

Vermont Housing Finance Agency Job Description

Job Title: Housing Policy & Engagement Specialist
Reports To: Research & Community Relations Manager
Job Grade: 24

Date Created: October 27, 2020
Date Reviewed:
Date Revised:

Summary of Position:

Focus on the Agency's housing policy work, specifically responsible for outreach and engagement. This position is charged with presenting VHFA's priorities as they relate to current federal and state legislative proposals, in partnership with the Executive Director. This will require attending state and regional housing policy meetings, fully understanding and articulating the Agency's public policy positions, and helping to strategize the research and communications tasks in support of those. Much of the focus of this role will be on external partners: engaging them in VHFA's work and understanding the impacts of VHFA's policies on their work. Finally, this position will work with the Agency's JEDI (Justice Equity Diversity Inclusion) Committee to ensure VHFA's equity, diversity and inclusionary goals are achieved.

Specific Responsibilities:

1. Support the Executive Director in VHFA's state legislative efforts, including drafting testimony for the Executive Director, monitoring hearings of interest to the Agency, providing testimony directly, responding to legislative requests, and managing ongoing communications with legislators. This will include helping to formulate VHFA's state legislative positions and priorities, in partnership with Executive Management.
2. Assist the Executive Director in the research and advocacy of VHFA's federal policy priorities. Form strong working relationships with each Congressional office staff both in-state and in DC. Communicate regularly with Congressional office staff on the progress, impacts, and actions needed of federal policies and legislation.
3. Assist in prioritizing the agency's legislative activities, including closely monitoring time and logistic demands for policy engagement.
4. Coordinate and facilitate VHFA's policy platform development through research, data, and subject matter experts to direct the agency's policy direction.
5. Engage partners to help VHFA anticipate and understand market needs and provide the Agency with channels to find mutually beneficial outcomes on initiatives. This will require travel throughout Vermont, potentially into the evening, to attend Annual Meetings, participate in regional forums, as well as grow and deepen VHFA's network by connecting individually with contacts. Work to establish strong relationships with key VHFA partners including the non-profit network, housing developers, and industry trade organizations such as the Mortgage Bankers, Bankers, Home Builders, Chambers of Commerce, Businesses for Social Responsibility, and League of Cities and Towns among others.
6. Support VHFA's equity, diversity and inclusion work by participating in the JEDI Committee, helping to shape the Agency's priorities, learning and sharing emerging practices from other organizations, and challenging staff, leadership and the Board of Commissioners to embrace the ultimate goal of justice in Agency work.
7. Promote equity in staffing, programs, training, and policy throughout VHFA. Understand the diverse perspectives of VHFA's stakeholders, represent the Agency's JEDI work throughout Vermont, and be committed to addressing systemic change in racial injustice.

8. Regularly attend statewide and regional housing policy meetings as VHFA's primary contact, although other staff may also attend. These meetings include: Vermont Housing Council, Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition meetings, New England Housing Network, and possibly more. Provide updates to impacted staff and departments from external meetings.
9. Stay up to date on national housing policy best practices by following the work of other state Housing Finance Agencies, national industry associations, policy think tanks and more to help bring national and out-of-state experiences into Vermont and VHFA in particular. Nurture contacts and create a national network of resources to serve our Agency's mission.
10. Other duties as assigned.

Supervises:

None.

Education Requirements:

Bachelor's Degree required. Focused studies in political science, public policy/administration, business administration, communications/marketing, or related subject is preferred.

Job Knowledge and Experience:

- A demonstrated commitment to social justice, equity, diversity and inclusion is desired
- Two years' experience in community or public relations, politics, communications, or policy analysis preferred
- Understanding of national and local political environment desired
- Familiarity with affordable housing policy and or government housing programs a plus

General Job Qualifications:

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills is required, including being an engaging, accurate, and compelling public speaker and effective trainer
- Commitment to and passion for VHFA's mission required
- This position requires a high level of cultural awareness, attentiveness, and interpersonal skills, plus a keen understanding of a fast-changing social and cultural landscape
- Work well independently and as a team member
- Represent VHFA professionally, positively, and to the high standards that are the Agency's norm
- Establish effective working relationships with elected officials and their staff, our partners, and the general public, which may require diplomacy and discretion
- Proven ability to manage multiple priorities
- Proficient in Microsoft Office products, especially Outlook, Word and Power Point
- An aptitude for graphic design or visual arts a plus, to help create visually pleasing reports and presentations
- Valid Driver's License. Must be willing to travel throughout Vermont and to out-of-state conference and training events as opportunities present themselves. Employee must either provide a personal automobile which is reliable and consistently available for travel or successfully participate in VHFA's CarShare membership. Mileage will be reimbursed according to the current IRS guidelines

Acknowledgment

I have read the above job description. I understand the duties and responsibilities of the position.

Printed name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____