



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Family Engagement: Parent Partnerships, Parent Connectivity, and Training & Capacity
Building

Proposals must be submitted to:

Karen Pisani
FIRST 5 SAN MATEO COUNTY (F5SMC)
1700 S. El Camino Real, Suite 405
San Mateo, CA 94402-3050
(650) 372-9500

By 5:00 p.m.,
Wednesday May 25, 2016

www.first5.smcgov.org

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II. TIMELINE

A. TIMELINE:

1.	Release of RFP	April 18, 2016
2.	Proposers' Conference & Family Engagement Data Share	April 29, 2016*
3.	Deadline for Proposers' Questions	May 6, 2016
4.	Answers to Proposers' Questions Posted by F5SMC	May 13, 2016
4.	Letters of Intent Due	May 18, 2016
5.	Proposal Due	May 25, 2016
6.	Review of Proposals	June 1-3, 2016
7.	Proposer Interviews (If needed)	June 1-3, 2016*
9.	Announcement of Recommendation (F5SMC Commission Meeting)	June 27, 2016
10.	Appeal Deadline	July 5, 2016 (Postmarked no later than July 5, 2016)
11.	Agreement Negotiations	June 28 – July 5, 2016*
12.	Agreement Approval	July 25, 2016
13.	Agreement Execution	July 26 – 29, 2016*
14.	Anticipated Start Date	August 1, 2016

* Denotes dates that Proposers' must be available to participate in the procurement process

II. PREFACE

A. GENERAL PROVISIONS:

Proposal Submission Date:

Proposals must be submitted to:

Karen Pisani
First 5 San Mateo County (F5SMC)
1700 South El Camino Real, Suite 405
San Mateo, California 94402-3050

**By 5:00 p.m.,
Wednesday May 25, 2016**

This Request for Proposals (RFP) 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 RFP process if deemed in the best interest of the Commission. Further, while every effort has been made to ensure the information presented in this RFP 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 RFP 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 completed and approved in September 2014.

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:

- ◆ Michael Garb, Chair, Public Member
- ◆ Lee Michelson, Vice-Chair, Public Member
- ◆ Sandra Phillips Sved, Public Member
- ◆ Anne E. Campbell, San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools
- ◆ Pam Frisella, Public Member
- ◆ Neel Patel MD, Public Member

- ◆ David Pine, San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
- ◆ Iliana Rodriguez, Director, San Mateo County Human Services Agency
- ◆ Louise F. Rogers, Chief, San Mateo County Health System
- ◆ Liza Persteva, Youth Commissioner
- ◆ Alexander Derhacobian, 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 RFP will be confidential. Please be advised that any contract that eventually arises from this Request for Proposals is a public record in its entirety. Also, all information submitted in response to this Request for Proposals is itself a public record without exception. Submission of any materials in response to this Request for Proposals 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 RFP shall become the exclusive property of F5SMC. At such time as F5SMC approves an Agreement, all proposals submitted in response to this RFP 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 RFP and continuing through the Commission vote(s) to award grant(s), all F5SMC personnel, Commissioners, and Review Panel members have been specifically directed not to hold meetings, conferences, or technical discussions regarding this RFP with prospective Proposers/service providers unless otherwise indicated in the RFP timeline set forth in Section VIII Proposal Solicitation Process and Section IX Proposal Selection Process and Review Criteria.

B. RIGHTS:

Proposers' Rights Regarding Confidentiality of Proposals:

If F5SMC receives a request for any portion of a document submitted in response to this RFP, 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 RFP. 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 RFP:

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

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 RFP, 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 23 months, from August 1, 2016 through June 30, 2018. Entering into an Agreement related to this RFP does not guarantee funding beyond June 30, 2018. Furthermore, all F5SMC agreements are subject to Agreement Terms and Termination provisions as stated in Paragraph 3 of the F5SMC sample Agreement (See 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.

III. INTRODUCTION

A. FIRST 5 SAN MATEO COUNTY 2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN:

In September 2014, the Commission adopted a new Strategic Plan for the years 2015-2020. Commission investments will be in three core Focus Areas: Early Learning, Child Health & Development, and Family Engagement.

With Proposition 10 revenues declining, the Strategic Plan reflects the Commission's decision to direct resources increasingly towards community partnerships, policy development, and leadership on issues related to young children and families, and to scale back its financial support for programs that directly serve children and families.

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 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, which is available on the First 5 San Mateo County website at www.first5.smcgov.org and is attached as APPENDIX F.

F5SMC's Strategic Plan Implementation Plan (SPIP) calls for rolling out funding in phases. In the summer of 2015 F5SMC funded projects that addressed the first strategy within the Family Engagement Focus Area (Intensive Supports for Families with Multiple Risk Factors) via Phase One, Round One funding. At that time the Commission acknowledged that the Family Engagement Round One funding primarily invested in intensive support core services, and that Phase Two would roll out funding for ancillary, wrap around supports through the remaining three strategies (Parent Partnerships, Parent Connectivity, and Training & Capacity Building). This RFP addresses the rollout of Phase One, Round Two Family Engagement funding.

With the new direction of the Commission in mind – funding less direct services in lieu of conducting more community partnerships, policy development, and leadership -- the Commission is interested in funding projects that maximize its investment through strong collaboration, service integration and continuity, and leveraging of multiple funding sources. In addition, the Commission will be seeking to support service projects that can achieve and demonstrate measureable positive results for the children and families they serve.

B. CONTEXT:

In preparation for this RFP, First 5 San Mateo County contracted with Applied Survey Research (ASR) to conduct a literature review as well as a Family Engagement Strategic Assessment Project. The latter was designed to identify systemic opportunities, weaknesses, and service gaps. The results of ASR's work are reflected below and throughout this RFP.

