

Position Description

Director of Policy and Opportunity
The Forum for Youth Investment



TITLE: Director of Policy and Opportunity
SUPERVISOR: Executive Vice President
LOCATION: The Forum for Youth Investment's headquarters in Washington, DC.
PURPOSE: Advancing the Forum's work to galvanize young leaders, strengthen advocacy coalitions, and secure support for policies that improve racial and other forms of social and economic equity. The director's focus will include, but not be limited to, leading the creation and use of our Opportunity Index, our activities with and for Opportunity Youth, and our work advancing equity.

About the Forum for Youth Investment

Founded in 1998, the Forum for Youth Investment is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan "action tank" committed to changing the odds that all children and youth are ready for college, work, and life. The Forum connects leaders to ideas, services, and networks that can help them make more intentional decisions that are good for young people, even in the face of limited resources. It helps leaders who are trying to improve and align policies, plan and partner for impact, and/or strengthen programs and adult practice across all the systems and settings where young people spend time.

Position Background and Responsibilities

The Forum for Youth Investment's Policy Unit galvanizes young leaders, strengthens advocacy coalitions, and secures support for policies that improve racial and other forms of social and economic equity. The Director of Policy and Opportunity will serve on the Forum for Youth Investment's Leadership Team and on the Policy Unit's Management Team. In addition to working to advance the organization's overall goals and the goals of the Policy Unit as a whole, this position will have a specific focus on the Opportunity Index, Opportunity Youth, and advancing equity.

The Opportunity Index. Started in 2011, the Forum's Opportunity Index calculates the level of opportunities that exist to change the odds in counties across the country and grades each county and state with a composite Opportunity Score. Last year we added the ability for counties to compare themselves to other counties with similar demographics. Next year we are adding the ability to see the level of opportunities at the city and sub-municipal levels as well, disaggregated by race and gender where possible.

Opportunity Youth. The Forum has had a special commitment to Opportunity Youth — 16 to 24-year-olds not employed or in school — throughout its history, focused on aligning efforts across the field and leading policy campaigns. In 2013 we launched the Opportunity Youth Network, bringing together collaborators to tackle challenges and opportunities too large for any one organization or sector to take on alone. Each year, we host a signature Opportunity Youth Network summit. In 2017 we launched the Reconnecting Youth Campaign, calling on Congress to invest in America's future by funding one million pathways to education, training, national service, and employment opportunities for Opportunity Youth. We secured \$195M of federal funding increases for Opportunity Youth programs over a two-year period. We are currently developing a comprehensive Opportunity Youth Policy Agenda.

Advancing Equity. The Forum for Youth Investment has an organization-wide commitment to equity that is a shared responsibility across all staff. The Director of Policy and Opportunity will play a role helping to facilitate our work on racial and other forms of social and economic equity, not only in their own work but also throughout the Policy Unit, as well as collaborating on related organization-wide efforts. As such, we are looking for someone who has a nuanced understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion frameworks and how to apply them to public policies.

The specific responsibilities of the Director of Policy and Opportunity include:

- a) Embody, cultivate, and foster the values, attributes and styles of work that define the Forum's culture (see below).
- b) Direct our government relations activities, leading our work to craft and advance strategic policy agendas, especially federal, state, and local legislative policies focused on equity, opportunity, and youth.
- c) Direct the following projects, providing strategic direction to, and insuring effective implementation of:
 - a. The Opportunity Index, conceptualizing and implementing innovative ways to use data about economic mobility and opportunity to generate media attention, galvanize a coalition, and drive nonpartisan support for policies that improve equity.
 - b. The Opportunity Youth Network as well as the Opportunity Youth/Boys and Men of Color Alignment Strategy Group, developing and implementing innovative ways to align multiple organizations to advance equity and to reconnect one million Opportunity Youth every five years.
 - c. The Reconnecting Youth Campaign and Opportunity Youth Policy Agenda, improving policies for and with Opportunity Youth.
- d) Be an all-star leader of our all-star team. Continue to cultivate and support our Policy Manager, Senior Policy Associate, and Opportunity Youth Fellows, ensuring a strong collaborative environment where equity and team culture are paramount. Recruit, hire, and onboard additional staff as needed.
- e) Select and supervise contractors and consultants to augment our staff as needed.
- f) Foster, deepen and clarify our partnerships with networks of organizations.
- g) Be ultimately responsible for ensuring the success of our related events (e.g., Annual Opportunity Youth Summit, Opportunity Index events, and Reconnecting Youth Campaign convenings), publications (e.g., papers, e-newsletters, and websites), and advocacy campaigns.
- h) Be a highly visible leader and spokesperson for these activities, speaking with a passion from the heart based on unique lived experiences.
- i) Cultivate high-level strategic relationships with policymakers and media.
- j) Help secure funding, deepening our existing relationships with foundations and corporations and cultivating new ones.
- k) Become familiar with all aspects of the Forum's work, identifying, creating and taking action on opportunities to align and support work across departments and teams.
- l) Serve on the Forum for Youth Investment's Leadership Team and the Policy Unit's Management Team.
- m) Travel as needed. The Director of Policy and Opportunity will have discretion to shape their body of work and the accompanying level of travel. In general, this may be around one or two trips per month.
- n) Other duties as assigned.

