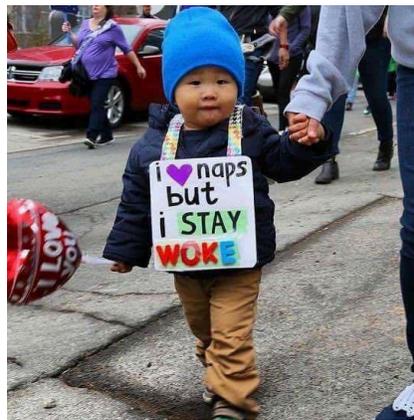




REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)



Consulting to Advance Diversity, Equity, Belonging & Anti-Racism RFP #2122-04

Our Vision

Children in Sonoma County from the prenatal stage to age five will develop to their fullest potential.

Our Mission

The mission of First 5 Sonoma County is to maximize the healthy development of all Sonoma County children from the prenatal stage through age five through support, education, and advocacy.

**PROPOSALS DUE:
Tuesday, February 16, 2021, 3:00 PM PST**

NOTE: Due to COVID-19 restrictions, proposals in response to this RFP must be submitted to the Commission electronically in the electronic format described in this RFP by the submission deadline. No hand deliveries will be accepted.

TIMELINE
Consulting to Advance Diversity, Equity, Belonging & Anti-Racism
 RFP #2122-04

IMPORTANT NOTE: Items in yellow boxes are **MANDATORY PROPOSER REQUIREMENTS and DEADLINES**.
 Proposers who fail to meet these requirements will not be considered for funding.

*All dates are subject to change at First 5 Sonoma County’s discretion. Notice of any date changes will be posted on the [First 5 Sonoma County website](#)

Date/Time	Event	Virtual Location
Friday December 11, 2020 3:00 pm	Request for Proposals (RFP) RELEASED	https://first5sonomacounty.org/funding-opportunities/
Wednesday December 16, 2020 3:00 pm	DEADLINE to submit Proposer questions regarding the RFP	Submit questions regarding this RFP to funding@first5sonomacounty.org
Friday December 18, 2020 3:00 pm	Answers to Questions regarding the RFP POSTED	https://first5sonomacounty.org/funding-opportunities/
Monday December 21, 2020 3:00 pm	DEADLINE to submit <i>Letter of Intent</i> (electronic submission ONLY)	Submit LOI as described in this RFP to the web-based application system: First 5 Sonoma County's Grant Manager
Tuesday February 16, 2021 3:00 pm	DEADLINE to submit Proposals (electronic submission ONLY)	Application access will be granted after acceptance of the LOI
February-March 2021	Proposal Review	N/A
April 1, 2021	Proposers notified of the Proposal Review Recommendations	Via email to proposers
Monday April 26, 2021 3:30 pm	Recommendations presented to First 5 Sonoma County Commission	TBD
On or about July 1, 2021	Contract Executed	N/A

I. Introduction to First 5 Sonoma County

First 5 Sonoma County is a public entity created by the passage of Proposition 10 in 1998 to help fund programs and services that support the optimal early development of children age 0-5. First 5 Sonoma County helps young children grow up healthy and ready to learn during the most important time in their development. First 5 Sonoma County has two decades of experience funding programs and advocating for policies that produce better futures for Sonoma County's children. The 2021-2025 First 5 Sonoma County Strategic Plan was recently adopted by the First 5 Sonoma County Commission and can be found [here](#).

