



**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)**

**QUALITY MATTERS  
Community of Practice Facilitator**

**Release Date: Friday, February 20, 2026**

**Application Due Date: Friday, May 29, 2026, at 5:00 pm**

**For more information, please contact:  
FIRST 5 Santa Clara County  
[Leah.Asuncion@first5kids.org](mailto:Leah.Asuncion@first5kids.org)**



<b>RFA APPLICATION PROCESS AND TIMELINE</b>		
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>DATE</b>
Release Date	Application information is available online at <a href="http://www.first5kids.org">www.first5kids.org</a> .	Friday, February 20, 2026
Questions & Answers	Questions regarding the application may be addressed via email to <a href="mailto:Leah.Asuncion@first5kids.org">Leah.Asuncion@first5kids.org</a> .	Monday, March 2 to Monday, April 27, 2026
Application Submission Deadline	Completed proposals must be submitted electronically by 5:00 PM. <a href="#">QM Community of Practice RFA Application</a>	Friday, May 29, 2026
Application Review	Applications submitted by the deadline will be reviewed by FIRST 5 staff.	Monday, June 1 – Friday, June 26
Initial Award Recommendation	Selected applicants will receive notice via email. Applicants not selected will also be notified.	Monday, July 6, 2026
Appeal Process	Applicants not recommended for funding may appeal within four (4) working days of notification. Appeals must document a violation of the FIRST 5 procedure, law, rule, or regulation. The decision on appeal is final.	Tuesday, July 7- Friday, July 10, 2026
Executive Director Approval	Upon completion of the appeal process, the Executive of Early Learning and Care will approve the final award.	Friday, July 17, 2026
Contract Negotiations	Contract scope and final budget will be negotiated with the selected applicant.	Monday, July 20 – Friday, July 31, 2026

**FIRST 5 Santa Clara County Overview**

In November 1998, California voters approved a \$.50 tax increase on tobacco products through the passage of Proposition 10, the Children and Families First Act. Eighty percent of these tax revenues are allocated annually to the 58 California counties to promote, support and improve early development of children from the prenatal stage



through five years of age. The remaining 20% of the revenues supports statewide programs and research. Each county established a Commission that has local authority over how to spend Prop 10 revenue in accordance with the intent of the law.

FIRST 5 Santa Clara County is an independent, local public entity governed by nine Commissioners who represent the county government, public health, social services, education, and early care and education. The Commissioners are charged with upholding the intent of Proposition 10 and administering the funds to support and promote programs and services for prenatal children through age 5 and their families.

FIRST 5 Santa Clara County's vision is that we will be a catalyst for ensuring that the developmental needs of children from prenatal through age 5 are a priority in all sectors of the community. Our mission is to support the healthy development of children from prenatal through age 5 and enrich the lives of their families and communities (please visit the About Us tab at <http://www.first5kids.org/>).

## **Purpose of the RFA**

FIRST 5 Santa Clara County seeks a qualified in-person trainer/ facilitator to design and deliver a Community of Practice (CoP) series for Family Child Care Home (FCCH) owners and assistants in Santa Clara County. The purpose of this CoP is to strengthen the capacity of FCCH educators to create inclusive, nurturing, and emotionally responsive learning environments for young children ages 0- 5. The series will build confidence in responding to challenging behaviors, practical strategies that can be implemented in home-based settings, and strengthen peer connection and shared problem-solving among FCCH educators.

This RFA is competitive and intended to identify one or more qualified facilitators to deliver one or more in-person CoP sessions, based on participant needs, scheduling considerations, and facilitator expertise. While proposals will not be scored or ranked in a traditional manner, funding is limited, and not all submissions may be selected. Proposals will be reviewed for alignment, readiness, and overall fit with the identified Community of Practice needs.

## **Community of Practice Focus Areas**

The CoP will focus on practical, strength-based professional learning that addresses the needs of FCCH owners and assistants. Proposers should demonstrate the ability to facilitate learning across the identified focus areas, with content grounded in the realities of home-based, mixed-age care settings.

