



To: Commissioners, First 5 Ventura County

From: Sam McCoy, Director of Program and Evaluation

Date: October 22, 2020

Re: Recommendation to Approve Selected Contractor to Develop Evaluation Plan

Background

The California Children and Families First Act requires outcome-based accountability and evaluation from local commissions. The Commission periodically releases Requests for Proposals (RFP) for evaluation services to assess the impact of First 5 Ventura County investments on young children and their families. Most recently, F5VC contracted with Social Policy Research (SPR) and EVALCORP to conduct the annual evaluation of services and programs.

In May of 2020, the Commission adopted a two-year extension of its current Strategic Plan through FY 2020-22. This will allow the Commission to evaluate the changes made to investments in years four and five prior to determining any potential changes in future years. The recently adopted strategic plan includes a high-level desired outcome framework to guide data collection and analysis for the Commission's Strategic Direction and Priorities. As part of next steps, F5VC will need to work with a consultant on developing a detailed evaluation plan and refine indicators.

In August 2020, an RFP for evaluation consulting services was publicly released with distribution through e-mail, social media, a legal notice posted in the newspaper, and the bidding opportunity posted on the Commission's website. On September 3rd, F5VC staff held a virtual Voluntary Applicants Conference to address any questions and inquiries. Six proposals were received within the required timeline. The Commission's procurement procedures for selecting vendors call for 2 staff members and at least 1 external reviewer with expertise in the subject matter. Proposals were independently reviewed and rated by 4 staff members and 1 external community member without a conflict of interest. A review committee met in October to discuss the proposals and formulate a funding recommendation for the Commission.

Of the six proposals submitted, two entities were selected by the review panel for consideration based on score, completeness of the proposal, subject matter expertise, experience, and approach to carrying out the scope of work. After conducting interviews with the two finalists, the review committee recommended to select Applied Survey Research (ASR) for their substantial and diverse First 5 commission evaluation experience and related projects.

Founded in 1980, ASR is a nonprofit social research firm whose mission is to conduct research that helps people build better communities. For over 40 years, ASR has provided research services such as community needs assessments, strategic planning, program design, and program evaluation to a wide range of partners, including federal, state, county and city

government agencies, foundations, non-profit organizations, and countywide coalitions. ASR's experience includes consultation on over 130 First 5 projects across 17 counties providing practical and creative approaches for setting up strategic evaluation frameworks, and leading or guiding the implementation of such frameworks.

Upon Commission approval, ASR will work with F5VC staff to develop an evaluation plan and framework, including a data collection and reporting template that will 1) assess and guide current investment strategies and systems change/policy/advocacy efforts 2) identify areas to measure and strengthen the broader local early childhood system. Additionally, ASR will develop recommendations for incorporating external data sources such as community need, and stakeholder input to guide the future strategic direction and priorities of the Commission.

Recommendation

The recommended action is to select Applied Survey Research (ASR) as the contractor to develop an evaluation plan, including a data collection and reporting template, for First 5 Ventura County's FY 2020-2022 strategic investments. The contract would be for an amount not to exceed \$50,000 for FY 2020-21.