



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

2025 - 2028

A request for proposals for programs that support children and families throughout Kern County

FIRST 5 KERN

FIRST5KERN.ORG/RFP2025



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SECTION I – BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

A. BACKGROUND – PROPOSITION 10

In November 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10, The California Children and Families Act (Act). The Act, which levied a 50-cent tax on tobacco products, created the California Children and Families Commission and a subsequent local commission in each of California’s 58 counties. Eighty percent of the revenues generated statewide are distributed to the county commissions to fund local programs that promote, support, and improve early childhood development from the prenatal stage to age five. On November 8, 2022, California voters passed Senate Bill (SB) 793, prohibiting tobacco retailers from selling most flavored tobacco products. The California Department of Finance anticipated an overall decline in revenues of up to 15% in the subsequent years.

B. LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION

The Kern County Children and Families Commission, also known as First 5 Kern, was established on December 15, 1998, by the Kern County Board of Supervisors. Nine Commissioners are appointed in accordance with the Act and local county ordinance. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of four Commissioners and thirteen community members guides the development of the Strategic Plan (hereinafter “the Strategic Plan”) and other Commission activities.

The Commission’s 2025-2028 mission is to “Enrich the lives of children ages prenatal to five through investments and community partnerships in child health and development, resilient families, and quality early learning.” Its 2025-2028 Strategic Plan embodies this mission, as well as the Commission’s goals and objectives. It also serves as a roadmap for achieving successful outcomes for Kern County’s children and families.

C. PROPOSAL INFORMATION

The Commission recommends that applicants become familiar with Commission related information and resources prior to completing and submitting their proposal. This information is available on the Commission’s website <http://www.First5Kern.org>.

To assist in understanding terms used by the Commission, please refer to Exhibit A – Glossary of Terms.

SECTION II – INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE OF THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

The Commission is seeking proposals from organizations interested in providing services to children prenatal to age five and their families living in Kern County. These services will be funded by the Commission using Proposition 10 funds and must be consistent with the Objectives outlined in the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan. Proposition 10 funds are intended to enhance existing services provided for children prenatal to age five and their families and may not supplant existing resources.

The Commission will fund programs targeting one or more of the three Focus Areas described in the Strategic Plan:

- Child Health and Development
- Resilient Families
- Quality Early Learning

Applicants may apply for funding for a period of up to three years, with a term to begin no earlier than July 1, 2025, and end no later than June 30, 2028. Only established organizations are eligible for funding; start-up organizations and capital projects are ineligible. There is no limitation on the number of separate proposals that an organization may submit.

Proposals will be reviewed and selected in accordance with the criteria and procedures set forth in this RFP. Successful applicants will be expected to sign a formal agreement with the Commission for the provision of services outlined in their proposal.

This RFP contains the instructions governing the requirements that must be met for proposals to be eligible for consideration, including the format in which the proposal is to be submitted and materials to be included.

SECTION III – ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

A. RFP FUNDING ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Programs must serve children prenatal to age five and their families.
- Only programs serving Kern County residents, and with an office located in Kern County, will be considered.
- Open to all community programs (start-up organizations and capital projects are ineligible).

B. FUNDING ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The Commission will fund programs proposed by governmental, nonprofit and for-profit entities and organizations, including city and county agencies, school districts, local service organizations, neighborhood and community-based agencies, faith-based and civic organizations, and businesses. The award is competitive based on the overall quality of the program, level of need, program's capacity, organization's history, program results, and geographic location of the proposed services.

An Independent Evaluation Committee will review the proposals and make funding recommendations to the Project Review Committee, which in turn will make a formal recommendation to the Commission.

Successful proposals must demonstrate:

- An understanding of the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan.
- A link between the proposed program and one or more of the Commission's goals and objectives from the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan.
- Experience in the proposed service area.
- Emphasis on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).
- A practical and realistic Scope of Work-Evaluation Plan (SOW-EP) that demonstrates an understanding of results-based accountability.
- A detailed budget that supports the SOW-EP.
- Efforts in actively seeking other sources of funding outside the organization to sustain the proposed services.
- The ability to effectively manage and report fiscal and program data through a web-based reporting system designated by the Commission.

