



INTENT TO NEGOTIATE

**Quality Care & Education: Quality Improvement & Expanded Access
for Children with Special Needs**

Issued March 10, 2020

Proposals must be submitted by:

Thursday, April 30, 2020, 4:00 PM

to

Jenifer Clark
First 5 San Mateo County
1700 S. El Camino Real, Suite 405
San Mateo, CA 94402-3050

This ITN and all its appendices are available online at:
https://first5sanmateo.org/partners/funding_opportunities/

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I. TIMELINE

Release of Intent to Negotiate (ITN)	March 10
ITN Leadership Meeting (<i>F5SMC, SMCOE, & Consultant</i>)	March 12, 10am - Noon
ITN Process Overview Webinar (<i>recommended</i>)	March 19, 10:30am - Noon
ITN Conference #1 (<i>mandatory</i>)	March 27, 10:30am - 1:30pm*
Partner Applicant Letters of Intent Due (<i>mandatory</i>)	April 1, by 5 PM
Deadline for submitting written Proposers' Questions	April 1, by 5pm
Answers to Proposers' Questions Posted by F5SMC	April 3, by 5 PM
ITN Conference #2 (<i>mandatory</i>)	April 17, 10:30am - 1:30 pm*
Proposals Due	April 30, 4 pm
Review of Proposals and possible follow-up interviews	Weeks of May 4 and/or 11 (date/time TBD)*
Announcement of Recommendation at F5SMC Commission Meeting	May 18, 4-6 pm
Appeal Deadline	May 29, midnight
Agreement Negotiations	May-June 2020
Agreement Approval at F5SMC Commission Meeting	June 22, 4-6 pm**
Agreement Execution	By June 30
Anticipated Contract Start Date	July 1, 2020

* Proposers must be available on these dates

** Approval of SOW, Budget, Budget Narrative, and Exhibit A

II. PREFACE

A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

This Intent to Negotiate (ITN) is not a commitment or contract of any kind. First 5 San Mateo County (F5SMC/the Commission) reserves the right to pursue any and/or all ideas generated by this request. F5SMC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and/or terminate the ITN process if deemed in the best interest of the Commission. Further, while every effort has been made to ensure the information presented in this ITN is accurate and thorough, F5SMC assumes no liability for any unintentional errors or omissions in this document. F5SMC reserves the right to waive or modify any requirements of this ITN when it determines that doing so is in the best interest of the Commission. Costs for developing the proposals are entirely the responsibility of the Proposers and shall not be reimbursed.

Authority

Proposition 10 (Prop 10), the “California Children and Families Act of 1998”, imposed an excise tax on tobacco products and authorized counties to establish commissions to allocate these funds at the local level. Ordinance #03889 was adopted by the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors on March 9, 1999, creating the nine-member Children and Families First Five Commission (now referred to as First 5 San Mateo County Commission). The Commission was authorized to develop a Strategic Plan and allocate funds accordingly. The most recent Strategic Plan was updated and approved in October 2018.

The F5SMC Commission consists of: (a) one member from the Board of Supervisors, (b) the Director of the County Health Department, (c) the Director of the County Human Services Agency, (d) the County Superintendent of Schools, and (e) five public members appointed by the Board of Supervisors. In addition, the F5SMC Commission recognizes the value of youth representation, and therefore invites up to two Youth Commissioners to serve as active members on the F5SMC Commission. The current Commission members are:

- Louise Rogers, Chief, San Mateo County Health, Commission Chair
- Sandra Phillips-Sved, Public Member, Commission Vice-Chair
- Nancy Magee, County Superintendent of Schools
- David J. Canepa, Board of Supervisors
- Ken Cole, Director, San Mateo County Human Services Agency
- Alexis Becerra, Public Member
- Rosanne Foust, Public Member
- Pam Frisella, Public Member
- Neel Patel, M.D., Public Member
- Ryan Teh, Youth Commissioner

Public Nature of Proposals

Government Code Section 6550 et. seq., the California Public Records Act, defines a public record as any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public business. The California Public Records Act provides that public records shall be disclosed upon written request, and that any citizen has a right to inspect any public record, unless the document is exempted from disclosure.

F5SMC cannot represent or guarantee that any information submitted in response to this ITN will be confidential. Please be advised that any contract that eventually arises from this ITN is a public record in its entirety. Also, all information submitted in response to this ITN is itself a public record without exception. Submission of any materials in response to this ITN constitutes a waiver by the submitting party of any claim that the information is protected from disclosure. By submitting materials, (1) you are consenting to release of such materials by F5SMC if requested under the California Public Records Act without further notice to you and (2) you agree to indemnify and hold harmless F5SMC for release of such information.

All proposals submitted in response to this ITN shall become the exclusive property of F5SMC. At such time as F5SMC approves an Agreement, all proposals submitted in response to this ITN shall become a matter of public record and shall be regarded as public records.

Communication with F5SMC

Please note that as of the issue date of this ITN and continuing through the Commission vote(s) to award grant(s), all F5SMC Commissioners and Review Panel members have been specifically directed not to hold meetings, conferences, or technical discussions regarding this ITN with prospective Proposers/service providers unless otherwise indicated in the ITN timeline set forth in Section VIII: Proposal Solicitation Process and Section IX: Proposal Selection Process and Review Criteria. F5SMC Staff who are managing this ITN reserve the right to provide technical assistance and support to the Lead Agency as needed during the process.

B. RIGHTS

Proposers' Rights Regarding Confidentiality of Proposals

If F5SMC receives a request for any portion of a document submitted in response to this ITN, it will not assert any privileges that may exist on behalf of the person or entity, and F5SMC reserves the right to disclose the requested materials without notice to the party who originally submitted the requested material. If a Proposer believes that a portion of its proposal is confidential and notifies F5SMC of such in writing, F5SMC may, as a courtesy, attempt to notify the Proposer of any request for the proposal. However, it would be the sole responsibility of that Proposer to assert any applicable privileges or reasons why the document should not be produced, and to obtain a court order prohibiting disclosure. The Proposer understands that F5SMC is not responsible, under any circumstances, for any harm caused by production of a confidential proposal.

F5SMC's Rights Regarding Confidentiality of Proposals

To the extent consistent with applicable provisions of the California Public Records Act and applicable case law interpreting those provisions, F5SMC and/or its officers, agents, and employees retain the discretion to release or to withhold disclosure of any information submitted in response to this ITN. Submission of a proposal constitutes a complete waiver of any claims whatsoever against F5SMC and/or its officers, agents, or employees that F5SMC has violated a Proposer's right to privacy, disclosed trade secrets, or caused any damage by allowing the proposal to be inspected.

F5SMC's Rights Regarding Funding Investments

F5SMC may, in its sole discretion, enter into one or multiple contracts with qualified agencies/entities. F5SMC also reserves the right not to fund any proposals received through this solicitation.

F5SMC's Right to Modify the ITN

F5SMC may modify the ITN prior to the fixed date for submission of proposals by issuance of an addendum to all parties who have received the ITN.

F5SMC's Rights Regarding Lowest-Cost Proposals

F5SMC reserves the right to accept other than the lowest price when the best interests of F5SMC are served by doing so.

F5SMC's Right Regarding Local Preference

F5SMC reserves the right to give preference to a San Mateo County-based service provider vendor if deemed in the best interest of F5SMC.

C. AGREEMENTS

Proposers' Agreement to Contracting Terms

The Proposer must be able to agree to all of the terms of the F5SMC sample Agreement included in APPENDIX B. If the Proposer cannot agree to each term but still wishes to respond to the ITN, the Proposer must specifically identify in its proposal the terms with which it cannot comply.

Proposers' Agreement to Funding Term and Renewal Language

The Funding Term will be for 36 months, from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2023. Entering into an Agreement related to this ITN does not guarantee funding beyond June 30, 2023. Furthermore, all F5SMC agreements are subject to Agreement Terms and Termination provisions as stated in Paragraph 3 of the F5SMC Sample Agreement (APPENDIX B).

Proposers' Agreement to Comply with Evaluation Requirements

All funded entities must agree to track process and outcome measures for their specific project. Additionally, funded projects will be expected to participate in a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of efforts under Proposition 10, including but not limited to:

- Collecting, entering and or importing individual-level client data and individual-level service data on all project activities into a central database as determined by F5SMC;
- Administering F5SMC evaluation tools on clients served as required by the F5SMC evaluation design;
- Allocating staffing resources and time to comply with the evaluation requirements;
- Providing additional information as required by F5SMC, F5CA, or other funders.

