



**Request for Qualifications (RFQ)
Help Me Grow Planning Consultant**

The First 5 Santa Cruz County Commission requests applications from qualified individuals or firms to help develop an integrated county-wide system for early identification, referral and care coordination for children at-risk for developmental, learning and/or behavioral delays. The Commission has authorized **up to \$20,000** for successful completion of phase 1 of this project.

The Commission reserves the right to issue an award under this RFQ to a single or multiple individuals or firms, at its sole discretion. If the Commission determines that no applicant meets the requirements of this RFQ, the Commission, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to reject all applications. The Commission may award all, or a portion thereof, of services at its sole discretion.

Timeline

RFQ Released	March 25, 2016
Applications Due to First 5 by 4:00 pm	April 8, 2016
Review of Applications	April 13, 2016
Applicant Interviews (if needed)	April 15, 2016
Notification of Intent to Award	April 18, 2016
Anticipated Contract Start	April 25, 2016

All dates of the Application review process are subject to change. If a significant date is changed, all known recipients of the original RFQ will be notified of the new date.

**First 5 Santa Cruz County
PO Box 1457, Capitola, CA 95010
Telephone: (831) 465-2217**



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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the California Children and Families First Act of 1998 (Proposition 10) is to create and implement a comprehensive, integrated system of information and services to promote, support, and optimize early childhood development and school readiness.

In March 2015, First 5 Santa Cruz County (First 5 SCC) adopted its current strategic plan, which describes the Commission’s priorities and funding allocations for the 2015/16-2019/20 period. The Strategic Plan also calls for the Commission to become a national “Help Me Grow” affiliate and support local planning efforts to implement a coordinated system of care for children at risk of developmental and behavioral concerns in Santa Cruz County.

The purpose of this RFQ is to obtain consulting services of an individual or firm to assist First 5 SCC in becoming a Help Me Grow affiliate community.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

First 5 Santa Cruz County invests in health, early learning and family support to promote the optimal development of Santa Cruz County’s youngest children. These investments include initiatives designed to increase developmental screening in pediatric and early care and education settings, as well as targeted investments in: 1) developmental assessment and care coordination for children in the foster care system; and 2) school-based behavioral health consultation and therapy for children in subsidized preschool classrooms.

The Help Me Grow (HMG) model is an evidence-based systems-building approach designed to address the need for early identification and linkage to developmental and behavioral services and supports for children and their families.

The four core components of a comprehensive HMG system are:

- Centralized telephone access point for connection of children and their families to services and care coordination
- Community outreach to promote the use of HMG and to provide networking opportunities among families and service providers
- Child health care provider outreach to support early detection and early intervention
- Data collection and analysis to understand all aspects of the HMG system, including the identification of gaps and barriers.

More information on First 5 SCC’s initiatives can be found here: www.first5scc.org. More information on the national Help Me Grow Network can be found here: <http://www.helpmegrownational.org/>.

SECTION 3: TIMELINE AND DELIVERABLES

Contract Timeline

The Phase 1 contract will be executed on or around April 25, 2016, and remain in effect through September 30, 2016 with the option to extend as warranted and mutually agreed upon between the parties.

Scope of Work – Phase 1

The selected applicant will:

- A. Engage with First 5 SCC staff and key stakeholders;
- B. Complete the Help Me Grow California Learning Community application in coordination with First 5 SCC staff and key stakeholders;
- C. Identify and recruit key partners and develop a process for involving them in the planning and discussions of a local HMG system;
- D. Conduct initial research on existing screening and early intervention systems in Santa Cruz County including but not limited to the status of pediatric developmental screening, referral paths, accessibility and utilization of Early Start and Special Education services and other services designed to support the developmental well-being and behavioral health of young children;
- E. Summarize findings and in coordination with First 5 SCC staff and stakeholders develop the Phase 2 plan for implementation of a HMG system in Santa Cruz County;
- F. Other work as mutually agreed upon between First 5 SCC and the selected vendor.

