

**L.A. CARE – HELP ME GROW LA  
EVALUATION  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

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

RELEASE DATE: JANUARY 24, 2022

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**I. TIMELINE FOR SELECTION PROCESS<sup>1</sup>**

ACTIVITY	DATE
RFP Released	January 24, 2022
Information Session	February 2, 2022
Final date to submit questions and requests for additional information	February 14, 2022
Posting of responses to questions	February 16, 2022
Proposal Due	February 22, 2022
Interviews	March 23-24, 2022
Contractor Selected	April 5, 2022
Anticipated Board of Commissioners Approval	May 12, 2022
Anticipated Contract Start Date	May 16, 2022

In order to respond to this Request for Proposals (RFP), the proposer must submit all required documents through the online application system designated by First 5 LA no later than **5:00 p.m. PST on February 22, 2022**. It is the proposer’s responsibility to verify submission prior to the deadline. First 5 LA will not be responsible for any technical problems or submission failure. **Failure to submit ALL required documents by 5:00 p.m. PST may constitute an incomplete proposal and may be grounds for disqualification.**

Questions and requests for additional information must be submitted in writing to:

Abigail Proff, Contract Compliance Officer  
 E-mail: [aproff@first5la.org](mailto:aproff@first5la.org)

All questions and requests for additional information regarding this RFP must be received in writing by First 5 LA via email before **5:00 p.m. PST on February 14, 2022**. First 5 LA reserves the sole right to determine the timing and content of the responses to all questions and requests for additional information, including proposer specific conflict of interest questions.<sup>2</sup> First 5 LA may respond to individual inquires and then post replies to all questions by the posting date.

Potential proposers are highly encouraged to participate in the Informational Session webinar at **9:00 a.m. PST on February 2, 2022** to learn more about the RFP requirements. Please register for the

<sup>1</sup> Note: Dates are subject to change at First 5 LA’s sole discretion.

<sup>2</sup> Proposers (including subcontractors) whose financial interests, or prior contractual relationships to First 5 LA, would constitute either a conflict of interest under California’s Political Reform Act, or a prohibited financial interest in the making of a First 5 LA contract as prohibited by Government Code Section 1090, are ineligible to receive this funding and will be disqualified from review. Any proposer specific questions related to conflict of interest should be directed to Abigail Proff at [aproff@first5la.org](mailto:aproff@first5la.org).

webinar at: [https://first5la.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_wg4SsnHTRI2IEMS1n94q1w](https://first5la.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wg4SsnHTRI2IEMS1n94q1w). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

**Please check the Funding Center webpage regularly for updates and addenda.** First 5 LA has the right to amend this solicitation by written addendum. First 5 LA is responsible only for that which is expressly stated in the solicitation document and any authorized written addenda thereto. Such addenda shall be made available via the online funding center. Failure to address the requirements of such addendum may result in the proposal not being considered, at the sole discretion of First 5 LA. Addenda to this solicitation, if any, will be posted on First 5 LA's website, which may be accessed by clicking <http://www.first5la.org/article/l-a-care-help-me-grow-la-evaluation-request-for-proposals-rfp>. It is the responsibility of proposers to ensure, prior to submission, that their application reflects the most recent information and RFP requirements.

## II. **BACKGROUND**

### **First 5 LA — Giving Kids the Best Start**

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.

### **The First 5 LA 2020-28 Strategic Plan**

In November 2019, First 5 LA's Board of Commissioners approved the [2020-28 Strategic Plan](#) that articulates the organization's bold "North Star" – that by 2028, all children in Los Angeles County will enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life. The plan will help guide and accelerate all First 5 LA does to make a tangible difference in the lives of children today and tomorrow.

#### **A. First 5 LA's Values**

First 5 LA grounds its work in its values, that act as guiding principles for how it does its work, the culture it aims to promote, and as a benchmark to measure behaviors and performance:

- **Collaboration**: We promote a collaborative culture and strategies in all that we do.
- **Integrity**: We act in ways that reflect our Values and hold ourselves accountable for our behaviors and the outcomes of our work.
- **Learning**: We integrate learning into all aspects of our decision-making, commit to continuous improvement and share what we have learned.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**: We embrace the diversity of L.A. County, advocate for fairness and promote systems that advance the full participation of young children and their families.

#### **B. First 5 LA's Investment Guidelines**

First 5 LA's Investment Guidelines serve as criteria for decision-making for all major components of the strategic planning process and as ongoing policy guidance for Board and staff during implementation. Together, the Investment Guidelines represent a "six-part identity statement for First 5 LA that explicitly prioritizes adopting an equity lens through our work and addressing the critical challenge of declining First 5 revenue:

- **Equity**: Prioritize children, families and communities in our target population that our work has the greatest potential to impact and advance our North Star.

- Use data to elevate disparities and achieve equitable outcomes
- Strengthen existing public systems to be child and family-centered
- Incorporate the voice of families and communities in systems change
- **Sustainability**: Embed sustainability strategies within all of our work.
  - Plan and operate within our fiscal reality
  - Create new revenue and fund leveraging strategies
  - Co-invest with partners
- **Partnership**: Engage partners throughout planning, development, and execution of our work.
  - Demonstrate how committed partnerships are engaged and fundamental to our work
- **Prevention**: Focus on early intervention and prevention.
  - Invest in early intervention and prevention as the primary focus of our work
  - Link downstream investments to prevention
- **System Change**: Focus on systems change and implementation to impact the most children and families.
  - Focus on strengthening existing systems; rather than creating new systems
  - Consider direct services only when there is significant potential to demonstrate models for scalability and sustainability
- **Evidence and Innovation**: Prioritize scaling up evidence-based practices, balanced with investments in innovative and promising approaches to address community needs.
  - Pursue and test innovative and promising approaches, as necessary, to respond to community needs and achieve scale

### C. What's Needed to Make First 5 LA's North Star a Reality?

To reach its North Star, First 5 LA wants systems to work better for all families in L.A. County by making them more family-centered and child-focused with a focus on four results areas that include:

1. Families have the resources, opportunities, relationships, and environments to optimize their child's development.
2. Children enter kindergarten without any previously unidentified developmental delays and connected to developmentally appropriate services and supports.
3. Children are safe from abuse, neglect, and other trauma.
4. Children have high quality early care and education (ECE) experiences prior to kindergarten entry.