Proposers' Agreement to Comply with Contract Compliance

A F5SMC Program Specialist will be the direct liaison between F5SMC and the funded partner(s). The Program Specialist will provide technical assistance, monitor for contract compliance, and quality oversight.

The funded partner(s) will be expected to participate in other regularly scheduled or ad hoc meetings as requested by F5SMC staff and is expected to maintain regular communication with F5SMC staff.

Proposers' Agreement to Non Supplantation

In accordance with the Proposition 10 statute, no Commission funds shall be granted or used for any existing project or program funded by state or local general funds unless the proponent demonstrates to the Commission's satisfaction that the Commission's funding will be used to improve the quality or quantity of an existing service, and not to supplant existing funding. Please see Appendix E, F5SMC Supplantation Policy, for more detail.

III. INTRODUCTION

A. INTENT TO NEGOTIATE OVERVIEW

An Intent to Negotiate (ITN) is a collaborative process that allows multiple agencies to jointly develop and submit a single collaborative proposal. It allows the Commission to release all data, strategic planning documents and relevant criteria to interested parties to assist them in preparing proposals. The Lead Agency is asked to develop a plan, a budget and a group of subcontractors as a complete package, detailed in a single proposal. F5SMC Commission staff will initiate the ITN with basic guidelines and technical assistance to applicants, and are permitted to collaborate with the Lead and potential subcontractor agencies during the proposal development process.

F5SMC welcomes Proposals from all qualified service providers. F5SMC may, in its sole discretion, enter into contracts with multiple qualified providers.

Purpose/Intent

The purpose of this ITN is to solicit Proposal(s) from qualified agencies interested in participating in implementing the Quality Care & Education: Quality Improvement & Expanded Access for Children with Special Needs Initiative in San Mateo County. The San Mateo County Office of Education and its subcontractors/partners will be expected to implement the Initiative expeditiously and economically, to promote collaboration and teamwork among key agencies with complementary strengths, to provide fiscal oversight and coordination, and to provide staff time and resources to complete tasks necessary for countywide implementation. F5SMC has approved up to \$3,180,000 for the time frame of July 1, 2020-June 30, 2023 for this initiative.

The ITN process is intended to develop the service delivery, budgetary, and administrative components of a program that will maintain, build upon, and integrate the work being done through various quality support efforts and funding streams in San Mateo County. Services funded through this process will focus on improving the quality of early learning settings throughout San Mateo County by developing and implementing quality improvement plans for different types early care and education settings and by enabling the utilization of the Quality Rating Improvement Scale in programs and settings where it is appropriate. Activities may include but are not limited to: enrolling programs in quality improvement efforts, conducting assessments and ratings, and providing the services and resources that programs and providers need to improve the quality of the care they provide. While any quality support activities that will help providers and programs improve their quality will be eligible for funding through this process, dollars have been set aside specifically to enhance programs' abilities to include children with special needs, create support networks for providers who are working with or considering enrolling children with special needs, and to connect families of children with special needs to high quality environments that can meet those needs.

A critical piece of this ITN process and the eventual implementation of the resulting initiative is the need to thoughtfully and strategically braid the available F5SMC funds with other funding streams supporting similar or complementary work. These funding streams include: the Quality Counts California Local Consortia and Partnership Grants RFA jointly released by First 5 California and the California Department of Education in January 2020¹; the Early Learning and Care Workforce Development Pathways Grant released by the California Department of Education on March 6 2020²; the Inclusive Early Education and Expansion Program RFA released by the California Department of Education in June 2019³; San Mateo County's Big Lift program; the California State Preschool Program adjustment factor available to fund Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation services in state-funded early learning settings; and various other State and Federal grants and contracts that support efforts to provide high quality early learning experiences to children ages birth to five⁴. We consider the Quality Care & Education: Quality Improvement & Expanded Access for Children with Special Needs ITN process an opportunity to re-imagine the best use of our local dollars within the context of the current funding landscape and to think innovatively about how to foster a quality improvement system that supports all settings and is integrated with other local, regional, and state-level efforts.

Eligible Applicants

First 5 San Mateo County has determined that the Lead Agency for this Initiative will be the San Mateo County Office of Education. This decision to sole-source the Lead Agency function ensures alignment with the requirements of the above-mentioned Quality Counts California Local Consortia and Partnership Grants RFA jointly released by First 5 California and the California Department of Education in January 2020. That RFA limits the number of its Lead Agencies to two, requires that one agency be a Local Education Agency such as a County Office of Education, and stipulates that local First 5 County Commissions have right of first refusal for the second Lead Agency role. Due to these requirements, F5SMC and SMCOE will function as co-Lead Agencies on the Quality Counts California grant application and any subsequent programming. Given the tight braiding of our local funds with this State funding stream, allowing another agency to apply to be the Lead of the locally-funded Quality Improvement & Expanded Access initiative would create inefficiencies in resource allocation, contract management, and reporting.

Eligible applicants for Partner Agencies to be funded through this ITN include: local governmental entities, local non-profit agencies with {501c (3)} status, Big-Lift eligible school districts, institutes of higher education, independent consultants, and other local service providers. The San Mateo County Office of Education will be serving as the Lead Agency and fiscal sponsor for this initiative. A strong partnership structure with subcontractor agencies is necessary. Agencies that submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) by April 1, 2020 may apply to be a Partner Agency for the Quality Care & Education: Quality Improvement & Expanded Access for Children with Special Needs program. A single unified application including budget and proposed service activities for the Lead and all

¹ Request for Application available at: <http://www.cfcf.ca.gov/partners/qris.html#quality>

² Information available at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/profile.asp?id=5468>

³ Information available at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/r2/ieep1819rfa.asp>

⁴ Descriptions of and budget information about child development programs administered by the California Department of Education: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/op/>

Partner Agencies must be submitted by the San Mateo County Office of Education, which has been identified as the Lead Agency for this initiative. A strong partnership structure with partner/subcontractor applicants is essential to deliver the intended service strategies outlined in this ITN.

B. FIRST 5 SAN MATEO COUNTY 2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

In October 2018, the Commission updated its Strategic Plan for the years 2020-2025. Commission investments will be in three core Focus Areas: Quality Care and Education, Healthy Children, and Resilient Families.

F5SMC has established the following Core Values and Principles to guide the Strategic Plan:

Core Values

1. Support the whole child within the whole family: We understand that young children's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development are interdependent, and that children grow and learn within their family relationships and the larger community.
2. Build connections between the many systems that serve young children and their parents and caregivers: We recognize the importance of smooth transitions for children and families as they grow from infancy through toddlerhood and preschool, and enter elementary school.
3. Embrace the importance of fathers and male role models in the healthy development of children: We expect intentional inclusion of fathers/male role models and consideration of their needs within the structure and delivery models of family services and supports.
4. Promote positive development in infants and toddlers, and focus on prevention and early intervention: We know that 75% of a child's brain develops before the third birthday, and that it is therefore critical to support pregnant women and to help mothers, fathers, and caregivers establish and maintain stable and loving relationships with their infants and toddlers.
5. Include children of diverse abilities: We support the right of all children to live, grow, and learn in their communities.
6. Respect and engage parents and families: We acknowledge the strength of individual familial structures and cultures, and respect the desire and ability of parents to nurture their children and act as their first teachers.
7. Honor cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity: We believe that all services should be delivered in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way.
8. Appreciate strengths: We build upon the positive qualities of children, families, and communities in the design and delivery of programs.
9. Enlarge community capacity: We invest in our community's understanding of and ability to support the healthy development of all children.

Guiding Principles

1. Create value: Invest in approaches that add social and economic value to the landscape of supports for all children and families; and build upon, integrate, and collaborate with existing services to improve quality and provide efficient service delivery.
2. Promote equity: Ensure that all children, regardless of circumstance, have the opportunity to reach their full potential, and include families as partners in decisions that affect their service provision.
3. Foster excellence: Expect excellence and allow for innovation in the development and implementation of initiatives and programs.
4. Demonstrate effectiveness: Consider the existing evidence of impact when designing and supporting activities, and evaluate our investments to monitor results and inform continuous quality improvement.
5. Achieve sustainable change: Use Commission investments to effect long-term policy, institutional, funding, and systemic changes that extend the reach and impact of F5SMC activities.

