



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

First 5 Contra Costa East County Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

Release Date: February 10, 2023

Due Date: March 17, 2023 by 12:00 noon

Proposed Funding Amount: Up to \$30,000.00

For more information, please contact:

Lisa R. Johnson
Grants and Contracts Manager
First 5 Contra Costa
lrjohnson@first5coco.org

First 5 Administrative Office staff are working hybrid. If you have any questions or need additional information, please use email.

The Commission may, at its sole discretion, reject any or all applications submitted in response to this document. The Commission also reserves the right to cancel this offer at its sole discretion at any time before execution of a Contract Agreement. Any applications, including attached materials, submitted in response to this document shall become property of the Commission.

FIRST 5 CONTRA COSTA
EAST COUNTY KINDERGARTEN READINESS ASSESSMENT
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission (hereafter “the Commission” or “First 5 Contra Costa”), is seeking a qualified researcher or team of researchers to create a Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) to reframe the KRA from solely individual child knowledge to also include broader structural conditions (ecological approach) and expand the inputs to determining kindergarten readiness beyond a child assessment for East Contra Costa County (East County).

Up to \$30,000, including expenses has been allocated for this project with up to two 1-year renewals. Costs should be reasonable and well justified.

First 5 is seeking diverse individuals, consultant teams and firms to apply. Please review the following materials for scope of work, submission instructions and the criteria for selection.

All questions about the RFQ must be directed to: vmiller@first5coco.org with the subject line “RFQ First 5 Contra Costa East County Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Question”. All questions need to be submitted no later than February 24, 2023, by 12:00 p.m. noon. A response will be given on or before March 1, 2023.

DO NOT contact any other person from First 5 for information about this RFQ.

RFQ responses are due no later than **March 17, 2023, by 12:00 p.m. noon**. Complete applications must be signed by an authority able to legally bind the organization. Due to COVID-19, First 5 Contra Costa is accepting **only** email submissions. Please email your complete RFQ packet to: vmiller@first5coco.org.

RFQ submissions received (email timestamp) after the 12:00 p.m. noon deadline will NOT be accepted or considered for selection.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

First 5 Contra Costa allocates Contra Costa County’s share of the Proposition 10 tobacco tax to fund programs for children ages 0 to 5. First 5 Contra Costa is governed by an eighteen-member Commission appointed by the county Board of Supervisors. The vision of the organization is that Contra Costa’s young children will be healthy, ready to learn, and supported in safe, nurturing families and communities. Since its inception, First 5 Contra Costa has invested over \$120 million in local programs and activities.

To learn more about First 5 Contra Costa, visit www.first5coco.org

The Ready Kids East County Initiative aims to address the structural root causes that underpin the opportunity gap for Black and African American children when it comes to being ready for kindergarten. This initiative, funded through the Dean and Margaret Leshner Foundation is in its fifth and final year of its work in East County. First 5 would like to conduct a kindergarten readiness assessment that is rooted in the Ready Kids Theory of Change (see attached).

Kindergarten Readiness in East County

In order to succeed in school, career, and life, young children must be fully supported and prepared to begin kindergarten.

A child's wellbeing is one of the best predictors for whether they will be ready for kindergarten. Studies show that economic, food, and housing security, as well as health and wellness, resiliency in the face of trauma and adversity, and access to resources are inextricably linked to a child's wellbeing, and therefore how ready they are for school.

But not all children have the same resources to support their readiness for school.

Alongside discriminatory school and community environments, racist policies have systematically drained resources from communities of color—especially Black communities—for the benefit of White communities. [First 5 Contra Costa's 2017 study](#) of kindergarten readiness in the county surfaced the racial disparities in school readiness that exist as a result of this disinvestment and violence, historical and present.

The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment also surfaced disparities by geography. When looking across districts (Antioch, Brentwood, Mt. Diablo, Pittsburg, San Ramon, and West Contra Costa County), Pittsburg was the district with the lowest percentage of children identified as “fully ready” (only 27%).

It truly takes a village to get our kids ready for school, and even more so to transform years of racist policies.

With Ready Kids East County, we believe that disparities in school readiness by race persist because we historically approach school readiness with a frame that Black children and families are solely responsible for being ready for school. To address the problem of school readiness disparities, we need to put the burden of change on the entire schools and community ecology, including First 5 Contra Costa, to be ready for Black children and families, rather than the other way around.

