



## **Position Announcement**

### **Public Policy and Research Director**

The National Head Start Association (NHS A) is seeking a Director of Public Policy and Research who has the skills and passion to be a part of a team that seeks to put the critical need for Head Start/Early Head Start at the forefront of the national priorities. The Director of Public Policy and Research must possess both a fundamental belief in the mission of Early Head Start/Head Start and the ability to connect the experiences of Head Start children and families to the development of federal and state policies and to all forms of research, while “interpreting” research for practitioners in order to improve practice.

The opportunity to succeed in school and in life, regardless of circumstances at birth, has been a core American value, and for the past forty-five years the Head Start movement has fully embraced the challenge of delivering on that value and developing our nation’s most vulnerable children and their families. With devastating increases in childhood poverty, it has become increasingly apparent that children and families need Head Start/Early Head Start more than ever. NHS A is looking to continue its engagement with the policy and research communities in order to be an effective advocate for them.

NHS A is a not-for-profit membership organization whose mission is to coalesce, inspire, and support the Head Start field as a leader in early childhood education. NHS A serves as a voice for more than 1 million children, 200,000 staff and 2,800 Head Start programs.

Created in 1965, Head Start is the most successful, longest-running, national school readiness program in the United States. The comprehensive array of services that Head Start provides to low-income children from pre-natal to school-age, as well as to their families, includes: education and social development, mental, dental and general health, nutrition, parent involvement, and social services. Since its inception, more than 27 million children and their families have benefited from Head Start.

Over the last 28 months, NHS A has reenergized the leadership team and staff with talented, committed, mission-driven individuals. The new Director of Public Policy and Research will be joining a unique team of knowledgeable, collaborative, and supportive individuals. NHS A’s field-driven strategic plan denotes significant shifts and offers a blueprint for new directions that will support new possibilities for Head Start.

This position operates with a high level of independence and a high degree of independent judgment under the general supervision of the Executive Director for a wide range of issues related to public policy, program evaluation, and research and conducting policy analysis on current and emerging legislative or regulatory issues in human services, education, and early childhood programs.



### **GENERAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Direct the capacity of NHSA to be a go-to resource on Head Start information for the early childhood education and care policy community, including policymakers and the media.
- Work with the Head Start community in an inclusive manner to develop an annual policy agenda.
- Manage the development of public policy proposals and analyze various policy options.
- Track and analyze legislative and regulatory proposals and draft positions based on community input, policy agenda and earlier positions.
- Calculate the national and state-level appropriations and enrollment effects of federal legislation and policy proposals on Head Start and Early Head Start programs.
- Design surveys and conduct research in specified areas to identify research and policy needs in the Head Start community and to obtain data needed for formulating and implementing policy recommendations.
- Author and co-author reports, articles, position papers, and other papers on policy topics concerning the Head Start community.
- Oversee publications providing research and data of interest to the early childhood education and care community.
- Monitor federally-funded Head Start assessments, research projects, and/or plans; critiques them; and drafts public comments on them for submission to government agencies.
- Synthesize and translate research findings for advocates and policymakers.
- Track and analyze new research developments
- Provide public policy and research technical assistance to NHSA members.
- Direct and manage the activities of public policy and research staff and the public policy and research department budget.
- Serve as a liaison to the Research and Evaluation Committees of the NHSA Board of Directors.

### **THE IDEAL CANDIDATE**

The ideal candidate will have the following professional and personal characteristics, qualifications and experiences:

- Graduate degree in Public Policy or related field or equivalent combination of education and experience preferred, PhD a plus.
- A passionate commitment to and broad knowledge of early care and education.
- Understanding of Head Start programs, operations, and policy concerns at the local, state, and national level.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Exceptional interpersonal skills and an accessible, transparent, and collaborative, working style.



- Strong ability to prioritize, plan, organize and carry out multiple assignments and to work effectively under pressure to achieve multiple objectives within a time-sensitive framework.
- Ability to work under pressure with minimum of supervision and in coordination with a variety of individuals and viewpoints.

NHSA offers a competitive salary commensurate with qualifications and excellent benefits package.

NHSA is an equal opportunity employer.

Interested applicants should submit a resume and cover letter detailing how applicant's experience provides a match for the requirements of the position. Information should be submitted to Alma Adriano at [careers@nhsa.org](mailto:careers@nhsa.org).