In recent years, many Commissions have been faced with the issue of declining revenues. While F5SMC dollars were never able to meet all needs of children 0-5 and their families, the decrease in funding has resulted in F5SMC prioritizing partnerships with entities that are achieving both direct impact and positive systemic change. This approach fosters sustainable improvement within agencies and systems and allows families beyond the direct service reach to benefit. As noted in the 2020- 2025 Strategic Plan, the Commission strives to strike the right balance between program investments and systems improvements; therefore, the Commission is particularly interested in proposals that address present needs as well as examine and improve the underlying systems. In addition, the Commission is interested in funding projects that maximize its investment through strong collaboration, service integration and continuity, and leveraging of multiple funding sources. The Commission will be seeking to support service projects that can achieve and demonstrate measurable, positive results for the children and families they serve.

For each Focus Area, the Commission has identified specific strategies for investment and population- and participant-level indicators to help track progress towards the Commission's desired outcomes. Proposers should be familiar with the content of the F5SMC 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, APPENDIX F.

C. BACKGROUND & RESEARCH

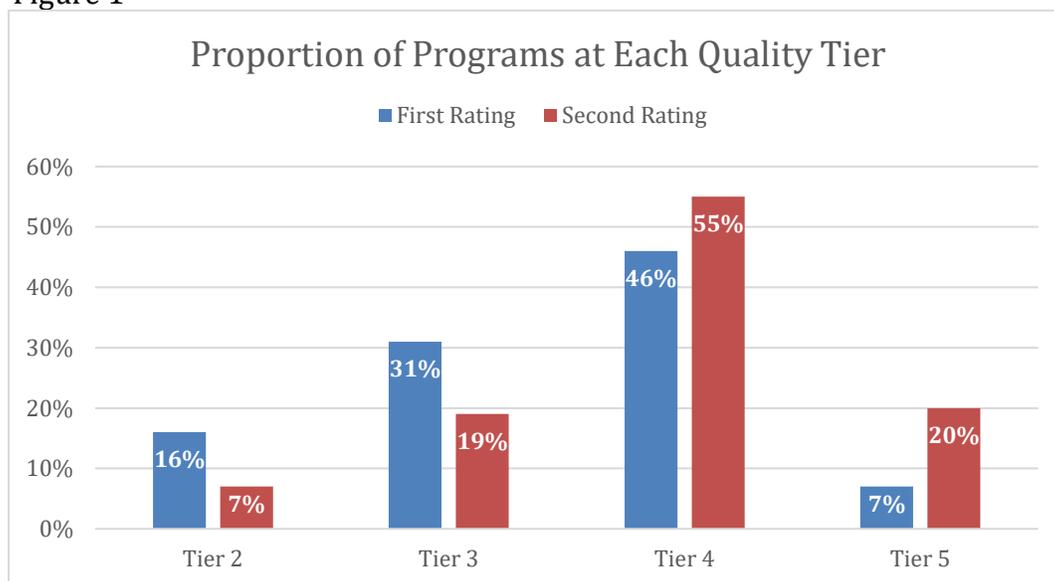
Early learning settings—including infant and toddler care, family child care homes, center-based preschool programs, and alternative settings such as parent-participation preschools, library story-times, municipal parks and recreation programs, and parent-child activity groups—play a critical role in nurturing children's social, emotional, and cognitive development and are an essential component of any strategy to promote school readiness and success in all aspects of life. In San Mateo County, 69% of children ages 0-5 live in families where all parents work⁵ and

⁵ American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-Year Dataset. Accessed at <https://data.census.gov/>

therefore require non-parental child care. Additionally, as part of its Big Lift preschool initiative San Mateo County has adopted a policy position that all children should attend two years of high quality preschool prior to kindergarten entry to support their academic, behavioral, and social-emotional preparedness for school. These two facts dictate that a high proportion of our local children ages 0-5 participate in early learning environments such as family child care homes or center-based care. The benefits of a continuum of high-quality early learning, beginning in infancy and with smooth transitions into toddler care, preschool, and elementary school, has been well researched and is a priority for the Commission.

Quality matters when providing early care and education services. Programs that participate in continuous quality improvement efforts are more likely to prepare students for success in school and beyond. Children who participate in high-quality early childhood education programs show long-term impacts on their ability to learn and interact with the world around them, including increased language and math skills, positive peer relationships, decreased rates of grade repetition, fewer referrals to special education services, and higher levels of cognitive and social development.⁶ One way to improve the quality of early learning settings is to sponsor a formal Quality Rating & Improvement System, such as the Quality Counts effort currently underway in San Mateo County and across the State of California. Our local involvement in this effort has led to improvement in programs' quality between their initial rating and their rating after receiving at least two years of quality improvement services (see figure 1 below). An additional benefit of QRIS programs is reduced teacher vacancies and turnover in participating early learning settings due to improved morale among providers and increased professionalization of the early care and education field⁷.

Figure 1



*Tier 5 is the highest quality tier.

⁶ Reynolds, A.J. and Wolfe, B. (1997). School achievement, early intervention, and special education: New Evidence from the Chicago Longitudinal Study. Focus 19, 3, 25-28. Available online at: www.worldbank.org/children/why/18.htm

⁷ San Mateo County Teacher Compensation Study, Davis Consulting 2017

The long-term economic benefit of children attending high-quality preschool programs is well documented, particularly for children living in low-income households. These “return on investment” studies differ on level of return depending on the population served, length of the program, and quality enhancements. One of the most widely studied programs is The Perry Preschool Program, a high-quality, half-day preschool targeted to very low-income children. Evaluations of this program document that the program returned seven dollars for every dollar invested.⁸

Parents of children with special needs and parents of infants and toddlers consistently report difficulty finding appropriate child care settings for their children. According to the 2017 San Mateo County Child Care Needs Assessment conducted by the Child Care Partnership Council, only 60% of the demand for infant and toddler care can be met with the available supply, and only 13% of the need for subsidized infant/toddler care is met.⁹ The 2014 assessment estimated that the parents of 1,956 children ages 0-5 with identified special needs are looking for an early learning program that will enroll their child. While the 2017 report did not provide a numerical estimate of the number of children with special needs who are seeking child care, it noted that the overall numbers of children served through the Golden Gate Regional Center and school district special education programs is similar to what has been found in prior assessments. High-quality early learning programs can also provide an early identification process to assess young children for special needs. Early interventions for children at high risk can improve their social competence and cognitive abilities prior to school entry.^{10,11} These programs adapt to meet the needs and strengths of their students, to ensure that students with physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities can learn some or all of the same lessons as other students.

D. SERVICE STRATEGIES

Service Strategies

- 1. Quality Improvement:** In partnership with existing community efforts, support formal quality improvement frameworks in early learning environments, and provide the services required to help providers and programs improve their quality as measured by these frameworks. Such services may include:
 - Quality improvement coaching for early learning providers and programs
 - Training and technical assistance for early learning providers

⁸ National Institute for Early Education Research. Economic benefits of quality preschool education for America’s 3- and 4- year olds. <http://nieer.org/resources/facts/index.php?FastFactID=6>

⁹San Mateo County Child Care and Preschool Needs Assessment. (2017) Retrieved from http://www.smcoe.org/assets/files/learning-and-leadership/child-care-partnershipcouncil/Needs%20Assessment%202017/CCPC_Full_Report_Needs_Assessment_11-17.pdf

¹⁰ Karoly, L., Greenwood, P.W., Everingham, S.S., Hoube, J., Kilburn, M.R., Rydell, C.P., Sanders, M. and Chiesa, J. (1998). Investing in Our Children: What We Know and Don't Know about the Costs and Benefits of Early Childhood Education. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Available online at: www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR898.

