



**FIRST 5 Santa Clara County**  
**Stronger Systems, Stronger Families Initiative**  
**Request For Proposals (RFP)**  
**RFP #24-001**  
**Issued: January 16, 2024**

**PROJECT TITLE:** Stronger Systems, Stronger Families Initiative

**PROPOSAL DUE:** Tuesday, February 20, 2024 at 5:00 pm, Pacific Time (PT)

**ESTIMATED TIME PERIOD FOR CONTRACT:** July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025 (It is FIRST 5's intent to award a contract with an initial term of one (1) year with an option for FIRST 5 to renew for periods totaling up to an additional two (2) years, unless terminated earlier or otherwise amended)

**PROPOSER ELIGIBILITY:** Organizations and entities of any kind are invited to apply so long as they meet the minimum qualifications set forth in this RFP and are available for lawful work in the State of California.

**SUBMIT INTENT TO APPLY BY FEB. 9TH TO:** [RFP@first5kids.org](mailto:RFP@first5kids.org)

**SUBMIT FINAL PROPOSAL BY FEB. 20TH TO:** [ONLINE APPLICATION PORTAL](https://us.grantrequest.com/application.aspx?sid=6344&fid=35029)  
(<https://us.grantrequest.com/application.aspx?sid=6344&fid=35029>)

**POINT OF CONTACT:** [RFP@first5kids.org](mailto:RFP@first5kids.org)

Questions regarding this RFP may be submitted to the above email address. Responses will be posted to the website per the schedule below. Technical questions about the online application portal may be submitted to: [TA@first5kids.org](mailto:TA@first5kids.org).

NOTE: If you download this RFP from the FIRST 5 Santa Clara County website, you are responsible for checking the website for any RFP amendments, addenda, or proposer questions and FIRST 5 responses.

# Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	1
<b>1. Scope of Services .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.1 Purpose .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.2 Three Interconnected Strategies .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.3 Eligible Proposers .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.4 Background &amp; Overview .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.5 Context for this Initiative .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2. Request for Proposals Process .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2.1 Eligible Proposers .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2.2 Schedule of RFP Events .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2.3 Proposers' Conference .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>2.4 RFP Inquiries and Requests for Information .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>2.5 Intent to Apply .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>2.6 Proposal Submittal and Withdrawal .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>3. Instructions to Proposers .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3.1 Summary .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3.2 Agency Exhibits .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>3.3 Organizational Narrative .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>3.4 Proposal Narrative(s) .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>3.5 Proposal Budget Worksheet(s) .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>3.6 Proposal Timeline(s) .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>4. Evaluation, Selection, &amp; Award Process .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>4.1 Compliance .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>4.2 Evaluation Process .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>4.3 Proposal Review Criteria .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>4.4 Best Value .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>4.5 Contract Award Process .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>5. Terms &amp; Conditions .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>5.1 Protests Process .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>5.2 Incurring Costs .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>5.3 Claims Against FIRST 5 .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>5.4 Basis for Proposal .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>5.5 No Public Proposal Opening .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>5.6 California Public Records Act (CPRA) .....</b>	<b>44</b>

**5.7 Confidentiality** ..... 45

**5.8 Electronic Submissions of the RFP** ..... 45

**5.9 Reservations** ..... 46

# 1. Scope of Services

## 1.1 Purpose

The Stronger Systems, Stronger Families Initiative strives to connect families to the resources, services, and support they need in order to raise healthy children prenatal through five years of age. To do this, FIRST 5 Santa Clara County (“FIRST 5”) seeks proposals from qualified organizations to conduct a variety of activities that enhance systems of care as culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and healing-centered.

FIRST 5’s community investment strategy is intended to provide flexible funding over three years to local organizations that connect families with young children to resources, services, and support for basic needs in ways that improve families’ sense of safety and belonging.

FIRST 5 will prioritize funding for those programs and organizations that serve families with young children who have been disproportionately impacted by poverty, systemic/institutional racism, and trauma. FIRST 5 has identified five priority populations to focus support on, and recognizes that any one family can be experiencing many of these impacts at once.

- Families who have children with disabilities and behavioral health needs.
- Immigrant families, prioritizing new arrivals and those with no or mixed documentation.
- Under-resourced families including low-income and "gap" families not eligible for government-funded programs. FIRST 5 defines “gap” families as those who earn too much to qualify for federal and state-subsidies, but not enough to pay the full cost for services.
- Court-impacted families affected by justice and child welfare systems, incarceration, court- monitored programs (including probation and parole), and child and family reunification processes.
- Families with unstable housing.

Depending on the challenges faced by families from the priority populations, “basic needs” can include access to housing, food, health care, childcare, financial assistance, parental education and support, and other services as needed.

“Systems of care” refer to local, state, and federal efforts to build services that are coordinated, timely, and trauma-informed, particularly for children and youth. Within a system of care model, all parties work together to break down silos and build a culture that is focused on delivering

services that are person-centered and not program-centered. This definition is adapted from the California Health and Human Services Agency.

FIRST 5 intends and has designed this RFP to provide funding that supports a broad range of current and emerging efforts across Santa Clara County to address critical gaps in direct services with a “systems change” approach that engages parents and caregivers directly. FIRST 5 defines systems change as an approach that addresses inequities by shifting the conditions that create those challenges (root causes) while paying attention to the interconnected parts of a complex network of organizations and people (relationships). In the Stronger Systems, Stronger Families Initiative, FIRST 5 will prioritize proposals that are creative, collaborative, and work towards systems change while connecting families to direct services.

Accordingly, FIRST 5 seeks proposals that respond to one or more of the following three strategies.

## 1.2 Three Interconnected Strategies

### **Place-Based Resource Centers**

Places and spaces that connect families to basic resources, services, and supports in ways that improve families’ sense of safety and belonging. These place-based sites are culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and healing-centered. They are knowledgeable about the barriers and unique challenges of the priority populations and “meet families where they are at.”

*FIRST 5 intends to fund proposals toward this strategy with grants of up to two (2) million dollars over three (3) years. This cap applies to this strategy, and organizations can apply for more than one strategy.*

### **Critical Gaps**

Programs that address critical gaps in connecting families to resources, services, and supports. This strategy invites partners who are (1) not working with a resource center model but who serve the priority populations within a system of care, or (2) place-based resource center partners seeking additional funding to address particular gaps experienced by the families they serve.

*FIRST 5 intends to fund proposals toward this strategy with grants of up to \$900,000 dollars over three (3) years. This cap applies to this strategy, and organizations can apply for more than one strategy.*

## **Bold & Innovative Efforts**

Bold and innovative efforts that center systems change in order to connect families to basic resources, services, and support. This strategy seeks to invite partners who are 1) not working in a resource center model but who serve the priority populations within a system of care, or 2) place-based resource center partners who are seeking additional funding to build out systems-change-focused projects with the families they serve.

*FIRST 5 intends to fund proposals toward this strategy with grants up to \$500,000 dollars over three (3) years. This cap applies to this strategy, and organizations can apply for more than one strategy.*

These strategies provide general guidelines for flexible funding, and FIRST 5 invites proposals based on organizations' understanding of how to best support families they serve. Please review selection criteria, sample activities, and budget guidelines by reading further.

Organizations can apply for one, two, or all three strategies. FIRST 5 will also accept proposals that are jointly submitted by multiple organizations. Please review the guidelines in the application for submitting proposals for more than one strategy and/or as a multiple-organization collaboration. If you choose to submit a proposal as a multiple-organization collaboration, you will need to designate a lead agency to fill out the online application.

### **1.2.1 Strategy One: Place-Based Resource Centers**

Strategy One strengthens systems of care with well-resourced, safe, and welcoming spaces that connect families to resources, services, and supports that help them meet the basic needs, safety, and healthy development of their children prenatal through 5 years old. With this strategy, FIRST 5 seeks to fund partners who connect families to a holistic, trust-based system of care.

Strategy One may include, but is not limited to, Family Resource Centers (FRC) and Community Resource Centers. FIRST 5 especially invites proposals that will build out a "Mobile FRC" or "Pop-Up Community Resource Centers" to address service gaps for the priority populations within Santa Clara County.

FIRST 5 encourages proposals that seek to strengthen families through the five key protective factors (parental resilience, social connections, concrete support, knowledge of parenting and child development, and social emotional competence of children).

FIRST 5 intends to prioritize proposals based on the extent to which they include or demonstrate the following elements:

- **Basic needs, safety, and healthy development of children prenatal through five years old:** Essential services and activities that support the entire family to meet the care and needs of young children in the priority populations. These are part of the core

programs, events, and services of the Resource Center. Proposals may include curriculums that FIRST 5 has supported in the past, but there is no specific curriculum or programming mandate.

- **Engagement with parents and caregivers:** Programming and services are responsive to parents from the priority populations, create parent connection and community, and support parent education, advocacy and empowerment.
- **Uniquely suited to work with the priority populations with attention to accessibility and cultural competency:** Demonstrated awareness and creative responses to the unique barriers and challenges of the priority populations such as flexible or alternative hours, easily accessible location(s), cultural and linguistic competency, a robust outreach and communications plan, etc.
- **Partnership and systems of care:** Directly- and intentionally- connected to partners in a system of care that is focused on models that improve resource navigation, provide warm-hand-off referrals, offer “no wrong door approach” and/or participate in “one stop shops.”
- **Combination of direct services with systems change:** “Place-based” refers to models for direct services that meet families where they are at with structures, programs, and services that are culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and/or focused on healing, and networked within the community and local systems of care. FIRST 5 invites proposers to describe or specify how their proposals will work towards systems change with the particular families they serve.

Characteristics or examples of activities within Strategy One include:

- Workshops, classes, and events that facilitate parent engagement, community connections and mutual support.
- Workshops, classes, and events that strengthen parenting, safety in the home, and healthy development.
- Evidence-based parent programming to strengthen parenting and child connections and development.
- Developmental playgroups and other activities that further children’s social and emotional development.
- Parent coaching and other parent support activities.
- Routine culturally competent community outreach and engagement to ensure priority populations benefit from services, programs, resources, and events.
- Connections for parents/caregivers to FIRST 5 and support with parent advisory boards to support systems change efforts.
- Organizational response capacity for families in crisis. For example, domestic violence, unstable housing, court-impacted family supports, mental health, family separation due to immigration or criminal courts.

