop a rating tool to provide an objective basis for scoring the application and will include two components: desired qualifications (40%) and proposed approach (60%). Applications will be scored on this assessment tool. The final selection process will be conducted through a consensus building process among the members of the selection team.

First 5 LA reserves the right, without prejudice, to reject any or all submitted qualifications. An appeals process is not available.
IX. CONTRACTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Specific contractual considerations, including but not limited to the following, apply to this 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 Appendix 8).

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. Contract Information

1. The Commission may, at its sole discretion, reject any or all submissions in response to this RFQ/ RFP. The Commission also reserves the right to cancel this RFQ/ 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 RFQ/RFP. Any cover letters, résumés and/or curriculum vita, including attached materials, submitted in response to this RFQ/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, scope of work, and any other Exhibits as needed throughout the term of the contract to best meet the needs of all parties.

4. The Commission reserves the right to request additional financial status information to verify applicants past status and current financial status. This information includes,
but is not limited to: the most recent independent audit ending Calendar Year 2007 or Fiscal Year June 30, 2007, 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 Term of Contract section of contract, 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 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. Any agreed upon changes to the intended start date must be confirmed in writing by both parties.

8. Unless otherwise submitted during the application (RFQ, RFP, etc.) 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
- Signature Authorization Form (1 original)
- By-laws (if applicable)
- Articles of Incorporation (if applicable)
- Board of Directors or List of Partners (as applicable)
- Form RRF-1 (required and filed annually with the California Attorney General’s Registry of Charitable Trusts) and IRS Form 990 (if applicable)
- Annual Independent Financial Audit for prior fiscal year or calendar year (if applicable)
- Appropriate business licenses (for vendors or private organizations)
- IRS Letter of Determination (if applicable) or 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. The sample contract and contracting requirements are attached (See Sample Contract). If successful, the Contractor will be required to meet all of the terms set out in these documents within the timeframe identified.

X. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Applicants should refer to Section VI (Statement of Qualifications) and Section VII (Submission Requirements) for complete information about required application content and submission guidelines. Failure to submit any required item will result in disqualification.

☐ Cover Letter (maximum 1 page)
☐ Professional Experience and Approach (maximum 10 page)
☐ Budget and Budget Narrative, Appendix 1
☐ Résumé or Curriculum Vitae for Key Staff and Subcontractor(s)
☐ Applicant Reference Form, Appendix 2 (3 required)
☐ Memorandum(s) of Understanding, Appendix 3
☐ Agency Involvement in Litigation and/or Contract Compliance Difficulties, Appendix 4
  (1 original, signed in blue ink)
☐ Signature Authorization Form, Appendix 5 (1 original, signed in blue ink)
☐ Board Resolution, Appendix 6, if applicable
☐ Independent Financial Audit
☐ Tool Kit, samples of work, Video/DVD, etc. (Optional)
☐ Bylaws, if applicable
☐ Articles of Incorporation, if applicable
☐ Submit one (1) original and three (3) copies, as well as all materials on a CD to:

  Evelyn V. Martinez, Executive Director
  First 5 LA
  750 N. Alameda Street, Suite 300
  Los Angeles, CA 90012

  Attention: School Readiness Initiative Facilitation Consultant
XI. APPENDICES

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All Appendices are included as separate attachments.