

# **FIRST CONNECTIONS PROGRAM EVALUATION REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

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

**RELEASE DATE: MARCH 14, 2019**

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

| ACTIVITY   | DATE              |
|--|-------------------|
| RFP Released   | March 14, 2019    |
| Information Session  | March 21, 2019    |
| Final date to submit questions and requests for additional information | March 28, 2019    |
| Posting of responses to questions                                      | April 1, 2019     |
| Proposal Due   | April 5, 2019     |
| Interviews   | April 23-24, 2019 |
| Contractor Selected  | May 1, 2019       |
| Board of Commissioners Approval  | June 13, 2019     |
| Contract Start Date  | July 1, 2019      |

In order to respond to this Request for Proposals (RFP), the proposal must submit all required documents through the online application system designated by First 5 LA no later than **5:00 p.m. PT on April 5, 2019**. 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. PT may constitute an incomplete proposal and may be grounds for disqualification.**

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

Daisy Ortiz, Contract Compliance Officer  
E-mail: [dortiz@first5la.org](mailto:dortiz@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. PT on March 28, 2019**. First 5 LA reserves the sole right to determine the timing and content of the responses to all questions and requests for additional information. First 5 LA may respond to individual inquiries 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. PT on March 21, 2019** to learn more about the RFP requirements. Please register for the webinar at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/9011564713364962049>. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. A recording of the webinar will also be made available on the Funding Opportunities webpage: <https://www.first5la.org/funding/first-connections-program-evaluation-request-for-proposals-rfp/>

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

**Please check the Funding Opportunities 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 application not being considered, as determined in 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 <https://www.first5la.org/funding/first-connections-program-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**

### **A. 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 ("L.A. 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.

### **B. The First 5 LA FY 2015-2020 Strategic Plan**

In November 2014, the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners adopted a new [Strategic Plan](#) to guide its investments from July 2015 through June 2020. The plan, [Focusing for the Future](#), lays out a clear path for First 5 LA to maximize its impact to strengthen families and improve outcomes for the greatest number of children prenatal to age 5 in L.A. County. The plan provides a roadmap for increasing First 5 LA's contribution to better outcomes for young children by strengthening families, the communities they live in, and the systems that support them.

Based on our research, we identified four Outcomes where we can achieve broad, lasting impact affecting the greatest number of children and their families. The strategies we use to reach these Outcomes are connected and mutually reinforcing, providing a clear, focused path for First 5 LA's work with its partners to help children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life.

Our target Outcomes are:

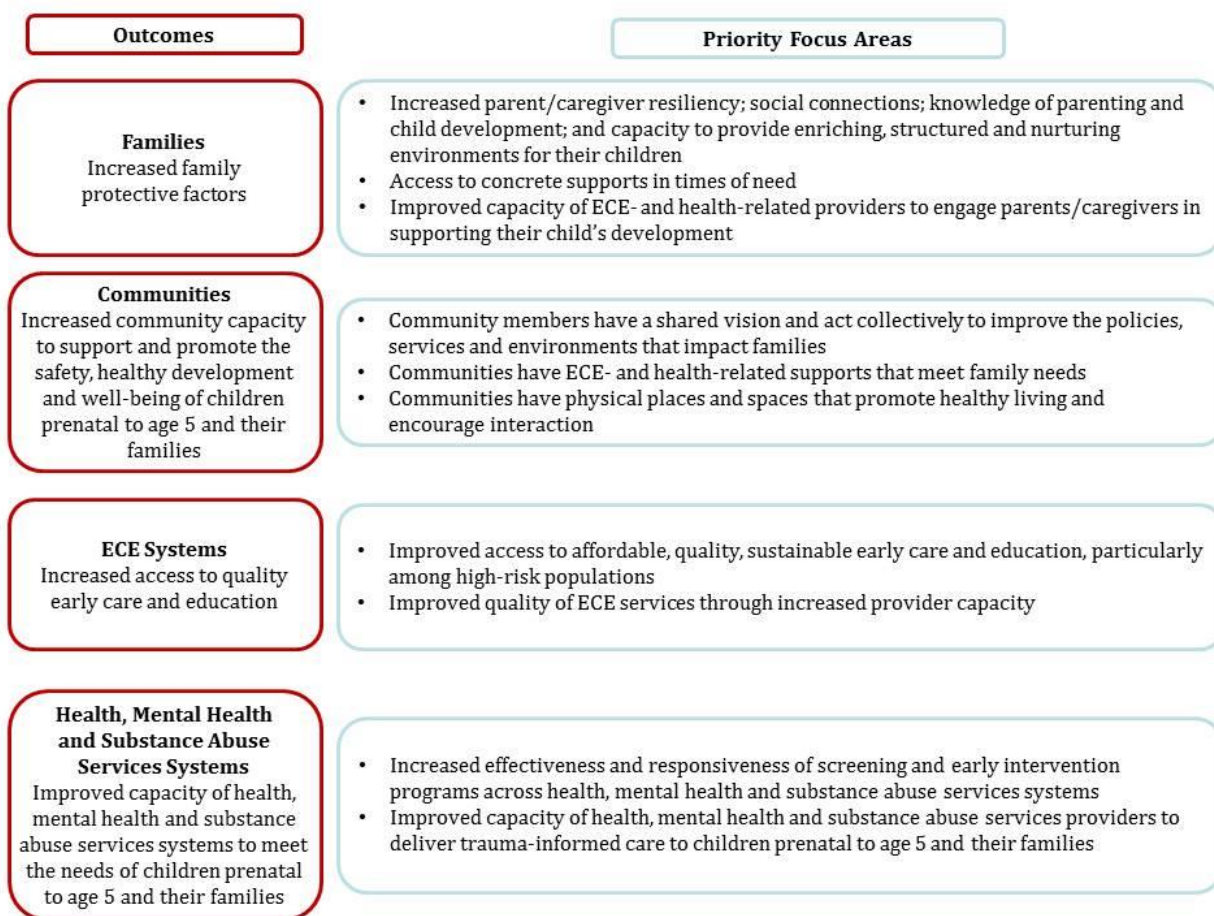
1. [Families](#): Increased family protective factors
2. [Communities](#): Increased community capacity to support and promote the safety, healthy development, and well-being of children prenatal to age 5 and their families
3. [Early Care and Education Systems](#): Increased access to high-quality early care and education
4. [Health-Related Systems](#): Improved capacity of health, mental health, and substance abuse services systems to meet the needs of children prenatal to age 5 and their families

To achieve these Outcomes, First 5 LA will focus its efforts on six investment areas:

1. [Research and Development](#): Promote the widespread use of proven best practices that are grounded in research and real-life application.
2. [Public Policy and Advocacy](#): Increase public investments of funds dedicated toward young children and improve policies that effect those investments.
3. [Provider Training](#): Build the knowledge and skills of the people providing support and services to

- parents and children.
4. Community Capacity Building: Help individuals and groups that live and work in neighborhoods and communities take greater ownership and responsibility for the children and families who live within them by fostering safe, healthy and vibrant communities.
  5. Service Delivery System Improvement: Increase the quality, effectiveness, and coordination of how services are accessed and provided.
  6. Communications: Educate the public about the importance of investing in young children and families.

With these six investment areas in mind, First 5 LA has identified Priority Focus Areas within each Outcome to further define the type of change that First 5 LA can measurably affect. The Priority Focus Areas and Outcomes are depicted in the below visual.



First 5 LA's 2015-2020 Strategic Plan also outlines investment guidelines to further support and guide First 5 LA's work. Based on these investment guidelines, First 5 LA will:

- Focus on prevention.
- Focus on systems and policy change.
- Seek to have a broad impact, affecting large numbers of people.
- Prioritize investments that strengthen families and, whenever possible, improve community capacity.

- Prioritize the identification and scaling up of evidence-based practices.
- Engage partners at the earliest possible stage of activity and/or investment.

Together, these investment guidelines, target Outcomes, investment areas and Priority Focus Areas serve as ongoing policy guidance for First 5 LA and its work.

### C. Health Systems Strategies

Through the Health Systems Department, First 5 LA invests to help improve how health related systems — such as health, mental health and substance abuse services — coordinate and deliver care to young children and their families in L.A. County. The Health Systems Department does this through two main strategies as outlined in the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan:

- Health Strategy 1: Advocate for policy and practice changes to support efforts to improve coordination and functioning of developmental screening, assessment and early intervention programs.
- Health Strategy 2: Identify and promote best practices around trauma-informed care that improve the service delivery system for children prenatal to age 5 and their families.