First 5 LA will seek these results through policy change, practice change and public-will building. It will do so with diverse partners who share First 5 LA's aspirations for children and bring an intentional focus on equity for children and families facing disparities in outcomes and opportunities.

### D. Early Identification and Intervention Landscape

Supporting First 5 LA in reaching the result that children enter kindergarten without any previously unidentified developmental delays and connected to developmentally appropriate services and supports is the Health Systems Team's efforts in early identification and intervention (EII). For information on First 5 LA's previous investments to strengthen EII, see **Appendix A – First 5 LA's Investments to Strengthen Early Identification and Intervention: 2005-Present**. In California, around 25% of children ages 0-5 are at risk for a developmental or behavioral delay. In L.A. County, it is estimated that an even higher percentage of young children (30-40%) would benefit from prevention

and early intervention services and supports.<sup>3</sup> However, many children do not receive prevention and early intervention services until they reach kindergarten.<sup>4</sup>

Approximately 17% of all children experience a developmental disability. In an ideal situation, this would mean that close to 17% of all children would also receive public early intervention services. However, data from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) suggests only 3% of all children receive early intervention under Part C by age 3.<sup>5,6</sup> In addition to gaps in accessing IDEA Part C services, children are not connected to mental health services in a timely manner. Data shows underutilization of behavioral and mental health intervention services and supports among young children under age 5. Of the total number of children ages 0-5 receiving Medi-Cal intervention services for behavioral needs, only 3% accessed specialty mental health services in L.A. County.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, evidence indicates there are significant racial disparities in screening rates. Latinx, African-American and Asian children in California are screened at lower rates than their White peers leading to delayed diagnosis<sup>8</sup> and Latinx and African-American children are also more likely to have unmet care coordination needs than White children.<sup>9</sup>

Once screened, too many children under age 5 with or at risk for developmental delays are not referred to the appropriate early intervention services.<sup>10</sup> There are several challenges to successful linkage to services, including but not limited to provider uncertainty in making a referral, matching identified need to appropriate referrals, limited services available, and dearth of parent/caregiver education on the benefits of prevention and early intervention for delays.

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<sup>3</sup> Campbell, H. (2012). *Early Developmental Screening and Intervention Initiative (EDSI): Lessons Learned 2005-2010*. First 5 LA. Retrieved from: [https://www.first5la.org/files/EDSI\\_Report\\_final\\_10092012.pdf](https://www.first5la.org/files/EDSI_Report_final_10092012.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Campbell, 2012; First 5 LA. (2020). *Pathways to progress: Indicators of young child well-being in Los Angeles County*. Retrieved from: <https://www.first5la.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/First-5-LA-2020-Indicators-Report.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> IDEA Part C – the Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities – is a federal program that supports states in providing early intervention services for children birth through age 2. IDEA Part B is a law mandating that children and youth ages 3 to 21 with disabilities receive special education and related services.

<sup>6</sup> Administration for Children & Families. (n.d.). Need for early intervention services among infants and toddlers in child welfare. *Research Brief, National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being, 8*. Retrieved from: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/nscaw-no-8-need-early-intervention-services-among-infants-and-toddlers-child-welfare>

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center. (n.d.). *Part C national program data*. Retrieved from: <http://ectacenter.org/partc/partcdata.asp>

National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). *Facts about developmental disabilities*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/facts.html>

Rice, C. E., Van Naarden Braun, K., Kogan, M D., Smith, C., Kavanagh, L., Strickland, B., & Blumberg, S. J. (2014). *Screening for developmental delays among young children – National Survey of Children’s Health, United States, 2007*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/su6302a5.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Department of Health Care Services. (2019). *Performance outcomes systems report*. Retrieved from: <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/MH/Documents/00-20190304-Statewide-SUP-Final.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Lordi, N., & Holtby, S. (2021). Developmental screening among children ages 1-5 in California. *Health Policy Brief, UCLA Center for Health Policy Research*. Retrieved from: <https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/publications/Documents/PDF/2021/Developmental-Screening-Among-Children-policybrief-jun2021.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Data Resource Center for Child & Adolescent Health. (2021). *NSCH Interactive Data Query (2016 - Present): 2018-2019 National Survey of Children’s Health, Child and Family Health Measures, Health Care Access and Quality: Effective care coordination, among children who needed it*. Retrieved from: <https://www.childhealthdata.org/browse/survey/results?q=7766&r=1&q=794&r2=6>

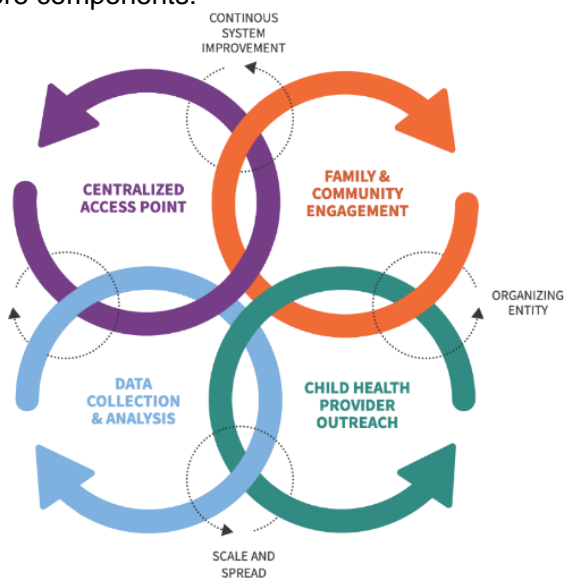
<sup>10</sup> Rice, C. E., Van Naarden Braun, K., Kogan, M. D., Smith, C., Kavanagh, L. Strickland, B., & Blumberg, S. J. (2014). *Screening for developmental delays among young children – National survey of children’s health, United States, 2007. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 63(2), 27-35.*

In response to these challenges, L.A. County is adopting the Help Me Grow model to strengthen the EII continuum of care.

