



Our mission is to coalesce, inspire, and support the Head Start field as a leader in early childhood development and education.

<b>Job Title:</b>	<b>Director of Government Affairs</b>
<b>Unit</b>	Government Affairs
<b>Reports to:</b>	Deputy Director
<b>Origination Date</b>	April 28, 2021
<b>Location</b>	Alexandria, Virginia; Begins remotely
<b>FLSA Status</b>	Exempt

## THE OPPORTUNITY

The National Head Start Association (NHSA) is seeking a **Director of Government Affairs** to lead the organization’s engagement with Congress and the administration, oversee strategy and policy development at the federal level, and grow and maintain relationships with stakeholders in order to increase support for Head Start and Early Head Start, including Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start, American Indian and Alaska Native Early Head Start, and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (We collectively refer to the entire family of programs as “Head Start.”).

We look for flexibility, good judgment, and people capable of evolving. The ideal candidate is an experienced government affairs professional who brings in-depth knowledge of policymaking, relationships on Capitol Hill, and experience with a diverse range of stakeholders. Experience in early childhood education is preferred, but not required. The ideal candidate is someone who is open-minded and constantly exploring new ways to strengthen and deliver on the promise of Head Start.

NHSA is a unique organization looking to grow intentionally and find the right person for the right opportunity on our team. If you are looking to be part of an organization that is static, where things are predictable and challenges are hard to come by, you should not work with us. If you are a person who is looking to only work on tasks in a job description (such as this) and has a proclivity to say “that is not my job,” we respect that, but you should not work with us. Your growth and contributions to the team are important to us because we know that a better you makes a better us. If you are interested in being a responsible contributor while flexing your curiosities and creativity, keep reading.

Do you believe that every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, has the ability to succeed in life? Do you believe in providing America’s most vulnerable children, families, and communities with the opportunities they need in order to succeed? Then think about joining us! This is a unique opportunity to play an essential role in securing a strong future for Head Start—the federal program serving more than one million eligible young children and families each year. The **Director of Government Affairs** will have the opportunity to make us a better organization and help us better serve Head Start.



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## ***Major Duties and Responsibilities***

### **Federal Affairs**

- Promote Head Start's value across Capitol Hill, the executive branch, and other national organizations
- Monitor federal legislation and regulations, providing technical expertise and policy insights to the Head Start community, colleagues, media, and Congress as needed
- Cultivate new and nurture existing relationships with members of Congress and their staff, including those covering HELP, Ed & Labor, and Appropriations Committees
- Lead internal appropriations work, including developing requests, authoring letters to Congress and the administration, shaping testimony for congressional hearings, generating collateral to explain the relevant funding needs, coordinating submissions to personal offices, and gathering support for congressional letters
- Supervise NHSA engagement with the federal rulemaking process, including assessing the need to submit responses, developing positions, editing draft responses, and ascertaining the need for involvement of the Head Start community

### **Management Responsibilities**

- Manage a team including coordination of day-to-day responsibilities and long-term development of staff
- Interface with external consultants to strengthen strategy, expand relationships, and reinforce Head Start's presence with decision makers

### **Advocacy & Coalition Building**

- Oversee the planning of grassroots advocacy activities in collaboration with Director of State Affairs, Director of Communications, and Director of Alumni Engagement to influence early childhood policy
- Plan and execute two fly-ins annually (including through cross-team collaboration)
- Ongoingly assess how policy can best support the Head Start community, disseminate relevant policy updates, including through contributing to regular newsletters and informing development of blogs, as well as informing effective practice activities

## **REQUIREMENTS**

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The ideal candidate will be a strong communicator, strategizer, and decisionmaker who is comfortable engaging with practitioners, collaborating with colleagues to optimize impact, and



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interfacing with top decision makers, including congressional staff, on topics including early childhood policy, funding/appropriations, and tangential policy (nutrition, mental health, infrastructure, workforce development, etc.).

- A minimum of eight years experience in government relations
- Deep knowledge of how to navigate the US Congress and administration to advance a cause including through federal appropriations
- Can-do attitude fueled by curiosity and desire to continuously improve
- Good judgment, flexibility, and problem-solving skills
- Ability to articulate complex policy, academic, and scientific matters in compelling and easily understood terms
- Ability to cultivate meaningful relationships and communicate effectively with diverse audiences including members of Congress, Head Start parents, Head Start practitioners, etc.
- Ability to work collaboratively and thrive in a fast-paced environment
- Register or be registered as a lobbyist
- Passion for Head Start's commitment to ensuring every vulnerable child has the opportunity to succeed
- Excellent interpersonal skills including effective communication skills, both written and verbal, and strong influencing skills