Service providers have a strong desire to be better trained so that they can provide excellent, "in-tune" services to families. Families have a strong need for those services and to become valued partners in creating and implementing service plans for their children. Families also have a need to connect with additional formal and informal supports. At the same time, some members of the provider community are yearning to strengthen the family engagement system across the county to support themselves and the families they serve. Parents need support. Providers need support. The system needs support.

In 2014, The John W. Gardner Center for Youth and their Communities published a brief which reported findings for a needs assessment for systemic, integrated, and sustainable family

engagement in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. The report included findings from 800 families and 120 service providers across six communities. The assessment found that families are invested in their children's learning and development; however, they do not always know how to support their children's needs. In addition, parents reported a need for programs which enhance their relationships with their children such as playgroups or support groups. Parents voiced a strong desire for programs which taught them how to interact with their children through experiential activities, and requested that children be more involved in the programming they received. Providers who participated reported a need for professional development focused on strategies, theories, and approaches for successful family engagement. Providers are interested in developing capacity through hands-on workshops.

The recent trend in family engagement is towards "authentic family engagement." Many providers have a desire to collaborate with families authentically; however, there is a lack of knowledge about how to successfully do so, as well as cultural barriers to effective family engagement. A key ingredient to authentic family engagement is the provision of services by someone of the family's own cultural background. However, attracting and retaining qualified, multi-cultural, bi-lingual staff has become increasingly difficult in the context of our county's rising housing costs and commute-to-work culture. Highly qualified candidates often go elsewhere. This hiring challenge often forces service providers to hire staff with less experience, bearing the burden of increased costs associated with even more training on both general child development/attachment principles as well as specialized trainings such as trauma-informed care.

While F5SMC's Strategic Plan addresses the three remaining Family Engagement Strategies separately (Parent Partnerships, Parent Connectivity, and Training & Capacity Building), in practice there is a great degree of overlap between them. The quality and effect of parent partnerships are impacted both by the degree that parents are connected to formal or informal support networks and by the extent that service providers and early childhood programs have and act upon early childhood understanding. (VIVA Strategy + Communications, Family Engagement Research Report)

The work of renowned social scientist, Urie Bronfenbrenner, consists of an ecological theory that describes the importance of considering all systems in which children develop from proximal (family, school) to distal (culture, neighborhoods) and their bi-directional interactions. This ecological theory argues that optimal learning occurs when there are harmonious interactions between systems (e.g., school and family) (Bronfenbrenner 1997, 2005).

There is a real need to holistically address family engagement issues.

C. PURPOSE AND SERVICE STRATEGIES:

The F5SMC Commission is interested in proposals that serve children 0-5 and/or their families who are experiencing isolation, lack of informal supports, struggling to become resilient, and to capitalize on the intrinsic strengths of families by engaging them as equal partners in service delivery while promoting parent leadership opportunities.

In addition, the Commission acknowledges that while there are established early childhood education and early childhood health networks in San Mateo County, the family engagement network is localized within certain geographic pockets. And according to Applied Survey Research's recent Family Engagement Strategic Assessment Project, both community based organizations and county leadership expressed a need for a more systemic approach to family

engagement. The Design Team for F5SMC's Family Engagement Initiative noted that the family engagement system can be confusing for families, especially for those unaccustomed to navigating complex systems and for families experiencing trauma. There is still work to be done to better connect health, early learning, and family support sectors. In addition, there is a need for providers to routinely come together to coalesce the family engagement system. Therefore, the Commission is also interested in proposals that partner with F5SMC to synthesize and bolster the family engagement system across the county while increasing the knowledge and capacity of service providers.

Specifically, F5SMC requests proposals for projects that will successfully address the following priority investment strategies within the Family Engagement Focus Area of the First 5 San Mateo County 2015-2020 Strategic Plan:

Parent Partnerships: Capitalize on parents' intrinsic strengths by engaging them as equal partners in services delivered to their families and by promoting parent leadership opportunities during service delivery that value their unique experiences, knowledge of their child, and ability to advocate on their behalf. Activities may include: groups, classes, and workshops that reinforce and strengthen parenting practices while appreciating the importance of the reciprocal process between parents and providers.

Parent Connectivity: Support informal or semi-formal social networks to promote parental resiliency and reduce social isolation. Activities may include: mothers' or fathers' groups; paraprofessional- or peer-led support groups; social media networking opportunities; father involvement efforts; developmental play groups; and partnering with parents to identify parent leaders who understand and share knowledge about attachment and early child development among their peers.

Training and Capacity Building: Increase the understanding of early brain development and the parent-child relationship among service providers from sectors whose decisions affect family functioning, and promote the appropriate application of that knowledge within their work. Activities may include: training and capacity building of both service sector leaders and direct service staff on early childhood development, adverse early childhood experiences and related subjects; promotion of family-centric practices; and increased cross-sector knowledge of programmatic services and eligibility. Examples of target service sectors may include: housing, law enforcement, criminal and family court, child welfare, probation, and other community agencies.

D. DEFINITIONS:

For the purposes of this RFP and the projects F5SMC seeks to fund, we are providing the following definitions:

Family Engagement:

A shared responsibility among families, organizations and communities where all collaborate in meaningful ways to support children's optimal development and learning while respecting and strengthening parents' and families' role as strong leaders and advocates for their children.

Parent Partnerships:

A deliberate and sustained effort to work with parents as equal partners, establishing relationships that are inclusive, trusting, and strength-based, in which parents perceive service providers as “on their side.” These relationships harness the intrinsic power of parents and promote parent-directed and parent-leadership opportunities.

Parent Connectivity:

Efforts that bridge the gap between parents’ need for connection and the reality that parents often feel isolated, especially during the infant and toddler years. These efforts address the lack of practical support (not being able to count on anyone for help), the lack of social support (no one with whom to share experiences and challenges), and/or the lack of parenting support (no resource to help with in-the-moment implementation of positive parenting practices). In short, parent connectivity is any activity that reduces parental isolation in their quest to raise their children successfully.

