



Chief Executive Officer

San Jose, CA

FIRST 5 Santa Clara County seeks a dynamic, inquisitive, and highly collaborative leader to serve as its next Chief Executive Officer. Working closely with the FIRST 5 Santa Clara County Commission and leading a talented staff of more than 50 professionals, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will lead efforts to align the organization's grantmaking, resources, and advocacy with shifting community needs. This is particularly important as County communities—mirroring the national moment—seek to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic while advancing racial justice, social equity, and economic mobility. This is an exciting opportunity for a committed and seasoned executive to leverage FIRST 5 Santa Clara County's 20+ year momentum to ensure all children ages 0-5 and their families throughout Santa Clara County have equitable access to care, education, and health services.

FIRST 5 Santa Clara County (FIRST 5) is one of 58 First 5 Commissions across California, which directs funds from a special tobacco tax for the benefit of young children and their families. It is the sixth-largest Commission in the state, serving a county-wide population of 1.93 million. Santa Clara County has a unique population, split almost evenly between those who identify as Latinx, Asian-American/Pacific Islander, and White. Importantly, three-fourths of children ages zero to five in the county are children of color. It will be critical that the next CEO of FIRST 5 understands these dynamics and ensures that the organization and its partners continue to invest in culturally responsive and relevant programs and services. In this way, FIRST 5 finds itself at a moment of evolution as the broader Santa Clara County community, reflecting national conversations around racial injustice and disparities, works to build community power for all citizens and noncitizens.

Building on the success of a founding CEO who has led the organization for more than two decades and established FIRST 5 as a regional and statewide leader in programming, policy change, and community collaboration, the new leader will direct the next chapter of growth and maturation. Under the direction of the FIRST 5 Santa Clara County Commission, the CEO will work to strengthen the organization's financial sustainability, lead the development of new planning and innovations, and co-create the future vision for FIRST 5 along with the external partners and staff. Declining revenue from tobacco sales means that FIRST 5 will have to reexamine how it raises funds from third parties and how it provides grants and sponsors programs. The next CEO will lead this external engagement, working to secure new funding and identify opportunities to partner with organizations that maximize impact and unlock shared potential. The CEO will also further develop the organizational structure and systems that ensure a working environment in which all of the organization's personnel can thrive.

More than just a standalone organization, FIRST 5 functions as a true organism of the communities it serves. Community-based organizations, school systems, county government, and families all plug into FIRST 5 in various ways—from program to services to policy development. The organization serves as a critical regional convener to advance new ideas and share information. Family Resources Centers (FRCs)—where many programs and services are offered to community members—are truly embedded in neighborhoods and schools. These centers are a shining example of the collaboration between FIRST 5 and communities, with many staff and institutional partners identifying them as growth opportunities. Many FRCs are managed by and co-located with



community-based organizations like schools, direct services providers, or cultural centers. FRCs serve as hubs for many of the education programs, trainings, social services, and convenings sponsored by FIRST 5. In this sense they embody the best that FIRST 5 has to offer: providing services that are core to its mission while bringing people together to innovate. It is a county-wide infrastructure that is both powerful and unique among all other FIRST 5s in the state.

The ideal candidate is expected to have a bachelor's degree and at least ten years of progressive experience working with community-based organizations, anchor institutions, and/or policy-setting groups to further positive social change. An advanced degree (MPA, MPP, MSW) or related certification is desirable, but not required. The successful candidate will have demonstrated expertise in designing and developing community programs/projects, experience working with boards or commissions of complex organizations, and proven ability to build and maintain cross-sector collaborative partnerships. A proven track record of convening diverse groups to identify, pursue, and achieve shared missions and goals is a must. A background in early childhood development, policy, education, or health is ideal, but those with a strong passion for young children and families and a commitment to social, racial, and health equity are encouraged to apply.

Previous experience working in a complex organization, preferably in collaborative environments (associations, networks, coalitions, etc.) is highly desired, as is the maturity to successfully navigate and collaborate with a kaleidoscope of organizations and community leaders with different missions. The successful candidate will be a strong relationship builder. Excellent organizational and interpersonal skills are necessary, including the curiosity and open-mindedness to work with diverse communities and promote new ideas. Strong verbal and written communications skills are required. A personal and professional commitment to equity and inclusiveness is critical.

FIRST 5 Santa Clara County

An independent government agency, FIRST 5 Santa Clara County stewards the investment of Proposition 10 funds throughout Santa Clara County for the benefit of all children ages zero to five and their families. Passed in 1998, Proposition 10 added taxes on cigarette and other tobacco products to fund early childhood health, development and education programs, family supports, and systems change efforts designed to improve services for young children and their families. FIRST 5 Santa Clara County operates under the fiscal and policy direction of the nine-member FIRST 5 Santa Clara County Commission.

As community needs have grown and shifted over the last two decades, FIRST 5 has sought to increase its programmatic, advocacy, and grantmaking efforts by diversifying its sources of revenue and partnerships. Today, the organization's annual revenue is \$27 million and is partnered with a wide array of local, regional, and national partners to pursue its mission of supporting the healthy development of children, from prenatal through age five, and enriching the lives of their families and communities.

This posting is available online at <https://talentcitizen.com/active-searches/f5scc-ceo/>. FIRST 5 Santa Clara County's website is <https://first5kids.org>.



The Chief Executive Officer Position

FIRST 5 Santa Clara County is at an exciting inflection point and is seeking a strategic, culturally competent, and inclusive CEO to lead the organization forward. They will build on the legacy of the founding CEO while uplifting staff expertise and collaborating with a wide range of external constituents, including community members, elected officials, policymakers, funders, and school district leaders.

