



Director, Congressional Affairs

Immediate Supervisor: Vice President of Public Policy

Position Overview

The Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) is a non-partisan not-for-profit organization established in 1981, dedicated to furthering the expansion of college opportunities for low-income, first-generation students, and students with disabilities, particularly those served by the Federal TRIO Programs: Talent Search, Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math/Science, Veterans Upward Bound, Student Support Services, Educational Opportunity Centers, and the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement. We aim to ensure that every young person and adult has an equal opportunity to prepare for, attend, and graduate from college. Graduation from any category of postsecondary institution should be achievable and not limited by economic status, family background, or disability. Over 880,000 students receive college access and retention services through 3,100 TRIO programs.

We seek a highly motivated and skilled Director of Congressional Affairs (DCA) to join the Public Policy Team to help us expand opportunities for low-income, first-generation students. The DCA will serve as a part of the lobbying team for COE and advocate for TRIO on Capitol Hill and with the Administration, including work with the bicameral, bipartisan Congressional TRIO Caucus. The DCA will drive our federal relations and policy agenda forward in collaboration with other COE departments and external partners. We seek a competent and experienced individual with deep knowledge and understanding of Capitol Hill and the legislative process, excellent written and oral communication skills, and the ability to help guide and implement COE's advocacy and policy work.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Advocate before Members of Congress, the Department of Education, and the White House to advance the interests of the Council, TRIO programs, and TRIO students.
- Develop and maintain relationships with Members of Congress and staff who will champion TRIO, including working with the bicameral, bipartisan Congressional TRIO Caucus.
- Track, analyze, and help develop COE's positions and responses to legislation (both authorizing and appropriations) and Department of Education regulations and guidance documents relevant to COE's policy agenda.
- Identify strategic opportunities in the legislative and executive branches and work to build and strengthen coalitions with other national advocacy organizations to fight for first-generation and low-income students.
- Develop and strengthen COE's grassroots activity and non-partisan civic engagement efforts, including planning and executing on-line and in-person training for TRIO educators, alumni, and students.
- Play a lead role in the planning, coordination, and execution of COE's annual congressional and advocacy events, including the annual Policy Seminar (Spring fly-in meeting), National Student Leadership Congress, First-Generation College Celebration, and various Capitol Hill briefings.
- Craft and, as appropriate, deliver weekly government relations updates, conference and webinar presentations, and regular responses to field inquiries.
- Monitor the work of a rotating team of policy fellows and interns for the Public Policy unit.
- Other duties as assigned.

Required Qualifications and Experience

Education

- Bachelor's degree required; Advanced degrees such as Juris Doctor or Master's degree preferred.

Experience

- Four to six years of relevant policy experience, with an intimate understanding of the appropriations and authorization processes;
- Minimum four years Capitol Hill experience preferred at the education legislative assistant level or higher.

This is not an entry-level position.

Skills

- Self-starter, and the ability to exercise strong judgment and discretion in advocacy matters at both the strategic and tactical levels;
- Strategic thinker who can identify policy opportunities and develop and achieve a plan for success;
- Excellent oral and written communication;
- Strong organizational and project management skills;
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office applications, particularly Microsoft Excel;
- Ability to relate to and communicate with diverse groups of individuals as a trusted team player;
- Keen insight, awareness, and sensitivity into low-income students, first-generation students, students of color, students with disabilities, and other underrepresented student groups.

Salary: \$70,000-\$90,000

Salary offered is commensurate with education, relevant experience, and demonstrated abilities.

Benefits

- Comprehensive benefits package that includes:
- Medical, dental, disability, and life insurance coverage;
- Employees are eligible to participate in a retirement savings plan.
- Parking or public transportation reimbursement;
- All federal holidays, the day after Thanksgiving, and the week between December 25 and January 1.

Additional supplementary benefits contingent upon remaining fringe benefits such as:

- Tuition assistance for the employee, employee's spouse or children;
- Payment of adoption expense
- Payment or reimbursement for reasonable health club membership dues and fees.

Working Conditions

- This position is based in Washington, D.C., and requires in-office working hours, and the ability to work remotely one day a week.
- Ability to travel to conferences, meetings, and other activities as necessary (Travel approximately 25%)
- Work after business hours and on weekends as necessary.

To apply: [Please apply here](#). Note that your application cannot be saved. *The Council considers applicants for all positions without regard to race, color, religion, creed, gender, national origin, disability, marital, political, or veteran status, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected status.*