

1. **GENERAL INFORMATION**
2. **Description of First 5 Orange County, Children and Families Commission**

The Children and Families Commission of Orange County (hereafter referred to as First 5 Orange County) is a public agency with a legal mandate to promote, support, and improve the early development of children from the prenatal stage to five years of age in Orange County. The agency was established as a result of the voter-approved California Children and Families Act of 1998 (Health and Safety Code Section 130100-130155).

Since its inception more than 20 years ago, First 5 Orange County has become a leading convener and collaborator, valued capacity builder, and influential funder. In these roles, we place particular emphasis on addressing equity issues that affect the health, well-being, and early learning for our county’s youngest residents. We want children of every culture, background, and circumstance to thrive.

First 5 Orange County’s [2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan](https://first5oc.org/about-us/reports/strategic-plan/) articulates our vision that *all* children, prenatal to age five, in Orange County reach their full potential from their earliest moments. To realize this vision, we collaborate with other county public agencies, community residents and organizations, and philanthropic partners, who share this vision for young children and are committed to working together to maximize resources and achieve the greatest possible impact.

1. **Background**

In October 2023, Orange County received its inaugural Black Infant Health (BIH) program grant from the California Department of Public Health's Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Division. This vital initiative, funded through Federal Title V MCH Block Grant funds, Federal Title XIX (Medicaid) funds, and State General funds, aims to improve Black infant and maternal health and decrease the inequities in mortality rates. The OC Health Care Agency (HCA) received the award and subcontracted a portion of the grant to First 5 Orange County given our focus on the prenatal to five population and ability to reach qualified community-based organizations that can ramp up quickly to implement BIH. HCA and First 5 Orange County are working collaboratively to support the success of BIH.

The BIH program stands as a crucial intervention in the ongoing effort to address and mitigate the stark disparities in infant and maternal mortality and morbidity rates among Black communities. The necessity of such a program is underscored by the alarming data that highlight the disproportionate challenges Black mothers and their infants face. Nationally, Black infants are more than twice as likely to die before their first birthday compared to White infants. Similarly, Black mothers experience maternal mortality rates that are 2 to 3 times higher than those of their White counterparts. These disparities are not simply numbers; they are a reflection of systemic inequities, access barriers to quality healthcare, and the pervasive impact of structural racism on the health and well-being of Black families.

In Orange County, the situation mirrors the national crisis, providing a localized lens on a widespread issue. Despite the county's overall wealth and access to medical resources, Black infants and mothers continue to experience these disproportionate disparities. For instance, recent data indicate that in Orange County, the percentage of Black babies with low birth weight is substantially higher than for the county's overall population. Low birth weight increases an infant's risk of immediate health issues such as respiratory distress, difficulty maintaining body temperature, and feeding problems. Long-term, low birth weight is associated with chronic conditions such as heart disease and diabetes, as well as developmental and educational challenges. These health disparities are deeply intertwined with broader societal and environmental conditions, serving as a stark reflection of how social determinants of health—such as socioeconomic status, education, neighborhood conditions, employment opportunities, and access to social support networks—do not impact all communities equally. Specifically, Black communities are disproportionately affected by challenges in these areas, leading to significant health inequities. This unequal burden of social determinants contributes to higher rates of health issues, including infant and maternal mortality, within Black populations, highlighting the critical need for focused interventions to address and rectify these systemic imbalances.

The BIH program's creation was a direct response to these unacceptable disparities, aiming to provide comprehensive support, education, and advocacy for Black mothers and their infants. By focusing on the social determinants of health, BIH seeks to offer a holistic approach to improving outcomes. This includes not only prenatal and postpartum care but also addressing broader issues such as housing, nutrition, mental health services, and support for navigating the healthcare system. The purpose of BIH is to create a supportive community network that empowers Black women through their pregnancy and beyond, ensuring they and their infants have the best possible start in life.

1. **INTENT OF RFP**

First 5 Orange County is seeking one or more organizations that have the values, experience, and infrastructure to implement the Black Infant Health (BIH) program in Orange County. We anticipate this project to begin May 2024, or sooner, and be implemented over a 26-month period (May 2024 – June 2026).

SCOPE OF WORK

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health (MCAH) Division designed BIH and expects the program to be implemented with fidelity. In other words, the organization(s) selected to implement BIH in Orange County is expected to structure and deliver the program as intended by the state. To learn more, review CDPH MCAH’s description of the [Black Infant Health program](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DMCAH/BIH/Pages/default.aspx).

