

POSITION DESCRIPTION

POSITION: Director of Policy and Advocacy
ORGANIZATION: NewSchools Venture Fund
REPORTS TO: Partner, External Relations
LOCATION: Washington, D.C.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES Interested candidates should submit a resume and one-page cover letter via e-mail to Christine Marra at hr@newschools.org.

BACKGROUND NewSchools Venture Fund™ is a venture philanthropy firm working to transform public education for underserved children by supporting education entrepreneurs and by providing thought leadership across traditional education boundaries. Founded in 1998, NewSchools has raised about \$125 million for investment in both nonprofit and for-profit organizations. Our current investment strategy focuses on increasing the supply of high-quality public schools for underserved students, enabling traditional and charter school systems to become performance-driven in their practices and enhancing the pipeline of talented people into and across the public school system. We focus much of our investment activity in key urban markets in order to build a critical mass of entrepreneurial organizations to help accelerate the transformation of the public education system. NewSchools works with a bipartisan network of education, nonprofit, policy, and business leaders to accelerate the process of education reform.

NewSchools is a small organization of 25 people with offices in two cities: San Francisco (where we are headquartered) and Boston. Please visit our website at www.newschools.org to learn more about NewSchools Venture Fund.

POSITION OVERVIEW

The Director of Policy and Advocacy (DPA) will be a key member of the NewSchools team, leading NewSchools' work in developing and advocating for a policy agenda that creates opportunities for education entrepreneurs. At a time of unprecedented possibility for the work of entrepreneurs in education, the DPA will play a vital role, both for NewSchools and for the broader education reform movement. This policy role represents a natural but significant growth in NewSchools' role in policy, filling a need for a voice to speak on behalf of education entrepreneurs who work passionately toward creating outstanding public school options for low-income children.

The DPA will be NewSchools' primary representative in policy matters, will lead NewSchools' work in connection with federal funding, and will work frequently with elected officials and staff members in the White House, the Department of Education, and in Congress. The DPA will also work, to a lesser extent, with leaders in key states. The DPA will develop and advocate for an agenda that includes ensuring access to public funding for both NewSchools and education entrepreneurs; and advocating for policies that create opportunities and remove barriers for entrepreneurs. Key areas of interest will include the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; stimulus funding; and the Social Innovation Fund created by the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Key responsibilities will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Work with NewSchools' leadership team, staff, and portfolio members to define the organization's policy agenda and keep the organization up-to-date on developments in policy that affect the sector, including regular briefings for the leadership team
- Work with elected and appointed officials and staff members in the White House, Congress and the Department of Education, as well as in key states and with key thought leaders, to advocate for NewSchools' policy agenda
- Manage NewSchools' work with the federal government in connection with stimulus and other key funds
- Play a key role in assembling and leading a coalition of entrepreneurial education organizations to advocate for key policies
- Maintain active and healthy connections with other key organizations that are important to the development and execution of NewSchools policy agenda, especially those organizations based in Washington, including the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
- Set up meetings as appropriate for members of the NewSchools leadership team with key officials, and prepare briefing materials for those meetings
- Create powerful written internal and external communications

SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Significant experience in Washington-based policy work
- Strong connections with key decision-makers on education policy
- Understanding of the work of education entrepreneurs
- Demonstrated commitment to public education reform
- A passionate belief that outstanding public education can make a life-changing difference in the lives of low-income children
- Excellent written and oral communication skills; persuasive strategic communication skills and ability to effectively build consensus among multiple stakeholders
- Ability to lead convenings and meetings, deliver presentations, give speeches, and represent NewSchools to external audiences
- Excellent project management skills – ability to manage large, long-term, complex projects
- Demonstrated ability to prioritize use of time and limited resources toward meeting ambitious, measurable goals
- Capacity to work effectively independently, without a support staff
- Close attention to detail

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- Bachelors degree
- At least 7 years experience in related field
- Experience in politics and/or policy-making required
- Entrepreneurial education experience preferred

WORKING STYLE AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Self-directed, self-starter able to manage multiple priorities
- Operating style suited to working in a small-organization setting, where teamwork and resourcefulness are highly valued
- Willingness to travel at moderate levels
- Undaunted by working at a geographic distance from NewSchools' main offices

COMPENSATION

A competitive compensation package including base salary, performance bonus, and complete benefits is available

NewSchools Venture Fund is an equal opportunity employer. People of color are encouraged to apply. In your cover letter, please indicate how you heard of this opportunity.