RESILIENT FAMILIES RFP Questions and Answers

(Questions submitted before, during, and after the Proposer's Conference on 1-21-2020)

Issued January 28, 2020

CLARIFICATION ITEMS BY F5SMC

1) Staffing: You will most likely address staffing throughout your Project Narrative. In addition, please provide a separate paragraph about how you will staff the project at the end of the Project Narrative section. This is not specifically called out in the Project Narrative instructions, but we are requiring that you provide it. You will also provide specific details about staffing in the Budget Request Form and the Budget Narrative Form. In terms of the Project Narrative paragraph about staffing, tell us:

   - Salary ranges and FTEs
   - New hire or existing staff
     - If existing, describe previous funding sources
     - Address the Supplanatation Policy
   - Job Descriptions/Resumes (please attach, does not count toward the page limit)
   - Identify consultants & subcontractors (please attach consultant qualifications and MOUs, does not count toward the page limit. See Q12 below for additional details.)
   - Who will be responsible for reporting
   - How you will promote professional development

2) Attachments: In addition to the attachments listed in the RFP on pages 31-35, please also attach all applicable MOUs, and your organization's 501(c)3 letter if a non-profit. Feel free to attach other documents that are related to your proposal which help the reader better understand your project, but be reasonable in terms of amount of attachments and how long each one is.

3) It is likely that F5SMC will issue a formal addendum to the RFP which explains the staffing and attachment items listed above.

4) The RFP distinctly calls out an interest in funding projects that work with the "working poor" or those who make just enough money to be disqualified from MediCal and other public benefits. However, that is not to be construed as F5SMC being disinterested in serving families who DO qualify for MediCal (because their income is relatively low). Income is only one potential indicator of an at-risk family; we aim to serve a myriad of families facing multiple risk factors.

QUESTIONS ASKED PRIOR TO THE PROPOSERS' CONFERENCE

1) Q: We just received the "Resilient Families" RFP and just want to ask if this is going to supersede the "Watch Me Grow" fund or if it is a completely different stream of funding. Thank you for your assistance. *Via Email*

   A: Because your question has an answer discoverable by reading our Strategic Plan (therefore anyone can access the information), I can go ahead and answer your question. But just know beyond something really general I can't answer questions. Although you could make a case for services for children with special needs falling under the Resilient Families Focus Area, our Strategic Plan has categorized special needs in the Healthy Children Focus Area. You'll see Strategy # 2 of the Healthy Children Focus Area is **Integrated Systems for Children with Special Needs and their Families**. Projects like Watch Me Grow would be funded out of that strategy. We have not yet released the RFP for the Healthy Children Focus Area, but it is slated for release within the next couple months. *Via Email*

QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE PROPOSER'S CONFERENCE

1) Q: I'm anticipating that my organization will propose a project that addresses more than one strategy within the Resilient Families Focus Area. I'm envisioning my project will have overlapping service strategies, do we somehow need to show exactly how which strategies are attached to which money? (This question was in response to the statement that we acknowledge that the Focus Area strategies overlap and cannot always be distinctly parsed out one from another when implementing services.)

   A: No, If you complete the Project Narrative and Budget Narrative fully, as well as identify on the SOW who is responsible for each activity, we will have a good sense of how the budget relates to the proposed activities/service strategies.

2) Q: Do private organizations need to submit a CEO or Board Authorization statement? Does the County Office of Education, which is not private, need to submit a Board Authorization?

   A: Private organizations do need to submit a CEO or Board Authorization statement. However, if the timing of your board meeting is such that you cannot execute the Board Authorization with your proposal submission, include an explanation on the form as to when you anticipate submitting a signed Board Authorization Form. This is an item that could be handled during contract negotiations, if needed. Given that the San Mateo County Office of Education is not a private organization, no CEO or Board Authorization is required.

3) Q: Is it possible that F5SMC would fund a subset of what an applicant proposes vs. the entire proposed project?

   A: Yes. If so, it would be as a result of the review panel making that suggestion.

4) Q: Is it possible that F5SMC would fund all the activities proposed in a project but at a reduced rate?

A: Yes. If so, it would be as a result of the review panel making that suggestion.

5) Q: After receiving all the proposals, if F5SMC sees a potential collaboration that would be beneficial – but was not proposed -- would F5SMC require those applicants to collaborate?

A: That's a possibility. Many years ago when we were rolling out our special needs funding that exact situation occurred. In response we implemented a 6-month planning process with the involved applicants and the result was a more collaborative, coalesced project with structured collaborative relationships. We also try to be mindful of the existing relationships and circumstances so that we are realistic around collaborations.