¹¹ Reynolds, A.J. and Wolfe, B. (1997). School achievement, early intervention, and special education: New evidence from the Chicago Longitudinal Study. Focus 19, 3, 25-28. Available online at: www.worldbank.org/children/why/18.htm

- Early childhood mental health consultation in early learning settings, including reflective practice and consultation to support children with social-emotional needs or who are at risk for expulsion and/or reduced hours
- Peer mentoring and professional learning communities
- Program quality assessments and ratings
- Facility enhancements

2. Expanded Access to Early Learning Settings for Children with Special Needs: Support families' ability to access appropriate early learning experiences for their children with special needs. Such efforts may include:

- Enhanced referrals matching children with appropriate placements
- Training and technical assistance to providers who enroll children with special needs
- Peer mentoring and professional learning communities for those who create and work in inclusive early learning environments
- Policy approaches supporting inclusion

Funding is not intended to support the following:

- The full array of existing activities funded via EQ+IP. Activities with the greatest value-add will be prioritized.
- Services that have the potential to be supported through other public funding streams, are otherwise covered by insurance, or are required to be provided by legal mandate.
- Services and strategies intended to bolster the pipeline of potential providers for the Early Learning workforce which are eligible for funding via the Early Learning and Care Workforce Development Pathways Grant.

Populations to be Served

The Quality Care & Education: Quality Improvement & Expanded Access for Children with Special Needs program is intended to build upon and foster the integration of the many initiatives currently underway in San Mateo County. Target populations include: early learning programs located within or feeding into Big Lift-eligible school districts; the children and families who are enrolled in these programs; current early-learning providers; and children ages 0-5 with special needs who may require extra support to find and/or remain in appropriate early learning settings.

E. LEAD AND PARTNER ROLES

The Quality Care & Education: Quality Improvement & Expanded Access for Children with Special Needs is one of F5SMC's signature investments. The lead agency will work closely with F5SMC staff and any designated consultants to co-lead the effort, which we envision will continue throughout the three-year funding term as a countywide, highly visible model.

Lead Agency Characteristics and Responsibilities

As specified above, F5SMC has determined that the San Mateo County Office of Education will function as the Lead Agency on this initiative. SMCOE has an extensive history of successfully administering large-scale programs with multiple partners and providing services similar to those outlined in this ITN; the ability to promote collaboration and teamwork among key agencies; experience launching and maintaining varied service components; the capacity to provide fiscal oversight and coordination; and the ability to set performance expectations, monitor and evaluate the performance of all partners, and provide regular program reports to F5SMC. In its role as Lead Agency, SMCOE is expected to be visionary and nimble, and to have the ability to allocate staff time and resources to complete all tasks necessary for countywide implementation. The Lead Agency will also be expected to meet with proposed partner agencies to develop the proposal throughout the ITN period.

Key Characteristics of Partner/Subcontractor Applicant(s)

F5SMC seeks partners/subcontractors with/to the Lead Agency that also have a history of providing services similar to those desired in this ITN; working collaboratively with other key agencies and providers; demonstrating complementary strengths to those of the Lead Agency applicant; and a record of completing tasks in the assigned time frame. Partners can submit a Letter of Intent (LOI—see Appendix G for LOI template) as a funded or unfunded partner but should collaborate with the Lead Agency to integrate their service offerings into the common proposal rather than submitting independently.

First 5 SMC reserves the right to contract directly with selected partners/subcontractors if deemed necessary or preferable during the ITN process or contract negotiations.

F. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this ITN and the service components F5SMC seeks to fund, we are providing the following definitions:

Lead Proposer/Applicant/Agency & Partner Applicant/Agency

The terms Lead Proposer, Lead Applicant, and Lead Agency are used interchangeably and refer to the Lead agency/entity applying for funding. The designation of “Lead” or “Partner” becomes important as applications are collaborative in nature. The “Lead” is the official Proposer/Applicant (and most likely will serve as the fiscal agent), while the “Partner(s)” are the agencies collaborating on the project. Partner Agencies may be funded or unfunded. They may have a formal subcontract with the Lead Agency or may participate in the project via a mechanism such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Children with Special Needs¹²

Children with Special Needs are those who have or are at increased risk for chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional conditions and who also require services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally.

Quality Rating & Improvement System/Scale (QRIS)¹³

A locally determined system for continuous quality improvement based on a tiered rating structure with progressively higher quality standards for each tier that provides supports and incentives for programs, teachers, and administrators to reach higher levels of quality, monitors and evaluates the impacts on child outcomes, and disseminates information to parents and the public about program quality.

G. DESIRED OUTCOMES

Successful proposals in response to this ITN will demonstrate that their proposed program activities will help F5SMC achieve the relevant Desired Outcomes listed in F5SMC Strategic Plan and below:

Population-level Indicators:

These indicators have community baseline data and are impacted by many efforts and agencies. The Commission will monitor the following indicators to inform its work:

- The percentage of children ages 3-5 who are enrolled in preschool prior to Transitional Kindergarten/Kindergarten entry
- The available supply of infant and toddler care relative to the need
- The number/percent of early learning programs that enroll and maintain children 0-5 with special needs
- The percentage of all early learning programs participating in the QRIS

Participant-level Indicators:

These indicators will be measured by First 5 San Mateo County grantees, as applicable, for participants in services:

- The percentage of children ages 3-5 who are enrolled in quality preschool prior to Transitional Kindergarten/Kindergarten entry (note: availability of information on the quality of programs is limited)
- The percentage of early learning programs that improve their overall rating on the QRIS matrix
- The percentage of families of children with special needs and of infants/toddlers reporting ability to access appropriate early care for their children

¹² McPherson M, Arango P, Fox H, Lauver C, McManus M, Newacheck P, Perrin J, Shonkoff J, and Strickland B. A new definition of children with special health care needs. *Pediatrics* 1998;102(1):137-140.

¹³ California Education Code Section 8203.1(b)(1)

H. FUNDING AMOUNT AND TERM

F5SMC has allocated a maximum of \$3,180,000 in total for the fiscal years 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022- 2023 to meet the goals and objectives detailed in this ITN. This allocation was established and approved by the Commission in October of 2018 as part of the Long Term Financial Plan. To support stability and effectiveness, F5SMC is inviting proposals for projects covering the 3-year term of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2023. However, funding for years 2 and 3 of approved contracts is not guaranteed and will be contingent upon satisfactory project performance in the previous year.

Lead and partner applicants are encouraged to work together to propose the amounts needed to support the effectiveness of their portion of the project. Applicants should be mindful of the intentional focus on partnership in this process and the importance of allocating resources amongst partners in order to achieve the desired outcomes for children, families, and early learning providers and settings. It may also be helpful to note that the amount available for this cycle of funding represents approximately 32% less than the amount allocated for the similar strategy in the previous funding cycle.

The table below outlines approved budget allocations for one year of funding by dollar amount and service component area.

Early Learning Quality Improvement & Expanded Access for Children with Special Needs Approved Annual Budget Allocations	
Quality Improvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality improvement coaching for early learning providers and programs • Training and technical assistance for early learning providers • Peer mentoring and professional learning communities • Program quality assessments and ratings • Facility enhancements • Early childhood mental health consultation in early learning settings, including reflective practice and consultation to support children with social-emotional needs or who are at risk for expulsion and/or reduced hours • Policy approaches supporting quality improvement 	\$900,000
Expanded Access for Children with Special Needs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced referrals matching children with appropriate placements • Training and technical assistance to providers who enroll children with special needs • Policy approaches supporting inclusion 	\$135,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer mentoring and professional learning communities focused on inclusion • Policy approaches supporting inclusion 	\$25,000

*Please Note: The proposed budget allocations in the chart above must also support allocations for project management and administration, operational expenses including data systems, and indirect costs of up to 12%.

I. INVITATION TO SUBMIT

F5SMC welcomes proposals from all qualified entities. Qualified applicants may include community- based (501)(c)(3) organizations, coalitions, government agencies/departments, and collaboratives. F5SMC is interested in applicants who exhibit expertise in providing services to children prenatally through age five and their families, as well as applicants that serve culturally diverse communities.

V. Proposal

A. CONTENT AND SEQUENCE OF PROPOSAL

Proposers shall adhere strictly to the format set forth below. Each of the required sections identified must be addressed and specifically labeled.

The content and sequence of the proposal submission should be as follows:

<i>Section</i>	<i>Title</i>	
1	Cover Sheet	
2	Table of Contents	
3	Project Narrative	
4	Attachments:	
	4a	Scope of Work Form
	4b	Budget Request and Budget Narrative Forms
	4c	Resumes of All Key Staff
	4d	Job Descriptions
	4e	Proof of Insurance
	4f	CEO or Board Authorization
	4g	References
	4h	Letter(s) of Commitment
4i	Miscellaneous	

Please refer to the following descriptions of the material that must be included in this proposal.