That is why we started [Ready Kids East County](#), a community-led effort to identify what it will take to reimagine our early childhood system in East County into one that rallies around Black children and everything they need from us—parents, caregivers, teachers, faith leaders, and more—to be ready for kindergarten. For more information about Ready Kids East County, please see Attachment D for the effort's Logic Model.

It is also time to reimagine our Kindergarten Readiness Assessment to be more culturally relevant to the Black and African American families in East Contra Costa County.

We know kindergarten readiness assessments commonly have cultural and linguistic bias in both the instrument design as well as implementation. Aligned to our ecological approach, First 5 Contra Costa seeks to reframe a kindergarten readiness assessment from solely individual child knowledge to an approach that builds on our previous efforts examining children's knowledge and includes a community-based approach, expanding the inputs to determine kindergarten readiness. We hope to develop a broader approach that includes community-based inputs and that is more culturally relevant so that decision-makers can assess where and what resources and supports are needed to best support young children and their families be fully ready for school. The proposed new approach would likely be piloted in East County in the 2023-2024 school year, and eventually be replicated in other communities.

SECTION 3: SCOPE OF WORK

First 5 Contra Costa is seeking a qualified researcher or team of researchers to create a Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) to reframe the KRA from solely focused on individual child knowledge to also include broader structural conditions (ecological approach) and expand the inputs to determining kindergarten readiness beyond a child assessment for the East County. The budget for this engagement is up to \$30,000 and would include the following tasks:

- Design a survey for parents of young children that is culturally relevant to Black and African American families and free of cultural and linguistic bias.
- Design a survey and/or interview protocol for Childcare Providers and Kindergarten Teachers that is culturally relevant to Black and African American families and free of cultural and linguistic bias.
- Create an analysis tool to consider resources available to support Kindergarten Readiness in East County.
- Establish and facilitate a Research Advisory Group consisting of a broad range of parents in East County that is also reflective of East County's demographics.
- Use Research Advisory Group input to support development of evaluation tools and how results of the tools might be used.
- Ensure the proposed KRA approach focus on structural conditions in addition to individual child knowledge.

Deliverables for the project, which must be completed by December 31, 2023, include:

- A Kindergarten Readiness Assessment that includes the elements described above, including the parent survey, childcare/teacher survey, and analysis tool to consider resources and supports that impact Kindergarten Readiness.
- A plan to implement the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment with parents, childcare providers, and teachers in East County.

- A short report on the key priorities and themes identified by the Research Advisory Group.
- A short report that synthesizes the themes and cross-cutting recommendations that emerge from this research, particularly addressing our goal to pilot this new approach in East County and replicate it in other communities.

SECTION 4: QUALIFICATIONS & PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Required Qualifications

First 5 seeks diverse researcher or team of researchers with:

- Experience and/or degrees in early care and education, public policy, human services, social work, or a closely related field.
- Experience facilitating discussions and/or listening sessions with diverse stakeholders around issues of racial equity, social justice, public opinion, and/or understanding mindsets.
- Experience writing culturally relevant assessments, curriculum, and/or organizational studies related to early childhood education, kindergarten readiness, or a closely related field.
- Demonstrable qualitative data analysis and synthesis, including written reports of findings.
- Experience working or living in East County preferred.

Complete applications must include the following information and be in the following proposal format with no more than ten pages with 1.5 line spacing, and in a standard twelve-point font to be considered for this contract. References and budget do not count toward the narrative page count limitations. Please include the following in your response:

I. Staff and/or Organization Qualifications

Describe your organization, including your relevant experience, the number of years you have been in existence, and the names and titles of the principal staff who will be leading the project.

II. Approach

Describe how you will approach this project and your process to address the tasks outlined in the scope of work. Please include estimated timelines and actions for developing a culturally relevant kindergarten readiness assessment.

III. Work Sample

Please provide links to three (3) complete work samples that highlight your ability to complete the tasks outlined in the Scope of Work. Please also include a brief paragraph for each work sample summarizing how the work sample relates to your ability to complete the tasks outlined in the Scope of Work. Samples may include but are not limited to readiness assessments, equity studies, engaging families and/or

community members in listening sessions, organizational studies, or consultation around early childhood evaluation.

