

CT State Director of External Relations

Start Date: ASAP
Team: External Relations
Location: Hartford or New Haven

About Achievement First:

Achievement First, a non-profit 501(c)3 charter school management organization, operates 36 public charter schools in New York, Connecticut and Rhode Island. The mission of Achievement First is to deliver on the promise of equal educational opportunity for all of America's children. We know that every child—regardless of race, zip code, or economic status—deserves access to great schools. Achievement First currently educates more than 13,300 students in historically underserved neighborhoods, with over 90% of our students identifying as Black or Latinx. For more information about the Achievement First mission, model, our schools and team, please visit our website at www.achievementfirst.org.

Summary:

Achievement First seeks a State Director of External Relations who will lead AF's advocacy, community engagement and student recruitment work. This is an extraordinary opportunity for a leader committed to building partnerships with school leaders, elected officials, community leaders, parent leaders, and other stakeholders who are passionate about our mission that every child should have access to a great education. The State Director of External Relations will lead a team of community outreach associates who manage this work for a portfolio of schools.

Responsibilities of the State Director of External Relations will include, but are not limited to:

- Team Leadership:
 - Provide direct supervision, coaching, direction and evaluation to a team of community outreach associates to ensure that all team members execute at high levels of excellence and shared enthusiasm for AF's mission.
 - Establish and maintain high standards of team performance by developing clear short-term goals and annual goals, and rigorously tracking performance against them throughout the year.
 - Ensure that the team operates in a way that is consistent with AF's mission, culture and values, and always puts our schools and their students first.
- Advocacy Planning and Execution:
 - Help develop, guide and implement winning advocacy strategies and tactics that effectively promote and advance AF's legislative and budgetary priorities among elected officials, community leaders and other key stakeholders.
 - Lead the state external team in supporting schools and school leaders with their advocacy efforts and needs within their local school communities.
 - Develop strong working relationships and serve as AF's primary point of contact with elected officials, government staffers and other policy stakeholders, including lobbying and testifying on behalf of AF.
- Community Engagement & Partnerships:
 - Responsible for developing strong community partnerships – and overseeing a team of community associates -- aimed at building relationships with community leaders, neighborhood organizations, parent leaders and other stakeholders.

- Conduct regular outreach to stakeholders through one-on-one meetings, school tours and other gatherings/events to inform communities about AF and develop a sense of shared partnership and urgency around AF's mission.
- Coordinate and develop plans to mobilize current and potential stakeholders around region-wide initiatives that advocate for and advance relevant priorities of our schools and network.
- Develop and implement new outreach ideas, events and programs in conjunction with community associates.
- Outreach to Families & Student Recruitment:
 - Develop and oversee our student recruitment efforts to ensure that prospective families within the geographies we serve are aware of the opportunity to attend our schools, and that all schools receive a sufficient number of applications to be fully enrolled.
 - Identify and develop plans where AF and community associates can engage and leverage parent groups and parent leaders in our advocacy, community-based and school-based initiatives.
- Performance Management and Progress Reporting:
 - Actively maintain and deliver regular reports about progress made towards advocacy, community partnerships, student recruitment and other projects.
 - Manage relevant data and organize reports which can be used to track and inform ongoing work and future initiatives.

Skills and Characteristics

- Detail-oriented, highly organized and exceptional project planner who can manage multiple complex, collaborative projects, with impeccable follow-through on execution.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, including an ability to effectively interact, communicate and persuade internal and external partners and stakeholders at all levels.
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills.
- Strong political acumen, knowledge and savviness.
- Training, management and/or coaching experience.
- Strong work ethic and a self-starter “roll-up-my-sleeves” attitude.
- Results-oriented individual and willing to do “whatever it takes”.
- Belief in the Achievement First mission and educational model.

Educational Background and Work Experience

- 7+ years of work experience
- Demonstrated results in one or more of the following: advocacy/political campaigns/governmental affairs, community engagement/organizing or student recruitment/application management
- Experience managing, evaluating and motivating teams
- Knowledge of the current educational and political landscape in the state and across the country

Compensation

Salary for this position is competitive and commensurate with experience. Additionally, Achievement First offers a comprehensive benefits package.

To Apply

Send resume and cover letter to:

Nellie Washington
Executive Assistant to the Chief External Officer
nelliewashington@achievementfirst.org

Achievement First is an equal opportunity employer and an organization that values diversity. People from all diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply. Spanish language proficiency is a plus. You can learn more about diversity at Achievement First here: <http://www.achievementfirst.org/about-us/diversity/>.