



## **Request for Applications (RFA)**

# **High Quality Early Care and Education Training and Technical Assistance Hub**

**Applications must be received by:  
12 p.m. on Wednesday, February 10, 2016**

First 5 Fresno County  
2405 Tulare Street, Suite 200  
Fresno, CA 93721  
(559) 558-4900  
[www.first5fresno.org](http://www.first5fresno.org)

## Table of Contents

1. About First 5 Fresno County .....	3
2. Intent of this Request for Applications .....	3
3. Eligible Applicants .....	6
4. Informational Sessions .....	7
5. Questions from Applicants.....	7
6. Contract Period .....	7
7. Timeline.....	8
8. Submission Requirements.....	8
9. Review for Compliance with Mandatory RFA Requirements.....	10
10. Review Process.....	11
11. Submission Instructions.....	11
12. Notification of Decision .....	11
13. Procurement Protest Process.....	11
14. Confidentiality of Responses .....	12
15. Important Information .....	12
ATTACHMENT A –Letter of Intent Cover Page .....	14
ATTACHMENT B – Application Cover Page .....	15
ATTACHMENT C – Application Checklist.....	17
ATTACHMENT D – Budget Instructions .....	18

## **Request for Applications (RFA)**

### **High Quality Early Care and Education Training and Technical Assistance Hub**

#### **1. About First 5 Fresno County:**

At First 5 Fresno County (F5FC), we focus on the first 5 years of life. We want all children to have a strong foundation so they can reach their full potential. The First 5 Fresno County Commission (the Commission) funds programs and invests in efforts that improve the lives of children ages 0 to 5 and their families.

F5FC was created in 1998 when voters passed Proposition 10, which added a 50-cent sales tax to every pack of cigarettes or tobacco product sold in California. The State of California collects the money and distributes it to each county based on birthrate. F5FC is responsible for developing a strategic plan to guide local funding decisions that are consistent with the purpose of Proposition 10, which is to promote, support and improve the early development of children from the prenatal stage to five years of age.

In January 2015, F5FC engaged in a focused review of the 2013-2020 Strategic Plan to explore opportunities presented by the new Lighthouse for Children facility and revisit the plan's investment strategies for relevancy after two years of implementation. During this review process, the Commission confirmed the overall direction of its investments ensuring the current strategic plan maintains children ages 0-5 and their families at the center of all of F5FC's investments and efforts. F5FC will continue to focus on health promotion, early learning, and strong families while partnering with service providers across the county to offer families quality services to sustain positive outcomes for children and improve the overall system of care in Fresno County.

The full F5FC [2013-2020 Strategic Plan – \(2015 Review Version\)](http://www.first5fresno.org) is available on the Commission's website at [www.first5fresno.org](http://www.first5fresno.org).

#### **2. Intent of this Request for Applications:**

F5FC's investments are aligned with the predictive factors associated with third grade level reading. Predictive factors for children reading at grade level by the end of third grade are largely being shaped in a child's first 5 years of life. One of these predictive factors is participation in high quality early care and education programs.

In the United States, nearly 11 million children are enrolled in child care. With 90% of a child's brain developing before kindergarten, what children experience in these settings – both positive and negative – directly impacts their lifelong learning and success. Children who participate in high quality early care and education programs are more likely to perform better in school, stay out of the criminal justice system, earn more money as an adult and complete a college degree. In fact, studies have shown that investing in high quality early care and education yields a 7% to 10% annual return on community investment.<sup>1</sup>

To this end, F5FC requests applications to create a Fresno County Training and Technical Assistance Hub (T&TA Hub) providing coaching, training, technical assistance

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<sup>1</sup> University of Chicago economist James Heckman, via <http://www.heckmanequation.org>.

and assessments to early learning programs pursuing quality improvement. The purpose of the T&TA Hub is to develop and implement a countywide coaching and assessment model, unifying and connecting local and regional experts to provide seamless support to child care providers.

F5FC will fund one applicant under this RFA for an amount not to exceed \$2,700,000 for one two-year contract to serve as the lead agency/T&TA Hub. The awarded agency will have an opportunity to renew for an additional two years of funding based on performance and availability of funds.

Experienced agencies interested in providing this service for F5FC are encouraged to submit an application. The agency selected will have demonstrated understanding in and experience providing similar services, and must be exceptionally capable of producing the desired services in a highly professional, timely and cost-conscious manner. It is expected that the selected lead agency will subcontract funding to agencies with the coaching, training, technical assistance and assessment credentials and expertise set forth in this RFA.