The CoP will offer topic-specific professional learning sessions to meet diverse FCCH. Each CoP is delivered as a topic-specific session and does not require participation in other sessions. Facilitators may propose one or more focus areas aligned with their expertise.



**Focus Areas (Stand-Alone Topics)** sessions should emphasize peer learning, reflection, and practical application that FCCH educators can immediately implement in their daily practice.

### **Positive Behavior Support and Behavior Guidance**

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS); developmentally appropriate behavior guidance; responding to and managing challenging behaviors; promoting children's emotional regulation and social-emotional development in family childcare settings.

### **Responding to Challenging Behaviors**

Practical strategies for understanding, preventing, and responding to challenging behaviors in mixed-age, home-based environments.

### **Inclusive Practices and Support for Children with Special Needs**

Strategies to support children with disabilities, developmental delays, and IEPs; inclusive approaches that honor children's strengths, abilities, cultures, and languages; practical adaptations and inclusive practices in family childcare environments.

### **Supporting Dual Language Learners (DLLs)**

Culturally and linguistically responsive practices that affirm home languages, strengthen communication with families, and support DLL Development.

### **STEAM Learning in Family Child Care Settings**

Developmentally appropriate STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) experience using low-cost, accessible materials suitable for mixed-age care.

### **Educator Wellness and Sustainability**

Strategies to support FCCH owners and assistants' well-being, reduce stress and burnout, and strengthen long-term sustainability in family childcare.

## **Scope of Work**

The selected facilitator will be responsible for:

- Plan, design, and facilitate one or more in-person CoP sessions, as mutually agreed upon with FIRST 5
- Develop session objectives, agendas, learning activities, and instructional materials aligned with the approved focus area(s) and CoP goals
- Deliver sessions that foster an interactive, inclusive, and culturally responsive learning environment reflective of FCCH settings
- Incorporate practical, evidence-informed tools and strategies that participants can immediately apply in their programs



- Collaborate with FIRST 5 staff on session planning, implementation, coordination, recruitment, and logistical support
- Share a brief session outline (for flyers), agenda, facilitation slides, and list of materials in advance of the session, as requested, to support coordination and accessibility planning
- Support brief participant reflection activities during sessions, as coordinated by FIRST 5 staff
- Participate in a short post-session debrief with FIRST 5 staff, as requested, to share observations, emerging themes, and recommendations to inform future CoP offerings

### **Session Format and Schedule**

- Format: In-person only
- Session Length: approximately 2 hours per session
- Audience: Family Child Care owners and assistants
- Schedule Preferences: Sessions are preferably held on Monday nights to accommodate FCCH provider schedules; however, weekend sessions may be considered based on participant need, topic relevance, and facilitator availability
- Language Access: FIRST 5 SCC is committed to supporting language access for participants. Interpretation and translation needs will be identified in advance, when feasible, and coordinated by FIRST 5 in collaboration with facilitators. Facilitators with bilingual or multilingual capacity are encouraged to indicate language proficiency in their proposals.

### **Compensation**

Facilitators may be contracted for one or multiple sessions; the selection and number of sessions will be based on participants' needs, topic alignment, and facilitator expertise.

The fee of \$1,500 per session should include all preparation, facilitation, and standard instructional materials typically required for session delivery.

FIRST 5 may, at its discretion and in collaboration with the facilitator, separately purchase materials, supplies, or items to support participant engagement. Such items are not required to be included in the facilitator's fee. Materials may include, but are not limited to, books, educational resources, and supplies that support the session curriculum or topic area.

FIRST 5 may, at its discretion, pay rental fees associated with the in-person training.

