

Safe & Just Michigan

About Safe & Just Michigan

Safe & Just Michigan (SJM) envisions a Michigan in which all are safe in their communities and everyone is responsible for creating accountability, safety and justice. We work to reduce the harm caused by both crime and unnecessary incarceration.

Safe & Just Michigan advances evidence-based reforms that can improve public safety and eliminate unnecessary and wasteful corrections spending. We conduct research, educate, advocate and mobilize support for smart investments in services and programs proven to reduce crime and promote healthy, thriving communities.

Policy director position description

The policy director is Safe & Just Michigan's legislative policy expert and oversees the organization's policy development and legislative advocacy. The position reports to the executive director.

This full-time position is headquartered Lansing, but arrangements may be made for telecommuting as appropriate for the position.

Responsibilities

Leadership:

- Develop a research agenda, legislative goals and strategies that advance SJM's strategic plan in consultation with SJM's lobbyist, the executive director, and the communications and outreach teams.
- Partner with the SJM leadership team to inform decision-making from a policy and research perspective, and to contribute more broadly to organizational strategy, decision-making and leadership.
- Develop and sustain SJM's positioning vis-a-vis key constituencies (e.g. media, Legislature, funders, members) in order to maximize the success of our legislative, educational, advocacy, organizing and fundraising efforts.

- Facilitate the development and growth of relationships with key organizations and individuals whose participation with SJM will advance strategic goals and objectives.
- Facilitate opportunities for external constituents, especially those most harmed and least served by the justice system, to bring their insights and voices into the work of SJM.
- Facilitate innovative and effective use of SJM constituent data to advance our work.
- Other duties as assigned.

Research and policy development:

- Work closely with the executive director and staff to develop areas of inquiry, research goals and work plans, and to complete research goals in a timely manner.
- Identify data needs and develop information to support policy initiatives and to respond to inquiries and opposition messaging.
- Answer questions about details of policy reforms from media, elected officials, allies, etc.; write issue briefs, bill summaries, fact sheets and draft other policy materials, as required.
- Analyze the Michigan budget to identify opportunities and challenges in executing SJM's objectives and prepare analyses for publication.
- Stay abreast of current state and national policy developments/best practices/research findings that may affect SJM's agenda.
- Other duties as assigned.

Legislative advocacy:

- Collaborate with experts, thought leaders and individuals with relevant legal or policy expertise, as required to address policy objectives or emerging issues.
- Work closely with the organization's lobbyist(s) to develop, explain and promote SJM's policy agenda with elected officials, staff and governmental agencies (especially the Michigan Department of Corrections).
- Play a key role in assembling and leading a coalition of stakeholder organizations to advocate for key policies.
- Join SJM's lobbyist, as needed, in meetings and work groups with elected and appointed officials and staff members in the legislature, executive branch, government agencies, and key thought leaders, to execute SJM's policy agenda.
- Create effective written internal and external communications materials on policy matters, including use of social media platforms, in partnership with the communications team.

- Review, with staff and appropriate consultants and experts, support for advocacy positions including briefing materials, presentations, reports and handouts communicating policy material for accuracy and political tone.
- Write and provide testimony before governmental bodies, assist in recruiting and prepping experts providing testimony, develop briefing materials and participate in meetings with legislators and other government officials to provide information.
- Make educational presentations and serve as spokesperson for the organization on policy matters, as required.
- Analyze pending legislation and develop recommendations for SJM's response, drafting amendments and providing data and policy impact information to staff, policy makers and stakeholders.
- Work closely with the organizations' lobbyist and strategic partners to review, support/oppose, draft, amend and/or explain legislation.
- Maintain an active, positive, working relationship with other state and national organizational partners and key stakeholders important to the development and execution of SJM's policy agenda.
- Communicate with and, if appropriate, negotiate with stakeholder organizations regarding their support or opposition to SJM's legislative priorities.
- Communicate with and manage relations with national organizations working in support of SJM goals and objectives.
- Other duties as assigned.

Administrative:

- Supervise and train policy and research staff, consultants, interns, and volunteers
- Develop policy and research work plans and establish benchmarks
- Manage consultants and vendor contracts for policy and research
- Manage recruitment and interview process for open policy and research staff positions
- Assist in developing funding reports, presenting to major donors and funders, and attending national events as required.
- Other duties as assigned.

Qualifications

The policy director must have:

- A minimum of 3-5 years of experience:
 - With the legislative process in Michigan, including bill drafting, bill analysis and related processes.

- Understanding the appropriations process and analyzing state budget information.
- Reading and accurately summarizing legal, statutory, regulatory and research materials.
- Working closely with key Republican and Democratic decision-makers to achieve policy goals.
- Reviewing, evaluating and accurately communicating relevant data, statistics and research findings to explain the impact of policy proposals.
- Building consensus among bipartisan groups of issue stakeholders.
- Leading meetings/convenings, participating in legislative work groups, delivering presentations or speeches and working with a wide range of external audiences.
- A demonstrated commitment to criminal justice reform and to SJM's mission.
- The ability to understand, clearly articulate and convincingly advocate for SJM's policy objectives.
- Substantial knowledge of corrections, sentencing and parole policies.
- Writing and editing skills, with close attention to detail and accuracy; ability to convey key content effectively to a broad spectrum of audiences, from experts to the general public. .
- Ability to analyze data from a number of sources with close attention to detail.
- Project and personnel management skills, with experience leading long-term complex projects.
- Time and resource management skills, with experience meeting ambitious, measurable goals.
- Bachelor's degree or equivalent combination of relevant education and experience. Law degree or advanced degree in public policy strongly preferred.

Compensation

Salary is based on experience and qualifications. Benefits include generous paid leave time and a comprehensive health care package.

To Apply

To apply, email a cover letter outlining your interest in this position, along with your resume, a brief writing sample (3-5 pages that illustrates the candidate's qualifications), and at least two professional references to **john@safeandjustmi.org**.

Please include "Policy Director" in the subject line. Only applicants with a complete submission of the requested information will be considered. **This position will remain open until filled.** SJM is seeking to fill this position as soon as possible, and will conduct interviews of preferred candidates on a rolling basis as received.

Only applicants selected for interviews will be contacted. No phone calls please.

Safe & Just Michigan considers all qualified applicants and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, prior record of arrest or conviction, citizenship status, current employment status, or military/veteran status in employment. Safe & Just Michigan values diverse experiences, including educational background and justice system involvement.