



Director, Funding Navigator

Summary

The recent \$55 billion for water infrastructure in the bipartisan infrastructure law has the potential to help thousands of water systems deliver safer and more affordable drinking water. We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to enhance equity and resilience by ensuring these funds reach underserved communities. The challenge is that many underserved communities have limited capacity to diagnose problems, develop solutions, or apply for funding. As a result, many underserved communities do not access federal funds to invest in water infrastructure. In an ideal world, the opposite should be true.

Together with our partners, EPIC is launching a program called the “Funding Navigator” to help hundreds of water systems serving underserved communities invest in infrastructure over the next five years. At its core, the Funding Navigator is an internal EPIC team, working in close partnership with other nonprofit organizations and for-profit businesses, who will use their expertise in community engagement, funding and finance, project management, and technical assistance to recruit water systems to rapidly diagnose problems, engage technical assistance providers, develop projects, complete applications, and secure funding from state and federal programs.

EPIC is seeking to hire a manager or administrator who has a passion for this kind of once-in-a-lifetime challenge and: 1) the talent and hands-on experience leading diverse teams and launching new projects; and 2) expertise in federal funding programs for water infrastructure. The position has significant flexibility in roles and responsibilities, depending on the skills, experience, and interest of the successful candidate.

Position Description

EPIC seeks a Director for the emerging Funding Navigator program. The Director will develop, lead, and advance national and state-based efforts to ensure many more water systems in underserved communities receive state and federal funds for infrastructure. We are looking for someone with experience administering and/or managing state and federal funding programs for water infrastructure; engaging and collaborating with program administrators, water utility managers and operators, and grassroots and environmental justice groups in frontline communities; building and leading diverse coalitions; and providing thought leadership on water infrastructure. We seek candidates who can build the operation of the Funding Navigator within a small organizational structure and momentum as a team leader working with other nonprofits, technical assistance providers, and philanthropists.

Responsibilities

- Lead EPIC’s effort to develop the Funding Navigator to help a large number of underserved communities access technical assistance and funding for water infrastructure projects
 - Build and execute a strategy to provide technical assistance at scale with active community engagement

- Fundamentally shift the type of capital projects that federal funds support to minimize operation and maintenance costs and maximize the use of nature-based solutions
- Recruit, develop relationships with, and assist partner communities. Support communities through all stages of the investment process, from identifying problems and designing projects to completing applications and securing funding from state and federal programs
- Work with administrative agencies and federal policymakers to replicate and routinely fund the Navigator model with annual set-asides
- Provide oversight, communication, and management of program consultant contracts.
- Monitor staff performance, particularly efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of deliverables
- Lead and advance a national network of technical assistance providers and water utility professionals who assist in the development of effective infrastructure projects
- Identify and participate in industry working groups, associations, and nonprofit collaborations
- Write case studies, better practices, and grant reports
- Participate in webinars, convenings, and public events to highlight prominent issues and solutions

Qualifications

Candidates must have:

- Bachelor's degree required. Graduate degree (MBA, MS, MEM, MF, MPA or JD) preferred
- 7+ years' experience in one or more of the following areas: water infrastructure design or finance or administration of a state or federal loan or grant program. We will consider time pursuing a graduate degree toward the 7+ years of experience.
- Expertise in federal and state-level funding programs
- Extensive experience leading initiatives that require carrying forward a vision, strategic thinking, quick decision-making, and forming and sharing opinions on policy
- Strong people and program management skills; this position will have direct reports
- Passion for equity
- Entrepreneurial motivation
- Excellent communications skills

We will prioritize candidates who can bring:

- Experience in managing, monitoring, and reporting for federal government grants
- Community engagement skills and experience
- Understanding of the technical or financial management of a water system
- Creative thinking
- A network of contacts within water utilities, trade associations, and local or state government agencies
- Track record of successful fundraising

Location

Depending on pandemic-related conditions, this position normally requires travel to meetings, conferences, and other events. Work other than travel is done either in an office environment at EPIC's

Washington, DC office or at the candidate's home office. We prefer candidates located in Washington DC, the Great Lakes, Mid-Atlantic, or Southeast regions but will not rule out any location with the right candidate.

Compensation and time commitment

EPIC offers competitive compensation commensurate with experience as well as a generous benefits package.

Applying

Qualified candidates should send an email to Katy Hansen at katy@policyinnovation.org with "Director, Funding Navigator" in the subject line. Please include a resume and a cover letter. Please also provide any supporting documents we should consider in evaluating your candidacy (e.g., writing samples).

As we describe above, we know there is not one ideal candidate who has all these traits. If you have a mix of interests, skills, and experience related to the above—and a passion for this work—please don't let a gap in your strengths stop you from applying for this role or reaching out. Thanks for your interest in working with EPIC.

About EPIC

The Environmental Policy Innovation Center (EPIC) builds policies that deliver spectacular improvement in the speed and scale of environmental progress. A nonprofit start-up, EPIC is committed to finding and highlighting the best approaches to scaling up results quickly. EPIC focuses on clean water, endangered species, environmental markets, and the use of data to further environmental and public health outcomes. Our largest program focuses on delivering better, safer, and more affordable water infrastructure to historically underinvested communities. EPIC operates through a fiscal sponsorship with the Sand County Foundation.

These values define the character and culture of our organization:

- Speed. When the planet's on fire, rapid innovation is better than slow and steady.
- Equity. We are committed to environmental progress and to prosperity for all people, because the most enduring and exceptional outcomes require both.
- Honesty. We bring real data, analysis, and facts to the limelight. Being honest about what is working and not working is not always easy, but we are committed to telling the truth.
- Pragmatism. We focus on ambitious but achievable solutions and believe that compromise and progress is more effective than purity and stasis.
- Wall-less. Innovation happens more in places without hierarchies and where every person and every idea gets respect. We do that.
- Empathy. We must ensure the voices of all people affected by our work are heard. We will support each other and others outside our organization with justice and respect.