



REQUEST FOR LETTER OF INTEREST

First 5 Ventura County is currently soliciting Letters of Interest to identify qualified entities to support and implement a two year Child Care Management Software Pilot, beginning on or around April 1, 2021.

To be considered, a Letter of Interest must be received **by 5:00 pm on Friday, January 11, 2021** via email to: assistant@first5ventura.org. Late responses will not be considered.

Background

Family child care (FCC) is child care that is offered in a provider's home. Working parents often prefer FCCs due to their mixed age setting, affordability, and more flexible hours. Critically, FCCs are often the only option available for families with infants and toddlers. While there are 18,688 children under the age of 2 in Ventura County, in 2019, there were only 849 spaces at licensed childcare centers for the same age group¹. By contrast, there were 5,704 mixed age spaces at FCCs¹. Without FCCs, parents of infants and toddlers might not be able to return to the workforce.

Unfortunately, nationally and locally, FCCs are leaving the field at high rates. There is a notable downward trend in the availability of FCCs in our community. Between 2014 and 2019, there was a 20% decline in FCCs, which meant a loss of 1,400 mixed age spaces in Ventura County¹. This has matched a statewide trend. Even more FCCs have closed in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In surveys of FCCs from the California Resource & Referral Network, providers report economic factors as the primary reasons they choose to leave the childcare field, including low or unpredictable income and no benefits. Hours of operation for a family child care home can often exceed center-based programs- FCC providers may spend 50–60 hours per week caring for children. When FCC providers are not directly caring for children, they spend additional hours on business related tasks, such as banking, grocery shopping, and cleaning the family child care environment. Low rates, coupled with long hours, often result in FCC providers being unable to maintain a livable wage.

Without being able to increase their revenue, it is predicted more FCCs will leave the field, increasing the gap of childcare options for workers with young children. As a result, a new emphasis is being placed on strengthening the fragile business model of FCCs.

Revenue for FCCs is contingent on the “Iron Triangle” of financing:

1. Full Enrollment
2. Full Collection of Family Fees
3. Appropriate Tuition- Revenues Cover Costs

¹California Resource & Referral Network, Annual California Child Care Portfolio

There is a growing utilization of technology platforms that address each facet of the Iron Triangle. A variety of new Child Care Management Software have entered the marketplace designed to automate business processes, particularly enrollment and tuition collection. Analysis of these platforms demonstrates significant costs savings for the FCC user, increasing their annual revenue. Increased utilization of these systems could result in less providers leaving the childcare field, which would be game changing for the FCC community of Ventura County.

Nature of Services Required

First 5 Ventura County is seeking an established Child Care Management Software (CCMS) vendor to implement a two-year pilot project that provides access for up to 20 FCCs in year 1, plus an additional 20 FCCs in year 2. We are seeking a CCMS vendor whose technology platform has been successfully utilized with FCCs and provides features, including but not limited to:

- Automated billing
- Marketing: online scheduling of tours; photos/information/reviews about the FCC; in-time vacancies tracked and available to the public
- Enrollment: Online enrollment; Waitlist management
- Attendance tracking: Automated check-in; Tracking of hours, absences, withdrawals
- Accounting: Time tracking (for taxes); Receipt management; Integration with Quickbooks
- Robust technical support so system benefits are fully maximized
- Community of Practice and/or other professional development trainings that address both the CCMS as well as other topics of relevance to providers (including business and pedagogical supports)
- Assistance with tax preparation
- Assistance with processing subsidy payments and participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

First 5 Ventura County would cover the costs of participating FCCs' CCMS accounts. As an investor, it is critical for F5VC to monitor uptake and use of the platform. Therefore, the chosen vendor is required to offer an "enterprise" account that allows third party access to the CCMS. With an enterprise account, F5VC will track data across all pilot sites (such as utilization rates, enrollment trends, cost savings realized) for data driven decision-making and an annual evaluation of the success of the pilot. Ideally, the CCMS vendor will provide a dashboard for ease of frequent data analysis.

Vendor will work closely with F5VC on marketing the platform to FCCs, including a focus on recruitment in high need areas as well as to FCCs participating in Ventura County's Quality Rating & Improvement System initiative (QRIS). F5VC will retain decision-making authority on which FCCs receive a F5VC prepaid account.

Summary of Desired Qualifications and Experience

- Proven experience as a CCMS vendor specifically with FCCs.
- Prior experience working with funders/third party partners and offering an enterprise account to allow for transparency and data tracking.
- Knowledge of family childcare business model, including subsidy.
- Ability to enter into a contract with First 5 Ventura County and implement the Scope of Work as defined in this Request for a Letter of Interest on or about April 1, 2020.

- Ability to comply with First 5 Ventura County's contract provisions, policy on funding faith-based organizations, and Principles on Equity.
- Must have sufficient working capital to meet the fiscal demands of the contract.

First 5 Ventura County will determine whether one or more entities with appropriate qualifications are interested in implementing the scope of work relative to administering the CCMS Pilot.

Depending on the response to the Request for a Letter of Interest, First 5 Ventura County may develop and release a Request for Proposals OR develop a sole source agreement. The selection process is based on the Commission's procurement policies and procedures.



**LETTER OF INTEREST
Child Care Management Software Pilot**

Applicant Agency Name:			
Address, City, Zip Code:			
Contact Person:			
Contact E-Mail Address:			
Contact Phone:			
Year Agency Founded:		Total Organizational Budget for Current Year:	\$

In no more than two pages, describe your qualifications and your experience implementing and managing services similar to those described in this Letter of Interest. Include a broad description of your overall approach to implementing the scope of work. Also include your typical yearly user cost as well as a projected cost to First 5 Ventura County to implement the pilot as described above.

As the authorized signatory for the entity submitting this letter, I acknowledge our interest in administering the FY 2021-23 First 5 Ventura County Child Care Management Software (CCMS) Pilot for Family Childcare Providers.

Authorized Signature	Name and Title

Please submit to assistant@first5ventura.org by **5:00 pm on Friday, January 11, 2021.**
Late responses will not be considered.