



External Relations Manager

Who We Are

Education Systems Center is a mission-driven policy development and program implementation center based within Northern Illinois University's Division of Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development. Our mission is to shape and strengthen education and workforce systems preparing more young people for productive careers and lives in a global economy. We have a primary focus on Illinois, while also working with national and international partners. Through our State university home, we are able to forge longstanding leadership roles with state agencies and intergovernmental bodies such as the Illinois P-20 Council. At the same time, we bring an intense focus on effective stakeholder engagement and successful execution consistent with those of internationally leading consulting firms.

The Position

Education Systems Center is seeking a full-time External Relations Manager to identify, develop and foster new partnerships and plan and implement strategies to secure support and funding. Reporting to the Executive Director and working closely with all members of the team, the Manager's responsibilities include:

- Support network building for EdSystems, including researching and fostering new partnerships, profiling EdSystems, and promoting collaborative activities
- Working with the Executive Director and senior leadership to develop a clear, strong, and targeted public presence
- Engage the Executive Director and senior leadership to plan EdSystems short- and long-term development strategies, including developing a viable, balanced income profile aligned to our mission, goals, and organizational strengths
- Provide leadership and direction to all staff in the effective execution of development functions
- Manage a portfolio of funders and prospects that requires a systemic approach of outreach
- Provide consistent follow-up after meetings, events, and other activities to secure commitments and move relationships forward
- Plan and execute an annual event that includes key funders, supporters, and prospects to raise awareness of our successes and our upcoming priorities
- Research potential funders, and prepare letters of inquiry, funding proposals, and reports in collaboration with staff
- Maintain and manage an annual grants calendar to ensure timely submission of proposals and reports
- Maintain and manage an annual communications calendar for staff blog posts, newsletters, podcasts, and other related strategies
- Liaise with EdSystems' Business Manager to develop budgets, budget reports, and track expenditures and sub-awards
- Liaise with the NIU Foundation to obtain financial and other documents required to submit proposals and reports

Qualifications

Desired Competencies

- Passion for EdSystems' mission and expanding opportunities for young people
- Superb written, verbal and interpersonal skills
- Highly organized with strong time management skills
- Understanding of fundraising environment and processes
- Understanding of public relations, including social media
- Strong research skills and able to synthesize information from multiple sources
- Understanding of budgeting
- Familiarity with education preferred
- Thrive in a high volume, fast-paced, mission-driven work environment
- Ability to multitask, work autonomously, and manage multiple projects while remaining execution-focused, exceeding expectations, and respecting deadlines

Education

- Bachelor's degree or higher

Experience

- Five or more years of related full-time professional experience
- Experience developing and executing a successful development strategy
- Established network of contacts in support of the position

Terms of Appointment

- Full-time appointment with annually renewable contract for each state fiscal year (July 1 – June 30)
- Salary is based on experience and job performance
- Evaluation of performance is on-going and is based primarily upon an annually negotiated set of performance goals
- The position will be based in Chicago at EdSystems's office and will be expected to regularly travel throughout Illinois, and occasionally out-of-state, as needed to meet responsibilities of the position

How to Apply

Please submit a resume, cover letter, short writing sample (no more than 3 pages), and reference contact information addressed to Jonathan Furr, Executive Director of Education Systems Center, to: educationsystems@niu.edu.