*Program Components*

First 5 Orange County will award one or more organizations that can demonstrate an ability to implement the following program components with a culturally affirming approach:

1. **Group Sessions**

Series of 10 prenatal and 10 postpartum group sessions conducted weekly with 8-12 participants each for 2.5 hours. The objective is to serve a minimum of 72 prenatal participants and 32 postpartum participants per fiscal year. The core elements of the [BIH Group Based Model](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DMCAH/BIH/Pages/default.aspx#program-profile) must be implemented as designed. Group sessions are to be delivered in a safe, accessible physical environment that honors the unique history and culture of the Black families. Two facilitators, who have direct experience working with Black families, are required per group session. Group facilitators must follow CDPH MCAH’s curriculum covering a variety of topics such as:

* + Cultural heritage as a source of pride
	+ Healthy pregnancy, labor and delivery
	+ Nurturing ourselves and our babies
	+ Prenatal, postnatal, and newborn care
	+ Stress management
	+ Healthy relationships
1. **Life Planning** **Meetings**

BIH participants are offered individualized life planning meetings with an assigned family health advocate (FHA). CDPH MCAH recommends a minimum of four meetings during the prenatal period and four during the postpartum period. During life planning meetings, the FHA connects participants to services and other community resources as needed. The FHA develops/strengthens referral pathways to facilitate a seamless process. The FHA also coaches participants, guiding and encouraging them to reach their short and long-term goals.

1. **Case Management**

For Black birthing people who want support but are unable to attend group sessions, they are offered case management support to connect them to resources, follow-up on questions and concerns, and track their progress. No more than 35% of participants can be offered 1:1 support without participating in group sessions.

*Outreach, Recruitment, and Retention*

The selected applicant(s) is expected to develop and implement a comprehensive community awareness and outreach plan in collaboration with the Health Care Agency (HCA) and First 5 Orange County (First 5 OC). Eligible participants are self-identified Black birthing people, 16 years or older, who are pregnant or up to six months postpartum. Participants are offered program services as follows:

* Age 16+, pregnant or up to six months postpartum are offered 1:1 support
* Age 18+, less than 30 weeks pregnant up to six months postpartum are offered group sessions prior to offering 1:1 support

At least 160 participants must be served (a minimum of 72 prenatal and 32 postpartum, and 56 in individualized 1:1 support). The selected applicant(s) is expected to conduct outreach activities, utilize effective communication, social media, and marketing methods, and build relationships with local providers, the faith-based community, Regional Perinatal Program agencies, Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program providers, and other community-based partners to ensure widespread knowledge of the program. HCA and First 5 OC have existing relationships, programs, and initiatives that can be leveraged to support outreach and recruitment efforts.

The selected applicant(s) is expected to recruit and retain participants for prenatal and postpartum group sessions, individualized life planning, and case management. Incentives (e.g., meals, door-to-door transportation, childcare, gift cards, diapers, pack and plays, infant feeding supplies, breastfeeding supplies, etc.) are allowable expenses under this service agreement. Continuous learning and improvement to address barriers to outreach, recruitment, and retention is critical for implementation success.

*Location of Services*

BIH program services must be implemented in Orange County. We encourage all interested organizations to apply including organizations outside of Orange County. Interested organizations responding to this Request for Proposals must have a clear plan for providing services within Orange County in a centralized location that is safe, accessible, and culturally affirming for Black families. On-site space and quality childcare services are to be provided to enable full participation in group sessions.

*Referral Pathways and Sustainability*

The BIH program, in and of itself, cannot meet the immediate and emerging needs of Black families. Nor is a single organization or grant sufficient given historical and complex realities that impact the health and well-being of Black infants, children and families. It is critical that the selected applicant(s) weave together available services and community resources (e.g., Home Visiting providers, CalAIM Enhanced Care Management providers, food resources such as WIC and CalFresh, existing doula programs, resource and referral agencies, mental health services, managed care plan providers, substance use disorder providers, federally qualified health centers, childcare and/or head start, etc.) to promote seamless and robust referral pathways and sustainability beyond BIH funding from the state. The selected applicant(s) is expected to develop and maintain a referral and resource directory with clear referral mechanisms and processes to identify and address service gaps and/or navigation challenges. The selected applicant(s) is also expected to have the infrastructure and relationships to leverage existing resources and seize emerging opportunities to address Black maternal and infant mortality.

*Staffing Requirements*

The selected applicant(s) must have a clear plan for recruiting, hiring, and retaining culturally competent staff. CDPH MCAH requires the following staffing model to implement the BIH program:

* Mental Health Professional (1.0 FTE)
* Family Health Advocate/Group Facilitator (3.0 FTE)
* Community Outreach Liaison 1.0 FTE)
* Data Entry (1.0 FTE)
* Child Watch (1.0 FTE)

The BIH Program Coordinator and Public Health Nurse are also required positions that are/will be filled and managed by HCA. BIH implementation staff will work in collaboration with HCA and First 5 OC staff to support service delivery and data collection.