### E. Help Me Grow Overview

Help Me Grow (HMG) is a national systems change model that promotes cross-sector coordination and integration at the local level to strengthen developmental screening, assessment and linkage to early intervention supports through the following four core components:

1. **Centralized Access Point (CAP):** serves as a telephone or web-based hub to link children and their families to early intervention services and supports to address developmental and behavioral delays or concerns. Families and service providers who access the CAP can receive information and educational materials about child developmental milestones, screenings and referrals to intervention services.
2. **Community and Family Engagement<sup>11</sup> (CFE):** promotes use of HMG and provides networking events for families and service providers to bolster knowledge about healthy child development and locally available and appropriate supports and services.
3. **Child Health Care Provider Outreach (CHPO):** provides training and support to child health providers to promote EII of developmental delays. Encourages the use of the HMG CAP to connect children to appropriate services and supports.
4. **Data Collection and Analysis (DCA):** helps identify gaps and barriers in early identification and intervention systems; provides continuous quality improvement to refine the HMG system; and examines model impact.



The HMG model aims to strengthen the EII continuum of care, which includes but is not limited to increasing developmental screenings, strengthening knowledge and awareness about developmental health, addressing stigma and misconceptions, linking children to prevention and early intervention services, and collecting data for quality improvement and illustrating impact. While the HMG model is typically implemented at a statewide level, California is implementing HMG on a county-by-county basis with Orange County being the first HMG model replication site; there are 29 counties at various levels of data collection and evaluation with a HMG system.

From Fall 2016 to Fall 2017, First 5 LA convened key stakeholders and experts across diverse sectors to design and to form a Leadership Council and Workgroups to plan a HMG system for L.A. County. Recommendations solidified by Workgroups and endorsed via a Leadership Council were captured in the October 2017 report [Promoting Young Children's Optimal Development](#). This report informs First 5 LA and county partners in the next phase of Help Me Grow LA (HMG LA) implementation planning. Based on the report recommendations, HMG LA will adopt an incremental implementation approach to test and refine strategies to more efficiently connect young children to early intervention services before scaling the model countywide. In response to L.A. County's size and complexity, a "centralized-decentralized" approach was proposed for HMG LA in which the CAP is accessible to families and providers countywide, while EII services, including screenings, case

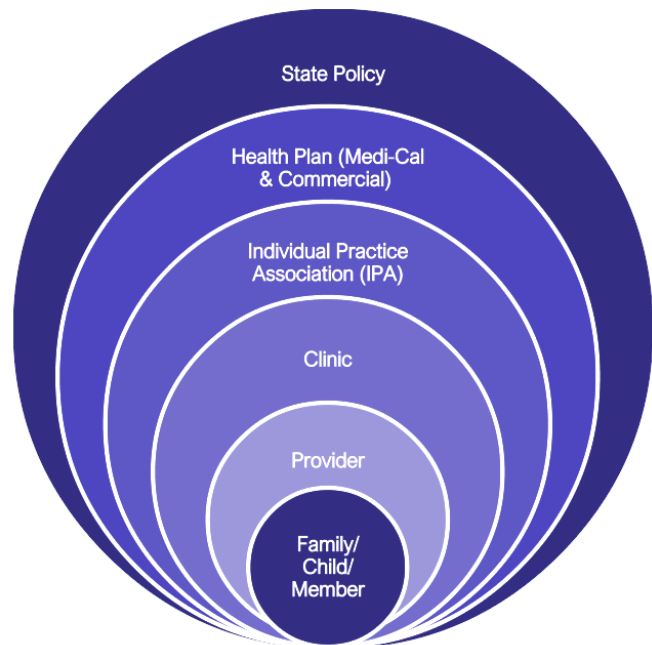
<sup>11</sup> The Help Me Grow National model refers to this core component as "Community and Family Outreach," however the HMG LA planning members changed the title to "Community and Family Engagement".

management, care coordination and intervention services, are delivered at the local level within existing systems and sectors.

In July 2018, First 5 LA partnered with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH) to serve as the HMG Organizing Entity<sup>12</sup> to co-implement HMG LA. First 5 LA is responsible for implementation of CHPO and CFE core components of the HMG model, while LACDPH is responsible for the implementation of the CAP and DCA. LACDPH plans to take a developmental evaluation approach to the larger evaluation of HMG LA. We anticipate there will be evaluation of HMG LA as a whole as well as evaluation of separate activities such as this L.A. Care partnership (described in further detail below), although these various evaluation efforts should complement each other.

## F. L.A. Care Health Plan Partnership

First 5 LA's partnership with L.A. Care Health Plan represents an important strategy of HMG LA's CHPO core component, which seeks to raise early identification and intervention standards across all health care delivery levels (as demonstrated in the figure at right). L.A. Care provides health care coverage to over half of the birth to five population in L.A. County through all plan partners, of which Medi-Cal is their largest line of business. L.A. Care's scope and reach make them a valuable partner to influence system change and increase the countywide impact of HMG LA.



Over the course of four years, starting in January 2021, L.A. Care will implement and review process and outcomes findings at multiple levels of the health care sector including: 1) communities/families; 2) health providers; 3) clinics/practices; and 4) managed care plans. The partnership leverages existing L.A. Care knowledge and relationships to create sustainable systemic change that supports the ability of providers to work closely with families to promote child development, use validated developmental screening tools, and improve access to local resources for children.

The project design utilizes three prevention effort strategies – education/awareness, early identification and linkage to intervention both internal and external to L.A. Care – across each level of the health care delivery system. The following outlines the partnership objectives and activities that L.A. Care is responsible for across each level.<sup>13</sup>

- **Communities/Families:** Seeks to increase knowledge among communities/families of developmental health, including accessing available community and health care delivery system resources and how to navigate the complex system of care. To reach

<sup>12</sup> The HMG model relies on establishing an Organizing Entity to provide administrative and fiscal support and oversight, facilitate broad systems change activities, and build out the necessary foundational infrastructure. On November 9, 2017, the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners approved the request to establish a strategic partnership with LACDPH to serve as the Organizing Entity for five years that began in fiscal year 2018-19.