Training and Capacity Building:

Supporting service providers and the family engagement system through professional development and/or collaborative efforts that: increase service staff knowledge regarding early childhood development, including how to authentically involve parents; arm the leadership of child-involved organizations (including those that don’t directly serve young children but whose decisions affect them) with early brain development knowledge, empowering them to make decisions that positively affect young children and their families; and/or establish a provider network to track and address training resources and needs which builds a community of learners among family engagement providers who share innovations and jointly solve problems.

E. DESIRED OUTCOMES:

Successful proposals in response to this RFP will demonstrate that their proposed program activities will help First 5 San Mateo County achieve the relevant Desired Outcomes listed in F5SMC Strategic Plan and also listed below:

- ✓ Families feel connected to and supported by their community and able to nurture their child’s health and development;
- ✓ Children have healthy attachments to their parents and caregivers; and
- ✓ San Mateo County will give priority to young children and their families. (For a fuller context please see the Policy, Advocacy, and Communication Efforts section of the F5SMC 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, Appendix F.)

In service of these larger strategic outcomes, First 5 anticipates that funded family engagement services will impact participant-level outcomes, such as:

- ✓ Increase in percentage of parents reporting that they are able to access the services their family needs;
- ✓ Increase in percentage of parents who report feeling connected to a support network;
- ✓ Increase in percentage of parents reporting confidence in their ability to nurture their children and support their development;
- ✓ Increase in the percentage of parents who regularly read, sing, and/or count with their children ages 0-5; and/or
- ✓ Increase in parents’ coping skills and competence in managing stress and anger.

F. FUNDING AMOUNT AND AVAILABLE TERM:

F5SMC has allocated a maximum of \$1.1 million for the fiscal years 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 to meet the goals and objectives detailed in this RFP. The Family Engagement allocation for FY 16-17, and 17-18 was established and approved by the Commission as part of the Long Term Financial Plan in July of 2014. To support stability and effectiveness, F5SMC is inviting proposals for projects covering the 2-year term of August 1, 2016 through June 30, 2018. However, funding for Year 2 of the approved projects is not guaranteed and will be contingent upon satisfactory project performance in the previous year.

The table below displays budget allocations by strategy area. Respondents to this RFP are welcome to apply for any amount needed to support the effectiveness of their project up to the yearly allocation and/or up to the total \$1.1 allocation. It is important to note that embedded within each Strategy allocation is funding for systemic improvements; therefore, F5SMC may reserve funding for future systems improvement work if needed.

Strategy	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	Total
Parent Partnerships	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$ 500,000
Parent Connectivity	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$ 400,000
Training & Capacity Building	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$ 200,000
			\$1,100,000

G. 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 collaborative. The F5SMC Commission 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.

IV. RELEVANT RESEARCH

A. RESEARCH ON FAMILY ENGAGEMENT RELATED TO PARENT PARTNERSHIPS, PARENT CONNECTIVITY, AND TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING:

The early childhood field has gained tremendous knowledge in the past ten years about the way in which families can be engaged to promote development in children. In recent years there has been a movement away from parent involvement (opportunities for parents to participate within program activities) and towards authentic family engagement (strength-based approaches which authentically honor cultural and structural diversity in families). This shift toward authentic family engagement is beginning to be accepted by the field as the best way to partner with families to achieve positive outcomes for children.

Authentic family engagement is characterized by dynamic, culturally sensitive relationships between parents (caregivers), staff, and communities that promote the overall development of children. Family engagement is an ongoing, poignant effort by service providers and family members alike to engage in a shared responsibility for the success of children (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012). Successful family engagement requires a commitment from service providers and families to share the responsibility of promoting positive outcomes for children and in turn, the community. In addition, successful programs utilize an exchange of data, from provider to parent and parent to provider, to set goals, set policies, and assess outcomes for children. Factors associated with high levels of engagement by families include (but are not limited to): positive self-efficacy and self-esteem in parents, high levels of trust toward providers, and high levels of social support (Smith, Duffe, Steinke, Huang, & Larkin, 2008).

Increased parental engagement has been linked to programs that are family-centered, supportive, empowering, and culturally relevant (Brookes, et al., 2006; Green, McAllister, & Tarte, 2004; Reid, Webster-Stratton, & Hammond, 2007). There are a variety of ways to support parents' abilities to engage with their children at home as well as in early child education and school settings including encouraging parent partnerships and parent connectivity (See Definitions, Section III. D.) Research on family engagement has repeatedly demonstrated that the majority of parents want the best for their children; however, they may lack the knowledge and/or resources to promote development during critical years. Nationally, 42% of parents believe that involvement in their children's education is most critical between birth and preschool (W.K Kellogg Foundation, 2014). Research on family engagement identifies the home learning environments as key to children's long-term achievement. In fact, parent engagement in learning at home predicted greater academic achievement in children than any other form of parent involvement (Harris & Goodall, 2008). Other research has supported that a positive home learning environment can mediate the effects of other disadvantages children may experience in early years (Melhuish, *et al*, 2008). Each family functions as a home learning environment, regardless of the family structure, economic level, ethnic or cultural background. Consequently, every family has the potential to support and improve the academic achievement of its children (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1993).

Researchers recognize that the models for engaging families in school age settings may not apply to the early childhood setting (Bay Area RTT Family Engagement Task Force: Family Engagement Literature Review). Furthermore, the research literature on family engagement emphasizes that children's learning can occur across a range of settings, and that programs and families should consider incorporating the community into children's learning experiences (Weiss et al. 2009).

