



**Request for Resources (RFR) 2014-2015
Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)
Quality Early Learning Initiative (QELI)**

First 5 Santa Cruz County invites programs participating in Santa Cruz County's QELI Consortium to request resources that will support their participation in RTT-ELC quality improvement activities during the period of July 2014 through June 2015. This is the second funding cycle for the grant. An additional Request for Resources may be issued for future QELI Consortium participants through December 2015.

The Commission has allocated up to \$150,000 for the period July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2015.

Timeline

Proposals Due to First 5	June 9, 2014
Review Committee	by June 13, 2014
Contractor Interviews (If needed)	by June 16, 2014
Final Selection / Notification of Intent to Fund	June 18, 2014
Commission approval for RFR's \$20,000 +	June 25, 2014
Anticipated Grant Start	July 1, 2014

All dates of the proposal review process are subject to change. If a significant date is changed, all known recipients of the original RFR will be notified of the new date.

**First 5 Santa Cruz County
PO Box 1457
Capitola, CA 95010
Telephone: (831) 465-2217**



**Request for Resources:
2014-2015 Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge**

Background

The purpose of the California Children and Families First Act of 1998 (Proposition 10) is to create and implement a comprehensive, integrated system of information and services to promote, support, and optimize early childhood development and school readiness. Under the Act, each county is charged with the development of a comprehensive strategic plan guiding services and supports for children from prenatal to age five (0-5) and their parents and caregivers. In June 2012, First 5 Santa Cruz County adopted its new strategic plan, which describes the Commission's priorities and funding allocations for 2012-2015. For a copy of the strategic plan, visit our web site at www.first5scc.org.

In 2012, California received a highly competitive Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) federal grant to improve the quality of early learning programs and close the achievement gap for vulnerable young children. Over a four year period ending December 31, 2015, California, led by local efforts in 16 counties in collaboration with the California Department of Education, will work together to ensure positive outcomes for the state's infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

The end goal of California's RTT-ELC effort is that young children, particularly those who are low-income, English learners, or children with disabilities or developmental delays have access to high-quality early learning programs so that they thrive in their early learning settings and succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

The state will receive \$75 million, largely to build a new child-care rating system that measures learning environments, teaching practices, child health promotion, program leadership and parent involvement. The 16 counties will receive approximately \$63 million over four years to implement a quality rating, public awareness and data system to increase the quality of child care in local communities. The California Department of Education (CDE) has designated First 5 of Santa Cruz County as the lead agency for the county. Santa Cruz County will receive \$1,133,645 through 12/31/15, of which \$50,000 was allocated for planning.

For questions regarding this Request for Resources, contact Vicki Boriack in writing until June 5, 2014, at: vboriack@first5scc.org. Answers will be posted on the First 5 Santa Cruz County website at www.first5scc.org within 1-2 business days.

**Request for Resources:
2014-2015 Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge**

Overview

In May 2012, First 5 Santa Cruz County issued an Invitation to Participate / Funding Applications for local implementation of RTT-ELC. This also included a Self-Assessment for each classroom that was based on the then-current Block Quality Rating System. Forty three sites made preliminary commitments to participate in RTT-ELC through December 31, 2015.

In January 2013, the Santa Cruz County QELI Consortium adopted the Hybrid Quality Continuum Framework and Tiers. Our Consortium is using the three state-approved common tiers as the foundation for our Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS). The scoring methodology will follow a hybrid system whereby a site would need to meet all the requirements of the lowest tier (Tier 1) to receive a rating and would be eligible to advance to higher tiers based on a point system. The Bay Area Consortium of RTT regions have agreed to implement a Bay Area Regional Tier 2 and Tier 5 based on the state's hybrid system.

The Hybrid Quality Continuum Framework and Tiers contains seven (7) elements, as follows:

1. Child Observation
2. Developmental and Health Screenings
3. Early Childhood Educator Qualifications
4. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions
5. Licensing and Regulatory Requirements
6. Program Administration and Leadership: Environment Rating Scale(s)
7. Program Administration and Leadership: Director Qualifications

Since the hybrid rating system represents a significant change from the prior block rating system, RTT-ELC programs were asked to complete a "Preliminary Assessment" of their sites using the Hybrid Quality Continuum Framework and Tiers. Based upon the results of the preliminary assessments and the desire to proceed with activities that will have a meaningful impact on quality improvement and ratings as soon as possible, First 5 Santa Cruz County has selected the following three (3) Elements from the Quality Continuum Framework that are Eligible for Funding during the pilot period of July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015:

