



## POSITION NARRATIVE

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR First 5 Association of CA

#### BACKGROUND AND OPPORTUNITY

Today the policy and political environment is ripe for major progress on the early childhood agenda, and the First 5 Association of California plays an important role in bringing the 58 First 5 county commissions' 20+ years of experience and learning to inform and drive local and state policy change focused on creating a vibrant and equitable future for our youngest children.

The vision of the First 5 Association is *"One day, California's success will be measured by the wellbeing of its youngest children."* The Association and its members are leading voices for early childhood development (ECD) which reflects a whole child, whole family framework. The framework is centered in three interrelated policy goals, 1.) strong and resilient families, 2.) comprehensive health and development, and 3.) quality early learning. This framework drives the Association's work to advance an integrated and coordinated early childhood system and support structure in all 58 counties, ensuring California's young children are safe, healthy and ready to succeed in school and life.

In 1998, California voters passed a landmark proposition to support building early childhood systems at the state and local level via a 50-cent tax on tobacco. This fund has generated nearly \$10B in investments made by the 58 county commissions, in partnership with First 5 California.

Each year, the county commissions serve an estimated one million children under the age of five, along with their families and caregivers. They collaborate with state agencies and diverse early childhood partners, including public schools, health clinics, community-based organizations, and early learning providers. The county commissions are uniquely suited to be responsive to local needs, to incubate innovations, and to contribute their learning to the broader field and policy makers through the Association and its First 5 Center for Children's Policy.

Leveraging these experiences and learnings of First 5s, the Center for Children's Policy leads state-wide efforts to examine, study, promote, and recommend positions and programs that support the work, direction, and purposes of the broader early childhood development field. The Center is primarily funded by a 501c(3) foundation created by the Association to accept donations and grants from other foundations and funders.

As tobacco tax revenue declines, the Association is a key partner to county commissions in developing and advocating for sustainable strategies to maintain and continually improve early childhood systems. The Association has strengthened its membership through the creation of the First 5 Network, which includes the Association, all 58 county commissions and First 5 California.

This Network manages collective knowledge, coordinates statewide policy efforts, and supports regional and local capacity building. The Association actively partners with other organizations to shape and advance aligned ECD policy goals.

The Association is governed by a 12-member Executive Committee (EC) which approves the overall strategy and direction of the Association, its complementary Foundation, and the First 5 Center for Children's Policy.

The Executive Director (ED) will be based in Sacramento. Currently, the Association has staff of eight with offices in Alameda, CA.

More information is available at <http://first5association.org> and <https://first5center.org/>.

## **POSITION SUMMARY**

The Executive Director (ED) leads the vision, overall strategy and direction of the Association, Foundation and the First 5 Center for Children's Policy in close collaboration with the Executive Committee (EC). The ED is a visible statewide ECD leader and champion, representing First 5s across a diversity of policy and systems change efforts. S/he is the primary advocate for the Association and its 58 county commission members, advancing First 5 financial sustainability initiatives and the Association's policy agenda in the State Capitol.

The ED is the lead relationship and coalition-builder who ensures that the Association works in close collaboration with the First 5 Network (counties and First 5 California) and other partners in Sacramento and beyond. The ED creates and grows the organizational infrastructure necessary to execute on the strategic direction and priorities approved by the EC, including creating work plans, preparing and monitoring the budget, and leading the staff team.

S/he is an advisor to the county Executive Directors, providing policy and management counsel, thought-partnership, problem-solving, and support for policy adoption and change initiatives with county commissions. The ED leads fund development, creating and maintaining relationships with foundation leaders, and growing the resources of the Association, Foundation and First 5 Center for Children's Policy. The ED actively supports the EC and Foundation Board in carrying out the governance of the organizations, adhering to the Bylaws and staffing their meetings.

## **ESSENTIAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Leadership & Governance:**

- Provides vision for Association, Foundation, and Center for Children's Policy, and leads development of long-term strategy and annual work plans for adoption by the EC;
- Champions First 5's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, and values a diversity of perspectives;
- Staffs the work of the EC and Foundation Board, collaborating with the chair to develop agendas for monthly EC calls and 4-6 in-person meetings annually.

### **External Affairs:**

- Leads relationship building and partner development to advance financial sustainability and the First 5 policy and systems change agenda in the State Capitol;
- Engages the First 5 Network to effectively influence legislative and executive branch decision making; serves as a thought-partner with the leadership of First 5 California;
- Represents the First 5 brand and serves as the lead media spokesperson for Association and Foundation;

**Member Services:**

- Advises member Executive Directors, providing policy and management counsel, thought-partnership and problem-solving, and support for sustainability efforts, policy adoption and change initiatives with member Commissions.