### D. Early Identification and Intervention (EII) Landscape

In California, approximately 25% of children 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>2</sup> However, many children do not receive prevention and early intervention services until they reach kindergarten.<sup>3</sup>

Approximately 15% of all young children experience developmental delays. In an ideal situation, this would mean that close to 15% 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>4,5</sup> In addition to gaps in accessing IDEA-Part C services, children are also not connected to mental health services in a timely manner. Data also shows underutilization of behavioral and mental health intervention services and supports among young children under 5 years old. Of the total number of children ages 0-5 eligible for intervention services to address behavioral needs, only 3% accessed specialty mental health services in Los

<sup>2</sup> First 5 LA. (2012). *Early Developmental Screening and Intervention Initiative (EDSI): Lessons Learned*.

<sup>3</sup> First 5 LA. (2012). *Early Developmental Screening and Intervention Initiative (EDSI): Lessons Learned*.

Children Now, First 5 Association of California, & Help Me Grow California. (2014). *Ensuring Children's Early Success: Promoting Developmental and Behavioral Screenings in California*.

<sup>4</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.

<sup>5</sup> Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center. (n.d.). Part C national program data. Retrieved from: <http://ectacenter.org/partc/partcdata.asp>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (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>

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/sites/default/files/opre/early\\_intervention\\_0.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/early_intervention_0.pdf)

Angeles.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, evidence indicates there are significant racial disparities in screening rates. Latino, African-American and Asian children in California are screened at lower rates than their White peers leading to delayed diagnosis.<sup>7</sup>

Once screened, too many children under 5 years old with or at risk for developmental and behavioral delays are not referred and connected to the appropriate early intervention services. 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 lack of parent/caregiver education on the benefits of prevention and early intervention for delays. Timely access to early intervention services was identified as a major concern for L.A. County's Regional Centers that deliver IDEA-Part C. Targeted discussions with Early Start leadership revealed that most Regional Centers receive referrals for children closer to age 3, limiting their time to enroll in and benefit from the IDEA-Part C Early Start program. Thus, it is not only crucial to have access to appropriate screenings and interventions but to also address any concerns as early as possible.

## E. Early Identification and Intervention Initiative ("First Connections")

### Overview

The First Connections Program is a critical component of the Health Strategy 1 listed above. Initiated in January 2014, the First Connections program prioritizes early screening and intervention for young children and connects them and their families with culturally and linguistically appropriate services as early as possible. Program objectives are to:

1. Raise competencies of community-based providers to conduct developmental screenings, identify developmental delays and link children and families to culturally and linguistically appropriate early intervention services and supports as early as possible.
2. Improve young children and families' access to developmental screenings and early intervention services.
3. Increase parents' knowledge about healthy development and developmental delays.
4. Strengthen support for parents with children who have special needs.

First Connections grantees (listed below) have piloted innovative approaches to strengthen, embed and expand EII practices within their agencies, such as utilizing technology to embed developmental screening within provider workflows. First Connections grantees also provide a range of early intervention services to help young children develop physical, cognitive and social-emotional skills. Also central to this work is helping families navigate EII systems (e.g., health plan in-network services, mental health, regional center and school district). First Connections grantees also engage parents and caregivers in discussions about healthy child development, and supporting families as they navigate transitions between programs and services across sectors by connecting them to local regional centers, school districts and local community supports. Several grantees have also selected to expand the First Connections program to multiple sites.

The six grantees that First 5 LA has partnered with to deliver the First Connections program include:

- Three Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)

<sup>6</sup> Department of Health Care Services. (2016). *Performance outcomes systems report*. Retrieved from: [https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/MH/Documents/LosAngeles\\_CtyAggRep.pdf](https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/MH/Documents/LosAngeles_CtyAggRep.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Zuckerman, K. E., Mattox, K. M., Sinche, B. K., Blaschke, G. S., & Bethell, C. (2014). Racial, ethnic, and language disparities in early childhood developmental/behavioral evaluations: A narrative review. *Clinical Pediatrics*, 53(7), 619-631. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3955219/>



- AltaMed Health Services Corporation
- Eisner Pediatric and Family Medical Center
- Northeast Valley Health Corporation
- Two Family Service Agencies
  - Foothill Family Service
  - Westside Children's Center, Inc.
- One Family Resource Center
  - South Central Los Angeles Regional Center for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, Inc.

The initial three-year \$2.5 million First Connections program was launched in January 2014 to address system barriers and reduce disparities in screening young children for Autism Spectrum Disorder and developmental delays. The program was extended for an additional three years through June 2020 for a total allocation of \$5.65 million. This extension allowed us to continue to sustain the critical infrastructure and partnerships established through First Connections and maintain important community-based resources that can inform early implementation of Help Me Grow – Los Angeles (HMG-LA), providing an opportunity to glean best practices and important learning from First Connections to further inform and strengthen EII practices across the county and serve as a model for other areas related to community expansion.