Element 2: Developmental & Health Screenings

Rationale for Funding This Element

Most Santa Cruz County RTT-ELC programs report meeting Title 22 regulations by requiring a health screening form at entry (Tier 1). Some but not all of these programs also re-enroll children each year, and thereby require the health screening form annually (Tier 2). To increase quality in this element, our local RTT-ELC Action Plan includes a recommendation for all programs to require a

health screening form annually and also screen all children using the ASQ at entry and as indicated by results (Tier 4) and the ASQ-SE if indicated then use those results to implement intervention strategies and adaptations as appropriate (Tier 5)

System-wide Investments to Support Quality Improvement in This Element

The California Department of Education (CDE) has provided ASQ and ASQ-SE kits and a regional Train the Trainer workshop. 7 local participants attended the regional training and may be available to RTT programs.

First 5 Santa Cruz County will provide training, coaching and mentoring for RTT-ELC program staff who will be using the ASQ and ASQ-SE.

Program-Level Investments to Support Quality Improvement in This Element

RTT-ELC programs are invited to apply for resources that will support their movement to a higher tier in this Element during this funding period.

Element 4: Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: CLASS Assessments

Rationale for Funding This Element

Most Santa Cruz County RTT-ELC programs reported in their self-assessment that their program staff are not familiar with the Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (CLASS™) (Tier 2). To improve quality in this element, our local RTT-ELC Action Plan includes a recommendation to provide programs with a 2-hour Overview training of CLASS, a 4 hour Looking At Classrooms (LAC) training, and subsequent independent assessment by a reliable observer to inform the program's professional development/improvement plan (Tier 3).

System-wide Investments to Support Quality Improvement in This Element

First 5 Santa Cruz County will provide training, coaching and mentoring for RTT-ELC program staff who will be using the CLASS. **Note:** All RTT programs that are also participating in CSP-2 received a 2-hour Overview training of CLASS, a 4 hour Looking At Classrooms (LAC) training in FY 12-13.

Program-Level Investments to Support Quality Improvement in This Element

RTT-ELC programs are invited to apply for resources that will support their movement toward a higher tier in this Element during this funding period

Element 6: Program Administration and Leadership: Environmental Rating Scale(s) (ERS)

Rationale for Funding This Element

Most Santa Cruz County RTT-ELC programs report that their staff and programs are familiar with ERS and that every classroom uses ERS as a part of a Quality Improvement Plan (Tier 2). However few programs have had the means to hire an independent ERS assessor (Tier 3). Therefore, to improve quality in this element, our local RTT-ELC Action Plan includes a recommendation to provide programs with an independent assessment by a reliable ERS observer, including the creation of an improvement plan.

System-wide Investments to Support Quality Improvement in This Element

For those programs or staff that are not currently familiar with ERS, CDE is providing free 2-hour ERS overviews (ECERS for pre-K programs, and ITERS for infant/toddler programs).

First 5 Santa Cruz County has set aside RTT-ELC funds to pay for independent assessors, in FY 2014-15.

Program-Level Investments to Support Quality Improvement in This Element

RTT-ELC programs are invited to apply for resources that will support their movement toward a higher tier in this Element during this funding period.

RTT-ELC Pilot Program Budget and Scope of Work to June 30, 2015

First 5 Santa Cruz County has allocated \$150,000 for Program-Level Investments to support Quality Improvement through June 2015. Based on availability of funds, applicants may request up to \$3500 per classroom teaching team with a minimum of \$5,000 available to single site programs*. The actual amount awarded could be more or less depending on the specific needs, who chooses to participate and the responses to this RFR. See table below for the maximum funds available per program.

Name of Program	Number of Sites	Number of teaching teams	Allocation per teaching team	Maximum RFR request
Cabrillo College	1	2	\$3,500	\$7,000
Campus Kids Connection*	1	1	\$5,000	\$5,000
Community Bridges	6	9	\$3,500	\$31,500
Encompass State Preschool	3	4	\$3,500	\$14,000
Live Oak Child Development	3	4	\$3,500	\$14,000
Pacific Preschool*	1	1	\$5,000	\$5,000
Pajaro Valley USD	12	13	\$3,500	\$45,500
UCSC	2	3	\$3,500	\$10,500
Walnut Ave Women's Center	2	3	\$3,500	\$10,500
YWCA	1	2	\$3,500	\$7,000
Head Start	12	14		Not requesting resources

Please review the results from your baseline rating in December 2013 and identify your top three priorities for improving quality in the elements that are eligible for funding during this cycle. Your top three priorities may be related to a single element or multiple elements. They may also involve a single site or multiple sites.