Any proposed changes to the staffing model must be approved in advance by HCA and CDPH MCAH.

*Training and Development*

Training and professional development are an essential element of BIH implementation to ensure BIH staff have the knowledge, skills, and ability to perform program activities competently. BIH staff are expected to participate, as required, in CDPH MCAH sponsored in-person and virtual trainings, conference calls, meetings and/or conferences (e.g., Annual MCAH Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Conference) as well as other trainings (e.g., cultural sensitivity and responsiveness) identified by the HCA to support the goals of BIH. Staff participation in local SIDS collaborative workgroups is also required to integrate strategies and action plans related to SIDS risk reduction.

HCA and First 5 OC are committed to the success of BIH. Both agencies will provide capacity building assistance to support the selected applicant(s) in strengthening the knowledge, skills, and infrastructure to implement BIH effectively and achieve results. We anticipate learning to be bi-directional as we also learn from the selected applicant(s) how to best serve Black families and support providers within a culturally affirming system of care.

*Data and Accountability*

The selected applicant(s) must adhere to the CDPH MCAH data collection requirements. BIH staff will be trained on and have access to BIH Efforts to Outcomes Data Management System and SharePoint site. BIH staff are expected to collect and enter all BIH participant information and outcome data accurately, securely, and in a timely manner in alignment with BIH Policies and Procedures developed by CDPH MCAH. Data collection, storage, and reporting must be HIPAA compliant. In addition, client satisfaction surveys after group sessions and at program completion are required to gather and respond to feedback from participants for continuous quality improvement. The selected applicant(s) will be required to participate in monthly, quarterly and annual reporting in accordance with county and state reporting requirements and present data, progress, and learning to community stakeholder groups as requested.

1. **DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS**

First 5 OC is seeking an organization with the following experience, knowledge and skills:

Experience

* Experience engaging Black families with demonstrated cultural competency.
* Demonstrated success in collaborating with other organizations to establish referral pathways and maximize resources for greater impact.
* Experience successfully managing contracts at the city, county, state and/or federal levels.
* Experience braiding public funding to support a holistic approach to service delivery.

Knowledge

* Understanding of early childhood development, maternal/infant health, and social determinants of health.
* General understanding of the issues facing the Black community in Orange County.
* Depth of knowledge about the historical, social, economic and political factors that influence the recruitment and retention of Black families in services and how to overcome them.

Skills

* Strong management and team building approach with open communication.
* Ability to meet the timelines, activities, and reporting requirements of county and state-funded programs.
* Strong history of delivering culturally affirming services.
* Big picture perspective with the ability to connect the dots between multiple resources and strands of work.
1. **AWARD**

The opportunity to respond to this Request for Proposals is open to all agencies including those not currently funded by First 5 OC. An award will be made based on an assessment of how well applicants demonstrate qualifications aligned with the *Scope of Work*, *Desired Qualifications*, and one or more of the following criteria:

1. Ability, capacity, and/or skills to implement the BIH program as required.
2. Capacity to ramp up quickly and implement to program within the specified timeframe.
3. Experience or quality of performance with previous contracts or services, if applicable.
4. Have or can obtain a centralized site location quickly within Orange County to deliver program services.
5. Agency has additional compatible resources that can be leveraged

To support the assessment of qualifications, applicants are asked to prepare a PowerPoint presentation that includes the following information:

* The organization’s qualifications, values, and driving philosophy.
* An example of working in partnership with state, county, or community organizations to provide culturally responsive services for Black children and families.
* Approach to recruitment and retention of Black families in services.
* Approach to ramping up staffing and site location in Orange County within the first three months of the executed service agreement.
* A brief description of the resources your organization can leverage to support BIH implementation.

The presentation will be a 90-minute in-person interview taking place at the First 5 OC office in Santa Ana between March 6 – March 8, 2024. The interview panel will consist of staff from First 5 OC, HCA, and consultant. An additional reviewer with experience in BIH implementation may be included. Applicant will have 30 minutes for the presentation followed by a set of standard questions that the review panel will ask of all applicants as well as time for general Q&A.

To ensure a fair process, questions about this RFP and the process must be submitted to First5OC@cfcoc.ocgov.com by February 23, 2024. Applicants are advised not to contact First 5 OC staff or consultants to discuss this RFP. All questions received will be addressed and shared on the website: [www.first5oc.org](http://www.first5oc.org) on February 26, 2024.

