

General Mini-Grants Program



**2010-2011
Guidelines & Application**

GENERAL MINI-GRANTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION

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I. TIMELINE

Due Date for Applications

Applications are due:

Cycle I: 4:00 PM, Wednesday, September 15, 2010

Cycle II: 4:00 PM, Friday, January 14, 2011

Late applications will not be accepted. Refer to full submission requirements detailed in this document.

General Mini-Grants Program Technical Assistance (TA)

One-on-one TA will be available upon request throughout the year on a continuous basis. Contact First 5 Merced County at (209) 385-7337 ext. 4921 or by e-mail at jmoua@co.merced.ca.us

II. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

It is the intent of the General Mini-Grants to provide Proposition 10 funding through an application process to fund **one-time** grants and encourage community participation and development of projects that address First 5 Merced County's vision and mission. Awards start at a minimum of \$250.00 up to \$3,000.00 that will improve the lives of children ages 0-5 years and their families in Merced County. The primary goal for Fiscal Year 2010-11 is to fund community agencies/members for local, community-driven projects or events that benefit children ages 0-5 years and their families in Merced County. The Commission established objectives and funding priorities in its Strategic Plan that specifically relate to children 0-5 years in Merced County. This application process is designed to encourage and involve members of the community to build upon existing community resources that are consistent with the goals and strategies articulated in the Strategic Plan, and serve to enhance, not supplant, current sources of funding. For a copy of the Commission's Strategic Plan please contact First 5 Merced County at 209.385.7337, or access it at www.first5mercedcounty.org

First 5 Merced County's Vision Statement

All children in Merced County will thrive in supportive, loving and nurturing environments, enter school healthy and ready to learn and become productive, well-adjusted members of society.

First 5 Merced County's Mission Statement

To provide for the optimal, physical, emotional and intellectual growth of the young children of Merced County.

III. MINI-GRANT ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

A. Application Eligibility Criteria

First 5 Merced County will consider programs and/or services proposed by any organization or entity that is registered as a non-profit agency, a government unit, or a for-profit business or licensee that provides or intends to provide services to the target population. The primary target population for this funding program is defined as children from the prenatal stage through age five and their parents and caregivers. Proposed projects should be limited duration service efforts, events, and/or activities aimed at enhancing the well-being of children 0-5 years and their families.

Funding requests that are eligible for consideration include, but are not limited to:

- One-time events for children and families
- Development of training programs and/or enrollment in appropriate training opportunities
- Technical assistance and/or workshops
- Community fairs and neighborhood outreach to increase access to resources available for young children and their families

- Development of cross-system policies and procedures to improve service delivery
- Purchase of educational materials and supplies

Funding requests that are NOT eligible include, but are not limited to:

- Requests supporting family child care providers
- Activities supported financially by First 5 funding through any other First 5 funding mechanism
- Purchasing equipment or upgrading preschool playground
- Giving away free groceries to needy families
- Fundraising
- Starting a new preschool
- Staffing cost for ongoing salaried positions
- * Capital project or improvements

* Capital projects and improvements are defined as any improvements to one's property such as construction, additions, alterations and/or modifications that may increase the value of that property.

First 5 Mini-Grant funds are intended to support only those costs that are directly associated with the proposed limited term activities. Funds are NOT eligible to support ongoing operational expenses that would otherwise be incurred by the requesting agency.

B. Availability of Funds

The Mini-Grants Program will provide one-time grants for a minimum of \$250.00 up to \$3,000.00 depending upon the scope of the proposed project. The Commission plans to award approximately \$30,000.00 for fiscal year 2010-2011 to be distributed among funded general Mini-Grant Projects. Applicants may only be awarded one grant per fiscal year, and only one grant award may be open with any recipient at any given time. No single program or service provider may receive more than \$3,000.00 in total funding from the Mini-Grant funding mechanism in any one fiscal year.

Mini-Grant funding may not be used to supplant state or local money or to fund existing levels of service. Funds awarded through this funding mechanism must be expended by June 30, 2011.

C. Contact Information

All questions concerning the General Mini-Grant Programs of First 5 Merced County are to be directed to the official contact person:

James Moua
 First 5 Merced County
 676 Loughborough Drive
 Merced, CA 95348

Phone: (209) 385-7337
Email – jmoua@co.merced.ca.us

D. Application Process

To apply for a General Mini-Grant, review and complete all of the documents provided in the Attachments. The application may be typed or neatly handwritten in either English or Spanish. An electronic version of the application can be accessed on our website: www.first5mercedcounty.org.

