STENOGRAPHER REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)
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I. TIMELINE FOR SELECTION PROCESS¹

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<tr>
<td>RFQ Released</td>
<td>February 11, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final date to submit questions and requests for additional information</td>
<td>February 14, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posting of responses to questions</td>
<td>February 18, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Due</td>
<td>February 26, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractor Selected</td>
<td>February 28, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Start Date</td>
<td>March 10, 2014</td>
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All questions and requests for additional information regarding this RFQ must be received in writing to First 5 LA via email before 5 p.m. on February 14, 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:

Jennifer Eckhart, Contract Compliance Manager  
First 5 LA  
750 N. Alameda Street, Suite 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

E-mail: jeckhart@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

III. PROJECT OVERVIEW

As a public entity, First 5 LA is seeking a Stenographer to produce accurate transcripts of live proceedings. First 5 LA is soliciting applications from Stenographers, or Stenographer staffing agencies that can meet the requirements in this request for qualifications. Under the direction of First 5 LA staff, the selected contractor will record and maintain official records of public board meetings, prepare transcripts, and perform other related duties as required. The selected contractor will be responsible for making verbatim official records of board meetings and providing read back of all or portions of the record upon request. Applicants responding to this RFQ must be able to ensure that the same stenographer will be available to attend regularly schedule Board Meetings, typically held on the second Thursday of the month. First 5 LA will provide notice of any other meetings that require the service of the selected contractor. Additionally, applicants must be able to provide an alternate in the event that the Stenographer is not available to attend the monthly board meetings.

IV. STATEMENT OF WORK

Applicant must be able to:

1. Attend monthly board meetings typically held on the second Thursday of the month and special meetings as needed, to make verbatim stenographic records of these meetings. These are public meetings in which there may be multiple people speaking simultaneously.

2. Prepare printed and electronic transcripts of board meetings.
3. Review, certify and file printed transcripts of board meetings and produce transcripts of meetings within 10 business days or earlier upon request. Transcripts must be available for public distribution.

4. Take stenographic notes of board meetings at the rate of 200 words per minute.

5. Communicate with First 5 LA staff to coordinate meeting schedules, deadlines, and billing.

6. Provide and maintain all necessary equipment.

7. Read, review, edit and correct written materials.

8. Plan and organize work to meet deadlines.

V. ELIGIBILITY

Must have a High School Diploma or GED and knowledge of English usage, grammar, punctuation, and spelling; transcript production procedures and practices; office procedures and practices.

VI. SUMMARY OF DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

1. A minimum of four years prime reporting experience in the free-lance field of service, or in courts or other government entities, or a combination thereof.

2. Must be a Certified Shorthand Reporter (C.S.R.) in the state of California.

3. Certified Realtime Reporter is preferred.


VII. TERMS OF PROJECT

Available Funding
The contractor will be compensated based on the negotiated rate developed during the contracting period. It is expected that the applicants’ rates will be appropriate to the work proposed.
Contract Period
The initial contract period is expected to be from March 2014 – June 30, 2015. First 5 LA intends to renew the contract for a period of three (3) one-year contracts, or successive fractions thereof at the sole discretion of First 5 LA.

VIII. SELECTION PROCESS AND REVIEW CRITERIA

First 5 LA will award the Stenographer contract to one applicant based on the following multi-stage review process:

Level 1 Review for Completeness:
First 5 LA staff will evaluate all applications for completeness and minimum requirements. Basic requirements include: timely receipt of application, inclusion of all appropriate attachments, etc. Applications with omissions of any required documentation are subject to disqualification.

Level 2 Review Process:
After Level 1 review, three (3) First 5 LA staff members will score the applications. Review tools are strictly adhered to by reviewers to mitigate the potential of bias. In accordance with First 5 LA policy, reviewers sign a conflict-of-interest form. Please refer to the Review Tool (Appendix D - Review Tool) for the criteria.

Level 3 Interview:
First 5 LA reserves the right to conduct interviews with the highest scoring applicants or all the applicants if First 5 LA decides further review of applicants are necessary.

If necessary, reference checks will be completed for applicants. First 5 LA must be able to contact the references provided by the applicant.

IX. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

1. Online Application Form: Applicants must submit an online application form. The link to the online application will be provided on the funding website.

