

PRISON

POLICY INITIATIVE

Employment Opportunity: Policy & Communications Associate

The Prison Policy Initiative

The Prison Policy Initiative (<http://www.prisonpolicy.org>) produces cutting edge research to expose the broader harm of mass incarceration, and advocates for a more just society. Our work advances immediate progressive change in criminal justice policy, and strengthens the broader movement for criminal justice reform by sparking critical public discourse and forging sustainable cross-sector coalitions. We craft rigorous original research that leads diverse grassroots coalitions to seek specific, realistic reforms. Each of our projects casts additional light on how the political decision to incarcerate a greater portion of our population than any other country is harmful to every member of our society.

The Prison Policy Initiative was founded by students in 2001 and is known for effectively using data to explain why the need for criminal justice reform is long overdue. Over the last 14 years our team has grown to three dedicated staff members who, along with our network of volunteers, shape a variety of national reform campaigns and develop groundbreaking publications from our office in Western Massachusetts.

The position

The Policy & Communications Associate is a key part of our team of three full-time staff members.¹ While we work as team, we'll expect the Policy & Communications Associate to take the lead on our communications and organizing work and to play critical supporting roles on research and logistical questions. Over time, this staff member can grow to take lead responsibility for particular topic areas, including as lead report author.

This position will be responsible for two main tasks:

- The goal of our **communications** work is to efficiently and effectively develop creative ways to both explain issues and broaden our audience. We'll need you to play an active role in developing how we describe our work and our unique role in the

¹ A lot of our work is subtle and behind the scenes — in terms of working with elected officials, fundraising, or providing journalists with context as they develop criminal justice stories — but one way to learn about what this job entails and how you can grow as a part of our team would be to look at what Bernadette Rabuy has published on our website starting with her first blog post published on May 28, 2014 and then her longer reports on the video visitation industry, the pre-incarceration incomes of the incarcerated, and visiting in state prisons. She'll be attending law school in the Fall of 2016.

larger movement. This includes spearheading our social media platforms, authoring blog posts, selecting articles for our three different e-newsletters (and putting those newsletters together), writing articles, op-eds, and press releases, building and maintaining ongoing relationships with key members of the media, and monitoring, archiving, and responding to relevant press coverage.

- Our **organizing** work aims to build and mobilize cross-sector coalitions to achieve real change that furthers the long-term goal of ending mass incarceration. This work, which is almost exclusively done from the office by telephone, email and our best-in-class website, includes reaching out to colleagues and allies from a wide variety of backgrounds (from grassroots groups, to legislators, to other advocacy nonprofits, to individual activists, to incarcerated colleagues and/or their families), and strategically appealing to their unique priorities and concerns in the context of larger advocacy campaigns.

Beyond those core responsibilities, the Prison Policy Initiative deeply values the skills that staff and volunteers bring to the table, and has a history of tailoring projects to those pre-existing skills or skills that can be developed on the job. (For example, video editing or graphic design.) Additionally, the Policy & Communications Associate will be responsible for providing necessary logistical support as needed and overseeing the organization's long-term resource projects such as the Research Clearinghouse and the Legal Resource Database.

We are an equal opportunity employer. People from communities that are overrepresented in the criminal justice system, or people with direct experience with the criminal justice system are especially encouraged to apply.

Qualified applicants will have many of these qualities and skills:

- You have a long-standing passion for racial and social justice. (Helpful: you have at least a year of part-time paid or volunteer work on criminal justice issues in at least one and preferably several states.)
- You have a desire to seek creative solutions to some of the nation's most pressing social problems.
- You have a college degree or equivalent experience. (Helpful: 1-2 years of work experience.)
- You bring strong writing skills and demonstrated experience writing in different formats for a wide variety of audiences.
- You are excited by the idea of linking criminal justice issues to other seemingly unrelated issues — like elections, or telecommunications policy, or state driving regulations — and developing new expertise and new ways to build coalitions.
- You have a strong passion for learning how to effectively disseminate little known ideas into the larger discourse on a very

short timetable with a very small budget. (Helpful: previous journalism or communications experience.)

- You are enthusiastic about collaboratively working with a wide variety of stakeholders, and comfortable reaching out to colleagues from a wide variety of backgrounds on email, phone, and in-person. (Helpful: You have experience organizing coalitions or campaigns. Also helpful: you have experience supervising students or volunteers.)
- You are comfortable successfully multitasking on multiple issues, and have demonstrated your ability to manage and meet multiple project deadlines. (Helpful: You have a natural inclination to compare the benefits of a given strategy to the effort it requires.)
- You have basic numerical literacy and are able to evaluate and use numbers in new contexts. (You don't need calculus, but you must intuitively know that 60% is the same as 3 out of 5, and that 6 is 20% greater than 5.)
- You are enthusiastic about improving your writing through feedback and want to receive writing assignments with increasing responsibility and visibility.
- You know that social change doesn't fund itself and see fundraising as an opportunity to hone your organizing and communications skills. (Helpful: you have experience with non-profit fundraising or a desire to learn more about it.)
- You are able to start by as soon as possible in our Easthampton, Massachusetts office. (Required: You can start by the end of May 2016. Helpful: Being able to start as soon as possible on a part-time or full-time basis.) (Requests to work in a potential satellite Hartford, Connecticut office will be considered, but the collaborative structure of our work will not allow us to consider requests to work remotely from other parts of the country.)
- You have basic office software literacy. (Helpful: Experience using Excel, image editing software, audio/video software, use of mail merge or regular expressions. Also helpful, but far from essential, would be experience with FileMaker, PERL, PHP, JavaScript, SQL, Access, and other databases and programming languages.)
- You are enthusiastic about, or have some experience with, learning to use technology more efficiently. (Helpful: If you are comfortable hand coding simple html, i.e. links, paragraphs, italics, bold, etc., you will be ready to learn even more advanced — and useful — things.)

Salary & Benefits

The expected salary for this anticipated entry-level position is \$31,500, and our practice has been to recognize the advancement of skills over time with generous raises. Benefits include health insurance, all Massachusetts holidays, paid sick time, paid vacation, and an IRA match.

To apply

Please send the following in one email to jobs@prisonpolicy.org:

- A cover letter
- Your resume or c.v.
- At least three writing samples on any topic representing at least three types of writing (e.g. news or opinion articles for publication, an academic paper for school, a blog post, a letter to the editor, a letter contesting a billing error, a letter to your representative, etc.²).
- Our Policy and Communications Associate skill assessment form at http://www.prisonpolicy.org/PolicyComms_skills.doc
- OPTIONAL: Graduating college seniors with short resumes are encouraged to include an unofficial transcript.

Hiring process

We will be reviewing applications and scheduling interviews on a weekly basis. We anticipate doing the first round of interviews by Skype and then a final round in-person.

Please allow us to keep our daily focus on improving the criminal justice system by refraining from writing or calling the office to check on the status of your application. We'll keep the job page at <http://www.prisonpolicy.org/jobs.html> up to date with the status of our candidate search.

² Yes. That type of writing you are thinking about would be great. Include it.