1. A complete application must include the following:
 - Attachment A: Application Cover Sheet
 - Attachment B: Project Narrative
 - Attachment C: Budget Form
 - Attachment D: Signed copy of Agreements and Certifications
 - Policy on Tobacco Free Environment
2. A complete application must arrive by mail or be hand delivered before 4:00 PM on each cycle's due date. Applications, regardless of postmark or circumstance, received after the application submission deadline will not be considered. Emailed or faxed applications will **not** be accepted.
3. Submit an original and four copies of the complete application to:
First 5 Merced County
ATTN: General Mini-Grants Program
676 Loughborough Drive
Merced, CA 95348

E. Application Review and Selection

All submitted applications will be evaluated and rated by First 5 Merced County staff then forwarded to the First 5 Merced County Commission for final consideration. A total of 100 points may be awarded, according to the following criteria:

Applications will be reviewed on a 100-point scale based on the following information:

- **Prior First 5 Funding** - Applicant has not been funded under the General Mini-Grants Program within 12 months of release of this document. (15 points)
- **Benefiting Kids Directly** - The overall need of the county and whether the project is directly servicing children 0-5 and their families. (15 points)
- **Project Plan** - Proposal is clear and comprehensible with a realistic timeline; project activities are well-defined and technically feasible, and/or within the funding categories described in the application. (30 points)
- **Outcomes/Impact** - Objectives are clearly stated, specific, realistic, measurable, and are consistent with First's vision and mission. The extent of contribution to promoting the development and support of

young children and their families in Merced County this project holds. (20 points)

- **Organizational Capacity** – Applicant is qualified to implement project and achieve stated objectives. (10 points)
- **Financial Viability** - Applicant demonstrates other sources of funding for the project, provides a sound budget, and clearly states how Commission funding is supporting not completely funding the proposed project/event. (10 points)

The Commission may request additional information from an applicant in the event that information in the application needs clarification. The Commission may waive any immaterial deviation or defect in an application. Any waiver of an immaterial deviation or defect by the Commission shall in no way modify this General Mini-Grants Program Guidelines and Application document, or relieve the successful applicant from full compliance with the grant terms in the Agreement if a grant is awarded.

Applications may be recommended for full or partial funding.

F. Notification

Applicants will be notified within 10 business days of the Commission’s action to award funds (or not) for submitted applications. The Commission reserves the right to reject any and all applications and to waive informalities and irregularities.

G. Appeals Process

Applicants that are not accepted for funding may appeal the Commission’s decision in writing. The Executive Director must receive written appeals within 30 days from the date of the Commission’s vote. Appeals will only be accepted based on a violation of law, rule, regulation, or terms of this document. Mere disagreement with the decision of the Commission is not grounds for appeal. The Commission is the sole and final authority regarding the approval or disapproval of applications and the conditions under which they are funded. The Commission will review accepted appeals at the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting.

All appeals must be made in writing, dated, signed by the Applicant or an individual authorized to sign contracts on behalf of the protesting Applicant, and contain a statement of the reason(s) for protest; citing the law(s), rule(s), and regulation(s) on which the protest is based. Such appeals may be sent either by U.S. mail, postage paid, or hand delivered to:

First 5 Merced County
ATTN: Executive Director
676 Loughborough Drive
Merced, CA 95348

IV. Expectations for Successful Applicants

A. Award of Contract

Upon approval of a project for funding by the Commission, the successful applicant organization or entity will be required to enter into a performance based contractual agreement with First 5 Merced County.

Successful projects will be required to participate in the Commission's evaluation program, providing required information as detailed in their contractual agreement. Additional evaluation opportunities may be available to successful Applicants on a voluntary basis to build their program evaluation capacity and participate in further evaluation.

Projects will be required to submit receipts for all expenses as submitted in their project budget. A copy of a financial audit or CPA review of the funded project may be requested within the contractual agreement, to be determined on an individual project basis.

B. Funding Restrictions

Funds will be disbursed to successful Applicants in the manner specified in their contractual agreement. Approved funds must be used in the current contract year.

C. Notice Regarding Merced County Contract Requirements

First 5 Merced County utilizes the administrative structure, policies and procedures of the County to distribute Proposition 10 funds in Merced County. Upon approval of funding by the First 5 Commission, the successful applicant organization or entity will be required to enter into a performance based contract agreement with Merced County on behalf of First 5 Merced County. A Draft Mini-Grants Program Agreement is provided in the Attachments section to provide applicants an understanding of likely contract conditions.