<sup>13</sup> Given the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic, some activities may be impacted or modified based on public health guidelines (e.g., hosting virtual events instead of in-person).



communities/families, L.A. Care will use public health messaging in health and community settings and leverage the multiple L.A. Care and Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan Community Resource Centers (CRCs) across the county. Through programming at L.A. Care CRCs, which are open to L.A. Care members and the general public, L.A. Care plans to host 60 classes/events, reaching approximately 1,000 community members/parents over the course of the project. L.A. Care has recently made investments to expand the network of CRCs for members and the larger community. This will be an important platform to test and develop strategies for engaging families in their children's care.

- **Health Providers:** Seeks to increase provider knowledge of child development and validated screening tools through various communication and training strategies. L.A. Care will utilize their Continuing Medical Education (CME) events to train 300 providers and advance their knowledge about child development, validated screening tools, appropriate referrals, and available community resources for developmental concerns. Potential reach of L.A. Care's larger communication and messaging to providers through mail/website etc. will target at least 1,000 providers.
- **Clinics/Practices:** Seeks to adjust practice workflow to imbed developmental conversations and screening into well-child and other visits. L.A. Care will utilize their extensive experience supporting practices through internal practice change with high-pediatric volume clinics through their Health Information Technology (HIT) Department. The HIT Department oversees practice transformation programs and interacts directly with county facilities, safety-net clinics and private practices. When barriers to implement developmental screening into workflow or needs of the clinic are identified throughout the project, mini-grants will be awarded to practices/clinics by L.A. Care. These funds will be used to implement specific, sustainable technological and/or infrastructure improvements. Any efforts taken on by participating clinics will be tailored by the project staff to ensure that they are fully embraced and sustained by the practice beyond the duration of the project. L.A. Care plans to work with 10 high-volume pediatric clinics through this approach.
- **Managed Care Plans:** Seeks to increase the number of children accessing primary care appropriately, are screened for developmental delays using validated tools, and strengthen referrals to appropriate supports. L.A. Care will explore many different strategies at the health plan level to reach these objectives. Some proposed strategies include, but are not limited to:
  - Engaging with practices and community-based organizations for more efficient coordination between health care settings and referral agencies in screening and follow-up for identified delays.
  - For key partnerships (like with CRCs), requiring commitment to share resources and data on intervention and educational programming implementation.
  - Monitoring screening rates and utilization trends for positively screened patients to build the evidence base for the most effective care/referral flow.

As for evaluation and data collection, L.A. Care will support this evaluation based on the following expectations:

- **Evaluation Plan:** Co-develops an implementation and outcome program evaluation plan to track project reach, fidelity to the HMG model, and impact on L.A. Care's policies and practices, provider practices, clinic policies and practices, CRC practices, and member health outcomes including longitudinal studies.
- **Data Collection:** Supports the collecting, analyzing and monitoring of data outlined in the implementation and outcome evaluation plan. Shares data results semi-annually.
- **Data Analysis and Dissemination:** Highlights key indicators and learnings on an annual basis. In collaboration, develops a brief of overarching lessons learned including evaluation findings.

### **III. PROJECT OVERVIEW**

#### **A. Purpose**

First 5 LA is seeking to contract with an individual or organization to co-design and co-implement a process and outcome evaluation of the L.A. Care partnership with HMG LA, including data collection support and data analysis. The primary purpose of the evaluation is to capture implementation learnings for scale and replication, sustainability, and accountability purposes. The evaluation should provide insights into implementation progress and fidelity to the HMG model, challenges, and emerging promising practices and solutions, taking into account differences between clinic sites and the populations they serve. Secondly, the evaluation, to the extent possible, in the final year should investigate effectiveness, as well as inform how the L.A. Care partnership complements core components of HMG LA. In the evaluation, it should be kept in mind that HMG LA is a systems change effort in that we are collaborating and partnering with public and community partners to bring about practice change, policy change and will building to better serve young children and their families.

#### **B. Project Assumptions**

Consistent with the purpose and goals of this project, First 5 LA has the following assumptions for this evaluation:

- Will be grounded in our [organizational values and investment guidelines](#).
- Will be informed by the set of recommendations set forth in the above referenced [Promoting Young Children's Optimal Development](#) (2017) report.
- Will elevate diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) given disparities in EII, as well as incorporate the voice of families and communities.
- Will be actionable and aligned and coordinated with the HMG model.
- Prioritized data needs will reflect the perspective of internal and external stakeholders.
- The evaluation will primarily leverage data collected by L.A. Care and may supplement this data with primary data collection.

#### **C. Collaboration with First 5 LA and External Partners**

The selected evaluator will work closely and in partnership with the HMG LA team comprised of First 5 LA and the LACDPH staff throughout the course of this project. This project will involve serving as a thought partner to the HMG LA team – First 5 LA and LACDPH – and L.A. Care in all aspects of the design and implementation of this project. In addition, the evaluator will work collaboratively with the staff of First 5 LA, grantees, contractors, and subject matter experts as well as our system, advocacy and data partners as appropriate.

Also note that First 5 LA is in the process of developing an organization-wide data strategy that provides a vision and roadmap for using data to achieve our organizational goals grounded in First 5 LA's 2020-2028 Strategic Plan. As part of this effort, First 5 LA's Data Strategy will identify organizational data priorities and how First 5 LA will address these priorities. As part of assessing prioritizing data needs for the L.A. Care Evaluation, the selected project team may coordinate with First 5 LA's Data Strategy project team to ensure alignment with the Data Strategy.

### **IV. SCOPE OF WORK**

This solicitation seeks proposals from individuals or organizations interested in leading the evaluation and shall provide expertise, facilitation, evaluation design and implementation, and project management services to First 5 LA in support of the L.A. Care partnership. The following outlines

potential tasks; however, the approach including the combination and sequencing of tasks will be determined collaboratively by First 5 LA and the selected evaluator.

### **Task 1: Orientation and Planning**

Participate in multiday orientation and planning meetings at the onset of the project. The meeting will serve the following purposes: (a) review contract with First 5 LA and project management expectations; (b) orient the evaluator to HMG LA and the L.A. Care partnership; (c) review and discuss key design, methodological and logistical issues; (d) introduce to key internal and external stakeholders; and (e) identify action items and next steps to supporting an effective evaluation launch. At least one week prior to a meeting, the evaluator shall work with First 5 LA staff to finalize the agenda. Within two weeks following a meeting, the evaluator shall generate a memo summarizing key decisions and action items.

