

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Priority Area 1 – Strong Families (July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2021)



DIRECT SERVICES



APRIL 2017

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TIMELINE FOR REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Release of Request for Proposal (RFP)	April 19, 2017
Deadline for Submitting Questions for Clarification	May 12, 2017, at 4:00 pm PST
Closing Date (Deadline) for Proposals	June 2, 2017 at 3:00 pm PST
Review of Proposals Begins	June 5, 2017
Discussion Period with Responsive Applicants Begins	June 22, 2017
Notification of Intent of Award	No later than June 27, 2017
Funding Recommendations Presented for Commission Action	July 10, 2017
Contract term Commences for Selected Applicants	July 1, 2017

NOTE: All dates are subject to change.



First 5 Merced County Request for Proposals (RFP) Proposal Submittal

All Proposals including one (1) signed original and seven (7) exact copies must be received by:

June 2, 2017, 3:00 p.m. PST

If delivering proposals in person, they will be considered late at 3:01 p.m. by the clock at the **new First 5 Merced County offices located at the Department of Public Health, 260 E. 15th Street**. Late proposals will not be accepted.

Mail or hand deliver proposals to:

**First 5 Merced County
C/O Merced County Department of Public Health
260 E. 15th Street
Merced, CA 95341**

ABOUT FIRST 5 MERCED COUNTY

On November 12, 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10, adding a 50-cent tax to each pack of cigarettes or comparable product sold in California. These resources were then utilized to provide increased support for early childhood development of children from conception through age five. The importance of early childhood development is widely recognized as a key to future success in school and success in life. Early childhood development also impacts children's physical, emotional and cognitive development.

With these funding resources, First 5 Merced County provides financial support for critical programs that impact child health and development, family strengthening, and the professional development of early education providers, all for the benefit of children prenatal to five years. Working in partnership with agencies and organizations throughout Merced County, First 5 Merced County fosters the active participation of parents, caregivers, educators and community members in the lives of young children, prenatal to five years old.

Vision of First 5 Merced County:

All children in Merced County will thrive in supportive, loving, and nurturing environments; enter school healthy and ready to learn; and become productive and well-adjusted members of society.

Mission of First 5 Merced County:

The mission is to provide services for the optimal physical, emotional, and intellectual growth of the young children of Merced County.

SECTION 1

FIRST 5 MERCED COUNTY PRIORITY AREA – STRONG FAMILIES

In 2016, the First 5 Merced County Commission worked tirelessly to adopt a Strategic Plan and budget that reflected the steep decline in tobacco tax revenue. While these declines were not unexpected, a rigorous review of First 5 Merced County’s investments under past strategic plans was conducted. This review revealed First 5 Merced County’s history of funding direct services and programs for individuals and families, compared to investments in systems level changes that have the potential to benefit more children and families in the future.

The Commission explored ways to invest more meaningfully, but not exclusively in “upstream” and systems level changes as a way to leave a lasting legacy. At the same time, Commissioners agreed to maintain some support for much-needed programs and service delivery that have historically been the emphasis of First 5’s investments. However Commissioners also recognized that declining funding levels did not support previous levels of funding to be maintained across the board. In response to this, the Commission allowed most contracts to sunset at the end of 2016, and reduced the number of Desired Outcomes to the following 3 Priority Areas and outcomes:

- 1) Strong Families - Families raise their children in safe, stable nurturing homes.
- 2) High Quality Early Learning – Children have access to high-quality early learning opportunities.
- 3) Children’s Health and Development – Children achieve optimal developmental, behavioral, and social-emotional health.

Related to the Strong Families Priority Area, the Commission hired a consultant in October 2016, who subcontracted with a local community navigator to meet with community members, stakeholders and other interested parties to:

- Assess current family support and strengthening standards and practices;
- Establish or reaffirm a shared vision for the health and well-being of children and families in Merced County;
- Establish a common understanding of upstream principles (prevention), evidence-based and/or evidence informed programs and practices, and results-based funding.

With that work near completion, the Commission is eager to support initiatives that strengthen families by assisting parents and caregivers in promoting a healthy, stable and nurturing environment for children.

The Strong Families Priority Area has two objectives: 1) Enhance the system of effective family support and strengthening programs, and 2) Support families in building and enhancing the **5 protective factors** that promote optimal development. Protective factors include:

- Parental resilience,
- Social connections,
- Concrete support in times of need,
- Knowledge of parenting and child development, and
- Social-emotional development in young children.

