



Position Announcement

Kentucky Center for Economic Policy Seeks Communications Director

December 2014

Overview

The Kentucky Center for Economic Policy (KCEP) seeks to hire a communications director. The new position will be responsible for creating and implementing a comprehensive communications strategy to help achieve KCEP's goals. The position requires extensive media relations experience, excellent writing and editing skills, and new media expertise. Successful applicants will bring strong communications experience and knowledge and a commitment to positive social and economic change in Kentucky.

Background

KCEP is a program of the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED) launched in 2011. KCEP uses research and analysis in combination with communications, public education, coalition building and advocacy to broaden the base of decision-makers, organizations, institutions and citizens supportive of better state policies. KCEP's role is as a respected provider of solid information about these issues and their impact on Kentuckians. KCEP strives for strategic, timely, and analytically rigorous research as well as compelling, clear and accessible communications. We seek to influence public understanding and debate about state fiscal and economic issues and contribute to real, lasting improvements in state policy.

MACED is a 38 year-old sustainable economic development organization seeking to create economic alternatives that work for people and places in eastern Kentucky and Central Appalachia. MACED is a fast-paced, dynamic and growing organization with a 30-person staff that manages \$28 million in total assets. The organization's strategies include: 1) providing financial capital and expertise to individuals, businesses and communities, 2) conducting research and engaging in effective communications to support good public policy, and 3) demonstrating effective community economic development efforts that make a difference. In addition to the Kentucky Center for Economic Policy, MACED's existing efforts include programs in enterprise development, sustainable forestry, energy efficiency and Appalachian economic transition.

Kentucky Center for Economic Policy

KCEP works to improve the quality of life for all Kentuckians through better economic and fiscal policies. A special area of focus involves the need for public investment in critical state services like education, health care and human services through an adequate, fair and sustainable state tax system. We also work on policies in the areas of economic security, including fair wages and access to income supports; education including college affordability; health care issues like protection of the Medicaid expansion and implementation of the Affordable Care Act; and economic and workforce development policies aimed at building our economy from within.

KCEP also produces analyses of the state's economy and the impact of federal policies on Kentucky.

KCEP is the Kentucky affiliate of the State Priorities Partnership, a network of organizations in 41 states that analyze and work proactively to affect state fiscal and economic policies. The partnership is coordinated by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. KCEP is also a member of the Working Poor Families Project, a national initiative made up of organizations in 25 states working on policies that create opportunity for low-income adults. And KCEP is part of the Economic Analysis and Research Network, an association of state and regional organizations affiliated with the Economic Policy Institute. Find out more about these initiatives by visiting their websites: www.statepriorities.org; www.cbpp.org; www.workingpoorfamilies.org; www.earncentral.org.

The communications director will report to the KCEP director and will join a team that also includes two research and policy associates.

KCEP's key strategies are as follows:

Research and Analysis. Providing solid and reliable information and analysis about state issues is the core KCEP strategy. KCEP serves as an expert entity that can provide high quality and timely analysis of budget, tax and economic issues and as a critical technical resource necessary to enabling honest public discussion of these issues. KCEP produces regular research briefs, reports and other publications that clearly explain and assess budget and legislative proposals, analyze important issues and propose options that can move Kentucky forward.

Communications and Public Education. KCEP plays an active role in communicating publicly about state fiscal and economic issues. We operate a regularly-updated website, participate in the media through submitting op-eds and providing information to reporters, utilize social media, and take part in and lead public forums to educate Kentuckians about these issues. We create special publications and presentations designed to help everyday people make basic sense of state budget and policy questions and understand needed changes.

Coalition Building and Advocacy. KCEP advocates to decision-makers around state budget, tax and economic issues. We develop and propose specific solutions that can move Kentucky forward. We collaborate with coalitions and organizations advancing these issues and seek to build participation from a wide range of people and interests.

Position Description

The duties and responsibilities of the communications director include the following areas.

Strategic Communications

- Work with the director and staff to create and play the lead role in implementing a comprehensive communications plan that helps shape policy debates through promoting KCEP policy analyses, reacting to breaking news and strategically seeking other media opportunities.
- Inform our research and advocacy strategy with an understanding of the political environment and news trends and cycles.
- Develop messaging guidance that persuasively and credibly shapes how the organization presents its analyses to the media, lawmakers and the general public.

- Coordinate a consistent organizational image in all external communications.

Media Relations

- Manage all media relations activities, including building relationships with reporters, pitching stories and coordinating interview requests.
- Write press releases, press advisories, statements, op-eds and letters to the editor.
- Help prepare staff for media interview opportunities and provide feedback to develop their skills.
- Organize press events, including press conferences and press conference calls.
- Coordinate tracking of news coverage on a daily basis.

New Media: Website, Blog, Social Media & Email

- Manage KCEP's website and blog, ensuring content is accessible, timely and well-organized, and work to increase site traffic.
- Develop and implement a plan for communicating with email subscribers regularly, working to increase the size of the email list.
- Manage KCEP's social media presence, implementing strategies to grow the organization's following on Facebook and Twitter.

Writing, Editing and Producing Content

- Edit materials produced by staff on complex topics to ensure the materials can be easily read and understood by media, policymakers and advocates.
- Write blog posts, website content and other materials.
- Create visual and multi-media products that communicate KCEP's ideas and proposals.

Administration

- Facilitate collection of performance data.
- Contribute to grassroots and foundation fundraising as needed.
- Other duties as assigned.

Minimum Requirements

- Strongly articulated interest in and commitment to progressive social and economic change in Kentucky.
- Bachelor's degree in communications, journalism, public relations or a related field.
- Five years of experience in media relations, communications, journalism, public affairs or a related field.
- Excellent writing and editing skills that demonstrate ability to simplify complex information.
- Self-motivated, creative thinker with the ability to work both independently and as part of a team.
- Knowledge of state economic and fiscal policy.
- Able to perform assigned duties in a time-efficient manner.
- Close vision with or without corrective lenses necessary for computer work.
- Manual dexterity needed to operate computer.
- Valid driver's license, access to a reliable vehicle for regular trips. Any employment offer is contingent upon applicant's insurability on MACED's group vehicle insurance policy.

Preferred Qualifications and Characteristics

- Proficiency with Adobe Creative Suite.
- Knowledge of and experience in Kentucky and awareness of Kentucky policy and politics.
- Experience working in nonprofit organizations and with grassroots advocacy efforts.

Additional Information

The position offers a competitive salary based on experience, with a generous benefits package. KCEP's office is located in Berea, but the location of the communications director is potentially flexible within Kentucky. MACED/KCEP is an equal opportunity employer.

Please e-mail your resume, three references and a cover letter specifically explaining why you are a good fit for this position to commdirector@kypolicy.org. Application review will be on-going and continue until the position is filled. For more information about KCEP visit www.kypolicy.org.