Core Responsibilities and Duties

Vision and Strategic Planning

Working in collaboration with Commissioners, staff, FIRST 5 families, and community partners, the CEO will take a comprehensive view of FIRST 5's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for evolution and lead others to realize a shared vision for the future of the organization. This will require the CEO to be as much of an active and responsive listener as it will be for them to have a clear voice of leadership.

Culture-Building and Advancing Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Recognizing the critical moment for the organization, it will be as important—if not more important—for the next CEO to lead change management efforts internally so that all staff reach their full potential with the full support and celebration by organizational leadership. In consultation with the Commission, the CEO will lead staff to identify and implement practices that foster an inclusive, equitable culture and an environment that supports the individual and collective success of a diverse team. They will ensure that staff members have the resources and support needed to succeed within their roles and engage across areas of difference both with internal and external constituents. In addition, they will build strong practices for effective and transparent communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution.

External Relations

The CEO will build on FIRST 5's strong reputation and relationships with external supporters and champions, including representing the organization with funders, policymakers, and partners. Working with internal staff and consultants, they will identify and build on appropriate opportunities for FIRST 5 in the areas of fundraising, advocacy, policy, government relations, and strategic partnerships.

Organizational Leadership

The CEO will supervise staff, empowering leaders 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 operations functions. Essential to these efforts will be the strategic and responsive engagement of the FIRST 5 Commission, from meeting agenda construction to Commissioner and committee development.

Key Indicators of Success for the Next CEO

Through input and suggestions from FIRST 5 staff, community-based organizations, and institutional partners, the FIRST 5 Santa Clara County Commission has identified the following seven key indicators that will be critical for the next CEO's success. Both the Commission and Talent Citizen recognize that different candidates will bring different qualities, professional backgrounds, and lived experiences in varying permutations and we will take an



appreciative inquiry approach in assessing candidates. We are holding this as core to bringing an equity lens to the process.

Adaptive Strategy and Vision Setting: Ability to solicit input from multiple stakeholders, identify immediate and longer-term needs, balance internal and external factors, implement best practices that are culturally responsive.

Partner and Network Development: Success in working closely with multiple constituencies, leveraging each stakeholder/partner strengths and reach, and looking across different teams and functions to recognize shared potential and value.

Policy, Advocacy, and Systems Change: Serve as a champion for programmatic and policy initiatives aimed at the well-being of children and young families; build coalitions to uplift policy solutions; garner support by engaging institutional leaders, policy professionals, and community members.

Racial and Social Equity: Deep understanding of social justice and how race and bias impact what we believe, how we think, and what we do; track record of centering that throughout their work. Attuned to cross-over movements.

Resource Development: Ability to identify and leverage funding support and partnerships that maximize impact through new relationships, streamlining current processes, or pooling of resources.

Operational and Financial Management: Effective financial management and planning; having a clear picture of potential deficits and the need for operational adjustments in future planning.

Trust-Based Leadership: Capacity to gain and maintain confidence among various stakeholders. Intentionally build professional growth within the organization. Create opportunities for dialog in decision making.

QUALIFICATIONS

- A bachelor's degree and at least 10 years of working in a complex environment advancing community-focused and community-centered change. An advanced degree (e.g., MPA, MPP, MSW) is desirable, but the FIRST 5 Santa Clara County Commission 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 degrees.
- Experience managing a complex program or organizational budget. Proven capacity to develop strategic and responsive financial and administrative planning processes that are inclusive and adaptive to changing priorities. Experience working in and with governmental budget processes, especially at county and state level in California, is highly desirable.
- Proven ability to engage staff from diverse backgrounds and at all levels of professional experience in a deep, authentic way that empowers individuals and teams to be simultaneously collaborative and honest.
- The capacity to absorb criticism and self-reflect on shifting responsibilities of a leader maturely and responsively.



- An understanding of child development, education, community health, social determinants of health, and the unique dynamics of working in and with local government. A passion for helping communities work toward progressive and equitable 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.
- Knowledge of California public policy and advocacy environments, especially as they relate to children and families.
- A sophisticated understanding of building relationships across different sectors, 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, and community members alike, especially those from differing backgrounds.
- Ability to think strategically and creatively, utilize critical thinking and analysis skills, and demonstrate the ability to transform new ideas into executable and successful programs.
- A strong interest in and commitment to the work of FIRST 5 Santa Clara County.
- Excellent verbal and interpersonal communication and writing skills.
- Deep humility and respect for the communities with which FIRST 5 partners.
- A sense of humor and appreciation of team-based fun.

Compensation & Benefits

The salary range for the Chief Executive Officer position **\$210,000-\$240,000** and is set by the FIRST 5 Santa Clara County Commission. The organization provides comprehensive benefits—medical, dental, vision, retirement, etc.—and relocation expenses for this position.

How to Apply or Nominate Candidates

FIRST 5 Santa Clara County has retained Talent Citizen, an executive search and consulting firm in pursuit of positive social impact with equity at its center, to assist in this recruitment. A firm with national reach, Talent Citizen also has a local presence in Santa Clara County. President Tracy D. Welsh, Senior Associate Rachel K. Partin, and Senior Associate Connor Daley are leading this search.

Candidates should submit a resume/CV and a cover letter outlining your interest, the reasons why you are best suited to the position and would be a great addition to the FIRST 5 team, and where you learned of the position to F5SCC-CEO@talentcitizen.com.

Nominations of potential candidates and any questions about the search should be sent directly to Senior Associate Connor Daley (cdaley@talentcitizen.com).

PLEASE NOTE: FIRST 5 Santa Clara County is a public entity. While all nominations and applications to Talent Citizen will be confidential, candidates who proceed to advanced interview stages with the FIRST 5 Santa Clara County Commission and/or additional stakeholders should be prepared to engage in public conversations/disclosure before a hiring decision is made.