- Community-based safety efforts for safer streets, care for parks and recreational spaces, alternatives to policing, etc.
- Health promotion and connection to appropriate health and early intervention services. For example, food access, building social connections, supporting connections to WIC / CalFresh / Medi-Cal, screenings (dental, vision, behavioral), etc.
- Programs in partnership with other public agencies or organizations.
- One Stop Shop / Resource Navigation / or Networked Service models that link families to resources, services and opportunities that help them meet their children's basic needs.
- Connections to subsidized home-based and center-based childcare environments that are culturally responsive, inclusive, and nurture a sense of belonging to a community of care.

Proposers should keep in mind the following budget guidelines and principles for Strategy One:

- In the past, FIRST 5 funded or supported Family Resource Centers themselves and then separately provided financial support for curriculum, training, and programming such as Bridge Library services. FIRST 5 will no longer be separately offering those programs or services. Therefore, proposers should include all costs or partnerships in the budget including all direct and indirect costs related to the operation and programming of the resource center including rent, equipment, staffing, curriculum, and materials. The budget must also describe how and to what extent the funding sought from FIRST 5 will fund those costs.
- Strategy One includes programs and services but offers a higher per-grant maximum than the other strategies in recognition of the sometimes substantial capital, administrative, and other wrap-around costs (including overhead and staffing) associated with providing programs and services to families within a place-based resource center that is culturally responsive, trauma-informed, focused on healing, and networked within the community and local systems of care.

### **1.2.2 Strategy Two: Critical Gaps**

Strategy Two addresses critical gaps in local systems of care that prevent families from connecting to the resources, services, and supports they need in order to meet their youngest children's basic needs, safety, and healthy development. In Strategy Two, FIRST 5 seeks proposals that are focused on specific or unique services that are unavailable, inaccessible, or ineffective in existing systems of care within Santa Clara County. Strategy Two is about filling critical gaps in focused ways.

FIRST 5 intends to prioritize proposals based on the extent to which they include or demonstrate the following elements:



- **Filling critical gaps to meet the basic needs, safety, and healthy development of children prenatal through five years old:** The proposed program or service supports families to meet the care and needs of young children in the priority populations, with a clear connection to a current and critical gap.
- **Engagement with parents and caregivers:** The proposed program or service is responsive to parents from the priority populations, creates parent connection and community, and supports parent education, advocacy and empowerment.
- **Partnership and Systems of Care:** The proposed program or service is directly- and intentionally- connected to partners in a system of care that is focused on models that improve resource navigation, provide warm-hand-off referrals, offer “no wrong door approach” and/or participate in “one stop shops.”
- **Combination of direct services with systems change:** The proposed program or service connects direct services that meet families where they are with structures, programs, and services that are culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and/or focused on healing, and networked within the community and local systems of care. FIRST 5 invites proposers to describe or specify how their proposals will work towards systems change with the particular families they serve.

Characteristics or examples of activities within Strategy Two include:

- Increased access to housing supports.
- Increased access to healthy and nutritious food.
- Services that support families in the courts, including supervised visitation.
- Programs and services that focus on “gap families” as defined in the priority populations above including access to financial support.
- Early education access and support.
- Support to close gaps in internet access and capabilities for caregivers with young children.
- Support for children to access well-child visits and care, and associated navigation support.
- Connection to early intervention services.
- Transportation services.
- Access to timely and supportive mental and behavioral health support.
- Evidence-based parent programming to strengthen parenting and child connections and development.
- Direct and personalized connections to government subsidized programs for healthcare and childcare.

Proposers should keep in mind the following budget guidelines and principles for Strategy Two:

- FIRST 5 intends to issue smaller dollar-value grants under Strategy Two than under Strategy One. An important reason for this is that FIRST 5 seeks to support multiple efforts across the county with a larger number of smaller grants that are also accessible to organizations that face barriers in securing funding from traditional sources. Strategy Two seeks to award grants to support proposals that are carefully focused on bridging critical and discretely defined gaps in systems of care.
- Proposers seeking funding under both Strategy One and Strategy Two must ensure their proposal for Strategy Two is a new service or program that does not yet exist at the resource center and/or enhances the accessibility or effectiveness of current programming for the priority populations.

### 1.2.3 Strategy Three: Bold & Innovative Efforts

Strategy Three creates new solutions that disrupt systemic oppression and remove barriers that prevent families from accessing the resources, programs, and supports they need to raise healthy children. This strategy aims to encourage local efforts focused on systems change to support young children’s health and social needs. The aim is to address upstream and social determinants of health, focus on root causes of inequity, and support emerging and new practices within the field.

FIRST 5 intends to prioritize proposals based on the extent to which they include or demonstrate the following elements:

- **Evidence-based or promising emergent practices that make a sustainable impact to improve children’s health, well-being, and safety by addressing root causes:** Create, implement, replicate, or scale new and innovative models that address the root causes of poverty and inequity.
- **Engagement with parents and caregivers:** Systems change and upstream interventions that are responsive to parents from the priority populations, create parent connection and community, and support parent education, advocacy and empowerment.
- **Works collaboratively, as appropriate for the project, with community and system partners to address a systems-wide policy and/or environmental issue:** This project should leverage collective impact principles to create long-term system change responding to children and their families' health, well-being, and safety needs.

FIRST 5 especially invites proposals that include or demonstrate the following:

- Bold and innovative efforts that align with FIRST 5’s mission, vision, and strategic plan.
- New collaborative/collective opportunities that improve systems of care, making it easier for families to access, navigate, and utilize current services and programs.
- Advancing health equity through advocacy or systems change by addressing social determinants of health (i.e., improving access to childcare, education, housing, food, healthcare, healthier/safer environments).

- Projects aimed at addressing socioeconomic factors through system interventions that go beyond direct services.
- Activate and expand public funding streams (for example, CalAIM) to support young children's healthy development.
- An innovative partnership that extends an organization's reach into FIRST 5's priority populations.

Proposers should keep in mind the following budget guidelines and principles for Strategy Three:

- FIRST 5 intends to issue smaller dollar-value grants under Strategy Three than under Strategies One and Two. An important reason for this is that Strategy Three seeks to encourage experimentation and development of new approaches and methods to supporting children and families, but FIRST 5 wishes to ensure that the bulk of the public resources it stewards remain dedicated to building and supplementing proven prevention strategies and intervention efforts.

## 1.3 Eligible Proposers

Organizations and entities of any kind are invited to apply so long as they meet the minimum qualifications set forth in this RFP and are available for lawful work in the State of California. Consistent with FIRST 5's strategic plan and the principles and guidance in this document, FIRST 5 intends to prioritize funding for those proposals that may effectively achieve FIRST 5's goals but that might not launch, be implemented, or become financially sustainable without FIRST 5's financial support. Accordingly, FIRST 5 intends to assess proposals based not only on their individual characteristics, but also by reference to the range of financial resources—including from sources other than FIRST 5—that may be available to fund, support, or sustain those proposals.

## 1.4 Background & Overview

Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically during the first five years of life. This critical period represents a window of opportunity to help shape how a child's brain matures and to lay the foundation for all of the years that follow. While the early period in children's development is absolutely critical to their future success, it is also where public investments are lowest.

In 1998, California voters approved Proposition 10 (Prop 10), the California Children and Families Act, which created, implemented, and funded an integrated, comprehensive, and collaborative system of information and services to enhance optimal early childhood development and to ensure that children are ready to enter school. The law created a statewide agency called First 5 California and permitted each of California's 58 counties to

create local First 5 commissions as well. Together with First 5 California, these 58 local commissions convene, partner in, and help lead the movement to create and implement a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated system for California's children, prenatal through five years old, and their families. Each local commission can tailor its work to address the needs of its local communities. Prop 10 funded this work by imposing a fifty-cent tax on every cigarette pack sold. Each local commission's share of the tax revenues depends on the area's birth rate.

FIRST 5 Santa Clara County was established in 1999 as an independent public agency, and is led by the FIRST 5 Commission, which is a group of nine individuals with experience and expertise in county government, public health, social services, education, and early learning and care. A core responsibility of the FIRST 5 Commission is to adopt and implement a strategic plan to guide the organization's use of public funds to support and promote programs and services for children, prenatal through five years old, and their caregivers. FIRST 5 is proud to serve the young children and families of Santa Clara County as a funder, a resource, and an advocate.

FIRST 5 is committed to meeting the varied and critical needs of children and families in Santa Clara County.

According to the [Medi-Cal Statistical Brief](#), in Santa Clara County, there are more than 133,000 children five years of age or younger, a quarter of whom are on Medi-Cal. Research shows that children and families on Medi-Cal are socioeconomically disadvantaged and experience health disparities and social inequities (i.e., education, employment, income). FIRST 5 also recognizes that many families who do not qualify for Medi-Cal, defined as "gap" families among the priority populations of this initiative, are also struggling with financial disadvantages, unstable housing, health disparities, and social inequalities.

The [California Budget & Policy Center](#) found that "young children in California faced a significant increase in poverty between 2021 and 2022, reversing the historic drop in child poverty from 2019-2021." The [Silicon Valley Pain Index](#), compiled by the San Jose State University Human Rights Institute, also sounds the alarm: 28% of households across Silicon Valley do not make enough to meet their basic needs without public and private assistance, while the real cost budget for a family of four in Santa Clara County is \$128,176, over \$30,000 more than the income threshold to qualify for Medi-Cal.

FIRST 5 engages in ongoing dialog with the diverse communities of Santa Clara County. In 2023, FIRST 5 conducted a parent/caregiver survey and hosted community conversations in order to learn more about the most important concerns for parents and caregivers post-pandemic. The results have informed the focus of the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan and this community investment initiative: meeting children's basic needs and safety, including access to stable housing, nutritious food, healthcare, childcare, and parenting education and support.

### **1.4.1 FIRST 5 Santa Clara County Today**

The COVID-19 pandemic hit the county and the world just as FIRST 5 was poised to launch a new grant cycle. Instead, FIRST 5 pivoted programs and services to address the urgent needs of families including facilitating and enabling our network of Family Resource Centers to provide basic needs to struggling families like masks, gloves, sanitizer, cleaning products, COVID-19 test kits, formula, and diapers during and in the aftermath of the pandemic.