II. PURPOSE & INTENT

First 5 Sonoma County is soliciting proposals from qualified consultants interested in providing professional consulting and advisory services for incorporating best practices to increase equity, diversity, inclusion, belonging and anti-racist approaches into our agency's culture, processes and policies and supporting our funded partner organizations to do the same. First 5 Sonoma seeks a consultant to facilitate the development of a framework to increase the capacity of the Commission, staff and key community partners to advance work addressing structural, policy, and systems-level inequities affecting young children, their families, and our communities. **The consultant team and scope of work for this engagement must employ competencies, qualities and approaches that promote commitment and practice of deep inclusivity and create the safe and brave space necessary to support the challenge and discomfort of addressing the harm of white supremacy through a restorative, reparative approach.**

III. BACKGROUND

To address the persistent and worsening local disparities in child and family outcomes across race, the First 5 Sonoma County Commission has formally adopted a commitment to an intentional focus on diversity, equity and belonging in the implementation of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, and to develop the capacity to practice and embed anti-racist approaches across our work. The Commission recognizes that true, long-term, systemic change to address racial disparities in school readiness, family self-sufficiency, and health outcomes cannot occur without action to address the root causes of inequity.

**First 5 Sonoma County Commission's Statement of Commitment
to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging & Anti-Racism**

First 5 Sonoma County envisions and contributes to a community and society where children 0-5, families and everyone in our communities can fully and safely participate, regardless of their race or ethnicity, the languages they speak, the makeup of their family, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, where they live, immigration status, their family's economic status or any other defining characteristic.

We will work to dismantle racism in our own operations, transform our systems, and partner with organizations that demonstrate commitment to anti-racism.

The Commission is positioned to mobilize resources, align funding policies and practices and to act as a catalyst for change, while ensuring that the internal culture of staff and governance is fair, diverse, inclusive and just. In order for families and community-based organizations to thrive, community partners must ensure spaces of belonging are created and fostered where parents, caregivers and frontline service providers are able to hold full agency, experience safety, make demands upon, and take part in leading organizational, cultural, institutional, and systemic change.

Beyond a statement of commitment, the Commission will work with a consultant or team of consultants during the first twelve to eighteen months of strategic plan implementation to assess First 5's current level of DEI capacity and competency and to co-create a framework that guides capacity building goals and activities and provides metrics and benchmarks to ensure accountability to the Commission's stated commitment. Opportunities are needed for the Commission, staff and stakeholders to develop a deeper understanding of the root causes of inequity in Sonoma County, the role that individuals, organizations and systems play in perpetuating white supremacy and institutionalized racism and to learn about and adopt best practices to advancing racial equity in the field of early childhood development, as well as practice on an organizational level.

See page 20 of the [Commission's Strategic Plan](#) for a preliminary framework that includes potential strategies and outcomes, as identified through the strategic planning process.

IV. TERM & FUNDING

Term: The maximum term of this contract is eighteen months.

Entire Contract Amount: The total proposed amount for this contract should not exceed \$150,000, inclusive of personnel, materials, printing, computer support, travel, and indirect costs.

V. REQUIRED & PREFERRED CONSULTANT QUALIFICATIONS

Requirements

- Lead consultant must have a minimum of five years *cumulative* experience working with community-based organizations in a capacity that has positioned them to advance organizational and programmatic diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging and anti-racism.
- Demonstrated capability to create a safe and brave space that supports the challenge and discomfort of acknowledging and repairing the harm of white supremacy in our community, organizations and systems, and promotes a commitment and practice of deep inclusivity.
- Demonstrated experience working with front line program staff, middle managers, executive leaders, community members, and governing bodies to implement new practices, policies, and approaches.
- Demonstrated hands-on experience guiding non-profit organizations and/or public agencies through the planning, implementation and successful completion of organization-wide learning and transformation related to equity and anti-racism.
- Demonstrated capacity to work with individuals and organizations at a range of “readiness” and starting points as well as in a range of local contexts.
- Experience working with diverse communities reflective of Sonoma County’s population.
- Consultant team must be reflective of Sonoma County’s diverse communities

Preferences

- Firm ownership and/or senior firm leadership by Black and/or indigenous Person/People/Woman of Color (BIPOC/BIWOC)

VI. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

A. Format

Proposers will submit proposals through a web-based system, *Foundant*. Elements of the proposal will be a combination of 1) text and information entered directly into the system; and, 2) required uploads of PDF and Excel attachments.