The Harvard Family Research Project (HRFP) suggests that essential elements of family engagement are:

- Shared responsibility to promote development of children among families, schools, and communities
- Occur across multiple settings where children live and learn (i.e. schools, summer camps, digital media, libraries)
- Coordination and communication among various service providers
- Continuous across a child's life
- Engage parents by allowing them to gain mastery in the skill through practice and application
- Dual capacity building (families **and** providers are able to develop skills through/for family engagement)

Similarly, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation has supported a transformational model of family engagement during the most critical years (birth to third grade). The Foundation has stressed the importance of family engagement that identifies parents as collaborators in their children's education rather than detractors. Families have inherent strengths that should be used to enhance services. In addition, the foundation emphasizes that family engagement is a shared responsibility among parents, teachers, and the community. Family engagement should be a dynamic, hands-on process that gives families the skills and confidence they need to promote development for their children as well as advocate for their children. Lastly, a successful family engagement system should be a systemic and integrated system which continually moves toward improvement for all members, and encourages families to plan, design and implement programs which meet their needs.

The impacts of family engagement can stretch well beyond services or programs. Efforts to promote family engagement at the micro level (i.e. early childcare setting, preschool, and community based organizations) can help parents feel more connected to and powerful at the macro level (i.e. the community at large). Tools and capacities learned through family engagement can be used within the family environment as well as the community. In addition, parents who feel engaged and empowered are more likely to continue engaging in positive practices beyond the scope of the program or service they have received (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2010). The most effective family engagement strategies require buy-in, collaboration, and partnerships by a wide-range of stakeholders. While buy-in from parents is a necessary component, it is not sufficient. Collaboration among service providers that is seamless and continuous has been linked with increased competencies of parents.

It is essential for service providers to move away from activities which involve random acts of involvement by parents towards continuous, ongoing engagement. One way for providers to give families opportunity beyond the scope of the program or intervention is by allowing parents to become mentors or peer supports to program participants. Several different settings (i.e. schools, community based organizations, early childcare settings) have implemented models to develop parents as leaders. Parents serve as effective mentors as they share similar background experiences with program participants and insight into important factors such as culture. Allowing parents to serve as mentors allows them to build capacity in leadership skills, such as leading a group, and communication skills as well as allows parents to gain deeper knowledge on important topics such as child development. This knowledge may lead to

increased efficacy in their capacity to effectively understand and parent their child. Service providers may co-facilitate with parents to provide additional structure and leadership.

Research points to several reasons why the three Strategies for Investment (Parent Partnerships, Parent Connectivity, and Training & Capacity Building) are important:

Effective Parent Partnerships: The ability of parents to partner with the agencies providing early care and education to their children is a contributing factor towards the effectiveness of those agencies at meeting their core missions. In relation to goals such as improving early literacy and academic achievement, and children's social adjustment to early care and educational environments, research has shown that the most effective forms of parent involvement are those which engage parents in working directly with their children on learning activities at home. (Cotton, K., Wikelund, K., Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, School Improvement Research Series: In Parent Involvement in Education.) Effective services combine formal facilitation and guidance by professionals with peer connections and on-going support. (Project on Effective Interventions, Pathways Mapping Initiative, 2007).

Families should feel welcomed into the program, and to be treated as an important resource of knowledge on their children as well as the community. Providers who use a family systems approach which includes bi-directional communication as well as shared goal setting and decision-making are better situated to form positive relationships with families (Trivette, Dunst, & Hamby, 2010). In addition to encouraging participation within programs, it is important the families are given tools and resources to promote learning within their home environment and beyond the scope of the service. For some cultures, family may include extended family members, and it is key to welcome and honor the involvement of grandparents, aunts, uncles, as they may play a significant role in development. Similarly, organizations should recognize that some family structures may be unconventional, as compared to traditional standards, and service providers must be just as welcoming to those individuals.

Intentional efforts should be put forth to include fathers and/or male role models in service provision. Fathers (or male family members) serve a unique and important role in school readiness and overall wellbeing for children. Having access to a loving and nurturing father figure has impacts on happiness, wellbeing, as well as social and academic success for children (Rohner & Venziano, 2001). Researchers have noted that these impacts hold true for non-resident fathers who are deeply engaged (Fogarty & Evans, 2009). In addition to positive effects on children, father involvement also has positive impacts for men. Fathers who are actively involved with their children feel better about themselves and find more meaning and enjoyment in life (Palkowitz, 2002). Several studies have shown that children are most likely to thrive when they have the opportunity for warm, close, and enduring relationships with both of their parents. (Susman-Stillman et. al, 2003; Chase-Lansdale & Pittman, 2002; Hilyard & Wolfe, 2002) Men typically are not staff or visitors of child care centers, so hiring male staff and engaging fathers and grandfathers in activities is characteristic of exemplary family-strengthening efforts. Staff should convey complete information to male and female parents and show children examples of men and women in nurturing roles. (Project on Effective Interventions, Pathways Mapping Initiative, 2007).

Programs should be culturally adaptable, flexible to the unique needs and structures of families, and operate from the notion that families have inherent strengths which can be used to build capacity. Barriers which may prevent family engagement (i.e. language, transportation, work schedules) should be considered, and a variety of opportunities for engagement should be offered. Priority should be given to programs which offer multiple delivery techniques

(discussion, experiential activities, modeling, and lecture) that allow families to apply the knowledge they learned in their programs.

Programs should be culturally adaptable, flexible to the unique needs and structures of families, and operate from the notion that families have inherent strengths which can be used to build capacity. Lastly, programs which offer multiple delivery techniques (discussion, experiential activities, modeling, and lecture) allow families to use the knowledge learned in the program.

