THE OPPORTUNITY

The opportunity to succeed in school and in life, regardless of circumstances at birth, is a core American value, and for the past fifty-six years, the Head Start community has embraced the challenge of delivering on that value and changing life trajectories for the nation’s most vulnerable children and families. A strong and sustainable future for Head Start will mean the success of generations of children who may otherwise struggle throughout their lives. Their future success rests on the knowledge, commitment, and collaboration of families, programs, researchers, and policymakers. 

NHSA is a unique organization looking to grow intentionally and to 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 on 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. If you are interested in being a responsible contributor while flexing your curiosities and creativity, keep reading.

The Manager of State Policy is responsible for leading a portfolio of policy and advocacy work designed to expand access to Early Head Start and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, creating more seamless prenatal-to-five experiences for eligible children and families.

This role requires a candidate who is comfortable working on both the policy and advocacy side of an issue, works independently, has strong communication and organizational skills, brings (or can quickly learn) early childhood and child care policy, especially related to the infant-toddler age, and is committed to strong internal alignment, teamwork, professionalism and equity.

MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As a key member of NHSA’s Government Affairs team, the Manager of State Policy will independently lead major elements of NHSA’s Early Head Start Rising campaign, which seeks to increase the number of Early Head Start slots by 500,000.

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

- Cultivate broad-based support for State Head Start Associations, State Head Start Collaboration Offices, Early Head Start programs, Early Head Start parents and other stakeholders to advance Early Head Start funding and policy, such as outreach, engagement, technical assistance and other activities.
- Lead proactive outreach and engagement to generate awareness of Early Head Start and available funding and policy options, including to child care policymakers and advocates.
- Write issue briefs, blogs and other web-based content to advance the campaign.
- Develop and lead major stakeholder conversations, advocacy events, trainings and webinars, including at NHSA conferences.
- Respond to technical assistance and other support requests.
- Expand the scale of the Early Head Start Rising community, through lead generation activities to build our strength and diversity and potential application of more coalition-focused strategies.
- Specifically develop engagement strategies for Early Head Start parents and staff to elevate real-world perspectives and stories of impact.
- Secure new organizational sign-ons and policy and advocacy partnerships for NHSA and Early Head Start Rising, including with the health community.
- Lead and curate working and coalition groups of Head Start, Early Head Start, and other early childhood practitioners/advocates.
- Expand the use of data and tracking to understand Early Head Start Rising’s impact.
- Coordinate internally with other teams at NHSA, including Communications and Effective Practice.
- Attend meetings of and fully contribute to a wide range of other Government Affairs work.

**REQUIREMENTS**

- Passion for Head Start’s commitment to ensuring every vulnerable child has the opportunity to succeed and every family has the support they need to thrive.
- Bachelor’s degree required, plus at least 5 years of relevant experience.
- Policy and/or advocacy experience working on early childhood policy or a related child or human services focused issue (e.g. hunger, housing, employment, etc.).
- Preference for policy and/or advocacy experience involving states and an understanding of state versus federal policy dynamics.
- Experience building a community or a movement in a policy-related context through relationship-building and responsive engagement.
- Coalition experience preferred.
- A demonstrated commitment to policy and advocacy approaches that are inclusive of diverse perspectives.
- Ability to work independently, organize complex engagements and follow-through.
- Excellent teamwork skills and adaptation to NHSA’s entrepreneurial, collaborative and field-responsive environment.
- Effective communication skills, both written and verbal.
- Strong facilitation and stakeholder engagement skills, experiences and frameworks.
- Demonstrated ability to innovate and apply analytical approaches to problems.
- Experience with Google Suite preferred.
- Prior association experience would be an asset.
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ABOUT THE NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION

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 1 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 at-risk children 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 childhood development and education.

OUR CORE VALUES

- 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

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
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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 55 years of commitment to continuous improvement, our staff is committed to personal and professional growth, understanding, and commitment to our mission.

THE PROCESS

Please submit your cover letter and résumé in one PDF document to jobs@nhsa.org with Manager of State Policy in the subject line.

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.