The ultimate community-level impact of the Strong Families Priority Area will ideally decrease rates of child abuse and neglect and decrease the percentage of children living in poverty.

SECTION 2

INTENT OF THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (#PA1-4172)

A. **Priority Area: Strong Families (Introduction and Intent)**

This Request for Proposal (RFP) (#PA1-4172) is designed to solicit proposals for funding from qualified Applicants for innovative, quality interventions for family support and strengthening efforts that meet First 5 Merced County's standards and contribute to achieving intended outcomes. There are two Requests for Proposals available from First 5 Merced County. This request (#PA1-4172) is intended to fund **Direct Service** proposals.

Proposals in this category honor the Commission's desire to maintain some support and service delivery that have historically been the emphasis of First 5's investments, while recognizing that declining revenue does not allow for previous levels of funding to be maintained across the board.

1. Direct Service Grants

Direct service grants are designed to provide funding for new direct services or enhancements of existing direct service programs. **The grant funding is not to be used for programs that will only operate for the life of the grant.** Rather, the funding will be targeted to kick-start new or existing programs that will continue forward with non-First 5 Merced County funding.

Proposals must directly target children 0-5 and their families/caregivers and identify specific impacts to this target population.

2. Contract Term

This RFP solicits proposals for services to begin as early as July 1, 2017, and to extend through as late as June 30, 2021. Proposed interventions may be contracted for up to 4 years or less dependent on factors that may include, but are not limited to, proposed intervention, contractor performance and effectiveness, or availability of funds. First 5 Merced County reserves the right to consider and recommend funding for a lesser *duration* when consistent with the intent of this RFP.

B. **Availability of First 5 Funds**

First 5 Merced County expects to fund up to a maximum of \$750,000 in Fiscal Year 2017/18 for all contracts. Due to match requirements, First 5 intends to fund 25% less in Fiscal Year 2018/19 and 50% less in Fiscal Year 2019/20. During the 4th year of the grants First 5 Merced County will offer significant training, technical assistance and other supports to allow contractors to be successful in year 4, without full funding from First 5 Merced County.

See chart below.

Year 1: Full First 5 funding

Year 2: 25% match of the year 1 funding: 75% First 5 funding

Year 3: 50% match of the year 1 funding: 50% First 5 funding

Year 4: Fully funded by the grantee with additional technical assistance and support available from First 5 Merced County

Contracts awarded in the Direct Service area will be issued for a period of four years. First-year funding will be for a maximum of \$150,000. Future-year funding will be determined based on the level of match funds obtained by the grantee organization. Proposals will require the proposing organization to set forth a sustainability plan detailing strategies to obtain matching funds for years 2, 3, 4 and beyond. The goal is for the organization to propose and implement strategies that will allow the achievement of full sustainability by year 4 of the grant. First 5 Merced County will offer technical assistance and support for grantees in year 4.

Applicants must clearly outline budgets for all 4 years and be able to identify matching dollars in the out years. While the Commission will consider adjustments to budgets, changes must be programmatically driven and are subject to Commission approval. **Salaries will be capped at first year levels for the entirety of the grant. Funds may not be used toward capital improvements.**

First 5 Merced County expects to support programs with a wide-range of funding amounts through this RFP, from \$25,000 to \$150,000 per year. Organizations may submit more than one proposal for distinct sets of proposed interventions (see Information to Applicants section). Specific amounts for proposals will depend upon the nature and scale of the proposed interventions and the degree to which a proposal contributes to First 5 Merced County's goals relative to total available funds. First 5 Merced County reserves the right to fund proposals outside of the stated range if it achieves the intent of this RFP.

C. **Required Sustainability Activities**

Proposals must include ongoing sustainability goals. It is the intent of this funding that organizations are no longer dependent on First 5 funding by the fourth year of the contract. Direct Service grantees will provide quarterly updates on progress toward sustainability goals and strategies. By the third quarter of each fiscal year, grantees must be able to articulate matching funding for the following fiscal year in the amount set in Section B. Availability of Funds (page 8). In the event a grantee is unable to provide matching funds for the following fiscal year, First 5 Merced County may take one or more of the following actions:

1. Require the grantee organization to submit to First 5 Merced County a corrective action plan detailing new strategies for obtaining matching funds in future years.
2. Reduce funding to the grantee to less-than the level of the first year grant.

