

# 2020

## Covid Response for Care and Early Learning Support Request for Proposals

DUE DATE: OCTOBER 15, 2020

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## A. Introduction

### First 5 San Luis Obispo County

First 5 San Luis Obispo (SLO) County originated as the Children and Families Commission of San Luis Obispo County (Commission) in 1998 as part of California’s statewide voter Proposition 10. The intent of the Children and Families Act (Act) is to provide a comprehensive and integrated system of prevention and early intervention services for children prenatal to five years and their families in order to help young children grow and develop to their maximum potential. These services are paid for by a tobacco tax authorized by the Act. Eighty percent of the revenues collected goes to the 58 County Commissions to fund local programs. Annual tobacco tax revenues are distributed to County Commissions based upon county birth rates. The remaining twenty percent is used by the State Commission to implement statewide strategies.

A nine-person Commission appointed by the SLO County Board of Supervisors oversees and sets direction for First 5 SLO County. Commissioner backgrounds span the range of children’s services, including education, healthcare, social services, child care, public and private service organizations, and local government.

### Sustained Community Support for Early Childhood

First 5 SLO County believes in shared investment to support our young children and their families during a critical and vulnerable stage of life – for two reasons. First, state tobacco tax revenues that support First 5 statewide are diminishing over time with the welcome decrease in smoking rates. Second, building lasting supports for young children and families into the fabric of our community is a wise choice, both morally and economically. To that end, First 5 funding is intended to support and expand services where resources are otherwise limited.

### Strategic Plan

In June 2020 the Commissioners approved the [First 5 San Luis Obispo County Strategic Plan](#) for 2020-2024. The Plan identifies the following three Focus Areas that inform First 5 program investments and advocacy to address core community needs in early childhood:

1. Health and Development
2. Early Learning
3. Resilient Families



## **First 5 SLO County Mission and Vision**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to allocate funds and advocate for quality programs and services, supporting children, prenatal to age 5, to ensure that every child is healthy, developing to optimal potential, and ready to learn in school.

### **VISION STATEMENT**

Our vision is to ensure children thrive in nurturing respectful environments and enter school healthy and ready to learn.

## Request/Need

First 5 San Luis Obispo (SLO) County, is seeking proposals for an organization/s to immediately provide support for child care and early learning for families with children ages birth to 5 years that have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **Background**

As part of its FY 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, First 5 has a goal to ensure that from birth, children have rich, varied and equitable opportunities to promote their physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development, both in families, early childhood education, and other enriching environments.

San Luis Obispo County has for many years been experiencing a growing child care crisis that is similarly being felt and addressed across the state. High cost of living, high demand, dwindling workforce and decreasing supply are all factors that contribute to this crisis. In March 2020 this crisis worsened with the sudden and devastating impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic created a perfect storm of events from school and business closures, to massive layoffs and unemployment. Many of the parents who were laid off could no longer afford child care, or those who were still employed kept their children home during shelter-in-place orders. The fear of infection, public health and child care licensing directives related to limiting capacity/slots and surrounding uncertainty brought on by the pandemic made it increasingly difficult if not impossible for child care operators to keep their doors open, increasing the pressure on an already strained system. The pandemic, which continues today, has further solidified how essential child care is not only for early learning, but for a strong workforce, economic recovery and family well-being.

## **B. Proposal – Child Care Access and Early Learning Support**

Under its FY 2020-24 Strategic Plan and Early Learning focus area, First 5 is inviting interested parties to submit a proposal that describes how it will relieve, reduce, or eliminate child care challenges brought about as result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Funding for this request is intended to expeditiously address challenges so that parents and families receive immediate support towards addressing their child care needs.

## **C. What are the expected services to be delivered?**

First 5 is inviting proposals for solutions to address the challenges and concerns described previously. While we are not prescribing a specific approach, the following is a sample of potential services that might be included:

- Free or reduced cost child care slots
- Direct child care stipends to parents/caregivers
- Developmentally appropriate early learning activities
- General operating support for open child care programs
- Alternative “pop-up” child care
- Outdoor classroom care
- Expanded, alternate, weekend, evening care
- Child care vouchers
- Matching families without child care with providers who have space
- Opening/expanding employer-based child care
- Waiving family fees

- Waiving alternative payment requirements for serving older children during instructional hours in licensed care.