#### Training and Technical Assistance Provided to First Connections Grantees

The First Connections grantees are supported in their efforts by a training and a technical assistance (TA) provider: Children's Hospital Los Angeles. The TA provider is tasked with the following responsibilities:

- Train the six First Connections grantees' staff to conduct developmental and behavioral screenings of children ages birth to 5 years using standardized tools.
- Develop workflows, algorithms and toolkits to ensure universal screening and linkage for underserved and vulnerable children.
- Support agencies to provide education and develop relationships with parents/caregivers.
- Develop strategies to link young children to early intervention services and reduce barriers to access.
- Conduct small-scale evaluations for quality improvement purposes that are tailored to what each agency wants to learn from their program.

#### **F. Help Me Grow**

The objectives of the First Connections Program to increase developmental screenings and improve access to services are aligned to the goals of HMG-LA.

Help Me Grow (HMG) is a national systems change model that aims to improve the coordination and functioning of developmental and behavioral screening, assessment and early intervention supports through HMG is a national effort that builds on existing resources at the local level to strengthen how systems work together to provide timely screenings for developmental and behavioral delays, effective care coordination and appropriate referrals to ensure young children have the support they need to thrive. HMG is comprised of four core components: Child Health Care Provider Outreach; Community & Family Outreach;<sup>8</sup> Centralized Access Point; and Data Collection and Analysis. While

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<sup>8</sup> The Help Me Grow National model refers to this core component as "Community and Family Outreach," however the HMG-LA planning members selected to change the title to "Community and Family Engagement".



the HMG model is typically implemented at a statewide level, California is implementing HMG on a county by county basis.

As will be discussed further in Section III, First 5 LA will conduct an evaluation of the First Connections Program. Findings from the evaluation of the First Connections Program will inform implementation of the HMG-LA model by sharing best practices of agencies to strengthen EII practices.

### **III. PROJECT OVERVIEW**

#### **A. Purpose**

First 5 LA is seeking to contract with an evaluator to design and conduct an evaluation of the First Connections Program. This evaluation will focus on: a) program implementation; b) evidence of effectiveness; and c) (to the extent possible) relationship between implementation and effectiveness. The goal of the evaluation is to: 1) identify essential components to implementing the First Connections Program and demonstrate grantees ability to embed and expand EII practices within their agencies; and 2) recognize what EII practices were most effective in standardizing early identification and making successful referrals (i.e., referrals appropriate based on screening results and families followed through on referrals).

The evaluation findings will serve two primary purposes: 1) Aiding in sustaining components and practices established by the First Connections Program; and 2) Informing system-change efforts to strengthen EII, including co-implementation of Help Me Grow-Los Angeles (HMG-LA) with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (“LACDPH”). Evaluation findings will be used to inform HMG-LA activities, such as enhancing trainings and educational material for key stakeholders, including but not limited to child-and-family-service providers and families. Furthermore, evaluation findings will be used to inform spread and scale of innovative practices countywide through HMG-LA, as well as provide support to other agencies interested in building and/or sustaining similar EII efforts.

#### **B. Evaluation Questions**

The selected evaluator of this RFP will conduct a study addressing the following evaluation questions:

1. What are the challenges, best practices and lessons learned during each phase (planning, implementation/maintaining and quality assurance) of the First Connections program?
  - a. What has and has not been standardized across agencies?
  - b. Are there any themes across the agencies, or by type of agency?
  - c. What are the successful practices that agencies use to engage families in EII services?
  - d. How did the First Connections components align with the agencies’ organizational structure and workforce capacities? If it did not align at onset, what processes did agencies use to align?
  - e. What types of data are agencies collecting in terms of screening results, referrals and EII services provided? What is the quality of the data? Is there consistency in data collected across the agencies?
  - f. What practices are structured to be sustained (i.e., imbedded within organization, linked to alternative county, state or federal funding sources)?
  - g. What components of the First Connections Program, if any, do grantees plan to expand or replicate across their agencies?
  - h. In what ways has the First Connections Program benefited the participating agencies (e.g., staff satisfaction, increased client capacity, etc.)?
2. What evidence is there to demonstrate that the program was effective?

