



Policy and Communications Director

Reports to: Executive Director

Department: Policy and Communications

Employment Status and Work Schedule

This is an exempt, full-time position, 40 hours per workweek. Some evening and weekend hours required.

Position Summary

First 5 Contra Costa is making a strategic shift to play a larger role as an advocate for policies that will sustain and expand systems for young children and their families. To that end, the Policy and Communications Director is responsible for aligning and strengthening our efforts in advocacy, evaluation, research and communications to better support First 5 Contra Costa's (First 5) role as a leader in the development of effective and sustainable services for children and families.

The Policy and Communications Director will be responsible for devising a comprehensive approach to formulating First 5's advocacy strategies, from eliciting broad community engagement, to developing useful strategic information, to steering a robust communications effort. S/he will serve as a leader in the County supporting advocacy efforts relating to children 0-5 years old and will participate in county, regional and state initiatives to advance policies improving the status of young children and their families.

The Policy and Communications Director will engage in strategic and thought partnership with the leadership team, particularly with the Executive Director, Deputy Director and the Finance and Operations Director. S/he will seek out and maintain strong relationships with local, regional and statewide organizations similarly advocating for young children. The Policy and Communications Director also plays a key role in the development and monitoring of the Commission's strategic plan.

The ideal candidate is a strong strategic thinker with experience and knowledge in advocacy, research and communications, and a proven ability to make the case for change in organizational practice and social policy. S/he is a problem-solver and strong analytical thinker who can quickly adapt to changing needs and opportunities. S/he is a forward thinker who excels at using data to create persuasive information. The Policy and Communications Director must have high standards for excellence as s/he oversees the work of a team of staff and contractors engaged in advocacy, program evaluation, research and communications. S/he is comfortable representing First 5 Contra Costa while engaging stakeholders, including residents, providers, agency directors, and First 5s around the state.

About First 5 Contra Costa

First 5 Contra Costa helps young children grow up healthy and ready to learn during the most important time in their development. We have nearly 20 years of experience funding innovative programs and advocating for policies that produce better futures for our children. Since our inception, First 5 Contra Costa has invested more than \$140 million in Prop. 10 revenues to programs and services that help Contra Costa's children get the best start in life. Learn more at first5coco.org.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Ensures First 5 has a coherent and aligned set of advocacy, evaluation, research and communications activities that promote First 5's mission, sustain services for children, families and providers, and communicate the status and needs of children and families in Contra Costa County.
- Oversees First 5's engagement strategies with stakeholders, elected officials, business leaders and others in advocacy activities to promote policies that support young children and families.
- Directs the development of timely and persuasive information describing the countywide trends for children and families in Contra Costa County, collaborating with other agencies as needed.
- Ensures timely communication of overall impact of programs and activities funded and engaged in by First 5 Contra Costa.
- Collaborates closely with staff to ensure that data and information development is closely aligned with First 5's strategic plan and with emerging strategic directions.
- Participates as a key staff leader in developing and reporting progress on First 5's strategic plan.
- Plans periodic events, publications, and updates relating to local advocacy and policy for children and families, including using existing data and information from local and state agencies, as well as commissioning new information-gathering processes.
- Tracks and communicates to appropriate audiences new and updated information and research relating to early childhood development, early childhood education, child health, and related areas.
- Oversees evaluation staff and contractors to ensure effective design and implementation of First 5's evaluation framework, and timely development and transmission of data required or requested by outside funders, including the First 5 California annual report.
- Develops partnerships with local and state agencies to identify and promote key indicators of the health, welfare and education of Contra Costa's children and families.
- Develops a comprehensive advocacy strategy, and represents First 5, in local, regional and statewide efforts to advance policies to support young children and their families.
- Designs and implements a comprehensive communications plan that supports First 5's strategic plan and outlines external and internal communications goals.
- Directs further development of communications components including First 5's website, Commission meeting presentations and reports, county and regional report cards, fact sheets, social media alerts, newsletters and others.
- Collaborates with staff to ensure quality and consistency of messaging and products intended for community use.
- Ensures that results from program monitoring, research and impact are used to inform future strategic direction
- Provides sufficient and effective supervision and team leadership to ensure the high levels of competency and productivity needed to meet agency needs, and to comply with all agency policies and procedures.

- Negotiates and procures professional contracts as needed and monitors to ensure successful and effective completion of work tasks.
- Serves as a member of the management team providing input on decision-making regarding First 5's operational, policy and program direction.

Supervisory Responsibilities

This position supervises the Research Analyst, the Database Coordinator, Communications Assistant II and the Strategic Information and Planning Assistant II.

Desired Qualifications

- Demonstrated strategic and innovative abilities, particularly in using information and communications as tools to promote policy and advocacy efforts.
- Demonstrated capability for project or program management, including planning, monitoring and delivering results on a timely basis.
- Successful experience motivating and supporting supervisees, including developing work plans, providing constructive feedback, and developing effective teams.
- Successful experience in team development, capitalizing on strengths for greater accomplishment.
- Ability to creatively and strategically use data to inform decision-making and persuade opinion.
- Strong analytical capacities, particularly in determining the alignment and fit between information and need.
- Experience participating in advocacy efforts to change norms, opinions or policies, whether through collaborative efforts, social marketing, direct access to decision-makers or other means.
- Knowledge and experience with strategic planning principles, particularly in gathering and holding supportive information and input from multiple sources to inform strategic decision-making.
- Demonstrated experience in developing budgets and using financial reports to monitor and manage department budget.
- Knowledge of trends, policies and other issues relating to children and families, such as child health, early childhood education, child development, and family support.
- Demonstrated ability to thoughtfully consider high-level strategies and determine successful methods and tactics to achieve them.
- Demonstrated strong professional manner, including the willingness to respect and include the perspectives of others with diverse backgrounds and experiences, in accordance with First 5's commitment to equity and cultural humility.
- Demonstrated capacity to adapt to change in a transforming environment.
- Capacity and sufficient comfort to form productive relationships with stakeholders within and outside First 5.
- Able to identify and employ useful tools and techniques to plan and organize work and use resources effectively.
- Strong writing and presentation skills demonstrating ability to tailor communications for particular audiences.
- Proficient in the use of MS Office applications including Excel, Word and PowerPoint; familiarity with Access or other database programs; familiarity with social, print and other media platforms.
- Valid CA driver's license and automobile insurance.

Preferred, but not required

- Experience working in or with a funding agency, understanding of RFP and allocation processes, including contracting and grant monitoring.
- Experience working with governing bodies, including boards of directors, advisory boards, commissions.
- Knowledge of Contra Costa County.
- Bi-lingual in Spanish.

Minimum Education and Experience

Master's Degree in Public Policy, Child Development, Education, Public Health, Social Welfare, or similar field and at least seven years of progressive project management experience in public policy, advocacy, research, strategic communications or similar endeavor.

This job description describes the general nature and level of work performed. It is not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and expectations required of the position. Duties, responsibilities and activities may change.

Salary and Benefits

Starting salary range is commensurate with experience and education. First 5 Contra Costa offers a comprehensive benefits package.

How to Apply

Please submit your resume and a letter of introduction that summarizes why you are ideally suited to this position.

Electronic submissions should include ***Policy and Communications Director*** in the subject line and be sent to: HR@first5coco.org. Or mail your submission to First 5 Contra Costa, Human Resources, 1485 Civic Court, Suite 1200, Concord, CA 94520.

Incomplete submissions will not be considered. The position will remain open until filled.

First 5 Contra Costa is an Equal Opportunity Employer