### **Desired Qualifications**



While we acknowledge that no list of skills would be fully comprehensive of all the ideal qualities of applicants in this work, we do want to intentionally name some skills and experiences that we feel would be valuable to the success of this work:

- Experience providing professional development to family child care or early learning educators.
- Subject matter expertise in behavior guidance, PBIS, emotional regulation, and inclusive practices.
- Experience working with diverse communities, including immigrant and multilingual providers.
- Ability to deliver engaging, practice-based, and culturally responsive training
- Strong ties to the community that is rooted in service, humility, and cultural and linguistic access to programs.
- Lived experience as an FCCH provider, or close partnership and ongoing engagement with FCCH communities, is highly valued.

## **Proposal Submission Requirements**

Interested applicants must submit a brief proposal in the application portal that includes:

1. An overview of the proposed training content and learning objectives
2. Description of facilitation approach and participation engagement strategies
3. Proposed fees and session date(s)

The Application portal can be accessed here: [QM Community of Practice RFA Application](#)

Proposals must be submitted electronically by May 29, 2026. Late or incomplete proposals may not be considered.

## **Questions**

Questions regarding this RFA may be directed to Leah Asuncion at [leah.asuncion@first5kids.org](mailto:leah.asuncion@first5kids.org). Additional clarification may be requested from applicants as needed.

## **Community Partnership and Shared Learning**

FIRST 5 Santa Clara values the expertise and experience of FCCH owners and assistants. As part of this Community of Practice initiative, FIRST 5 may invite FCCH providers to participate in an advisory capacity role during the review process. Providers in the Quality Matters network may serve in this capacity to offer input on facilitator alignment with priorities, relevance of proposed topics, and applicability to real-world, home-based practices. Advisory input will be used to inform staff



about reviews and decision-making; final selection decisions will be made by FIRST 5 staff.

## Selection Criteria

This RFA is competitive, and proposals will be reviewed to determine alignment and readiness rather than ranked against one another. FIRST 5 Santa Clara County will assess proposals on how clearly the submitted proposal addresses the criteria below:

- *Alignment with CoP Focus Area*  
Demonstrate experience and expertise in one or more of the CoP focus areas.
- *Relevant Experience and Expertise*  
Experience providing professional development or facilitation to FCCH, early learning educators, particularly in home-based or mixed-age settings.
- *Facilitation Approach*  
Use of interactive, practice-based, and culturally responsive facilitation strategies that support peer learning and real-world applications.
- *Equity and Cultural Responsiveness*  
Demonstrated commitment to equity-centered practices and experience working with diverse communities, including immigrant, multilingual, and historically under-resourced early educators.
- *Capacity and Fit*  
Ability to deliver one or more in-person sessions aligned with participant needs, facilitator expertise, and FIRST 5 scheduling and program priorities.

## Terms and Conditions

FIRST 5 reserves the right and sole discretion to determine whether to reject a proposal based on the proposal's failure to follow the specified format, and/or to treat a proposal as non-responsive and ineligible for consideration based on its failure to conform to the requirements of this RFA.

- *Evaluation.* FIRST 5 will evaluate responses to this RFA based upon the submissions and reserve the right to conduct interviews if and to the extent FIRST 5 determines it is necessary or advisable to do so.

FIRST 5 will issue an award or awards in response to this RFA on the basis of the proposal or proposals that best fit FIRST 5's requirements and the purposes and intent of the funding.

- *Award Process.* FIRST 5 may direct negotiations with propose(s) with the



highest ranked proposal(s), may direct negotiations with multiple proposals, and/or may request best and final offers. The discussions may include price and conditions attendant to price. Each proposer agrees that its proposal shall and does constitute a firm offer that it is bound to, and that FIRST 5 shall have the option for at least one year after the closing of the solicitation to accept that firm offer.

- FIRST 5 always reserves the right to terminate or suspend negotiations and may begin negotiations with other proposer(s). This process may continue until execution of one or more contract(s) acceptable to FIRST 5 or rejection of all proposals. No proposer shall have any rights against FIRST 5 arising from or related to such negotiations, suspensions, or terminations thereof.

If and to the extent FIRST 5 issues to any proposer any notice, including any of intent to recommend funding for the Proposer's proposal, that notice shall not create rights, interests, or claims of entitlement in the proposer(s).

