



## **Title**

Director of Strategic Communications

## **Work Location**

Remote in Philadelphia, or in one of the following states (CO, GA, NC, NJ, NY, PA, VA)

## **The Opportunity**

Research for Action (RFA) is looking for an innovative, entrepreneurial Director of Strategic Communications, which is a senior-level management position in the organization and serves as the architect and implementer of RFA's communications strategy and presence. The Director will develop, direct, and implement RFA's strategic communications efforts, including using website, print media, social media, and other means, to raise our visibility and impact as a national equity-focused education research and evaluation organization with a strong local-to-Philadelphia presence. The Director will be a skilled storyteller of nuanced narratives that will be shared with multiple audiences across multiple platforms. The Director will report to RFA's Executive Director and will work with RFA's researchers to develop and promote their education content expertise and will oversee the production and dissemination of reports and publications from RFA's two dozen concurrent research and evaluation projects. They will lead and contribute to strategic organizational initiatives, including building internal systems to support communications and impact goals, and engage in other strategic initiatives and activities as appropriate.

## **About Research for Action**

[RFA](#) is an independent, non-profit educational research organization with a mission of using culturally responsive and community-informed research to promote racial equity and social justice. For 30 years, RFA has conducted research and developed partnerships to strengthen public schools and postsecondary institutions; provided research-based recommendations to policymakers, practitioners and the public at the local, state and national levels; and enriched the civic and community dialogue about public education.

RFA's portfolio of local and national research, evaluation, and policy studies span critical topics related to advancing equity for students, families, and communities across the education pipeline. Some of our [recent and current projects](#) examine undergraduate students' experiences and recommendations around campus racial climate, how higher education institutions can address racial equity gaps, the implementation of an anti-violence community program, teacher diversity and



Black teacher attrition, gaps in educational opportunity for minoritized K-12 students across the nation, and the impact of COVID on Head Start and Early Head Start workforce stability. A focus on and commitment to community engagement is a defining component of RFA's research enterprise. Our Community Engagement division hosted its first [Teach-In](#) in April 2022.

Between December 2022 and November 2023, RFA is engaging in a strategy and culture-building process to further establish its mission, vision, and values; chart its theory of action for impact; and strengthen its culture in the post-COVID remote/hybrid environment. Team members who join RFA during this time will contribute to organizational change and shape how RFA will aim to promote racial equity and social justice through culturally responsive and community-informed educational research.

### **Key Responsibilities**

- Develop and implement a long-term integrated communications/marketing vision and strategy, to elevate RFA's organizational profile, impact, and thought leadership in equity-focused education research and evaluation.
- Facilitate organizational alignment around the key educational focus areas in which RFA wants to anchor its communications and advance its thought leadership (i.e., topics within K-12 and postsecondary education, out-of-school time, and education policy).
- Collaborate with various RFA researchers, project teams, and external partners/clients to translate the mission of RFA and objectives and results of key research into impactful integrated communications and dissemination plans – including the development of key messages, distribution on relevant owned and external channels.
- Track, measure, analyze, and report communications impact through a variety of metrics and means.
- Proactively identify and execute opportunities for RFA to contribute its voice/perspective to external discussions/debates, through outreach to local, regional and national media outlets, and building relationships with appropriate journalists and mediums.
- Serve as the lead writer and editor of RFA's external messages and collateral including creating strategy and content for website/blog content, e-newsletters, annual reports, press releases, summary of RFA research, articles, op-eds, issue briefs, talking points, social media posts, executive remarks, and other marketing/communications materials for distribution across RFA communications channels.



- Coach and support RFA’s researchers and leadership in creating individual and organizational strategies for publicizing their work and developing an external presence as content experts.
- Develop and continually evolve RFA’s digital and social media strategy, campaigns, and content to further the organization’s mission.
- Build and develop systems/processes for tracking, monitoring and measurement of publications, media/stakeholder influence, conference attendance, constituent management, and other systems to track visibility and other impacts of communications efforts.
- Manage internal and external communications support as necessary, including additional communications staff, such as graphic designers or interns.

