



# FIRST 5 ALAMEDA COUNTY

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

### User Interface Design Services

**Application Deadline: May 12, 2025**

#### **APPLICATION INFORMATION:**

1. All five sections of the application must be completed.
2. Completed applications should be emailed to:  
Anna Miera (she/her)  
Coordinated Eligibility & Enrollment Administrator  
Email: [anna.miera@first5alameda.org](mailto:anna.miera@first5alameda.org)
3. Applications must be received by **May 12, 2025** Applications must be emailed. **WE WILL NOT ACCEPT FAXED OR MAILED COPIES.**
4. All applicants will be notified by **May 23, 2025.**

If you have any questions, please contact Anna Miera via email at [anna.miera@first5alameda.org](mailto:anna.miera@first5alameda.org)



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION .....	3
SECTION 2: BACKGROUND .....	3
SECTION 3: SCOPE OF WORK AND REQUIREMENTS.....	5
SECTION 4: TIMELINE AND FUNDING .....	8
SECTION 5: ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS .....	8
SECTION 6: PROJECT BUDGET .....	9
SECTION 7: SELECTION CRITERIA & SELECTION PROCESS.....	10
SECTION 8: OTHER INFORMATION .....	10



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## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

First 5 Alameda County's (First 5's) work is to fund, partner, administer, and advocate to create the conditions needed to ensure every child in Alameda County is prepared for kindergarten. The organization is an independent government agency funded almost exclusively by taxpayer dollars. Since 1998, we have worked collaboratively with local systems to ensure that families with young children have what they need to thrive. We help build a better future for young children through a broad network of community organizations, support for families and early childhood education providers, community investments, and data for action and advocacy.

New local measures passed by Alameda County voters like the Oakland Children's Initiative (Measure AA) and Alameda County Measure C are providing an opportunity to scale up the work of First 5. With the influx of new local resources, this moment represents a critical opportunity to call upon our systems to address structural inequities that historically have affected our communities.

**We seek design services for the development of a Coordinated Eligibility and Enrollment (CEE) system. The selected contractor is responsible for designing user experience and user interface (UI) components for the CEE system based on user research and human-centered design practices. Please review the application materials for scope of work, application instructions, and the criteria for selection.**

## SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C) was passed by Alameda County voters in March 2020. The Alameda County Board of Supervisors approved the collection of this half-percent (0.5%) sales tax beginning in Fiscal Year 2021-2022. Measure C is expected to impact thousands of children and families across Alameda County with expanded access to childcare, increases in early childhood education (ECE) workforce wages, and improvements to ECE program quality. Measure C outlines a plan to improve the efficiency and accessibility of ECE services in the County, and to streamline the administration of the program for parents and providers. For more details on this and other measures administered by First 5, visit <https://www.first5alameda.org/ballot-measures>.

The plan includes developing technology systems to improve efficiency and access to early care and education services, including the development of a Coordinated Eligibility and Enrollment (CEE) system. The goal is to create a comprehensive support system to help families in Alameda County find and choose the child care experience that best fits their needs. This system will offer a user-friendly online tool, dedicated





family navigation staff, helpful resources, and options for in-person and paper-based assistance. Families will be able to search for programs, compare options, and complete intake with guidance every step of the way, ensuring that accessing child care is simple, equitable, and stress-free for all.

First 5 has been gathering multiple user perspectives through a community Design Team made up of families and system partners to ensure the tools and system reflect the needs of core users. The contracted designer will be expected to review and incorporate this user research, along with additional findings, into the design process.

### EQUITY STATEMENT

First 5 Alameda County is committed to being an equity-centered, anti-racist, and anti-classist organization. We recognize that we operate in a racialized economic system characterized by extractive and exploitative labor practices and public policies that perpetuate long-standing disparate life outcomes. To this end, we use anti-racist and equity-based practices to invest in and support children, families, and neighborhoods. Our Place, People, Policy framework intentionally prioritizes our investments in communities that have experienced historic and systemic racism and disinvestment.

As a part of this commitment, we use our resources to redress (to set right) these injustices by:

- Celebrating Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) cultures and honoring their assets, values, and needs by ensuring investments, programs, data, and policy work is directed by and reflects the richness and needs of these communities.
- Prioritizing the needs of low-to-moderate-income families and neighborhoods with historical disinvestment.
- Addressing root causes through the administration of public funds, advocacy, and operationalization of public policy.
- Interrupting inequities that impact the conditions needed for kindergarten readiness.
- Ensuring that our investments, policies, practices, and Agency culture are aligned with our equity principles.

