



FIRST 5
ORANGE COUNTY



Request For Proposals

Engaged Neighborhoods Evaluation



December 15th, 2024

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. 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](#) 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 community residents and organizations who share this vision for young children and are committed to working together to maximize resources and achieve the greatest possible impact.

B. Background

First 5 Orange County's Engaged Neighborhood Initiative empowers families and neighborhoods to advocate for their young children while connecting families to the early health and development systems, and the systems to each other. We currently fund collaborative Engaged Neighborhood groups in four Cities: Anaheim, Garden Grove, La Habra and Santa Ana. Our theory of change reflects:

If we:

- Support neighborhoods to engage and empower families
- Connect families to resources
- Connect resource providers to each other

Then Communities will have:

- Families that are empowered changemakers, advocating for their solutions facing their community
- Equitable access to services
- Neighborhoods with infrastructure to support healthy children

The metric of success we use is:

- The number of neighborhoods with increasing proportion of children ready for kindergarten

Research shows that kindergarten readiness is a strong predictor of future success. Children who are developmentally ready when they enter the classroom are more likely to graduate

from high school, compete for higher-paying jobs, and enjoy success and happiness throughout their lives. That is why First 5 Orange County, and the Engaged Neighborhoods utilize the Early Development Index (EDI) a population-based measure of a child's development in five key developmental areas: physical health; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive development; and communication skills and general knowledge. We use the EDI data and other data sources to understand inequities and support advocacy and resident engagement in communities that lack resources.

Each of the Engaged Neighborhood collaboratives is different: they were started at different times, some have been in place nearly 10 years while others are just a few years old, and each serves a unique role in their community. We are engaging family leaders, providers, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders, and together we are working to improve health and development, neighborhood by neighborhood. Each Engaged Neighborhood has created their own Impact Plan as a guide to creating dreams for their community, setting goals for accomplishing those dreams and measuring the outcomes for achieving those dreams. Those goals are detailed in their scope of work funded by First 5 OC.

Anaheim Learn Well

Learn Well empowers families to advocate on behalf of their young children and provides early childhood resources to families. Learn Well's current approach to accomplish this is to develop parent leaders through a Resident Leadership Academy, which trains participants to identify their community needs and then become messengers who can clearly and impactfully advocate for those needs.

Growing Up Garden Grove

Growing Up Garden Grove is the newest Engaged Neighborhood. Its vision is to educate families and community partners about the importance of early childhood, encourage early learning advocacy, and empower adults with the tools they need so that all of Garden Grove's children have an equitable start in school and life. Their current approach to this work is to build the capacity of families in the community via educational workshops, provide local families with resources and connection to providers through community events and by continuously communicating with families to understand their assets and needs.

La Habra's Little Learners

La Habra's Little Learners' vision is that La Habra's children are socially, emotionally, and academically ready for school, and ready to live their dreams to the fullest. La Habra Little Learners works to create neighborhoods that support young children and provide equitable access to resources for all community members. They do this through weekly activities that target identified needs, providing concrete supports to families that need them and by sharing EDI data among their partners so they can be informed and take action.

Santa Ana Early Learning Initiative (SAELI)

SAELI is the largest and longest-running Engaged Neighborhood. This collaborative of residents, resource providers, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations has become a robust champion for young children and families in Santa Ana. SAELI is empowering families to enhance early literacy and math skills in their young children before

they enter kindergarten, based on the children's unique needs. SAELI believes in the importance of supporting the family/caregiver alongside the child. They connect families to resources through a coordinated effort among their collaborative members, and they are now working to incorporate developmental playgroups through the work of Community Health Workers.

II. SCOPE OF WORK

First 5 Orange County is seeking a consultant or organization to help us document and communicate results emerging from the Engaged Neighborhood investment and generate learnings of the investment strategies that have yielded system change. The chosen respondent will lead the Engaged Neighborhoods evaluation process that will drive the conceptualization and execution of the evaluation and will serve as a strategic thought partner with First 5 Orange County staff, the four Engaged Neighborhood collaboratives and community stakeholders to co-design a qualitative, community-based evaluation that reflects the impact the Engaged Neighborhood investment has made in its communities.

While it is anticipated the evaluation design will include mixed methodologies to collect and analyze data such as surveys, focus groups, interviews, Engaged Neighborhood Impact Statements, EDI data and other community data indicators, critical to the evaluation design is an iterative process with residents and stakeholders from the Engaged Neighborhood communities. We believe that the residents and stakeholders in these four communities know better than anyone else the desired outcomes and the impacts that the Engaged Neighborhood investments have made in their neighborhoods given their knowledge of the community and the cultural context within which it operates and can speak to the impact and results the investments have made. By working with the evaluation team on assessing a program's merit, worth, and value, residents and stakeholders can ensure that resources are used optimally and that desired outcomes are achieved.

The findings of the evaluation will be used to identify the Engaged Neighborhood collaboratives' strengths and limitations, opportunities for growth and change, inform areas for continued financial investment, and demonstrate accountability to residents and stakeholders and the First 5 board.

III. DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

First 5 Orange County is seeking an individual or organization with the following experience and skills:

Experience

- Substantial experience of running rigorous evaluations of comparable size, scope and focus.
- Experience in leading and co-designing evaluations with clients and stakeholders through an iterative process. Must demonstrate experience with methodological flexibility and adaptability; systems thinking; creative and critical thinking; high tolerance for ambiguity; be open and agile; value teamwork and be able to facilitate various perspectives.
- Strong background in evaluation and research methodology.
- Developing innovative evaluation approaches in real-time

- Strong skills in translating data into meaningful, actionable insights for both technical and non-technical audiences. Experience developing clear, concise, and visually engaging reports and presentations. Demonstrated ability to provide recommendations that are practical, feasible, and tailored to the client’s needs.