### Specific Requirements

1. Solutions must be mobilized/implemented within 30 days.
2. Solutions must provide support for those most in need.
3. Solutions must be administered in a fair and equitable manner such that all families particularly those in hard-to-reach, marginalized and minority communities understand these services are available, and are given ample opportunity for access.
4. Applicants must include a description of the developmentally and age appropriate early learning framework practiced by the program/agency.
5. Solutions must adhere to the latest local and state guidelines and safety measures as they relate to child care and prevention of the spread of Covid-19.
6. Licensed child care providers may only operate under the current rules and restrictions of their license.

NOTE: First 5 encourages creative solutions to address these challenges, First 5 has no authority to offer license waivers or relief of license mandates.

### **D. What are the desired impacts of the program?**

1. Increased number of families provided with safe, affordable, high quality child care options.
2. Increased number of children ages 0-5 receiving child care services.

### **E. Available Funds**

- \$200,000 is available through June 30, 2021
- Applications are for a minimum of \$50,000 and up to \$200,000
- The funding period is short term. Expected Duration: November 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021.
- First 5 SLO County is inviting proposals covering the entire 8-month term. Funding beyond this term is not expected nor guaranteed. In addition to satisfactory performance, First 5 will consider future funding based on the nature of the pandemic and community needs in early 2021.

### Match Requirement (In-kind)

The Covid Response for Care and Early Learning Support funds are intended to build on existing systems, to partner with organizations that have a demonstrated history providing early care and education services to children from birth to five years. A successful applicant will have established infrastructure and capacity to immediately address the challenges stated and provide relief to families in need of a high quality, affordable child care.

### **F. Who May Submit**

- Non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) status
- City/County Governments
- School/School Districts
- Community Based Private Entities

### **G. What to Include in the Proposal**

The Concept Proposal should include the following:

1. Title Page: Organization's name, contact person, address, telephone, e-mail address
2. Proposal Narrative (Not to exceed 3 pages):
  - History of providing family supports for families with young children and/or early care and education for children 0-5
  - Description of the proposed plan for providing immediate increased access to affordable, high quality child care to families with children ages 0-5 impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic.
  - Number of families and unique children you expect to serve?
  - Criteria for access to services and support?
  - How will you ensure equitable and fair access to services and distribution of resources?
  - Who will supervise and train staff?
  - How will you provide services to non-English speaking families?
3. Budget and Budget Narrative (Not to exceed 3 pages): An estimated 9-month budget including the requested and total project amount, in-kind contributions.

#### **H. Proposal Restrictions**

1. Applicants should be aware that these funds cannot be used to provide services to families that do not include a child aged birth to age 5.
2. Funding will only be allocated to fund new or expanded services.
3. No funding will be provided for existing services currently funded through another source (i.e., no funding may be used to supplant local, state, or federal funds for any purpose).
4. Funds that are requested by the applicant must be used exclusively for the operation and administration of the proposed activities outlined in the applicant's scope of work.

#### **I. E-mail Notification on Interest**

Applicants are encouraged to send an email notification of their interest to [jwells@first5slo.org](mailto:jwells@first5slo.org). The email should contain the applicant organization's name and identified contact person.

#### **J. Proposal Deadline**

October 15, 2020 at 5:00pm.

#### **K. Submission**

Provide one (1) copy of the proposal in a single PDF file by email to Jason Wells at [jwells@first5slo.org](mailto:jwells@first5slo.org)

#### **L. Award Process**

##### Proposal Review

A Review Panel will review submitted proposals. Proposals will be ranked according to the applicant's demonstrated capacity to implement and manage the requirements of this request. Applicants may be interviewed for further program vetting and approval.

Notification of Intent to Award

By October 19, 2020, notification of the funding recommendations will be e-mailed to all applicants.

Commission Vote on Recommendations

The Commission will vote on proposal(s) award recommendations on October 29, 2020, at its regularly scheduled meeting.

Sole Discretion

Final selection is at the sole discretion of the Commission, which reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to fund one or more proposals, to negotiate programmatic or budgetary changes with applicants or to make no selection based on proposals. There is no appeal to this process.

**M. Application Timeline**

The following timetable indicates dates of major significance to this project:

Release of Request for Proposal	September 29, 2020
Proposals Due	October 15, 2020
Intent to Award Funding Announced	October 19, 2020
Proposal Award Recommendation to Commission	October 29, 2020
Contract Approval	October 29, 2020 or by special meeting TBD
Expected Contract Start Date	November 1, 2020

For questions, interpretations, or clarifications of this Request for Proposal please contact Jason Wells-jwells@first5slo.org or Wendy Wendt-wwendt@first5slo.org at First 5 San Luis Obispo County.