- *Incurring Costs.* This RFA does not commit FIRST 5 to award, nor does it commit FIRST 5 to pay any cost incurred in the submission of any proposal, or in making necessary studies or designs for the preparation thereof, nor procure or contract for services or supplies. Further, no reimbursable cost may be incurred in anticipation of a contract award.
- *Claims Against FIRST 5.* Neither a proposer nor its organization, or any of its representatives shall have any claims whatsoever against FIRST 5 or any of its respective officials, agents, or employees arising out of or relating to this RFA or these RFA procedures.
- *California Public Records Act (CPRA).* All the proposal become the property of FIRST 5, which is a public agency subject to the disclosure requirements of the California Public Records Act (CPRA). If proposer's proprietary information is contained in documents submitted to FIRST 5, and proposer claims that such information falls within one or more CPRA exemptions, proposer must clearly mark such information "CONFIDENTIAL AND PROPRIETARY", and identify the specific lines containing the information. In the event of a request for such information, FIRST 5 will make reasonable efforts to provide notice to proposer prior to disclosure. If proposer contends that any documents are exempt from the CPRA and wishes to prevent disclosure, it is required to obtain a protective order, injunctive relief, or other appropriate remedy from a court of law in Santa Clara County before FIRST 5's deadline for responding to the CPRA request. If proposer fails to clearly mark information submitted



with the response as CONFIDENTIAL AND PROPRIETY and/or fails to seek or obtain such remedy prior to FIRST 5's deadline for responding to the CPRA request, such failure shall constitute a waiver of the proposer's right to object to disclosure of the information, and FIRST 5 may disclose the requested information to the requestor without incurring or owing any penalty or liability to the proposer.

- By submitting a proposal, proposer further agrees that it shall defend, indemnify and hold FIRST 5 harmless against any claim, action, litigation, damage or injury (including but not limited to all judgments, costs, fees, and attorney's fees) that may result from partial or complete denial of access to, or non-disclosure or redaction of, documents arising from any representation, action, or inaction by the proposer.
- *Confidentiality.* All data and information obtained from FIRST 5 by the proposers and their agents in this RFA process, including reports, recommendations, specifications, and data, shall be treated by the proposer and its agents as confidential. The proposers and its agents shall not disclose or communicate this information to a third party or use it in advertising, publicity, propaganda, marketing, or in another job or jobs, unless prior written consent is obtained from an authorized representative of FIRST 5. Generally, each proposal and all documentation, including financial information, submitted by a proposer to FIRST 5 is to be treated as confidential by the proposer. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the proposal and all documentation are subject to the California Public Records Act, as described immediately above.

## **Reservations**

FIRST 5 reserves the right to cancel or change the RFA process at any time for any reason, even after reviewing all the applications.

- Reduce, increase, amend, and/ or rescind the RFA or the funding available under this RFA at any time
  - Request clarification or additional documentation from any Proposer.
  - Reject any or all proposal(s)
  - Waive or correct any minor defect, irregularities, or errors in a proposal or the RFA process.
  - Cancel or terminate the RFA process, even after review of proposals, and, at it
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option, issue a new RFA

- Procure any equipment or services specified in this RFA by any other means
- Modify the selection process, the specifications or requirements for materials or services, or the contents or formal requirements for proposals.
- Extend a deadline specified in this RFA, including deadlines for accepting proposals.
- Accept proposals through sources or modes other than those required by this RFA and beyond the due date and time, at its sole discretion.
- Negotiate with any or none of the proposers
- Modify in the final agreement any terms and/or conditions described in this RFA
- Terminate failed negotiations with a proposer without liability, and negotiate with other proposers
- Disqualify any proposer on the basis of a real or apparent conflict of interest or evidence of collusion evaluated by FIRST 5.
- Eliminate, reject, or disqualify a proposal of any proposer that is not a responsible proposer or fails to submit a responsive offer as determined solely by FIRST 5 and/ or
- Accept all or a portion of any proposal.