



Position Profile
**National Sustainable Agriculture
Coalition Policy Director**
Washington, DC

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) seeks a passionate, highly experienced policy professional who will build upon the Coalition's accomplishments over the past 28 years. The Coalition establishes and secures support and funding for dozens of policies and programs that promote conservation; foster family farm agriculture; build new value-added and regional food markets and businesses; protect food system integrity; and support sustainable and organic research, education and extension. The Policy Director shares in the leadership of the organization with the Managing Director.

The Organization

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) is an alliance of grassroots organizations that advocates for federal policy reform to advance the sustainability of agriculture, food systems, natural resources, and rural communities. NSAC was founded on two shared and integrated priorities, the first of which is to support, build, develop, and engage the grassroots of sustainable agriculture for the health and vitality of the sustainable agriculture movement. The second is to research, develop, and advocate for federal policies relating to farm, food, and environmental issues; appropriations; and implementation to support and advance sustainable agriculture.

With an operating budget of \$1.8M, NSAC employs a dedicated staff of 12. The Policy Director and Managing Director co-lead the organization and report directly to NSAC's Organizational Council (OC). In addition to hiring and providing leadership to the Policy Director and Managing Director, the OC oversees strategic planning and development, evaluates NSAC's effectiveness, and provides financial oversight.

NSAC affirms that racial equity – an understanding and acknowledgement of historical and ongoing racial inequities and a commitment to actions challenging those inequities – is a core tenet of our coalition's outlook and will be embedded in its structure, analysis, and policy development and advocacy process. Please visit our website at www.sustainableagriculture.net to read more about NSAC's Statement on Racial Equity and to learn more about our work.

Key Responsibilities

The policy director, in conjunction with NSAC staff and member organizations, leads NSAC's public policy work, develops issue campaigns, represents the Coalition to policymakers and to the media, coordinates and oversees the policy development and advocacy work of the Coalition, staffs the Policy Council, and manages the policy staff. The policy director directly supervises the seven other policy team staff members, and coordinates with and works through the grassroots director and grassroots team on campaign development, member communication, and grassroots advocacy. Major functions include:

- Research and stay abreast of developments in sustainable agriculture as well as policy perspectives, options, threats, and opportunities.
- Provide general oversight for the strategic planning process and strategic plan implementation for elements directly related to policy and policy campaigns.
- Monitor and analyze relevant activity on Capitol Hill, in the executive branch, and in peer advocacy organizations.
- Coordinate and manage the annual policy priority setting process, help create a well-defined and well-designed policy agenda with effective strategies, realistic goals, performance measures, and a racial equity lens.
- Assure the organization has a long-range advocacy and equitable policy plan to achieve its goals and objectives.
- Advocate NSAC priorities and positions to congressional and administrative decision-makers, and coordinate all direct advocacy by NSAC staff.
- Develop and maintain good working relationships with member organization's staff and farm leaders that play an active role in policy work.
- Assist NSAC organizations with meeting and communicating directly with congressional and administrative decision-makers.
- Help draft legislation, amendments, report language, testimony, letters to Congress and comments on federal rulemakings and program implementation decisions. Train policy staff to do this work and review their work. Sign-off on all written policy communications.
- Develop effective coalitions with other national and regional organizations interested in our issues, and ensure adequate NSAC representation on our key working coalitions.
- Serve on advisory boards, commissions, and other similar bodies when appropriate to advance NSAC's advocacy agenda.
- In coordination with other staff, help develop overall publications strategy, frame and articulate advocacy related messages, develop and maintain relationships with media, and offer comments as appropriate to advance NSAC's advocacy agenda.
- Speak and represent NSAC at meetings, conferences, symposia, etc.
- Assist the Managing Director and the Grassroots Director with membership recruitment and membership capacity building for policy work.
- Assist the Managing Director with the development of the annual budget, including staffing arrangements and policy campaign needs.
- As needed, assist the Managing Director in raising funds for major policy campaigns.
- Maintain a climate that attracts, engages, motivates, and retains a diverse, highly qualified and effective policy staff.

Experience and Attributes

The successful candidates will have the following **required** skills:

- A strong understanding of sustainable food and agriculture policy, including federal policy related conservation, environmental protection, farm entry, commodity and crop insurance programs, rural development, agricultural research, food safety, climate change, local and regional food systems, and related topics
- Ability to lead and manage a team of six policy specialists, and to work cooperatively
- Ability to distill the interests and needs of farmers and farm-based organizations into a federal policy campaign, and to interpret policy language to understand how it will affect farmers on the ground
- Ability to work well with decision-makers of all political stripes
- Ability to push incremental change with broader long-term goals in sight
- Willingness to work around a demanding congressional schedule and administrative deadlines

- Willingness to develop deep and lasting relationships with stakeholders and decision makers, and to engage in Hill social events on a regular basis
- Willingness to travel domestically several times per year
- 7-10 years of federal policy experience
- Strong experience advocating on Capitol Hill and experience advocating within federal agencies
- Strong experience with large, multi-organization grassroots coalitions or networks and experience with grassroots advocacy campaigns
- Strong experience writing policy papers, testimony, legislation, advocacy materials, and comments related to federal policy and rulemaking
- Excellent written and verbal communication and public speaking skills.
- Must have obvious passion for NSAC's mission and work.
- Must be an authentic leader with strong interpersonal skills; must be an excellent listener with strong ability to build trust among a wide range of constituents

The following skills and experiences are also highly desired:

- Experience working within Congress or within the USDA, FDA, EPA or other relevant federal agencies
- Experience crafting grant proposals for policy projects and campaigns
- Experience facilitating consensus among diverse stakeholders
- Experience analyzing and advocating policy reform from a racial justice standpoint
- Experience with annual planning and priority setting
- Experience with annual organizational budgeting

Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience.

Application Process

To apply, e-mail cover letter, resume, and salary requirements to: NSAC@raffa.com (e-mail applications are **required**). For other inquiries contact James Sunshine at jsunshine@raffa.com.

All communications will be treated confidentially. Resume reviews begin immediately.

NSAC is committed to hiring and retaining a diverse workforce, making decisions without regard to gender, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, veteran status, disability, or any other protected class. Please refer to NSAC's [Statement of Racial Equity](#).