During this time, FIRST 5 also accomplished a leadership transition and began an ongoing organizational transformation upon the retirement of a long-term, visionary Executive Director. The national reckoning around entrenched and systemic racism, sparked by the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May 2020, also brought renewed clarity and momentum to FIRST 5 and the County of Santa Clara's stated efforts to address the systemic inequalities that disproportionately affect children prenatal through five years old from families directly affected by white supremacy racism.

Since then, an increasingly diverse staff at FIRST 5 has unionized and the executive team has committed to shared leadership practices and structures. In 2023, the FIRST 5 Commission adopted a three-year strategic plan that was informed and inspired by tremendously valuable insights from community members, the organizations with which FIRST 5 has worked, and FIRST 5's staff and commissioners. This RFP implements the community investment strategy adopted as part of FIRST 5's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan: The Stronger Systems, Stronger Families Initiative.

This initiative responds to both the challenges and the opportunities of these pivotal times, meeting the reality of diminishing financial resources with a commitment to act boldly to connect families and caregivers to a supportive system of resources, programs and supports that optimize children's health, learning, and well-being.

### **1.4.2 An Unprecedented Challenge**

The rate of smoking in California has declined steadily for years, and tobacco use also dropped significantly in the wake of California voters' recent approval of a ban on flavored tobacco products. This is excellent news for public health, but it also presents a challenge for FIRST 5 because the declining tax revenues from sales of those products means diminishing financial support to fuel FIRST 5's work.

In FIRST 5's first decade, it received well over \$20 million per year in Prop 10 funding. That figure has fallen by more than half. FIRST 5 expects to receive less than \$11 million this fiscal year, and tobacco tax revenues are expected to continue to shrink for the foreseeable future; FIRST 5 expects to receive just \$8.5 million in tobacco tax revenues in Fiscal Year 2032-33. FIRST 5 built up a fund balance when tax revenues were high, and now that they are

declining, FIRST 5 has been spending down the fund balance in order to continue investing significant amounts into the community. But the fund balances are also rapidly depleting, so now FIRST 5 must make difficult decisions to decrease spending beginning July 1, 2024 in order to ensure FIRST 5's long-term financial health and stability.

This adjustment inevitably affects FIRST 5 community investments. To maximize FIRST 5's ability to support the most vulnerable children and families in Santa Clara County, FIRST 5 has adopted strategic priorities for financial sustainability. These are:

- Expanding outreach to a broad range of funding opportunities, grants, and philanthropic organizations that support this work;
- Prioritizing programs and services that maximize community impact;
- Supporting FIRST 5 grantees to seek additional, sustainable funding sources; and
- Focusing on diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in all community investment decisions.

FIRST 5 plans to issue grants through this RFP that will distribute a total of \$29.5 million over three years. FIRST 5 intends to structure the grants as one-year contracts with the possibility of renewal for additional year-long terms.

### **1.4.3 A New Strategic Plan**

FIRST 5 recently completed a year-long collaborative effort to develop the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. FIRST 5 is grateful to all the community partners who were able to participate in this process through individual interviews, focus groups, and community feedback retreats, and FIRST 5 is humbled by the more than 2,800 responses to the parent and caregiver survey completed in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The full plan can be viewed [here](#).<sup>1</sup>

With this plan, FIRST 5 is embarking on a new strategic direction – one which responds to the evolving context, reflects FIRST 5's updated values and priorities, and is aligned with community-identified needs. FIRST 5 can act as a bridge between families, community-based organizations, and public agencies, and seeks to be a catalyst for a more functional and equitable local system of care that centers all children prenatal through five years old.

Throughout the strategic planning process, FIRST 5 heard from families and community partners that they envision FIRST 5's role to evolve from providing direct services towards more systems change efforts. In the strategic plan, FIRST 5 outlined a goal of shifting its staff activities and funding towards more systems change work in connection to current direct service work.

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<sup>1</sup> Please see: <https://www.first5kids.org/about-us/strategic-plan/>.



FIRST 5 has identified four focus areas for the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan:

1. Connect families to affordable, quality supports and services that meet children’s basic needs and safety.
2. Engage families in our work, including advocacy and leadership opportunities.
3. Promote diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging at FIRST 5.
4. Strengthen the diverse workforce that supports young children and their families.

This initiative is focused primarily on the first focus area to “connect families to affordable, quality supports and services that meet children’s basic needs and safety”. FIRST 5 will prioritize funding for organizations that are contributing to the broad priorities, outcomes, and goals of this focus area as laid out in our strategic plan and listed in the table. The other focus areas will inform the ways FIRST 5 engages with community partners and families.

Proposals do *not* need to contribute to *all* of the following priorities, outcomes, or goals. In the following application, there will be an opportunity to share which of the following priorities, outcomes, and/or goals align with potential partners’ priorities, outcomes, and/or goals.



## FIRST 5 2024-2027 Strategic Plan – Priorities, Outcomes, Goals

### Connect Families to Affordable, Quality Supports and Services that Meet Children’s Basic Needs and Safety

PRIORITIES	OUTCOMES	GOALS
<p>1: Prioritize access to services and supports that meet the basic needs of children, prenatal through five years.</p>	<p>1: The basic needs of children prenatal through five years are met, with a particular emphasis on priority populations.</p> <p>2: FIRST 5 projects and initiatives that meet the basic needs of children, prenatal through five years, are on a path to long-term sustainability.</p> <p>3: Basic needs of children are prioritized and met by equitable, culturally responsive systems of care, in partnership with community-based organizations and families they serve.</p>	<p>1: In partnership with community-based organizations and families, and using available countywide data, maximize the impact of current, FIRST 5 projects and initiatives by focusing on those efforts that meet the basic needs of children prenatal through five years.</p> <p>2: Convene and connect critical partners, including families, to work together to uplift, prioritize, and dismantle systemic barriers that prevent families from meeting the basic needs of children prenatal through five years.</p> <p>3: As systemic barriers are identified, develop an advocacy/ implementation plan, in partnership with community-based organizations and families, to improve systems of care.</p> <p>4: For contracts that begin July 2024, in partnership with community-based organizations, system partners, and families, co-create and begin implementation of long-term sustainability plans for FIRST 5 projects and initiatives that meet the basic needs of children prenatal through five years.</p> <p>5: In partnership with community-based organizations, system partners, and families, co-develop and begin implementation of an equity-centered, culturally responsive framework that can continue to transform systems of care to focus on priority populations with trauma-informed, healing-centered practices.</p>



PRIORITIES	OUTCOMES	GOALS
<p>2: Explore and elevate families' concerns around the safety of their children, prenatal through five years, in their homes and communities.</p>	<p>1: Families with children, prenatal through five years, report feeling safer in their homes and communities.</p>	<p>1: Convene and connect critical partners, including families, to deepen our understanding of primary safety concerns both in their home and in their community for families with children, prenatal through five years, and learn more about current strategies being implemented.</p> <p>2: Gather relevant data sources, assess current strategies, and identify and co-create a plan to address gaps and issues that emerge from conversations with key partners, including families.</p> <p>3: Implement and evaluate co-created plan.</p>
PRIORITIES	OUTCOMES	GOALS
<p>3: Children prenatal through five years, experience healthy development and behaviors.</p>	<p>1: Families/caregivers are equipped with knowledge and resources that support optimal child development and behaviors for children prenatal through five years.</p> <p>2: Systems of care are aligned in efforts to provide equitable, culturally responsive, trauma-informed and healing-centered approaches that support optimal child development and behaviors for children prenatal through five years.</p>	<p>1: In partnership with community-based organizations and families, identify and prioritize 2-3 root causes of adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress to promote healthy child development and behaviors.</p> <p>2: As root causes and potential systemic solutions are identified, work in partnership with families, caregivers, and systems partners to mitigate risk factors and increase protective factors that contribute to optimal child development and behaviors.</p> <p>3: Convene and connect with families in our priority populations to further understand what supports their sense of belonging when interacting with systems of care.</p> <p>4: Connect families with system partners to elevate feedback towards a goal of providing more equitable, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed services and supports.</p>

## 1.5 Context for this Initiative

### 1.5.1 Evaluation Approach

FIRST 5's evaluation approach will be anchored in the priorities, outcomes, and goals of the strategic plan in alignment with the community partners' priorities, outcomes, and goals. Accordingly, each potential grantee is asked to propose an evaluation approach that is aligned with the proposer's own internal evaluation process, defines the indicators it will use to assess progress towards the priorities, outcomes, and goals listed above, and centers the feedback and vision of the parents, caregivers, and children served.

The data and reporting requirements for each grant will be determined during the contract negotiation process after FIRST 5 selects the grantees among the proposers. All grantees will need to be able to provide data on the numbers of children prenatal through five years old anticipated to be served during the course of each year and over the three-year period contemplated by this RFP, in addition to other factors as defined by the contract agreement. FIRST 5 staff will seek to align reporting requirements with partner organizations' internal data & reporting processes.

Evaluation of collective impact will be a critical part of this Initiative. FIRST 5 is committed to learning with partners and families about improving systems of care over the next three years. Grantees will be expected to participate in cohort gatherings as well as parent and family engagement efforts.

### **1.5.2 Financial Sustainability**

One of the principal intended outcomes of the Strengthening Systems, Strengthening Families Initiative is for FIRST 5 projects and initiatives that meet the basic needs of children prenatal through five years to be on a path to long-term sustainability. FIRST 5 intends to accompany grantees to identify additional and alternative funding sources, as well as long-term sustainability plans and goals.

FIRST 5 does not and cannot commit to funding any grantee's programs or services beyond its available resources, and we cannot predict with confidence what resources FIRST 5 will be able to invest in the future, especially after FY 2026-2027. Accordingly, FIRST 5 will prioritize for funding proposals that demonstrate existing or future financial sustainability. Likewise, FIRST 5 does not intend to provide funding for projects that could or will become fully or primarily dependent on FIRST 5 funding for continuation after FY 2026-2027.

Contracts will contain a sustainability plan and goals, and FIRST 5 intends to offer technical assistance and support to grantees if needed.

### **1.5.3 New Ways of Being**

The strategic plan names five core values that are guiding and informing all of FIRST 5's work, including this community investment approach. FIRST 5 has already begun to put these values

into practice to collectively design this initiative, as well as other internal practices across the organization.

