

Director of Policy & Advocacy

Full time

Salary Range: \$70K - \$75K, negotiable based on skills/experience

Reports to: President & CEO

Applications accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis, with a hopeful start date in early May.

Friends of the Los Angeles River (FoLAR) seeks an experienced and motivated advocate for nature-based climate solutions and equity of the Los Angeles River. The Director of Policy & Advocacy is a senior role in the organization operating with considerable autonomy and making among the most significant recommendations to the executive team. This person will work with local community members and leaders and FoLAR's broad, diverse coalition and internal team to lead FoLAR's advocacy campaigns for local, state, and federal policy and planning decisions.

About the Organization:

Mission: We build capacity for communities, students, and future leaders to advocate for nature, climate, and equity on the Los Angeles River.

Vision: We envision a verdant Los Angeles River that supports vulnerable communities in climate adaptation. The river will be transformed into a dynamic, functioning ecosystem that reduces flood risk, cleans the air, cools temperatures, and supports the biodiversity essential to our collective wellbeing.

FoLAR's Equity Statement: The LA River traverses through diverse communities of people, plants, and geographies. It provides an opportunity to reshape our environment in a way that is more inclusive, equitable, and just. We are committed to building a team, leadership, and a River Movement that is as diverse as the communities the River touches. We believe in working with nature and alongside communities to achieve climate resilience, park equity, and environmental health for all.

About the Role:

Reporting directly to the President & CEO, this is an extremely fast-paced and dynamic role. The Director of Policy & Advocacy acts as the internal and external face of advocacy for the organization. This position requires excellent interpersonal skills, experience building strong partnerships, and a proven track record of success in creating change in public policy. Experience in project management, campaigns, and/or community organizing is preferred.

The Director of Policy & Advocacy will develop strategy and implement campaigns to ensure FoLAR's key issues and projects geared towards a restored Los Angeles River are accomplished at the local and state levels, with occasional focus on the federal level. The right candidate for this role is a respected figure in Los Angeles-area public policy, environmentalism, or social justice and will work with FoLAR staff and partner organizations to develop strategies that influence decision-making and policy at the local, state and federal level.

The successful candidate will be expected to remain current with events and trends that relate to Los Angeles River restoration, the LA River community, environmental justice in Los Angeles County, and leverage FoLAR activities, major events, and internal projects to mobilize community action around advocacy priorities, as well as comply with policies and procedures of FoLAR.

Responsibilities:

- Independently develop strategy and direct advocacy campaigns as they relate to FoLAR's mission.
- Track various issues and planning and policy decisions at the local and state levels and work with lobbyists and coalitions to develop joint strategies.
- Lead the development of the annual policy budget and department work plan.
- Manage the policy department, which may include interns, part-time staff, and/or lobbyists.
- Work collaboratively with the Director of Strategic Communications to strategize and execute advocacy campaigns that leverage mass communication and aim to mobilize the masses around key actionable issues.
- Ensure each primary campaign includes aspects of community organizing, engagement, education and cross-pollinates with internal departments and activities.
- Monitor and analyze the political landscape to make recommendations around strategic priorities.
- Educate and engage agency and elected officials at the local, federal and state levels on priority issues and be comfortable pushing on them to make the desired changes.
- Build and maintain FoLAR's strong coalition of disparate interests, including a broad range of organizations, elected officials, agencies, and community leaders.
- Work with the CEO and Development team to secure policy and advocacy funding.
- Plan, coordinate and implement advocacy-related programs and events.
- Identify new and creative approaches to integrate policy objectives into organizational activities, events, and programming.
- Communicate effectively internally to ensure that policy and organizational priorities are clear to staff, executive team, and Board and can be readily shared and discussed in the field.
- Staff the Policy and Legislative Committee, attend occasional Board meetings; help present issues/proposals to the full Board and achieve buy-in.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in planning, public policy, environmental science or related area required. Master's degree preferred.
- Five years of progressively responsible experience in issue advocacy, legislative affairs, and/or campaigns; or other relevant experience/education required.
- Confidence in public speaking and offering persuasive and oftentimes dissenting opinions to field experts and/or positions of power required.
- Demonstrated ability in working on collaborative projects that involve multiple organizations, stakeholders and decision-makers required.
- Knowledge of government affairs and processes related to achieving policy change and funding required.
- Strong interpersonal and communications skills and the ability to communicate complex ideas clearly and effectively when writing and speaking required.
- Ability to multi-task and manage many projects simultaneously with scrupulous attention to detail required.
- Ability to absorb, retain, and strategically apply highly technical information required.
- Personnel management experience preferred.
- Spanish fluency preferred.

What We Offer (Benefits):

- Competitive salary based on experience
- Health, dental, and vision insurance (75% covered)
- 403b retirement plan
- Three weeks paid vacation in addition to 10 paid holidays, 1 floating holiday, and additional paid time off between Christmas and New Years
- Generous family leave and sabbatical leave opportunities
- Flexible work schedule and remote work options based on individual and team needs
- Close, passionate, fun, and creative team environment
- Opportunities to grow with the organization
- Beautiful office location

To Apply:

If you don't meet 100% of the qualifications, don't let that stop you! If you think you offer what it takes to excel in this role, are non-conformist, have a sense of humor, and a passion for the environment and climate action - please apply!

To apply for this position, please email your cover letter, resume, AND at least two writing or one writing and one campaign sample to resumes@folar.org with "Director of Policy & Advocacy Application" in the subject line.

Format is important; please send the cover letter in the body of the email as text and any documents (resume, etc.) as easily accessible attachments. No calls or walk-ins.

Friends of the Los Angeles River is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religion, sex, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or national origin. Women and people of color are strongly encouraged to apply.