Positive Parent Connectivity: Positive social connections strengthen the web of informal support that help parents cope effectively with the stresses of child rearing and their daily lives that are particularly prevalent in families that are economically disadvantaged. In particular, they give families extra access to important psychological and instrumental resources such as emotional support, material aid, needed information, job referrals, and help with childcare (PCAN, 2007). Connections to peers within the community has been linked with positive parenting practices as well as enhanced self-efficacy for parents (Suzuki, Holloway, Yamamoto, & Mindnich, 2009; Green, Furrer, McAllister, 2007).

A lack of social connections and low levels of contact with others (e.g., reduced interactions with kin, few adults in the household, etc.) are risk factors for child maltreatment and neglect. Social support networks, including formal and informal connections, help to build family strengths that lower the chance of child abuse and neglect. Social networks are associated with better parenting skills, greater knowledge of child development, and stronger family relationships. Mothers with large social networks are more likely than their counterparts to be involved in their children's lives, both at home and at school. Mothers who have social support are more likely to be responsive parents and to provide a stimulating home environment (Sheldon, 2002; Adamakos, et al., 1986; Burchinal, et al., 1996). Until recently, there has been a dearth of research on the impact of engaging fathers as well as on effective ways to engage fathers. In recent years, there have been movements to establish programs which meet the needs of fathers as well as conduct research on programs. Research to support fathers' groups is limited; however, there are programs which show promise. When offering support groups to fathers, it is important for the leader/facilitator to also be a male who is similar in age and has similar life experiences. In addition, engagement should include open peer support groups that meet frequently so that fathers can build a social network and receive advice from experienced fathers.

The Silicon Valley Parent Project (2013) found that within San Mateo County and Santa Clara County, parents lacked social support. Thirty-three percent of parents reported they could not count on a neighbor for support. Similarly, 24% of high-needs families reported they did not have friends to help them in their role as parents. Mothers' or fathers' groups can help parents network with other parents from similar backgrounds. Effective parent support groups are led by individuals who have similar life experiences and have a deep understanding of the socio-cultural backgrounds of the group participants. In some instances it can be helpful to have two lead facilitators; one who has knowledge on the experiences of participants and one has expert knowledge on the topic area covered (i.e. nurses, counselors, social workers). Facilitators should have training on the topic areas focused on in the support group as well as skills required to effectively engage participants (communication, facilitation, leadership). Lastly, groups should include discussion, information sharing and experiences, and experiential activities and have specified rules to allow for open and honest dialogue among parents.

Parents who have warm, trusting, and reliable relationships within their communities (e.g. with

peers, service providers, teachers) tend to have positive relationships with their children (The National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement, 2013). The reverse is also true: a disturbed relationship between the primary caregiver and the child is one of the most significant risk factors for later poor outcomes (Solchany & Barnard, 2001).

Training & Capacity Building:

One barrier to family engagement for service providers and early childhood educators is a lack of knowledge and/or skills on how to effectively develop family engagement strategies. A key ingredient of effective family engagement is developing the capacity of providers through professional development (Mapp & Kurtner, 2013). A focus should be placed on building capacity of staff **and** families in four keys areas (Alvara & Kluge, 2015):

- ✓ Capabilities (skills and knowledge)
- ✓ Connections (networks)
- ✓ Cognition (beliefs, values)
- ✓ Confidence (self-efficacy)

The Training & Capacity Building Investment Strategy is comprised of three elements: 1) professional development for service providers; 2) capacity building of service sector leaders; 3) Family Engagement systems integration/improvement work.

1. Professional Development:

Having a fundamental understanding of child development is key to positively impacting children. Without such knowledge and information, service providers will struggle to reach children in a positive light. (National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)). Service providers who have the training and level of education necessary to implement best practices can have positive impacts for the community at-large as they can provide higher quality experiences for families with children. There has been limited direction offered to service providers with regard to establishing and maintaining effective engagement with families. Many providers have a desire to collaborate with families; however, there are cultural barriers as well as lack of knowledge about how to successfully collaborate.

2. Capacity Building of Service Sector Leaders:

As with professional development, service sector leaders (i.e. executive directors, supervisors, decision makers) must have a fundamental understanding of early brain development and the parent-child relationship, as well as an understanding of the importance of family engagement for child development. This is critical to guard against decision makers implementing practices/approaches/policies that unwittingly burden families and/or the family-serving system. In addition, these leaders must have a baseline knowledge of effective strategies for engagement; resources to develop, manipulate and/or implement family engagement strategies; and tools to effectively evaluate family engagement strategies. In addition, service sector leaders should promote an integrated, systemic approach to family engagement which emphasizes strategies that meet the needs of diverse family structures and backgrounds. Lastly, leaders must highlight that family engagement is an integral part of their organization by providing pre-service training as well as professional development for all staff.

3. Family Engagement Systems Integration/Improvement Work

An integrated family engagement system should include:

- Integration of family engagement strategies among all health, social, and education servicers
- Fluid and bi-directional communication among service providers and agencies
- Analysis of data across agencies to have a clear understanding of what methods are most beneficial for families

In addition, decision makers should plan intentionally to allocate resources using accurate and meaningful estimates of need. Decisions about service provision and target populations should include consideration of traditionally “screened out families” (e.g., those that do not qualify for MediCal), so that resources are distributed appropriately and based on accurate and solid data.

A strong, family-centric family engagement system can be a springboard for deeper systems coordination and improvement among and between sectors. For example, traditional child welfare approaches to maltreatment focus largely on physical injury, the relative risk of recurrent harm, and questions of child custody, however; the abuse or neglect of young children should be evaluated and treated as a matter of child health and development within the context of the family relationship (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004). Child abuse prevention strategies that emphasize both the developmental needs of children and the importance of community-based supports for families show how we can close the gap between science and practice for our most vulnerable young children (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004). Substance abuse treatment and mental illness services should minimize separation from the child during treatment and integrate parent education regarding child development into the program (Project on Effective Interventions, Pathways Mapping Initiative, 2007)

It is equally important that families have a clear understanding of services available within the community, the entry points to those services, and receive referrals that ensure discrete, focused, and tiered services. Connection to services should happen at key milestones (i.e. prenatal, birth, preschool). Lastly, families, once connected, should receive services in a timely manner.