The five core values are:

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**COLLABORATION**

We co-create in partnership with others, prioritize lived experience, and develop strategies that advance the well-being of families with young children.

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**INCLUSIVITY**

We center diverse perspectives to ensure the representation and participation of marginalized individuals throughout our work.

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**CREATIVITY**

We approach our work from a place of curiosity, joy, innovation, and openness to new ideas.

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**INTEGRITY**

We are accountable for our actions and the outcomes of our work, striving for transparency with the community, our partners, and each other.

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**EQUITY**

We advocate for fair access to opportunities and seek solutions that disrupt systemic oppression, close gaps, and remove barriers that harm families with young children.

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This RFP is the result of a process that centered these values along the way. From September through December 2023, the FIRST 5 staff who will be primarily responsible for key elements of this funding strategy (about 25 people across the agency) came together to co-create this initiative. In addition to nine in-person sessions, the staff hosted seven community conversations with over 45 parents and promotores (community health workers) in Gilroy, Mountain View, and East San José. The collective effort was intended to ground this community investment initiative in the wisdom of FIRST 5's diverse and committed staff, as well as parents from the priority populations.

Based on what FIRST 5 has learned through previous grant circles, in alignment with emerging trends in the grant-making field, and the newly articulated core values, FIRST 5 is moving towards a trust-based philanthropy approach.

Over the next three years, FIRST 5 is committed to shifting traditional power dynamics, intentionally investing in relationships to build trust over time, and engaging parents and caregivers directly alongside community partners. This shift is about recognizing that the strategy FIRST 5 needs in order to have impact on systems change does not necessarily come from those distributing funds. The strategic wisdom lies in the communities themselves, as well as those who work most closely with them.

Instead of holding a monitoring mentality, FIRST 5 intends to work in meaningful partnership, and to problem-solve *with* community partners in order to meet requirements and to face any challenges, and opportunities that emerge. FIRST 5 is committed to engaging families directly throughout the process to learn from them and ground the work in their wisdom.

FIRST 5 also recognizes that the agency will have to work actively to establish and maintain trust with the grantees. The staff is excited to be thought partners, advocates, and champions for the work of funded partners and FIRST 5 wants to build deep relationships that produce meaningful shifts in the conditions that challenge the healthy development of children prenatal through five years. It is important to fund partners who are willing to offer honest and constructive feedback along the way so FIRST 5 can consistently grow into these new ways of being.

To allow for learning, room for experimentation, and the time needed for implementation and impact, FIRST 5 expects selected proposals to receive three years of flexible funding.

FIRST 5 is also committed to community partners' long-term, organizational sustainability, grounded in the recognition that FIRST 5 funds will continue to decline, though the services being provided are still critical. FIRST 5 staff will work with partners to explore other funding sources so that services can be sustained after FIRST 5's grant funding ends.

This is a part of FIRST 5's investment in systems change: to change the way resources and funding are distributed towards a more relationship- and trust-based approach that invites shared learning and growth, always with the leadership and wisdom of families with young children who have been disproportionately impacted by poverty, systemic/institutional racism, and trauma.

## **2. Request for Proposals Process**

### **2.1 Eligible Proposers**

"Proposer" is any entity that submits a Proposal in response to this RFP. Organizations and entities of any kind are invited to apply so long as they are available for lawful work in the State of California.

### **2.2 Schedule of RFP Events**

The following Schedule of Events reflects important dates for the selection process. All dates throughout this RFP are subject to change at FIRST 5's discretion. Notice of any date change will be posted on FIRST 5's website: <https://www.first5kids.org/funding-opportunities/>.

EVENTS	DESCRIPTION	DATE (AND TIME)
RFP Released	FIRST 5 issues RFP Packet and it is available online at <a href="https://www.first5kids.org/funding-opportunities/">https://www.first5kids.org/funding-opportunities/</a> .	Week of January 16, 2024
Proposer's Conference	To register for the Proposer's Conference, go to: <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/e/proposers-conference-tickets-795593149527?aff=oddtcreator">https://www.eventbrite.com/e/proposers-conference-tickets-795593149527?aff=oddtcreator</a>	Fri, January 26, 2024, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm PT
RFP Questions Deadline, Round One	Questions regarding the RFP must be submitted by this date and time. Questions must be in writing and sent via email to <a href="mailto:RFP@first5kids.org">RFP@first5kids.org</a> .	Wed, January 31, 2024
Written Response, Round One	FIRST 5 intends to issue written responses to RFP questions on FIRST 5's website.	Fri, February 2, 2024
RFP Questions Deadline, Round Two	Questions regarding the RFP must be submitted by this date and time. Questions must be in writing and sent via email to <a href="mailto:RFP@first5kids.org">RFP@first5kids.org</a> .	Thurs, February 8, 2024
Intent to Apply Deadline	Applicants should submit their non-binding "Intent to Apply" form to: <a href="mailto:RFP@first5kids.org">RFP@first5kids.org</a> . Proposers may download the template from the FIRST 5 <a href="#">website</a> .	Fri, February 9, 2024
Written Response, Round Two	FIRST 5 intends to issue written responses to RFP questions on FIRST 5's website.	Tues, February 13, 2024
Proposal Submission Deadline	The completed proposal packet must be submitted through the <a href="https://us.grantrequest.com/application.aspx?sid=6344&amp;fid=35029">online application portal (https://us.grantrequest.com/application.aspx?sid=6344&amp;fid=35029)</a> .  Proposals must be filed on or before the due date and time, or FIRST 5 may reject them as untimely.	Tues, February 20, 2024, at 5:00 pm Pacific Time
Notification of Intent to Negotiate Contract	FIRST 5 will notify each Proposer whether FIRST 5 intends to enter into negotiations to award a contract for their proposal.	Late March/Early April
Contract Start	Contract Term begins on July 1, 2024.	July 1, 2024

## 2.3 Proposers' Conference

Potential Proposers are highly encouraged to attend a pre-proposal conference on Friday, January 26, 2024 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm PT on Zoom.

<b>REGISTRATION:</b>	To register for the Proposer's Conference, click <a href="#">HERE</a> . ( <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/e/proposers-conference-tickets-795593149527?aff=oddtcreator">https://www.eventbrite.com/e/proposers-conference-tickets-795593149527?aff=oddtcreator</a> ). Upon registration, the zoom information will be e-mailed to you.
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The purpose of the Proposer's Conference is to provide an opportunity for Potential Proposers to ask specific questions about the project and to request RFP clarification. Potential Proposers may submit questions in writing before or during the conference.

FIRST 5 will entertain verbal questions asked at the conference, but responses may be deferred and provided at a later date. FIRST 5 will record the conference and post a link on our website, but Proposers should refer to the posted responses on the website for final guidance. FIRST 5 will attempt to tabulate a list of all questions posed and responses provided at the Proposer's Conference, but does not guarantee that the list will include every question asked or every response provided at the event.

Upon request, FIRST 5 may publish a list of entities attending the Proposer's Conference after the conclusion of the event.

## 2.4 RFP Inquiries and Requests for Information

Potential Proposers may submit written questions about the RFP by email prior to or after the proposer's conference. Written questions must be submitted by mailing: [RFP@first5kids.org](mailto:RFP@first5kids.org) with the Subject Line: **RFP #24-001**.

There will be two rounds of questions and answers. The first round will be collected by January 31, 2024 with answers posted to the [FIRST 5 website](#) by Friday, February 2. Proposers may also submit questions for the second round between February 2, 2024 and February 8, 2024. Those answers will be posted to the [FIRST 5 website](#) by Tuesday February 13, 2024. We cannot guarantee that questions submitted after February 8, 2024 will be answered.

FIRST 5 reserves the right to post additional addenda, including addenda that make material changes to the RFP. It is the responsibility of applicants to verify, before submission, that their application aligns with the latest information and RFP specifications.

Any inquiries or requests regarding this procurement should be submitted by email to [RFP@first5kids.org](mailto:RFP@first5kids.org).

Technical questions about our online application portal should be submitted to: [TA@first5kids.org](mailto:TA@first5kids.org).

## 2.5 Intent to Apply

Applicants should complete and submit the Intent to Apply form by February 9, 2024. This is a non-binding commitment to applying for this RFP. Please download the template from the FIRST 5 [website](#) and email a completed PDF of the form to: [RFP@first5kids.org](mailto:RFP@first5kids.org).

## 2.6 Proposal Submittal and Withdrawal

Proposer must fully complete the Proposal in the format required by FIRST 5 and respond to every question. Proposal must be submitted to FIRST 5 electronically using the online submission portal provided. No paper, email, or fax submissions will be accepted, nor will FIRST 5 accept proposals submitted by hand delivery, U.S. Mail, or courier service.

FIRST 5 will not, under any circumstances, pay or be liable for any costs that any person incurs in connection with the preparation, submittal, or presentation of a Proposal. Proposal submission is subject to the conditions specified below governing this RFP.

To withdraw a Proposal, the Proposer must submit a written request, signed by an authorized representative, to FIRST 5 Santa Clara County. After withdrawing a previously submitted Proposal, the Proposer may submit another Proposal at any time up to the deadline for submitting Proposals. Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Proposals submitted on behalf of more than one organization must clearly describe the collaborative partner roles and responsibilities. Memorandums of understanding (MOUs), contracts, and/or other documents reflecting or describing commitments by each of the organizations to collaborate and work together on the proposed project and the roles of each organization will be required if selected. FIRST 5 reserves the right to designate and contract with a lead agency for proposals submitted on behalf of multiple organizations.

# 3. Instructions to Proposers

All proposals must be submitted by **5:00 pm on Tuesday, February 20th, 2024**. Proposals must be submitted using the link to the online submission portal provided on the FIRST 5 website: <https://www.first5kids.org/funding-opportunities/>.

Please review the following proposal guidelines in order to prepare your application. Proposers will be required to create an account on the online submission portal as a “New User.” Download and closely follow the instructions provided on the FIRST 5 website.

Proposers must fully complete the Organizational Narrative and one or more of the Proposal Narratives, responding to every question, and attaching all necessary requested documents including the Declaration Upon Submission of Proposal. Proposers must adhere to word count where indicated. FIRST 5 reserves the right and sole discretion to determine whether to reject a proposal based on the proposal’s failure to follow the specified format, and/or to treat a proposal as non-responsive and ineligible for consideration based on its failure to conform to the requirements of this RFP.

