



**FIRST 5 LA  
EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR**

Position  
Announcement

First 5 LA is an independent public agency, mandated to improve the lives of children, prenatal to age 5, and their families created by the 1998 voter-approved California Children and Families Act (Proposition 10). Being an independent organization allows us the flexibility to design and test new ways of doing work and implement innovative strategies that strengthen child- and family-serving systems and prioritize resources to young children, their families and communities most in-need.

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Since our inception, we have invested more than \$2 billion in county and community efforts to improve conditions for young children and families. Our FY 2022-23 budget of \$105.9 million makes First 5 LA one of the largest investors in early childhood in the country. In addition to dedicated Prop 10 funds generated by state cigarette tax revenues, we have continued to diversify our revenue, attracting over \$24.5 million in other public and private resources in the last four fiscal years, and successfully securing State and LA County support of programs and services previously piloted or fully funded by First 5 LA.

Our focus is on systems change – advancing policy and practice change within county and community systems and building collective will among multiple and diverse stakeholders to improve outcomes for young children. We know we cannot achieve systems change alone. First 5 LA has the financial resources; deep relationships with parents, residents and community leaders; partnerships with the diverse family-serving public systems throughout LA County; and 24 years of experience and learning. All these assets put us in a unique position to make meaningful progress toward our highest aspirations for children, their families, and communities in the years ahead.

As a team, we are passionate about the [vision and mission of First 5 LA](#) – which inspire 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. In recent years, we have structured the organization for success, tested new ways of integrating our work across functions, and refined operational policies and practices.

We have reaffirmed our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) through an employee-led DEI governance structure to hold ourselves accountable to our DEI commitment, and developed 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.



Our 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.

Our partners describe us as a trusted agency and partner, an effective bridge between the public and private sectors, and able to move more nimbly between government and community-based organizations than LA County agencies. They say that we have stepped up to the plate on race and inequality, focused on the social safety net for children most in need, and are an effective convener with a strong internal talent capable of bringing together people working in different areas of child wellbeing and collaborating on aligned policy and system change goals. Finally, we are recognized by partners for our ability to blend, leverage and grow resources to sustain the work we have demonstrated to be highly effective for supporting the developmental potential of children from prenatal to age 5.

The fundamentals of First 5 LA are strong. The organization is: guided by a clear strategic focus on systems change; grounded in values that imbue our work together and alongside community; governed by a Board confident in First 5 LA's strategic direction; and led by a team of mission-driven, passionate, adaptive, and capable professionals – First 5 LA's greatest asset.

For more information, please visit: [www.First5LA.org](http://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. Currently, we are reflecting on our experience with this framing of our North Star as a part of our three-year strategic plan review and refinement cycle. Both the Commissioners and the staff team are deeply engaged in this work, which has affirmed support for our overall strategic focus on systems change while clarifying the outcomes we seek and refining our strategies. This review and refinement process will be completed by the end of 2022.

## OUR PEOPLE

With 118 budgeted positions, and a racially and ethnically diverse team that reflects the diversity within the communities across the county, First 5 LA is an employer of choice with a high retention rate. 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 – dedicated to the “Why?” and “How” of our work. They are committed to strengthening organizational culture and living our values.

## OUR BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

First 5 LA is 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). Each year, the Board votes on its Board chair.

Our Commissioners are county and community leaders passionate about the work of First 5 LA and confident in its strategic direction. They are important thought partners, providing strategic direction as well as insights and reflections derived from their lived and professional experience 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](#).

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. We are responsible stewards of public funds and believe it is imperative that we use these values to 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.

# OUR 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

First 5 LA is seeking an Executive Director (ED) to build upon the organization's strong strategic foundation and accelerate its influence and impact.