3. Impose a fiscal penalty.
4. Terminate the grant in its entirety.

D. Notice to Applicants

Prior to proceeding further, the reader is strongly encouraged to review Section 7. Contracting Requirements on page 26 of this RFP which provides:

- Essential information on eligibility;
- Contract requirements and process;
- Important mandates regarding supplanting ;
- Use of Proposition 10 funds solely for the benefit of children 0 - 5 years and their families/caregivers.

SECTION 3

SERVICE POPULATIONS AND INTERVENTIONS

A. Target Populations

When developing proposals in response to this RFP, Applicants may propose interventions for any *target population* of their choosing. However, Applicants are encouraged to keep in mind First 5 Merced County's Strong Families Priority Area was developed over time with community input and proposals will be required to address adherence to the Priority Area and Objectives. Applicants shall also be aware that each proposal will be reviewed and scored relative to the proposal review criteria (see Evaluation Criteria section, on page 23).

Proposals must include a clear description of the intended target population(s) for First 5 Merced County to make the most discerning funding decisions. Proposals also must clearly demonstrate long-term impacts the grant will have on the target population(s), which directly includes children 0-5 and their families/caregivers.

B. Examples of Interventions

To assist in the understanding of options afforded by this RFP a list of example interventions is provided as attachment #2. These examples are provided ONLY to illustrate the type of interventions that could be implemented. Applicants may propose any intervention of their choosing.

C. Evidence Base for Proposed Interventions

Proposed interventions should be selected from best or promising practices for which evidence, research, studies/reports or other data indicate the strong likelihood the intervention will produce the desired impact. Proposals must include a description of the evidence-based practice which establishes the proposed intervention (see Proposal Instructions and Content Requirements, page 16). Additionally, useful resources on best and promising practices are included in Attachment #2.

D. Types of Eligible Interventions

Acceptable intervention types may include but are not limited to: support groups, parent advocacy and leadership training, prenatal classes, breastfeeding workshops, and parenting classes to assist parents and caregivers to learn ways to talk, read, sing, play and appropriately discipline children. Proposals must:

- Aim to reach a broad range of children and families and improve local systems to improve, strengthen and build strong families.
- Support families in building and enhancing the **5 protective factors** that promote optimal child development.
- Support and strengthen program options and practices that meet First 5 Merced County's standards.

Activities may include Strengthening Families or similar framework that builds parental capacity, provides parental education support and addresses one or more of the protective factors.

Applicants are encouraged to be creative and utilize the full range of latitude offered by this RFP.

SECTION 4

INFORMATION TO APPLICANTS

A. Request for Proposals Closing Date and Submission Information

Proposals must be received by First 5 Merced County on or before 3:00 PM on June 2, 2017. Proposals shall be presented under sealed cover and mailed or delivered to:

First 5 Merced County
RFP for Strong Families – Direct Services
c/o Merced County Department of Public Health
260 E. 15th Street
Merced, California 95341

No oral, email, or faxed proposals will be considered. Proposals received after the deadline will be rejected regardless of postmark date and will be returned to the Applicant unopened. If delivering proposals in person, they will be considered late at 3:01 PM by the clock at the Department of Public Health offices and will not be accepted. It is the sole responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that proposals are received before the submission deadline.

Without law or policy to the contrary, if the Applicant took reasonable steps to submit the proposal in due time, and failure of the proposal to be on hand at the time of closing was not the result of negligence or other fault of the Applicant, but was the result of negligence by First 5 Merced County, First 5 reserves the right to accept such proposal.

B. Applicant Eligibility

First 5 Merced County will consider programs and/or services proposed by any organization or entity that is registered as a non-profit entity, an educational or government unit, or a for-profit business or licensee.

C. Submission of Multiple Proposals

A legal organization or entity may submit one (1) or more proposals for consideration in response to this RFP. In most cases, multiple proposals will be submitted from larger entities which have multiple departments or sub-units. More than one proposal can be submitted from a department or sub-unit if the proposals are clearly distinct, and propose unique interventions for different intended service populations.

D. Announcement of Proposals

All proposals received by the published date and time for submission will be publicly announced at First 5 Merced County. The name of each Applicant will be publicly read and recorded. Attendance by Applicants is not required. No award decision, pricing, or exchange of views will be discussed at the proposal announcement.