## 3.1 Summary

<b>Submit all documents in PDF or Excel format into FIRST 5’s <a href="https://us.grantrequest.com/application.aspx?sid=6344&amp;fid=35029">online application portal</a> (<a href="https://us.grantrequest.com/application.aspx?sid=6344&amp;fid=35029">https://us.grantrequest.com/application.aspx?sid=6344&amp;fid=35029</a>).</b>	
<b>Agency Info</b>	Contact and Agency Information for the Proposer
<b>Agency Exhibits</b>	Exhibit A: Letter of Transmittal (download template from <a href="#">website</a> )
	Exhibit B: Agency Annual Budget
	Exhibit C: Audit
	Exhibit D: Tax Returns
	Exhibit E: Organizational Chart
	Exhibit F: Declaration Upon Submission of Proposal



	(download template from <a href="#">website</a> )
	Exhibit G: Reference List
<p><b>All Proposers must complete the Organizational Narrative.</b></p> <p>If you choose to apply for multiple strategies, you may upload the same Organizational Narrative for each strategy.</p>	
<p><b>Organizational Narrative</b></p> <p>This narrative must be submitted as a single PDF. The organizational narrative must not exceed 4500 words.</p> <p>(The word counts specified in this table for each section of the Organizational Narrative are guidelines.)</p>	Executive Summary (300-500 words)
	Description of Strategy/Strategies (200-500 words)
	Priority Populations (300-650 words)
	Evaluation (300-750 words)
	Organizational Capacity (650 - 1000 words)
	Staffing, Including Key Personnel (300-650 words)
	Financial Sustainability (300-750 words)
<p><b>Proposal Narrative(s)</b></p> <p>Each strategy requires a separate <b>Proposal Narrative</b> submitted as a single PDF with a maximum of 3000 words per the guidance below.</p>	
<p><b>Proposal Budget Worksheet(s)</b></p> <p>Proposers must include a separate <b>Proposal Budget Worksheet</b> for each strategy using the template provided on the FIRST 5 <a href="#">website</a>. Please upload your completed budget worksheet as a PDF or Excel file on the online application portal.</p>	
<p><b>Proposal Timeline(s)</b></p> <p>Proposers must include a separate <b>Proposal Timeline</b> for each strategy. Please upload your completed timeline as a PDF file on the online application portal.</p>	

## **3.2 Agency Exhibits**

### **A. Letter of Transmittal**

Each application must include a Letter of Transmittal. Please download the template from the FIRST 5 [website](#), and upload your completed form as a PDF on the online submission portal.

### **B. Agency Annual Budget**

Each proposer must submit their most recent organizational Agency Annual Budget and attach it as a PDF on the online submission portal.

Public and governmental entities (including but not limited to cities, counties, local FIRST 5 commissions, and school districts) are exempt from the requirement to submit Exhibit B.

### **C. Audit**

Each proposer must submit audited financial statements (or, if none, then unaudited financial statements) and upload them as a PDF on the online submission portal.

Proposers that do not have any of the required documents must provide other documentation or narrative that establishes their financial responsibility and that explains the absence of an audited financial statement.

Public and governmental entities (including but not limited to cities, counties, local FIRST 5 commissions, and school districts) are exempt from the requirement to submit Exhibit C.

### **D. Tax Returns**

Each proposer must submit federal tax returns (if any, whether on IRS Form 990 or otherwise) and upload them as a PDF on the online submission portal.

Public and governmental entities (including but not limited to cities, counties, local FIRST 5 commissions, and school districts) are exempt from the requirement to submit Exhibit D.

### **E. Organizational Chart**

Each proposer must submit an Organization Chart uploaded as a PDF on the online submission portal.

The organizational chart must highlight the positions that will be fully or partially funded with the funding sought from FIRST 5. To the extent your most recent organizational chart does not fully describe all positions that will be fully or partially funded by FIRST 5, please also submit an organizational chart that describes the organizational structure that you anticipate implementing and utilizing during operation of the project, and highlight the positions that will be fully or partially funded by the funding for which you have applied.

## **F. Declaration Upon Submission of Proposal**

Each applicant must complete the Declaration Upon Submission of Proposal form. If the proposal includes a partnership, only the lead agency must submit this declaration. The declaration must be signed by a person authorized to bind the organization to the statements in the declaration.

Please download the template from the FIRST 5 [website](#), and upload your completed form as a PDF on the online submission portal.

## **G. Reference List**

Proposers must identify at least two systems partner references and three parent/caregiver references by listing:

- Type of reference
- Name
- Title
- Address
- Telephone number
- Email address of the principal contact person for the reference
- Brief description of the relationship between the applicant organization and the reference.

No person or organization may serve as a reference in connection with any proposal as to which the person or organization may bear some responsibility for performance or on whose behalf the proposal is submitted.

FIRST 5 may contact any or all of these references and speak with them about the applicant organization, the proposal, or any other related matter.

## **3.3 Organizational Narrative**

Proposers must submit an Organizational Narrative that responds to all of the questions below, in sequence and using the same headings and numbering as set forth below. Proposers may also provide additional information or content, as long as the Organizational Narrative remains within the stated length limitation. If you are applying for multiple strategies, you may submit the same Organizational Narrative for each strategy in the online application portal.

### **3.3.1 Executive Summary**

Please briefly describe the priority populations group(s), the needs your proposal will address, the primary interventions that you will use to meet those needs, and the results for children, families, and/or communities that you expect the proposal to achieve. You should view this summary as a brief introduction to provide the reader an understanding of your proposal.

FIRST 5 may repurpose the Executive Summaries of successful proposals to inform the community, other practitioners and funders, and other interested parties about your project proposal. This is an opportunity to tell the story of your proposal and to share why the work your organization or organizations do is so needed and so important!

### **3.3.2 Description of Strategy/Strategies**

Describe which of the Initiative's three strategies you propose to undertake and how this strategy aligns with your organization(s) current and future programming and services. You will share more details in the following Proposal Narrative(s).

Each organization or organizations can apply for one, two, or all three strategies. If you are applying for more than one strategy, please provide a brief overview of how the strategies are inter-connected within your organization and/or across multiple organizations.

### **3.3.3 Priority Populations**

The population(s) you propose to serve must include at least one of the priority population groups in the FIRST 5 Strategic Plan. FIRST 5 expects to award higher scores to proposals to the extent that they address multiple priority population groups and do so with attention to intersectionality, for example, how one family might be a member of multiple priority populations.

This section of the proposal must:

- Describe the population(s) that will be served by the proposed project(s) and which of the FIRST 5 priority populations will be served.
- Estimate the number of children prenatal through five years and their families to be served by your project, and explain the basis for that estimate. You can provide a range.

Highlight the estimated number of children prenatal through five years old per priority population that you anticipate will be served by the project.

- Describe the geographic area(s)/communities to be covered by the proposed project. Describe the specific geographic areas (cities, neighborhoods) in Santa Clara County where the priority population(s) will be served.
- Explain how the proposal is designed with the priority population(s) in mind.

FIRST 5 will prioritize culturally competent proposals that demonstrate practical knowledge about the priority population(s) and a clear connection to the priority population(s) through previous or on-going programming and services.

### **3.3.4 Evaluation**

Please describe the anticipated improved outcomes for the priority populations over the next three years, and identify the measurable results you expect to achieve for and with the priority populations. FIRST 5 wants to hear about the way you currently measure success with your community and clients. You can refer to your organization's internal strategic plan or annual planning processes that your organization has identified.

- What objectives has your organization identified in order to name and measure the impact of your proposed efforts? How are these objectives grounded in community input and feedback?
- Which, if any, of the FIRST 5 priorities, outcomes, and/or goals described in this RFP will your proposal address or achieve?
- Describe your organization's current data collection and reporting policies, as well as your current internal evaluation and learning processes. How does your organization collect quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate effectiveness at achieving results for the priority populations?
- How do you plan to monitor/assess the implementation of your proposed project and the methods and tools you will use to evaluate their effectiveness at achieving results for the priority population(s) your proposal seeks to serve?
- While FIRST 5 is committed to identifying indicators based on each partner's ongoing data and evaluation processes, FIRST 5 is also subject to various data collection and reporting requirements, including requirements imposed by state law regarding the number of children prenatal to five years old served and aspects of the way they are served. Projects funded by FIRST 5 are also subject to these requirements, and therefore, FIRST 5 typically requires its grantees to comply with data collection and reporting requests. Describe how and to what extent the organization has capacity to gather data required by FIRST 5 (for example, population served, number of children, ages (by date of birth), number of parents/guardians, other family members, and providers/caregivers, ethnic breakdown of each by census category, primary language spoken for each) and respond to reporting requirements.

- How are you engaging parents and caregivers in your evaluation efforts?

### **3.3.5 Organizational Capacity**

Please describe how your organization or organizations are especially well qualified or positioned to successfully implement the proposal as well as the opportunities for growth that this funding offers.

Include in your response:

- The date(s) of establishment of the organization or organizations, a description of the primary mission of the organization(s), and a brief overview of the services and programs offered by the organization(s).
- If applying as multiple organizations, please list the information for each organization separately and describe the role and responsibilities of each organization for this proposal.
- Describe the organizational capability and resources to manage the proposed project or parts of the project, including to achieve timely start-up and implementation. What strengths does your organization or organizations hold and what are the growing opportunities over the next three years?
- What challenges do you foresee in the ability to implement the proposal and meet the projected outcomes? How do you plan to address those challenges? How, if at all, has your organization or organizations pivoted to address challenges in the past?

### **3.3.6 Staffing, Including Key Personnel**

Please describe the staffing structures and key personnel of your organization or organizations. This section of the proposal must:

- State the name, title, proposed role in the project, and summary of experience of each person who is or would be key personnel providing the service(s) being proposed.
- Detail your organization's salary ranges for full- and part- time employees.
- Explain if positions are new hires or existing staff. If existing, please describe existing funding sources.
- Identify any consultants or subcontractors by stating the name, title, proposed role in the project, and summary of experience of each consultant or subcontractor who is or would be key personnel providing the service(s) being proposed.
- FIRST 5 participates in the Medi-Cal Administrative Activities (MAA) program, which enables it to draw on federal Medicaid funding to support certain programs that FIRST 5 or its grantees operate for the benefit of people who are or may be eligible for Medi-Cal. For program costs to be eligible for reimbursement, they must conform to MAA program requirements, including but not limited to requirements regarding record retention and production, certifications, training, organizational infrastructure, and collection of data concerning allocation and use of time and the ways in which staff provides outreach and

assistance to residents around access and program planning for Medi-Cal and Medi-Cal covered services. Please describe the capacity of the organization(s) to participate in data collection, record retention, timesheet tracking, and reporting requirements.

