



First 5 LA Chief Operating Officer

POSITION
ANNOUNCEMENT



■ Background and Context

First 5 LA is a public agency, mandated to achieve results that improve the lives of children, prenatal to age 5, and their families. The agency, while established as a result of the voter-approved California Children and Families Act (Proposition 10) of 1998, is not part of county government. Being an independent public agency allows us the flexibility to design and test new ways of doing work and implement innovative strategies that maximize resources for the greatest number of young children and their families across LA County – today, and for generations to come.

Since our inception, we have invested more than \$2 billion in county and community efforts to improve conditions for young children and families. The FY 2021-2022 budget of \$114.3 million makes First 5 LA one of the largest investors in early childhood well-being in the country.

The impact we seek is grounded in our focus on systems change – i.e., advancing policy and practice change within county and community systems and building collective will among multiple and diverse stakeholders to achieve the results we seek. But we know we cannot achieve systems change alone. Our status as a public agency, relationships with communities and some of the largest family-serving public systems and resources in the country put us

in a unique position to make meaningful progress toward our highest aspirations for children, their families, and communities.

We are passionate about the vision and mission of First 5 LA – each inspiring us to embrace transformation and continuous improvement to optimize our organizational effectiveness and fully live our values within the agency and across the county we serve. Over the last year, we have structured the organization for success; are testing new ways of integrating our work across functions and refining operational policies and practices. We have re-affirmed our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) through an employee-driven DEI governance structure to hold ourselves accountable to our DEI commitments and develop new behaviors and habits to strengthen our organizational culture. We care deeply about these efforts and view them as essential to building an increasingly diverse, equitable, and inclusive First 5 LA.

The First 5 LA team, at all levels of the organization, is leaning-in to support the agency’s evolution into an even higher performing organization that makes intentional and meaningful progress toward strong futures for young children, their families, and communities.

For more information, please visit: www.first5la.org



■ Our North Star

Our 2020-2028 Strategic Plan articulates a bold vision – our North Star – that, by 2028, all children in Los Angeles County will enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life. While we know systems change is a long-term proposition, we also know that 2028 represents a milestone year as Los Angeles hosts the Summer Olympics. We are committed to making visible improvement in the lives of children and families and sharing with the world a Los Angeles community that collectively cares for its youngest residents.

■ Our People

Fully staffed, First 5 LA is a team of 120 people. When asked, colleagues tell us what stands out most about First 5 LA is “the people.” Our team is consistently described as passionate, creative, talented, and fun – committed to the “Why?” and “How” of our work. We are looking for individuals to join our dynamic team, contributing their time and talent to our bold North Star and the bright futures of Los Angeles County’s children.

■ Our Board of Commissioners

First 5 LA is a public agency governed by a 13-member Board of Commissioners (nine voting and four ex-officio). Board members are appointed by each of the Los Angeles County Supervisors and the County departments of Mental Health, Public Health, and Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE). The Chairman of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors designates a Board representative to serve on the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners. Each year, the Board votes on its Board chair.

Our Commissioners are county and community leaders passionate about the work of First 5 LA. They are important thought partners, providing strategic direction as well as insights and reflections derived from their lived and professional experiences and knowledge of diverse communities, issues, and efforts across the county. The Board of Commissioners meets eight times a year, with committee meetings as scheduled.

We invite you to learn about our Commissioners [here](#).

■ Our Values

First 5 LA has four organizational values – Collaboration, Integrity, Learning, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – that we aspire to showcase in our daily interactions with each other and in our work with external partners. As a public entity, we are responsible stewards of public funds and consider it imperative that these values guide our work. We embrace the energy that comes with being a work in progress as we continuously reflect and adjust to fully live these values.

COLLABORATION

Engaging with stakeholders early and often, in a manner that is open, respectful, and authentic, to effectively inform, plan and execute our work

INTEGRITY

Reflecting on our behaviors, decisions, policies, practices, and commitments and addressing inconsistencies with our values

LEARNING

Cultivating a culture of curiosity, innovation, listening with humility, and adapting to continuously improve our work and grow together to be the most effective we can be

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Advocating for fairness and promoting full participation of people with diverse identities, economic status, opinions, and beliefs within public and community systems and organizations, including our own

■ The Position

First 5 LA continues to learn and adapt its [organizational structure](#) to facilitate our internal and external work. In 2020, we restructured our organization, and the Administration Division was renamed the Center for Operational Excellence (COE) to reflect the critical role and functions it contributes to the aspirations embedded in our Strategic Plan.