E. Interpretation, Corrections, and Addenda to RFP

The Applicant must carefully examine the specifications, terms and conditions provided in the Request for Proposal. If the Applicant has any questions regarding the RFP, such questions may be raised with First 5 Merced County until 4:00 PM on May 12, 2017. Questions are to be addressed to: Martha Hermosillo, Executive Director, First 5 Merced County, mhermosillo@co.merced.ca.us or (209) 385-7337.

Any changes in the RFP that may be required subsequent to its release will be made only by written addendum, issued by First 5 Merced County and incorporated into the RFP. Any addenda made to the RFP will be made publicly available through the means by which the RFP was originally disseminated.

F. Discussion with Responsive Applicants Regarding Proposals

Discussions may be conducted with Applicants who submit proposals determined to be responsive and have the potential of being selected for an award. Such discussions may be for clarification or modification to the scope of proposed services to best meet the intent of this RFP. Modifications could include, reducing/expanding/modifying the proposed interventions, subcontracting arrangements or the proposed budget and planned expenditures.

Such discussions may be permitted after submission of proposals and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining best and final offers from Applicants that best meet the intent of the RFP and First 5 Merced County's efforts to achieve the Strategic Plan goals.

G. Award and Contracting

All Applicants submitting a proposal for consideration agree that their organization will be willing to enter into a final contract if awarded. The First 5 Merced County Commission has the authority to approve awards to qualifying Applicants and approve/reject the final contract. Refer to the Contracting Requirements section, page 26, to be fully apprised of the contract requirements.

H. False or Misleading Statements

Proposals that contain false or misleading statements, or that provide references that do not support an attribute or condition claimed by the Applicant, may be rejected.

I. Rules for Proposal Withdrawal or Revision

A proposal which is submitted prior to the deadline may be withdrawn or revised any time prior to, but not after, the deadline for receipt of proposals, so long as the request is made by the Applicant's duly authorized representative.

J. Subcontracting

Any Applicant using a Subcontractor(s) must clearly describe and explain the use of the Subcontractor(s) within their proposal, as described in the RFP proposal instructions. If selected, the Applicant will be fully responsible for all work performed under this

proposal as the primary contractor. Any subcontracting or other legal arrangements made by the Applicant are the sole responsibility of the Applicant.

K. Confidentiality

The contents of all proposals shall be held in the strictest confidence until the contract is awarded. The contents of all working papers, trade secrets, proprietary data, and discussions relating to the Applicant's proposal shall be held confidential indefinitely unless the public interest is best served by an item's disclosure because of its direct pertinence to a decision agreement or an evaluation of the proposal. First 5 Merced County cannot and does not give any assurances or guarantees that such information could not be ordered released under the California Public Records Act by a court of law, or be otherwise releasable thereunder, if requested by any third party.

The Applicant should clearly mark any of the information within their proposal that is proprietary. Designating the entire proposal as "proprietary" is not acceptable and will not be honored. Submission of a proposal by an Applicant shall constitute an agreement to the provision for public announcement. The County shall not be obligated to release information contained in any Applicant's RFP submittal that has been annotated as proprietary without the written consent of the Applicant.

L. General Information

First 5 Merced County reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any or all proposals or any part thereof, or to waive any informalities in the proposal and minor irregularities, technical defects or clerical errors, to make an award on the basis of suitability, quality of services proposed, their conformity with the RFP, and not confined to price alone.

M. Property of First 5 Merced County

All proposals and accompanying documentation submitted become the property of First 5 Merced County and will not be returned.

N. Cost of Proposal Development

Costs for developing proposals for this RFP are solely the responsibility of the Applicant whether or not any award results from this solicitation. Further, the cost of developing and preparing responses to the proposal will not be allowed as direct or indirect charges under any resulting contract.

O. Public Disclosure

All public records are available for disclosure except the contents of the proposals received in response to an RFP, which are not open for public review until a contract has been signed. If an unsuccessful Applicant files an official request to view the awarded proposal, First 5 Merced County must comply with the appropriate public disclosure procedures. However, information specifically designated in the proposal as proprietary will not be made available.

P. Qualifications of Applicant

First 5 Merced County may make such investigation as it deems necessary to determine the ability of the Applicant to provide the services requested herein, and the Applicant shall furnish all information and data for this purpose as requested.

