Position Announcement
Director of Government Affairs and Advocacy

The Southern Education Foundation (SEF), located in Atlanta, GA, seeks outstanding candidates to fill a Director of Government Affairs and Advocacy position. This position is dedicated to the advancement of a comprehensive, proactive government affairs strategy that furthers the mission and goals of SEF to advance creative solutions to ensure equity and excellence in education for students of color and students from low-income families in the South. This individual will possess a robust understanding of federal, state, and local education legislation and regulations across the P-20 pipeline. The Director will provide leadership and support, through supervision, project and budget management, and engagement with policymakers, elected officials, practitioners, an array of other like-minded partners, and other education stakeholders. To be successful, this individual must be a team player and a proactive manager of processes and people with stellar interpersonal skills.

This position reports to the President and CEO.

Candidates interested in this position should have working knowledge and genuine interest in improving educational opportunity across the P-20 continuum and working to ensure that education is the vehicle by which all students get fair chances to develop their talents and contribute to the common good.

For more than 150 years SEF has made outsized contributions to improving education at all levels, from pre-kindergarten through higher education. SEF works to improve equity, excellence, and opportunity in education nationally. Research, policy analysis, advocacy, and programs are the primary means through which SEF pursues its mission.

SPECIFIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:
1. In collaboration with the President/CEO and the senior leadership team, develops and manages SEF’s strategy for strengthening relationships with elected officials and government agencies and increasing their understanding of and support for the work and mission of SEF
2. Works with the President/CEO and the senior leadership team to identify priority legislative and government relations issues throughout the southern region of importance to the work of SEF
3. Communicates and advocates SEF’s priorities to local, regional, state, and national elected officials and staff
4. Researches, monitors, analyzes, and responds to state, local, and federal legislation, regulatory activity, and policy activities; updates and advises SEF leadership and staff about relevant policy proposals and actions, and works with SEF staff to analyze potential impacts on the mission and work of SEF
5. Communicates with SEF staff and SEF partner organizations to inform them of relevant government affairs issues
6. Coordinates government relations strategy with other relevant stakeholders, including local, state, regional, and national education associations. Develops a wide range of materials in support of SEF’s
government relations agenda, such as talking points, legislative summaries, factsheets, testimony, reports, and letters

7. Plans and implements programs, events, and other activities to support SEF’s advocacy and government affairs goals and advance SEF’s public policy priorities, through avenues such as legislative hearings, town halls, news conferences, meetings, and convenings of diverse groups of education stakeholders

8. Partners with SEF’s Director of Communications to manage and produce web content, electronic policy updates, legislative alerts, position statements, and research reports for members and other key stakeholders. Assists with the commentary and response to proposed local, state, regional, and national education policy initiatives and legislation

9. Partners with SEF’s Senior Director of Research and Policy to move SEF’s research-based policy priorities into local, state, and federal legislation and regulations

10. Educate legislators and other policymakers about the scope and impact of their public policy choices on education equity

11. Ensures a robust, relevant program of learning opportunities related to advocacy and public policy for key SEF partners and community advocates

12. Builds and maintains relationships with partner organizations, coalitions, foundations, and associations throughout SEF’s 17-state footprint to advance legislative and public policy goals

13. Provides technical assistance to SEF staff on government relations, legislative, and regulatory issues

14. Plans and manages the budget for Advocacy and Government Affairs activities within the SEF budget

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

- A bachelor’s degree is required; a master’s degree in political science, public policy, public relations, communications, or a related field is preferred.
- Seven or more years’ experience in analyzing and interpreting legislation and policy documents as well as knowledge of local, state, and federal legislative, regulatory, and executive processes.
- Exceptional written, oral, and electronic communication skills, able to reach diverse external audiences are essential
- Experience in developing and maintaining relationships with public officials and their staffs
- Experience analyzing and interpreting legislation and policy documents
- Deep commitment to educational equity and high achievement for all students, particularly for students of color and students from low-income families
- Deep knowledge of local, state, and federal education policies and legislation across the P-20 pipeline
- Demonstrated capacity to translate ideas into action
- Strong project management skills and ability to facilitate the work of multiple teams and prioritize competing demands in a changing, highly collaborative environment
- Sense of humor and the ability to exhibit grace under pressure
- Comfort with ambiguity
- Ability to travel (when permitted under CDC and expert guidance)

Interested candidates should submit: 1) a letter of interest; 2) a current resume; 3) names and contact information of three references to (hr@southerneducation.org) with Director of Government Affairs and Advocacy in the subject line of the email.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

Compensation: Excellent non-profit employee benefits and competitive salary commensurate with position and experience.
The Southern Education Foundation is an equal opportunity employer. Candidates of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.