

JHA Community Engagement and Policy Manager position

The John Howard Association (JHA), founded in 1901, is the only independent citizen correctional oversight organization in Illinois and only one of only three such organizations in the United States. JHA serves as the state's prison watchdog, monitoring the conditions of confinement and treatment of people who are incarcerated and advocating for change based on the issues identified by people inside and their lived experiences. On our monitoring visits, JHA speaks with the people who live and work in the facilities, observes conditions, learns about the implementation and impact of policies and practices, seeks information and data, and utilizes data collection tools to gather as many perspectives and experiences as possible in order to understand and report on the realities of our prisons.

JHA seeks a Community Engagement and Policy Manager to increase our impact. Reporting to the Executive Director, the Community Engagement and Policy Manager will help JHA expand our community of partners and supporters through relationship building; strengthening our intern and volunteer program; and identifying and pursuing potential partnerships and collaborations. The person in this role will also assist by tracking policy initiatives; representing JHA in stakeholder discussions around policy change efforts; and help develop policy proposals to address issues of concern to people who are incarcerated and their loved ones. This position will play an important role in expanding community understanding, engagement and support for JHA's mission and work.

Essential Job Duties

Community Engagement:

- Identify communities and coalitions JHA could engage with to further oversight of jails and prisons and advance reform; conduct outreach to agencies, organizations, community groups, and stakeholders
- Attend community events as a JHA Representative, and coordinate events on behalf of JHA
- Increase visibility and understanding of the system-wide work done by JHA. Develop, cultivate and promote positive relationships with organizations and justice-impacted individuals and their support systems
- Assist Executive Director in nurturing new and old relationships with collaborative partners and assess possible partnerships related to policy reform efforts, constituent outreach, and support-building activities and initiatives
- Assist Prison Communications Manager in reviewing and assessing organization's intern and volunteer program (e.g., recruitment, training, and retention) and seek ways to grow program

- Document and share information from events, meetings and conversations with JHA staff, identifying prison issues/concerns for further information collection and examination
- Research models of auxiliary committees/boards and their potential role/impact for JHA

Policy Coordination:

- Identify and track legislation impacting people who are incarcerated and their loved ones and communities in an organized way that can be shared with internal and external audiences
- Provide legislative updates to Executive Director and work with JHA lobby team to identify pending initiatives in need of increased attention/action
- Represent JHA with stakeholders and advocacy groups in policy discussions and meetings
- Identify and cultivate support outside the organization for JHA-led initiatives
- Assist in drafting legislative testimony for subject matter and appropriations hearings and testify as needed
- Attend legislative hearings
- Develop relationships with legislators and legislative staff
- Travel to Springfield as necessary

Qualifications for Position

JHA seeks a person who has been directly impacted by the prison system to help develop our community engagement efforts and assist with our policy work. In order to be effective in this position, desired qualifications include but are not limited to:

- Deep understanding of experience of incarceration and knowledge of Illinois state prison system
- Familiarity with landscape of criminal justice reform stakeholders, including advocates, grass roots organizers, direct service providers, and government agencies/offices
- Experience conducting outreach to groups and individuals and engaging them in conversations in order to identify shared goals and efforts
- Ability to cultivate relationships with new and existing people and groups working on prison reform and system change
- Ability to effectively represent the organization in group meetings, convenings, conferences and events in order to build, expand, and sustain partnerships
- Assist in furthering organizational policy goals by effectively communicating and advocating for/against proposals impacting people in prison and their loved ones
- Strong communication skills:
 - Writing: must have ability to draft internal and external facing documents such as memos, presentations plans, fact sheets and information one pagers that are clear, accurate and well organized
 - Oral/Verbal: must be able to effectively communicate and share information both within the organization and with external groups and individuals. This may include

reporting on activities, meetings, and events; leading presentations; sharing and explaining ideas, plans, goals, and opportunities to advance or undertake new efforts, increase impact; and accurately inform audiences about JHA's prison oversight, monitoring work and reform efforts

- Experience or understanding of successful intern and volunteer programs, including recruiting and activity development for organizational supporters
- Understanding of legislative process, including bill tracking and content review
- Background in policy analysis, creation, and/or development highly desirable
- Ability to identify, synthesize and utilize available data to support policy positions and recommendations

How to Apply

JHA is actively recruiting highly qualified candidates to begin immediately. JHA recognizes and values people's unique skillsets, backgrounds, and experiences; the qualifications outlined above are designed to provide information and guidance on the work the person in this position will be responsible for, so that the individual in this role will be successful. It is not meant to deter or limit applications.

Interested candidates are strongly encouraged to apply as soon as possible by sending a resume, cover letter not to exceed one page including relevant experience, skills, and qualifications, interest in JHA and understanding of organization's mission and work, via email to Dan Hoffman, dhoffman@thejha.org.

Diverse candidates are encouraged to apply. At JHA, we believe that differences and diversity benefit our staff, our mission, our work and our community. JHA is an equal opportunity work place and we welcome applications from all candidates regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, disability status, and age. Further, we highly value those who have lived criminal justice system experience.