



2024

Early Learning and Child Care Request for Proposals

- **Release of Request for Proposal:** July 29, 2024
- **Optional Bidders' Conference (via Zoom):** August 9, 2024
- **Mandatory Letter of Intent Due:** August 16, 2024
- **Proposals Due:** September 13, 2024
- **Intent to Award Funding Announced:** October 23, 2024
- **Anticipated Contract Recommendation and Approval:** December 4, 2024 (First 5 Commission Meeting)
- **Anticipated Contract Start:** January 1, 2025

First 5 San Luis Obispo County
3220 South Higuera Street, Ste. 232
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-6985
Phone: 805.781.4058
www.first5slo.org

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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 (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.

First 5 SLO County Mission and Vision

Mission Statement

First 5 San Luis Obispo County funds and advocates for quality programs and services, to support children prenatal to five years old and their families, so that every child is healthy, learning and developing to their optimal potential, and ready to succeed in school and life.

Vision Statement

Our vision is to see children in San Luis Obispo County thrive in nurturing, respectful environments, and enter school healthy and ready to learn.

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 and system improvement where resources are otherwise limited.

Strategic Plan

In May 2024, Commissioners approved the [First 5 SLO County Strategic Plan 2024-2028](#). The Plan identifies the following three Focus Areas that inform First 5 program investments and advocacy to address core community needs in early childhood:

- **Early Health Foundations:** *Promoting young children’s wellness and access to quality care.*
- **Early Learning & Child Care:** *Ensuring that from birth, children have rich and varied opportunities to develop their minds.*
- **Parent Engagement, Connection & Education:** *Supporting parents and families to build stable, nurturing and enriching home environments for young children.*

Outcome Goals within the Early Learning and Child Care Focus Area are the following:

Short-Term Outcomes

1. Increased awareness of the importance of child care as an issue for shared attention and responsibility among the private and public sectors.
2. More residents and community organizations across sectors are engaged in child care as an issue.
3. Greater alignment between the early care and education sector and school districts now serving younger students.

Medium & Longer-Term Outcomes

1. Greater child care capacity (in unmet/targeted need areas – e.g. infant toddler, nontraditional hours).
2. More private sector businesses and public agencies are offering child care support.
3. Expanded capacity across community serving organizations to coordinate child care infrastructure.
4. Increased/sustained public and private policies and funding to support child care.

B. First 5 Funding Opportunity

The Commission has allocated up to \$800,000 through June 2028 to contribute new First 5 investments toward improving the Early Learning and Child Care system in San Luis Obispo County, and specifically addressing one or more of the Outcome Goals in the Strategic Plan (see above). Successful proposals will be funded by the Commission using Proposition 10 funds. These funds are intended for the benefit of children prenatal to age five and their families and may not supplant existing resources.

The Commission desires to fund one to two proposals that **build on current efforts** to address *system-level needs and challenges* related to early learning and child care in San Luis Obispo County.

Examples of key need/challenge areas to be addressed include, but are not limited to:

- **Early Learning and Child Care Workforce:** e.g. recruitment, retention, compensation strategies to stabilize and grow the child care sector.
- **Child Care Sector Business Supports:** e.g. child care business start-ups, modifications to child care sector in response to UPK/TK, expansion of opportunities for infant-toddler care.
- **Bridge Funding:** e.g. extensions of projects launched with ARPA or other limited funding.

Specific Requirements

1. Proposals must address the early learning and child care needs of children 5 and under.
2. Solutions must be offered and delivered in a fair and equitable manner such that any individual or organization that might be impacted - particularly those in isolated, marginalized and otherwise vulnerable communities – are informed of the work, actively engaged in its development, and are given ample opportunity for access.

C. Available Funds

- Total of up to \$200,000 annually is available through June 30, 2028 (Actual award amount may be lower if more than one proposal is funded).
- Expected Contract Duration: January 1, 2025 – June 30, 2028.

- Shared Investment: First 5 funds are intended to build on existing systems and infrastructure, to support organizations that have a demonstrated history of successfully providing services to benefit children from prenatal to five years and their families. A successful applicant will have an established infrastructure and capacity to address the challenges stated.

