

Director of Advocacy

Organization

TransitCenter is a research and advocacy organization that works nationally to improve public transit in ways that make U.S. cities more just, environmentally sustainable, and economically vibrant. To do this, we are committed to reforming how and by whom decisions about transit are made, bringing new perspectives, especially those of transit riders, into planning and policy work. We believe that supporting community-based activists and harnessing our own voice are critical to advancing the type of transit advocacy urgently needed in American cities.

About the Position

TransitCenter seeks a Director of Advocacy in its office in New York City. The Director of Advocacy will devise concrete strategies to influence local officials to improve transit in ways that make cities fairer and more sustainable, leveraging grassroots and grassroots power, coalition building, and strategic communications. The Director will lead a team of 2-3 staff to provide support and organizing expertise to allied advocacy organizations in other U.S. cities (e.g. San Francisco, Miami, Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington DC, New Orleans). The team will also participate directly in our ongoing advocacy campaigns in New York City to improve local bus service and make the subway fully accessible.

As a member of the senior management team, the Director will provide overall direction to the organization to ensure that advocacy is inextricably linked to TransitCenter's other competencies such as research, grant-making, communications, and public programming. Some domestic U.S. travel will be involved, not likely to exceed one-third of the employee's time in any month.

Primary responsibilities, carried out in collaboration with colleagues:

- Shape TransitCenter's strategies to enable us to most effectively support and engage in transit advocacy in key U.S. cities.
- Provide strategic and tactical advice to advocacy organizations and other allies in key U.S. cities as part of TransitCenter's goal of creating a nationwide movement for pro-transit reform one city at a time. Play a leadership role in managing that network.
- Manage 2-3 team members who help carry out these activities.
- Collaborate with other senior managers at TransitCenter who are responsible for research, program development, communications, events management and grant-making, to ensure that all of TransitCenter's activities are reinforcing one another.
- Represent TransitCenter at events (e.g. conferences, rallies, panels, seminars) with well-crafted presentations and other materials.

Key qualifications:

- At least 5 years in leadership roles related to social activism, community organizing, leading issue-based public interest campaigns in urban settings, and/or legislative or executive offices of local government.
- Knowledge of urban transportation policy, and a strong grasp on how transportation intersects with related issues like social justice, racism, housing policy, and environmental quality.
- Record of accomplishment in influencing government policy, and a practical understanding of the forces that tend to create change in public bureaucracies. (This experience could have been gained either inside or outside of government, or both.)
- Record of successfully managing other staff members to optimize different skill sets in a spirited and fast-moving group.
- Experience at the helm of a progressive issue campaign which seeks to influence policies and debate at the local level. (The campaign need not have been transportation related - for example, natural resource protection, minimum wage, or voting access campaigns qualify.)
- Experience working in heterogeneous coalitions.
- Some familiarity with the norms of grant-making, either as a recipient or a grantor, and awareness of how foundations relate to community-based organizations.

Key Attributes:

- Strong professional and personal commitment to advancing transit that makes cities more just and environmentally sustainable.
- Persuasive verbal skills.
- Ability to think strategically as well as imaginatively about the methods that are most likely to create change in public policy and in public agencies, including creative and unconventional methods.
- Empathy for potential allies who come from different backgrounds and work under differing constraints, and a style that both supports and respectfully challenges allies to achieve ambitious goals that fit their context.
- Knowledge of the current realities and challenges facing the transit industry, along with a willingness to confront those challenges in a constructively provocative manner.
- Must be a congenial team player, able to work in a collaborative organizational environment. Must have a commitment to guiding the career growth of subordinates, willing to mentoring colleagues to tap their potential while maximizing productivity.

Salary range: \$100,000 - \$120,000. The benefits package will be described as part of the interview process. Reasonable relocation expenses will be reimbursed if the successful candidate has to move to the NYC region from elsewhere.

How to Apply:

Throw your hat into the ring by sending the following information to careers@transitcenter.org with “Director of Advocacy” in the subject line:

- Cover letter describing your experience and goals and how they fit the position
- Resume

Please do not phone our office to ask about the position. Candidates will get to ask us lots of questions during the interview stage.

Deadline to apply: March 15, 2019

People of color, women, LGBTQ people, and people with disabilities are encouraged to apply. As advocates who are transit riders ourselves, our organization strives to reflect all the various people we represent.

TransitCenter is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, political orientation or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law. Employment is on an “at-will” basis, meaning both the employer and the employee can terminate the relationship at any time. TransitCenter, a private philanthropic foundation, is incorporated in the State of New York, with its sole office located in the City of New York, and is bound by the employment statutes and regulations of those jurisdictions.