



Job Description Director of Policy

The Kennedy Forum Illinois

The Kennedy Forum Illinois (TKFI) is seeking a Director of Policy to help advance the organization's mission – to end stigma and discrimination against people with mental health and addiction challenges – through state-level policy transformation. Our aim is not just to change the conversation, but to change the system in attitude and practice.

TKFI is a leader in changing the way mental health care and substance use disorder (MH/SUD) treatment is delivered in Illinois. We believe in a future where all persons are treated with dignity and receive the person-centered mental and physical care and support they need to thrive and achieve their goals, with a health system that fully recognizes that the brain is part of the body.

Purpose

The Director of Policy is a full-time position that will serve as a senior member of our growing team. The Director of Policy will work to implement strong state-level policy changes to help make Illinois a national leader in MH/SUD treatment. Representing no specific constituent group other than people living with MH/SUD conditions, TKFI seeks to advance policy change across five core pillars of a strong MH/SUD system:

- Ensuring parity in insurance coverage,
- Integrating MH/SUD and other types of health care,
- Using technology to increase access and improve outcomes,
- Demanding quality and transparency in care, and
- Advancing prevention and early intervention.

A foundation for these pillars is aggressively changing public attitudes and shaping the public narrative in order to drive forward systemic and policy change. The Director of Policy will provide strategic direction and engage a wide range of stakeholders to not only advance the organization's agenda within the current political environment, but also to seek change in the political landscape through the strategic use of policy, engagement, communications strategies. Guiding the Director of Policy will be a relentless focus on the strategic plan and Board-approved policy agenda, using TKFI resources and unique advantages to most effectively increase the well-being of those living with MH/SUD.

This position reports directly to the Executive Director based in Chicago, Illinois.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- In collaboration with the Executive Director and Board of Directors, identify and execute the organization's short- and long-term policy priorities, with a particular emphasis on ending insurance coverage discrimination against people living with MH/SUD;
- Maintain and develop relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, including but not limited to, those in the MH/SUD treatment field and those with lived MH/SUD experience in order to ensure that all policy work is informed by their experiences and best advances their needs;
- Convene and provide leadership to a coalition to advance MH/SUD insurance coverage parity in Illinois;
- Serve as a primary representative of TKFI with state government officials, including legislators, and strategically build strong relationships to advance policy work;
- Represent TKFI in various policy coalitions relevant to the mission and priorities of TKFI;
- Develop, advance, and monitor legislation in Illinois to advance policy goals;
- Provide technical expertise on MH/SUD policy issues to government officials and partners to advance policy goals;
- Work within Illinois Executive Branch agencies to improve government systems that support MH/SUD treatment in the state;
- Provide written and oral testimony before government bodies on TKFI priorities;
- Build and maintain relationships with key members of the press on TKFI policy priorities and, in consultation with the Executive Director, educate reporters on policy issues in order to drive public education around TKFI policy initiatives;
- Ensure that all lobbying registration, regulation, and reporting requirements are met to ensure the organization's compliance with Illinois and federal law;
- Ensure that the Executive Director and Board of Directors is informed about and engaged in policy activities;
- Collaborate and communicate with staff at The Kennedy Forum on Illinois policy projects and opportunities to jointly advance federal MH/SUD policy goals.

Competencies

To perform the job successfully, an individual should demonstrate the following competencies:

Core Competencies: **Passion to eliminate discrimination towards mental health and substance use disorders**, Leadership, Managing People, Strategic Thinking, Policy Expertise, Judgment, Planning/Organizing, Problem Solving, Computer Skills, Dependability, Diversity, Ethics, Initiative, Interpersonal Skills, Organizational Support, Professionalism, Quality, Teamwork, Impeccable Written and Oral Communications (especially for legislative briefings and written/oral testimonies.)

Additional Competencies: Adaptability, Analytical, Conflict Management, Innovation, Motivation, Change Management.

Qualifications

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Education and/or Experience

- Bachelor's degree (B.A.) from four-year college or university required;
- Master's Degree preferred;
- A minimum of 5 years of advancing state-level policy change in Illinois.
- Demonstrated record of driving policy change within State of Illinois government.
- Strong working relationships with key stakeholders in MH/SUD policy in Illinois.
- Experience working with press and giving interviews to build momentum for policy change.
- Ability to conduct policy research to develop and advance sound MH/SU policy.
- Understanding of political dynamics, public opinion, and governmental policy levers.
- Strategic thinker with the ability to help the organization assess its challenges.
- Effective communicator who can communicate with all levels of staff and with external stakeholders.
- Professional integrity to effectively represent and promote the organization externally.
- Ability to effectively handle crisis and high stress.
- Strong interpersonal, written, and verbal communications skills;
- Strong analytical skills
- Strong organizational skills.

Language Skills

- Ability to read, analyze and interpret general business periodicals, professional journals, technical procedures, and governmental regulations.
- Ability to write reports, business correspondence, and procedure manuals.
- Ability to effectively present information and respond to questions from groups of managers, clients, customers, Board members, and the general public.

The Kennedy Forum Illinois makes all hiring decisions in a non-discriminatory manner, without regard to race, ethnicity, creed, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, citizenship status, military service, marital status, different ability or disability, or any other factor determined to be unlawful by federal, state, or local statutes.

Individuals with lived experience of mental health and/or substance use disorders are strongly encouraged to apply.

Please submit resume and coverletter to: Cheryl@thekennedyforum.org with the subject line "TKFI - Director of Policy". No phone calls will be accepted.