1. **COVER SHEET:** Proposer shall complete and append to the front of the submission the Cover Sheet, APPENDIX A. The Cover Sheet should identify the name of the lead agency that will be responsible for providing the services offered in the proposal. The name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of a principal contact for information regarding the proposal shall also be supplied. The Cover Sheet should also include the names of partner agency applicants and their contact information.

2. **TABLE OF CONTENTS:** Immediately following the Cover Sheet, provide a comprehensive Table of Contents of the material included in the proposal. The Table of Contents must clearly identify the proposal sections and the applicable page numbers.
3. **PROJECT NARRATIVE:** A narrative description of the proposed project is required and is limited to 30 doubled-spaced pages with 1 inch margins and utilizing 12 point Calibri or Cambria font. The narrative should address all of the requirements listed below in the same sequence and using the same headings and numbering. Additional content areas are permitted; however, they must remain within the 30-page limit for the narrative. Please refer to the review criteria of this ITN to ensure that adequate and complete responses to the project narrative questions are provided.

The project narrative should include the following content areas, 3a through 3e:

3a. Executive Summary (3-page limit)

Please provide a brief (no more than 3 pages) summary of the goals of the proposed Quality Care & Education: Quality Improvement & Expanded Access for Children with Special Needs program, the roles of the Lead Agency and its partners/subcontractors in implementing the system, the specific elements and services you propose to implement, and how the proposed program will complement and build upon similar efforts currently underway in San Mateo County and contribute to an integrated, county-wide QRIS model that aligns with other State and local efforts in this area. Proposers should view this summary as a form of “elevator speech” that can quickly provide the reader an understanding of your project. The Executive Summary of the successful proposal will be repurposed by F5SMC to inform the community, other practitioners and funders, and other interested parties about your project specifically and F5SMC’s portfolio generally.

3b. Lead Agency Capability (5-page limit)

Please describe how your organization is uniquely qualified to successfully Lead the implementation of the Quality Care & Education: Quality Improvement & Expanded Access for Children with Special Needs Initiative in San Mateo County.

Agency Qualifications

- Agency’s primary mission. Provide a brief overview of the services and programs currently being offered.
- Describe the agency’s capability and resources to manage the proposed project, including timely start-up and implementation.
- Describe the agency’s approach to professional development and performance management of its staff.
- Describe how the project will be culturally- and linguistically-responsive to the population(s) served.
- Describe the experience and unique skills of the staff for the positions listed in the project budget.

- Indicate whether staff supported by these funds will be new hires or are in existing positions. If existing positions, please describe how these positions were previously funded and how those responsibilities will not conflict with this project if funded. Prop 10 funds CANNOT be used to supplant state and local general funds (please see Supplantation Policy in APPENDIX E).
- Attach job descriptions/resumes/consultant qualifications for key roles (does not count toward the 30-page limit).

Please describe the Lead applicant’s relevant experience in the following areas:

Leadership and Coordinated Services

- Successful administration of large-scale, integrated programs/initiatives with multiple partners, including subcontractors;
- Collaborative service delivery with other providers in San Mateo County to achieve common goals on a defined timeline;
- Flexibility and nimbleness to adapt to changing landscape and resources;
- In-depth knowledge of the current landscape of early learning services and systems in San Mateo County, including a detailed understanding of funding streams and programmatic and reporting requirements for:
 - California State Preschool Programs
 - Early Head Start and Head Start
 - Quality Counts California unified RFA and other State funding streams
 - The Big Lift
 - Build Up for Kids
 - Close the Gap
- Accurate and transparent fiscal and programmatic management, evaluation, and reporting for significant, complex programs with multiple partners;
- Providing technical assistance to partners to support grant deliverables;
- Credibility as a leader with First 5 SMC, publicly-funded, and privately-operated programs and service providers in the early learning, special needs, and family support sectors.

Systems Leadership and Sustainability

- Driving systems-level collaboration toward shared goals between key stakeholders in the early learning, inclusion, and family support fields;
- Gauging community needs and capacities, and matching resources and services appropriately to meet these needs within fiscal and other constraints;
- Co-developing the vision for the initiative to complement, integrate with, or fill gaps unaddressed by similar efforts;

- Accomplishing program goals in a cost-effective manner (e.g. fiscal leveraging, in-kind resources).

Governance and Oversight

- Discuss your approach to promoting an organizational culture that demonstrates flexibility in working with multiple partners.
- Share how you intend to promote openness and willingness amongst staff and partners to adapt the proposed service delivery system based on effectiveness and available resources.
- Describe your commitment to listening to and soliciting input from families, providers, and others interested members of the community.
- Briefly describe how the agencies proposed as partners were selected and specifically involved in the planning and development of this proposal.
- Describe the meeting structure, communication, and governance system you will use to ensure that partners/subcontractors provide on-going input into the development and implementation of the Quality Improvement & Expanded Access for Children with Special Needs Initiative.
- Include an organizational chart or graphic indicating the relationship between the Lead applicant and its partners (both funded and unfunded).

3c. Partnership Structure and Subcontractor Applicant Capability (10-page limit, not including agency budgets and other required attachments)

The ideal proposal will feature a common vision and strong collaboration between the Lead Agency and its partners, capitalizing on complementary strengths. Please describe briefly the qualifications/capacity of each of the other key agencies proposed to be subcontractors and partners (with budgets of \$25,000 per year or more) in the implementation of the Quality Improvement & Expanded Access for Children with Special Needs Initiative in San Mateo County.

For each partner agency:

- I. Provide the formal name of the agency, its primary mission, and a description of the services it currently offers.
- II. Describe how the agency will prioritize cultural competence.
- III. Describe how the agency will ensure effective interagency coordination.
- IV. Describe the agency's proposed role in the Quality Improvement & Expanded Access for Children with Special Needs Initiative, its capability, and its resources to manage its proposed portion of the initiative, including timely start-up and implementation.
- V. Describe the agency's capacity in managing and reporting its scope of work and budget.
- VI. Describe the agency's financial ability to conduct its proposed portion of the initiative. Include: budget; staff size, fiscal leveraging and whether it has audited financial statements.

VII. Describe each agency's capacity to comply with all reporting, evaluation and contracting requirements.

3d. Project Description and Initiative Elements (10-page limit)

The Early Learning Quality Improvement & Expanded Access for Children with Special Needs program will encompass the services listed below. Describe your proposed project including: the rationale for service strategies; how recipients will be selected and enrolled in services; the expected results of services; and how the proposed programming will complement and expand on work being done through other funding streams.

- I. Strategic partnerships to ensure that the Quality Improvement & Expanded Access for Children with Special Needs program is integrated with other similar initiatives, and that the activities funded through this process enhance and are complementary to other efforts.
 - a. Linkages to regional, statewide, or federal efforts aimed at improving the quality of early learning settings and/or expanding access.
 - b. Aligning efforts with other countywide partnerships focused on improving the quality of early learning environments.
 - c. Leveraging resources for strategies and activities addressed by this ITN.
 - d. Supporting policy, advocacy, and systems-level work in partnership with F5SMC and others in the community.

Quality Improvement

- II. Program Quality Assessments & Ratings. Support to complete any and all program assessment and review components required to receive a rating on the Quality Rating Improvement Scale (QRIS) matrix in use in San Mateo County.
- III. Facility Enhancements. Support for programs to purchase materials and supplies and/or enhance their physical facility in order to improve their scores on the QRIS.
- IV. Early learning provider training, technical assistance, coaching, consultation, and peer mentoring. Professional development activities that support current early learning providers in improving the quality of their work with children and families, and/or that allow programs to increase their scores on the QRIS.

Expanded Access for Children with Special Needs

- V. Training and consultation for early learning providers and programs: Professional development and capacity-building activities that enhance the abilities of programs and providers to create and maintain inclusive environments for children with special needs and their families.
- VI. Enhanced referrals matching children with appropriate placements: Connecting the families of individual children with special needs to early learning environments with the specific capacity to meet those needs; support for children, families, and providers during the child's transition into the early learning placement; ongoing

support to build the capacity of early learning environments to provide these inclusive services.

- VII. Peer Mentoring and Professional Learning Communities focused on inclusion:
Developing peer-to-peer networks and communities to support providers who are considering enrolling children with special needs and those who currently have such children in their programs.

3e. Financial Summary (2-page limit)

Please provide a brief description that describes your agency's overall budget, including a summary of your agency's annual income and expenditures.