D. Who May Submit

- Non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) status
- City/County Governments
- School/School Districts
- Community based private entities
- All applicants must have an office or program site located in San Luis Obispo County

E. Optional Bidders' Conference

August 9, 2024, 11AM-12PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85420182793>

Meeting ID: 854 2018 2793

F. Mandatory Letter of Intent

Applicants **must** submit a Letter of Intent as the first step before submitting a full proposal. The letter of intent is due Monday August 16, 2024, by 5PM, and shall be emailed to: jwells@first5slo.org. The Letter of Intent shall be no more than one page in length, and include the following:

- Agency Name, Primary Contact, Phone & Email
- Brief Summary of Proposal
- Expected Impact/s
- Estimated Total Funding Request Amount

Submitting a Letter of Intent to apply does not bind applicants to complete the application process but it is a required step in the application process.

G. What to Include in the Proposal

The Proposal should include the following:

1. **Title Page:** Organization's name, contact person, address, telephone, e-mail address
2. **Proposal Narrative** (Not to exceed 6 pages):
 - a) **History** of providing supports that benefit young children prenatal to aged 5 and their families. History of providing or supporting systems improvement of early learning and child care.
 - b) **Description** of the plan to support, create, or expand access to quality affordable early learning/child care opportunities for children 5 years and under in San Luis Obispo County. What current effort/s does the proposed project build upon?

- c) **Population/s of Focus:** Provide detail on whom and how many the project intends to serve -- depending on the proposal, this could be organizations, early childhood professionals, families/children, etc. Include any other relevant information that describes the identified population/s of focus, such as age groups, life circumstances, size/type of organizations, geographic communities, life circumstances, backgrounds, etc.
- d) **Anticipated Impact:** What is the overall goal of the proposal? What will you consider evidence of success?
- e) **Equity:** How will you ensure equitable and fair access to services and distribution of resources?
- f) **Partnership:** What other community organizations or groups will you partner with/involve?

3. **Budget and Budget Narrative:**

- o Projects funded through this RFP process may be up to 4 fiscal years. First 5 operates on a July 1-June 30 Fiscal Year calendar. Because the contract/s start date is anticipated to be January 1, 2025, the funded period is up to 42 months (i.e. 6 months in Fiscal Year 24-25, plus three additional 12-month periods). Please create annual budgets and narratives for the 42-month period, including the requested and total project amount.
- o Please show in the budget and budget narrative how First 5's investment will be supported, matched or leveraged by other sources of funding, infrastructure and in-kind resources.

4. **Agency Financials**

- a) Include current FY Abbreviated Organizational Operating Budget
- b) Attach prior year Abbreviated Financial Statement
- c) Attach list of major and current sources of funding (including First 5)

5. **Scalability:** Describe how you would adapt or scale down the program if your request is not fully funded.

6. **Support:** Include letters of support from at least two:

- a) Local parents/primary caregivers who would potentially benefit from this program.
- b) Local Family Serving Agencies.

H. Proposal Restrictions

- Applicants should be aware that these funds must be used toward services to benefit families that include at least one child prenatal to age 5.
- Commission funds will not be used to finance or supplant any existing levels of service currently funded by federal, state, or local funds. If your program is funded, your organization must agree to this policy.
- 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 proposal.

I. Proposal Deadline

Friday September 13, 2024, at 5:00 PM.

J. Submission

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

K. Award Process

Proposal Review

A panel will review submitted proposals. Proposals will be ranked according to merit of the proposal as it relates to the need, and the applicant's demonstrated capacity to implement and manage the requirements of this request. Applicants may be interviewed for further program vetting and questions.

Notification of Intent to Award

By October 23, 2024, 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 December 4, 2024, at its regularly scheduled meeting.

Contract Approval

The Commission is expected to vote on contract approval December 4, 2024.

Sole Discretion

Final proposal 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.

L. Application Timeline

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

Release of Request for Proposal:	July 29, 2024
Bidders Conference (via Zoom):	August 9, 2024
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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 805.781.4058.

M. 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 which 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 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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