IV. Budget (ATTACHMENT B)

Include a budget/fee schedule outlining expected expenses. Complete the attached budget form and explain your proposed budget in a brief narrative including estimated amounts of time to carry out contract activities, staff assigned to the project line item and their respective hourly rates. It is assumed that the costs will include the salary benefits and related expenses for staff. Costs should be reasonable and well justified. **(The use of the included form is not required, but all information must be included, if a different format is used.)**

V. References (ATTACHMENT C)

Provide three references of current and/or past clients with knowledge of the consultant's ability to manage projects similar in nature and scope to this project.

Section 5: Criteria for Selection

A review panel comprised of First 5 staff and its partners will evaluate qualifications/proposal. The criteria by which each response will be evaluated are as follows:

1. **Applicable experience:** The extent to which applicants demonstrate experience and expertise related to the scope of work as outlined in the RFQ.
2. **Demonstration of understanding:** The extent to which the applicant communicates an understanding of the needs described here with documented samples of success.
3. **Demonstration of capacity:** The proposal will be evaluated for feasibility, completeness and capacity to address the scope of work as outlined in this RFQ.
4. **Cost/Budget:** The extent to which the costs are reasonable and well justified.

Selection Process

All applications will be reviewed using a ranking tool. Applicants selected for the second phase of the process may be invited for an oral interview.

First 5 Contra Costa reserves the right to approve and verify the qualifications and experience of all staff working under the contract.

SECTION 6: APPEALS

Only respondents who have submitted a response in accordance with this RFQ process may appeal the RFQ process and must be submitted **within five (5) business days after**

the “Notice of Intent to Fund” has been posted on First 5 Contra Costa’s website at <http://www.first5coco.org/about-us/apply-for-funding/>. Grounds for appeals are limited to the following:

- The RFQ evaluation and eligibility criteria were not appropriately applied to the proposal; and/or
- The Commission failed to follow the RFQ process/procedures.

Appeals must be in writing and specifically state the grounds on which the appeal is based. Oral appeals will not be accepted. Letters of appeal must be submitted electronically to: lrjohnson@first5coco.org and addressed to Lisa R. Johnson, Grants & Contracts Manager with a subject line: APPEAL- **First 5 Contra Costa East County Kindergarten Readiness Assessment RFQ**

The Commission’s Executive Committee will handle all appeals. At this time, all decisions by the Executive Committee will be final and cannot be appealed further. Notification of the final decision on the appeal shall be made in writing to the applicant.

Appeals will only be considered if received by the appeal deadline.

SECTION 7: OTHER REQUIREMENTS AND INFORMATION

To be eligible to apply for funding under this RFQ the applicant must meet the following criteria:

1. Be in compliance and good standing with all local, county, state, and federal government entities including but not limited to the IRS, California Secretary of State-Business Programs and the Franchise Tax Board.
2. Satisfactory performance on any contract(s) previously awarded by the Commission.

If selected for funding, Contractor will also be required to:

- Show proof of general liability and worker’s compensation insurance (if applicant has employees).
- Indemnify First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission.
- If using a Federal Tax ID Number Contractor will need to submit a copy of Employer Identification Number letter from the IRS.
- If Contractor’s status is a sole proprietor Contractor will need to submit a copy of Driver’s License and if using a social security number Contractor will need to submit a copy of social security card.

SECTION 8: RFQ SCHEDULE

Task	Date (Time)
Application Released	February 10, 2023
Questions Submittal Deadline	February 24, 2023
Response to Questions	On or before March 1, 2023
Deadline for RFQ to be Submitted	March 17, 2023
Review Period	March 20 - 31, 2023
Appeal Deadline Note: All respondents will be notified of the Commission's Intent to Fund	April 7, 2023
Contract begins	April 15, 2023

COVER SHEET /CHECKLIST (ATTACHMENT A)

ORGANIZATION/ LEGAL NAME:					
CONTACT PERSON:					
ADDRESS:					
CITY:		State:		Zip Code:	
PHONE:		Fax:		Email:	
Proposed Budget Amount:	\$				
Federal Tax Identification Number:					

A complete qualification/proposal has no more than **10 single-sided pages with 1.5 line spacing, 12pt font, and 8.5 x 11-inch paper with 1-inch margins plus any required Attachments** (Resumes, references and budget do not count toward the page count limitations) and additional information as listed below:

- A. ☐ Cover Letter/Checklist (**ATTACHMENT A**) – The cover letter must be signed by an individual authorized to bind the proposing organization.
- B. ☐ Budget (**ATTACHMENT B**)
- C. ☐ References (**ATTACHMENT C**)
- E. ☐ I have the minimum required experience as outlined in the required qualifications section.
- F. ☐ I provided a minimum of 3 relevant work samples.