This funding opportunity aligns with the Commission's Strategic Plan Tier 1: Children and Families - Goal 2: Early Learning.

The policies, procedures and requirements set forth by the Commission and outlined in this application must be fully understood and adhered to by potential partners. The complete list of [all Commission policies and/or guidelines](#) for funded partners is available on the Commission's website at [www.first5fresno.org](http://www.first5fresno.org).

**Guidelines and Program Requirements:** Organizations applying for funding under this RFA should develop their applications with the following guidelines and requirements in mind:

- The intention of this RFA is to create a T&TA Hub and implement a child care quality improvement coaching and assessment model to enhance the existing Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) in Fresno County.
- This RFA will not establish a separate quality improvement system of its own. It is expected that any agency awarded funding will intentionally collaborate with local QRIS partners as an integral piece of one system.
- All services provided under this RFA must directly align and coordinate with the following programs to create a cohesive early learning quality improvement system in Fresno County and statewide:
  - Fresno County's QRIS ([Fresno County Early Stars](#))<sup>2</sup> matrix and/or Continuous Quality Improvement Pathways
  - First 5 California's Improve & Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive ([IMPACT](#))<sup>3</sup> program

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2 For more information about Fresno County Early Stars visit: [www.earlystars.org](http://www.earlystars.org).

3 For more information about First 5 IMPACT visit: [http://www.cafc.ca.gov/programs/programs\\_impact.html](http://www.cafc.ca.gov/programs/programs_impact.html).

- The goal is to create one system with coaching available on each element and pathway of the quality continuum framework.

QRIS Elements	
1.	Child Observation
2.	Developmental and Health Screenings
3.	Minimum Qualifications for Lead Teacher/Family Child Care Home
4.	Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: CLASS® Assessment
5.	Ratios and Group Size
6.	Program Environment Rating Scale(s)
7.	Director Qualifications
Continuous Quality Improvement Pathways	
1.	School Readiness
2.	Social-Emotional Development
3.	Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity
4.	Effective Teacher-Child Interactions
5.	Professional Development
6.	Environment
7.	Program Administration
8.	Family Engagement

- Of the above elements and pathways, priority must be given to one or more of the following:
  - Developmental and Health Screenings: [Ages & Stages Questionnaires®](#), [Ages & Stages Questionnaire®: Social Emotional](#)
  - Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: [CLASS® Assessment](#)
  - Social-Emotional Development: [Teaching Pyramid](#), [Program for Infant-Toddler Care](#)
  - Program Environment Rating Scale(s)/Environment: Including health and safety
- It is expected that the selected lead agency will establish subcontracts with qualified agencies to ensure expertise is available in the aforementioned elements and pathways. The lead agency will be responsible for creating a unified coaching and assessment system with all subcontractors to promote streamlined access for providers.
- F5FC recognizes that children are cared for in a variety of settings throughout the county and each early childhood educator's path to quality is unique. Therefore, services under this RFA are to be inclusive of all early learning sites including licensed centers and family child care homes; legally license-exempt centers; family, friend and neighbor (FFN) care; and alternative settings for children ages 0-5. Additionally, providers pursuing quality improvement through

national accreditation may also receive coaching in so much as it aligns with the QRIS elements and pathways.

- Per First 5 California's IMPACT program, coaching is defined as: a relationship-based process led by an expert with specialized and adult learning knowledge and skills, who often serves in a different professional role than the recipient(s).
- The required frequency of in-person coaching should be based on the individual needs of each early learning program. Individualized action plans should directly align with the QRIS elements and pathways and be developed in conjunction with the early childhood educator receiving coaching.
- To maintain objectivity, individual coaching staff must be separate from those staff conducting ratings and assessments under the QRIS system. Lead agencies must also work to establish cross-county assessment partnerships to avoid local assessor bias.
- Professional trainings and workshops may be included as complementary services as long as the topics directly relate to the above elements and pathways.
- Coaches providing services must have individual professional development plans in place, including ongoing training and technical assistance, to maintain fidelity with the QRIS model and best practices in early care and education coaching.
- To encourage messaging and service alignment, it is recommended that Fresno County coaches meet regularly so all early childhood educators are receiving a standardized coaching experience.
- Staff administering assessments must be certified under each applicable assessment tool's certification requirements.
- A portion of the funding from this RFA may also be utilized by the lead agency to increase family access to high quality early care and education. For example: messaging to parents about the importance of quality care, multi-agency convenings to streamline access to and inform families about child care subsidies and supports, etc.