B. Narrative (Limited to 12,000 characters with spaces, approximately 8 pages)

Description of the overall proposal, including firm's general philosophy and approach to DEI work and how the approach aligns with First 5 Sonoma County's strategic plan and commitment to equity.

C. Proposed Work Plan (Upload as a PDF - 10 page maximum)

Detailed plan in table format that includes a rigorous, yet realistic project timeline and deliverables, logistics, components, tools and strategies for completion for all work. First 5 Sonoma County anticipates the project length from 12 to 18-months. The work plan should include the following three phases, which may overlap and/or integrate:

Phase 1: Agency-Wide Assessment

Conduct an assessment of diversity, equity and inclusion to establish priorities and paths for growth and improvement:

- Assess DEI internal to First 5 Sonoma County (e.g., awareness and competency, hiring practices, professional development, operations, implicit bias, issues of power and privilege within Agency decision-making structure, roles, and responsibilities)
- Assess DEI in First 5 Sonoma County's external work (e.g., investments, partnerships, program design, research, data, communications)

Phase 2: Framework Development

Engage staff, Commission and stakeholders in co-creation of First 5 Sonoma County's *Framework for Diversity, Equity, Belonging & Anti-Racism* that applies a DEI best practice model and adopts community-driven accountability standards (standards of DEI that are defined, validated and observed by communities of color and community grass roots organizations that are led by communities of color), to strengthen First 5 Sonoma County's ability to execute its mission, operations and strategic direction as a public agency.

The Framework should include concrete strategies and metrics that operationalize how First 5 will respond to DEI concerns, internally and externally, and measure progress, to include:

- Trainings, workshops, and/or coaching for staff on anti-racism, othering and belonging, implicit bias, microaggressions, historical context and intersectional issues, such as classism, homophobia, transphobia and sexism.
- Assessment tools for staff and funded partners to apply equity in their work
- Changes to operational policies, procedures, and practices (HR, communications, etc.)

- Implications for planning and program design processes, funding processes, evaluation and research, communications, policy and advocacy, etc.

Phase 3: Launch of a Learning Community on Diversity, Equity, Belonging and Anti-Racism

Design and facilitate spaces as part of Learning Communities for staff and funded partners that are conducive to open discussion, and that are restorative in nature.

D. Qualifications (Limited to 6,000 characters, approximately 4 pages)

Provide a description of your firm, including but not limited to the following:

- Firm's history and type of services provided, including number of years the firm and/or lead consultant has provided organization-wide DEI assessment, planning and/or implementation efforts, and experience with non-profit and public agencies.
- Describe project roles and responsibilities for each identified professional, areas of expertise, and how consultant(s) reflect the diversity of Sonoma County.
- Describe experience in developing, facilitating and supporting implementation of organizational culture-change initiatives.
- Provide examples of DEI assessments, training, and/or work plans that have been developed and utilized.
- Qualifications for all proposed project personnel.
- Describe how the firm's ownership and/or leadership is informed by lived experience, as related to organizational DEI and how BIPOC and BIWOC are represented at the leadership level.

E. Budget Workbook: Multi-Year Budget, Fiscal Year Budgets and Budget Narrative
(Upload required: Budget Workbook in Excel, Attachment A)

The maximum funding available for the project is \$150,000.

Proposers are required to submit a detailed budget for each fiscal year, a Multi-Year Budget and Budget Narrative. Budget information must be submitted through the web-based system on the provided Excel spreadsheet, Budget Workbook, Attachment A, to articulate all direct, indirect and sub-contractual costs to the project. Prior to submission, proposers should review and verify that the details included in individual worksheets in the Budget Workbook match and align exactly across worksheets. Each item in the budget and budget narrative must correlate to specific activities described in the proposal. No costs should be included in the Budget and Budget Narrative that are not described in the proposal, and vice versa.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are shared costs across an organization whose benefit is not readily identifiable with a specific program or programs, but necessary to the general operation of the organization. The methodology for calculating indirect costs should be explained in the Budget Narrative. If indirect costs are calculated through an overall percentage of direct costs, then individual indirect costs cannot be also listed as line items, and vice versa.