We acknowledge that our unconscious and conscious bias impacts our practices. Therefore, we are committed to deepening our understanding of how power, wealth, and opportunity imbalances appear in policies, communities, organizations, and interpersonal relationships. We can only do this as lifelong learners with a growth mindset focused on transformative change.

We commit to continuous improvement and to hold ourselves accountable to operationalize this statement and our principles.



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In addition to our co-created Equity Statement, we are adopting the “Guiding Principles for Federal Action on Racial Equity” developed by national leaders PolicyLink and Race Forward to further articulate our intentions. The statement and principles are consistent with our systems approach and will be operationalized into each of our strategies.

## PRINCIPLES

### PRINCIPLE 1: UNDERSTAND THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND YOUR INFLUENCE

Understand and acknowledge the federal, state, and local\* government’s role in impacting society at a wide scale to this day—whether positive, negative, or seemingly neutral

### PRINCIPLE 2: CONSISTENTLY ADDRESS ROOT DRIVERS

Target the fundamental root drivers of gaps and inequities and prioritize the people who have traditionally been excluded, recognizing these investments will benefit all

### PRINCIPLE 3: WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH IMPACT IN RELEVANT COMMUNITIES

Leverage the expertise and experiences of all to promote equity, particularly leaders of color and their communities

### PRINCIPLE 4: ADOPT A CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND ADAPTIVE APPROACH

Acknowledge that the scale and complexity of reaching racial equity will require ongoing commitment, action, and adjustments to drive meaningful change and strengthen our democracy

### PRINCIPLE 5: BE TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE

Build public trust and accountability in the long-term commitment for racial equity through data-driven decision-making and outcome tracking

*\*Edited from the original “Five guiding principles for federal action on racial equity” developed by PolicyLink. Original source: 2021 PolicyLink report, For Love of Country: A Path for the Federal Government to Advance Racial Equity, page 36.*

## SECTION 3: SCOPE OF WORK AND REQUIREMENTS

First 5 Alameda County is seeking a Designer to provide design services for the development of Coordinated Eligibility and Enrollment (CEE) technology components. This system will support families in the process of learning about and accessing affordable child care, and support subsidy administrators in enhancing





marketing efforts and operational efficiency. The Designer will contribute to creating a family-centered digital experience, a user-friendly interface for subsidy administrators, and incorporating cohesive branding elements for the system.

Emphasizing accessibility and cultural relevance, the designer will ensure the system design reflects and celebrates the diversity of Alameda County. The Designer is expected to prioritize equity throughout the design process, centering on those who have been historically marginalized to ensure the system will effectively address a diverse set of needs. The values underlying this project include fostering belonging, inclusivity, and equitable access for all users.

The Designer is expected to review and incorporate existing user research, including insights from a community Design Team composed of families and system partners, into the design process. Additionally, the Designer will identify further user research needs, support the process of conducting this research, and integrate user feedback into the design.

In addition, the Designer will support an agile design process, focusing on iterative development and regular feedback. The initial phase will concentrate on website design, followed by the design and integration of additional elements such as an eligibility calculator, site and family profiles, and documentation collection. The Designer will be expected to incorporate branding from First 5's strategic communications partner and adapt to use for this project.

Collaboration with First 5 Alameda County staff and adaptability to evolving needs are essential throughout this process.

## CONTRACT OBJECTIVES

The Designer is expected to work closely with the First 5 team to provide User Interface design for a project with an iterative approach, aiming to deliver value to internal and external users on a regular basis.

1. **User Experience (UX) and User Interface (UI):** The contracted Designer will develop essential design elements, components, and workflows required to build a cohesive and user-friendly interface, including:
  - a. Wireframe designs for the following core system flows by user profile:
    - i. For families, the wireframes will focus on a mobile-first, multilingual, and accessible design for elements such as the website landing page, pre-eligibility tools, child care provider comparison and matching features, documentation portal, and resource support pages.