I. Project Financials: Provide a synopsis of the anticipated budget for each fiscal year of the project including the process used to determine budgetary needs. F5SMC's Fiscal Year runs July 1 – June 30. Detailed financial information for each year of the project (FY 20-21, FY 21-22, and FY 22-23) will be included as attachments, using the Budget Request and Budget Narrative form in APPENDIX D and described below in Attachments Section 4b)

II. Project Sustainability: San Mateo County Proposition 10 funds are expected to decrease in future years. The Commission does not intend to maintain funding at this level in future years. Please describe how the project will be sustained beyond the availability of this level of funding.

- Describe how the proposed project will complete its intended objectives and move towards becoming more self-sustaining.
- Explain how the proposed project activities may reduce costs elsewhere in the system.
- If there is a need and/or opportunity to raise or leverage funds from other sources, explain how this will be accomplished. Be specific about the funding sources (public and private) to be targeted and the fundraising or billing strategies to be utilized.

4. ATTACHMENTS:

4a. Scope Of Work Form

For each entity (Lead and Partners) complete the template provided in APPENDIX C, including detailed deliverables that show how the proposed activities (described in the Narrative) will be implemented for the agreement period. Each agency should complete separate templates and submit a Scope of Work for three fiscal years: July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2023 (one SOW form for each of the three fiscal years per agency). For the tabs labeled either "Lead" or "Partner", applicants should complete only those relevant to their applicant status in addition to the project component tabs.

Description of Scope of Work (SOW) Components and Instructions:

Applicants are required to submit a Scope of Work Form for each year of the three years of the proposed project (see Excel workbook template, APPENDIX C: Scope of Work Form).

The Scope of Work should directly tie to the narrative of the project. The SOW form has 12 tabs: the first tab is an example tab of how to populate Program Component tabs; the next 5 tabs are blank Program Component tabs for applicants to complete in their entirety; the final 6 tabs are standard tabs with pre-set activities, applicants need only provide the missing information.

PROGRAM COMPONENT EXAMPLE TAB: The first tab is an example of how to populate the Program Component tabs. Notice that service target numbers may be duplicated in the top portion of the form where the Activities are delineated, but must be unduplicated in the Unduplicated Target Numbers Table at the bottom of the tab.

PROGRAM COMPONENT TABS (PC): The 5 tabs following the Program Component Example tab are Labeled “PC #1 Name”, “PC #2 Name” etc. These tabs are blank and are to be individualized by the proposer.

At the top of each PC sheet enter the Name of the Lead or Partner applicant agency, the Name of the Program (e.g. Quality Improvement & Expanded Access for Children with Special Needs, or whatever name the Lead proposer assigns to the proposal), the fiscal year, the number of the Component Strategy and brief descriptor of the strategy, i.e., “PC #1: Outreach”. Also, number and name the Excel tab at the bottom of the sheet.

The proposer is to group activities that the project intends to accomplish by program components, for example outreach activities may go on one program component tab and care coordination on another. The applicant should copy and add additional program component tabs if more than 5 are needed. Conversely, if the project has less than 5 distinct program components the applicant can leave the unneeded program component tabs blank or delete them. Below the Program Component title applicants are to list the specific project activities associated with that program component. The SOW form is pre-populated with activity lines labeled A through D. Applicants should add more activity lines if needed.

Each activity will include the following information in the designated spaces of the Program Component tabs:

- Specific description of the Activities
- The Timeframe span of dates by quarter and/or specific dates that the activities are planned to take place
- Primary person[s] Responsible for enacting the activity
- The Documentation method that will be employed to track/document the activities [i.e., sign in sheets, screening tools, etc.]
- Indication of Yes/No/NA – is used in lieu of client target numbers for activities that do not directly serve clients. For example, the Yes/No/NA designation would be used if the activity involved writing a handbook to be utilized during parent education sessions.

There are no people being served by the actual writing of the handbook, but it is an integral part of the program and warrants being listed as an activity.

- The # Parents/Caregivers Served is the area to quantify how many parents and caregivers will be served on an annual basis. Applicants need only fill out the Annual Target box of this section.
- The # Other Family Members Served is the area to quantify how many family members who are not parents/primary caregivers will be served (i.e., grandparents, aunts, etc.). Applicants need only fill out the Annual Target box of this section.
- The # Children Served is the area to quantify how many children will be served. Applicants need only fill out the Annual Target box of this section.
- The # Providers Served is the area to quantify how many providers will be served. Applicants need only fill out the Annual Target box of this section.
- Notes is a space to provide any additional, critical information that does not fall within the other provided categories.

Each Program Component tab contains an Unduplicated Target Numbers Table at the bottom for indicating UNDUPLICATED target numbers.

Each unduplicated table is to be populated by filling out the first line across with the annual, unduplicated target number of all people served through the Program Component, without counting anyone twice. These numbers should be derived from the activity target numbers above, accounting for anyone who was counted more than once. The goal is to provide the actual, unique number of clients served by category according to:

- # Parents/Caregivers
- # Other Family Members
- # Children Ages 0-2
- # Children ages 3-5
- # Children Age Unknown
- # of Providers

Applicants need not complete the bottom two lines of the unduplicated table.

STANDARD TABS: The final 6 tabs of the SOW Form are tabs containing standard activities that all F5SMC grantees are required to perform. These tabs are prepopulated to an extent. Proposers are not to delete information from the standard tabs. Proposers should add information to each standard tab as called for by the proposed project. The standard activities are divided into three major areas: F5 Standard Activities, Standard Communications Activities, and Standard Evaluation Activities. These tabs are further organized by Lead agency and Partner agency(s).

The standard SOW tabs are summarized below:

- I. F5 Standard Activities:
 - a. Distribute the F5SMC Kit for New Parents to clients

- b. Participate in F5SMC grantee convenings, trainings, and other collaborative efforts
 - c. Place F5SMC Tobacco-Free Premises placard in a prominent area where services take place
 - d. Make tobacco education and cessation resources provided by F5SMC readily available
 - e. Report on this project using Persimmony, the F5SMC on-line grants-management system
- II. Standard Communications:
- a. Distribute F5SMC materials to project clients and at community events
 - b. Put out press releases using template provided by F5SMC announcing receipt of F5SMC funding for your program/agency
 - c. Recognize F5SMC by placing the F5SMC logo and/or the phrase “Funding provided by First 5 San Mateo County” in your agency’s annual report, public education materials, outreach materials, website, media communications, and presentations and papers on work funded (wholly or in part) by F5SMC
 - d. Place a placard announcing project funding by F5SMC in a prominent area where services take place
 - e. Participate in F5SMC Communications Workgroup and other communications activities as requested, and follow the recommendations of the Communications Workgroup regarding use of the F5SMC Style Guide
 - f. Attend trainings on and utilize as appropriate the F5SMC Social Media Toolkit
- III. Standard Evaluation:
- a. Collect and enter/upload into Persimmony individual-level client data and individual-level service data on all project activities as required.
 - b. Administer F5SMC data collection and evaluation tools on clients served as required.
 - c. Participate in the F5SMC Systems Change Evaluation as required
 - d. Participate in data collection and evaluation activities such as planning meetings and trainings as required by F5SMC
 - e. Participate in data-sharing and data-linking conversations and projects within San Mateo County as required.

4b. Budget Requests and Budget Narrative Forms

Using the templates in APPENDIX D, provide Budget Request and Budget Narrative Forms for the Lead Agency detailing information about how this initiative will be staffed, financed and operated during the agreement period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2023. A Budget Request and Budget Narrative form must be completed for each of the three funding years (FY 20-21, FY 21-22, FY 22-23). Narratives must include calculations for each line item. Lead agencies must note each subcontractor/partner agency total budget amount as a Subcontractor in the Lead applicant budget regardless of annual amount requested.

Separate Budget Request and Budget Narrative forms must be completed for any subcontractor/partner agency whose annual budget exceeds \$25,000. For those subcontractor/partner agencies with annual budget amounts less than \$25,000, the Lead applicant should list these in the master Budget Request and Budget Narrative submitted by the Lead applicant.

- Include personnel, operating, indirect costs, and other relevant expenditure categories.
- Include information on any other sources that will fund the proposed program; list them in the leveraged column.
- Identify and submit Budget Request and Budget Narrative Forms for any subcontractors or partner agencies whose budgeted amount exceeds \$25,000.
- F5SMC allows a maximum amount for indirect costs of 12% of total direct costs (excluding subcontractor, consultant and capital costs).

