



## **Request for Proposals: Child Care Management Software Vendor**

First 5 Ventura County (F5VC) is soliciting proposals for a vendor to support and implement a two year Child Care Management Software Pilot, beginning on or around July 1, 2021.

To be considered, proposals must be received **by 4:00 PM (PST) on March 30, 2021**. Late responses will not be considered.

**Proposals will only be accepted via email to: [assistant@first5ventura.org](mailto:assistant@first5ventura.org)**

All proposals received will be provided a receipt for submission via email confirmation. If you do not receive an emailed confirmation, or you wish to call and verify receipt, you may contact Fahim Farag at: (805) 648-9990.

Any questions concerning this request for proposal should be directed to Nani Oesterle, Program Manager, email: [noesterle@first5ventura.org](mailto:noesterle@first5ventura.org). All questions and answers will be posted on the F5VC website: [www.first5ventura.org](http://www.first5ventura.org)

### **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 group<sup>1</sup>. By contrast, there were 5,704 mixed age spaces at FCCs<sup>1</sup>. 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 County<sup>1</sup>. 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 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.

<sup>1</sup>California Resource & Referral Network, Annual California Child Care Portfolio

Without opportunities 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

There is a growing utilization of technology platforms that address each facet of the Iron Triangle. A variety of 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.

### **Scope of Work**

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 CCMS 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 during the Pilot period. 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.

Selected 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

The ideal contractor will have the following qualifications:

- Proven experience as a vendor using its CCMS with FCCs.
- Prior experience working with funders/third party partners and offering an enterprise account to allow for transparency and data tracking.
- Knowledge of the FCC 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 Proposals on or about July 1, 2021.
- 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.

### Time Considerations and Requirements

1. To be considered, proposals must be received by First 5 Ventura County **by 4:00 PM (PST) on March 30, 2021**. Late proposals cannot be accepted.
2. The contract is scheduled to be awarded in June 2021.
3. The time period for conducting this project is **July 2021 through June 2023**.

### Proposal Requirements

In 4 pages or less (single spaced, 12 point font), provide a proposal that addresses the following:

- **Experience:** Describe your qualifications and your past and current experience with similar work as outlined in this Request for Proposals.
- **Strategies:** Describe your proposed strategies, work plan, and timeline for implementing the CCMS pilot, including recruiting and onboarding FCCs, providing real time and ongoing technical assistance to ensure FCCs are using the CCMS as designed, and frequent communication with F5VC regarding pilot rollout, including sharing of agreed upon data metrics. Describe troubleshooting strategies if FCC uptake or utilization is lower than expected.
- **Costs:** Costs for performing the above scope of work should be based on deliverables. Please list your proposed cost for each of the deliverables specified in the scope of work. Ensure your costs includes a clear breakdown of the CCMS per user cost. User fees must be affordable and sustainable for providers, who will ultimately carry the responsibility of payment after the conclusion of the Pilot; therefore, user cost will be considered in the selection of the vendor.

- **Strength of Product:** Describe how the CCMS meets the needs of FCC business owners in a user friendly way. Describe modifications vendor can make if components of the CCMS are not being successfully utilized or are not beneficial to FCCs as designed.

**Required Information (not included in page count):**

- **Primary Contact Person** - include the email, mailing address, and phone number of the primary contact person.
- **Resumes** – include the resumes of all staff expected to work on this project, and delineate roles of each staff member in the proposed project.
- **List of References** – provide a list of the names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses (if applicable), and agency contacts of three (3) former/current clients and the title of the project completed. F5VC may contact some or all of the bidder's references as part of the review process.

**Optional Information (not included in page count)**

- **Example of CCMS** – items that help visually demonstrate the CCMS will be accepted, including screenshots or a short video preview (less than 10 minutes). Large files may be shared to [assistant@first5ventura.org](mailto:assistant@first5ventura.org) via Drop Box or Google Drive.

**Evaluation of Proposals**

Proposals will be evaluated to ascertain which vendor best meets the needs of First 5 Ventura County. Oral interviews that include a product demonstration may be necessary to assist in making the final selection.

Evaluation considerations will include the following:

- Qualifications, experience, and professional activities of the vendor relevant to this scope of work.
- Proposal demonstrates a clear understanding of the work to be performed and the proposed timeline is reasonable.
- Cost, although a significant factor, may not be the dominant factor. Cost is particularly important when all the other evaluation criteria are relatively equal.
- Vendor's CCMS product is user friendly and meets the needs of Family Child Care (FCC) providers.

The award will be made to the vendor which, in the opinion of First 5 Ventura County, is best qualified. F5VC may, at its sole discretion, reject any or all proposals submitted in response to this Request for Proposals (RFP). Failure to comply with the specifications of this solicitation shall be grounds for disqualification. F5VC also reserves the right to cancel this RFP at its sole discretion, at any time prior to execution of an agreement or contract. F5VC shall not be liable for any costs incurred in connection with the preparation of any proposal submitted in response to this solicitation.

After selection of contractor, F5VC reserves the right to enter negotiations with the contractor for additional work and/or to further define work requirements for the contract period.