First 5 LA is now seeking a Chief Operating Officer with the strategic vision, aptitude, and history of accomplishments in operational excellence and change management that promote continuous improvement, agility, and next-level performance in Finance, Contract Administration and Purchasing, Information Technology, and Facilities. The COO reports directly to the Executive Director and is a member of First 5 LA's Senior Leadership Team, which currently includes four organizational Chiefs and the Executive Vice President.

As the COO, this individual is responsible for providing vision and strategic direction to the COE, which is comprised of 27 colleagues and a budget of \$8.6 million for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. The COO directly supervises three Directors – Finance, Contract Administration and Purchasing, Information Technology, as well as the Senior Strategist, Operational Excellence. The COO is also responsible for Facilities and oversees the contract with an external property management company. In collaboration with colleagues, the COO plans, coordinates, and prioritizes COE's work to optimize internal systems and processes and maximize First 5 LA's systems change strategies.



KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE COO ARE TO:

- Facilitate effective change management strategies to optimize operational functions aligned with our organizational values and strategic direction
- Assume leadership over our existing capital improvement project (CIP), oversee hired CIP contractors, and collaborate with colleagues to prioritize the health and safety of all employees
- Partner with teams within COE and across the organization to shape and evolve a collective vision for operational excellence and key performance indicators to track progress
- Promote operational innovations in the context of hybrid, in-person, and remote work settings
- Cultivate the knowledge of COE Directors and teams to understand and articulate the strategic connection between their day-to-day work and the systems change impact we seek
- Elevate new ideas and proven strategies to leverage and maximize our resources through partnerships with L.A. County public agencies and philanthropic partners
- Contribute to our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) evolution

■ Key Areas of Oversight

The COO is expected to exemplify First 5 LA's values of collaboration, integrity, learning, and diversity, equity, and inclusion in the execution of their key responsibilities identified below. Highlights from the full job description, available [here](#), include:

- Advises the Executive Director and Commission on internal operations; effectively communicates and advocates for improvements in organizational effectiveness and champions innovative solutions
- Plans, coordinates, and prioritizes the COE's work in close collaboration with members of the senior and broader leadership teams as well as colleagues throughout the organization
- Hires, supervises, evaluates, and serves as a resource to the Directors of Finance, Contract Administration and Purchasing, and Information Technology as well as the Senior Strategist, Operational Excellence, providing high-level leadership, coaching, and strategic direction
- Manages facilities and works with the contracted property manager to ensure the physical work environment is a safe, collaborative, and productive climate for operations through planning, building services, maintenance, security, and parking
- Leads current and future capital improvement projects (CIP) to upgrade First 5 LA's building, hire and oversee CIP contractors, and collaborate with colleagues to ensure the health and safety of all employees, effective space planning, and the technological infrastructure to enable collaboration, inclusion, and communication
- Develops the COE's annual budget proposal, monitors expenditures against the budget and administrative cap, and makes adjustments as needed



■ The Ideal Candidate

The ideal person for the First 5 LA COO position is an experienced, people-centric, mission-driven, and collegial leader who is passionate about the importance of operations in living our organizational values and making meaningful progress toward our highest aspirations for children and families. They have a strong cross-functional operations background and are passionate about their role in advancing an organization's goals. The individual is an active listener, a team builder, and proactive collaborator who fosters a culture of ongoing curiosity, growth, and ingenuity, and is committed to DEI as a personal and professional journey of self-reflection and deliberate improvement. They will offer a strong track record in organizational change leadership, team and employee development, and empowering leadership in others.

The ideal candidate will bring a diversity of attributes, experience, and education that will help us achieve a collective vision for operational excellence in service of our strategic plan.

ATTRIBUTES

- Deep strategic and systems thinker with the ability to connect the administrative functions to organizational values and strategic direction
- Adaptive mindset with the demonstrated ability to work with diverse internal and external partners and stakeholders, including many within public systems, to advance aligned goals and adapt to changing contexts, opportunities, and challenges
- Emotional intelligence, change management, and communication skills to promote trust, collaboration and partnership and move teams forward through organizational change
- Demonstrated success in working with a diversity of partners to identify, design, test and spread innovative and proven approaches to address organizational goals



- Ability to foster employee growth through coaching, mentoring, and professional development aligned with the team's function and focus
- Ability to interpret and communicate operational terminology in ways that increase understanding of and commitment to operational excellence among colleagues across an organization