- a. To what extent is there evidence of the success of referrals and of parent satisfaction with First Connections services?
  - b. What are key factors that account for differences in success of referrals?
  - c. To what extent have First Connections services been responsive to the diverse needs of children and their families?
3. (If possible depending on data available) How does implementation affect program effectiveness?
  - a. What standard(s) needs to be set to successfully replicate the First Connections program?

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

- The evaluation may need to examine a subset of the First Connections population rather than all families served by the program given possible data constraints.
- To the extent possible, the evaluation will examine disaggregated data to gain insights on outcomes of key sub-groups (e.g., children identified with typical development, children identified at risk for delays, children identified with mild to moderate delays and children identified with more severe delays).
- The evaluation should primarily rely on existing data sources given limited time availability of staff from First Connections agencies, although additional data collection may be warranted.
- The contracted evaluator will be responsible for data merging and cleaning.
- The evaluation team should coordinate efforts with the TA provider who is conducting other evaluation activities in order to avoid duplicating efforts.
- Members of the evaluation team will work in collaboration with select First Connections grantees to achieve the goals of this evaluation for the duration of the project. This includes adhering to the policies of each grantee to obtain data (e.g., Institutional Review Board [IRB], Research Committee, etc.). First 5 LA staff has had ongoing discussions with grantees and interest has been expressed in participating in the evaluation by the majority of grantees.

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

The selected evaluator will work closely and in partnership with First 5 LA staff throughout the course of this evaluation. First 5 LA expects to work as a thought partner with the selected evaluator and actively engage in all aspects of refining the design and implementation of this evaluation. In addition, the selected evaluator will collaborate with the staff of First 5 LA, First Connections grantees, First Connections TA provider, and other stakeholders to be determined by First 5 LA.

## **IV. SCOPE OF WORK**

### **A. Major Tasks**

In order to successfully design and conduct the 12-month First Connections Evaluation, First 5 LA expects the evaluator and any proposed subcontractor to complete the tasks outlined below:

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

Participate in a multi-day, in-person meeting 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 First Connections grantees; (c) review and discuss key design, methodological and logistical issues; and (d) identify action items and next steps to supporting an effective evaluation launch. At least one week prior to the meeting, the evaluator shall work with First 5 LA staff to finalize

the agenda. Within two weeks following the meeting, the evaluator shall generate a memo summarizing key decisions and action items.

### Task 2: Assess Grantee Data

The evaluator will be responsible for assessing the status of data available from First Connections grantees, including assessing types of data available, data quality and consistency across agencies. A preliminary conversation will begin during the planning meeting (Task 1) and First 5 LA will facilitate other conversations with the grantees as needed. See Appendix A for a listing of data that grantees are tasked with collecting.

### Task 3: Refine Evaluation Plan<sup>9</sup>

Based on Task 2's findings, the evaluator will refine their proposed evaluation plan. The evaluation plan will be based on content in this RFP, decisions made during contract negotiation and the planning meeting (Task 1), and availability of data (Task 2). The purpose of the evaluation plan is to 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 evaluation plan refined for this task will reflect the agreed upon plan and approach at the outset of the project, including documentation that will need to be submitted for Task 5. The evaluation plan will include plans for data collection (listing additional data the proposer recommends collecting) and detail sampling methods (if applicable). 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.

### Task 4: Create Data Collection Protocols and Instruments

While the evaluation will primarily utilize existing data, some additional data may need to be collected from First Connections grantees. In these cases, the evaluator shall create or identify existing data collection protocols and instruments to meet the needs of this project consistent with the evaluation plan (Task 3). The evaluator will work with First 5 LA and/or its grantees to coordinate the piloting of data collection protocols and instruments, if necessary. The evaluator and First 5 LA will jointly determine when it is necessary to pilot data collections tools and the process for doing so.

### Task 5: Submit Documentation to Obtain Data

Dependent on data available and each grantee's policy for obtaining data, the evaluator with First 5 LA's assistance will develop materials necessary to obtain data<sup>10</sup>. At a minimum, the evaluator should plan to request data on:

- Screening scores (ASQ-3, ASQ-SE, PEDS, MCHAT-R)
- Demographics: age at ASQ screening, gender, race/ethnicity
- Whether child was referred to services, type of referral and whether families followed through on referrals
- Satisfaction surveys (if available)

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<sup>9</sup> For further information see section VII. Terms of Project.

<sup>10</sup> Grantees vary in their data collection and entry; some are paper-based, some are electronic-based and others a combination.