### **3. Eligible Applicants:**

Through this competitive process, F5FC will award funds to one agency with the expertise and qualifications to successfully facilitate and manage the proposed program for early childhood educators. Specifically, applicants must be able to demonstrate the strength of their relationship with the proposed target population, including a demonstrated success in partnering with other agencies to provide quality improvement supports to child care providers. An organization is eligible to apply if it meets the following:

- Is a community-based public benefit corporation 501(c)(3) organization, or early childhood education program operated by a governmental agency. Please note local school districts are ineligible to respond to this RFA due to the Commission's commitment to support school districts solely through the Birth through Third Grade (B3) Initiative.
- Has at least three years of demonstrated expertise and experience in serving early childhood educators.
- Has adequate financial resources and accounting standards.
- Has no record of unsatisfactory performance or business practice (if the applicant is a current or past F5FC service provider, contract(s) must be or have termed in good standing).
- Has the demonstrated capacity to conform to all requirements and guidelines set forth in this RFA.
- Must provide in-kind, leveraged and/or cash match at a minimum of 10% of the requested amount to further support quality improvement efforts.

#### 4. Informational Sessions:

Informational Sessions are for the purpose of answering questions directly related to the RFA requirements and submission. **It is strongly recommended to attend at least one of the Informational Sessions.**

January 19, 2016 10 a.m.	January 20, 2016 2:30 p.m.	January 21, 2016 9:30 a.m.
Rios Terrace Apartments Community Center 191 Tuft Street Mendota, CA 93640	Lighthouse for Children 2405 Tulare Street Fresno, CA 93721	Fowler Unified Instructional Services Center 624 E Adams Avenue Fowler, CA 93625

#### 5. Questions from Applicants:

Any questions about this RFA must be submitted via e-mail to [funding@first5fresno.org](mailto:funding@first5fresno.org) with the subject line: "Question RFA – T&TA Hub." Questions will be accepted until 5 p.m. Wednesday, February 3, 2016. Responses to questions will be posted on the F5FC website's [funding page](http://first5fresno.org/about-us/funding) ([first5fresno.org/about-us/funding](http://first5fresno.org/about-us/funding)) by 5 p.m. every Friday from January 22, 2016 through February 5, 2016.

#### 6. Contract Period:

The contract period will be from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2018 with an option to renew based on performance and availability of funds for an additional two years of funding. The total amount available under this RFA is up to \$2,700,000 for one two-year contract. The Commission reserves the right to negotiate the proposed activities and/or budget of any proposed program or program components.

## 7. Timeline:

January 13, 2016	Release of Request For Applications
January 19, 20 and 21, 2016	Informational Sessions
January 27, 2016 by 5 p.m.	Deadline to Submit Letter of Intent (Required)
January 14 - February 3, 2016	Timeframe to Submit RFA-related Questions
January 22, January 29 & February 5, 2016 by 5 p.m.	Days when a Response to Submitted Questions will be posted on F5FC website
February 10, 2016 by 12 p.m.	Deadline to Submit Application
March 7, 2016	Applicant Notification
March 21 to April 29, 2016*	Proposed Scope of Work/Budget Development Period*
May 18, 2016	Proposed Awards Presented to the Commission for Approval
July 1, 2016	Contract Start Date

\*Agencies recommended for funding consideration by the Commission will be required to participate in meetings with F5FC staff to develop the proposed scope of work and budget, and therefore must be available during these dates.

## 8. Submission Requirements:

- A. Letter of Intent - Attachment A:** A Letter of Intent (LOI) is required of all prospective agencies submitting an application. Failure to submit a LOI will result in ineligibility for funding. Please use Attachment A as the template for the organization's LOI. The LOI must be signed by an authorized agency representative and include a brief description of the organization and the proposed services. The LOI must be received by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, January 27, 2016. Please submit the LOI electronically to the e-mail address: [funding@first5fresno.org](mailto:funding@first5fresno.org) with the subject line: "Letter of Intent – RFA – T&TA Hub."
- B. Application Cover Page - Attachment B:** Identify the contact person for the application, their address, telephone and e-mail. An agency representative authorized to bind the organization/agency to the terms of the application must sign the Application Cover Page.
- C. Application Checklist - Attachment C:** The items included on the checklist are required to be submitted as part of the application and must be presented in the order noted. If any of the items are omitted from the application, the application will be considered incomplete and out of compliance with this RFA and will not be reviewed. Complete the attached application checklist to ensure all application attachments and required components are included.



