BACKGROUND

First 5 LA is one of 58 county commissions created by Proposition 10 in November 1998, to support children from prenatal to age 5. These commissions support improved child outcomes by funding local service providers, health and learning programs, and resources tailored to meet the needs of families and communities. First 5 LA also supports policy and advocacy efforts to promote sustainable improvements in child outcomes. Proposition 10 established a dedicated funding source of a 50 cent-per-pack tax on cigarettes and a comparable tax on other tobacco products, which currently generate approximately $590 million annually statewide, of which $90 million is directed to First 5 LA. The FY 2013-14 First 5 LA budget is $212 million.

The First 5 LA Board of Commissioners is comprised of 17 members (nine voting, four ex-officio, four alternates). The Board includes voting members appointed by each of the Los Angeles County supervisors and the L.A. County departments of Children and Family Services, Public Health and Mental Health. The Chairman of the L.A. County Board of Supervisors also serves as Chairman of the First 5 LA Commission.

In its 2009-15 strategic plan, the Board of Commissioners endorsed place-based efforts as central to the strategic plan and First 5 LA’s efforts to support optimal child development. Known as Best Start, this place-based effort was allocated 45-60% of First 5 LA revenues. In June 2013, the Board adopted the Building Stronger Families framework that articulates six core family- and community-level results First 5 LA seeks in order to improve long-term outcomes for children. These results incorporate the evidence-based strengthening families protective factors. The Building Stronger Families framework reflects First 5 LA’s belief that if families are strong and communities support families, then children’s health, safety and school readiness will improve.

Joining the organization as a senior leader at a time of transition, the Director of the Best Start Communities will have the opportunity to help shape the alignment of investments within Best Start’s 14 distinct geographic communities with First 5 LA’s countywide investments and strategies, and will lead the department team from being primarily a planning organization to one that is focused on implementation and results. In so doing, the Director of Best Start Communities will have an opportunity to positively impact one of the largest, most diverse place-based efforts in the nation.

More information is available at www.first5la.org.
**POSITION SUMMARY**

Reporting to the Executive Management of First 5 LA, the Director of Best Start Communities will lead First 5 LA’s place-based initiative, which includes community-specific efforts in 14 geographic areas in Los Angeles County. The Director will provide day-to-day management of a team of twenty-five plus employees who are responsible for design and implementation of the overall effort. The Director will also work closely with the Director of Research and Evaluation on the programmatic evaluation of Best Start.

As a champion of the place-based approach and the *Building Stronger Families* framework, the Director will utilize evidence-based and most promising practices to promote stronger families and communities that support families. The Director will lead the implementation phase of the partnership support model and create internal capacity to make First 5 LA a statewide and national leader in the community change field.

The Director is the primary spokesperson for the Best Start Communities Department and is responsible for collaboration and coordination with both internal and external constituencies and stakeholders. The Director ensures that Department’s work is aligned with First 5 LA’s countywide investments and strategies.

**ESSENTIAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

**External Focus**

Acts as the principal champion for First 5 LA’s place-based initiative and the *Building Stronger Families* framework to support community-specific change in the 14 Best Start Communities of Los Angeles County.

Cultivates partnerships and builds coalitions with leaders in local government, media, research institutions, civil society stakeholders, funding agencies, service providers and other key stakeholders in the community change field to achieve the results called for in the *Building Stronger Families* framework’s core results.

Ensures that Best Start Communities Department implementation activities are aligned and coordinated with related activities at the community, County, and State levels.

Engages at all levels within the diverse ethnic, cultural, geographic and socio-economic populations served by First 5 LA and the 14 Best Start communities.

Directs, coordinates, supervises and authorizes departmental reports, board materials and special presentations. Acts as the primary spokesperson for the Department. Makes presentations to Commissioners, top management and local communities.

Stays abreast of emerging trends in the fields of family strengthening and healthy communities, including evidence-based and most-promising practices, and public policy.
Internal Focus

Leads and supervises departmental staff of 6 subordinate managers, 21 program officers and two administrative assistants to develop the overall strategy, activities and business model for community partnerships to ensure success in implementing Best Start’s approach to community change.

Leads departmental internal capacity building – including professional and team development, programmatic understanding, functional expertise, clarity of roles and responsibilities and standards for operational excellence

Examines the staff/independent consultant configuration and proposes an approach that promotes maximum effectiveness in determining which projects and tasks are best to outsource and which should be led internally.

Leads the development of the Best Start Communities department budget, and tracks team performance against plan. Working with the Director of Finance; makes funding recommendations to the Chief Operating Officer and the Executive Director.