Most grantees have indicated willingness to share data, although the process for obtaining data varies by agency. The evaluator should plan to go through an IRB process, submit research applications for review by Research Committees and develop data sharing agreements such as Business Associate Agreements<sup>11</sup>. Additional efforts may be required if the evaluator requests protected health information (PHI) and/or links to administrative records.

#### Task 6: Collect Data

The evaluator will be responsible for quantitative and qualitative data collection for the evaluation per agreements established with First Connections grantees as described under Task 5. At a minimum, data collected should reflect existing data sources and staff interviews and/or focus groups in order to obtain data described in Task 5. It is the responsibility of the evaluator to train data collectors and to coordinate with the appropriate First Connections grantees and First 5 LA staff to collect data. Data collected for this evaluation, merged, cleaned and stripped of PHI, shall be submitted to First 5 LA in an acceptable format no less than 30 days prior to the contract end date. Together, First 5 LA and the evaluator will determine if and when there is need for suppression of variables, especially any low frequency variables that may risk compromising confidentiality.

#### Task 7: Analyze Data

The evaluator will analyze data according to the Evaluation Plan (from Task 3) and any addenda to answer the evaluation questions.

#### Task 8: Share Findings

The evaluator will plan and facilitate conversations with appropriate staff from First 5 LA and First Connections grantees in real time as needed. These conversations will provide the opportunity to collaboratively: (a) discuss and interpret evaluation results; (b) identify implications of those findings in the current context; (c) develop recommendations; and (d) outline associated next steps. To the extent possible, these conversations will be integrated into the quarterly First Connections meetings.

The evaluator will work closely with First 5 LA staff to share study findings with other key stakeholders and with the field broadly. Interim findings will be reported throughout the evaluation in the form of Rapid Feedback Memos. A final report will be produced at the end of the evaluation. In addition to generating written briefs and reports, the evaluator may present study findings using PowerPoint or a similar application to the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners and staff from First Connections grantees. The selected evaluator and First 5 LA will abide by data sharing and intellectual property principles as outlined in Section IX. Collection and Evaluation of Data and Information and Section X. Proprietary Rights of the sample contract (Appendix B).

#### Task 9: Manage the Overall Project

The evaluator will maintain quality control and timeliness throughout the life of the project. During all phases of the contract, the evaluator will inform First 5 LA 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 with

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<sup>11</sup> These agreements would be for existing data, unless otherwise noted in the Evaluation Plan such as the use of focus groups, interviews, surveys (Task 3).

the First 5 LA project team. For conference calls, the evaluator will be responsible for drafting meeting agendas and summarizing discussion, decision and action items.

The tasks, as well as any additional subtasks proposed, should be included in the proposal narrative proposed scope of work and 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.

## B. 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, scope of work, and task orders. Section VII below will discuss the terms of the project. The selected evaluator will be responsible for furnishing the necessary personnel, materials, services, and technological capabilities for efficient communication (phone and email) needed to carry out all tasks as outlined in the Scope of Work to perform this evaluation.

## C. Overview of Tasks and Deliverables

The table below provides a recap of tasks and likely deliverables for the First Connections Evaluation. The information in this table is preliminary and subject to change.

| Task   | Deliverable(s)                                  |
|--|---|
| Task 1: Orientation and Planning Meeting                 | Agenda  |
|  | Summary memo                                    |
| Task 2: Assess Grantee Data                              | Summary memo                                    |
| Task 3: Refine Evaluation Plan                           | Final evaluation plan                           |
| Task 4: Create Data Collection Protocols and Instruments | Draft data collection protocols and instruments |
|  | Final data collection protocols and instruments |
| Task 5: Submit Documentation to Obtain Data              | Obtain IRB and Research Committee approvals     |
|  | Enter into data sharing agreement(s)            |
| Task 6: Collect Data                                     | Data collection update in progress memos        |
|  | Data sets                                       |
| Task 7: Analyze Data                                     | Rapid feedback memos                            |
| Task 8: Share Findings                                   | Summary memos, reports and briefs               |
|  | Presentation(s)                                 |
| Task 9: Manage the Overall Project                       | Meeting agendas and notes                       |
|  | Progress memos                                  |

## V. ELIGIBILITY

Proposers shall meet the following criteria:

1. A physical office location in the County of Los Angeles with key staff available to attend in-person meetings in Los Angeles, CA for the duration of the project.
2. Experience obtaining approvals to conduct evaluations through an IRB.
3. The evaluation team must have a member with a minimum of three (3) years of experience designing and implementing performance measurement, and conducting applied research or evaluation projects at agencies that are doing work similar to First 5 LA.