EXPERIENCE

- 15 years (preferred) of progressively more responsible leadership or management of a range of operational functions (finance, contracts, facilities, and information technology) in government, philanthropy, or non-profit organizations
- Experience in organizations engaged in systems change and public will-building in social services, health, early care and education or community change highly desired
- Proven track record of optimizing the effectiveness of operational functions (finance, contracts, facilities, and information technology) to achieve organizational goals
- Significant experience working in collaboration with colleagues and external partners with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, political and religious views, cultural backgrounds, lifestyles, and sexual orientation with a demonstrated track record of cultivating an environment in which colleagues with diverse backgrounds, positions, and perspectives feel welcomed, valued, and respected
- Proven track record of guiding teams or organizations through complex business process improvements that facilitate shifting mindsets and new ways of doing things
- Experience managing projects of various sizes, complexity, resources, levels of risk, and timelines in a highly organized manner and with attention to detail

EDUCATION

- Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university in public administration, business administration, finance, or a related field
- Advanced degree preferred

For the full job description, click [here](#).



■ Compensation and Benefits

SALARY

The starting salary for this position is \$220,000. The salary offer will be dependent on experience.

HEALTH BENEFITS

We pay 100% of the premiums for employee and their 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

We offer a 403(b) retirement savings and investment plan through The Standard. Eligibility for a match and non-elective contribution from First 5 LA starts immediately upon hire.

Elective Contribution: First 5 LA matches an employee's elective contribution, dollar for dollar, up

to 1% of salary the first year of completed service; up to 2% of salary after one year of completed service; up to 3% of salary after two years of completed service or more.

Non-Elective Contribution: Whether or not you contribute to your retirement savings, First 5 LA will contribute 3% of the employee's salary for less than five years of completed service; 4.5% for five-nine years; 6% for 10-14 years; 7.5% for 15 years or more.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

We offer paid vacation and sick time, 13 paid holidays, flexible work schedules, voluntary health and dependent care spending accounts, employee assistance program, life insurance, long-term disability, voluntary college savings plan, and leadership development programs.

In addition, First 5 LA's status as an independent public agency allows full-time employees to apply and possibly receive federal student loan forgiveness under the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program offered by the U.S. Department of Education.

■ Location, Travel, Residency, and Vaccine Requirements

Throughout 2021 and at the time of this posting, we have functioned as a mostly remote organization to ensure the safety and health of our employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Because the health and safety of our colleagues is so important to us, we require all employees to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, unless they are entitled to a reasonable accommodation under applicable law.

We look forward to when we can gather again with colleagues. Subject to changing public health conditions, we anticipate a transition to a hybrid work organization when it is safe to do so. Under a hybrid work context, the COO may travel locally, statewide, and nationally, as needed.

Whether a remote or hybrid work organization, working remotely is not guaranteed and is at the sole discretion of First 5 LA. We are sensitive to the varying needs and experiences of our colleagues and are in the process of designing an approach to hybrid work that meets the needs of our people and the organization.

We are so passionate about the work we do in Los Angeles County that we do not permit employees to work remotely out of state. If the ideal candidate accepts an offer from us, we require proof of in-state residency. The ideal candidate who lives outside of the Greater Los Angeles area must be able to work onsite in the First 5 LA building as needed.



■ Apply

We are partnering with Justus McGinity Executive Search for this recruitment. The position will remain open until filled. To apply for this opportunity, please electronically submit your resume, letter of interest, and a list of three professional references [here](#). The letter of interest should outline why you are interested in joining First 5 LA and your relevant accomplishments and experiences that make you the ideal candidate. Please provide two examples of why you would be a strong candidate and the key attributes you would bring to this position. Submitted materials will be screened for experience as well as alignment with our vision, priorities, and attributes for the COO role.

Confidential inquiries are encouraged and can be directed to Julie Justus McGinity via:

Email: julie@j2mconsult.onmicrosoft.com

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/julie-justus-mcginity-5800294/>

Phone: (310) 922-7965

■ Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

We are dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We celebrate the diversity of the First 5 LA team, acknowledge where we have room to grow, and are committed to creating an environment of belonging for everyone.

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to age, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, parental status, national origin, ability/disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, First 5 LA will provide reasonable accommodations upon request.

We highly encourage our diverse community to apply for the COO position, and all positions at First 5 LA, as we aim to ensure our staff reflects the diverse communities of Los Angeles County.