Q. Applicant Disqualification

An Applicant may be disqualified and the proposal rejected, in addition to any other cause for rejection as set forth elsewhere in this RFP, or for any, but not limited to, one of the following reasons: Collusion, lack of responsibility and cooperation as shown by past work or services, non-compliance with current/past contract requirements, being in arrears on existing contracts or having defaulted on previous contracts, and/or incomplete information or missing documents as required in the proposal.

R. Gratuities

Neither the Applicant nor any person, firm, or corporation employed by the Applicant shall give, directly or indirectly, to any employee or agent of First 5 Merced County, any gift, money, or anything of value, or any promise, obligation, or contract for future reward or compensation, neither during the proposal process nor during the performance of any contract period resulting from this proposal.

S. Extension of Contract

First 5 reserves the right to extend any contract resulting from this proposal on a term-by-term basis to the successful Applicant awarded the contract.

T. Cancellation Due to Lack of Funding

First 5 Merced County reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time should funding to support it be unavailable as determined by the Commission of First 5 Merced County.

SECTION 5

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS AND CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

This section describes the required proposal format and content. Failure to follow the prescribed format may result in rejection of your proposal.

A. **Proposal Format**

Narrative text sections of the proposal should be typewritten, single spaced with one-inch margins on all sides of the paper using 12-point font. Text should appear single-sided only. Pages should be numbered consecutively from beginning to end. Do not staple proposals; binder clip each proposal together.

B. **Number of Copies**

Applicants must provide one (1) original proposal with signatures in blue ink by an individual legally authorized to bind the agency/organization, and seven (7) complete copies of the entire proposal.

C. **Outline of Proposal Content**

The content and sequence of the proposal will be as follows:

1. Proposal Cover Sheet and Certification Form
2. Executive Summary
3. Table of Contents
4. Exceptions (to RFP and to sample contract)
5. Proposal Narrative
6. Proposed Budget and Budget Justification
7. Sustainability Action Planning Template

D. **Proposal Instructions**

1. **Proposal Cover Sheet and Certification Form:** Complete the Proposal Cover Sheet and Certification Form provided in the Attachments section. Original signatures must be in blue ink by an individual legally authorized to bind the agency/organization.
2. **Executive Summary (not to exceed one-half page in length):** Provide an Executive Summary of the proposal in narrative format that briefly summarizes the proposed primary interventions, the specific outcome(s) pursued, the service population targeted, the proposed budget amount, total requested staffing levels (FTE), and proposed subcontractors (if applicable).
3. **Table of Contents:** Provide a Table of Contents listing the proposal contents as required in the RFP, along with corresponding page numbers.
4. **Exceptions:** Provide a listing of Exceptions to the requirements and conditions taken by the Applicant. The Applicant's exceptions should give an explanation as to why the Applicant is taking exception to the specific requirements. If no

exceptions are taken, Applicant is to state, “No Exceptions Taken” in this section, and First 5 Merced County assumes that the Applicant’s proposal meets all RFP requirements as specified.

5. **Proposal Narrative**: Provide a Narrative NOT exceeding ten (10) pages in length that addresses the items listed below. Proposals *less* than ten pages in length that concisely provide the requested information and enable reviewers to have a clear understanding of the proposed effort are welcomed.
6. **Proposed Budget and Budget Justification**: Complete the Proposed Budget and Budget Justification forms provided in the attachment section. Ensure matching funds are identified for the out years.
7. **Sustainability Action Planning Template**: Complete the Sustainability Action Planning Template provided in the attachment section. This is a guide to assist applicants to identify sustainability and plan for years 2, 3 and 4.

E. **Content Requirements**

This section describes the proposal narrative content requirements. Applicants must also include the Proposed Budget and Budget Justification form and Sustainability Action Planning Template provided in Attachment #4 and #5.

Part A: Organizational Description and Capacity (suggested length – 1 page maximum)
 Administrative: Describe the Applicant’s organization. If the proposed intervention(s) are to be implemented by a department or other sub-unit of a larger entity, describe the department or sub-unit. Include the organizational/departmental mission, the years in operation in Merced County, annual operating budget, number of (FTE) employees, a statement regarding the entity’s good standing and qualifications to enter into contracts and provide services in the county, and any other information describing the Applicant’s capability to manage, administer, and fulfill contractual commitments. Provide this information for proposed subcontractor(s), if applicable.

