



Senior Communications Officer

July 2022

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.

How We Work

We take a collaborative approach to our work. The communications team works closely with program team and the President & CEO to achieve the Foundation's goals through strategic communications at the project, strategy, and organizational level.

Communications efforts form an important part of our systems change strategy. Together with policy and practices changes, strategic communications and movement-building can lay groundwork for, enable, accelerate, or amplify reforms. Our communications goal is to inspire influential leaders to embrace a shared vision for student success and set an agenda for advancing equitable postsecondary completion and socioeconomic mobility.

We believe you will find our staff to be a collaborative, kind, smart, and constructive group deeply committed to our philanthropic mission, our DEI practices, and our organizational values of equity, courage, community, and curiosity.

Learn more about what we do at www.collegefutures.org.

Position Summary

Working closely with, and under the supervision of, the Director of Strategic Communications, and with a Communications Associate as part of the team, the Senior Communications Officer is responsible for a range of institutional, programmatic, and initiative-specific communications.

These fall under the broad areas of strategic communications, branding, issue framing, messaging, research, media relations, and related projects.

The Senior Communications Officer we seek will bring a range of experience in developing and implementing communications strategies, has familiarity with multiple media platforms (traditional and digital), and has worked in a multi-layered field shaped by policy, social, and economic factors. We especially want to find someone who understands how to utilize storytelling—written, oral, and/or visual—to powerful effect. The Senior Communications Officer must be adept at working across departments with colleagues on collaborative efforts and managing relationships with partners outside of the Foundation as well.

Activities include developing content for the Foundation's major communications platforms, managing and staffing communications campaigns, and assisting in the development and administration of news media grants and research projects. The officer may at times lead communications efforts specific to various program areas and initiatives and act as an advisor to program staff or grantee partners. The role requires staying abreast of research as well as news media and thought leader coverage of relevant topics, developing an understanding of diverse student experiences, conducting research to assist us in case-making and position articulation, and acting as an ambassador for the Foundation's work.

Key responsibilities include:

- Developing and/or implementing communications strategies, workplans, narratives, and messaging.
- Developing, drafting, and/or editing high-quality, compelling content for the Foundation's major communications platforms and externally-facing staff, and engaging key audiences. This may include a range of materials such as reports, blog posts, op-eds, talking points, presentations, videos, podcasts, fact sheets, press releases, infographics, and social media content and toolkits. (We employ contractors / freelancers to assist with content production and design work as needed.)
- Incorporating strategic communications thinking (e.g. as regards goals, target audiences, engagement plans, and resources needed) into programmatic planning.
- Developing and managing relationships with journalists and thought leaders. Representing College Future Foundations with the media and at select external events.
- Communications-related grantmaking and contracting.
- Supporting grantees and partners by offering communications counsel and delivering capacity-building assistance.
- Coordinating and managing activities of communications-related consultants and vendors.
- Managing complex projects, communications work plans, and editorial calendars.
- Special projects and responsibilities as assigned.

Preferred qualifications:

- 5+ years of work experience in communications, media, journalism, public relations, advocacy, or related field, particularly within a mission-driven effort or policy arena.
- Knowledge of higher education or other major systems, multi-stakeholder movement-based advocacy, 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.
- Experience developing and implementing strategic communications, narrative, and messaging plans and campaigns. (Experience with policy, education, or social justice initiatives a plus.)
- Understands good practice in communicating with system leaders and policymakers, engaging media and thought leaders, and/or partnering with nonprofit organizations.
- Ability to work both collaboratively and independently. Ability to manage projects with precision, remain organized, and pay close attention to detail while simultaneously attending to the big picture. Excellent time management. Uses discretion and sound judgment.
- A strong commitment to equity.
- Ability to contribute to a collegial, respectful, and supportive work environment.

Additional Position Details:

This is a full-time position located in downtown Oakland (near the 19th Street BART station). This is a flexible and hybrid position, with only occasional in-person time at the office or events in the field.

College Futures Foundation is an equal opportunity employer to all regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital status, disability, religious or political affiliation, or sexual orientation.

Compensation:

This permanent, full-time position offers competitive compensation and excellent benefits. Annual salary is \$130,000 to \$165,000. The salary range is subject to change with the labor market over time.

To Apply:

Please submit application materials—a **cover letter, resume, and a work sample (details below)**—via email to jobs@collegefutures.org. Preferred subject line: “Application: Senior Communications Officer.” No calls, please.

Your **work sample** should include two components: (1) a piece of original writing and (2) a piece that illustrates your other capabilities relevant to this job. For example, the second piece might showcase (a) planning or executing strategic communications campaigns, audience engagement events, or complex projects, (b) design or visual storytelling, or (c) framing issues, conducting research, or advising others on their oral or written communications.

Invited candidates will be asked to participate in a one-hour Zoom interview with College Futures Foundation staff members. Second-round candidates will be invited to participate in a final interview with the Director of Strategic Communications and another College Futures staff member.