



Senior Communications Officer

October 2018

About College Futures Foundation

At College Futures Foundation, we believe there is nothing more transformative for individuals, our economy, and our society than educational opportunity, and that the pathway to a college degree should be clear and open to the diverse students of California.

Right now, that is not the case. Not all hardworking young people are getting a fair shot at a better life. The vast majority of our state's K–12 students are of color and low-income, yet when it comes to graduates from our public universities, they are in the minority. At every step, they face roadblocks. We are working to change that.

We partner with organizations and leaders across the state to catalyze systemic change and close equity gaps so that this vision of a seamless, student-centered educational path to opportunity becomes a reality—and one that's available to every student, regardless of zip code, skin color, or income.

We believe that ensuring the college success of students facing the most formidable barriers will help all of us thrive—our families, communities, economy, society, and state.

Current Context for Communications

As part of a recent strategic planning process, we are moving forward on our goals with increased emphasis on using the levers of policy influence, partnership, and communications for impact. We will activate the Foundation's voice and leadership more explicitly and often when we feel it can make a positive difference, and we are excited about the possibilities for greater impact and influence through new communications opportunities. At a fundamental level, our organizational brand—what the Foundation offers and is known for—will evolve, and we will be doing and saying more to communicate what we care about and what we want to see happen with respect to higher education in California. At the same time, the communications team will continue to offer targeted support and partnership to our leadership and program colleagues on specific initiatives and areas of work. (We are announcing a new strategic framework for the foundation by early November, so please check our [website](#) for updates.)

Position Summary

Until recently, the communications team has consisted of a Director of Communications working with an array of contractor services. We are now seeking an experienced Senior Communications Officer to join our growing team. Working closely with, and under the supervision of, the Director of Communications, and with a Communications Associate as part of the team, the Senior Communications Officer will be responsible for a range of institutional, programmatic, and initiative-specific communications.

The Senior Communications Officer will work closely with the Director of Communications and other Foundation staff on organization-wide branding and communications as well as cross-cutting campaigns, including staffing the higher-level planning elements of major events and convenings and developing content for the Foundation's major communications platforms. The officer will also have the opportunity to take the lead on communications efforts specific to various program areas. In that role, the officer will be expected to be the lead advisor and partner for communication campaigns related to specific program initiatives. The key duties of the position include: developing and implementing communications strategies and workplans, editing and drafting written content, managing complex projects, advising grantees and overseeing consultants' work, staying abreast of research as well as media and thought leader coverage of relevant topics, and acting as an ambassador for the Foundation's work.

The Senior Communications Officer will bring a range of experience in developing and implementing communications strategies; we hope to find someone who has developed and implemented effective messaging and content dissemination strategies, has familiarity with multiple media platforms (traditional and digital), and has worked in education or some other similarly multi-layered field shaped by policy, social, and economic factors. We especially want to find someone who can draft and edit high-quality, compelling communications materials—from reports and talking points to press releases and digital outreach. The Senior Communications Officer must be adept at working across departments with colleagues on collaborative Foundation efforts and managing relationships with partners outside of the Foundation as well.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Developing and/or implementing institutional communications strategy and messaging.
- Developing and implementing communications strategies and messaging in support of initiatives and topic-specific communications campaigns. Working collaboratively with colleagues across the Foundation to develop and implement strategies.
- Drafting or editing a range of communications materials such as talking points, speeches, presentations, fact sheets, reports, briefs, press releases, and website and social media content.
- Incorporating strategic communications thinking, including discussions of goals and target audiences, into programmatic planning.
- Supporting grantees and partners by offering communications counsel and delivering capacity-building assistance.
- Developing content creation and dissemination strategies for institutional and campaign communications.
- Managing communications work plans and editorial calendar.
- Representing College Future Foundations with the media and at appropriate external events.
- Developing and managing relationships with journalists and thought leaders.
- Communications-related grantmaking.
- Coordinating and managing activities of communications-related consultants and vendors.
- Special projects and responsibilities as assigned.

Preferred qualifications:

- 5+ years of work experience in communications, media, public relations, or related role, particularly within a mission-driven effort and/or policy arena. Knowledge of public higher education, other major systems, or policy work—especially in California—a plus.
- Highly motivated, creative, and strategic thinker with strong interpersonal skills.
- Exceptional writing, editing, and oral communication skills with experience drafting and implementing strategic communications plans and messaging.
- A successful track record of leading and/or supporting communications initiatives and campaigns. Experience in policy and education campaigns a plus.
- Experience communicating and working with systems leaders and policymakers in California, engaging media/journalists and thought leaders, and/or partnering with nonprofit organizations.
- Ability to work collaboratively and independently, as needed.
- Ability to manage projects with precision, remain organized, and pay close attention to detail while simultaneously attending to the big picture.
- Uses discretion, sound judgment, and maintains the strictest confidentiality when handling sensitive materials and information.
- Excellent time management.
- Technical skills in, or the ability to quickly learn, relevant software applications, including those for design, web presence management, and project management, a plus. (We often use Adobe Creative Suite, MS Office/PowerPoint, WordPress, social media tools such as Hootsuite, project management tools such as Asana, and Salesforce.)
- Bachelor's degree and/or master's degree preferred but not required.
- A strong commitment to equity and opportunity, particularly in the area of education.
- A sense of humor, flexibility, and the ability to contribute to a collegial, respectful, and supportive work environment.

This is a full-time position located in the San Francisco Bay Area, with some travel required.

Compensation:

This permanent, full-time position offers competitive compensation and excellent health, commuter and retirement benefits. Some travel will be required.

To Apply:

Please submit application materials—a cover letter, resume, and work sample—via email to media@collegefutures.org by **November 21**. Preferred subject line: “Application: Senior Communications Officer.” No calls, please.

Learn more about our work at www.collegefutures.org.