Programmatic: Describe the Applicant’s programmatic experience, major accomplishments, and/or other related activities and organizational assets that are *specifically relevant to the interventions the Applicant proposes* to implement. Include experience working with children 0-5 and/or the specific service population(s) proposed. Describe any previous funding from First 5 Merced County by program name and date. Provide this information for proposed subcontractor(s), if applicable.

Part B: Proposed Goals and Service Population(s) to be Addressed (suggested length – 1 page maximum)

Provide a concise description of the specific goal(s) of the proposed program and the service population. Include how this intervention will impact the service population and expected outcomes the proposed intervention will accomplish. This section will answer the question, “What will the program achieve, change, or improve, and among who?”

In describing the service population, describe the degree of “need” that characterizes this population and the specific goals that address the identified needs. (e.g., what is the baseline level of functioning/performance/effectiveness compared to the goals of your program). Refer to the Service Populations and Interventions section (page 11) of this RFP for relevant information. Include realistic expectations about how the proposed intervention(s) will result in changes to the populations. Please describe any anticipated barriers or dynamics that may impact your efforts. Provide relevant demographic, socioeconomic, and other statistical data or descriptive characteristics that convey the depth of understanding of the service population and needs, if applicable.

Note: Types of “service populations” vary depending on the specific goal pursued and the nature of the particular intervention(s) proposed and may include children, parents/families, organizations/providers/businesses, the community at-large, inter-organizational service systems, policymakers/key opinion leaders, etc.

Part C: Rationale for Proposed Interventions (suggested length – 1-2 pages maximum)

Listing of Interventions: Provide a listing of the specific primary intervention(s) that will be implemented to accomplish programmatic goals. For each intervention listed, indicate which of the 5 Protective Factors the intervention addresses. This brief response will answer the question: “What are the primary services, activities, or other efforts the Applicant will implement?”

Rationale: Describe the rationale supporting the selection of the proposed interventions. Include any information that substantiates why the interventions are likely to have the desired impact with the targeted population in a cost-effective manner.

Utilize the appropriate evidence base from scientific and research literature, studies or reports; program evaluation data or outcomes, or any other information that establishes that the selected interventions are likely to be successful in achieving programmatic goals relevant to First 5 Merced County’s desired goals.

This response will answer the question “How likely will the interventions produce the proposed results?”

Part D: Program Description (suggested length - 3 pages maximum)

Provide a concise narrative description of the program plan. Include sufficient detail to clearly convey to the Review Committee “what, where, when, how, and with whom.”

The response to this section will be dependent upon the type of interventions proposed, the level(s) of intervention selected service population, and program goals.

Generally-speaking, responses to the following types of questions may be helpful in guiding your response:

- ✓ *How will you identify, outreach to, enroll or otherwise engage the intended service population for participation?*
- ✓ *What are the primary planned steps or major tasks needed to implement the interventions? When and/or in what sequence will these tasks or steps be implemented?*
- ✓ *Where and when will interventions be offered? With what frequency and/or duration will program interventions be offered?*
- ✓ *How many individuals (and/or other service population types) will be served?*
- ✓ *How will cultural and linguistic diversity of those served be addressed?*
- ✓ *List partners and/or subcontractors, if applicable. For what particular services or activities will partners or subcontractors be involved?*
- ✓ *What are the anticipated challenges and barriers to implementation? What unique or responsive steps will be taken to successfully address anticipated challenges or barriers?*
- ✓ *Identify any planned changes, modifications, or sequences of primary activities that are expected over the course of the entirety of the contract term.*

Part E: Sustainability (suggested length – 1 page maximum)

Planning for sustainability is required for this grant and is essential to any long-term meaningful change. Supporting and sustaining strong families is not a short-term endeavor; it calls for small but significant changes in everyday practice among professionals who interact with families and young children. Sustainability planning is important because it supports systems and communities to address critical issues beyond any one source of funding, helps protect investments made by the community and enables collaborative efforts to thrive in the face of change.

The development of a sustainability plan is a **requirement** of this funding. Note that in years 2, 3 and 4 of the contract, Applicants will be required to match First 5 funds (see Availability of First 5 Funds, Section 2, page 8).

Attachment #5 is a template that supports Applicants in considering all possible sustainability approaches and identifying the type of information needed to prepare a sustainability plan. This document is required of all Applicants and the completed form must be included with the Applicant's proposal.