### **Task 2: Draft Evaluation and Data Collection Plan Development**

In partnership with First 5 LA, L.A. Care and LACDPH, co-design an implementation and outcome evaluation plan. The evaluation plan should document and describe how the evaluation will be conducted and the safeguards and quality assurance procedures that will be in place to ensure the quality, accuracy and confidentiality of the data. The plan should address how the evaluation will measure and provide insights into reach, alignment to the HMG model, best practices, implementation challenges, and promising solutions. The plan should embed continuous quality improvement throughout. Additionally, the plan should address how the evaluation will generate learnings on whether and how differences in clinic sites and populations served impact implementation. Finally, the plan should articulate how the evaluation will measure impact on L.A. Care's policies and practices, provider practices, clinic policies and practices, CRC practices, and member health outcomes including longitudinal tracking of member health outcomes. The evaluation plan will reflect the agreed upon plan and approach at the outset of the project, including any documentation that will need to be submitted to obtain data. The evaluation plan will include plans for data collection (listing additional data the proposer recommends collecting) and detail sampling methods (if applicable). See **Appendix B – Data Variables List and Sample Data Structure** for a list of data that will be made available by L.A. Care in support of the evaluation. Essentially, initial evaluation results should lead to implementation refinement so that in the final year of the L.A. Care partnership the impact of full implementation can be evaluated. The evaluation will include implementation and outcome components, with the implementation being the initial focus. As the evaluation evolves, any proposed amendments to this evaluation plan must be approved by First 5 LA. The evaluator will work with First 5 LA to come to an agreement on the design of the evaluation plan and any amendments to the plan. Activities to develop the plan should:

- Address reporting requirements in alignment with but not limited to HMG national model, HMG California, and HMG LA benchmarks, as well as the First 5 LA Strategic Plan and Impact Framework.
- Convene an advisory group to provide guidance and recommendations.<sup>14</sup>

### **Task 3: Execute Evaluation and Data Collection Plan**

After approval of the evaluation plan, the evaluator will implement the plan which may include the following activities:

- Establish data collection and storage protocols according to data access and security protocols including HIPAA compliance.
- Develop study consent forms and obtain study approvals from Institutional Review Board (IRB) as needed

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<sup>14</sup> The evaluator may consider existing groups to serve this advisory role. Note that HMG LA has two active councils: Systems Synergy Council to advance HMG LA in their systems to create synergy across systems; and Community and Family Engagement Council to ensure services and resources meet the needs of families.

- In collaboration with First 5 LA, L.A. Care and LACDPH staff, collect or compile data as needed to support the approved evaluation plan in collaboration with L.A. Care
- Conduct quantitative and qualitative primary and secondary data analysis according to the approved evaluation plan.
- Refine evaluation plan as context evolves, if needed.

It is important to note that execution of the outcome evaluation component of the plan will be contingent on implementation being progressed enough to be at a stage to assess for outcomes.

#### **Task 4: Share Findings**

The evaluator will work closely with First 5 LA, L.A. Care and LACDPH staff to share study findings with key stakeholders and with the field broadly. Activities may include:

- Submission of interim reports throughout the course of the evaluation.
- Submission of year-end reports that highlight key indicators and learnings including implementation best practices from the year focused on health plan findings, testimonials and evaluation findings.
- A final implementation and outcome evaluation report, including slide deck and executive summary or brief.
- Support efforts related to sensemaking and data use including approaches, tools and processes within First 5 LA and with key partners.
- Presentation(s) to the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners, L.A. Care Health Plan's Board of Governors or other key stakeholder groups.

#### **Task 5: Project Management**

The selected evaluator will assume direct responsibility of compliance to the agreement with First 5 LA, including but not limited to fiscal management, reporting, invoicing, subcontracting<sup>15</sup> and monitoring. The evaluator shall manage all aspects of the project, including maintaining quality control and timeliness throughout the life of the project. During all phases of the contract, the evaluator will inform First 5 LA, LACDPH and L.A. Care of progress as well as obstacles or issues encountered, proposed solutions and next steps. The evaluator will submit progress memos organized by task. The evaluator is also expected to plan and facilitate regular conference calls/virtual meetings with the First 5 LA project team. For conference calls/virtual meetings, the evaluator will be responsible for drafting meeting agendas and summarizing discussion, decision and action items.

The above tasks, as well as any additional tasks proposed, should be included in the proposed project plan and reflected in the budget. Proposers are encouraged to revise, expand and otherwise edit the tasks in the proposed Scope of Work to enhance the project as long as they remain consistent with the overall project purpose and goals. Establishing and maintaining communication and engagement with key internal and external stakeholders is essential to successfully accomplish tasks.

#### **Additional Activities**

First 5 LA may require the selected evaluator to perform additional activities related to the work described above based on emergent learning and our desire to respond to unique needs of this project. These activities may be incorporated in a revised design and analysis plan, budget, and scope of work.

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<sup>15</sup> Tasks 1-4 can be subcontracted, but Task 5 project management cannot be subcontracted.

## **V. ELIGIBILITY**

Proposers must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Minimum of five (5) years of experience in partnering with organizations to design and conduct evaluations or applied research projects.
- HIPAA Compliant Certification, certified by an independent organization. Proposers are required to include a copy of any certifications with their proposal.

## **VI. DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS**

The following qualifications are desired:

### *Knowledge*

- Knowledge of implementation science, especially in regard to fidelity of implementation and identifying best practices
- Knowledge of the EII landscape in Los Angeles County, including characteristics of the service delivery systems and infrastructure
- Knowledge of literature related to EII
- Knowledge of equity-focused research practices that document and elevate disparities, including analyzing and interpreting disaggregated data
- Familiarity with key characteristics, issues, and challenges implementing health care delivery system improvements
- Knowledge of systems thinking, systems change initiatives, and approaches to systems research (please refer to [2020-28 Strategic Plan](#) for what these terms pertain to First 5 LA)
- General understanding of the context of Los Angeles County, including, but not limited to, racial inequities and issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Knowledge of childhood development including impact on children's wellbeing