Costs to be considered “direct” for purposes of calculating indirect include: salaries, benefits, materials and supplies directly related to implementation of the project, travel and sub-contractual costs. Indirect costs cannot exceed 15% of direct costs.

Budget Narrative

In the Budget Narrative tab in the Budget Workbook, explain how costs in the budget were estimated and justify the need for each cost. Use the template to break down each major cost category (i.e., salaries, fringe benefits, equipment, travel, supplies, other direct costs and indirect costs). Provide a brief description of each budget line item in the budget and show the calculations used to derive the costs.

For Personnel, list each job title separately and include employee name(s) (or TBD if position is vacant), gross annual salary, hourly wage, any anticipated salary increases (i.e. COLA, merit, labor union, etc.) that may occur during the funding period and role in the project. Refer to agency’s benefit package and describe how fringe benefits are calculated in the budget.

Describe and justify equipment, including quantity, cost per unit, and identify the purpose and the individuals who will be using the equipment. For Postage, Supplies, Printing, Travel, and Training, provide a general description, quantity and the number of months.

For employee mileage associated with the project, describe the rate of reimbursement. The mileage rate should not exceed the GSA mileage reimbursement rate.

Describe the method chosen for budgeting indirect costs and how they are calculated.

F. References

Provide references, listing a minimum of three (3) clients whom the consultant has conducted similar services that First 5 Sonoma County may contact. Please include the following information:

- i. Firm Name
- ii. Contact Information
- iii. Brief description of similar work performed

G. Resumes

Include resumes/CVs for all consultants and subcontractors. Upload all documents to proposal submission system as a single PDF.

VII. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

A. Questions about the RFP

Questions from prospective proposers regarding this RFP are to be directed to funding@first5sonomacounty.org by 3:00 pm December 16, 2020. The mail subject line must read: “RFP Question – Equity Consultant”. Questions received via email will be posted with the corresponding answers on the First 5 Sonoma County website by Friday, December 18, 2020 at 3:00 pm.

B. Mandatory Letter of Intent

All proposers must submit a *Letter of Intent* by Monday, December 21st, 3:00 pm to <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=f5sc>.

C. Submission

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, proposals must be submitted electronically via First 5 Sonoma County’s web-based proposal submission system. No hard copies will be required or accepted. Proposers that submit a Letter of Intent by the deadline specified in this RFP will receive a unique link to use for submitting their proposal.

Formatting and Size Limits

The Foundant system does not have formatting within the application entry system. Information can only be entered as plain text. Formatting such as: **BOLD**, *italics*, underlining, bullets, highlighting, etc. is not available.

If you are working in MS Word (or a similar platform) and using a copy/paste method to enter the information into the application, the pasted text will **not** include formatting, such as: **BOLD**, *italics*, underlining, bullets, highlighting, etc.

Size limits for each text section of the application include character counts. While typing into Foundant directly, the character count will show at the bottom of each section and update as the text is entered.

If you plan to work in MS Word and copy and paste the content into Foundant, the character count of a section in Word can be found by highlighting that section, clicking on **Review** in the menu bar, and clicking on **Word Count**. The statistic title “Characters (with spaces)” is the closest to the character count in Foundant, but may not be exact.

As an example, 2000 characters with spaces in Foundant is the equivalent to approximately one page double spaced, 12-point font. Because Foundant counts spaces as characters the page count estimates may vary greatly, due to paragraphs and spacing.

*Using the enter key to provide a space between paragraphs will only count as one character.

Applicants are encouraged to either work in the system, or to enter information into each section before finalizing content to ensure the vital aspects of each section are included within the specified character count.

VIII. PROPOSAL REVIEW AND AWARD PROCESS

Step 1: Proposal Elements Requirements Screening

Each proposal will be reviewed for the complete and accurate submission of required elements, format and forms as specified in the RFP.