1. **TERMS OF THE PROJECT**

First 5 OC expect to enter into a 26-month service agreement with the selected applicant with an anticipated start date of May 1, 2024, or sooner. Funding for the project is allocated for each fiscal year as follows:

* FY 23/24 (May – June 2024): $522,797
* FY 24/25 (July 2024 – June 2025): $522,797
* FY 25/26 (July 2025 – June 2026): $522,797

These amounts are on a fiscal year basis and cannot be rolled over into a subsequent fiscal year. These amounts may be increased based on additional funding from CDPH MCAH and/or funding from other sources. Renewal of the service agreement beyond June 2026 is possible depending on whether Orange County continues to receive funding from the state for BIH implementation, approval by the Health Care Agency, and approval by First 5 OC Board of Commissioners.

This will be a cost reimbursement service agreement. In a cost-reimbursement agreement, the grantee will be reimbursed through monthly invoices based on services rendered and actual expenses incurred. Therefore, the grantee must anticipate sufficient cash flow. First 5 OC will negotiate a final budget with the selected applicant.

1. **REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

### Submit required documents electronically to First5OC@cfcoc.ocgov.com no later than February 28, 2024 by 3:00 pm (Pacific Time). Submissions after this date and time will be automatically rejected.

### Responses to this RFP must include all required documents listed below. Incomplete submissions may be grounds for disqualification.

1. **Letter of Interest (Limited to 1 page).** The cover letter must include the following information:
* Organization’s name, and the lead person’s name, title, and contact information. The cover letter must be signed by the corporate officer who has the authority to act on behalf of, and bind, the Organization.
	+ A high-level overview of how your organization meets the desired qualifications to implement BIH.
	+ Your first, second, third choice for the presentation/discussion between March 6 – March 8, 2024.
		- **March 6, 2024**
			* 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.
			* 11:00 – 12:30 p.m.
			* 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.
			* 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.
		- **March 7, 2024**
			* 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.
			* 11:00 – 12:30 p.m.
			* 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.
			* 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.
		- **March 8, 2024**
			* 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.
			* 11:00 – 12:30 p.m.
			* 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.
1. **Resumes or Curricula Vitae.** Include resumes or curricula vitae for key personnel including proposed subcontractors, if applicable, who will exercise a major policy, administrative, or consultative role in carrying out the work described in the *Scope of Work* (Section II).
2. **Financial Audit.** Submit complete, unqualified independent financial audit for two consecutive years OR one complete, unqualified independent audit and two consecutive years of Form 990. Audits and Form 990s should be no older than 2021.
3. **RFP CONTRACTING**

First 5 OC reserves the right to contract with any organization providing responses to this RFP that meets First 5 OC contracting requirements. Submission of required documents and/or responses to follow up questions does not obligate First 5 OC to contract with applicant organizations. All awarded organizations, including subcontractors, must be able to meet federal and state requirements regardless of whether they receive state or federal funding.

* 1. General requirements required to contract with First 5 OC include, but are not limited to:
1. **Contract** - First 5 OC will develop a contract based on its usual and customary terms and conditions incorporating the requirements outlined in the RFP document and the responses of the selected applicant(s). A draft of the contract template may be provided upon request**.**
2. **Non-Resident Tax Withholding** – Please note that First 5 OC is required to comply with all State laws and regulations related to non-resident withholding pursuant to California Revenue and Taxation Code Section 18662 which requires 7% of all payments exceeding applicable amount in a calendar year to be withheld and sent to the California Franchise Tax Board.Nonresident payees include corporations, limited liability companies, partnerships, and individuals that do not have a permanent place of business in California.
3. **Personnel** - Project partners, managers, other supervisory staff, and specialists may be changed if those personnel leave the agency, are promoted, or are assigned to another office. The personnel may also be changed for other reasons with the expressed prior written permission of First 5 OC. However, in either case, First 5 OC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all replacements.

Specialists identified in response to the RFP can only be changed with the express prior written permission of First 5 OC, which reserves the right to approve or reject any or all replacements.

Other staff personnel may be changed at the discretion of agencies provided that such replacements have substantially the same or better applications or experience.