- Describe the past, current, and intended future practices of the organization(s) around diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Explain how you will promote professional development and training for personnel responsible for designing or implementing program activities. FIRST 5 is especially interested in how your organization provides professional development around the concepts of systems change, culturally responsive approaches, trauma-informed practices, and healing-centered programming.

### **3.3.7 Financial Sustainability**

Financial sustainability is one of the core priorities for the Strengthening Systems, Strengthening Families Initiative. One of the principal intended outcomes of FIRST 5's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan is to identify and ensure paths to long-term sustainability for FIRST 5 projects and initiatives that meet the basic needs of children prenatal through five years.

FIRST 5 does not and cannot commit to funding any grantee's programs or services beyond its available resources, and FIRST 5 cannot predict with confidence what resources FIRST 5 will be able to invest in the future, especially after Fiscal Year 2026-2027. Accordingly, FIRST 5 will prioritize funding proposals that demonstrate existing or future financial sustainability. Likewise, FIRST 5 does not intend to provide funding for projects that could, seem likely to, or will become fully or primarily dependent on FIRST 5 funding for continuation after Fiscal Year 2026-2027. Given these parameters, proposers must describe how, if at all, their projects will be sustained over the long term and beyond the availability of funding offered in this RFP.

Please describe the financial sustainability for this proposal in terms of strengths (confirmed or potential braided funding, ongoing government contracts or grants, etc.) and challenges (foreseeable gaps, funding that is sunseting) over the next three years. Please be specific about the funding sources (public and private) to be targeted. This narrative needs to provide context and highlight key take-aways from the more comprehensive Proposal Budget Worksheet that will be uploaded for each strategy.

- Describe the extent to which the financial sustainability of the organization(s) requires raising or leveraging funds from other sources, and explain how this funding will be accomplished.
- Describe how the proposed project will complete its intended objectives and move towards becoming more sustainable. When applicable, how is the financial sustainability plan part of your system change approach?

## 3.4 Proposal Narrative(s)

Proposers must submit a Proposal Narrative for each strategy. Proposers must respond to each lettered topic or question below, but you are not required to answer each and every bulleted sub-question. The bulleted sub-questions describe and illustrate the types of information FIRST 5 believes will help it to understand and assess your work and proposal. Additional content areas are permitted; however, they must remain within the limit for each strategy proposal narrative.

### 3.4.1 Strategy One: Place-Based Resource Centers

- A. Describe the place and/or spaces that connect families to basic resources, services, and supports in ways that improve families' sense of safety and belonging.
- How does the site's operational approach respond to the particular barriers and unique challenges of the populations served?
  - If needed, does the organization have flexible or alternative hours that include weekends and evenings in order to facilitate access and a sense of belonging?
  - How is the location accessed by the priority populations? If accessibility has been a challenge for the priority populations, how does this proposal improve accessibility?
  - What kinds of spaces and programming are provided for children prenatal through five years old?
  - What is the cultural and linguistic competency of the staff to meet the needs of the priority populations?
  - If the proposal includes a mobile component or is for a mobile resource center, please describe where the mobile resources will be accessible and why those locations have been chosen. Would your organization consider offering mobile services in areas identified by FIRST 5 as an area of service need?
- B. What are the core activities (programs, services, resources, and/or events) that will meet the basic needs, safety, and healthy development of children prenatal through five years from the priority populations?
- What are the essential services and programs that the resource center will provide year-round on a daily basis? What can a family expect to find when they walk through your doors?
  - If proposals include curriculums that FIRST 5 has supported in the past, please explain why you have decided to continue with this core programming or service?



- If you intend to offer a new curriculum, please share background information about this offering.
  - How do these essential/core services and programs meet the basic need(s), safety and/or healthy development of children prenatal through five years old from the priority populations you serve?
  - If applicable, how will the resource center's programming and services strengthen families through [five key protective factors](#) (parental resilience, social connections, concrete support, knowledge of parenting and child development, and social emotional competence of children) promoted by the Center for the Study of Social Policy?
- C. Why has your organization(s) chosen to provide these core services and programming in order to meet the basic needs, safety, and healthy development of children prenatal through five years old in the priority populations groups you serve? Please explain the context and the reasons for choosing to provide these core activities.
- Why are these basic needs, safety issues, and/or health development resources significant for the priority populations you serve? How are they present in Santa Clara County? Use and cite source(s) of your information.
  - If applicable, describe the safety concerns among the priority populations and the ways the organization will learn from and respond with the priority populations to address safety concerns.
  - Please identify any evidence-based practices or models that you will be utilizing, including citing the source of the model or practice. Please also identify any emergent or best/promising pilot practices that you will be utilizing, including citing the source of the model or practice.
- D. How does the place-based resource center create parent/caregiver connections, community, and social capital for and with the priority populations groups?
- What is your outreach and communications approach for the priority populations you serve? How do you share the resources, services, and programs with the larger communities so that parents and caregivers are aware of them?
  - Describe a typical event or series of events that creates community and connection for and with parents, caregivers, and their children.
- E. How does the place-based resource center support parent engagement, advocacy and empowerment? Does the resource center engage with parents and caregivers as advisors and leaders within your organization? If so, how?

- How does your organization or organizations engage parents of children prenatal through five years old? How often? With what objectives? Do you have staff dedicated to parent/community engagement or do you hope to develop staff positions or training responsible for parent/community engagement?
- Do you already have a family advisory board, or something like it? If so, what role will the family advisory board play in the proposed activities over the next three years? If not, how will you build one over the next three years?
- How does the resource center support parents and caregivers as advocates and leaders beyond your organization?
- How will you begin or strengthen your parent/caregiver engagement approach over the next three years?

F. Describe the organization's approach to collaboration, partnership and systems of care. Describe the organizations or agencies, if any, that you will be partnering with to achieve your project goals.

- How does the organization directly and intentionally connect to partners in a system of care that is focused on improved resource navigation, warm-hand-off referrals, "no wrong door approach" and/or "one stop shop" models? Please give examples.
- Do you currently have partnership agreements with other organizations or agencies? If not, how, if at all, do you plan to explore or establish any new partnerships or other kinds of informal or formal collaborations over the next three years?

G. Describe the place-based resource center's combination of direct services with systems change. Clearly identify the change(s) you (and your partners) are seeking to make, and how you propose to document and measure change over the next three years.

- How does your proposal achieve systems change for and in collaboration with the families you serve? Please feel free to detail the way you understand and achieve systems change as defined in this RFP and/or the ways that your proposal refines or concretizes systems change.
- What estimated percentage of programs and services provide direct services and what estimated percentage of programs and services focuses on systems change? How, when, and where do these elements overlap in the resource center's approach?
- How is the resource center culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and/or focused on healing? What have been the challenges to provide culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and/or healing-focused programs and services in

- the past? How does the resource center hope to strengthen culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and/or healing-focused programs and services over the next three years?
- What root causes of poverty, systemic/institutional racism, and/or trauma does the resource center address or seek to change? How will the resource center work to shift conditions or root causes over the next three years?
  - Consider highlighting the data you propose to collect regarding systems change and how that data helps measure the impacts.

### **3.4.2 Strategy Two: Critical Gaps**

- A. Identify the issue(s) or need(s) that this proposal seeks to address and the existing landscape of services that are trying to address those issues or needs. Please explain how your project will complement, integrate with, or fill critical gaps unaddressed by similar services or efforts in these areas.
- What are the critical gaps for parents and caregivers of the priority populations groups to meet the basic needs, safety, and/or healthy development of children prenatal through five years old and how will they be addressed through this proposal?
  - Why are these basic needs, safety issues, or healthy development concerns significant for the priority populations groups? How are they present in Santa Clara County? Use and cite source(s) of your information.
  - Why has the organization or organizations chosen to develop or strengthen this specific or unique program or service?
- B. What are the activities (programs, services, resources, and/or events) that will meet these critical gaps for the basic need(s), safety, healthy development of children prenatal through five years old from the priority populations groups?
- Describe the activities or resources that will be provided in detail. Where? How often? Who will provide the services? Who are the services intended for? In what languages?
  - Identify any evidence-based practices or models that you will be utilizing, including citing the source of the model or practice. Please also identify any emergent or best/promising pilot practices that you will be utilizing, including citing the source of the model or practice.
  - If applicable, how will the programming and services strengthen families through the five protective factors (parental resilience, social connections, concrete

support, knowledge of parenting and child development, and social emotional competence of children)?

C. Describe your organization's approach to services delivered for this project including outreach, access, and trust-building with families.

- Explain how the population(s) your project will serve will be identified, engaged, and maintained in your services. If applicable, what is your outreach and communications approach for the priority populations you serve?
- What is the cultural and linguistic competency of the staff to meet the needs of the priority populations?
- Is the site or sites accessible to the priority populations groups in terms of transportation, open hours, etc.? If so, how so? If not, how will this proposal address some of those accessibility challenges over the next three years?
- How will the family be supported as a part of the programs or services that are focused on children prenatal through five years old?

D. How will the proposed program or service engage parents from the priority populations, create parent connection and community, and/or support parent education, advocacy and empowerment? Proposals do not need to do all three, but all successful proposals must have a parent engagement component.

- How does your organization or organizations engage parents of children prenatal through five years old? How often? With what objectives? Do you have staff dedicated to parent/community engagement or do you hope to develop staff positions or training responsible for parent/community engagement?
- Is there a parent education element? If so, please describe.
- Does your organization or organizations already engage with parents and caregivers? If so, please describe.
- How does your organization or organizations support parents and caregivers as advocates for their children within the organization(s) and beyond?

E. How, if at all, is the proposed program or service directly and intentionally connected to partners in a system of care that is focused on improved resource navigation, warm-hand-off referrals, “no wrong door approach” and/or “one stop shop” models?