B. RESEARCH ON KEY INGREDIENTS OF EFFECTIVE SERVICES:

Key Ingredients are the underlying elements that make certain services and supports effective. They reflect the fact that, how interventions are implemented and how services are provided are as important as whether they are provided¹.

Effective family engagement strategies should:

- ✓ Be family-centered and family-driven
- ✓ Help families advocate for themselves
- ✓ Respect families and treat them as partners in service (not just recipients)
- ✓ Use innovative strategies to reach families
- ✓ Support service providers to do their best emotional and technical work

Respondents to this RFP should keep in mind the following key ingredients of effective services when designing and implementing their projects:

¹ Source: Project on Effective Interventions at Harvard University, 2007

Regarding outreach, enrollment, and retention of clients:

- ✓ Outreach and enrollment procedures ensure that families can easily locate and reach needed services.
- ✓ Outreach occurs at times and locations convenient to families, including locations where high-risk individuals congregate or pass through.
- ✓ Program requirements are simple, streamlined, and results-oriented.

Regarding services and supports:

- ✓ Programs are driven by clear purposes and theory.
- ✓ Providers identify circumstances that prevent clients from using services and supports effectively and adopt practices that remove barriers (e.g., clients' transportation, mobility, language, and child care needs).
- ✓ The focus, duration, frequency, and intensity of interventions, services, and supports are carefully calibrated to the needs, resources, and risk factors of specific children and families.
- ✓ Services and supports are family-centered and respond to individuals in the context of their family and to families in the context of their community.
- ✓ Programs address the "whole child."
- ✓ Programs are characterized by mutually respectful interactions.
- ✓ Staff make involving families and caregivers in identifying needs and solutions a priority.
- ✓ Programs are sensitive to clients with diverse cultural backgrounds, values, languages, education, and communities.
- ✓ Effectiveness is gauged by the results and outcomes experienced by children and families.
- ✓ Programs seek early, visible gains while working toward long-term goals.
- ✓ Regular program assessment and professional development efforts ensure continuous improvement.

Regarding service coordination and partnerships:

- ✓ Programs take responsibility for forging connections to and across services and supports and have the capacity to link children and families with primary supports and services (e.g., housing, child care, jobs) and with specialized services.
- ✓ Staff communicate across programs and agencies, plan solutions jointly, agree on common objectives, and share responsibility for attaining goals.
- ✓ Staff from various agencies use coordinated case management in developing service plans for the same children and families which ensures that clients receive a more comprehensive and coordinated set of services and supports

V. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

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 must be specifically labeled.

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

Section	Title
1.	Cover Sheet
2.	Table of Contents
3.	Project Narrative (including Financial Summary)
4.	Attachments:
	4a Scope of Work Form
	4b Budget Request and Budget Narrative Forms
	4c Organizational Chart
	4d Resumes of All Key Staff
	4e Job Descriptions
	4f Consultant Qualification Statement
	4g Proof of Insurance
	4h CEO or Board Authorization
	4i References (provide three)

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, included as Appendix A of this RFP. The Cover Sheet should identify the lead entity's/agency's name 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 template is accessible on the F5SMC Website at www.first5.smcgov.org).

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 20 double-spaced pages with 1 inch margins and utilizing 12 point Arial font. The narrative should answer all of the questions below in the same sequence and using the same headings and numbering. Additional content areas are permitted; however, they must remain within the 20-page limit for the narrative. Please refer to the criteria of this RFP to ensure that adequate and complete responses to the project narrative questions are provided.

The project narrative should include the following content areas: 3.a. thru 3.e.

3a. Executive Summary

In one or two paragraphs, please briefly describe: the overall goal of your project, the target population and needs your project will address, the primary program model and/or interventions that you will use to meet those needs, and the results for children, families, and/or communities that you expect the project to achieve. You should view this summary as a form of “elevator speech” that can quickly provide the reader an understanding of your project. The Executive Summaries of successful proposals 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. Organizational Capacity

Please describe how your organization is uniquely qualified to successfully implement the proposed project. Include in your description:

- Date the agency was established and its 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 the experience and unique skills of the staff for the positions listed in the project budget.
- Describe how the project will be culturally/linguistically appropriate for the population(s) served.
- 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 is funded. Prop 10 funds CANNOT be used to supplant state and local general funds (please see Supplantation Policy in Appendix E).
- Identify and Include qualifications of any consultants who will be supported by F5SMC funds.

3c. Project Need

Describe the issue(s) and/or need(s) that your project will seek to address. In your response, be sure to address the following questions and points:

- Why are these issues or needs significant?
- How are they present in San Mateo County? Use and cite the source(s) of your information.
- Identify the existing landscape of services that are trying to address these issues or needs.
- Explain how your project will complement, integrate with, or fill gaps unaddressed by, similar services or efforts in these areas.