## VI. SUMMARY OF DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal proposer will have the following qualifications:

### Knowledge

- Knowledge of contextual, methodological and logistical issues associated with formative and summative evaluation
- Knowledge of and experience working with early childhood programs on quality improvement efforts
- Knowledge of the EII landscape in L.A. County, including characteristics of the service delivery systems and infrastructure
- *Preferred* knowledge and experience working with agencies that provide early identification and/or intervention services for developmental disabilities, including familiarity with standardized and validated developmental and behavioral screening tools (e.g., ASQ, PEDS, MCHAT, etc.); developmental domains and milestones; and IDEA-part B and IDEA-part C intervention services.

### Experience

- Experience working with culturally and linguistically diverse groups, in particular, parents of young children and community-based programs.
- Experience performing evaluations for systems, policy or advocacy change initiatives, including experience identifying appropriate indicators to measure, track and report progress on initiatives
- Experience developing qualitative data collection tools and conducting interviews, focus groups and document review
- Experience developing and administering quantitative data collection tools including surveys and observation protocols
- Experience with multi-site evaluations and merging data from multiple sites
- Experience analyzing and synthesizing quantitative and qualitative data in real time and making findings available in accessible formats
- Experience obtaining approvals to conduct evaluations through an IRB. Preferable that the evaluator has a connection to an IRB given the timeframe of this evaluation (please detail in proposal this relationship).
- Experience reporting data to various stakeholders

## VII. TERMS OF THE PROJECT

The total project term is 12-months with an estimated project cost not to exceed \$120,000. The Commission expects to enter into a contract with the selected contractor with an anticipated start date of July 1, 2019, subject to approval by the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners. It is expected that the proposed budget will be clearly justified in the budget narrative and will be appropriate to the work proposed. A final Scope of Work (Appendix **F**) and Budget (Appendix **G**) will be negotiated with the selected contractor and subject to approval by First 5 LA's Board of Commissioners.



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This contract utilize a blended budget, which includes fixed-price for deliverables and a reserved budget for the performance of work that will be specified through Task Orders for any deliverables that are identified as a result of the emergent nature of this project as described below:

- Pre-determined fixed-price deliverables will be negotiated for Tasks 1-3 and 7-9 specified in Section IV Scope of Work (SOW).
- The reserved budget that will be specified through Task Orders will support SOW Tasks 4-6. Task Orders shall be submitted by the contractor for approval by First 5 LA (Appendix E). A fixed-price will be negotiated for task orders as they are identified and approved. The Contractor shall only perform work under task orders when authorized in writing by the designated First 5 LA staff.

Payments will be based on a fixed price that is not subject to any adjustment by reason of costs experienced by proposer in the performance of the contract. First 5 LA will negotiate a final budget after the selected proposer is awarded. The selected proposer is responsible for supplying all business equipment needed to carry out its duties (e.g., computer, printer, fax, internet access, etc.). The duration, extension, renewal, and amendment of the contract may be contingent upon the First 5 LA Board of Commissioner's approval.

## **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, as applicable.

### **Level 1 Internal 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 which includes a review of the Litigation and Contract Compliance form and a review of whether 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. First 5 LA reserves the right to request additional information, if needed, to validate eligibility and/or and minimum requirements.

### **Level 2 Proposal Review**

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

### **Level 3 Interview**

Highly scoring proposals from Level 2 Review will proceed to Level 3 Review. 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 either in-person at First 5 LA or via phone. The Interview Panel will be comprised of First 5 LA staff members. Members of the Interview Panel will be assessed for conflicts of interest with proposers 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/meetings should additional questions arise.

The proposer with the highest combined score proposed from the proposal review (Level 2) and interview (Level 3) will be recommended to First 5 LA's Board of Commissioners for award of the contract. Proposers must score a minimum combined score of 80% or higher in the proposal review and interview processes to be considered for award by First 5 LA staff and Board.

## 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 may constitute an incomplete proposal and may be grounds for disqualification.