***These are a plus, but not required:***

- Extensive experience working in/with national organizations, Congress, or government agencies
- Experience with early learning programs that serve children and/or families in poverty
- Experience and/or personal connection with Head Start

## **ABOUT THE NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION**

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Are you passionate about early childhood education, remedying social inequities, and supporting America's most vulnerable children and families? Be a part of our team! NHSA is a nonprofit organization committed to the belief that every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, has the ability to succeed in life. NHSA is the voice for more than one million children, 275,000 staff, and over 1,600 Head Start grantees in the United States. Since 1974, NHSA has worked diligently for policy changes that ensure all children from at-risk backgrounds have access to the Head Start model of support for the whole child, the family, and the community.

### ***Our Mission and Vision***

NHSA's vision is for Head Start to lead—to be the untiring voice that will not be quiet until every vulnerable child is served with the Head Start model of support for the whole child, the family, and the community—and to advocate—to work diligently for policy and institutional changes that ensure all vulnerable children and families have what they need to succeed. NHSA's mission is to coalesce, inspire, and support the Head Start field as a leader in early



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## OUR CORE VALUES

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- We are determined to play a valued and visible national leadership role in this country's efforts to educate and serve its most vulnerable children and families.
- We recognize change is constant and are building a flexible, nimble organization that values innovation and can respond effectively to change.
- We are actively committed to being a high-impact organization that evaluates effort and measures outcomes; our commitment extends to helping Head Start value and use measurements effectively.
- We value partnerships and collaboration and at our core, we are relationship-based.
- We celebrate Head Start alumni, both graduates and parents, and the lasting impact that are having in this country.
- We are accountable to our members and funders, seeking high standards of governance, carefully stewarding resources, operating transparently, and living up to the highest standards of quality.

## OUR CULTURE

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NHSA is proud of our inclusive, collaborative, and professional culture. We value and reward teamwork, initiative, creativity, and intellectual and professional growth. We seek those qualities when considering people to join our team.

- *Collaboration: NHSA works in teams—we share ideas, brainstorm endlessly, and constantly seek innovative ideas that advance NHSA's and Head Start's missions.*
- *Vision: NHSA values colleagues who see and seize opportunities, take risks, learn from failure, and bring a relentless passion for our mission.*
- *Creativity: NHSA team members use data to form original insights. We find ways to incorporate innovative ideas and approaches that exist in the rich and vital Head Start community.*
- *Mindfulness: NHSA has an organization-wide commitment to strive for excellence; we set clear objectives, achieve ambitious goals, ensure accountability for results, and focus on our impact.*
- *Curiosity: NHSA values those who are curious and hungry for knowledge. Reflecting Head Start's 56 years of commitment to continuous improvement, our staff is committed to personal and professional growth, understanding, and commitment to our mission.*

## OUR BENEFITS

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NHSA offers a competitive salary commensurate with experience and an attractive benefits package including:

- 401k Savings—Employees are eligible to contribute to NHSA’s ERISA plan immediately. NHSA contributes up to 6% of base salary to the plan after one year of service.
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)—confidential EAP to all full-time employees to assist with life challenges.
- Flexible Spending Account (FSA)—tax-deferred flexible spending accounts to help employees maximize their salaries and defray cost for health-related expenses.
- Health Care Coverage—100% employer-paid healthcare including prescription and vision coverage. Employee’s dependents are at an additional cost to the employee.
- Dental Coverage—offered to employees at minimal cost. Employee’s dependents are at an additional cost to the employee.
- Life Insurance—one-time the base salary of the employee to a maximum of \$200,000 and NHSA covers 100% of the cost.
- Paid Time Away from Work (every year)
  - 11 paid holidays per year (all federal holidays plus the day after Thanksgiving)
  - Week in between Christmas and New Years
  - 12 sick days
  - 3 personal paid leave days
  - Paid Vacation (2.5 weeks in your first five years)
- Tuition Reimbursement—eligible to employees after one year of employment and toward a qualifying education program.
- Worldwide Travel Assistance—available 24/7/365 to employees when they travel 100 or more miles away from home, whether for work or pleasure.

## THE PROCESS

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Please submit your cover letter and résumé in one PDF document to [jobs@nhsa.org](mailto:jobs@nhsa.org) with the **Director of Government Affairs** in the subject line.

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*NHSA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER. All qualified applicants will receive consideration without regard to race, color, national origin, marital status, religion, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, personal appearance, family responsibilities, political affiliation, or enrollment in a college, university, technical school, or adult education.*