C. POLICY ON INDIRECT COSTS

This policy is necessary to provide a fair and consistent methodology for contractors to develop and apply indirect cost rates on funded programs. Indirect costs are costs incurred for common or joint program objectives and cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective. Unlike direct costs, these costs do not provide a measurable, direct benefit to a program or activity. Indirect costs may include activities such as legal services, human resource functions, accounting activities, and administrative oversight. Indirect cost rates will be applied against salaries, benefits, and operating expenses.

The Commission's policy on reimbursement of indirect costs includes the following guidelines:

- Organizations with a pre-determined indirect cost rate will utilize that rate or 4%, whichever is less.

- The indirect cost rates for school districts are determined by the California Department of Education School Fiscal Services Division's published rates.
- In no instance will the indirect cost rate be greater than 4% of eligible contract costs.
- The indirect cost rate will be applied to the Proposition 10 cost of the program.
- The indirect cost rate, except for school districts, must be reviewed and certified annually by an independent qualified professional who possesses appropriate accounting credentials and certifications and must be independent of the applicant's organization (i.e., a staff bookkeeper or internal auditor would not meet this requirement). Organizations without a certified indirect rate will be ineligible to claim indirect costs.

D. POLICY ON FINANCIAL AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

The Commission will require all funded programs to submit an annual financial audit, completed in accordance with Generally Accepted Auditing Standards. Each funded program must submit to the Commission an audited financial report prepared by an independent certified public accountant within 180 days after the end of the organization's fiscal year.

This policy is necessary to provide a fair and consistent methodology to obtain information relating to the financial operations of programs and organizations funded by the Commission. The independent audit will ensure financial accountability as it relates to operations and is designed to determine whether or not funds have been used for the purposes given. If any audit findings demonstrate that expenditures have been made inappropriately, the Commission will take steps to recover funds. This policy is necessary for discovery and deterrence of inappropriate and unlawful conduct.

The auditor's report will include both an opinion on the financial statements and a report on internal control and compliance in accordance with Generally Accepted Auditing Standards. The cost of the audit will be paid for by the Commission. Audit costs are typically set up as a specific budget line item on the applicant's proposed budget.

E. POLICY ON FUND DISTRIBUTION

Funding is disbursed on a quarterly reimbursement method. It is recommended organizations have sufficient operating capital available through cash, line of credit, or other funds to initially operate programs until quarterly reimbursement begins. If the Commission funds your proposal, the first quarterly reimbursement will be made after October 31, 2025.

F. POLICY ON SUPPLANTING

Commission funds will not be used to finance or supplant any existing levels of service currently funded by federal, state, or local funds. If your program is funded, your organization must agree to this policy.

SECTION IV – PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND INQUIRES

A. PROPOSAL TIMELINE

Event	Date
Request for Proposals Release	June 17, 2024
Call for Proposals Webinar	June 25, 2024 (1:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.) June 26, 2024 (9:00 a.m.)
Questions and Answers	June 26, 2024 – July 24, 2024
Letter of Interest Due (optional)	July 12, 2024 by 5:00 p.m.
Proposals Due	July 31, 2024 by 5:00 p.m.
Notification Letter	Week of October 21, 2024*
Commission Awards	December 4, 2024*
Appeals Process Commences	December 5, 2024*
Letters of Appeal Due	December 27, 2024, by 5:00 p.m.*

*Dates subject to change at the Commission’s discretion.

B. LETTER OF INTEREST

- Letter of Interest (Exhibit F) must be submitted by **Friday, July 12, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.** to funding@first5kern.org. This form expresses an interest in submitting a proposal but does not obligate the submission of a proposal. While the Letter of Interest (LOI) is not mandatory, it is strongly recommended.

C. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

- Proposals must be hand delivered or received by certified or registered mail with return receipt by **Wednesday, July 31, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. to:**

Kern County Children and Families Commission
Attn: RFP 2025-2028
5080 California Avenue, Suite 200
Bakersfield, CA 93309

- **Proposals submitted after the specified due date and time will be returned unopened to the submitting party.**
- **Faxed or emailed proposals will not be accepted.**
- Applicants must submit one original proposal and a copy of the most recent audit. Do not use staples.

- The original proposal must be signed by the authorized party in **blue** ink. Unsigned proposals will be rejected.
- Each proposal must contain all the required documents when submitted. *No changes, modifications, corrections, or additions may be made to the proposal once received by the Commission. **NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE.***

D. INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS

Any questions regarding the RFP or about the proposal and evaluation process may be submitted through the First 5 Kern website, on the RFP page (listed below). **Questions may be submitted from June 26, 2024, through July 24, 2024.** Agencies will not receive personal replies to questions regarding the RFP process, either by phone, mail, or email. Questions and answers will be posted on the Commission website by noon on Wednesdays and Fridays. **We will not respond to, or post questions received after July 24, 2024.** Applicants should check the website prior to submitting questions.

Please refrain from directing inquiries to First 5 Kern personnel, as such queries will not receive a response. Additionally, repeated requests may lead to the rejection of a submitted RFP.

The Commission will utilize its website as the primary platform for disseminating information, updates, and addenda regarding the RFP to applicants and other interested parties. Any modifications, responses to requests for clarification, or other communications from the Commission will be considered adequately notified and provided when posted on the website. Applicants are responsible for monitoring the website for such information.

Website Address:

<http://www.First5Kern.org/RFP2025>

SECTION V – PROPOSAL FORMAT

A. PROPOSAL PREPARATION

The Commission recommends that applicants carefully review the information in this section and the instructions in the RFP before submitting their proposals.

A proposal will be rejected without appeal rights if the applicant disregards the instructions regarding completeness of the proposal, required forms and attachments, required signatures, and timeliness of submission. In addition, proposals that are plagiarized or contain false or misleading information will be rejected.

B. GENERAL FORMAT

To promote a fair process, all proposals must follow the standardized format below:

- Must use the Commission provided RFP template.
 - Proposal Application (Attachment C) must not exceed 11 pages.
- One original signed in **blue** ink by an authorized party.

C. PROPOSAL CONTENTS – ORDER OF PRESENTATION

Proposal Cover Page (1 original signed in blue ink)	Attachment A
Proposal Checklist	Attachment B
Proposal Application	Attachment C
• Program Summary	1 page max
• Definition of Key Terms (if necessary)	1 page max
• Organization Description and Capacity	2 pages max
• Program Description and Overview	2 pages max
• Program and Fiscal Oversight	3 pages max
• Program Impact	1 page max
• Sustainability Goals	1 page max
Scope of Work-Evaluation Plan	Attachment D
Budget Form and Budget Narrative	Attachment E
Organization Financial Audit (copy)	No page limit
Proposal Copies – One Original (signed in blue ink)	Entire Proposal

D. PROPOSAL CONTENTS – DESCRIPTIONS

Proposal Cover Page – Form Provided – Attachment A

The proposal cover page must be completely filled out and signed by an authorized party in **blue** ink.

Proposal Checklist – Form Provided – Attachment B

If applicants answer “Yes” to any of the Proposal Checklist questions, and the item is missing, the proposal will be considered incomplete. If applicants answer “N/A” to any of the questions, a brief explanation must be provided at the bottom of the Proposal Checklist.

Proposal Application – Form Provided – Attachment C

- **Program Summary – 1 Page Maximum**

The program summary should include a concise outline of its services and objectives and how they align with the Commission’s Goals and Objectives outlined in the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan.

- **Definition of Key Terms – 1 Page Maximum (*if necessary*)**

Define any specific terms, such as medical terms, conditions, diagnosis, intervention strategies, and treatment protocols specific to the program. Include brief examples as necessary. Provide any information necessary for readers to understand the proposal.