SECTION 4: ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Desired Qualifications

First 5 SCC invites responses from individuals/firms with the following skills, expertise and experience:

- A. Expertise in early childhood development and the issues facing young children and their families;
- B. Specific expertise in developmental surveillance and screening, as well as early intervention systems and services;
- C. Familiarity with Santa Cruz County and the organizations serving young children;
- D. Experience coordinating and facilitating community processes and/or professional development initiatives;
- E. Experience building consensus among constituents with varying opinions;
- F. Strong written and oral communication skills;
- G. Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively.

Proposal Submission Instructions

- A. Use standard 8.5"x11" letter-sized paper with 1-inch margins for all documents.
- B. Use 12 point font.

Application Elements

- *Cover Letter* – Please submit a cover letter including the name, title and original signature of the person authorized to bind the agreement as well as any other information the applicant deems relevant (maximum 1 page);
- *Summary of Qualifications* – Summarize relevant experience of the applicant; describe level of knowledge and expertise specific to the desired qualifications described above; (maximum 4 pages);
- *Work Plan/Budget* – A proposed work plan and budget that incorporates the scope of work described above as well as any other tasks deemed relevant by the applicant. Applicant may re-order and/or modify the scope of work described above. Each task should be described with an estimated number of hours necessary to complete the task as well as a proposed hourly rate and total proposed cost not to exceed \$20,000 (no page limit);
- *Writing Sample* – A writing sample preferably of a project plan, final report or equivalent document that demonstrates the applicant's written communication skills (no page limit);
- *Resumes and References* – Provide resumes (or equivalent) and three references for each individual that will be engaged in the project.

SECTION 5: SELECTION PROCESS

All applications will be reviewed by First 5 Santa Cruz County. There is no guarantee that submission of a response to this RFQ will result in funding, or that funding will be allocated at the level requested. The Commission reserves the right to fund one applicant, multiple applicants, or none. Final scope of work and budget will be negotiated with the selected applicant.

Interviews

First 5 Santa Cruz County may, at its sole discretion, select applicants for interviews. In that event, interviews, which may be in person, or by phone or internet connection, will take place on April 15th. References will be consulted.

Waiver of Immaterial Defect

The Commission may waive any immaterial deviation in any application. The determination as to whether a defect or deviation is material or immaterial shall be made by the Commission in its sole discretion. The waiver of any immaterial defect(s) shall not excuse an application from full compliance with the contract terms if a contract is awarded.

Appeals Process

Applicants will be notified of the Commission's selection following the decision. Notification will be made by posting a Notice of Intent to Award at the Commission's offices at 4450 Capitola Rd, Capitola, CA 95010, and by sending that notice to all applicants. Individuals, agencies and/or

organizations not selected for funding have the right to file an appeal if they believe that a significant material error occurred in the Proposal's evaluation and/or selection process that had a negative effect on their consideration for funding. The following rules apply to the appeals process:

Appeals will be accepted only from individuals or organizations that submitted applications. No third party complaints will be considered. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the First 5 Santa Cruz County Commission at the address printed on page 1 of this document, before 5:00 p.m. on the fifth (5th) business day following notification.

The appeal must describe the specific alleged violation of process or procedure that serves as the basis for appeal.

The appeal must include the name, address, and telephone number of the individual or the person representing the organization that is making the appeal. Commission staff will issue a final decision within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal.

SECTION 6: PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL PROCESS

1. Interested parties must submit proposals by **4:00 pm on April 8, 2016**, in PDF format via email to Barbara Dana at bdana@first5scc.org with a subject line "Help Me Grow Planning Consultant."
2. An email confirmation will be sent within one business day to indicate the proposal was received prior to the deadline. **If an email confirmation is not received within one business day of the submission, it is the responsibility of the applicant to contact Ms. Dana via phone at 831-465-2213.**
3. Faxed copies will not be accepted.
4. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that proposals are received on time.
5. **No Proposals, modifications or corrections will be accepted after the deadline.**