## THE POSITION

Reporting to the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners, the ED leads the vision, overall strategy and direction of First 5 LA. They are a visible countywide and statewide early childhood development leader, representing First 5 LA across a variety of county and state policy and systems change efforts. In collaboration with the Board, the First 5 LA team, and community partners, the ED leads First 5 LA's efforts to advance systems change (policy, practice, community norm change) within child- and family-serving systems.

The ED oversees a seven-member Senior Leadership Team, comprising the leaders of the Center for Operational Effectiveness, Center for Child and Family Impact, and the Offices of Data for Action; Equity, Strategy and Learning; Communications; and Government Affairs and Public Policy. They also oversee the Executive Director's Office, which is led by a Chief of Staff.

As the leader of the organization, the ED will be a champion of and passionate about improving outcomes for children prenatal to age 5 and their families, particularly those facing the greatest inequities in outcomes and opportunities. They will bring strategic and visionary leadership to First 5 LA; have a track record of success in organizational and change management; be skilled at communicating with and building effective relationships and coalitions across a wide array of public, philanthropic and community partners; and understand and model the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in all aspects of their work.



Our First 5 LA team highlighted these skills and traits as important for the next Executive Director's success in leading the agency: emotionally intelligent leader who demonstrates self-awareness, humility, empathy, and personal accountability; inclusive leader committed to collaborating and seeking diverse perspectives to inform decision-making; and transformational leader committed to building and modeling an organizational culture of belonging, healing and trust. Commissioners and employees identified a number of priorities for the next ED:

- Sharpen organizational goals and prioritize strategies to achieve outcomes
- Strengthen organizational culture, living our values of collaboration, integrity, learning, and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI); and contributing to the organization's DEI journey
- Leverage and maximize First 5 LA's resources through partnerships with LA County public agencies, philanthropic partners, and policy makers, while right-sizing expenditures to align with declining tobacco tax revenues
- Enhance community stakeholder engagement by deeply listening to and clearly and accessibly communicating with the communities working alongside First 5 LA
- Strengthen cross-system integration to reduce fragmentation within child- and family-serving systems so that they work for children and their families



# KEYS AREAS OF OVERSIGHT

The ED 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.

## ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The ED will supervise staff, empowering team members in their areas of expertise and responsibility while providing mentorship and support where needed. They will ensure cohesion and mission-focus across the organization's programmatic, financial, and operational functions. Essential to these efforts will be the strategic and responsive engagement of the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners.

## VISION AND STRATEGIC PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND REFINEMENT

The ED will bring strategic and visionary leadership to First 5 LA. They will have a successful track record as a collaborator, convener, executor, and innovator. Working in collaboration with Commissioners, employees, stakeholders, and community partners, the ED takes a comprehensive view of First 5 LA's strengths, challenges, and opportunities to implement and refine First 5 LA's strategic plan in alignment with the organization's resources.

## CULTURE-BUILDING AND ADVANCING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Grounded in the organization's staff-led DEI governance process, which actively involves more than 60 team members, the ED will work with staff to identify and implement practices that foster a culture of trust, healing and belonging, and an environment that supports the individual and collective success of a diverse team. They will model and practice a mindset that fosters a learning culture and informs strategy and operational refinements.

## EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The ED serves as a champion for programmatic and policy initiatives aimed at advancing First 5 LA's goals. Working with First 5 LA's internal team and external partners, the ED will build on strategic opportunities for First 5 LA in the areas of policy development, advocacy, government relations, partnerships and community engagement. The ED will be a strong facilitator, clear communicator and collaborator who is skilled at listening to and learning from diverse community voices and parents with lived experience in the communities historically underserved and hardest to reach.



## THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

First 5 LA's next ED will be an experienced, people-centric, results-focused and collegial leader who is passionate about First 5 LA's mission and strategic direction. They will exhibit strategic, inclusive and adaptive leadership, systems thinking, strong "plain speak" communications skills, change management practices, and people management skills. They will embrace the use and power of data and parent voice to call attention to issues and drive systems-level change. They will bring a strong orientation to fiscal stewardship, the strategic use of public funds, and growing state and county investments in the outcomes we seek for young children and families.