- **Organization Description and Capacity – 2 Pages Maximum**

Provide a description of the organization, including its legal status, programs, services, populations served, with a particular focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts. Describe the organization's history of providing services to children from prenatal to age five and their families, emphasizing any DEI initiatives that have been integrated into these services. In the case of applicants with only a brief history, it is essential to present evidence that demonstrates the organization's capacity to provide the proposed services and advance DEI objectives. The Commission retains the option to request supplementary evidence to verify capacity.

- **Program Description and Overview of Services– 2 Pages Maximum**

Explain the needs of the geographic area(s) the proposed services will cover. Outline the program’s proposed services, detailing how the program will cater to the needs of children from prenatal to age five and their families and how the proposed services align with the selected Goals and Objectives listed in the Commission’s Strategic Plan. Provide the anticipated number of children and families who will benefit from the proposed services.

- **Program and Fiscal Oversight – 3 Pages Maximum**

- Detail the staffing structure of the program, outlining the roles and responsibilities of each staff member. Specify the individual responsible for program management, overseeing accurate data collection, and entering information into the Commission-mandated data management system.
- Specify the individual responsible for overseeing the program budget and handling the processing of reimbursement claims. Describe the system for preparing, reviewing, and approving fiscal documents.
- Provide a staff organizational chart describing the program and fiscal staff hierarchy.

- If hiring a subcontractor is proposed, describe the subcontractor's experience offering services to children prenatal to age five and their families. Subcontractors must adhere to the standards required of the primary contractor and the primary contractor is responsible for all subcontractor performance.

- **Program Impact – 1 Page Maximum**

Provide an example showcasing the successful outcomes of the proposed program and services. Include the following components:

- Provide detailed insights into the community impact resulting from the services offered.
- Specify the curriculum and assessments utilized by the program and present the evaluation outcomes derived from the assessments/evaluation tools or other demonstrated results of the program.

- **Sustainability Goals – 1 Page Maximum**

The Commission will support applicants that maximize multiple funding opportunities such as leveraging and matching grant funds from other private, local, state, or federal programs. Describe the proposed program's current and anticipated funding sources from outside your organization that support services specific to children ages prenatal to five during the funding cycle. Sustainability, or the ability of a program to sustain itself beyond Commission dollars, is a key factor in any successful program. Include the following components:

- Other Funding (Current and Anticipated): List sources of funding that provide current or anticipated support to the program such as matching grant funds from other private, local, state, or federal programs. Describe program activities or services supported by funding.
- Highlight your sustainability goals.
- Provide detailed strategies and activities for achieving sustainability goals.

Scope of Work-Evaluation Plan – Form Provided – Attachment D

The Scope of Work-Evaluation Plan (SOW-EP) details the proposed program's services and target audience. The 2025-2028 Strategic Plan, in coordination with Exhibit B – Assessment Glossary and Exhibit C – 2025-2028 Result Indicator Glossary, should be used to identify the Focus Area and Objectives that align with the proposed services.

The SOW-EP must include the following:

- Goal – Refer to the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan to complete. Identify and select the Goal that corresponds to the proposed service.
- Objective – Refer to the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan to complete. Identify and select the Objective that corresponds to the proposed service.
- Result Indicator – Leave blank. This column will be populated by First 5 Kern staff.
- Service Category – Leave blank. This column will be populated by First 5 Kern staff.
- Assessment – Enter the assessment that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the service. Refer to the Assessment Glossary (Exhibit B) for Commission approved assessment or enter "N/A" if none.

- Assigned Staff – List title(s) of the responsible (both funded and in-kind) staff members, including the quantity of each position in parenthesis (e.g., Family Advocate (3); Office Clerk (1) etc.). The staff members listed must coincide with the staff members listed on the Budget Form.
- Service Description – Provide a summary of the proposed service. Describe who will be served, duration of services, dates, and times of services (if applicable), and curriculum (if any).
- Data Reporting and Monitoring – Leave blank. This column will be populated by First 5 Kern staff.
- Reporting Unit – Select the client type who will receive services (e.g., families, children, parents/guardians, providers, etc.).
- Annual Target – Enter the proposed annual target. The count must be an unduplicated count. See Exhibit A (Glossary of Terms) for definition.

