

General Mini-Grants Program



2019-20 Guidelines

To apply for a General Mini-Grant, please visit the First 5 Merced County website at www.first5mercedcounty.org to download application materials. Application packets are also available at the First 5 Merced County Office at 260 E. 15th Street, Merced, CA 95341.

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The purpose of First 5 Merced County's General Mini-Grants program is to provide (Proposition 10) funding for **one-time** grants and encourage community participation and development of projects that address First 5 Merced County's vision and mission.

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.

Mission Statement

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

Awards of \$250.00 to \$3,000.00 are available through an application process to support local, community-driven projects or events that benefit children ages 0-5 years and their families in Merced County.

II. MINI-GRANT ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

A. Applicant Eligibility Criteria

Applications will be accepted from:

- Non-profit agencies or organizations
- Private/for-profit businesses or corporations
- Community groups working with a fiscal agent (manages the grant money and signs the contract)
- Governmental units

* Family child care providers and IMPACT participants are NOT eligible. Please contact First 5 Merced County for opportunities available to family child care providers.

B. Eligible Activities

The target populations for this funding program are children from the prenatal stage through age five, their parents and caregivers. Proposed projects should be short-term service efforts, events, and/or activities with goals to improve 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

Examples of funding requests that are NOT eligible include, but are not limited to:

- Requests supporting family child care providers
- Requests supporting providers or centers participating in the First 5 IMPACT initiative
- 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/child care facility
- Ongoing expenses, including ongoing salaried staffing costs or operational expenses
- Capital project or improvements (defined as any improvements to one's property such as construction, additions, alterations and/or modifications that may increase the value of that property.)

Program activities must take place during the 2019-20 fiscal year (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020).

C. Availability of Funds

The First 5 General Mini-Grants Program will provide one-time grants for \$250.00 to \$3,000.00 depending upon the scope of the proposed project. The Commission plans to award approximately \$45,000.00 in mini-grants for fiscal year 2019-20 across three cycles with due dates in August, November and February. Applicants may only receive one mini-grant per fiscal year.

Funds may not be used to supplant state or local money or to fund existing levels of service.

Funds may not be used for efforts that have been supported by the General Mini-Grant program during the previous fiscal year.

Funds awarded through this funding mechanism must be expended by June 30, 2020.

D. Application Requirements

To apply for a General Mini-Grant, review and complete all of the documents listed below. The application may be typed or neatly handwritten in either English or Spanish. An electronic version of the application can be accessed on the First 5 Merced County website: www.first5mercedcounty.org.

A complete application packet must include 1 original and 4 copies of the following:

- Attachment A: Application Cover Sheet
- Attachment B: Project Narrative
- Attachment C: Budget Form
- Attachment D: Signed copy of Agreements and Certifications
- Applicant's Policy on Tobacco Free Environment
- Documentation of Tax Exempt Status (if applicable)
- Copy of Business License (if applicable)

E. Submission

There are three cycles for the General Mini-Grants Program.

Cycle 1 deadline: Friday, August 16, 2019, 4:00 P.M.

Cycle 2 deadline: Friday, November 15, 2019, 4:00 P.M.

Cycle 3 deadline: Friday, February 21, 2020, 4:00 P.M.

A complete application packet must arrive by mail or be hand delivered before 4:00 PM on the deadline. First 5 staff will receive packets and all packets must be signed in. Packets, regardless of postmark or circumstance, received after the submission deadline will not be considered. Packets sent by email or fax will **not** be accepted.

Submit an original and four copies of the complete packet to:

First 5 Merced County
ATTN: General Mini-Grants Program
260 E. 15th Street
Merced, CA 95341

F. Application Review and Selection

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

1. **Organizational Capacity** – Applicant is qualified to implement project and achieve stated objectives. Organization’s Tobacco Policy is included. (10 points)
2. **Project Plan** – Project Plan is clear with a realistic timeline; project activities are well-defined and technically feasible, and/or within eligibility criteria described in the application. (10 points)
3. **Benefiting Children and Their Families Directly** - Applicant describes the overall need of the target population and the project directly serves children 0-5 and their families. (15 points)
4. **Outcomes/Impact** - Objectives are clearly stated, specific, realistic, measurable, and consistent with First 5 Merced County’s vision and mission. (40 points)
5. **Financial Viability** - Applicant demonstrates other sources of funding or in-kind support for the project, provides a sound budget, and clearly states how Commission funding is supporting, not completely funding, the proposed project/event. (10 points)
6. **Applicant Funding History** - Applicants are awarded up to 15 points based on their funding history with First 5 Merced County. Points are awarded as follows: (15 points maximum)
 - o Currently receiving funds through another First 5 Merced County contract/program: 5 points
 - o Not currently receiving First 5 Merced County funding: 10 points
 - o Have not been awarded a First 5 Merced County General Mini-Grant within the past 24 months: 5 points

If the Review Committee recommends an application for approval, the applicant will be requested to attend a Commission meeting if further clarification about the proposal is necessary.

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.

G. Notification

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

H. 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
260 E. 15th Street
Merced, CA 95341

III. EXPECTATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

A. Award of Contract

Upon approval of 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. Program activities must occur in fiscal year 2019-20 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020).

B. Marketing and Development

Any marketing materials (flyers, posters, signs, etc.) for First 5 funded events/activities shall include attribution to First 5 Merced County in the form of an attribution statement and/or official logo (both provided upon funding approval). Organizations are required to submit copies of all marketing materials to First 5 **prior** to distribution to the public. Notification of media events shall be shared with First 5 **prior** to airing time, if possible. Submissions of photos for project activities and/or events are required 5 days after the event.

Recipients of funding under this project will be required to complete a survey and participate in any program-level evaluation activities as required by the Commission. Failure to complete required documentation prior to closeout

could result in exclusion of subsequent funding opportunities. Additional evaluation opportunities may be available to successful applicants on a voluntary basis to build their program evaluation capacity and participate in further evaluation.

A. Compensation

Organizations will submit one invoice for all project expenses and be paid on a reimbursement basis. In special circumstances, and with advance approval, multiple invoices may be accepted. Organizations may request an advanced payment up to 20% of the approved grant amount. Receipts for all project expenses outlined in the budget must be provided.

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.

Please review Section 3. Grant Amount and Section 4. Terms of Payment of the Draft Mini-Grant Agreement for additional information regarding compensation.

B. Funding Restrictions

Funds will be disbursed to successful applicants in the manner specified in their contractual agreement. Approved funds must be used in fiscal year 2019-20 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020).

C. Notice Regarding Merced County Contract Requirements

First 5 Merced County utilizes the administrative structure, policies and procedures of the County of Merced to distribute Proposition 10 funds. A Draft Mini-Grants Program Agreement is included in the Attachments section to provide applicants with an understanding of likely contract conditions. Please review the draft agreement (Attachment E) before submitting an application to become familiar with these requirements.

IV. QUESTIONS OR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

One-on-one technical assistance is available upon request through the following dates:

Thursday, August 15, 2019 at 4:00 P.M. for Cycle 1

Thursday, November 14, 2019 at 4:00 P.M. for Cycle 2

Thursday, February 20, 2020 at 4:00 P.M. for Cycle 3

All questions and requests for technical assistance concerning the General Mini-Grant Program are to be directed to the official contact person:

Marie Pickney, Program Manager
First 5 Merced County
260 E. 15th Street
Merced, CA 95341
Phone: (209) 385-7337
Email – mpickney@co.merced.ca.us