- If it is not yet operating within a system of care, how will the organization build those connections quickly in order to leverage them over the next three years?

- If it is already operating within a system of care or more, what systems of care? How will the organization strengthen those connections over the next three years?
- F. How, if at all, does the proposed program or service incorporate elements of systems change while meeting families where they are at and connecting them to direct services? Clearly identify the change(s) you (and your partners) are seeking to make, and how you propose to document and measure change over the next three years.
- How does your proposal achieve systems change for and in collaboration with the families you serve? Please feel free to detail the way you understand and achieve systems change as defined in this RFP and/or the ways that your proposal refines or concretizes systems change.
  - If applicable, how is the program or service culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and/or focused on healing? What have been the challenges to provide culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and/or healing-focused programs and services in the past? How does the organization hope to strengthen culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and/or healing-focused programs and services over the next three years?
  - If applicable, what root causes of poverty, systemic/institutional racism, and/or trauma does the resource center address or seek to change? How will the organization work to shift conditions or root causes over the next three years?
  - Consider highlighting the data you propose to collect regarding systems change and how that data helps measure the impacts.

### **3.4.3 Strategy Three: Bold & Innovative Efforts**

- A. Describe in detail the strategy or project that this proposal will fund.
- What is the specific objective or goal of this effort?
  - How does this proposal intend to shift a particular part of the system that cares for children prenatal through five from the priority populations?
  - Identify any evidence-based practices or models that you will be utilizing, including citing the source of the model or practice. Please also identify any emergent or best/promising pilot practices that you will be utilizing, including citing the source of the model or practice.
  - If this is a pilot program, describe the different phases of the pilot from design through possible full implementation systems-wide, including the financial sustainability plan referred to in the organization narrative.
- B. How does this proposal create, implement, replicate, or scale new and innovative models that address the root causes of poverty and inequity? What particular element

or part of the system does this proposal seek to disrupt, change, or shift?

- How is this proposal innovative and bold?
- How does this proposal address upstream and social determinants of health, focus on root causes of inequity, and/or support emerging and new practices within the field?
- What is the sustainable impact to improve children's health, well-being, and safety?
- How will this proposal disrupt systemic oppression and/or remove barriers harming families with young children?
- If applicable, what are the root causes of poverty and inequity that this proposal seeks to address? How will the organization or organizations work to shift conditions or root causes over the next three years?
- If applicable, how is the proposal culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and/or focused on healing?
- Describe any existing evidence that supports your approach to addressing the challenge(s) identified. Alternatively, if there is no prior evidence, what evidence do you hope your project will produce to address the challenge(s)?

C. How does this proposal address the needs of parents from priority populations? Does it establish connections with parents and the community at large? Does it provide support for parent education, advocacy, and empowerment? While not all proposals need to cover all three aspects, successful proposals should include a parent engagement component.

- How is this systems-change intervention responsive to parents from the priority populations and based on direct feedback from them? Have parents and caregivers been a part of the design process for this proposal? If so, how so?
- How does your organization or organizations engage parents of children prenatal through five years old? How often? With what objectives? Do you have staff dedicated to parent/community engagement or do you hope to develop staff positions or training responsible for parent/community engagement?
- Is there a parent education element? If so, please describe.
- How does your organization or organizations support parents and caregivers as advocates for their children within the organization(s) and beyond?

D. How does this proposal engage with and/or collaborate with community and system partners to address a systems-wide, policy, and/or environmental issue?

- What are the organizations, agencies, and/or communities with which the organization or organization will work collaboratively?
- If applicable, what is the leverage of collective impact efforts to create long-term system change that this proposal is aligned with, directly or indirectly?

- Is the proposed program or service directly or indirectly connected to partners in a system of care that is focused on improved resource navigation, warm-hand-off referrals, “no wrong door approach” and/or “one stop shop” models? Please describe.
- E. What are the potential key risks or challenges that could impact the viability of the project? How does your organization or organizations plan to address identified risks and/or emerging challenges?
- Has the organization or organizations piloted other programs? If so, which ones and what was learned? If not, how is the organization or organization ready to do so now?
  - How, if at all, are lessons from COVID-19 and the response to COVID-19 informing this proposal, if at all?

### 3.5 Proposal Budget Worksheet(s)

Proposers must include a Proposal Budget Worksheet for each strategy, using the template provided on the FIRST 5 [website](#). The Proposal Budget Worksheet Template has one tab for the total *three-year budget* and a tab for the *FY 2024-25 Budget*. Both are required. Please upload your completed budget worksheet as an Excel file on the online submission portal.

Budgets must describe in detail how much of each cost or expense is provided in-kind by the organization, how much is covered by funding sources other than FIRST 5, and how much will be covered by the funding sought from FIRST 5 for FY 2024-25 only.

FIRST 5 will fund a budget that claims indirect/administrative costs that does not exceed 15% of the total budget amount.

FIRST 5 is committed to supporting organizations that pay equitable wages and benefits for to frontline staff who are meeting families where they are at. Accordingly, budgets must state the wages and benefits to be paid to each employee by classification that will perform work on the project. We encourage proposers to build and submit budgets that acknowledge and factor in cost-of-living adjustments.

#### ***Key Budget Definitions***

**Direct Program Personnel** must include positions, salary, period (months), and Full-Time-Equivalent or “FTE” (actual percentage of time devoted to the project) for each position. Salary and benefits must be pro-rated for non-full-time employees, if the organization provides benefits to part time employees. Salaries are fixed compensation for services performed by staff that are directly employed by the Proposer and are paid for on a regular basis. Employee

benefits and employer payroll taxes include employer's contributions or expenses for social security, employee's life and health insurance plans, unemployment insurance, pension plans, and other similar expenses that are approved by FIRST 5. These expenses are allowable when they are included in the grant award and are in accordance with the agency's approved written policies. Salaries and Benefits of personnel involved in more than one grant or project must be charged to each grant based on the actual percentage of time spent on each grant or project. The annualized actual percentage charged for a particular position (e.g., Project Director) cannot exceed the annual percentage approved in the grant award. Similarly, the dollar amount charged for a particular position also must not exceed the dollar amount in the approved grant award. Functional timesheets or an allocation plan must be maintained which support the time charged to FIRST 5 grants.

**Collaborative Partners and Consultants** includes costs from other agencies and consultants the proposer will partner with to fulfill the grant responsibility.

**Direct Program Costs** are defined as necessary expenditures exclusive of personnel salaries and benefits, equipment and the costs of partners and consultants. Such expenses include specific items directly charged to the project. The expenses must be grant-related (i.e., to further the program objectives as defined in the grant award) and be incurred (realized) during the grant period. FIRST 5 reserves the right to make the final determination if an operating expense is allowable and necessary.

**Indirect Costs** are shared costs that cannot be directly assigned to a particular activity but are necessary to the operation of the agency and the performance of the program. The costs of operating and maintaining accounting services and administrative salaries are examples of indirect costs. For this program, indirect costs cannot exceed 15% of the total of Salaries and Benefits, and Operating Expenses.

## 3.6 Proposal Timeline(s)

Proposers must include a Proposal Timeline for each strategy. Please upload your completed Proposal Timeline as a PDF on the online submission portal for each strategy for which you are submitting an application.

Describe in detail the calendar of activities by calendar quarter across the three fiscal years FY 2024-2025, FY 2025-2026, and FY 2026-2027, beginning on July 1, 2024 and ending on June 30, 2027.

The timeline should identify staffing needs including, to the extent possible, referencing the above key personnel and their roles during each period.

If warranted, please explain the amount of ramp-up time and costs the proposal budget will require. Please note that FIRST 5's general practice is to permit and fund grantees for no more



than one quarter-year (i.e., the first three months of the grant period) to ramp up before beginning to operate the program(s) and provide the service(s). Any proposal whose timeline requires more than three months of ramp-up time must explain in detail why more than three months is required.

## **4. Evaluation, Selection, & Award Process**

### **4.1 Compliance**

FIRST 5 will review each proposal to determine if the proposal is responsive to the submission requirements specified in this RFP. FIRST 5 may, in its sole discretion, deem a proposal non-responsive, and therefore disqualify it from further consideration, on the ground that the proposal does not respond to all questions or include all required components, signatures, and exhibits, is noncompliant with any applicable length limitation, is not timely submitted, or has otherwise failed to satisfy any requirement of this RFP.

### **4.2 Evaluation Process**

Proposals will be reviewed by FIRST 5 through and by individuals, groups, and/or committees designated by FIRST 5 in FIRST 5's sole discretion. FIRST 5 reserves the right to review and/or evaluate proposals through any combination of FIRST 5 staff, community members, and other parties that may have relevant expertise or experience, and through any process that FIRST 5 determines, in FIRST 5's sole discretion, is in FIRST 5's best interests and for the purposes described in this RFP.

The process, sequence, and manner of evaluation of the proposals shall be within FIRST 5's sole judgment and discretion. FIRST 5 may, in its sole discretion, evaluate proposals in one or more rounds, if and to the extent FIRST 5 determines in its sole discretion is reasonable or necessary in the public interest. Each round of evaluation may, in FIRST 5's sole discretion, result in modification of scores, further clarification or addenda being issued, and changes in the RFP process. FIRST 5 will evaluate the proposals using the criteria described in Section 4.3.

FIRST 5 has and may exercise sole discretion to make final selections of proposals.

### **4.3 Proposal Review Criteria**

Each proposal will be reviewed utilizing the following criteria as described in this RFP:

Capacity and Prior Experience Serving Priority Populations
Evaluation Plan
Organizational Capacity
Staffing Plan
Financial Sustainability Plan
Attention to Basic Needs, Safety, and/or Healthy Development as Described by Strategy
Parent and Caregiver Engagement
Accessibility for Priority Populations (not a criterion for Strategy 3)
Cultural and Linguistic Competency
Capacity to Collaborate
System Change Elements
Proposal Timeline
Proposal Budget

#### **4.4 Best Value**

FIRST 5 will select the proposals that present the best value with respect to FIRST 5's vision and mission to support young children prenatal through five years and their families, and the benefit to the early learning and childcare community. Accordingly, FIRST 5 may not necessarily issue awards to proposals with the lowest price if doing so would not be in the overall best interest of FIRST 5. FIRST 5 reserves the right to expand or reduce the proposed scope of work during the contracting process based on budget constraints.