Part F: External and In-kind Funds (suggested length – 1/2 page maximum)

Describe external, non-First 5 funding that will be available to support the proposed interventions, if selected for funding. Describe the amounts and sources, and state how the funds will reduce the needed First 5 funding particularly in the out years. Include instances in which First 5 funds, if received, will be used to match or leverage funds from other funding sources. Additionally, describe in-kind resources that will support the project during its term, along with the estimated equivalent value of such resources.

Part G: Evaluation Approach (suggested length – 1/2-page maximum)

Describe the proposed evaluation plan that highlights the effectiveness of the proposal. Include the specific change(s) expected or produced that will identify success. (i.e., what measurable indicators will be used?) Identify what methods to collect data on these indicators, as well as what staff, budgetary, or other resources are planned for evaluation.

Note: All successful Applicants will be required to participate in First 5 Merced County's evaluation activities which may include the use of an online data management system for data entry and program reporting. While kept to a minimum, contractors can expect to participate in periodic, mandatory evaluation training.

Part H: Staffing Plan (suggested length – 1/2 page maximum)

Outline the Applicant organization's current staffing. If staffing is requested through this proposal, describe the staffing configuration and portion of position(s) the grant will fund (partial positions or FTE). Include experience, certifications and/or special qualifications or training required, if applicable. Describe the primary function of each position related to the proposal. If staff is already identified for the proposed position(s), describe the specific qualifications and any particular strengths the identified individual(s) bring to the position(s).

A complete Proposal Narrative should include all of the following components, as described above:

- ✓ Organizational Description and Capacity
- ✓ Proposed Goals and Service Population(s)
- ✓ Rationale for Proposed Intervention
- ✓ Program Description
- ✓ Sustainability
- ✓ External and In-kind Funds
- ✓ Evaluation Approach
- ✓ Staffing Plan

SECTION 6**BASIS OF AWARDS, SELECTION PROCESS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA****A. Basis of Award**

Funding recommendations will be made to the Applicants whose proposals demonstrate they will be the most qualified, responsive and advantageous to First 5 Merced County, and consistent with the intent of this RFP. First 5 Merced County shall not be obligated to accept the lowest cost proposals, but will make awards in the best interests of First 5 Merced County after all factors have been evaluated.

First 5 Merced County reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or any part thereof, to waive any informalities in the proposals and minor irregularities, technical defects or clerical errors, to make an award on the basis of suitability, quality of services to be supplied, their conformity with the specifications and for the purposes for which they are required. False, incomplete, or non-responsive statements in connection with the proposal may be deemed sufficient cause for rejection. First 5 Merced County shall be the sole judge in making such determination.

First 5 Merced County reserves the right to cancel or discontinue with the RFP process and reject any or all proposals in the event it determines that there is no longer a requirement for the furnishing of services, funding is no longer available for this RFP, or it is otherwise in First 5 Merced County's best interest to cancel the RFP process.

B. Selection Process for RFP

A Review Committee consisting of community members, out-of-county reviewers and other selected personnel will be established to evaluate the proposals. The Committee may include representatives from the First 5 Merced County Commission, First 5 Merced County staff, and reviewers in health care, social services and early education from within and outside of Merced County. It is the intent of the committee to select the most responsive Applicants whose proposals meet desirable, minimum qualifications, to initiate discussions with responsive applicants, potentially enter into contract negotiations, and execute contract agreements.

C. Evaluation Criteria

The Review Committee will consider only those proposals which are responsive to the RFP. Any proposal which fails to meet the RFP requirements will be considered non-responsive and may be rejected.

The committee may contact Applicants to clarify any proposal responses provided, as well as contact and evaluate any references provided by the Applicant and/or subcontractor(s)(if applicable); solicit information from any available source concerning any aspect of a proposal; and seek and review any other information deemed pertinent to the evaluation process.

The selection of funding recipients under this RFP will be guided by the merits of each proposal and the direct contributions to First 5 Merced County’s Strong Families Priority Area. Thus, each proposal will be judged on both its merits for directly and specifically pursuing a Strong Families framework.