**Organizational Management:**

- Prepares overall budget proposal consistent with the adopted strategy and work plans, and presents to EC and Foundation Board for review and adoption;
- Creates organizational structure and staffing plan; hires team members; and retains consultants, vendors and contractors to effectively execute the work of the Association and Foundation;
- Leads and organizes the staff team, providing clear direction, assigning responsibilities, and ensuring strong accountability for work assignments; provides individual coaching and opportunities for skill building and professional development for the team;
- Applies critical thinking, creativity and innovation in all aspects of the role; effectively thinks through complex problems and information, using traditional and innovative approaches to identify effective solutions; seeks to accept and build on the ideas of others for solutions others may not have considered.

**Business Development:**

- Grows funding for all First 5s; cultivates new partners, develops and builds on relationships with existing government and foundation funders;
- Creates and maintains robust grant and contracts management system which ensures compliance with funder requirements and facilitates future growth.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

Competitive candidates will have 1.) at least 10 years of progressively more responsible experience in organizations that advocate for more equitable, child-centered and family-focused health, social services and/or education policies and systems; 2.) a successful track-record of coalition and relationship building to effectively execute on policy and advocacy priorities; 3.) a deep understanding of California, and its many rural, suburban and urban regions; 4.) experience as a seasoned navigator of the California political and policy landscape.

**Knowledge, Skills & Abilities:**

- Visionary and self-directed, with a demonstrated passion for First 5 Association's Early Childhood whole child, whole family framework, and the work to protect and build early childhood systems and supports throughout California;
- Demonstrated ability to listen and be a true partner to members, understanding their business needs and offering information, expertise and counsel in problem-solving;
- Demonstrated ability as an effective communicator and presenter with a wide variety of audiences;
- Possess a clear and concise writing style and experience as a collaborator and editor on reports and other written products;
- Effective people manager who actively provides direction, guidance and feedback to team; demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion; models self-reflection, values a diversity of perspectives and encourages contributions by all team members;

- Effective manager of multiple work streams simultaneously and through collaborative partnerships; demonstrates integrity and judgment in all aspects of decision-making.

**Experience:**

- Leadership-level responsibility in a mission-driven and nimble organization, with a track-record of success for building relationships and partnerships to further legislative and executive branch advocacy;
- Existing CA-based relationships with the philanthropic community, non-profits, advocacy organizations, local governments and academia;
- Reputation for strong critical thinking and problem solving;
- Track record as an effective collaboration builder, to enhance organizational effectiveness at a regional or statewide level;
- Personal service on boards of directors, or experience reporting to/staffing a board of directors;
- Political or governmental experiences which have honed the capacity to find agreement and develop workable compromises to achieve policy goals;
- Reputation for a growth mindset; and track-record of utilizing creativity and innovation to solve problems and drive progress on the organizational strategic plan;
- Previous work in early childhood health, wellness or education, preferred.

**Education:**

- Master’s Degree (M.A.) in Social Science, Public Administration, Early Childhood Development, Social Work, Public Policy, Public Health, Non-Profit Management, Health & Human Services or Family Studies from an accredited four-year college or university preferred. Extensive work experience in the above areas may be substituted.

**COMPENSATION & BENEFITS**

**Compensation**

First 5 Association offers a competitive salary, vacation, administrative leave and sick days plan, and pre-tax deductions for out-of-pocket medical and dependent care expenses.

**Health**

First 5 Association, through an affiliation with the County Supervisors Association of California (CSAC), pays for up to 100% of the premiums for employee and dependents for medical, dental, vision benefits, and for employee’s life and long-term disability insurance policies; benefit eligibility takes effect on the first of the month following 30 days of employment.

**Retirement**

First 5 Association offers a defined benefit retirement through an affiliation with San Bernardino County Employees’ Association, The Executive Director will be eligible for the Tier II defined benefit retirement. See additional information [here](#).

## APPLICATION PROCESS

First 5 Association has partnered with Justus McGinity Executive Search to complete this recruitment.

Interested candidates are encouraged to submit their cover letter and resume promptly to [JMSearchResume@gmail.com](mailto:JMSearchResume@gmail.com) with "First 5 Association ED" in the subject line. Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of candidates throughout the process.

There is no established deadline for the submission of applications; resumes will be accepted until the position is filled. Only candidates who move beyond the review of submitted written materials will be contacted by Justus McGinity Executive Search or First 5 Association.

### ***Equal Opportunity Employer***

*First 5 Association and Justus McGinity Executive Search do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions and gender), religion, marital status, registered domestic partner status, age national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, legally protected medical condition, including genetic characteristics, sexual orientation, or any other status protected by federal, state or local laws. It also pertains to a perception that anyone who has any of those characteristics, or is associated with a person who has, or is perceived as having one of those characteristics, to the extent required by law.*