The ideal candidate is an active listener, a team builder, and proactive collaborator who fosters a culture of belonging, healing and trust and is committed to DEI as a personal and professional journey of self-reflection and deliberate improvement. And, the individual will possess a high level of emotional intelligence to cultivate and maintain trusting relationships with both internal and external stakeholders and partners.





## ATTRIBUTES

- Deep strategic and systems thinker with the ability to connect the programmatic and 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 Center or Office team's function and focus
- Ability to communicate First 5 LA's systems change goals and terminology in ways that increase understanding of and commitment to child- and family-level outcomes among employees, the Board, community members and stakeholders

## EXPERIENCE

- At least 15 years of progressively more responsible leadership or management in complex environments advancing community-focused and community-centered change and successfully influencing colleagues at all levels of leadership across an organization
- Experience managing complex programs or organizational budgets. Proven capacity to develop strategic and responsive financial and administrative planning processes that are inclusive and adaptive to changing priorities. Experience managing public systems and budget processes, at the local, county and/or state level in California, is highly desirable
- 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 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 and leading teams or organizations through complex change processes that facilitate shifting mindsets and new ways of working
- An understanding of child development, early learning, community health, social determinants of health and the unique dynamics of work in and alongside parents, residents and local government
- Understanding of and respect for the lived experience of families with young children and a passion for helping communities work toward equitable systems change
- Success in coalition-building and working effectively with diverse groups of people, including the acumen and humility to work in a cross-cultural manner
- Working experience in California and Los Angeles County public policy and advocacy environments, especially as they relate to children, their families and communities
- A sophisticated understanding of building relationships across different sectors, networks, fields and geographies in order to identify and advance common visions of success
- Ability to respectfully and adeptly communicate, interact and facilitate conversations with institutional leaders, policy leaders, parents, and community members alike, especially those from differing backgrounds
- Deep humility and respect for the communities with which First 5 LA partners
- A sense of humor

## EDUCATION

- A Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university, and an advanced degree is desirable. The First 5 LA Board recognizes that academic credentials alone are not indicative of leadership experience and potential; a mix of professional background and lived experience will be strongly considered in place of formal advanced degrees.

# COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

## SALARY

We offer an attractive public sector executive salary, eligibility for an annual performance bonus at the discretion of the Board, car allowance and severance package (pursuant to negotiated employment agreement). 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.

First 5 LA supports professional development coaching at the employer's expense.

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.

## HYBRID WORK, VACCINE REQUIREMENTS, LOCATION, RESIDENCY

Since March 2020, First 5 LA has functioned as a mostly remote organization to ensure the safety and health of our employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since mid-April 2022, we have begun to test a hybrid approach, enabling colleagues to return to in-person and onsite work on a voluntary basis. 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.

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 are so passionate about the work we do in Los Angeles County that we do not permit employees to work remotely out-of-state, and we require proof of in-state residency. The ideal candidate will live in the Greater Los Angeles area, and be able to work onsite in the First 5 LA building.





# APPLY

We are partnering with Justus McGinity Executive Search for this recruitment. To apply for this opportunity, please submit a resume and cover letter to [First5LA.ED@gmail.com](mailto:First5LA.ED@gmail.com). Submitted materials will be screened for experience as well as alignment with our vision, priorities, and attributes for the ED role.

The approximate timeline for the recruitment is as follows:

LATE SEPTEMBER	MID-OCTOBER	LATE OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
Presentation of Candidates to Executive Committee	Round One Interviews with Executive Committee	Finalist Interviews with Board of Commissioners	Targeted Date to Approve Contract of New Executive Director

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



[julie@j2mconsult.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:julie@j2mconsult.onmicrosoft.com)



(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 ED position, and all positions at First 5 LA, as we aim to ensure our staff reflects the diverse communities of Los Angeles County.

