

Position Description

Policy & Advocacy Associate
Forum for Youth Investment



TITLE: Policy & Advocacy Associate
SUPERVISOR: Executive Vice President
LOCATION: The Forum for Youth Investment's headquarters in Washington, DC.
PURPOSE: The Policy & Advocacy Associate will participate in the full range of the Forum's advocacy activities.

Organization & Position Background

The Forum for Youth Investment is a nonprofit, nonpartisan "action tank" dedicated to helping communities and the nation make sure all young people are Ready by 21®: ready for college, work and life. Informed by rigorous research and practical experience, the Forum forges innovative ideas, strategies and partnerships to strengthen solutions for young people and those who care about them. The Forum is a thriving organization with more than 45 staff and an annual budget of more than eight million dollars. It is funded by a mix of foundations, corporations and fee-for-service contracts. The Forum's headquarters are in Washington, DC, with an office in Ypsilanti, Michigan focused on improving the quality of youth-serving organizations, and a small office in New York City focused on effective online storytelling and mobilization. The Policy & Advocacy Associate will be based in the Forum's Washington, DC office, and will report to the Executive Vice President who oversees the Forum's work on federal policy, Opportunity Youth, evidence-based policymaking, and racial, social and economic equity.

The Forum manages a number of centers and partnerships, including Big Picture Approach Consulting, the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, the Children's Cabinet Networks and SparkAction. In April 2018, the Forum also became the new home of Opportunity Nation, a bipartisan, national campaign to expand economic mobility and close the opportunity gap in America. The core work of the Forum is helping leaders, organizations, partnerships and systems – at the local, state and national levels – assess, improve and align their practices and policies. The Forum works in collaboration with national partners representing the education, government, nonprofit, business, and community philanthropy sectors.

Position Background & Responsibilities

The Policy & Advocacy Associate will support the Forum's efforts to change the odds that all children and youth are ready for college, work and life by improving public policies and perceptions by helping policymakers, advocates and young people to:

- align fragmented policies;
- create and use the best types of evidence in the best ways;
- communicate and advocate effectively; and
- improve racial and social equity.

This position will be the primary point person on the Forum's advocacy campaigns (including Opportunity Nation) designed to advance our policy goals. Such goals currently include increasing funding and improving policies for: interagency alignment/collective impact/place-based initiatives; disconnected youth/opportunity youth; afterschool programs, social & emotional learning/youth development outcomes such as character; and evidence-based policymaking.



Responsibilities include:

- a) Build coalitions of organizations to support the Forum's advocacy goals.
- b) Write position papers, issue briefs, and policy analyses.
- c) Draft responses to government requests for information and other opportunities to provide feedback on proposed executive branch policies.
- d) Foster relationships with key White House and congressional staff to build support for our advocacy goals.
- e) Develop and promote sign-on letters and "dear colleague" letters.
- f) Maintain our state-of-the-art Quorum software to identify policy opportunities and to track interactions with policymakers.
- g) Work with the Forum's SparkAction team to develop and promote action alerts and social media campaigns to advance the Forum's advocacy goals.
- h) Be familiar with all aspects of Forum activities in order to effectively provide a wide range of information, to screen, prepare and manage responses. This includes, and is not limited to, knowledge of Forum procedures and policies.
- i) Provide planning, administrative, and programmatic assistance to the Forum's policy advocacy team through routine tasks such as scheduling and correspondence, event planning, travel arrangements, expense reporting and data entry.
- j) Other duties as assigned.

Team Culture

We are fanatical about the values, attributes and styles of work that comprise our team culture. We seek to hire based on fit with our culture at least as much as based on credentials and work experience. Our goal isn't to judge the overarching value or quality of an applicant. Instead we are assessing how well their values, attributes and styles of work fit our own. We look for the values that make you a passionate champion of our mission, the essential attributes that make you a great part of the Forum family, and the work styles that make you a strong contributor to our team.

Mission and Values

Applicants should ask themselves "Do these connect with my own passions? Do they speak to me on a deeper level than just words on a page? Are these the things that make me come alive both personally and professionally?"