#### **4.5 Contract Award Process**

FIRST 5 may direct negotiations with Proposer(s) with the highest ranked proposal(s), may direct negotiations with multiple Proposers, and/or may request best and final offers. The discussions may include price and conditions attendant to price. Each Proposer agrees that its proposal shall and does constitute a firm offer that it is bound to, and that FIRST 5 shall have the option for at least one year after the closing of the solicitation to accept that firm offer.

FIRST 5 always reserves the right to terminate or suspend negotiations and may begin negotiations with other proposer(s). This process may continue until execution of one or more contract(s) acceptable to FIRST 5 or the rejection of all proposals. No proposer shall have any

rights against FIRST 5 arising from or related to such negotiations, suspensions, or terminations thereof.

If and to the extent FIRST 5 issues to any Proposer any notice, including any of intent to recommend funding for the Proposer's proposal, that notice shall not create rights, interests, or claims of entitlement in the Proposer(s).

Any proposed contract resulting from this solicitation will be submitted to the FIRST 5 Commission or designee. All proposers will be notified by email of the decision with respect to the award of contract(s). FIRST 5's decision of whether to make the award(s) and to which proposer(s) shall be final.

Please note that FIRST 5 generally requires its grantees to maintain or cause to be maintained (1) an insurance policy for commercial general liability with limits of liability not less than \$1 million per occurrence and \$3 million annual aggregate; (2) a policy of worker's compensation providing statutory coverage; and (3) liability insurance for licensed professionals; as well as (4) any other insurance that may reasonably be necessary to insure the grantee against any claim for damages arising under contracts awarded in this RFP or other errors or omissions. FIRST 5 also generally requires its grantees to provide proof of these insurance coverages to FIRST 5 promptly after execution of any grant agreement. To expedite this aspect of contracting, grantees will be required to provide proof of same to FIRST 5 promptly upon request.

Proposers that are public entities may satisfy these requirements with programs of self-insurance in lieu of or in addition to policies of insurance.

## **5. Terms & Conditions**

### **5.1 Protests Process**

FIRST 5 will notify each Proposer whether FIRST 5 intends to enter into a negotiation to award a contract for their proposal. A proposer whose proposal was not selected to proceed to negotiations may file a written protest within three working days of issuance of the email from FIRST 5. FIRST 5 reserves the right at its sole discretion to continue with the solicitation process including proceeding with negotiations, award, and/or commencement of the contract(s) with the successful proposer(s) while a protest is pending. Protesters must follow the procedures outlined below.

*Filing a Protest.* The protest must be in writing and submitted by email. The party filing the protest must be a proposer that submitted a proposal in response to the RFP. Only proposers or their authorized representatives may file a protest. The protest and all supporting documentation must be emailed to the Point of Contact listed above so that it is received no later than 5:00 pm Pacific Time on the third business day after notification from FIRST 5 of whether FIRST 5 intends to enter into negotiations to award a contract for their proposal. The email containing the protest must contain the following subject line: "Protest Relating to [RFP #24-001]." FIRST 5 shall have sole discretion to reject or dismiss any protest filed by persons or entities not eligible to protest, not received by the deadline, that do not include correct identifying information or all required information, or are sent to anyone other than the Point of Contact.

*Grounds for Protest.* Grounds for protest are limited to a violation of a FIRST 5 procedure or applicable law, rule, or regulation. Protests will not be accepted on any other grounds.

*Contents of Protest.* The written protest must contain the following information: (1) the name, street address, email address, and telephone number of the protester; (2) authorized signature of the protester or its representative; (3) clearly state the grounds for the protest as set forth below and the evidence and/or credible allegations supporting each ground; (4) copies of any relevant documents; and (5) the form of relief requested. Protests should be concise and logically arranged. All documents submitted by the protester are public records subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

The protester may not present any additional grounds, evidence, allegations, or arguments for protest after submission unless requested by FIRST 5.

*Assessment and Resolution of Protest.* FIRST 5 will review the protest and issue a written decision on the protest that FIRST 5 will send to the protester at the email address provided in the Protest. FIRST 5 will endeavor to act as promptly as possible, but there shall be no specific deadline for FIRST 5 to issue a decision. FIRST 5's written decision is final. No other protest or appeal process is available to the protesting party.

*Remedies.* FIRST 5 has no obligation to delay or otherwise postpone an award of contract based on a proposer's/bidder's protest. The remedies available pursuant to these procedures may include, but are not limited to, the reevaluation of proposals/bids by the same or a new evaluation committee or the cancellation of a solicitation. However, no remedy may require FIRST 5 to execute a contract with any entity.

## **5.2 Incurring Costs**

This RFP does not commit FIRST 5 to award, nor does it commit FIRST 5 to pay any cost incurred in the submission of any proposal, or in making necessary studies or designs for the

preparation thereof, nor procure or contract for services or supplies. Further, no reimbursable cost may be incurred in anticipation of a contract award.

### **5.3 Claims Against FIRST 5**

Neither proposers' organization nor any of their representatives shall have any claims whatsoever against FIRST 5 or any of its respective officials, agents, or employees arising out of or relating to this RFP or these RFP procedures.

### **5.4 Basis for Proposal**

Only information supplied by FIRST 5 in writing via FIRST 5's solicitation management system in connection with this RFP should be used as the basis for the preparation of proposer's proposal.

### **5.5 No Public Proposal Opening**

There will be no public opening for this RFP.

### **5.6 California Public Records Act (CPRA)**

All proposals become the property of FIRST 5, which is a public agency subject to the disclosure requirements of the California Public Records Act ("CPRA"). If proposer's proprietary information is contained in documents submitted to FIRST 5, and proposer claims that such information falls within one or more CPRA exemptions, proposer must clearly mark such information "CONFIDENTIAL AND PROPRIETARY," and identify the specific lines containing the information. In the event of a request for such information, FIRST 5 will make reasonable efforts to provide notice to proposer prior to disclosure. If proposer contends that any documents are exempt from the CPRA and wishes to prevent disclosure, it is required to obtain a protective order, injunctive relief, or other appropriate remedy from a court of law in Santa Clara County before FIRST 5's deadline for responding to the CPRA request. If proposer fails to seek or obtain such remedy prior to FIRST 5's deadline for responding to the CPRA request, FIRST 5 may disclose the requested information without penalty or liability to the proposer.

By submitting a proposal, proposer further agrees that it shall defend, indemnify and hold FIRST 5 harmless against any claim, action, litigation, damage or injury (including but not limited to all judgments, costs, fees, and attorney's fees) that may result from partial or complete denial of access to, or non-disclosure or redaction of, documents arising from any representation, action, or inaction by the proposer.

## 5.7 Confidentiality

All data and information obtained from FIRST 5 by the proposers and their agents in this RFP process, including reports, recommendations, specifications and data, shall be treated by the proposer and its agents as confidential. The proposers and its agents shall not disclose or communicate this information to a third party or use it in advertising, publicity, propaganda, marketing, or in another job or jobs, unless prior written consent is obtained from an authorized representative of FIRST 5. Generally, each proposal and all documentation, including financial information, submitted by a proposer to FIRST 5 is to be treated as confidential by a proposer. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the proposal and all documentation are subject to the California Public Records Act, as described in 5.5 immediately above.

## 5.8 Electronic Submissions of the RFP

- A. This RFP is being made available by electronic means. As part of the RFP, proposers will be required to download, complete and upload certain documents. Proposers acknowledge and accept full responsibility to ensure that no changes are made to the RFP or to the documents required. In the event of conflict between a version of the RFP in the proposer's possession and the version maintained by FIRST 5, the version maintained by FIRST 5 shall govern.
- B. All proposals must be submitted electronically via the [online submission portal](#) in accordance with FIRST 5 requirements or FIRST 5 may reject the proposals as nonresponsive. Please refer to the [FIRST 5 website](#) for instructions on creating an account and accessing the application.
- C. Proposers may modify or withdraw their proposals in accordance with the terms and procedures specified above. FIRST 5 will only consider the latest version of the proposal submitted pursuant to the requirements of this RFP.
- D. Proposers should allow adequate time to submit proposals electronically. Submission of a proposal may not be instantaneous and may be affected by several events, such as temporarily losing connection to the internet.
- E. Proposers are solely responsible for ensuring their responses are completed and submitted prior to the closing date and time for this RFP.
- F. FIRST 5 has the capability of viewing documents submitted only in the following formats: Microsoft Excel (XLSX) and portable document format file (PDF).
- G. If FIRST 5 is unable to open a file due to a virus or because the file has been corrupted, the proposal response may be considered incomplete or non-responsive, and may be disqualified from further consideration.

- H. This RFP requires proposers to upload electronic attachments to their proposals. The submission of attachments containing embedded documents or proprietary file extensions is prohibited. Each document should be attached as a separate file.
- I. Information submitted in response to this RFP may be subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act as specified above.

## **5.9 Reservations**

FIRST 5 reserves the right to do any of the following at any time:

- Reduce, increase, amend, and/or rescind this RFP or the funding available under this RFP at any time prior.
- Request clarification or additional documentation from any Proposer.
- Reject any or all proposal(s);
- Waive or correct any minor defect, irregularity or error in a proposal or the RFP process;
- Cancel or terminate the RFP process, even after review of proposals, and, at its option, issue a new RFP;
- Procure any equipment or services specified in this RFP by any other means;
- Modify the selection process, the specifications or requirements for materials or services, or the contents or format requirements for proposals;
- Extend a deadline specified in this RFP, including deadlines for accepting proposals;
- Accept proposals through sources or modes other than those required by this RFP and beyond the due date and time, at its sole discretion.
- Negotiate with any or none of the proposers;
- Modify in the final agreement any terms and/or conditions described in this RFP;
- Terminate failed negotiations with a proposer without liability, and negotiate with other proposers;
- Disqualify any proposer on the basis of a real or apparent conflict of interest or evidence of collusion evaluated by FIRST 5;
- Eliminate, reject or disqualify a proposal of any proposer who is not a responsible proposer or fails to submit a responsive offer as determined solely by FIRST 5; and/or
- Accept all or a portion of any Proposal.

**END OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**