Ensure effective management within the communications/design/marketing function, including consistent implementation of RFA’s brand identity across internal and external communications, and a culture to stay current on communications trends and best practices.

### **Qualifications, Skills, and Competencies**

RFA considers any combination of professional experience, volunteer work, coursework, and other transferable skills as qualifications. Candidates need not demonstrate all criteria to be considered for the role.

- 8-10 years of progressively responsible experience with demonstrated success in communications, media relations, public affairs, marketing, and digital communications strategy and administration or a combination of education and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- A degree in communications, marketing, journalism, or a similar relevant field, or an equivalent combination of professional experience or training.
- Superior oral and written communications skills, including the ability to articulate complex messages to a diverse constituency, including:
  - Demonstrated skills, knowledge, and experience in the development, design, and execution of communications and marketing activities, including effective communication on social media.
  - Demonstrated successful experience writing news releases, developing and delivering presentations, and working with media.
  - Experience overseeing the design and production of print materials and publications, website management, and social media content creation and management.



- Experience communicating/working with social science research and/or data visualization of research findings a plus.

### Interpersonal Qualifications, Skills and Competencies

- Excellent interpersonal and management skills, and a commitment to working with shared leadership and in cross-functional teams, including:
  - Ability to manage conflicting demands on-time, manage multiple tasks involving multiple co-workers, maintain and exhibit flexibility, and work under pressure and meet tight deadlines.
  - Ability to thrive in our dynamic, collaborative, and team-oriented culture in a virtual and/or hybrid environment.
  - Ability to lead strategic initiatives and matrixed projects in a time of organizational transition/transformation.
- Ability to work independently and responsibly while managing numerous projects simultaneously
- Demonstrated passion for RFA's mission and interest in contributing to and enhancing our team's equity-focused and community-informed practices in education research.

### **Work for RFA**

**Culture:** RFA is a fast-paced, highly-collaborative, team-based, diverse organization where the thoughts, opinions, and perspectives of all staff members are valued. RFA welcomes applications from people of all underrepresented backgrounds and credentials.

**Salary and benefits:** The anticipated salary range for this full-time position is \$95,000 to \$125,000. Base pay may vary with job-related knowledge, skills, experience, market location, and geography. RFA's total compensation package includes a low-cost to the employee health, dental, and vision insurance program, flex spending plans, an employer-funded retirement plan after two years of service, and a generous paid holidays and time off program for all benefits-eligible staff.

**Other requirements:** The Director of Strategic Communications is a full-time position. This is a primarily remote position. Candidates can be located in/near RFA's home city of Philadelphia, or in one of the following states: Colorado, Georgia, North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, or Virginia. This position will require U.S. travel of up to 20% (dependent on COVID mitigation measures), primarily to RFA's Center City office for leadership retreats, as well as to conferences, meetings, and other work-related functions. RFA takes COVID-19 precautions and the health and safety of our staff and their families seriously;



masking when in person or conducting fieldwork, as well as proof of vaccination consistent with current CDC guidelines, is required for all employees regardless of location.

### **How to apply**

Applications for this position will be reviewed on a rolling basis with initial interviews scheduled in late January/early February 2023.

Qualified candidates should submit:

- A resume.
- A detailed letter explaining your interest in the position. The letter should answer the following questions:
  - What specific professional skills and experiences have you gained that make you a fit for this position?
  - How would you describe your commitment to equity and/or social justice as it relates to RFA's mission?
- Two writing samples that demonstrate any of the following: narrative storytelling, communicating technical or research-based information for a lay/diverse audience, and/or conveying other complex topics in a variety of writing formats. One other work sample of the applicant's choosing that showcase creativity, use of infographics, or another skill.
- Salary requirements.

All qualified applicants receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, domestic violence victim status, veteran status, disability, history of disability or perceived disability, or other status protected by law.

Click here to apply:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/578bb62c300640818b9bc38d1fbba963>