Proposals shall be ranked on a total score of 100, and shall be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

10 points	Organizational Capacity
10 points	Proposed Service Population(s)
30 points	Merit of Proposed Intervention Plan
20 points	Sustainability Plan
5 points	External/In-Kind Funds
15 points	Evaluation Approach
<u>10 points</u>	Proposed Budget/Budget Justification
100	Total Points Possible

The review committee may recommend adjustments to individual proposed program budgets and services as part of its recommendation to the full Commission based on discussions with Applicants and subsequent contract negotiations. In such cases, the Applicant may elect to accept an adjusted award and revised scope of the program, or withdraw its application from consideration.

D. Notification and Debriefing

Each Applicant will be notified in writing of the outcome of their proposal following completion of the review, discussion, and negotiation process. Any Applicant with questions regarding the outcome of their proposal may contact the Executive Director following the notification to discuss those questions. A debriefing may be held prior to Commission action on funding recommendations upon the receipt of a written request for a debriefing (within 3 business days of written notification) by an unsuccessful Applicant for the purpose of receiving information concerning the evaluation of the Applicant’s proposal.

E. Protest Procedures

The protest process is made available in the event that an unsuccessful Applicant cannot reach agreement with First 5 Merced County after undergoing the debriefing process described herein above.

Should an unsuccessful Applicant request a debriefing, and believes its proposal to be the most responsive to the RFP and that First 5 has incorrectly selected another Applicant for award, the appealing Applicant may submit a protest of the selection. All protests must be made in writing, dated, signed by the Applicant or an individual authorized to sign contracts on behalf of the protesting Applicant, and contain a statement of the reason(s) for protest; citing the law(s), rule(s) and regulation(s) or procedure(s) on which the protest is based. The protesting Applicant must provide facts and evidence to support the protest. Protests are not allowed based solely on a mere disagreement with the proposal review outcome. Protests must be received no later than seven (7) working days following First 5 Merced County's written notification to the Applicant regarding the outcome of their proposal.

Protests may be sent either by U.S. mail, postage paid, or hand delivered to:

First 5 Merced County
c/o Merced County Department of Public Health
ATTN: Executive Director
260 E. 15th Street
Merced, CA 95341

Upon receipt of the formal protest, the Executive Director will attempt to resolve the protest. If the protest has not been resolved, the Applicant will have an opportunity to address the Commission to state the concern. A protest shall be disallowed when, in the judgment of the Executive Director or other Commission designee, it has been submitted: 1) as a delay tactic; 2) for the purpose of posturing the protester advantageously for future procurement; 3) in a form that deviates from the prescribed; 4) without adequate factual basis or merit; or, 5) in an untimely manner.

The Commission will review accepted protests at the next available regularly scheduled Commission meeting. The Commission is the sole and final authority regarding the approval or disapproval of proposals and the conditions under which they are funded. All decisions of the Commission shall be final.

SECTION 7

CONTRACTING REQUIREMENTS

A. Expectations for Successful Applicants

Upon approval of funding by the First 5 Merced County Commission, the successful Applicant organization or entity will be required to enter into a performance-based contract agreement with the County of Merced, on behalf of First 5 Merced County. The proposal submitted in response to this RFP is not a legal agreement, but is instead a reference point for entering into a final contract with the County, specifically identifying the “Scope of Work” as well as the County’s and First 5 Merced County’s contract terms and conditions.

B. Contract Agreement – Terms and Conditions, Statutes and Rules

The general contract terms and conditions for recipients of First 5 Merced County funding are specifically incorporated into this RFP by reference, attached herein in the Attachments section, and should be reviewed carefully by all Applicants. The contract will not be binding on either the Commission or the Applicant until executed by each.

C. Non-Supplantation / Services Benefiting Children 0-5 years and their Families

As described in the attached contract terms and conditions document, Applicants shall be informed that Proposition 10 funds can only be expended for the purposes of supplementing existing levels of services and not to fund (supplant) existing levels of service. Additionally Proposition 10 funds are to be used solely for the benefit of, and/or services to, children 0-5 years of age and their families.

D. Pre-Contract Expectations

Successful Applicants may be expected to attend informational meetings, orientations, and/or trainings prior to the execution of the contract in order to prepare for implementation of contracted services.

SECTION 8
CONTACT INFORMATION

First 5 Merced County is eager to facilitate your participation in this RFP process. For such assistance, please contact:

Martha Hermosillo, Executive Director
First 5 Merced County
c/o Merced County Department of Public Health
260 E. 15th Street
Merced, CA 95341
Phone: (209)385-7337
E-mail: mhermosillo@co.merced.ca.us