

First 5 California  
Child Signature Program (CSP)  
RFA #2  
Frequently Asked Questions  
April 13, 2012

**Program Questions**

1. **Q:** For current Power of Preschool (PoP) counties wanting to apply for RFA #2, will the emphasis be on training and quality improvement for the new classrooms (Promise Sites) we identify in the application since we are not eligible to apply for RFA #3?

**A:** Yes. For current PoP counties, funding from RFA #2 will provide training, technical assistance, and support from the Early Education Effectiveness Exchange (E4) and the Early Learning Systems Specialist (ELSS) for quality improvement of the CSP Promise Sites.

2. **Q:** Please provide some examples of how this is being coordinated with Race to the Top.

**A:** Coordination between RFA #2 and Race to The Top (RTT) is a local decision. Each county will determine the extent of coordination based on their resources. RFA #2 participants must meet all requirements contained in the RFA. However, counties participating in RTT will be able to benefit from training provided by the E4 and ELSS that overlap with both the CSP Baseline Criteria (Attachment C2) and CSP Quality Enhancement Elements (Attachment C1).

3. **Q:** If “Promise Sites” participating in RFA #2 do not qualify to participate as CSP Candidate Sites” in RFA 3, how are counties to maintain training requirements without incentives?

**A:** Each county will be responsible for selecting centers/classrooms that agree to engage in quality improvement activities throughout the three-year funding period. Incentives to participate include free support from the ELSS and training and technical assistance that would otherwise not be available. This training and technical assistance is designed to enhance quality in participating centers/classrooms in areas identified for needed improvements.

4. **Q:** If the classrooms/agencies fall into the category of CSP “Promise Sites,” can these sites continue to participate through 2015 as long as they continue to maintain the Promise Site label?

**A: All participating centers/classrooms that do not eventually qualify to receive RFA #3 funding (CSP Promise Sites) will engage in quality improvement activities throughout the three-year funding period: FY 2012-13 through 2014-15 (Section IV, A). Centers and classrooms that meet the CSP Baseline Criteria and do not receive RFA #3 funding are to remain as Promise Sites and work toward meeting the CSP Quality Enhancement (Attachment C1) elements, receive all services and benefits, and complete all requirements of RFA #2.**

**5. Q: Who is required to complete the on-line Tobacco Training?**

**A: At a minimum, “All participating classroom staff will complete an on-line tobacco training” (Section VII). The tobacco training provides useful information for all staff working in early care and education. It is our hope that all center staff will be encouraged to take the training regardless of whether their classroom participates in RFA #2 or not.**

**6. Q: Is the number of classrooms defined by the sessions or classroom ( i.e., would a classroom with an A.M. and P.M. session be counted as 2 or 1)?**

**A: The classroom number is defined by the number of sessions, the classroom with both A.M. and P.M. sessions will be counted as 2 classrooms.**

**7. Q: What is the rationale for the requirement of having a minimum of 1 preschool classroom serving no fewer than 12 preschool children?**

**A: The decision to require applicants to “include a minimum of 1 preschool classroom serving no fewer than 12 preschool children” (Section IX, A) is based on California Child Care Licensing (January 2007) Section 101216.3 “Teacher – Child Ratio” that states: “There shall be a ratio of one teacher visually observing and supervising no more than 12 children in attendance.”**

### **Target Population Questions**

**8. Q: The RFA talks both about API scores in deciles 1-3 and the areas defined by the Local Child Care Planning Council (LPC). Do the areas defined by the LPC only kick-in after the API scores in deciles 1-3 criteria have been met?**

**A: The target population requirements identified in Section V must first be met before the “Additional Eligibility Target Population” requirements are met.**

9. **Q:** (Rural County Question): Can we qualify an entire school district as a catchment area if the majority of children attend schools with a API score in deciles 1-5, are geographically isolated, and have high concentrations of Dual Language Learners (DLL) and students qualifying for free and reduced lunches?

**A:** According to the California Department of Education (CDE), the API reflects a school's, a school district's, or a subgroup's performance level, based on the results of statewide testing. Only in cases where CDE has based the API on the academic performance of the district and not on individual schools will the API of the school district be allowed.

### **Staffing Questions**

10. **Q:** Is the assumption that a full-time ELSS would be able to handle up to 30 classrooms? If so, would that mean that an ELSS for 10-14 classrooms would be at or below 50% FTE? So, if an application came in for 10-14 classrooms, would a part-time ELSS be acceptable?

**A:** The ELSS position will need to be staffed proportionate to the funding allocated based on the number of identified classrooms (up to 30). A full-time ELSS would serve no more than 30 classrooms. A county that has:

- 10 - 14 participating classrooms and receives \$35, 000 will need to hire an ELSS at no less than 20% FTE
- 15 – 19 participating classrooms and receives \$52,500 will need to hire an ELSS at no less than 40% FTE
- 20 – 24 participating classrooms receives \$70,000 will need to hire an ELSS at no less than 60% FTE
- 25-29 participating classrooms receives \$87,500 will need to hire an ELSS at no less than 80% FTE
- 30 participating classrooms receives \$105,000 will need to hire a ELSS at no less than 100% FTE

11. **Q:** Will you be issuing guidelines for the staffing of the ELSS position beyond those in the RFA?

**A:** The full set of guidelines for the ELSS is included in the Job Description (Attachment E). No additional guidelines for the ELSS beyond what is included in the RFA #2 document and attachments will be issued.