4c. Resumes of All Key Staff

4d. Job Descriptions

Provide job descriptions containing the minimum qualification for all positions to be supported with F5SMC funds.

4e. Proof of Insurance

Attach current insurance certificates indicating liability insurance of a minimum of \$1,000,000 for each of the following: comprehensive general, motor vehicle, professional, and worker's compensation.

4f. CEO or Board Authorization

Private organizations must submit an original, signed statement from your chief executive officer (CEO) verifying support for your proposal. If the timing of your Board meeting is such that it is not possible to obtain a signature on the statement of support when submitting your proposal, please note that on the cover sheet and tell us when you expect to submit the executed Board Authorization Letter. If needed, this item can be handled during contract negotiations.

4g. References

Include three reference letters of agencies or individuals recently familiar with the quality and reliability of the Lead Agency's work. Include the name; mailing address, contact person, email address and phone number for each reference.

4h. Letter(s) of Commitment

Please attach a Letter of Commitment for each subcontractor/partner, signed by both Lead and Partner applicants. The Letter of Commitment should indicate the specific

responsibilities and services to be provided by the Partner agency (does not count toward the 30-page limit).

4i. Miscellaneous

- For non-profit organizations, include a copy of the 501(c)3 letter
- Include a copy of your most recent audited financial statement

VI. F5SMC EVALUATION PROTOCOL AND POTENTIAL RESULTS

A. EVALUATION PROTOCOL

Lead and partner entities must agree to track process and outcome measures for their specific project. The Lead Agency will be responsible for ensuring that partner agencies fulfill these requirements. Additionally, funded projects will be expected to participate in a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of efforts under Proposition 10, including but not limited to:

- Collecting individual-level client data and individual-level service data on all project activities and providing this data to F5SMC either via data exports or direct data entry into a centralized data system determined by F5SMC.
- Administering F5SMC evaluation tools on clients served as required by the F5SMC evaluation design.
- Allocating staffing resources and time to comply with the evaluation requirements.
- Administering/using any and all survey instruments as directed by F5SMC, and/or any F5SMC Evaluation Consultant, including outcomes and satisfaction measurement instruments.

Successful proposers will be expected to comply with evaluation requirements as specified by F5SMC. Data collection activities may include:

- Obtaining informed consent from service recipients to share personally identified information with F5SMC for purposes of program evaluation, continuous quality improvement efforts, and needs assessments.
- Individual-level client data, including demographic information (e.g. age, race/ethnicity, language, income, educational attainment, zip code of residence); indicator data (e.g. child care arrangements, access to services, social support); and self-reported parenting behaviors and confidence (e.g. frequency of early literacy activities).

- Agency-, program-, or site-level information such as: wait-list length; aggregate service numbers broken down by language, race/ethnicity, and child age; results of QRIS assessments and ratings; time spent by staff on activities relevant to the program’s desired outcomes; referral protocols; or information-sharing practices.
- Systems-level information, such as the extent of cooperation and coordination amongst participating agencies; perceived quality and availability of relevant services within the County.

VII. PROPOSAL PROCESS, FORMAT, & SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A. GENERAL

Intent to Negotiate Characteristics

An ITN is not a commitment or contract. There is no guarantee that the submission of a Proposals will result in funding, or that funding will be awarded at the level requested. The Commission and its delegates shall be the sole evaluator of the contents of the Proposals submitted in response to this ITN and will make the final selection of contractors, if any.

Prior to award of a contract, selected applicants will be asked to enter into a discussion with F5SMC to negotiate improvements/resolve any differences. Applicants will be required to designate their representative to receive all correspondence and to serve as the entity’s lead negotiator. F5SMC may request revisions in work plans as part of the contracting or post-contracting process.

B. FORMAT GUIDELINES

Proposals must be submitted both electronically and in paper format. Both electronic and paper copies must be received by the filing deadline.

Paper copies must be typed in Microsoft Word, one-sided, double-spaced in no smaller than 12-point Calibri font, have margins no less than 1” on any side, and have consecutively numbered pages.

Project narratives are limited to 30 double-spaced pages. Please label any exhibits, charts, or other attachments included.

The Cover Page and Table of Contents do not count towards the Project Narrative page limit. Similarly, the Scope of Work Form, Budget and Budget Narrative Forms, Resumes of Key Staff, Job Descriptions, and Reference Letters are considered attachments and do not count toward the Project Narrative page limit. Any materials in excess of the limit shall not be considered.

C. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposers must submit both electronic copies and paper copies of the proposal and the proposal attachments. Submit electronic, non-PDF copies on a flash drive labeled with the Proposer organization's name.

The original, paper copy of the proposal should be submitted unbound, along with seven copies securely bound by an industrial/heavy duty staple or binder clip in the upper left-hand corner. No facsimile or telephone proposals will be accepted.

Proposal Filing Deadline: 4:00 p.m. on Thursday April 30, 2020

Submit electronic and paper proposals to:

Jenifer Clark
First 5 San Mateo County
1700 S. El Camino Real, Suite 405
San Mateo, CA 94402-3050

VIII. Proposal SOLICITATION Process

A. ITN RELEASED

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

B. ITN LEADERSHIP MEETING: F5SMC, SMCOE, AND CONSULTANT

Thursday, March 12, 2020 from 10am to noon. An initial meeting to set the vision for the ITN process and activities.

C. NON-MANDATORY PROCESS OVERVIEW FOR PARTNER APPLICANTS: WEBINAR

Thursday, March 19, 2020 from 10:30am to noon. A webinar to inform potential partner applicants about what an Intent to Negotiate procurement process entails. The webinar will cover the overall content of this ITN including the application process, available funding amount and term, and the purpose and service strategies. Applicants will also have an opportunity to ask questions about the ITN and the funding process.

D. ITN CONFERENCE #1

Attendance at the two ITN Conferences is mandatory for the Lead Agency and those who intend to apply as Partners. Conference #1 will provide an opportunity to have a deeper discussion about the purpose and strategies of this ITN, and begin to explore how our local quality care & education

programs and services can best achieve the goals of the F5SMC Strategic Plan. Applicants will also have an opportunity to ask questions about the funding process, as well as have time to converse with others in attendance (without F5SMC staff present) in order to initiate conversations regarding potential collaborations in response to this ITN.

Friday, March 27, 2020

10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Lunch will be provided

1700 S. El Camino Real

San Mateo, CA 94402

Miller Ream Room, first floor

PLEASE NOTE: Due to County guidance regarding holding non-essential public gatherings in the context of the recent outbreak of the coronavirus, it may be necessary to hold this meeting online. If this becomes necessary, we will notify potential applicants as soon as possible.

E. DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTAL OF WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND PARTNER AGENCY LETTERS OF INTENT (LOI)

Wednesday, April 1, 2020 by 5:00 p.m.

F5SMC will accept written questions regarding this ITN through **April 1, 2020**, sent via email to Jenifer Clark at jdclark@smcgov.org AND Mai Le at mle@smcgov.org. All questions and answers, whether posed during the Process Overview Webinar, the ITN Conference #1, or sent afterwards in writing, will be posted to the F5SMC website by April 3, 2020 and emailed to all contacts who submitted LOIs. F5SMC, at its sole discretion, may choose to provide additional information following receipt of the questions.

The LOI template is APPENDIX G. Letters of Intent are mandatory but not binding for Partner Applicants. This information will be shared with the San Mateo County Office of Education to help them identify potential partners. Letters of Intent must be emailed to both Jenifer Clark at jdclark@smcgov.org and Mai Le at mle@smcgov.org.

F. ITN CONFERENCE #2

Attendance at both ITN Conferences is mandatory for applicants. As Lead Agency, SMCOE will likely have met with prospective partners in the weeks prior to ITN Conference #2, and a portion of this convening will be facilitated by an external consultant who will work with applicants to gain a greater understanding of desired roles and functions of the various applicants.

Friday, April 17, 2020

10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Lunch will be provided

Silicon Valley Community Foundation
1300 S. El Camino Real, #100
San Mateo, CA 94402

PLEASE NOTE: Due to County guidance regarding holding non-essential public gatherings in the context of the recent outbreak of the coronavirus, it may be necessary to hold this meeting online. If this becomes necessary, we will notify potential applicants as soon as possible.

G. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL

All proposals submitted in response to this ITN shall become the exclusive property of F5SMC.

