

Director of Government Affairs

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Position Overview

First 5 Association believes that all of California's youngest children deserve to be healthy, safe, and ready to thrive in school and life. We are seeking a Director of Government Affairs to help achieve that goal by advocating for [public policies that support our mission](#). The position is instrumental in driving the development and implementation of our advocacy and engagement strategy. They accomplish this through building, growing, and deepening relationships with our local First 5 members, policymakers, governmental agencies and advocacy partner groups. The **Director of Government Affairs** is an advocate, an activator, a natural motivator, and a clear communicator. They are politically savvy and innately strategic, with the ability to advance big goals by identifying paths forward through smaller, actionable steps. When they experience setbacks, they see it as an inspiring sign to review their approach, implement course corrections, apply creative tactics, and redouble efforts to achieve organization's advocacy goals.

Successful Candidates:

- Have a passion for advancing policies that positively impact California's children and families.
- Are deeply invested in policy and advocacy as levers of change for those who face the most systemic barriers to opportunity.
- Offer strategic short and long-term approaches for advocacy impact.
- Synthesize multiple issues, perspectives, contextual factors and considerations into a smart forward course of action, while maintaining focus on overarching goals.
- Enjoy working collaboratively with partners and stakeholders with a range of perspectives and are effective at building consensus and working in coalitions.
- Are skilled at adapting their communication style and message in a way that authentically connects with the audience they seek to engage.
- Want to be a part of a team that is collaborative, mission-oriented, hard-working, evolving and caring.

Key Responsibilities

Lead Advocacy Strategy

- Lead, plan, organize, and coordinate all aspects of the organization's government relations and advocacy work.
- Develop political and policy strategies and positions to advance the Association's strategic plan.
- Implement advocacy strategy to advance the Association's state and federal budget, legislative and administrative policy priorities.
- Oversee work of Association's lobbyists and political consultants.
- Monitor, analyze, and track state and federal legislation and political developments, spearheading development of the Association's position and response.
- Draft letters, comments, testimony and talking points and help plan legislative briefings and informational events for policymakers on key early childhood issues.

Build Relationships and Coalitions

- Develop strong relationships with elected officials and policymakers, legislative and congressional staff, and key stakeholders and partners at the state and federal levels.
- Represent Association in State Capitol. Lead communications and advocacy efforts on Association sponsored bills, co-sponsored bill and budget items, and Association's participation with partners in coalition joint advocacy work.
- Partner with state agency First 5 California on joint early childhood policy advocacy efforts.
- Participate actively and help lead early childhood policy coalitions.
- Strengthen awareness of early childhood development policy issues and needs

Lead Advocacy Engagement of First 5 Network

- Working closely with local First 5 agencies throughout the state, inform, coordinate and mobilize local First 5's participation in advocacy efforts to achieve the Association's policy and government relations goals.
- Ensure timely and informative communications to members regarding the Association's advocacy activities.
- Provide policy and political intelligence to the Executive Director, governing body, key committees, members and the team to inform and shape our policy and advocacy agenda and approaches.
- Staff the organizational committee responsible for adopting positions on legislation and budget proposals at the state and federal levels.
- Lead planning and execution of annual advocacy days in Sacramento and Washington, DC.

Team Collaboration

- Work collaboratively with colleagues across the Association to develop and implement effective external advocacy strategies and communications.
- Partner with internal colleagues to develop member service programs that help build the First 5 network's advocacy capacity and effectiveness.
- Maintain a collaborative, cross-functional, team-oriented approach and demonstrate leadership in the organization.

Qualifications:

Knowledge and Education

- Knowledge of children's and family issues strongly preferred;
- At least five years of experience working in the policy and advocacy arena (e.g., state legislature or administration, Capitol Hill, public affairs firm, trade association, nonprofit policy and advocacy organization);
- Bachelor's degree or equivalent combination of college and work experience;

Skills and Capabilities

- Demonstrated ability to work with government officials at the state and/or federal levels, preferably with experience in California;
- Political advocacy and analytical skills; track record of sound judgment, problem-solving, and high decision quality in complex, multi-faceted situations and political environments;
- Demonstrated ability to develop, recommend and execute advocacy strategies for accomplishing strategic policy and legislative objectives;
- Demonstrated experience building partnerships and forging consensus among stakeholders; a proven ability to work in coalition;
- Excellent communication skills and highly effective presenter, with the ability to convey complex concepts clearly, both orally and written;
- Excellent interpersonal skills, approachable, strong listening and synthesis skills, ability to maintain composure in a range of situations, acts with high degree of integrity and trust, dedicated to continuing to learn and grow professionally;

- Ability to set priorities and manage multiple projects in a fast-paced, ever evolving environment;
- Team oriented, collaborative with capacity to build strong peer relationships and work effectively on cross-functional issues and teams;

Location and Travel

- Position location: Flexible within California.
- Frequent travel to the State Capitol in Sacramento, CA. Some travel within California and to Washington, DC required. For local/regional travel, valid California Class C Driver license and valid automobile insurance needed or the ability to utilize an alternative method of transportation when needed to carry out job-related essential functions.

Compensation

Salary is commensurate with experience and will begin at \$130,000.

It is the policy of First 5 Association to afford equal opportunity in all aspects of employment to all persons without discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, ethnicity, age, physical or mental disabilities, color, marital status, sexual orientation or medical condition, or any other basis protected by law. This policy shall apply to all employees and applicants for employment, and extends to all phases of employment, including hiring, training, promotion, discharge or layoff, rehiring, compensation and benefits.

Please send a cover letter and resume, each as a separate PDF, to applications@first5association.org. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis until filled.

About First 5 Association of California

First 5 Association of California is a member organization that supports the 58 county commissions and works with our members, First 5 California, and many external partners and experts to advance programs, systems and policies to improve early childhood outcomes in California. Grounded in a whole child/whole family framework that advances equity, prevention and systems coordination, First 5 seeks to build comprehensive and integrated early childhood systems of care, with an intentional focus on Prenatal-3 during this critical stage of child development. First 5's policy framework aims to build state and federal systems of care that proactively support the wellbeing of children and families and focus on those farthest from opportunity, recognizing the disproportionate impacts that poverty, systemic racism, COVID-19, and natural disasters have had on low-income people and communities of color.

We encourage applicants to review the Association's three year Strategic Plan, first5association.org/strategicplan, and Policy Action Plan, <https://first5center.org/action-plan> to learn more about the organization.