Skills

- Ability to dialogue with community residents, community-based organizations and other stakeholders based on mutual respect and a mutual regard for the knowledge, skills, and talents of each party.
- Big picture perspective with the ability to connect the dots between multiple resources and strands of work.
- Strong critical thinking skills, including the ability to identify problems, evaluate evidence, and develop effective solutions.
- Excellent communication skills, including the ability to convey complex information to stakeholders in clear, concise language; listen actively and engage with stakeholders
- Cross-cultural competency, including an understanding of diverse cultures and the ability to work efficiently in cross-cultural settings
- Strong project management skills, including planning, budgeting, team building and time management.
- Must adhere to ethical standards including confidentiality, informed consent and ensuring the safety and well-being of participants.

IV. PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Complete submittal packages shall be an emailed document that is double-spaced with Arial 11-point font size using 1” margins and 8.5 x11 size paper, and include:

1. Cover Letter (Limited to 1 page)

The cover letter must include 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 the agency.

2. Proposal

a. Approach (Limited to 4 pages)

Provide a detailed approach to addressing the needs of First 5 Orange County. Describe how your organization will accomplish the desired results outlined in this RFP. Include your understanding of the project, what your approach is to bringing a diverse group of participants together to create the evaluation, as well as an outline of main actions and steps to get to the design of the evaluation. We are specifically looking to see that your experience is reflected in leading this type of iterative, qualitative community-based evaluation.

3. Implementation Timeline (Limited to 1 page)

Describe your proposed implementation timeline for the implementation of services. Specific requirements for this section include:

- Five (5) month timeline (following approval by the COMMISSION at the February 2025 COMMISSION meeting. The timeline for this project is anticipated to run February through June 30, 2025) including timing of major work efforts, assessments and/or deliverables.

4. Description of Personnel and Relevant Experience (Limited to 4 pages)

The resource capability and management for planning and performing the work will be considered in the proposal selection process. Specifically outline background and experience of key personal proposed to complete the work, including performing this type of iterative, qualitative community-based analysis. Any change in key personnel is subject to approval by the First 5 Orange County. Specific requirements for this section include:

- Qualifications and experience of the organization and individual personnel to be assigned to the project.
- Optional Staffing Table (**Attachment 1**) if proposal includes more than one staff member.

5. References

Include three references (**Attachment 2**) recently familiar with the quality and reliability of respondent’s work. References specific to proposed evaluator’s experience in co-designing evaluations with stakeholders is highly recommended. Include the organization’s name, mailing address, contact person and title, phone number, email and a general description of services provided for each reference.

6. Budget (No Page Limit)

Include detailed pricing for evaluation process, staffing, materials, etc. The budget should be within a range of \$100,000 to \$150,000.

V. RFP KEY ACTIVITIES AND DATES

Release Date: December 16, 2024	Instructions for submission will be available on First 5 Orange County’s website: www.first5oc.org
Final Date to Submit Questions: December 23, 2024	Submit questions to First5OC@cfcoc.ocgov.com by 3:00 PM on December 23, 2024.
Responses to Questions: December 30, 2024	Responses to questions posted on First 5 OC’s website: www.first5oc.org .
RFP Due Date: January 10, 2025	Submit required documents to First5OC@cfcoc.ocgov.com by 3:00 p.m. on January 10 th 2025. No submissions will be accepted after this date and time.
Notification of Selected Respondents – January 29, 2025	Selected respondent notified.
Anticipated Board of Commissioner Approval: February 5, 2024	All awards contingent on First 5 Orange County’s Board of Commissioner approval.

**Anticipated Contract
Start Date: February 6,
2024**

First 5 Orange County reserves the right to change the start date of the contract for any reason.

VI. RFP CONTRACTING

First 5 Orange County (hereinafter "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.

A. 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.

4. **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.
5. **Public Record** - All applications submitted in response to this RFP will become the property of First 5 OC and a matter of public record.
6. **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.

7. **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.
8. **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.
9. **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 \$1,000,000 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).
10. **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.

11. **Cancellation of RFP** – First 5 OC may cancel this RFP at any time for any reason without notice.
12. **Compliance with Laws** - All information submitted in response to this RFP shall comply with current federal, state, and other applicable laws related thereto.
13. **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.

Attachment 1: Staffing Table
(Optional if the proposal includes more than one staff member)

Include the position title and name of all individuals that will be expensed to the project. Use additional space and/or pages, as needed.

Individual Name and Position Title:
Qualifications:
Project Duties (reference the RFP scope of work and include specific paragraph references):
Estimated hours charged to the project:
Hourly Rate:

Individual Name and Position Title:
Qualifications:
Project Duties (reference the RFP scope of work and include specific paragraph references):
Estimated hours charged to the project:
Hourly Rate:

Individual Name and Position Title:
Qualifications:
Project Duties (reference the RFP scope of work and include specific paragraph references):
Estimated hours charged to the project:
Hourly Rate:

Attachment 2: Reference Table

Include three references recently familiar with the quality and reliability of respondent’s evaluation work. Include the organization’s name, mailing address, contact person, phone number, email and a general description of services provided to each reference. References specific to proposed evaluator’s experience in co-designing evaluations with stakeholders is highly recommended.

Organization Name:
Contact Person and Title:
Mailing Address:
Phone and Email:
General Description of Services Provided:

Organization Name:
Contact Person and Title:
Mailing Address:
Phone and Email:
General Description of Services Provided:

Organization Name:
Contact Person and Title:
Mailing Address:
Phone and Email:
General Description of Services Provided: