

Job Description

Title: Policy Director

Organization: Community Water Center

Location: Sacramento, CA



ORGANIZATION

Community Water Center (CWC) is an environmental justice nonprofit that works directly alongside impacted communities towards the goal of securing universal access to safe and affordable drinking water in California. We believe access to safe and affordable drinking water is a basic human right, not a privilege. CWC seeks to build an enduring movement for water justice that is powered by community activists by serving as a catalyst for community-driven water solutions through organizing, education, and advocacy.

CWC employs three primary strategies to accomplish our goals:

- Educate, organize, and provide capacity-building assistance to low-income communities and communities of color in the San Joaquin Valley and Central Coast who are facing local water challenges.
- Advocate for systemic change to address the root causes of unsafe drinking water by advancing community-driven legislative, regulatory, and policy changes, and by lifting up community voices in the media.
- Serve as a resource for information and expertise on community water challenges for impacted communities, decision-makers, and the general public.

Since opening our doors in 2006, CWC has worked with local residents from dozens of California communities to improve access to safe, clean, and affordable water. Over the years CWC has trained many community residents as clean water advocates and provided technical and legal assistance to numerous local water boards and community-based organizations struggling with how to manage efficient and accountable water systems in their communities. Our work, in partnership with ally organizations, has helped pass the nation's first Human Right to Water Law, secure more than \$2 billion in funding for drinking water, advance multiple groundbreaking legislative and regulatory policies that help advance the cause of water justice, raise the visibility of California's unjust drinking water reality in the media, and most importantly, empower community members to advocate for change.

CWC's team is passionate, dynamic, and believes in the cause of water justice and making real change that is driven directly by impacted communities themselves. Our organizing and advocacy work, community collaborations, and organizational culture all reflect a concern for equity, mutual respect, appreciation for diversity, and environmental and social justice. As CWC continues to grow, we are looking for candidates who share our values, bring a passion for our mission, and seek to contribute to achieving our mission and for making change in our society.

CWC is headquartered in Visalia, California, with offices in Watsonville and Sacramento.

Position Description:

The Policy Director position is a full-time, exempt employee position that will be primarily responsible for leading CWC’s policy and advocacy programs and activities, and will manage the policy and communications teams. The Policy Director will report directly to the Executive Director, but will also work closely with the other CWC staff and organizational partners. All employees at CWC are “at will.” The Policy Director is based out of the Sacramento office.

NOTE: All staff are working remotely for the time being due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ideal Candidate Profile:

The ideal candidate will have significant policy, advocacy, and management experience. Candidates that will excel at this position are those that have core competencies in and enjoy the areas identified below. Water policy expertise is appreciated but not required as a strong candidate can quickly grow in water policy expertise. We recognize that candidates may have particular strengths with some but not all of the below areas — that said, the ideal candidate will be motivated to excel at all of the below identified areas and should be able to demonstrate past examples of quickly coming up to speed when stepping into leadership roles. The ideal candidate should also be energized by the idea of leading and empowering teams of internal staff and external partners. And the ideal candidate should be driven by the desire to create transformative societal change through community-driven people power and environmental justice principles.

Major Responsibilities:

Policy

- Serve as an external spokesperson and regularly testify before legislative/regulatory/decision-making bodies and speak on panels, at conferences, before stakeholder groups, at community meetings, and in other spaces
- Manage and develop policy proposals for legislation or regulation
- Manage and facilitate internal and external policy development processes
- Review, analyze and coordinate the organization’s response to legislation, regulations, academic papers or think tank papers
- Develop and disseminate materials regarding legislative developments for targeted audiences (policy makers, media, etc.)
- Provide leadership, along with other staff and partner organizations, in the development and implementation of policy priorities and strategy
- Serve as a subject matter expert on drinking water policy issues (note: water expertise encouraged but not required at time of hiring)

Advocacy

- Serve as a direct advocate for the organization and lobby on its priorities
- Navigate legislation through the legislative process and into law
- Run local, regional, statewide and/or national advocacy campaigns
- Develop communications strategies
- Serve as a media spokesperson on drinking water policy issues
- Lead and manage coalitions

- Develop advocacy and campaign plans and then manage those plans to achieve organizational advocacy objectives
- Develop strategic relationships on behalf of the organization with decision-makers, stakeholders, and the media
- Develop persuasive messaging that advance organizational objectives and help support successful advocacy campaigns
- Ensure the involvement of grassroots community partners and leaders and partner organizations in both the development and implementation of legislative proposals

Management

- Manage the organization's policy and communications staff and serve in the role of a supervisor for multiple team members
- Serve in a leadership position within the organization
- Identify process gaps and develop and implement new systems and processes to improve work quality, team communication, and workflow efficiency
- Ensure CWC's policy and advocacy efforts are always community-driven and centered in CWC's environmental justice principles and vision

General Duties

- Foster an environment that promotes trust and cooperation amongst CWC staff, community members, and affiliate organizations.
- Actively participate in organizational and programmatic strategy, planning, tracking and reporting, communications activities, and staff meetings and retreats.
- Actively participate in CWC fund development activities, such as donor drives, online appeals, and other events.
- Other duties as assigned by the Executive Director.

Note: Nothing in this job description restricts management's right to assign or reassign duties and responsibilities to or from this position at any time.

Required Qualifications and Skills:

- Strong passion for, and commitment to, social and environmental justice
- Experience managing staff in a direct supervisory capacity
- Strong legislative and administrative lobbying and advocacy skills
- Extensive knowledge of legislative and administrative processes
- Strong public speaking skills and familiarity given presentations/remarks in a range of public settings, including testifying before legislative or regulatory or decision-making bodies
- Extensive experience and capacity to facilitate internal and external meetings, including meetings that may involve complex or sensitive subject matter and/or require negotiating with stakeholders
- Strong policy analysis and writing skills
- Strong interpersonal verbal communication and writing skills, with sensitivity to appropriate delivery depending on target and audience
- Outstanding organizational skills
- Ability to work in a fast-paced environment and meet deadlines

- Strong ability to work in teams and in coalitions
- Creative and comprehensive problem-solving skills and ability to quickly adapt strategies to new, changing or unexpected circumstances
- Ability to analyze and respond to technical documents related to groundwater quality and supply, public finance, governance, and public health
- Ability to accept and provide praise and critical feedback – the ideal candidate would value self-improvement and seek and provide regular feedback & evaluation
- Proficient with basic computer skills including, at minimum: Microsoft Office, Google Apps, and ability to troubleshoot basic software and computer equipment problems
- Flexible schedule: willing and able to travel to communities in the San Joaquin Valley and Central Coast work weekends, and attend night meetings when necessary
- Valid California Driver's License

Preferred Qualifications:

- Conversational and written fluency in Spanish
- At least 5 years of experience in CA administrative and/or legislative policy advocacy, with some management experience, particularly in the following areas:
 - CA water and environmental law
 - CA local government law
- Experience working with low-income communities and/or communities of color
- Experience living in or working in small and/or unincorporated low-income communities of color
- Experience working with media and developing communications materials around advocacy campaigns
- Experience working with local environmental justice (EJ) community partners in advocacy campaigns
- Background in environmental science or policy, public health, sustainable agriculture, community development or related field
- Experience developing grants & reports and communicating with foundation program officers
- Legal expertise, including *Juris Doctorate* (JD) and Bar membership in California in good standing

Starting Date: Open until filled

Salary: Starting at \$75,000 (based on experience and qualifications)

Application:

To apply, email resume and cover letter to: erick.orellana@communitywatercenter.org

Benefits:

We offer a comprehensive compensation and benefits package which includes: medical, dental, and vision insurance; generous vacation, family, and sick leave, and holiday policies; a flexible work schedule; professional development opportunities and more. (Benefits guidelines and eligibility vary based on tenure and employment status, among other factors.) We also provide contributions to employees' SEP-IRA after a two-year tenure.

Community Water Center is committed to providing equal opportunity to qualified job applicants and employees and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability (including pregnancy), mental disability, medical condition, marital status, sex, age, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship, military service status or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local law.

To learn more about the Community Water Center and our programs, visit our website at www.communitywatercenter.org