6) Q: This question relates to the first one. In order to be mindful of how many words we're using in tying project activities to the three Resilient Families Focus Area Strategies given our proposed project activities overlap, how do we structure our proposal? If we list each service strategy and describe which Focus Area Strategy it ties to, we'll be reiterating that several times given the overlap. How do we handle this?

A: Every project is different. The idea is not to have you repeat yourself over and over, the idea is that you clearly explain the project and tell us which Focus Area strategies your projects addresses. For some projects a general statement in the narrative at the beginning may be clear enough, for another it may be beneficial to reiterate if it makes the project clearer for the reader. Just do your best and focus on telling the story of what you're proposing and why, and how it relates to what we want to fund.

7) Q: Is there a link to an evidence-based clearing house that we could refer to?

A: There are some related to McVeigh funding and home visiting where there is a list of state-recommended evidence-based practices. You could just use a google search to find what you're looking for. And as a reminder you do not have to only suggest evidence-based project elements, evidence-informed or promising practices are also acceptable. We just want some reasonable evidence that your project will be effective.

8) Q: Has F5SMC or other First 5's identified a list of common stressors and practices to support families?

A: Lean on the larger evidence-based clearing houses; there is no formal First 5 data bank, but we have included a lot of information in the RFP itself including results from local data gathering efforts as well as research on key indicators of effective programming, etc.

9) Q: Can we include our own needs assessment if it pertains to the project we are proposing?

A: Yes, in fact the RFP instructions include providing your own needs assessment if it helps support your proposed project.

10) Q: Are there any exclusions to serving undocumented or newly immigrated populations, and is there a terminology preference?

A: Our funding does not exclude services to undocumented or newly immigrated children and families. Use the terminology that describes your target population the best; use the verbiage you see fit.

11) Q: In the spirit of not making the review panel search for things in the proposal in different places in order to understand the proposed project, could the review panel scoring rubric be made available so that we have that as we craft our proposal?

A: No. The review criteria are in the back of the RFP and are clearly stated. The scoring rubric is based on the criteria listed in the RFP. The county has recently banned numerical review of proposals and F5SMC has never had numerical ranking of proposals. In terms of structuring your proposal, sometimes applicants have included a table in the narrative portion that can be helpful in order to show the structure of the project, for example to show how strategies relate to activities. You can also use bullet points or whatever is easiest to convey the information – it does not have to be 20 pages of sheer narrative.

12) Q: In working with consultants do you have suggestions regarding what to be mindful of other than they need their own Budget and SOW if their budget is $25,000 or more?

A: Consultants would need to appropriately calculate their indirect costs, and the consultant subcontract amount would need to be backed out of the lead agency's indirect calculation. Consultant qualifications is a requirement of the RFP so be sure to include that as an attachment. We've had the experience that a consultant does not perform well and that negatively impacts the project, so be sure the consultant you select is appropriate for the project and has the bandwidth to execute their SOW. Review panelists do look at the hourly rate for consultants, so be sure the rate they are charging is the fair market value of the service and not too high.

To provide augment the RFP instructions regarding consultants we are providing the following: For every consultant to be supported by F5SMC provide a statement of qualifications. What is it about this particular consultant that will benefit your project? What expertise or experience do they have? What is their particular area of expertise that they bring that can't be provided by your staff? What is their hourly rate? If you would like to attach a resume in addition to the Consultant Qualifications Statement, you may. If you anticipate needing a consultant but have not yet identified one by the time you submit your proposal, explain this in your Project Narrative, include the recruitment of the consultant as an activity in the first quarter of your SOW, and include a line item in the Budget and Budget Narrative Forms with an amount you are earmarking/allocating for the consultant. If the consultant is retained during the contract negotiation period we can update your Budget forms and SOW forms to include the consultant. If the consultant is not identified until the first quarter of the project, we can perform a SOW update and or a Budget Revision, if necessary.

13) Q: This question was posed by Karen Pisani of F5SMC to the whole group: Would you like the list of attendees here today so that collaboration is a little easier?

A: Yes.

14) Q: Some of the elements that we would like to propose we are already doing but we would like to expand those services. Is that ok?

A: Yes. The Supplanation Policy states that we cannot fund anything that has previously been funded through state or local general funds. If the service/project proposed is expanding beyond what is currently being provided, that does not violate the supplantation policy. Be clear in your narrative about the fact that the proposed project does not violate the supplantation policy because what you are proposing is new or an augmented service.