Top 3 Priorities for advancement during this funding cycle

Element Choose from Element 2, 4 and/or 6	Goal What growth or changes do you want to focus on in this funding period?	Outcome What will be the <i>result</i> of the growth or changes by June 2015?	Site Which site(s) will be involved?
1.			
2.			
3.			

Proposal Narrative

For each priority listed above, please describe the following in detail.

- What is your rationale in choosing this as a priority?
- What will you need to do and/or provide to prepare your site to meet this Goal and achieve this Outcome by June 2015? What is your anticipated timeline for taking these steps?
- How will you ensure the results of these preparatory steps are integrated into your program long-term?
- What resources would help you to achieve this Goal and Outcome? (Resources can be anything from release time, stipends, and materials, etc.)
- What is your proposed budget for these resources?

Please use the following table to outline your budget for each priority.

Resource	Amount	Timeline	Site

Total Amount Requested for this Priority: \$ _____

Funding Decisions

The Commission reserves the right to fund one contractor, multiple contractors, or no contractors in this funding category.

Contractors will be required to provide brief biannual progress reports to First 5 and to coordinate with Commission staff, evaluators, and other partners, as requested.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a contract with, and provide required insurance endorsements to, the First 5 Santa Cruz County Commission.

Proposal Submittal Process

Interested parties must submit one electronic copy by email to Barbara Dana at bdana@first5scc.org and one original hard copy enclosed in a sealed envelope or package and clearly marked "RTT-ELC RFR" by **June 9, 2014 by 4:00PM**

Written proposals are to be submitted to the following address:

**First 5 Santa Cruz County
PO Box 1457
Capitola, CA 95010
Attention: RTT-ELC RFR**

No proposals, modifications or corrections will be accepted after the deadline.

This RFR and required forms are available at www.first5scc.org.

Proposal Review

First 5 Santa Cruz County will establish a Proposal Review Committee to evaluate all proposals. Independent, non-conflicted reviewers with particular subject matter expertise will be invited to assist in the evaluation of proposals, at the sole discretion of the Commission. Potential contractors or persons affiliated with applicant organizations are not eligible to serve as reviewers for such proposals. Participants on the Proposal Review Committee may not respond and may not assist others in responding to this RFR. Funding requests for \$20,000 or more will require authorization from the First 5 Santa Cruz County Commission prior to execution of the contract.

There is no guarantee that submission of a proposal will result in funding, or that funding will be allocated at the level requested. The Commission reserves the right to fund one contract, multiple contracts, or none.

Interviews

The Review Committee may, at its sole discretion, select applicants for interviews. In that event, interviews, which may be in person or by phone or internet connection, will take place by June 16, 2014.

Waiver of Immaterial Defect

The Commission may waive any immaterial deviation in any proposal. The determination as to whether a defect or deviation is material or immaterial shall be made by the Commission in its sole discretion. The waiver of any immaterial defect(s) shall not excuse a proposal from full compliance with the contract terms if a contract is awarded.

Appeals Process

Applicants will be notified of the Commission's selection following the Commission meeting in which a decision is made. Notification will be made by posting a Notice of Intent to Award at the Commission's offices at 4450 Capitola Rd, Capitola, CA 95010, and by sending that notice to all applicants. Individuals, agencies and/or organizations not selected for funding have the right to file an appeal if they believe that a significant material error occurred in the proposal evaluation and/or selection process that had a negative effect on their consideration for funding. The following rules apply to the appeals process:

Appeals will only be accepted from organizations or government entities that submitted proposals for funding. No third party complaints will be considered. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the First 5 Santa Cruz County Commission at the address printed on page seven of this document, before 5:00 p.m. on the fifth (5th) business day following notification.

The appeal must describe the specific alleged violation of process or procedure that serves as the basis for appeal.

The appeal must include the name, address, and telephone number of the person representing the agency or organization that is making the appeal. Commission staff will issue a final decision within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal.

**First 5 Santa Cruz County Commission
Request For Proposals:
2014-2015 Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge
Cover Sheet**



- I am submitting a Request for Resources for the period of July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015
- I will continue to participate in Race to the Top on behalf of my program, but will not be submitting a Request for Resources at this time.
- I am uncertain whether I am able to continue participating in Race to the Top on behalf of my program and will not be submitting a Request for Resources.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Legal Name: _____

Director: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Fax: _____

Address: _____

Website: _____

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Contact Person: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Fax: _____

E-mail address: _____

Total Amount Requested: _____

SIGNATURE (Must be signed by an individual with the legal authority to enter into a contract with First 5 Santa Cruz County on behalf of the above agency).

Authorized Signature

Title

Date

By signing this form, I state that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, all information in this Proposal is true and correct.