12. **Q:** Can the Early Learning Systems Specialist (ELSS) job description be considered services that can be contracted through a team or organization, and not a person?

**A: Section XI, Q5 of RFA #2 allows the First 5 County Commission to subcontract with another agency to implement the CSP. However, Section XI, E states that “First 5 California will not reimburse administrative and/or indirect costs for the ELSS position and related expenses.” It is up to the county’s discretion as to whether a team or organization will fulfill the responsibilities of the ELSS. The county is responsible for meeting all requirements detailed in the ELSS duty statement. The county will need to explain how each requirement of the ELSS will be accomplished through an alternative delivery structure.**

**13. Q:** There are no funds allowed for administration, indirect costs, etc. This assumes that the First 5 county commission will provide this as in-kind. Is it appropriate for the ELSS to complete all the required reports?

**A. The ELSS position responsibilities can include completion of required reports and corresponding administrative responsibilities. However, it would be more cost effective for the county to provide the administrative support for the ELSS so that they can make better use of their time and skills to work with the participating centers and classrooms and formulate responses to the reports.**

### **Fiscal Questions**

**14. Q:** What is the definition of “First 5 California funded classrooms” and “county funded classrooms”?

**A: Section XIII, Part D, Form 6, Section 6B of RFA #2 describes First 5 California funded and county funded classrooms. The term “First 5 California funded classrooms” refers to First 5 California funding used to support, not directly fund, up to the maximum of 30 classrooms through this RFA. First 5 California funds will be used to provide training, technical assistance, and support from the Early Education Effectiveness Exchange (E4) and Early Learning Systems Specialist (ELSS). In addition, Section XI, Part A, provides an option for counties to include up to 30 additional classrooms (above the 30 classroom maximum supported with First 5 California funds). Including additional classrooms as part of RFA #2 is strictly at the discretion of the county. Funding for these additional classrooms (“county funded classrooms”), added at the county’s discretion, will be at the county’s expense. As with First 5 California funded classrooms, those classrooms must comply with all RFA #2 requirements to receive support from the E4.**

**15. Q:** Commissions will want some indication of the state's thoughts regarding the required "match" associated with RFA #3.

**A: The RFA #3 match amount has not been determined; however, it is likely that it will mirror the county match requirement contained in RFA #1.**

**16. Q:** If a region applies for funding, will the formula be the total of what each county could apply for separately? For example, one county has 30 classrooms (\$105,000), one county has 10 classrooms (for \$35,000) and one county has 20 classrooms (for \$70,000) – can the region apply for \$210,000?

**A: No. The RFA allows for a First 5 county commission or consortium to apply for RFA #2. A consortium may apply only in cases where a single county is unable to meet the minimum number of classrooms for participation in RFA #2 (Section IV, D). The funding formula is then based on the total number of classrooms served up to a maximum of 30 classrooms. Additional classrooms may be added (up to a total of 60) at county expense. (See Question #4)**

**17. Q:** Form 4a-reflects "State Funded Classroom Profile Information." Are we limited to state funded classrooms? Is Head Start also accepted?

**A: The title for "Form 4a" should be "First 5 California Participating Classrooms" and not "State Funded Classrooms." First 5 California will not fund classrooms per se, in this RFA. Instead, RFA #2 funds the training, technical assistance, and support provided to participating centers and classrooms through the E4 and ELSS. Any center or classroom that meets the "Target Population" (Section V) criteria is eligible to participate (this includes State Funded Preschool, Early Head Start, Head Start, etc.). In PoP counties, all centers and classrooms already included in RFA #1 are NOT eligible to be included in RFA #2 (Section IV, C)**

**18. Q:** In reference to the preview of First 5 California CSP Readiness Assessment: For those classrooms/agencies referred to as "CSP Promise Sites," what assistance will they receive for external evaluators regarding ECRS/CLASS in order to be promoted to "CSP Candidate Sites"?

**A: Funding for external evaluators for ECRS and CLASS is an allowable budgeted expense for all centers/classrooms identified for**

**participation in RFA #2 as it is directly related to the core RFA #2 program requirements (Section XI, B).**

**19. Q:** Please explain the section on “Program Compliance Review” and provide information on what it entails as it appears to be new.

**A:** The purpose of a program compliance review is to ensure that contractors are complying with the program requirements of the agreement. A program compliance review is typically performed onsite and may include confirmation of program-related requirements such as participation eligibility, use of funds, maintenance of documentation to support program expenditures, etc. The contractor would be notified in advance of the guidelines for the review and the schedule for the review. The Program Compliance Review component is a necessary state program oversight function.

**20. Q:** How much has been allocated for RFA #2? How competitive will this be among counties?

**A:** RFA #2 is not a competitive process. First 5 California has available funding for all 58 counties to participate.

**21. Q:** Please clarify the issue of “reimbursement” vs “carryover.”

**A:** The definitions for “reimbursement” and “carry over” are included in the CSP RFA #2 Fiscal Glossary, Attachment I.

**“Reimbursement” is the cash issued by the state to the contractor as repayment of the cost of work or services performed through RFA #2 up to the maximum amount of the agreement. Reimbursement may also include repayment of expenditures made for or on behalf of another governmental unit, fund, or department.**

**“Carryover” is the unobligated (unspent) award balance from a previous year's award that a contractor requests to have transferred to the current year's award, and are available to spend in addition to the current year's award. A carryover request is accomplished through the budget revision process.**