**N. General Terms and Conditions**

1. Proposers wishing to submit proposals in response to this request do so entirely at their own expense, and submission of a proposal indicates the proposer’s willingness to conform to the conditions contained in this REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS unless clearly and specifically noted otherwise.
2. First 5, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to determine whether any proposer meets the minimum eligibility standards, to determine whether a proposal is responsive, and to select a proposal(s) that best serves its objectives. First 5 reserves the right to make an award in part or in full to the proposer of its choice, based on the proposer’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 PROPOSALS, proposers are hereby advised that this REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS is a solicitation of proposals 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 PROPOSALS at any time.

- 4.** Responses to this REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS should be made according to the instructions contained herein. Failure to adhere to REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS instructions may be cause for rejection of the proposal. A proposal which contains conditions or limitations set up by the proposer may be deemed irregular and subsequently rejected by First 5.
- 5.** First 5 reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive variances in proposals provided such action is in the best interest of First 5. Where First 5 waives minor variances in proposals, such waiver does not modify the REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS requirements or excuse the proposer from full compliance with the REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS. Notwithstanding any minor variance, First 5 may hold any proposer to strict compliance with the REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS.
- 6.** False, incomplete, or unresponsive statements in the proposal response may be cause for its rejection. The evaluation and determination of the fulfillment of the REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS 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 PROPOSALS at any time prior to the proposal submission date. Such interpretation or change shall be in the form of a written addendum to this REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS. Such addendum will become part of this REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS and any resultant contract. Such addendum shall be made available to each firm that has received a REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS. Should such addendum require additional information not previously requested, a proposer's failure to address the requirements of such addendum in the final proposal response may result in the proposal 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 proposals, in which case, a written REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS addendum issued by First 5 shall indicate the new submission date for proposals. Prior to the final submission date, proposers may retrieve their proposals to make additions or alterations. Such retrieval, however, shall not extend the final submission date.
- 9.** Proposers should carefully review this REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS and all attachments for comments, questions, defects, objections or any other matter requiring clarification or correction (collectively "Comments.") All Comments concerning the REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS must be sent to Jason Wells [jwells@first5slo.org](mailto:jwells@first5slo.org) by the deadline included in the timeline above.
- 10.** This REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS does not represent an offer or commitment by FIRST 5 to enter into an agreement with a proposer 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 proposers. This REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS and the selected proposer's response to this REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS, may, by reference, become a part of any formal agreement between the proposer and First 5 resulting from this solicitation.
- 11.** The proposer shall not collude in any manner or engage in any practices with any other proposer(s) that may restrict or eliminate competition or otherwise restrain trade. Violation of this instruction will cause the proposer's submittal to be rejected by First 5. The prohibition is not intended to preclude joint ventures or subcontracts that are identified in the proposal. All proposals submitted must be the original work product of the proposer. The copying, paraphrasing, or otherwise using of substantial portions of the work product of another proposer is not permitted. Failure to adhere to this instruction will cause the proposal 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 PROPOSALS 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 PROPOSALS or a subsequent First 5 contract.

**13.** To withdraw a proposal, the proposer must submit a written request, signed by an authorized representative, to the REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS Coordinator. After withdrawing a previously submitted proposal, the proposer may submit another proposal at any time up to the deadline for submitting proposals. Proposers are liable for all errors or omissions contained in their proposals. Proposers will not be allowed to alter proposal documents after the deadline for submitting proposals. First 5 will not accept any amendments, revisions or alterations to proposals after the deadline for proposal submittal unless such is formally requested, in writing, by First 5.

**14.** All proposals and other materials submitted in response to this REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS become the property of First 5. Selection or rejection of a proposal does not affect this right. All proposal information, including detailed price and cost information, will be held in confidence during the evaluation process. Upon the completion of the evaluation of proposals, the proposals 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 a proposal, the proposer acknowledges and accepts that the contents of the proposal 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 a proposer does not want disclosed to the public or used by First 5 for any purpose other than evaluation of the proposer'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 proposals, First 5 intends to enter into contract negotiations with the selected proposer. 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 proposers.

**17.** If any provision of this REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS 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 proposers will be construed and enforced as if the REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS did not contain the particular provision held to be invalid.

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