**D. Narrative (75 total points):** A narrative description of the proposed project is required. The narrative, excluding attachments, must not exceed **12** single-sided, typewritten pages. All portions of the narrative must be double-spaced, in no smaller than 11-point Arial font, and have consecutively numbered pages. Please label each new section with applicable bolded headers listed below beginning with **Capability**.

➤ **Capability (10 points - two-page maximum):** Summarize the organization's mission, strengths and experience as they align with the proposed program and target population, as well as the administrative capability to manage grant funds.

- Please include the strengths and experience of the lead agency and subcontractors and the history of the collaboration as applicable. Please identify the unique roles of each agency as they relate to the proposed program.

➤ **Program Design and Implementation (25 points - five-page maximum):** Describe the proposed coaching and assessment system. What is the proposal to provide QRIS aligned coaching, technical assistance and/or assessments to early childhood educators to improve the quality of early care and education in Fresno County? Be sure to clearly address the structure, approach to implementation and planned activities. Please note how the proposed implementation is in alignment with the guidelines detailed in this document. These activities should correspond to the activities that would be included in a scope of work. In addition, briefly describe the following:

- What QRIS element(s) or pathway(s) the proposed coaching will address.
- Who the proposed subcontractors are and their role(s) in the coaching and assessment model.
- The target population, including their unique characteristics, such as: type of early childhood education provider, ethnicity, geographic location, and their need for the proposed services. Be sure to include the estimated unduplicated number of individuals and sites to be served during the two-year period.
- How prospective participants will be identified and linked to the proposed services.
- A timeline for the planning, start-up and implementation of the services. If the application is for the enhancement of an existing program, the timeline should show when the new components will be implemented.
- How success will be measured (what outcomes will be achieved) and the use of data collected to enhance and improve programs.

➤ **Staffing (10 points - two-page maximum):** Provide a brief summary of each job description and primary responsibilities of each position. In addition, briefly describe the following:

- Staff (including subcontractor) qualifications for providing the proposed coaching topics/elements and/or assessments.

- How project services, activities and data collection will be supervised.
  - Protocols that will be followed to monitor participant outcomes.
  - The plan to train staff and ongoing in-service education.
- **Description of Collaborative Planning Process (10 points – one-page maximum):** Describe the process utilized to develop this application. The description should include the involvement and collaboration of agencies and partners and how the proposed program will align and integrate with current county quality improvement efforts. Clearly describe how linkages will be made with other organizations in the community to ensure a unified system.
- **Fiscal Management and Controls (10 points – one-page maximum):** Describe the agency's fiscal management experience, including experience administering grants, and discuss the fiscal controls that will be used for this project. In addition, please provide:
- A brief description of the agency's accounting systems, including payroll and ledger systems for receivables, payables, expenses and disbursements.
  - Annual revenue for the agency. Provide a description of each of the funding sources and list the amounts to each source.
- **Data Management and Quality Controls (10 points – one-page maximum):** Describe the current data management system utilized by the agency.
- Describe the quality controls that have been implemented in the agency to ensure data quality and integrity.
  - Describe how data will be shared and utilized to advance quality improvement efforts countywide.
- E. Budget - Attachment D (25 points):** Complete the relevant sections of the Budget Template using the instructions from Attachment D.
- 9. Review for Compliance with Mandatory RFA Requirements:**

Applications will be date and time-stamped upon receipt at the F5FC office. Each application received by the deadline will be reviewed for compliance with the requirements and guidelines provided in this document. Applications that do not comply with the requirements and guidelines will be considered non-responsive and excluded from the review. Omission of any required document or form, failure to use required formats for response, or failure to respond to any requirement, may lead to rejecting the application prior to the formal review. The Commission reserves the right to reject any and all applications and to waive any informalities or irregularities.