Budget Form and Budget Narrative – Form Provided – Attachment E

All organizations will submit a detailed budget and supporting narrative. Budgets are monitored on a line item basis and all costs charged must be clearly allocated to the line item and be supported by the language in the narrative. The Budget Narrative should provide a thorough and clear explanation of all projected line item costs and the basis used for determining those costs. Include all organization support or in-kind contributions, if any, in the budget and supporting narrative.

Organizations who propose a line item for subcontracted services in Section II – Services and Supplies, are required to submit a supplemental Budget Form and Budget Narrative detailing subcontractor activities.

Examples of commonly used Services and Supplies line items are provided in Section II below – Services and Supplies. Budget line items shown serve as a guide for the type of expenses that are typically represented in this section of the budget. Organizations may have additional budget line items that are specific to their proposal or industry.

The Budget Form and Budget Narrative must include the following:

Section I – Personnel Services

- Personnel Services – Position title, hourly rate (salaries must be converted to an hourly rate/limit to two decimal places), and program hours. Include any salary or cost of living increases for future contract years.
- Benefits – Payroll taxes, workers compensation, health insurance costs, etc.
- Total Personnel Services – Total of all personnel costs and related benefits.

Section II – Services and Supplies

- Office Expenses – Office supplies, office equipment maintenance, postage, and other consumable items. Furniture and office equipment with an acquisition cost of \$499 or less per unit are considered general expense items.
- Communications – Telephones, internet connectivity, etc.
- Utilities – Gas, electric, water, garbage, etc.
- Program Supplies – Supplies necessary to provide direct program services to eligible children and/or parents/guardians. Medical and dental supplies, curriculum, educational books and projects, etc.

- Space Costs – Office rental or lease, including cost and term. May include related costs such as custodial, alarm service, etc.
- Insurance – Commercial, general, professional, and auto liabilities.
- Travel – Travel costs related to program activities. Mileage expense should be based on the organization's approved rate in effect at the time of proposal or the Federal IRS rate, whichever is less.
- Training – Training or conference costs that directly reinforce or expand knowledge related to the delivery of services.
- Duplication and Printing Costs – Duplication and printing costs related to the delivery of direct services or outreach activities.
- Equipment – Durable furniture, office and medical equipment costing \$500 or more.
- Audit – Cost of the organization's required audit.
- Total Services and Supplies – Total of all the non-personnel costs, excluding indirect costs.

Section III – Indirect

- Indirect costs at the applicant's approved indirect rate – not to exceed 4%.
- Total Indirect.
- Grand Total (Total Program Budget) – Total personnel services, services and supplies, and indirect costs proposed by the applicant.

Organization Financial Audit

Applicants are required to submit one complete copy of the organization's most recent audit, including any findings and recommendations.

Audits are not needed from subcontractors.

SECTION VI – PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

A. RECEIPT OF PROPOSAL

All proposals received by the deadline will be reviewed for completeness before being forwarded to the corresponding Independent Evaluation Committee for a full evaluation. **The absence of required forms or information will result in rejection of the proposal.**

B. INDEPENDENT EVALUATION AND PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEES

Three Independent Evaluation Committees (IECs), each dedicated to one Focus Area, will be established. These committees will consist of individuals selected for their expertise related to the relevant Focus Area, their familiarity with the Strategic Plan, and Proposition 10 funding. Committee members will be chosen from both within and outside Kern County. This ensures a diverse range of perspectives, further enhancing impartial judgment through their valuable insights on First 5 programming.