Name:

Title:

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE:

Date:

BUDGET (ATTACHMENT B)

The use of this format is not required, but all information must be included, if a different format is used.
The proposed budget should not exceed \$30,000. All costs should be reasonable and justified.

Task		Person or persons conducting this task	Est. number of hours	Month of completion
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				

Hourly Rates:

Name	Hourly Loaded Rate

Other Expenses (please explain)	

Total proposed budget	
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REFERENCES (ATTACHMENT C)

ORGANIZATION/ LEGAL NAME: _____

Please list three references for contracts your agency was awarded to implement similar type of services within the last three years. The references listed below may be contacted by the Commission to substantiate your agency's experience in the identified area of service delivery.

REFERENCE					
ORGANIZATION:					
CONTACT PERSON:					
ADDRESS:					
CITY:		STATE:		ZIP CODE:	
PHONE:		AMOUNT:	\$	EMAIL:	
Brief Description of Services Provided:					
REFERENCE					
ORGANIZATION:					
CONTACT PERSON:					
ADDRESS:					
CITY:		STATE:		ZIP CODE:	
PHONE:		AMOUNT:	\$	EMAIL:	
Brief Description of Services Provided:					



REFERENCE					
ORGANIZATION:					
CONTACT PERSON:					
ADDRESS:					
CITY:		STATE:		ZIP CODE:	
PHONE:		AMOUNT:	\$	EMAIL:	
Brief Description of Services Provided:					

RKEC LOGIC MODEL/THEORY OF CHANGE (ATTACHMENT D)

Problem & Possibility

Problem: Disparities in school readiness by race persist because we're approaching school readiness with a frame that Black children and families are solely responsible for being ready for school.

Possibility: What would it look like if we instead put the burden of change on the entire schools and community ecology to be ready for Black children and families, rather than the other way around?

Strategies	Short-term Outcomes (1-2 yrs)	Long-term Outcomes (2-3 yrs)	Assumptions
<p>BUILD RELATIONSHIPS: Create bridging spaces for parents, school leaders, county leaders, teachers, and service providers to learn from one another</p> <p>BUILD COLLECTIVE VISION: Engage with community partners and leaders to create and strengthen relationships and build networks that create pathways to success for Black children</p> <p>BUILD CAPACITY: Share promising paths for providing programs and services that center Black children's experiences and identities with early childhood education providers</p> <p>BUILD POWER AND RESOURCES: Support and empower parents in advocating for children, building competencies to thrive in the school readiness system, and connecting them to resources</p>	<p>Stakeholders 1) learn from one another 2) clarify their role in the school readiness ecology for Black children and 3) begin to adjust practices to be more culturally relevant</p>	<p>READY FAMILIES: Black families have tools, resources, and relationships to advocate for learning environments where their young children will thrive.</p> <p>READY SCHOOLS: Community organizations and schools shift their practices, environments, and cultures to serve, center, and celebrate Black children and their families.</p> <p>READY COMMUNITIES: A coalition of fierce advocates for Black children in East County forms and propels family-centered and culturally relevant policies, funding, and service provision.</p>	<p>BECAUSE whole ecosystems (families, schools, communities) shape children's development of school readiness and families' ability to support development of school readiness</p> <p>BECAUSE when you're in relationship with somebody, you listen, exchange information, and are accountable with one another.</p> <p>BECAUSE With relationships, knowledge, and power combined, parents are better equipped to advocate for themselves and their children.</p> <p>BECAUSE families' beliefs and expectations are central to a culturally relevant, whole-family approach to school readiness.</p>

Players/Stakeholders

Parents, caregivers of Black children
Black children
Tandem, COPE
First 5-funded partners
First 5 Commissioners
First 5 Centers - leadership and staff
ECE Providers
Design Team members
PUSD school staff, board
County, local government + law enforcement
Faith-based organizations
Other CBOs + social clubs/groups

Ultimate Impact

Among schools and community organizations, there are resources, information, and a culture that center and celebrate Black children in East County and equip them and their families with everything they need to be ready for kindergarten.