The proposal shall be used to determine the Proposers' ability to render the services to be provided. The failure of a Proposer to comply fully with the instructions in this ITN may eliminate its proposal from further evaluation as determined at the sole discretion of F5SMC. F5SMC reserves the sole right to evaluate the contents of proposals submitted in response to this ITN and to select a successful contractor, if any.

All proposals must remain valid for a period of not less than one hundred twenty (120) days from the closing date for submission.

H. PROPOSER INTERVIEWS

If F5SMC determines, in its sole discretion, that additional information is required or desirable beyond that provided in the proposal(s) of any of the Proposer(s), F5SMC may call the Proposer(s) for additional information or invite the Proposer(s) to make oral and/or written presentations to the Proposal Review Panel.

Proposers should ensure that appropriate program, fiscal and management staff are available to participate in a phone interview on either **Friday May 8 or Monday May 11, 2020**.

IX. PROPOSAL SELECTION PROCESS AND REVIEW CRITERIA

A. FINAL FILING DATE

Proposal must be received at the F5SMC office by **4:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 30, 2020**.

B. LATE PROPOSALS

Any proposals received AFTER 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 30, 2020 may be rejected by F5SMC as not meeting the requirements of this ITN. Emailed proposals will not be accepted.

C. REJECTION OF PROPOSALS

1. F5SMC may reject any proposal not meeting the minimum requirements of this ITN.
2. F5SMC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.
3. F5SMC reserves the right to waive any requirements of this ITN when it determines that waiving a requirement is in the best interest of F5SMC. F5SMC's waiver of an immaterial requirement shall not excuse the Proposer from full compliance with remaining requirements and the contents of its proposal in the event it is awarded the contract.

D. ERRORS OR CHANGES IN THE PROPOSAL

If errors are found in a proposal, F5SMC may reject the proposal; however, F5SMC may, in its sole discretion, correct arithmetic and/or transposition errors. The Proposer will be informed of the errors and corrections.

If an item is described in the narrative and omitted from the cost data, the proposal will be interpreted to mean that the Proposer will provide the item at no cost. If this is a significant item, the Proposer will be notified.

Clarification of and changes to proposals prior to contract award are permissible provided that each Proposer is treated fairly and equally.

E. PROPOSAL REVIEW PANEL

The evaluation of proposals will be made by a Proposal Review Panel comprised of F5SMC staff and outside experts in Early Learning, Child Health and Development, and Family Support and Engagement. The review panel will be selected by the Executive Director of First 5 San Mateo County. The Proposal Review Panel will objectively and fairly assess each proposal (including leads and any partners and/or subcontractors) and the qualifications of Proposers submitting proposals. Their review will include their individual reading and scoring of proposals, and participation in one or more meetings of reviewers designed to determine funding recommendations and amounts.

Additional Information

If F5SMC determines, in its sole discretion, that additional information is required or desirable beyond that provided in the Proposals(s) of any of the Proposer(s), F5SMC may call the

Proposer(s) for additional information or invite the Proposer(s) to make oral and/or written presentations.

F. PROPOSAL REVIEW CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated on their strength, relevance to F5SMC's goals, and the quality of partnerships to facilitate their overall success. Proposed initiatives should be consistent with the Desired Outcomes detailed in the Commission's Strategic Plan.

Among the criteria that F5SMC will weigh in its selection of grantees will be the ability of the proposer to provide a clear and strong rationale that their activities will be strategic, coordinated and positioned to achieve measurable outcomes.

The review panel will use the following criteria to weigh the relative benefits of the projects being proposed.

1. ITN Purpose and Areas of Interest

- How closely the applicant responds to the purpose of the ITN
- Whether -- and to what degree -- the applicant responds to/incorporates the areas of interest and service strategies in their proposed project
- To what degree the applicant proposes to reach the target populations

2. Agency Capacity

- The degree to which the lead applicant demonstrates the organization's ability to manage the project
- The level of experience and skills of staff related to the service strategies being addresses
- The ability of the lead applicant to develop a shared vision in collaboration with partners to respond to areas of need
- The ability of the lead applicant and its partners to deliver culturally responsive, family-centered solutions in a cost-effective manner

3. Project Description and Initiative Elements

- The degree to which the applicant is responsive to each of the proposed service strategies and works with partners to thoughtfully outline a coordinated system of early learning quality improvement and enhanced access for children with special needs
- Creates an overarching structure and vision for the initiative
- Proposes to use this local funding stream to shore up and enhance areas within the early learning quality improvement and inclusion landscape that are not eligible for funding through other means
- Strategically brings critical partners to the table to provide the highest quality and most resource-effective solutions to the proposed initiative

4. Sustainability

- The level of clarity and detail regarding how the project will be sustained with a reduced amount/no F5SMC funding after the term of the project.

5. Scope of Work

- Are SOW documents for lead and partner applicants complete for each proposed year of work?
- Are the activities described in the Scope of Work sufficient to accomplish the goals outlined in the ITN and the F5SMC Strategic Plan?
- Are the objectives listed in the Scope of Work measurable and achievable?
- Is there sufficient staffing proposed to perform the services and activities?
- Is the level of expertise and experience of the staff sufficient to provide the proposed services?
- Does the proposal convincingly describe the plan for ongoing communication with staff and monitoring of staff performance?
- Is the agency's plan for providing culturally competent services consistent with the principles described in the ITN? Does the agency offer multi-lingual capability?
- How closely does the SOW correlate to and quantify the Project Narrative?

6. Project Budget and Budget Narrative

- Is the Budget Narrative clear, realistic and specific? Does the Budget Narrative demonstrate a thoroughly planned Initiative?
- Are budget justifications, including administrative costs, reasonable? Are staffing patterns adequate?
- Are funding allocations reasonably balanced to cover costs of the various proposed service strategies?
- Does the proposer effectively describe their ability to utilize all opportunities to leverage additional resources and indicate all resources available in-kind?
- Are Budgets and Budget Narratives for subcontracts exceeding \$25,000 included?
- Does the proposer submit Financial Statements?

G. NOTIFICATION

Notification of the announcement of recommendation may be done by certified or registered mail, email, and/or phone.

H. INABILITY TO NEGOTIATE AN AGREEMENT

After a Proposer has been recommended for funding by the Proposal Review Panel and selected for funding by F5SMC, negotiations will commence to institute a contract. If a satisfactory contract cannot be negotiated, F5SMC may, in its sole discretion, defer the amount of funding to another date or award the funds to another Proposer.

I. APPEAL PROCESS

An email informing unsuccessful Proposers that their proposal has not been selected for funding will be sent by Tuesday, May 19, 2020, to the contact person identified on the ITN Cover Sheet.

A Proposer must submit a written appeal via email by midnight, May 29, 2020 to the attention of the Executive Director of F5SMC and copied to the Program staff as indicated below. Appeals may be written in the body of the email itself or sent as an attachment to the email.

Appeals shall be emailed to: Kitty Lopez, Executive Director, F5SMC at klopez@smcgov.org and copied to: Jenifer Clark, Research & Evaluation Specialist, at jdclark@smcgov.org; and Mai Le, Program Associate, at mle@smcgov.org

Mailed or hand-delivered appeals will not be accepted.

Appeals shall be submitted as stated above and shall be limited to the following grounds:

1. Any failure of F5SMC to follow ITN procedures as articulated in the ITN; and/or
2. The ITN review criteria were not appropriately applied to the proposal.

The Proposer must include a statement of explanation in the appeal letter describing the specific reasons that form the basis of the appeal.

The Executive Director of F5SMC will respond in writing to the appeal within 10 calendar days of the receipt of the written appeal. F5SMC staff may establish a meeting with the Proposer in order to discuss the concerns. The decision of the Executive Director of F5SMC is final.

If the proposer fails to follow any of the instructions set forth in this ITN, Proposer will waive the right to file an appeal with the Commission.

X. Appendices

Appendices are available for download in the “Funding Opportunities” section of the F5SMC website: https://first5sanmateo.org/partners/funding_opportunities/

Appendix A: Cover Sheet

Appendix B: F5SMC Sample Agreement

Appendix C: Scope of Work Form

Appendix D: Budget Request and Budget Narrative Forms

Appendix E: F5SMC Supplantation Policy

Appendix F: F5SMC 2020-2025 Strategic Plan

Appendix G: Letter of Intent Form