- ii. For subsidy administrators, the wireframes will detail interfaces like the landing page, family recruitment tools, site and vacancy profiles, document verification processes, and family notifications, incorporating annotations for key interactions and user pathways.
    - iii. For system administrators, the wireframes will document backend interfaces such as user role and permission management, system configuration settings, and data integration tools.
  - b. High-fidelity designs for key user flows for both the families and subsidy administrators, ensuring the following:
    - i. Accessibility-compliant (S. 508)<sup>1</sup> design, with AA/AAA color contrast, scalable text, and alternative text placeholders
    - ii. Component and layout system to support implementation by the technology development team
    - iii. Handoff-ready files with design system documentation
  - c. Mid- to high-fidelity prototypes by user profile as needs adjust, ensuring that designs are functional, intuitive, and aligned with user feedback.
- 2. **User Research Consultation:** The Designer will engage in a thorough review of existing community-sources ideas and features to inform the design of each component of the broader system. In collaboration with First 5, the Designer will identify additional design requirements and areas for improvement. This process includes attending user research groups to gain firsthand insights from families and system partners to align design with their experiences and expectations. The Designer will support First 5 in user research activities to effectively serve the diverse needs of Alameda County.

## CONTRACT DELIVERABLES

- 1. **User Experience (UX) and User Interface (UI) Package:** For each system component, develop a UI package with the essential design elements, wireframes, workflows, and prototypes required to build a cohesive and user-friendly interface. Participate in an iterative design process with First 5 staff, key partners, and end users. Final UI assets should be developer-ready and provided in formats compatible with industry-standard tools (e.g., Figma preferred). This includes:

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<sup>1</sup> First 5 Alameda County aims to meet or exceed Section 508 as a baseline for all public facing web products. **Section 508** refers to a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that requires federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology (EIT) accessible to people with disabilities. This includes websites, documents, and software, ensuring equal access to information and services. <https://www.fcc.gov/general/section-508-rehabilitation-act>



- a. Wireframes: Design wireframes tailored to the distinct needs of three primary user groups: families, subsidy administrators, and system administrators. These wireframes will serve as foundational blueprints, outlining the structure, navigation, and functionality of the system to ensure an intuitive and user-friendly experience.
  - b. Workflows: Create high-fidelity designs for key user workflows for each system component. These designs will ensure accessibility compliance, support implementation by the technology development team, and include comprehensive documentation to facilitate seamless integration and usability.
  - c. Prototypes: Design mid to high-fidelity prototypes by user profile as needs adjust, ensuring that designs are functional, intuitive, and aligned with user feedback.
2. **User Research Consultation:** Review existing community engagement feedback and collaborate with First 5 to identify additional user research needs.
  - a. Co-design and participate in user research sessions to gather insights from families and system partners, ensuring that the designs are informed by and responsive to the experiences and expectations of its diverse user base.
  - b. Advise on additional feedback needed to create responsive, human-centered design technology for users.

## SECTION 4: TIMELINE AND FUNDING

### CONTRACT TIMELINE

The term of the contract will be July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

### FUNDING

\$199,000 has been dedicated to this project. Contractor payments will be made based on actual approved expenses and satisfactory work performance of identified deliverables.

## SECTION 5: ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

### ELIGIBILITY

Eligible organizations or consultants are those that meet the minimum requirements:







1. An organization or individual with a minimum of seven years of expertise in designing software that centers communities that have been historically marginalized.
2. Demonstrated experience working with state or local government agencies to deliver new product designs and iterations post-launch.
  - a. Knowledge of web accessibility standards (Section 508)<sup>2</sup> and equitable design practices.
3. Demonstrated experience working with community research teams and end users to synthesize ideas and requirements into design concepts and prototypes.

### APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Interested applicants should submit their qualifications in the following proposal format, no more than four pages (12-point font).

1. **Qualifications & Experience** – Describe the agency and/or individual’s qualifications to successfully fulfill the obligations of the contract, including your experience in designing software that centers user experience while collaborating with community partners. Please provide 3-5 samples of your work and 3 references.
2. **Approach** – Describe your recommended approach to designing software that works for diverse communities with multiple languages, technology comfort levels and supporting agile development methods, including approach and draft workplan and the roles/bios of key staff assigned to the project.
3. **Evaluation** – Describe how you will assess the effectiveness of the software design and user research methods.

### OTHER REQUIRED INFORMATION

1. Please provide 3 client references

## SECTION 6: PROJECT BUDGET

### PROJECT BUDGET

1. Please provide a budget of your proposed expenses using the form included at the end of this packet. The budget form and narrative does not count toward the four-page limit.