Step 2: Scoring and Review by Proposal Review Team

Proposals will be reviewed and scored by the ad hoc committee that will be comprised of Commissioners, staff, and individuals with expertise and experience in DEI, capacity building and organizational change, particularly in the nonprofit sector. Members of review teams will be carefully selected to mitigate and minimize any real or perceived conflict of interest.

Reviewers will score each item and provide written comments regarding strengths and weaknesses of the proposal. It is critical for proposers to provide complete, clear and specific information in the narrative text of the proposal that is consistent with other information contained in the proposal, such as the budget, budget narrative and staffing competencies.

The review team will discuss their individual scores for each proposal in a facilitated meeting where reviewers will have the opportunity to compare their perceptions and impressions. Individual reviewer scores alone will not determine whether a proposal is funded; reviewers will be encouraged to discuss proposals in the context of First 5 Sonoma County's overarching strategic vision and community context in a facilitated consensus-building process.

Weighted scoring for each component of the proposal is illustrated in the table below.

Proposal Component	Possible Points
Proposal Narrative	30
Work Plan	30
Qualifications/Preferences	20
Cost Proposal/Budget	20
TOTAL POSSIBLE	100

IX. PROPOSER INTERVIEWS

Reviewers and staff will have the option to recommend that proposers be contacted for an interview to explore specific issues related to the proposed approach, strategies, budget, staffing, or other elements of implementation and potentially negotiate refinements to proposed scope of work within the parameters described in this Request for Proposals.

X. INITIAL AWARD RECOMMENDATION LETTER

An initial award recommendation letter will be sent to all applicants notifying them of the review team’s recommendation.

XI. APPEAL PROCESS

Applicants wishing to appeal the review committee’s recommendation have three (3) working days from the date of the initial award recommendation letter to file an appeal in writing. Letters of appeal must be sent electronically to: funding@first5sonomacounty.org and addressed to Angie Dillon-Shore, Executive Director.

Grounds for appeal are limited to a violation of a First 5 procedure, law, rule, or regulation regarding this RFP process. Appeals will not be accepted on any other grounds. Mere disagreement with the recommendation or decision is not grounds for an appeal.

Appeals will only be considered if received electronically by 5:00 PM on the third working day from the date of the initial award recommendation letter. The appeal letter will be reviewed by the Executive Director and a decision on the appeal will be electronically sent to the applicant. The decision on appeal is final.

XII. AWARDING OF CONTRACT

The First 5 Sonoma County Commission will award the contract, upon which First 5 staff will enter into negotiations with the selected applicant to execute a formal agreement. The

contract resulting from this RFP will include, but will not be limited to, the following terms and conditions:

- Insurance requirements
- Payment structure

XIII. RESERVATIONS

- First 5 Sonoma County reserves the right to cancel the RFP process at any time for any reason, even after review of all the applications, and is not responsible for any expenses incurred by an applicant in developing an application.
- First 5 Sonoma County reserves the right to reduce, amend, and/or rescind this RFP at any time prior to final execution of the contract.
- First 5 Sonoma County reserves the right to negotiate scope of work, budget, and costs with any successful applicant. If negotiations fail to culminate in a contract, First 5 Sonoma County may select another applicant.
- First 5 Sonoma County is under no obligation to award a contract to the applicant that presents the lowest cost. Selection will be made based on overall evaluation of the application and the best interest of First 5 Sonoma County as recommended by the review team and the Executive Director, and approved by the Commission.
- First 5 Sonoma County reserves the right to request clarification from any applicant on their application.
- First 5 Sonoma County reserves the right to accept all or a portion of any application, to waive any minor irregularities in an application.
- First 5 Sonoma County reserves the right to contract with more than one firm. All applications become the property of First 5 Sonoma County.
- All applications will remain confidential until a contract is negotiated, however, because First 5 Sonoma County is a public entity, all applications can become public after all successful contract negotiations.