1. **RFP Interpretations and Addenda** - Any change to or interpretation of the RFP by First 5 OC will be posted on First 5 OC’s website, and any such changes or interpretations shall become a part of the RFP for incorporation into any contract awarded pursuant to the RFP.
2. **Public Record** - All applications submitted in response to this RFP will become the property of First 5 OC and a matter of public record.
3. **Additional Services** - The general service requirements outlined above describe the minimum work to be accomplished. During initial contract negotiations and any subsequent negotiations for contract renewals, the scope of service may be modified and refined based on the needs of First 5 OC.
4. **Undue Influence** – The responding Organization declares and warrants that no undue influence or pressure is used against or in concert with any officer or employee of First 5 OC in connection with the award or terms of any contract that may be executed as a result of award of this RFP, including any method of coercion, confidential financial arrangement, or financial inducement. No officer or employee of First 5 OC will receive compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Organization, or from any officer, employee, or agent of the Organization, in connection with the award of any contract or any work to be conducted as a result of an ensuing contract. A violation of this provision shall be a material breach of any contract entered into, entitling First 5 OC to any and all remedies at law or in equity.
5. **Submittal Preparation Expenses –** First 5 OC shall not be liable for any expenses incurred by the Organization in the preparation or submission of its applications, and such expenses shall not be reimbursed under a resulting contract.
6. **Insurance Requirements –** The insurance requirements for standard First 5 OC contracts are set forth below, including coverage amounts, types of coverage, and policy requirements. The insurance requirements for specific contracts may be adjusted at time of contract negotiations based on the scope of services to be provided.
* Comprehensive General Liability Insurance for bodily injury (including death) and property damage which provides not less than $1,000,000 combined single limit per occurrence and not less than $2,000,000 annual aggregate.
* Comprehensive Automobile Liability Insurance for bodily injury (including death) and property damage which provides total limits of not less than $l,000,000 combined single limit per occurrence applicable to all owned, non-owned and hired vehicles/watercraft, $1,000,000 annual aggregate.
* Workers’ Compensation Insurance for all employees engaged in project services with the California statutory amount of $1,000,000 per accident (only if the Applicant is a firm with employees).
* Employers’ Liability Coverage of not less than $1,000,000 per occurrence for all employees engaged in project services or operations (only if the Applicant is a firm with employees).
* Professional Liability of not less than $1,000,000 for professional licensed staff engaged in project services or operations (only if the Applicant will provide a service which requires a professional license).
1. **Conflict of Interest -** A conflict of interest exists when a responding Organization and its staff have the opportunity to advance or protect a personal interest, or the interests of others with whom he/she has a relationship, in a way that is detrimental or potentially harmful for the integrity or fundamental mission of First 5 OC. Responding Organizations will be required to disclose potential conflicts of interest as soon as it becomes known to them, or prior to engaging in any services with First 5 OC or a First 5 OC-funded organization, whichever comes first. Even the perception of a conflict of interest must be avoided and may require the restriction of the Organization’s scope of work or may give rise to the disqualification of an Organization from providing further services on behalf of First 5 **OC** in a particular area of expertise. First 5 **OC** staff will consult with legal counsel regarding potential conflicts of interest. Remedies may include, but are not limited to, removing the Organization from any decision making, limiting the Organization’s exposure to the decision-making process, and other means as available to avoid the conflict of interest.
2. **Cancellation of RFP** – First 5 OC may cancel this RFP at any time for any reason without notice.
3. **Compliance with Laws** - All information submitted in response to this RFP shall comply with current federal, state, and other applicable laws related thereto.
4. **Severability** - If any provisions or portion of any provision of this RFP are held invalid, illegal or unenforceable, they shall be severed from the RFP and the remaining provisions shall be valid and enforceable to the extent feasible.

**VIII. RFP KEY ACTIVITIES AND DATES**

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| **Release Date:** **February 14, 2024** | Instructions for submission will be available on First 5 OC’s website: [www.first5oc.org](http://www.first5oc.org)  |
| **Final Date to Submit Questions: February 23, 2024** | Submit questions to First5OC@cfcoc.ocgov.com on February 26, 2024 by 3:00 p.m. |
| **Responses to Questions:****February 26, 2024** | Responses to questions posted on First 5 OC’s website: [www.first5oc.org.](http://www.first5oc.org.)  |
| **Letter of Interest:** **February 28, 2024** | Submit required documents to First5OC@cfcoc.ocgov.com on February 28, 2024 by 3:00 p.m. No submissions will be accepted after this date and time. |
| **Applicant Presentations:** **March 6 – March 8, 2024** | Included first, second, and third choice in the letter of interest as instructed under *Section VI. Required Documents.* |
| **Anticipated Board of Commissioner Approval:** **April 3, 2024** | All awards contingent on First 5 OC Board of Commisioner approval. |
| **Anticipated Contract Start Date: May 1, 2024** | First 5 OC reserves the right to change the start date of the contract for any reason. |