Integrates Best Start Communities Department planning with Finance, Public Affairs, Community Investments, Policy, Program Development and Research and Evaluation Departments; aligns the Building Stronger Families framework and place-based work overall with the countywide activities across First 5 LA departments.

Manages day-to-day operations to achieve the Department’s goals, ensures successful employee onboarding, communicates performance expectations, measures progress, holds staff accountable, and recognizes achievement and lessons learned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Education

Bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university in the fields of social science, health, education or a related academic field. Master’s Degree preferred.

Experience

Minimum of fifteen years of professional experience in managing a community-based program within a major metropolitan area. Minimum of seven years of supervisorial experience. Two years of professional experience will be credited for every one year of post-secondary education required for this position.

Substantial experience in place-based family strengthening and healthy communities efforts; including the successful design and implementation of community-level initiatives and community advocacy.
Proven track-record for leading organizations through change. Ability to work with others respectfully and collegially, and to collaborate to truly build an internal “learning culture.”

Significant experience working with a range of civil society stakeholders, including policymakers, private sector leaders, parents and community residents.

**Knowledge & Abilities**

Sophisticated knowledge of evidence-based and most-promising practices in place-based strategies and community strengthening efforts.

Ability to lead organizational capacity building, conceptualize program ideas and strategies, and translating them into well-defined roles and responsibilities for the Department staff.

Proficiency in strategic and operational planning, including annual plans, budget preparation and management of annual budgets of no less than $10 million.

Ability to effectively advocate for the Best Start Communities Department, and First 5 LA policies and procedures required to empower the community-based work. Ability to manage “up” and “speak truth to power” when necessary.

Proven reputation as an effective coach and mentor of teams of no less than 10 people. Ability to objectively and equitably hold staff accountable for results.

Effectively manages multiple and often simultaneous tasks, and creates a work environment that is recognized for a high level of ethical integrity, organization, timeliness, cost-effectiveness, accuracy, and results.

Understanding of the ethnic, cultural, geographic and socio-economic diversity of the populations served by First 5 LA and the 14 Best Start communities, as well as the ability to effectively engage at all levels within those communities.

**Personal Qualities**

Impeccable integrity, positive attitude, mission-driven and self-directed with a demonstrated passion for First 5 LA’s mission.

Community-oriented leader with a proven track record of understanding, respecting and incorporating community interests and input into organizational processes and decision making.

Highly effective advocate for the community, using a “bottom up” approach to addressing community problems and challenges in the context of First 5 LA’s public governance structure.

Politically astute and tactful; attentive to the perspectives and competing interests of various internal and external stakeholders.

Fundamentally respectful of others, committed to diversity and inclusion; values a diversity of perspectives and encourages contributions by all team members.
Adaptable and reliable in the face of conflict, crisis, or changing priorities.

Understands and values quality improvement, applies managerial and technical skills to measure and improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Rapidly acquires knowledge, exercises good judgment in its application, and effectively manages overlapping projects and deadlines.

Active and engaged listener. Authentic and genuine interpersonal skills.

**Language Skills**

Excellent and experienced communicator, with a demonstrated record of making effective and persuasive presentations on controversial or complex topics to a wide range of audiences from policymakers and senior executives to community residents.

Ability to read, analyze, and interpret complex documents, and respond effectively to the most sensitive inquiries or complaints.

Fluency in Spanish is highly desired.

**Computer Skills**

Proficiency in MS Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook) and Internet Explorer or other widely used and supported Internet browsers.

**Travel Requirements**

Extensive travel locally to the 14 Best Start communities in Los Angeles County. Statewide and national travel as needed.

*The statements in this narrative represent typical elements, criteria, and general work performed; they are not to be construed as an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and skills required for the position.*

### COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

**Compensation**

Competitive senior executive salary commensurate with experience.

**Health Benefits**

First 5 LA pays for 100% of the premiums for medical, dental, vision benefits, and for life and long-term disability insurance policies; benefit eligibility takes effect on the first of the month following 30 days of employment.

**Paid Leave**

10 days of vacation per year, 15 days after three (3) years of service, to a maximum of 20 days per year after four (4) years of service. 10 days of sick leave per year. 12 paid holidays per year.
APPLICATION PROCESS

Please direct all inquiries, recommendations and resumes to Julie Justus McGinity, Principal, Justus McGinity Executive Search at First5LA@j2mconsult.onmicrosoft.com. Interested candidates are encouraged to submit resumes promptly. There is no established deadline for the submission of applications; résumé will be accepted until the position is filled. Only candidates who move beyond the review of submitted written materials will be contacted.

Equal Opportunity Employer

First 5 LA 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, martial 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.