Proposals that exceed First 5 LA's page limitation requirements will be adjusted by the removal of page(s) from the proposal. Pages will be removed before the Level 2: Proposal Review. The removed page(s) 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/funding/first-connections-program-evaluation-request-for-proposals-rfp/>.
- **Proposal Narrative:** Provide a narrative, not to exceed ten (10) pages single-spaced, size 12 font, 1-inch margins, describing how the applicant proposes to approach this evaluation addressing the evaluation questions in Section III. Project Overview, as well as all other tasks outlined in Section IV. Scope of Work including any expected logistical or methodological challenges and how they will be address or minimized to achieve evaluation goals within the project period. The tasks described in Section IV above, as well as any additional tasks proposed by the proposer, should be included in the proposal narrative and the proposed 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 and goals. The proposal narrative should detail which physical office location in the County of Los Angeles that the evaluator (evaluation team) will work from, and key staff availability to attend in-person meetings in Los Angeles, CA for the duration of the project.
- **Scope of Work:** Complete the Scope of Work template (Appendix F) and describe the objectives and related key activities for the project term of 12 months. Refer to Section IV for required Scope of Work activities. Include any proposed subcontractors in the Scope of Work template. The final Scope of Work will be negotiated with the awarded Contractor. The tasks described in Section IV above, as well as any additional tasks proposed by the proposer, should be included in the proposal narrative and the proposed 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 and goals.

- **Qualifications Narrative:** Provide a narrative, not to exceed eight (8) pages single-spaced, size 12 font, 1-inch margins, describing how relevant work experience(s) that specifically illustrates how proposer has been successful with a project of similar scope and scale that address the following:
  - a. Describe your (your team's) responsiveness to qualifications listed in Section VI, Summary of Desired Qualifications. In particular, the applicant should detail:
    - i. Knowledge of the EII landscape in L.A. County.
    - ii. Experience working with culturally and linguistically diverse groups, in particular parents of young children and community-based programs.
  - b. Detail the number of years of experience the evaluator (evaluation team) has in experience designing and implementing performance measurement, applied research or evaluation projects at agencies that are doing work similar to First 5 LA.
  - c. Describe your team's experience with obtaining IRB approval and going through Research Committees.
  - d. 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.
- **Resumes:** Inclusion of full résumés of proposed key personnel which clearly reflect the range and depth of the requirements outlined above and lists. The résumés should clearly state number of years of experience designing and implementing performance measurement, applied research or evaluation projects. No page limit for resumes.
- **Work Samples:** Please provide up to two (2) work samples from a project, such as evaluation plans or evaluation reports written by the proposer. No page limit for samples.
- **Budget:** Using Appendix **G**, submit a proposed Budget. The proposer must propose a feasible, realistic budget to achieve project goals. It is expected that the proposed budget will be clearly justified in the budget narrative and will be appropriate to the work proposed.
- **Budget Narrative:** Using Appendix **H**, submit a proposed Budget Narrative that clearly justifies the Budget (Appendix **G**). The Budget Narrative, not to exceed eight (8) pages should provide a description and justification for all costs included in the Budget (Appendix **G**).
- **Litigation and Contract Compliance Form:** Please read the information on the required Litigation and Contract Compliance Form attached as Appendix **I** thoroughly and include a signed copy by the submission 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 application 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. PT on April 5, 2019.** **Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.** It is the responsibility of the proposer to ensure, prior to submission, that its application 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 RPP**

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 <http://www.first5la.org/Funding-Center>.

First 5 LA reserves the right to reject all applications and re-solicit for applications. Failure to comply with proposal specifications shall be grounds for disqualification of proposals. Each proposer shall be required to honor the price and specifications quoted for a minimum of sixty (60) calendar days following submission of the proposal. 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 application 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 application or specific parts of the application 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 elect to waive any minor irregularity in a proposal if the sum and substance of the proposal is present.

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.

## **XI. CONTRACTUAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The successful proposer must sign and adhere to the provisions of the First 5 LA Contract (see Appendix B – 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.

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/Performance Matrix (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 \$75,000 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.

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.

## **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 this RFP. Appeals challenging First 5 LA's decision on the merits or qualifications of 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 or 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 <https://www.first5la.org/policies/>.

## **XIII. APPENDICES**

### **For Informative Purposes**

- Appendix A – First Connections Available Data
- Appendix B – Sample Contract
- Appendix C – Level 2 Review: Proposal Scoring Criteria
- Appendix D – Application Checklist
- Appendix E – Task Order Template

### **For Submission with Proposal**

- Appendix F – Scope of Work Template
- Appendix G – Deliverables Based Budget Template
- Appendix H – Budget Narrative Template
- Appendix I – Litigation and Contract Compliance Form