3d. Project Description and Program Model[s]

Please describe the proposed project you are seeking funding for. Include the following information:

- i. Desired Outcomes: Identify which of the Desired Outcomes of the F5SMC Strategic Plan, listed in Section III E above, will be addressed by your project.
- ii. Target Populations: Please describe the target population(s) that will be served by the proposed project. In your description include:
 - The projected number of children and families to be served by your project
 - The geographic area(s)/communities to be covered by the proposed project.
 - Demographic information including economic status and any other information about the target population that you feel is relevant.
 - Explain how the population(s) your project will serve will be identified, engaged, and maintained in your services.
 - The specific risk factors that are impacting the population you plan to serve. In your description explain how these issues have manifested themselves in San Mateo County in the past and in the present.
- iii. Project Strategies and Activities: Describe the strategies and specific activities to be used to meet the outcomes and objectives of your project. If warranted, please explain the amount of ramp-up time the service will require. In general F5SMC allows 3 months during the first quarter of the project. Ramp-up activities should also be inserted in the appropriate sections of the Scope of Work attachment.
 - Explain why these strategies will be effective in achieving the expected results.
 - Identify any evidence-based practices or models that you will be utilizing, including citing the source of the model or practice. Also identify evidence-informed or best practices.
 - Describe how you plan to monitor/assess the implementation of your program strategies/models, and the methods and tools you will use to evaluate their effectiveness at achieving results for your target service population(s).
- iv. Expected Results: Identify the measureable results and outcomes you expect to achieve for the target populations of your project.
- v. Partnerships and Collaboration: Describe the organizations or agencies, if any, that you will be partnering with to achieve your project goals. Identify whether this is a new or existing partnership arrangement, and whether it is formal (i.e., with a fully executed MOU) or informal.
- vi. Systems Change: Identify any policy or practice system change components your project will address, if any. If there is a systems component, clearly

identify the change you (and your partners) are seeking to make, and how you will be able to document and measure that change.

- Include Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with all subcontractors and other major partners that play critical roles in your project. These MOUs should indicate the specific responsibilities and services to be provided.

NOTE: The project activities described above should directly tie to SOW objectives & activities (see Attachment section below for full instructions). The Narrative provides the full context, or the “story”; the SOW is the tool to track progress toward deliverables

3e. Financial Summary:

Please provide a brief description that describes your agency’s overall budget, including a delineation of amounts and types of receivables that constitute 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 16-17, and FY 17-18) 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 fund projects that will become fully dependent on its funds for continuation 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:** 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. **Please submit a**

Scope of Work for two fiscal years August 1, 2016 through June 30, 2018 (one SOW form for each fiscal year, 16-17 and 17-18).

Description of Scope of Work (SOW) Components:

Applicants are required to submit a Scope of Work Form (an Excel workbook template is accessible on the F5SMC Website at www.first5.smcgov.org). See Appendix C: Scope of Work Form.) This template includes tabbed worksheets that can later be used to produce quarterly progress reports.

The first set of tabbed pages will be individualized by the proposer outlining the goals, objectives, and activities that the project intends to accomplish.

Proposers will organize their projects on the SOW in the form of strategies and the activities to be employed as part of the strategies. Each activity will include the following information in the designated spaces:

- ✓ Specific **Description** of the activity
- ✓ Primary project **Person[s] Responsible** for enacting the activity
- ✓ The **Timeline** [span of dates by quarter and/or specific dates that the activities are planned to take place
- ✓ The **Measureable Objectives/Outputs** that are expected to occur when the activities are implemented; and
- ✓ The **Measureable Outcomes/Results**, i.e., changes for children, families, and/or communities that the project sponsors will be able to document were achieved due to the effective implementation of the activity.

The SOW Form contains 5 standard tabs near the end. 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 5 standard SOW tabs are summarized below:

1. **Collaboration**: Maximize collaborations with other systems, agencies and/or efforts. (This is the only optional tab.) If the proposed project contains a very strong collaboration effort that cannot be adequately portrayed utilizing the Systems Change tab, use the Collaboration tab to describe your work with others.
2. **Sustainability**: Promote sustainable practices and identify additional resources to ensure the continuation of service provision.
3. **Systems Change**: Communicate the importance of the first 5 years of life and collaborate to improve systems integration, decrease duplicative services, and create lasting beneficial systems improvement.
4. **Evaluation**: Participate in the design of the evaluation and in the implementation of data collection activities as required by the evaluation design.
5. **Prop 10**: Ensure the public is aware of the benefit of Prop 10 tax dollars by keeping the public informed of how and where Prop10 funds are invested in San Mateo County.

4b. BUDGET REQUESTS AND BUDGET NARRATIVE FORMS: Using the templates included in Appendix D, provide Budget Request and Budget Narrative Forms detailing information about how this program will be staffed, financed and operated during the agreement period of July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2018 (an Excel workbook template is accessible on the F5SMC Website at www.first5.smcgov.org). Budget Narratives must include calculations for each line item. Please submit a Budget Request and Budget Narrative form for July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2018 (One for each fiscal year 16-17 and 17-18). 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 subcontractor(s) 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. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

4d. RESUMES OF ALL KEY STAFF

4e. JOB DESCRIPTIONS:

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

4f. CONSULTANT QUALIFICATION STATEMENT:

For each consultant to be supported with F5SMC funds provide a statement of qualifications.

4g. 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.

4h. CEO OR BOARD AUTHORIZATION:

Private organizations must submit an original, signed statement from your chief executive officer (CEO) verifying support for your proposal.

4i. REFERENCES:

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

VI. F5SMC EVALUATION PROTOCOL AND POTENTIAL RESULTS

A. F5SMC's EVALUATION PROTOCOL:

As stated earlier in the RIGHTS section of this RFP, 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 serves 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 the 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 will include:

- 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-level information, such as wait-list length; time spent by staff on activities relevant to the Initiative'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.

B. POTENTIAL RESULTS:

Refer to Section III E Desired Outcomes and Section IV Relevant Research, in this RFP, for information regarding strategic plan outcomes and potential results. Other potential results include:

- ✓ Parents report less isolation and increased connection to informal and formal networks
- ✓ Parents and providers demonstrate/report better skills & knowledge, improved networks and confidence.

VII. PROPOSAL FORMAT

A. 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 Arial font, have margins no less than 1" on any side, and have consecutively numbered pages. Project narratives are limited to 20 double-spaced pages.

The Scope of Work Form, Budget and Budget Narrative Forms, 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.

B. 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 name on the RFP Cover Sheet must match the name on the flash drive).