### *Experience*

- Experience designing and conducting complex, multi-site implementation studies
- Experience with systems change measurement, research and evaluation efforts in early childhood systems
- Experience working with health plans or similar entities
- Demonstrated commitment to equity-focused data practices that document and elevate disparities
- Experience cleaning, analyzing, and synthesizing quantitative and qualitative primary and secondary data in real time
- Experience gathering and synthesizing complex information to make actionable insights available in accessible formats for a variety of audiences
- Experience with collaborative decision-making and planning among stakeholders – in-person and virtually – with diverse identities, experience and interests
- Experience in serving as a neutral and objective third party in strategic planning and implementation
- Experience working with culturally, ethnically, linguistically, and socio-economically diverse groups
- Experience successfully managing projects in complex and changing environments with competing priorities and deadlines that require flexible and nimble responses
- Demonstrated ability to provide an impartial evaluation of the L.A. Care partnership

## **VII. TERMS OF THE PROJECT**

First 5 LA expects to enter into an initial 14-month agreement with the selected proposer with an anticipated started date of May 16, 2022, subject to approval by the First 5 LA Board of

Commissioners, if applicable. The contract will renew at First 5 LA's sole discretion for a total project term of up to 30 months, through November 15, 2024, with an estimated total project cost not to exceed \$600,000. Based on learnings and shifts in the Help Me Grow LA project, as well as refinements of First 5 LA's Data Strategy, this project may be extended beyond the estimated project term to complete the objectives of the project. While there is no guarantee of an extension, First 5 LA is seeking a contractor that can potentially continue beyond the estimated project term. Contract renewal will be based on First 5 LA's business needs, contractor performance and contingent upon approval by the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners. First 5 LA reserves the right to terminate the contract if the quality of services is not to First 5 LA's satisfaction.

First 5 LA may require the selected contractor to perform additional activities related to the scope of work described above in Section IV. Scope of Work. The selected proposer will be responsible for furnishing the necessary personnel, materials services, and technological capabilities, including videoconference management to facilitate interaction with First 5 LA staff in Los Angeles and other partners as necessary to carry out all tasks to perform this evaluation.

This will be a fixed-fee Task Order contract based on negotiated rates per deliverable between First 5 LA and the selected Contractor. Task Orders may be issued for an entire task of the project or for a subset of activities within a single Task. First 5 LA will work with the Project Team to determine tasks and corresponding deliverables for each Task Order. Task Orders will be negotiated with the selected Contractor.

If using subcontractors, Task Orders must be submitted by the selected Contractor (Lead Contractor) to First 5 LA for approval prior to starting any of the work identified by the Task Orders. First 5 LA and the Lead Contractor will negotiate dollar amounts for Task Orders as they are identified and approved. Payments will be based on a fixed price that is not subject to any adjustment by reason of costs experienced by Contractor in the performance of the contract. Invoices will be paid based upon the negotiated rate per task/assignment. The Contractor shall only perform work under Task Orders when authorized in writing by the designated First 5 LA staff

First 5 LA will retain sole ownership of the data gathered and/or generated and reports created by the contractor during the life of the project and in compliance with all data sharing agreements for this project. Contractor shall have no right to retain or use data gathered in the course of this project following the completion of this evaluation, or for any other purpose without the express and advance written consent of First 5 LA. The selected Contractor and subcontractors may be required to execute and comply with standard Business Associate Agreements ("BAA") with First 5 LA and/or its partners.

## **VIII. SELECTION PROCESS AND REVIEW CRITERIA**

First 5 LA will review the proposers based on the multi-stage review process detailed below. Proposal must score satisfactorily in each level of review in order to move on to the next level of review or for final selection, as applicable.

### **Level 1 Administrative Review**

First 5 LA will evaluate all proposals for completeness and minimum requirements. Basic requirements include: timely receipt of proposal, submission of all required attachments, and adherence to eligibility requirements. Proposals with omissions of any required documentation are subject to disqualification.

First 5 LA will also conduct a due diligence review that includes a review of the *Litigation and Contract Compliance form (Appendix H)* and a review of whether the proposer (that are current and former contractors, grantees and vendors) currently remain placed in non-compliant status by First 5 LA

under any existing and past agreement with First 5 LA. If applicable, First 5 LA will evaluate past and current performance under a First 5 LA agreement to inform Level 1 Review. First 5 LA reserves the right to request additional information, if needed, to validate eligibility and/or and minimum requirements. Additionally, First 5 LA will conduct a conflict of interest review for proposers including subcontractors.

### **Level 2 Proposal Review**

Proposers that pass Level 1 Review will proceed to Level 2 Review. The proposal review panel will be comprised of First 5 LA, L.A. Care and LACDPH staff. Prior to beginning the review process, proposal reviewers will be assessed for conflicts of interest with proposers, including subcontractors, and sign a Conflict-of-Interest form to certify that there are no conflicts of interest. Proposal reviewers will score proposals using the review tool listed as **Appendix C**. Reviewers will participate in a calibration session prior to finalizing scores. Proposers scoring highly in Level 2 Review will proceed to Level 3 Review.

### **Level 3 Interview**

Highly scoring proposals from Level 2 Proposal Review will proceed to Level 3 Interview. Only key personnel identified on the Project Team of the proposal can participate in the interview. Tentative interview dates are included in *Section I. Timeline for Selection Process* and are subject to change at First 5 LA's sole discretion. Interviews will be held virtually on an online meeting platform or via telephone. The Interview Panel will be comprised of First 5 LA, L.A. Care and LACDPH staff. Members of the Interview Panel will be assessed for conflicts of interest with proposers, including subcontractors, and sign a Conflict-of-Interest form to certify that there are no conflicts of interest. Members of the Interview Panel will participate in a calibration session prior to finalizing scores. Further written materials may be requested prior to or after the interview. First 5 LA reserves the right to schedule additional interviews or meetings.

### **Award of Contract**

The highest scoring proposer based on combined Level 2 Proposal Review and Level 3 Interview scores will be recommended to First 5 LA's Board of Commissioners for award of the contract.

## **IX. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

The documents listed in this section are required to respond to this RFP. **Appendix D – Application Checklist** is available to assist in application completion. Omission of any document/form will constitute an incomplete proposal and may be grounds for disqualification. Applications that exceed First 5 LA's page limitation requirements will be adjusted by the removal of page(s) from the application. Pages will be removed before the Level 2: Proposal Review. The removed page(s) will not be made available to reviewers.