## **10. Review Process:**

A Community Review Committee will evaluate and score each application that complies with the purpose and requirements of this RFA using a scale of 0 to 100 points. Applications receiving a score of 80 points or more may become finalists to be considered for funding. However, there is no guarantee that scoring above 80 will result in funding or funding at the level requested. The Commission reserves the right to request an interview at any time during the review process to obtain clarification on subject matter proposed by an organization. If an interview is deemed necessary, applicants will receive advance notice regarding the date, time and location.

## **11. Submission Instructions:**

The application must be submitted as stated herein. An initial review of the application will be done to determine if instructions were followed. Failure to follow the submission instructions may result in disqualification and is determined at the sole discretion of F5FC.

Applications (one [1] original and five [5] copies) shall be mailed or hand-delivered to:

High Quality Early Care and Education RFA  
First 5 Fresno County  
2405 Tulare Street, Suite 200  
Fresno, CA 93721

Use a simple clasp or staple in the upper left-hand corner to secure each copy of the application.

Applications can be mailed or hand-delivered but regardless of the postmark date, must be received by F5FC on or before **12 p.m. on February 10, 2016**. Electronic transmission either by fax or e-mail will NOT be accepted.

## **12. Notification of Decision:**

The contact person for each application, whether selected for funding or denied, will be notified in writing of the Commission's decision. All organizations, including those that are selected as finalists, will be notified by March 7, 2016 of the status of their application. Upon notification, finalist applicants will meet with Commission staff to develop a detailed scope of work, evaluation plan and budget that will be presented to the Commission's board for consideration and ultimate approval.

## **13. Procurement Protest Process:**

Upon notice by F5FC of a proposed award, any applicant may file a formal written protest regarding a potential or recent procurement by the Commission. The protest shall be filed with the Executive Director no later than forty-eight (48) hours before the day of the meeting at which the Commission is scheduled to award the subject contract. The protest shall be in writing addressed to and filed with the Executive Director and

contain the exact basis for the protest, and proof that the protester is a viable and responsible provider of the services sought. The protest should provide evidence that the award violated F5FC's procurement procedures or State law. Mere disagreement with the Commission or Executive Director's decision shall not be the basis for a successful protest.

#### **14. Confidentiality of Responses:**

F5FC cannot guarantee the confidentiality of information submitted by the organization/agency. In the event that F5FC receives a request for records or court order that F5FC reasonably determines compels its disclosure of the application, F5FC shall provide such records as it deems appropriate. All materials submitted as part of an applicant's response to this RFA become the property of F5FC.

#### **15. Important Information:**

- As of the issue date of this RFA and continuing through the public notification of the award, all F5FC staff and Commissioners are specifically directed **NOT** to hold any unscheduled meetings, conferences or technical discussions regarding this RFA with prospective service providers. "Off the record" contacts can potentially taint the Commission's decision-making process. Applicants may only submit inquiries through the [funding@first5fresno.org](mailto:funding@first5fresno.org) e-mail address in response to any matter pertaining to the RFA. Applicants are prohibited from directly contacting any other Commission staff member or any Commissioner regarding any matter directly or indirectly related to this RFA. Such prohibited contact may result in disqualification of the potential contractor's application.
- Issuance of this RFA does not constitute a commitment by the Commission to award a contract. The Commission reserves the right to reject any or all applications received in response to this RFA, or to cancel this RFA if it is in the best interest of the Commission to do so. In addition, F5FC staff reserves the right, after contract award, to amend the resulting contract as needed throughout the term of the contract to best meet the needs of all parties.
- Any contract awarded by the Commission will contain various terms and conditions that will not be negotiable, including, but not limited to, applicant's obligation to indemnify, defend, and hold the Commission harmless from and against applicant's negligence and willful actions, insurance requirements as determined by the Commission, and compliance with various Commission policies.
- No Commission funds shall be used to supplant (i.e., take the place of or replace) state or local general fund money for any purpose. This prohibition does not apply to federally funded or privately funded programs.
- All agencies/organizations funded by the Commission must abide by all the policies and guidelines stipulated in the Commission's Service Provider Manual as appropriate. The Service Provider Manual is updated annually and can be found here: [www.first5fresno.org/partners/service-providers](http://www.first5fresno.org/partners/service-providers).

- Pursuant to the Commission's Conflicts of Interest Policy and Conflicts of Interest Code, as amended, no Commissioner or designated staff may make, participate in making, or use their official position to influence the making of any governmental decision which may have a direct or indirect foreseeable material financial effect on the Commissioner or designated staff person. Therefore, no entity in which a Commissioner or designated staff person has a material financial interest may submit an application to the Commission.

