



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 14, 2020

First 5 Contra Costa Welcomes Dr. Ruth Fernández as the New Executive Director

After an extensive search, First 5 Contra Costa is pleased to announce that Ruth Fernández has accepted the position of executive director effective on January 13, 2020. Ruth had previously served as Deputy Director at First 5 Contra Costa since November 2017 and will continue to lead First 5's mission to foster the optimal development of Contra Costa children, prenatal through 5 years of age.

"It gives me great pride to start 2020 by leading First 5 Contra Costa's mission on behalf of young children and their families. It is our duty as community leaders to eradicate the systemic barriers that disproportionately affect the lives and wellbeing of children—they are our most precious resource. I am elated for the opportunity to continue to serve the county in this role." said Ruth Fernández, First 5 Contra Costa Executive Director.

Ruth brings to her role an exceptional combination of knowledge and experience working in early childhood, as well as over 20 years of experience working with diverse communities in project management, and strategic planning and system services coordination in the education and social services sectors. In 2019, she earned her Doctorate degree from Mills College of Oakland in Educational Leadership, with a concentration in Early Childhood Education. She also has a B.A. in Political Economies of Industrialized Societies from the University of California at Berkeley, and a Master's Degree in Leadership from St. Mary's College of California. Prior to her role as Deputy Director at First 5 Contra Costa, Ruth worked at the Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE) for over 12 years and helped to identify and coordinate educational services for educators working in early childhood education throughout the county.

The First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission is confident that Ruth's knowledge, leadership skills, and experience in working in early childhood will continue the organization's success and vision that all of Contra Costa's young children will be healthy, ready to learn, and supported in safe, nurturing families and communities.

"Ruth's vision for First 5 and her track record of program innovation, strategic partnership development, and effective leadership, made her the inspired choice. We are excited to usher in the next era for First 5, with Ruth at the helm." said Marilyn Cachola Lucey, Commission Chair for the First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission.

First 5 is grateful to the search firm CPS HR Consulting, First 5 staff, and the Children and Families Commission for their role and ongoing support in the decision-making process. Please join First 5 Contra Costa in welcoming Ruth and share in the excitement as we enter into a new chapter of our continual support of parents and families, and strengthening systems that give our youngest children the best start in life.

About First 5 Contra Costa:

First 5 Contra Costa helps young children start school healthy, nurtured and ready to learn by investing in programs and activities focused on children during their first five years—the most important time in children's development. <http://www.first5coco.org/>

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