



Position Announcement Director of Research & Policy

The Southern Education Foundation (SEF), located in Atlanta, GA, seeks outstanding candidates to fill a Director of Research & Policy position to lead SEF's research and policy analysis activities, as well as, the Foundation's overall learning and evaluation functions. The Director of Research & Policy will inform internal strategic decision-making and help elevate SEF's posture as a thought leader externally. They will also possess a robust understanding of federal, state, and local education policy across the P-20 pipeline. They will work collaboratively with the Chief of Staff to promote and support an organizational culture that values research and learning in a way that is both actionable and useful for improving overall effectiveness and driving impact across the education policy and advocacy landscape.

The Director will lead both internal and commissioned research and policy analysis initiatives, as well as provide technical assistance for research and policy components embedded within specific projects. They will bolster SEF's learning agenda by responding to our most pressing learning questions through rigorous, evidence-based knowledge generation. They will work collaboratively across the organization with Program and Communications staff at all levels, as well as directly with partner organizations.

This position reports to the President and CEO.

Candidates interested in this position should have working knowledge of 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.

A PhD or JD is required. Candidates should: be able to organize and prioritize workload to effectively complete multiple assignments; have experience in reviewing and tracking grants, contracts, and agreements, as well as exceptional written, oral, and electronic communication skills; have the ability to interact with diverse external audiences; effectively communicate and embody the value, belief, purpose, and mission of the organization; have experience working both independently and in cooperation with other staff members while displaying a positive, cooperative attitude; and exhibit sensitivity to and respect for differences in personal, professional, and business relationships on behalf of the Foundation.

SPECIFIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Research and Policy Strategy

1. Partner with SEF's senior leadership to develop and execute a strategic plan for policy and research initiatives that advance SEF's mission to raise the achievement of all students in the South and close achievement gaps;
2. Lead the design and implementation of action-oriented research and policy analysis in support of program learning agendas;
3. Lead the development of policy recommendations on our core issue areas and generate ideas for new policy areas that promise to improve outcomes for students;
4. Partner with the Director of Communications and Program Leads to monitor and respond to federal, state, and local policies and research relevant to students in the South, including serving as a media spokesperson on those issues;
5. Forge new partnerships with a range of research and policy experts, institutions and other stakeholders to further leverage knowledge generation activities;
6. Engage in conferences, convenings, working groups, speaking engagements and other activities that reinforce SEF's role as thought contributor;
7. Build staff and partner capacity to understand, manage and/or undertake rigorous, ethical and impactful research and policy analysis.
8. Identify new grant opportunities, contribute to grant writing, and manage relationships with grant officers, including tracking and communicating our impact in grant reports.

Organizational Learning and Other Duties

1. Provide consultation to Program Leads to develop hypotheses, learning questions, indicators, and metrics for strategies and initiatives;
2. Partner with Operations team to create and refine internal structures and systems for cross-program sharing; and develop specific tools and technology supports that anchor a culture of learning both organizationally and within program areas; this may include drafting learning reports to SEF's Board of Directors, learning publications, staff learning retreats, and other activities that support the evolution of the Southern Education Foundation as a learning organization;

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

- Possession of a doctorate degree in education, education policy, or related field or a juris doctorate.
- Seven or more years of experience managing and/or conducting research, evaluation, and/or policy analysis;
- Deep commitment to educational equity and high achievement for all students, particularly for students of color and low-income children;
- Deep knowledge of state and federal education policies;
- Preferred experience in statistical analysis package such as STATA or SPSS or other research tools; expertise in Microsoft Excel required
- An organizational learning and effectiveness orientation, with a proven record of developing and implementing processes that advance rigor and learning across an organization or team
- Demonstrated capacity of translating ideas into action
- Excellent written and oral communication skills; ability to distill and explain complex information, data, and technical details to a multiplicity of audiences and partners;
- Strong project management skills; ability to facilitate the work of multiple teams and prioritize competing demands in a changing, highly collaborative environment;
- Sense of humor, exhibiting grace under pressure;
- Comfort with ambiguity

- Ability to travel

Compensation and benefits are competitive.

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 Research & Policy as the subject line of the email.

Applications will be accepted until 08/13/2021.

The Southern Education Foundation is an equal opportunity employer. Candidates of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.