Additionally, under no circumstances, may a financial dependent of a F5FC Commissioner or staff respond to this RFA. Relatives (which shall include, but not be limited to, adult children, siblings, aunts and uncles) of F5FC Commissioners or staff who are not dependents are discouraged from submitting an application.



**In the space below, provide a brief description of the agency and proposed services. (100 words or less)**

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Date

14



**ATTACHMENT B - APPLICATION COVER PAGE**  
**High Quality Early Care and Education – T&TA Hub RFA**

Organization Name:	
Address:	
Contact Person:	
Title:	
Phone:	E-mail:
Type of Organization: <input type="checkbox"/> Government Entity <input type="checkbox"/> Community-Based (501(c)3 Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe):	
Title of Program/Project:	Amount Requested:
Please provide a brief summary of the proposed program for which funding is being requested (100 words or less):	

**List and include signatures for agencies to be subcontracted through this RFA:**

Organization Name #1:	Subcontract amount:
Contact Person:	Title:
Phone:	
E-mail:	
Role as Subcontractor:	
Signature of Authorized Representative:	Date:







**ATTACHMENT C – APPLICATION CHECKLIST**  
**High Quality Early Care and Education – T&TA Hub RFA**

The following attachments and components must be completed and submitted in the order shown here. Applications which are missing any of these attachments or components will be considered non-compliant and will not be reviewed.

<b>Attachments and Components:</b>	<b>Checkmark ( √ )</b>
One (1) Original Application	<input type="checkbox"/>
Five (5) Copies of the Application	<input type="checkbox"/>
Application Cover Page (Attachment B)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Application Checklist (Attachment C)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Narrative Section (not to exceed 12 pages)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Budget Form (Per Budget Instructions, Attachment D)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Audited Financials or Internal Financial Statements*	<input type="checkbox"/>
W-9 Form or IRS Tax Exempt Letter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organizational Chart	<input type="checkbox"/>

\*If organization's gross receipts from the previous fiscal year are \$500,000 or more, audited financial statements are required. (Note: Gross receipts total can be found on Form 990, line G or Form 990EZ, line L). If gross receipts from previous fiscal year are less than \$500,000, please submit most recent board reviewed internal financial statements, including balance sheet and income statement.



## ATTACHMENT D – BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS

### High Quality Early Care and Education – T&TA Hub RFA

**Please complete the attached budget template for the proposed program/services (30 Points).** The budget form consists of two sections Year 1 (07/01/16 – 06/30/17), and Year 2 (07/01/17 – 06/30/18). The budget is a summary of expenses for the program to operate. The requested expenses must be reasonable, necessary and suitable for the proposed service activities. Calculate and insert costs for the approved budget categories described below. If a category does not apply, simply insert a zero (0) in that category. Only use whole numbers and round to the nearest dollar.

#### **I. Personnel:**

Salaries: Include job title, FTE, role and amount of all F5FC funded positions needed to successfully implement the services including all personnel costs such as benefits and taxes.

#### **II. Operating Expenses:**

Expenses: Include facility costs (e.g. Building rent, maintenance, utilities, telephone) that are direct costs to the project; and/or Operational/Supplies (e.g. Leases, equipment maintenance, office supplies, printing, advertising, etc.) that directly supports the staff.

#### **III. Program Expenses:**

Enter all items that support the proposed service activities including a description and cost. Examples include but are not limited to healthy snacks, books, room rental fees, and travel costs associated with the successful implementation of the proposed service activities.

#### **IV. Professional Services:**

Costs of professional and consultant services rendered by persons who are members of a particular profession or possess a special skill, and who are not officers or employees of the organization, are allowable (e.g. interpreters).

#### **V. Indirect:**

Indirect costs refer to expenses that cannot be readily assigned to one specific program or one specific line item within a program, or those expenses that are purely administrative functions. The indirect rate must not exceed 15% of all program costs.

#### **VI. Other Funding:**

F5FC requires that agencies allocate a portion (10% at minimum) of their existing revenue and resources to support the activities in this RFA. Other funding includes additional resources and/or funds that are directly supporting the service activities at no cost to the agency/program. Examples may include staffing, volunteers, facilities, supplies and services.

Click [here](#) to download the Budget Template.