



First 5 SLO County Stabilization Fund: Request for Applications (RFA)

Funding Available: Up to \$150,000 Total

Release Date:	October 30, 2025
Applications Due:	December 5, 2025
Anticipated Intent to Award Funding Announced:	December 19, 2025
Anticipated Contract Recommendation and Approval:	January 28, 2026
Anticipated Contract Start:	February 1, 2026

A. Overview/Purpose

Funding shifts at the federal, state, and local levels are threatening safety-net programs and essential services that have already or are likely to significantly alter, reduce, or eliminate existing systems of support for young children and their families.

Additionally, recent policy changes at the federal level and the ongoing federal government shutdown have put many families at risk of loss or delayed core benefits such as Medi-Cal and SNAP-Ed (CalFresh). Taken together, these challenges have increased or will soon increase the needs of families and the demands placed on organizations whose mission is to serve them.

In response to these dramatic shifts, the First 5 San Luis Obispo County Commission approved the establishment of a new program funding allocation, the First 5 Early Childhood Stabilization Fund. This fund will operate for up to three fiscal years (FY25-26, FY26-27, FY27-28), with declining annual allocations of \$300,000, \$200,000, and \$100,000, respectively.

As a first phase in releasing Stabilization Funds into the community, First 5 SLO County deployed \$100,000 to the Community Foundation San Luis Obispo County's Together for SLO County: A Critical Response Fund. This public private-partnership helps nonprofits weather deep funding cuts while building long-term resilience across the region.

First 5 San Luis Obispo County now announces Phase 2, the **Early Childhood Stabilization Fund - Request for Applications (RFA)**, which is designed to provide financial support for essential programs, services, and supplies focused on children prenatal to age 5 and their families, and impacted by the recent budget cuts, funding losses and/or policy shifts.

This funding opportunity aims to help trusted community organizations sustain core early childhood services and supports that directly benefit young children's health, development, learning, and family well-being.

B. Eligible Applicants

Eligible entities include:

1. Nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) status.
2. Public schools and school districts.
3. Public agencies or city/county departments.
4. Applicants must serve families with children prenatal to age 5 in San Luis Obispo County.

C. Funding and Term

1. Total Funds Available: Up to \$150,000.
2. Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$50,000 per application.
3. Funding Term: February 1, 2026 – June 30, 2026 (5 months). Funding must be spent by June 30, 2026.

Allowable Uses:

1. Staffing and operational support for early childhood services.
2. Materials, supplies, or supports for families with children prenatal to age 5.
3. Funds may not supplant other government or grant funding sources.

Application:

Section 1: Applicant Information (Cover Page)

1. Organization Name
2. Mailing Address
3. Website
4. Contact Person
5. Title
6. Phone
7. Email
8. Total Funding Requested

Section 2: Summary of Need (Maximum 1 Page)

Briefly describe (As applicable):

1. What program, service, or supply for families with children prenatal to age 5 has been reduced or eliminated.
2. What funding source(s) were lost (amount and type).
3. When this funding was discontinued or reduced.
4. How this reduction has impacted children prenatal to age 5 and their families.
5. What program, service, or supply has experienced a surge in demand due to current conditions.

Section 3: Proposed Use of Funds (Maximum 1 Page)

Describe how First 5 Stabilization Funds will help maintain or restore essential services and/or support for families with children, prenatal to age 5. Include:

1. Description of program, service, and/or supply.
2. Who will benefit (estimated number of families/children).
3. How funds will be used (brief budget summary or line items).

Section 4: Equity & Access (Maximum 1 Page)

Explain how you will ensure equitable access for the underserved and most in need families.

Section 5: Budget Summary (Maximum 1 Page)

Create a budget in the style of the table below. Only include line items for you which you are requesting funding:

	Description	Amount Requested
Personnel		
Program Materials		
Supplies		
Equipment		
Direct Payment Family Assistance		
Other (specify)		
Total		

Submission Instructions

- Deadline: Friday, December 5, 2025, by 5:00 PM
- Submit Sections 1-5 as a single PDF to: jwells@first5slo.org
- PDF Name: Your Organization + F5Stable
- Subject Line: “Stabilization Fund Application – [Your Organization Name]”

For questions, contact:

Jason Wells, Associate Director

Email: jwells@first5slo.org | Phone: 805.781.4058

Website: www.first5slo.org

A. General Terms and Conditions

1. Proposers wishing to submit applications in response to this request do so entirely at their own expense, and submission of an application indicates the applicant’s willingness to conform to the conditions contained in this REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS unless clearly and specifically noted otherwise.
2. First 5, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to determine whether any applicant meets the minimum eligibility standards, to determine whether an application is responsive, and to select an application(s) that best serves its objectives. First 5 reserves the right to make an award in part or in full to the applicant of its choice, based on the applicant’s evaluation of the separate project components. First 5 reserves the right to modify the information required for each phase of the selection process.
3. Notwithstanding any other provision of this REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS, applicants are hereby advised that this REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS is a solicitation of applications only and is not to be construed as an offer to enter into any contract or agreement. First 5 shall have the unconditional and unqualified right to withdraw, cancel, or amend this REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS at any time.
4. Responses to this REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS should be made according to the instructions contained herein. Failure to adhere to REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS instructions may be cause for rejection of the application. An application which contains conditions or limitations set up by the applicant may be deemed irregular and subsequently rejected by First 5.