Qualifications

The successful candidate will also likely have most of the following:

- A passion for speaking authentically and inspirationally about their unique lived experiences.
- Direct legislative and/or government relations experience.
- Experience overseeing projects that include the creation and use of data.
- A history of advancing racial and other forms of social and economic equity throughout their career.
- A vision for ways in which the Forum's activities could be even more successful.
- A demonstrated track record of success in generating media attention for social issues.
- A demonstrated track record of success securing high-level nonpartisan support for issues, events, and policies.
- A strong network of corporate, philanthropic, and/or nonprofit leaders, or those who demonstrate the ability to rapidly develop such a network.
- An affinity for partnering with grassroots youth organizers.
- Experience leading projects and people, with a leadership style strongly aligned with the Forum team's culture as outlined below.
- At least a bachelor's or associate degree and 10 years of related work experience.

Team Culture

Like the organization as a whole, the Policy Unit is 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. *We encourage applicants to approach this process as an opportunity to assess whether our culture is a fit for what makes you come alive both personally and professionally.*

Mission and Values

We are mission driven and fueled by a set of deeply held 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?"*

- We are passionate about helping children, youth, and families. This isn't just a job for us. It is a calling.
- We stand up for racial and other forms of social and economic equity. We are here to advance social justice.
- We believe 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 strive to embody humility, respect, and stewardship. We value both local lived experience and national expertise.

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?"*

- We have an insatiable desire to work hard, grow and learn. We look for people who take pride in their work and are relentless in achieving their goals. People who are quick to identify their weaknesses, actively seek help to improve, and approach each new task as an opportunity to grow personally and professionally. People who see feedback as a gift. People who want to show up every day and be pushed to be better than they were the day before.
- We 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.
- We are team players. We look for people who care about collective success more than personal success. People who are quick to point out the contributions of others and slow to seek attention for their own.

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 work collaboratively. We enjoy constructive debate, brainstorming meetings, collaborative processes, and joint decision making, both within the Forum and with partner organizations. None of us seek complete autonomy on anything: we prefer to work together with a great set of people who make all our decisions better.
- We are innovative, 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. Our responsibilities and projects shift frequently as we adapt to new opportunities and challenges in the field.
- We embrace complexity. We use lots of charts, matrices, graphics, and visual frameworks to convey thoughts and ideas. We spend a lot of time discussing and improving upon our frameworks and tools to guide thinking and help users connect theoretical models to specific, tangible actions to drive their work forward.
- We move fast. Policymaking and other types of decision-making often come with a schedule and timeline we can't control. When windows of opportunity open, we often need to deliver as much as we can as fast as we can. At times, for certain projects, we can have a campaign mentality and dynamic style of work.

Position and Compensation

Salaries at the Forum are competitive with comparable non-profit organizations in the region and will be based upon experience and expertise. The Forum provides a strong benefits package. 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, cover letter, and a separate document with salary requirements to jobs@forumfyi.org. Please be sure to specify that you are applying for the Director of Policy and Opportunity position. 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.

The Forum for Youth Investment is committed to creating a diverse work environment and is proud to be an Equal Opportunity Employer and drug-free workplace, and to comply with ADA regulations as applicable. All applicants are considered for all positions without regard to race, religion, color, sex, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, physical/mental disability, severe/morbid obesity, medical condition, military/veteran status, genetic information, marital status, ethnicity, alienage or any other protected classification, in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws. We encourage individuals of all backgrounds to apply. If you are a qualified candidate with a disability, please email us at jobs@forumfyi.org if you require a reasonable accommodation to complete your application.