Unless explicitly requested below, **do not** embed hyperlinks in your proposal documents. Any hyperlink included in proposal documents will be deactivated before the Level 2 Proposal Review and will not be made available to reviewers.

- **Online Application:** In order to respond to this RFP, proposers must complete an online application form and submit all required documents specified below through the online application system. Proposers must set-up an online account in order to access the application form. Instructions on setting up the account and access the online application may be found at <https://www.first5la.org/article/l-a-care-help-me-grow-la-evaluation-request-for-proposals-rfp>

To access the online application:

[https://www.grantrequest.com/SID\\_725?SA=SNA&FID=35360](https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_725?SA=SNA&FID=35360)

- **HIPAA Compliant Certification:** *No page limit.* Please include a copy of any HIPAA certifications, certified by an independent organization, as one file through the online application system.
- **Proposed Project Plan:** *Maximum of ten (10) pages single-spaced, size 12 font, 1-inch margins* – For the entire project, 30 months, provide a narrative that addresses the following:
  - Proposed approach for developing and implementing the L.A. Care evaluation plan that addresses project purpose, goals, and assumptions and considers the potential tasks outlined in *Section IV. Scope of Work*. Proposers are encouraged to revise, expand and otherwise edit the tasks in the proposed Scope of Work to enhance the project as long as they remain consistent with the overall project purpose, goals and terms including cost and duration.
  - Any anticipated contextual, logistical or methodological challenges and how they will be addressed or mitigated to achieve the project purpose and goals.
  - Draft work plan and timeline.
  - Description of what activities, if any, will require in-person participation.
- **Qualifications and Relevant Experience Narrative:** *Maximum of eight (8) pages single-spaced, size 12 font, 1-inch margins* – Provide a narrative that addresses the following:
  - Describe your (your team's) knowledge, experience and current capacity to carry out the tasks listed in *Section IV. Scope of Work*.
  - Describe your (your team's) responsiveness to all desired qualifications listed in *Section VI. Desired Qualifications*.
  - Provide a brief list of similar types of projects that were successfully concluded. Please describe your specific role played in the project and how it led to the outcomes described.
- **Project Organizational Chart:** *Maximum two (2) page* organizational chart for the proposed Project Team that specifies:
  - The name, job title, and role on the project for each key member of the proposed Project Team, including any proposed subcontractors.
  - The reporting relationships between the members of the team including proposed subcontractors, if applicable.
- **Resumes** for key personnel who will perform major roles in carrying out the project. *Maximum of three (3) pages per team member. Do not embed hyperlinks in resumes.*
- **Work Samples:** Using **Appendix F**, please provide two (2) work samples from completed projects that demonstrate your (your team's) approach and expertise. Proposers must provide a brief description of the work sample including approach taken for said work sample and identify team member(s) involved in the creation of the work sample. *Maximum 10 pages per sample (Appendix F cover page not included in page count); you may submit an excerpt of a longer product to adhere to the maximum page length requirement. Do not embed hyperlinks in work samples.*
- **Budget and Budget Narrative:** Submit a proposed Budget and Budget Narrative using **Appendix G** that details and justifies the estimated cost per task outlined in *Section IV. Scope of Work* for the initial 14-months of the project. *Maximum four (4) pages single-spaced, size 12 font, 1-inch margins.*



- **Litigation and Contract Compliance Form:** Please read the information on the required Litigation and Contract Compliance Form listed as **Appendix H** thoroughly and include a signed copy by the proposal deadline. If you checked “Yes” to any of the questions on this form, please explain whether this will impact the project on this solicitation. Omission of the form will constitute an incomplete application and may be grounds for disqualification.
- **Business License** (If applicable)

**Failure to submit all required attachments may constitute an incomplete proposal and may be grounds for disqualification.** Proposers are responsible for any errors and omissions in their proposals and applications. 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 p.m. PST on February 22, 2022.** **Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered.** It is the responsibility of the proposer to ensure, prior to submission, that its proposal reflects the requirements of this solicitation. Proposers should not wait to submit documents through the online application system minutes before the closing time. First 5 LA will not be responsible for any delays proposers may encounter with the online application system due to multiple proposers uploading documents before the closing time.

#### **X. TERMS OF THE RFP**

First 5 LA has the right to amend this solicitation by written addendum. First 5 LA is responsible only for that which is expressly stated in the solicitation document and any authorized written addenda thereto. Such addenda shall be made available via the online funding center. Failure to address the requirements of an addendum may result in the proposal not being considered, at the sole discretion of First 5 LA. It is the responsibility of proposers to ensure, prior to submission, that their application reflects the most recent addenda information and RFP requirements. Addenda to this solicitation, if any, will be posted on First 5 LA’s website at <https://www.first5la.org/news-resources/funding-center/>.

First 5 LA reserves the right to reject all bids and re-advertise for bids, and that failure to comply with bid specification may be grounds for disqualification of bids. Each bidder or proposer shall be required to honor the price and specifications quoted for a minimum of ninety (90) calendar days following submission of the bid unless otherwise approved by First 5 LA. First 5 LA may waive any irregularity in bids or proposals if the irregularity does not provide an unfair competitive advantage over other bidders or proposers. First 5 LA also reserves the right to cancel this RFP, in its sole discretion, at any time before execution of a contract.

First 5 LA shall not be liable for any costs incurred in connection with a proposer’s preparation of a proposal in response to this RFP. Any cover letters, résumés and curriculum vita, including attached materials, submitted in response to this RFP shall become First 5 LA’s property and subject to public disclosure.

Each proposal shall be retained for official files and will become public record upon submittal unless the proposal or specific parts of the proposal can be shown to be exempt from disclosure by law. The budget, scope of work and other contractual information may be included in board materials which are made public if the contract requires board approval. Each proposer may clearly label parts of a proposal as “CONFIDENTIAL” if the proposer thereby agrees to indemnify and defend First 5 LA for honoring such a designation. The failure to so label any information that is released by First 5 LA shall constitute a complete waiver of all claims for damages caused by any release of the information. If a public records request for information labeled confidential is received by First 5 LA, First 5 LA will notify the proposer of the request. Within seven (7) calendar days after First 5 LA’s notification to the proposer, it will be the proposer’s duty to act in protection of the labeled information. The proposer’s failure to so act shall constitute a complete waiver.