5. First 5 reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive variances in applications provided such action is in the best interest of First 5. Where First 5 waives minor variances in applications, such waiver does not modify the REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS requirements or excuse the applicant from full compliance with the REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS. Notwithstanding any minor variance, First 5 may hold any applicant to strict compliance with the REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS.
6. False, incomplete, or unresponsive statements in the application response may be cause for its rejection. The evaluation and determination of the fulfillment of the REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS requirements will be First 5's responsibility and its judgment shall be final.
7. First 5 reserves the right to interpret or change any provision of this REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS at any time prior to the application submission date. Such interpretation or change shall be in the form of a written addendum to this REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS. Such addendum will become part of this REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS and any resultant contract. Such addendum shall be made available to each firm which has received a REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS. Should such addendum require additional information not previously requested, a applicant's failure to address the requirements of such addendum in the final application response may result in the application not be considered.
8. First 5 has, at its sole discretion, the unconditional and unqualified right to determine whether a time extension is required for submission of APPLICATIONS, in which case, a written REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS addendum issued by First 5 shall indicate the new submission date for APPLICATIONS. Prior to the final submission date, applicants may retrieve their APPLICATIONS to make additions or alterations. Such retrieval, however, shall not extend the final submission date.
9. Proposers should carefully review this REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS and all attachments for comments, questions, defects, objections or any other matter requiring clarification or correction (collectively "Comments.") All Comments concerning the REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS must be sent to Jason Wells jwells@first5slo.org by the deadline included in the timeline above.

10. This REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS does not represent an offer or commitment by FIRST 5 to enter into an agreement with a applicant or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this request. The responses and any information made as part of the responses will not be returned to applicants. This REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS and the selected applicant's response to this REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS, may, by reference, become a part of any formal agreement between the applicant and First 5 resulting from this solicitation.
11. The applicant shall not collude in any manner or engage in any practices with any other applicant(s) that may restrict or eliminate competition or otherwise restrain trade. Violation of this instruction will cause the applicant's submittal to be rejected by First 5. The prohibition is not intended to preclude joint ventures or subcontracts that are identified in the application. All APPLICATIONS submitted must be the original work product of the applicant. The copying, paraphrasing, or otherwise using of substantial portions of the work product of another applicant is not permitted. Failure to adhere to this instruction will cause the application to be rejected.
12. No person will offer, give or agree to give any First 5 employee or its representatives any gratuity or offer of employment in connection with this REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS or the award of a subsequent contract by First 5. No First 5 employee or its representatives will solicit, demand, accept or agree to accept from any other person a gratuity or offer of employment in connection with this REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS or a subsequent First 5 contract.
13. To withdraw an application, the applicant must submit a written request, signed by an authorized representative, to the REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS Coordinator. After withdrawing a previously submitted application, the applicant may submit another application at any time up to the deadline for submitting APPLICATIONS. Proposers are liable for all errors or omissions contained in their APPLICATIONS. Proposers will not be allowed to alter application documents after the deadline for submitting APPLICATIONS. First 5 will not accept any amendments, revisions or alterations to APPLICATIONS after the deadline for application submittal unless such is formally requested, in writing, by First 5.

14. All APPLICATIONS and other materials submitted in response to this REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS become the property of First 5. Selection or rejection of an application does not affect this right. All application information, including detailed price and cost information, will be held in confidence during the evaluation process. Upon the completion of the evaluation of APPLICATIONS, the APPLICATIONS and associated materials will be open for review by the public to the extent allowed by the California Public Records Act, (Government Code Section 6250-6270 and 6275-6276.48). By submitting an application, the applicant acknowledges and accepts that the contents of the application and associated documents will become open to public inspection.
15. The California Public Records Act limits First 5's ability to withhold trade secrets or related records, the disclosure of which may be exempt or prohibited pursuant to federal or state law. If a submittal contains any trade secrets that an applicant does not want disclosed to the public or used by First 5 for any purpose other than evaluation of the applicant's eligibility, each sheet of such information must be marked with the designation "Confidential." First 5 will notify the submitter of data so classified of any request to inspect such data so that the submitter will have an opportunity to establish that such information is exempt from inspection in any proceeding to compel inspection.
16. After review of the APPLICATIONS, First 5 intends to enter into contract negotiations with the selected applicant. These negotiations could include all aspects of services and fees, or only a select few. If a contract is not finalized in a reasonable period of time, First 5 will open negotiations with other applicants.
17. If any provision of this REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS is declared by a court to be illegal or in conflict with any law, the validity of the remaining terms and provisions will not be affected; and the rights and obligations of First 5 and applicants will be construed and enforced as if the REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS did not contain the particular provision held to be invalid.

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