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<sup>2</sup> First 5 Alameda County aims to meet or exceed Section 508 as a baseline for all public facing web products. **Section 508** refers to a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that requires federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology (EIT) accessible to people with disabilities. This includes websites, documents, and software, ensuring equal access to information and services.  
<https://www.fcc.gov/general/section-508-rehabilitation-act>





2. Please provide a narrative description of your budget request (one-page limit).

## SECTION 7: SELECTION CRITERIA & SELECTION PROCESS

### SELECTION CRITERIA

The criteria by which each response will be judged are as follows:

1. **Applicable experience** – The extent to which the agency or individual demonstrates a depth of relevant experience in 1) designing modern software; 2) incorporating diverse community ideas and needs into the designs; and 3) commitment to equity-driven design practices that promote inclusive outcomes. Include 3-5 examples of past web design work.
2. **Applicable approach** – The extent to which the applicant describes an approach to designing modern web applications, phasing of components, modular design, equity driven design, and delivering value early and often that is consistent with the needs outlined in this document.
3. **Fit with First 5 Alameda County** – The degree to which the applicant’s approach and values are consistent with that of First 5.
4. **Cost** – Should be reasonable and well justified.
5. **Demonstration of understanding** – The extent to which the applicant communicates an understanding of the mandate of public agency initiatives and the unique requirements of First 5.
6. **Staff Qualifications** – The extent to which the proposed staff demonstrate a depth of relevant experience in design, user research, technical expertise, government systems, equity, and diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) principles as described in the scope in this document.

### SELECTION PROCESS

All applications will be reviewed by an internal staff and an external expert committee. The top two applicants may be invited to a one-hour interview. References may be consulted.

## SECTION 8: OTHER INFORMATION

1. No response will be considered for award unless submitted in full, delivered on or before the date specified in this RFP.
2. Specifications are carefully prepared describing the services desired. An addendum will be issued to all applicants, if necessary, stating revisions, deletions, or additions to be made to the specifications.





3. First 5 reserves the right to cancel the RFP process at any time, for any reason, even after review of all the applications, and it is not responsible for any expenses incurred by an applicant in developing an application.
4. First 5 reserves the right to reduce, amend, and/or rescind this RFP at any time prior to final execution of the contract.
5. First 5 reserves the right to negotiate scope of work, budget, and costs with successful applicant. If negotiations fail to culminate in a contract, First 5 may select another applicant.
6. First 5 is under no obligation to award a contract to the applicant that presents the lowest cost or highest yield. Selection will be made based on overall evaluation of the application in the best interest of First 5 as determined by the review team, the chief executive officer, and the Commission.
7. First 5 reserves the right to request clarification from any applicant on their application.
8. First 5 reserves the right to accept all or a portion of an application. First 5 reserves the right to waive any minor irregularities in an application. First 5 reserves the right to contract with more than one firm. All applications become the property of First 5.
9. All applications will remain confidential until a contract is negotiated. However, because First 5 is a public entity, all applications can become public after all successful contract negotiations.
10. First 5 shall require indemnification on behalf of itself and Alameda County entities with any agencies or individuals into which it enters into agreements. In addition, First 5 requires all agencies to provide evidence of both workers compensation and general liability insurance, with First 5 listed as additional insured.

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FIRST 5 ALAMEDA COUNTY

PROPOSED BUDGET FORM

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

BUDGET LINE ITEMS	Engage, Plan, Design & Launch
<b>PERSONNEL EXPENSES</b>	
<i>List position, FTE % on project, rate</i>	
<b>Total Salaries</b>	
Personnel Benefits	
<b>PERSONNEL EXPENSES SUBTOTAL</b>	
<b>GENERAL EXPENSES</b>	
Training	
Program Materials	
Printing	
Office Supplies	
Staff Travel	
Consulting Services	
<i>List hourly unit cost, # of hours, term</i>	
Evaluation	
Miscellaneous	
<b>GENERAL EXPENSES SUBTOTAL</b>	
<b>EQUIPMENT</b> <i>Itemize equipment costs more than \$2,000</i>	





BUDGET LINE ITEMS	Engage, Plan, Design & Launch
<b>EQUIPMENT SUBTOTAL</b>	
<b>SUBCONTRACTORS</b> <i>Requires First 5 prior approval; List separately, if more than one subcontractor</i>	
<b>SUBCONTRACTORS SUBTOTAL</b>	
<b>OTHER EXPENSES</b> <i>(Additional line Items exceeding \$5,000)</i>	
<b>OTHER EXPENSES SUBTOTAL</b>	
<b>SUBTOTAL OF DIRECT EXPENSES</b> <i>Sum of totals for Personnel, General, Equipment, Subcontractors and Other</i>	
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE/INDIRECT COSTS</b> <i>Maximum 15% of Direct Costs</i>	
<b>SUBTOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE/INDIRECT COSTS</b>	
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	