The proposer agrees that, by submitting application proposal, the proposer authorizes First 5 LA to verify any or all information and/or references submitted in the proposal.

False, misleading, incomplete, or deceptively unresponsive statements in connection with a proposal shall be sufficient cause for rejection of the proposal at any time. The evaluation and determination in this area shall be at First 5 LA's sole judgment.

First 5 LA may waive any irregularity in bids or proposals if the irregularity does not provide an unfair competitive advantage over other bidders or proposers.

## **XI. CONTRACTUAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The successful proposer must sign and adhere to the provisions of the First 5 LA Contract (see **Appendix E – Sample Contract**). The successful proposer must execute the Contract without substantive alteration. All proposers must review the sample Contract in detail and fully understand the contractual obligations described in the Contract, including all insurance requirements. If a satisfactory agreement cannot be negotiated within 30 days of award, First 5 LA may, at its sole discretion, begin negotiations with the next qualified proposer, as determined by First 5 LA. First 5 LA may, after contract award, amend the awarded contract, scope of work and any other exhibits in accordance with the terms of the contract and as needed throughout the contract term to best meet the needs of First 5 LA.

First 5 LA may, at its discretion, request that the Contractor undertake additional, unanticipated, activities that are aligned to the project objectives of this RFP and incorporate such activities into the final Scope of Work/Performance Matrix and Budget, if applicable.

Current and former First 5 LA grantees, contractors and vendors must be in good standing and compliant with all aspects of current and former agreements with First 5 LA in order to be eligible to respond to this RFP. First 5 LA may deem a proposer ineligible to respond to this RFP if it finds, in its sole discretion, that the proposer has done any of the following: (1) violated any term or condition of a First 5 LA agreement; (2) committed any act or omission, or engaged in a pattern or practice, that negatively reflects on the proposer's quality, fitness or capacity to perform services listed in this RFP; (3) committed an act or offense that indicates a lack of business integrity or business dishonesty; or (4) made or submitted a false claim to First 5 LA or any other public entity.

As stewards of public funds [First 5 LA's Funding Guidelines](#) are intended to provide information about the restrictions on the use of First 5 LA funds. Although these Funding Guidelines are applicable generally, the terms of individual funding agreements will always take precedence over these guidelines.

The award of a contract by First 5 LA to an individual/agency/organization that proposes to use subcontractors for the performance of work under the contract resulting from this RFP process shall not limit First 5 LA's right to approve subcontractors, assemble teams and/or assign leads. Each proposer 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 First 5 LA.

First 5 LA, in its sole discretion, may conduct an evaluation of this project. Contractors will be required to comply with First 5 LA's evaluation and any requests for information arising out of such evaluations within the timeframe specified by First 5 LA.

If the awarded contract is not signed prior to the intended start date, the commencement of any activities under the contract's Scope of Work (Exhibit A) will not begin until the contract execution

date (the date all parties have signed and delivered the contract) and the successful proposer will not be eligible to obtain reimbursement for any costs incurred prior to the contract execution date, unless otherwise approved in writing by First 5 LA. If the awarded contract is not signed by the successful proposer within thirty (30) calendar days from the proposed intended start date, First 5 LA may withdraw the contract award. First 5 LA may revise the proposed effective date prior to final execution of the awarded contract.

If the value of the contract is \$150,000 or more in the aggregate in any fiscal year, the award and execution of the contract is subject to First 5 LA's Board approval. Any performance of services commenced prior to obtaining all written approvals by First 5 LA shall be considered voluntary.

The Contractor shall ensure that the Contractor, its employees and subcontractors, as well as the participants in any program or service conducted hereunder, comply with all applicable federal, State and local public health orders to protect against the spread of the COVID-19 virus or other public health threat, including, without limitation, maintaining social distancing requirements, avoiding unnecessary or non-essential gatherings, and providing or requiring personal protective devices such as face masks, gloves and cleaning supplies.

Unless otherwise submitted during the RFP process, the successful proposer will be required to submit additional required documentation including, but not limited to, the following documents before the awarded contract can be fully executed:

- Litigation and Contract Compliance 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 Determination Letter for non-profit status (if applicable)
- Completed IRS Form W-9
- Memorandums of Understanding and Subcontracts (for any sub-contractors, collaborators, and/or partners)
- Certificates of Insurance for all insurance requirements outlined in the sample Contract

It is First 5 LA's intent to contract with independent contractors as defined under California's AB 5 and not to create an employer/employee relationship.

## **XII. APPEALS POLICY**

First 5 LA reserves the right, without prejudice, to reject any or all submitted proposals. 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 solicitation. Appeals challenging First 5 LA's decisions on the merits or qualifications of bidders or proposers, or the scoring of proposals shall not be permitted. Appeals regarding First 5 LA's decisions on procedural or formatting errors, such as failure to include required documentation or failure to comply with page limits, shall not be permitted. An appeal of a First 5 LA decision shall be in writing and filed within ten (10) business days following the date the notification of decision is made by First 5 LA. The appeal must be filed by email to the designated contact person on the solicitation or other method described in the solicitation. An appeal shall be deemed filed on the date it is received by First 5 LA. Any appeal received by First 5 LA after the close of business on the tenth (10th) business day following the date the notification of decision is issued shall be rejected. Please be advised that your agency has the right to appeal the decision. First 5 LA's Appeals Policy can be found at <https://www.first5la.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Procurement-Policy-2021.pdf>. Please refer to *Section XI. Appeals* for more information.

### **XIII. APPENDICES**

#### **For Informative Purposes**

- Appendix A – First 5 LA's Investments to Strengthen Early Identification and Intervention: 2005-Present
- Appendix B – Data Variables List and Sample Data Structure
- Appendix C – Level 2 Review: Scoring Criteria
- Appendix D – Application Checklist
- Appendix E – Sample Contract

#### **For Submission with Proposal**

- Appendix F – Work Sample Submission Cover Page
- Appendix G – Budget and Budget Narrative
- Appendix H – Litigation and Contract Compliance Form