- Passionate about helping children, youth and families. We talk about "changing the odds" that all young people will succeed. This isn't just a job for us. It is a calling. It is what we would be doing even if we weren't paid to do it.
- Standing up for social, economic and racial equity. We are here to advance social justice. We see our work as a part of the broader civil and human rights movement. We stand up against intolerance of all forms. We explicitly address implicit bias. We work to address structural and institutional racism.
- Belief in the power of youth and local community members to lead the charge. We work to shift balances of power to increase the influence of those who are too often marginalized. We value diversity and inclusivity.
- Embodying humility, respect and stewardship. We recognize the role we play is a small one, and we only succeed through the work of local leaders. We value both local lived experience and national expertise. We believe that no task is beneath us, no matter where we are on the organization chart or the roles we are playing in a community.

Essential Attributes

We seek and cultivate a set of essential attributes that collectively make the Forum a great place for all of us to work and a place where each of us can be our best possible selves. *Applicants should ask themselves “Do these attributes really describe me? Are these things I want to be accountable for living every day?”*

- People who have an insatiable desire to work hard, grow and learn. We look for people who are optimistic about what is possible, take pride in their work, and are relentless in achieving their goals.
- People who like to laugh and genuinely care about each other. We look for people who approach work with a smile on their face and a bounce in their step. We love what we do and want you to as well.
- People who are team players. We look for people who care about collective success more than personal success. People whose personal ambition is inextricably linked to helping the organization succeed.

Work Styles

The Forum has a distinctive style to the way we tackle work. It works great for us, but, like all styles, it isn't for everyone. *Applicants should ask themselves “Is this how I like to work? Would this be fun for me?”*

- We are entrepreneurial, flexible, and learn by doing. We are trailblazers and visionaries, optimistic about what is possible, and fearless in trying to do things that haven't been done before. We are comfortable with ambiguity and non-linear paths.
- We embrace complexity—and frameworks that make complex concepts more accessible. Our work aims to “move ideas to impact.” We are excited by and have respect for the power of ideas. We use lots of charts, matrices, graphics and visual frameworks to convey thoughts and ideas.
- We move fast. Our role is supporting others, so we often don't dictate our own schedules.
- We work collaboratively. We enjoy constructive debate, brainstorming meetings, collaborative processes, and joint decision making, both within the Forum and with partner organizations.

Additional Qualifications

In addition to being strongly aligned with our team culture, the successful candidate will also likely have several or all of the following:

- Bachelor's degree and significant experience in the nonprofit, education, or government sector or a master's degree in a relevant field. Academic credentials in a subject area related to children and youth programming and public policy are desirable.
- A strong interest and ability in writing as well as excellent facilitation and verbal communications skills are a must. We are looking for someone who can walk into a room, tell people about an advocacy campaign, and walk out with business cards of people excited to help.
- Experience in policymaking and advocacy campaigns.
- A powerful personal story to share about opportunity in America.
- Passion for helping children, youth and families and advancing racial, social and economic equity.
- Interest in using data as a tool to advance equity.
- Network management/coalition building experience.
- Experience in communications and social media use for campaigns.
- Well organized, detail-oriented.

- Comfortable working with online tools such as Quorum, Salesforce, etc.

Position & Compensation

Salaries at the Forum are competitive with comparable non-profit organizations in the region and will be based upon experience and expertise. Salary range, duties and responsibilities of this position meet the requirements of Section 13 (a) (1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act and therefore it qualifies as an "exempt" position.

If interested, submit a resume and cover letter specifying the Policy & Advocacy Associate position with salary requirements to jobs@forumfyi.org. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. If your application is selected for an interview, you will be contacted directly. No telephone calls or inquiry emails, please.

Equal Opportunity Employer

The Forum is committed to creating a diverse work environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. The Forum does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, parental status, veteran status, or any other protected status under applicable laws. We encourage individuals of all backgrounds to apply. If you are a qualified candidate with a disability, please e-mail us at jobs@forumfyi.org if you require a reasonable accommodation to complete your application.