The Project Review Committee (PRC) is a subcommittee of the Commission. The PRC will use the IECs' results to determine funding allocations and make recommendations to the Commission for final approval. All proceedings and work of the IECs and PRC, including rating or scoring instruments, notes, actual scores, ratings, and recommendations, remain the confidential property of the Commission and will not be released to the applicant or any other party.

C. RATING PROPOSALS

Each IEC will review and evaluate proposals using Exhibit G – Scoring Matrix. The Scoring Matrix will yield scores for all factors and combined for a total score for each proposal. The resulting scores will assist the IECs in assessing the overall proposal and making recommendations to the PRC. The IECs and PRC reserve the right to request any additional information in order to facilitate the recommendation process.

D. AWARD OF AGREEMENT

Applicants will be notified of the Project Review Committee's results through formal letters during the week of October 21, 2024.

The Commission will make all final funding decisions on December 4, 2024. Agreements are awarded based on proposals that meet RFP requirements, are aligned with the Strategic Plan, and approved by the Commission. Following approval, Commission staff will meet with each awarded applicant to negotiate and execute an Agreement. An Agreement will be in effect only after the effective date of the Agreement and authorized representatives of the applicant and the Commission have signed the Agreement. The Agreement may include contents of the RFP, the proposal, and any other modification or addendums determined by the Commission to be necessary prior to its execution by the parties.

Funding for all approved programs and services are subject to an annual review. Programs will also be subject to a quarterly review process to determine if anticipated results are achieved.

SECTION VII – LEGAL INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

A. RESERVATIONS

- The Commission reserves the right to reduce, amend, and/or rescind this RFP at any time prior to final execution of the contract.
- Submitting a proposal in response to this RFP and/or Commission approval of proposals does not commit the Commission to award an Agreement.
- The Commission assumes no responsibility for any costs incurred by an applicant in submitting a proposal.
- The Commission is under no obligation to award a contract to the applicant that presents the lowest cost or highest yield. The selected applications will be made based on a comprehensive evaluation of all the submitted proposals and the best interests of the Commission as determined by the Commission.
- The Commission reserves the right to request additional information and/or clarification from any or all applicants.
- All proposals become the property of the Commission.
- All proposals will remain confidential until an Agreement is negotiated. However, since the Commission is a public entity, all applications can become public, with written request, after all successful contract negotiations.

B. LEGAL INFORMATION

Proposal Confidentiality

Proposals will be maintained as confidential until the recommendation to fund proposals is forwarded to the Commission. At that time, all proposals become public record.

If any applicant has trade secrets or other information in the proposal that are proprietary by law, the applicant must, at the time the proposal is submitted, request that the Commission keep said information confidential. This request for confidentiality must be made in writing and the information must be readily separable from the proposal in order to facilitate eventual public inspection of the non-confidential portion of the proposal. The Commission, its agents, and/or employees shall not be legally or monetarily responsible for disseminating to third parties' information deemed by the applicant to be confidential.

Appeals Process

The Commission is the sole and final authority to approve or reject proposals and the conditions under which they are funded. At its sole discretion, the Commission may consider or reject an appeal.

To appeal the Commission's decision, the applicant must submit a Letter of Appeal to the Commission office by **December 27, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.** The Commission will adhere to its "Policy and Procedure for Reconsideration of Funding Requests" when addressing appeals.

Disposition of Proposals

All materials submitted with this RFP will become the property of the Commission and will not be returned. The original copy will be kept on file and become a public record for a minimum of three years.

SECTION VIII – LIST OF PROPOSAL ATTACHMENTS AND EXHIBITS

All proposal attachments and exhibits in this document are referenced below and available at <http://www.First5Kern.org/RFP2025>.

PROPOSAL ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A – Proposal Cover Page
- Attachment B – Proposal Checklist
- Attachment C – Proposal Application
- Attachment D – Scope of Work-Evaluation Plan
- Attachment E – Budget Form and Budget Narrative

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit A – Glossary of Terms
- Exhibit B – Assessment Glossary
- Exhibit C – Strategic Plan 2025-2028 - Result Indicator Glossary
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