2. Narrative: (may not exceed 2 single spaced pages using at least 10pt font): The narrative should describe how the applicant is qualified to meet all requirements in the Statement of Work (Section IV) and highlight all relevant experience. The applicant shall provide the name and qualifications of the stenographer that will provide the service. At a minimum, the proposal must address the following elements:
   a. Experience and qualifications of the Stenographer.
   b. Expected delivery time of transcripts.
   c. Ability to attend regularly scheduled Board Meetings which are typically held
the second Thursday of each month.

d. Ability to provide an alternate.

3. Résumé(s): Please submit the résumé of the Stenographer that will be available to First 5 LA outlining all relevant work history, educational attainment and certifications.

4. Rate Sheet: Applicants must submit a Rate Sheet that includes the information below:

   a. Cost/rate per hour or appearance fee stenographer.
   b. Cost per page of the transcript.
   c. Any other associated costs.

First 5 LA reserves the right to negotiate any or all proposed fees prior to any agreement/award.

5. Certifications: Please include all certifications as one document through the online application system.

6. Client Reference Form: Please complete the information in Appendix A and provide two (2) references. References 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 abilities and performance.

7. 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 B). An electronic copy must 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.

8. Signature Authorization Form: This form (see AppendixC) is required in order to verify signature authority to enter into contractual agreement with First 5 LA.

   For individuals applying, enter your name under “Agency Name” and Complete Part 1. Certification: Name, Signature, Title and Date and skip Part 2.

   An electronic copy must be uploaded with the online application. Omission of the form will constitute an incomplete proposal and may be grounds for disqualification.

9. Business License (if applicable)

Failure to submit all required attachments will constitute an incomplete proposal and may be grounds for disqualification. In order to respond to this RFQ, please complete and submit your online application with all required attachments to First 5 LA no later than 5pm on February 26, 2014. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered. It is the responsibility of
the applicant to ensure, prior to submission, that their application reflects the requirements of this solicitation.

First 5 LA reserves the unilateral right to amend this RFQ in writing at any time by posting the amendment on the Commission's website prior to the application deadline. Applicants are responsible to view the website continually for any amendments to the RFQ.

X. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Client Reference Form (required)
APPENDIX B: Agency Involvement in Litigation (required)
APPENDIX C: Contractor Signature Authorization Form (required)
APPENDIX D: Review Tool (for review only)
APPENDIX E: Sample Contract (for review only)

XI. 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 applicable provisions in the attached sample contract (See Sample Contract Appendix E). Please note that all provisions in the sample contract may not apply. Contractual terms and requirements may be negotiated during final contract negotiation period.

A. Conflict of Interest

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

Current/Former grantees and/or Contractors must be in good standing and in compliance with all aspects of their contract with the COMMISSION in order to be eligible to apply for the current Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The COMMISSION may deem an applicant ineligible if it finds in its reasonable discretion, that applicant has done any of the following, including but not limited to: (1) violated any significant terms or conditions of Grant Agreement/Contract; (2) committed any act or omission which negatively reflects on Applicant’s quality, fitness or capacity to perform services listed in RFQ with the COMMISSION or any other public entity, or engaged in a pattern or practice which negatively reflects on the same; (3) committed an act or offense which indicates a lack of business integrity or business dishonesty; or (4) made or submitted a false claim against the COMMISSION or any other public entity.

C. **Contract Information**

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

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

The contractor shall not be authorized to deliver or commence performance of services as described in this RFQ until final execution of the contract (contract must be signed by both parties). Final execution of the contract is contingent on First 5 LA’s Board approval of the negotiated scope of work and budget. Any performance of services commenced prior to obtaining all written approvals by First 5 LA shall be considered voluntary.

8. Unless otherwise submitted during the application process, the selected Contractor will be required to submit the required documentation listed on the Contractor Checklist, which includes, but not limited to, the following documents before the Contract can be fully executed:

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

9. Per the COMMISSION’s Policy and Guidelines for Hiring Consultants, the total composite rate for a consultant may not exceed $150-$200 an hour, depending on the type of service. This means that the total cost of billable hours and other costs associated with a contract divided by the total number of hours billed must be equal to or less than the maximum hourly rate. 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). Please note that any other costs (e.g. equipment, travel, and supplies) must be included when dividing the total number of hours.

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.

XII. 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, RFQ 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.