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

**Proposal Filing Deadline:
5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 25, 2016**

Submit electronic (flash drive) and paper proposals to:

Karen Pisani
First 5 San Mateo County
1700 S. El Camino Real, Suite 405
San Mateo, CA 94402-3050
(650) 372-9500

VIII. PROPOSAL SOLICITATION PROCESS

A. RFP RELEASED:

Monday, April 18, 2016

B. LETTERS OF INTENT DUE:

Friday, May 18, 2016 (The template is accessible on the F5SMC Website at www.first5.smcgov.org)

C. PROPOSERS CONFERENCE & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT DATA SHARE EVENT:

Agencies potentially interested in submitting proposals and requiring clarification of the intent or content of this RFP, or of the competitive proposal process, **should attend the F5SMC Proposers Conference & Family Engagement Data Share Event, scheduled for Friday, April 29, 2016.**

The intent of the Proposers' Conference & Family Engagement Data Share Event is to present preliminary data gathered during Applied Survey Research's recent Family Engagement Strategic Assessment Project – including the draft Family Engagement Service Map & Resource Guide – and to address questions related to the information contained in this RFP.

F5SMC Family Engagement Proposers' Conference & Family Engagement Data Share Event
San Mateo Public Library, Oak Room
55 West 3rd Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94402

Friday, April 29, 2016
TIME 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Lunch will be provided

PLEASE RSVP for the Proposers Conference no later than 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 26, 2016, to kpisani@smcgov.org indicating the number of people who will attend.

D. POSTING OF ANSWERS TO PROPOSERS' CONFERENCE & WRITTEN QUESTIONS:

- i. F5SMC will accept Written Questions regarding this RFP through May 6, 2016, sent via email to kpisani@smcgov.org. All questions and answers – whether posed during the Proposers Conference or afterward in writing -- will be posted to the F5SMC website on May 13, 2016. F5SMC at its sole discretion may choose to provide additional information following receipt of the questions.
- ii. F5SMC is responsible only for what is expressly stated in this RFP and authorized written addenda thereto. F5SMC is not responsible for, and shall not be bound by, any non-authorized person acting or purporting to act on its behalf.

E. 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, and/or an in-person interview during the time frame of June 1-3, 2016.

F. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL:

All proposals submitted in response to this RFP 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 RFP 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 RFP 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.

IX. PROPOSAL SELECTION PROCESS AND REVIEW CRITERIA

A. PROPOSAL SELECTION PROCESS:

Final Filing Date:

The final date and time to submit a proposal is **Wednesday, May 25, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.**

Proposals, in hard copy (one unbound original, and eight stapled copies using industrial/heavy duty staples in upper left hand corner) and one electronic copy saved to a flash drive and labeled with the Proposer organization's name must be received at the F5SMC office by **5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 25, 2016**. The office of First 5 San Mateo County is located at:

First 5 San Mateo County
1700 S. El Camino Real, Suite 405
San Mateo, CA 94402-3050
(650) 372-9500

Late Proposals:

Any proposals received **AFTER 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 25, 2016** shall be rejected by F5SMC as not meeting the requirements of this RFP. Faxed proposals will not be accepted.

Rejection of Proposals:

1. F5SMC may reject any proposal not meeting the minimum requirements of this RFP.
2. F5SMC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.
3. F5SMC reserves the right to waive any requirements of this RFP 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.

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.

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 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.

Proposal Review Criteria:

Proposals will be evaluated on their strength, relevance to F5SMC's goals, and the likelihood of their success. Proposed projects 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 achieve measurable results, and their ability to show how they intend to document those results with objectively collected evidence.

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

1. Organizational Capacity
 - The degree to which the applicant demonstrates the organization's ability to manage the project
 - The level of experience and skills of staff related to the issues being addressed.
 - The ability of the organization to provided culturally competent services.
2. Project Need
 - The degree to which the applicant demonstrates sufficient understanding of: the nature and scope of the issue(s) being addressed; the existing gaps in services; the population(s) to be served; and other resources and/or collaborative opportunities to address the issue.
3. Target Population
 - The degree to which the applicant organization demonstrates strong knowledge about the population to be served and the risk factors that will be addressed.
4. Project Description and Program Model
 - The degree to which the strategies proposed seem appropriate to the population(s) being served and the issues and needs to be addressed.
 - The strength of the evidence provided for the program model and strategies that make them likely to achieve the outcomes and results being sought.
5. Sustainability
 - The level of clarity and detail regarding how the project will be sustained without F5SMC funding after the term of the project.
6. Scope of Work
 - The level of clarity and detail in the scope of work
 - The presence of measureable objectives and results with a concrete plan for documenting the results.
7. Project Budget and Budget Narrative

- Is the Budget Narrative clear, realistic and specific? Does the Budget Narrative demonstrate a thoroughly planned project?
- Are budget justifications, including administrative costs, reasonable? Are staffing patterns adequate?

Notification:

Notification of the announcement of recommendation will be done by certified or registered mail. Notification may also be conducted via email and/or phone.

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.

Appeal Process:

An email informing unsuccessful Proposers that their proposal has not been selected for funding will be sent on **Tuesday, June 28, 2016**, to the contact person identified on the Request for Proposal Cover Sheet. A Proposer must submit a written appeal postmarked by **July 5, 2016** to the attention of the Executive Director of F5SMC. Written appeals will be accepted at:

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

Written appeals transmitted via email or fax shall not be accepted.

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

1. Any failure of F5SMC to follow RFP procedures as articulated in the RFP; and/or
2. The RFP 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 RFP, Proposer will waive the right to file an appeal with the Commission.

X. APPENDICES

All Appendices are available for download at www.first5.smcgov.org.

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 2015-2020 Strategic Plan

Appendix G: Letter of Intent Form