15) Q: We can ask questions after this conference, right?

A: Yes, you can ask questions after the Proposers' Conference by submitting an email to both Karen Pisani (kpisani@smcgov.org) and Mai Le (Mle@smcgov.org). Questions will be accepted through January 24, 2020.

16) Q: So you're looking to cover (serve) the whole county, but it doesn't matter if our proposal is submitted individually or as part of a collaborative effort, correct?

A: Yes. And the Commission could decide that they really want to target their investment to a particular region or particular target population, etc. Additionally, the review panel will often times give thought to the overall approach of their recommendation, so they might recommend collaboration among two or more applicants if it makes sense. Conversely, they may deliberate and determine that the proposed collaboration is too unwieldy given the proposed approach, and suggest a different construct. Either way that is something the review panel will likely discuss and adjudicate. If you are going to submit a collaborative proposal be very clear of the structure, who will be making decisions, who is responsible for the activities to be executed, and who is accountable for which pieces of the project. For example be clear about who is responsible for data collection activities for the collaborative and how that will be managed. Karen Pisani of F5SMC shared that when writing the RFP and requiring a systems change element, she anticipated that there would be collaborative proposals submitted because often times systems change efforts require working with other entities, not just within your own organization.

17) Q: Is there any questions you think should have been asked that we didn't ask?
A: I tried to anticipate those questions and include them in my presentation.

18) Q: Just to be clear, collaborations are not required, correct? And collaborations of varying forms are acceptable, for example one in which there is an MOU but no formal subcontract.

A: Collaborations are not required, but a systems change element is. We envision the systems change element necessitating collaborations in some cases. Collaborative relationships, if any, can be informal and established via and MOU, or formal in which there is an actual subcontract put in place. Subcontractors of $25,000 or more must be presented in the proposal with their own distinct Scope of Work and budget for all three years of the project (assuming they will be collaborators for the duration).

19) Q: First 5 is a natural collaborator yet beyond this meeting we can't talk to you, so how are we supposed to discuss our collaborative ideas with you?

A: Propose your idea regarding collaborations and the role you see F5SMC playing. We are open to hearing your ideas about how you see us as a collaborator and taking the lead on that, just be realistic. Fine tuning ideas around collaborations is also something that can be handled during contract negotiations.

20) Q. How should I handle listing in-kind support and leveraged funding?

A: List all of your leveraged funds in the Budget Request Form where indicated. The form instructs you to note which funding is secured and which is not yet secured. So if you have proposals out to other funders and you've not heard back yet, just list it in leveraged and note that it is unsecured. An example might be if your project relies on utilizing the F5SMC Kit for New Parents and you are assuming the KNPs will still be available, list that as leveraged, unsecured because you don't yet know if in fact you will be able to access the volume of KNPs needed for your proposed project.

COLLABORATIVE CONSTRUCTS AND F5SMC's POLICIES.

To help provide further clarity around F5SMC policies regarding partners, subcontractors, contractors, and MOUs – and how they relate to the required F5SMC budget and SOW forms -- we are providing the following overview:

<u>All</u> F5SMC dollars requested must be accounted for on the Budget Request and Budget Narrative Form/s and all activities reflected in the SOW/s. F5SMC generally utilizes MOUs for collaborations in which money is not being exchanged.

<u>THE LEAD APPLICANT</u>: must show a line item for each subcontractor above or below the 25K threshold.

- If the subcontractor is less than 25K, no subcontractor-level Budget or separate SOW is needed (the Applicant may decide to institute an MOU, if so give us a copy). For subcontractors less than 25K, the activities of the subcontractor should be specified in the Lead Applicant's SOW, either on a separate tab, or throughout the SOW, as dictated by the project.

- If the subcontractor is 25K or more, then a subcontractor-level Budget and SOW is required. Even if the relationship is outlined between the two entities in an MOU, F5SMC requires any partnership relationship of 25K or more to be formalized as a contractor and subcontractor; therefore a subcontractor Budget and SOW are required.

<u>MOUs OF 25K OR MORE</u>: Regardless of the policies of applicant organizations regarding MOUs with funding attached, F5SMC's policy is to formalize any partnership associated with $25,000 or more in a contract / subcontract construct. F5SMC is the contractor with the Lead Agency. In turn, the Lead Agency becomes the contractor to the partner – the partner becomes the subcontractor to the Lead Agency.

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