

Afterschool for Children and Teens Now Coalition (ACT Now)

Position Title: ACT Now Policy and Communications Fellow

Reports to: Deputy Director of Policy, Communications, and External Affairs

Location: Chicago, Illinois

Job Type: Full-Time

Fellowship Duration: Flexible start date, on or before January 1, 2027; ending December 31, 2027

Position Summary: The Policy and Communications Fellow will support the Afterschool for Children and Teens Now Coalition (ACT Now) in advancing its mission to promote access to high-quality and affordable afterschool and out-of-school time (OST) programs for children and youth across Illinois. Working closely with the Deputy Director of Policy, Communications, and External Affairs and other members of the ACT Now team, the Fellow will contribute to policy research, advocacy initiatives, communications and resource development, program evaluation, and external partner engagement.

This fellowship is designed for individuals who have earned an undergraduate or graduate degree in public policy, public administration, education, political science, social work, or related fields who are interested in educational policy, youth development, and community advocacy. The Fellow will gain practical experience in statewide policy initiatives while collaborating with educators, program providers, policymakers, community leaders, youth, and families to strengthen the afterschool field.

Key Responsibilities*Policy and Advocacy*

- Support the development, implementation and tracking of ACT Now's policy priorities and advocacy initiatives
- Research state and federal legislation, education policies, budget proposals, and funding opportunities affecting afterschool and youth-serving programs.
- Assist the Chief of Staff in developing annual policy briefs and reports.
- Develop advocacy toolkits, action alerts, and other resources to inform policymakers and equip coalition members to engage in advocacy initiatives.
- Assist the Chief of Staff with planning and coordinating advocacy events, legislative meetings, and other activities that advance the coalition's policy agenda.
- Participate in relevant policy committees, working groups, and meetings to support policy development and implementation.

Communications and Resource Development

- Develop and edit communications materials, including newsletters, policy updates, presentations, and website and social media content.
- Translate complex policy information into clear, accessible materials for diverse audiences.
- Collect and share stories, research findings, and data that illustrate the impact and value of afterschool programs and inform the public.
- Prepare materials for advocacy campaigns, partner meetings, professional development sessions, and conference.
- Share communications performance insights with ACT Now staff and recommend opportunities to strengthen audience engagement and expand the Coalition's reach.

Program Support and Evaluation

- Assist the Interim Chief of Staff with coordinating youth advocacy initiatives, including the Youth Afterschool Ambassadors, through slide deck creation and co-facilitation of evening sessions and application processes.
- Collect, analyze, and visualize program and stakeholder data to identify service gaps, highlight community needs, assess program reach, and inform policy recommendations.
- Help track and assess ACT Now's policy trainings and technical assistance for coalition members.

Grants, Operations, and Administrative Support

- Support grant development and management, including funding research, proposal preparation, and grant reporting.
- Assist with organizational operations, and administrative tasks, including project coordination, scheduling, recordkeeping and meeting minutes, and preparing reports and materials for internal committee structures.

External Partner Engagement

- Build and maintain relationships with educators, afterschool providers, families, youth leaders, community organizations, and other stakeholders to strengthen collaboration across the statewide network.
- Coordinate meetings, workshops, trainings, and events that facilitate information sharing and support member engagement.
- Represent ACT Now at meetings and events, as appropriate, and help elevate the perspectives of youth, families, and community-based organizations.

Professional Development

- Participate in professional development opportunities related to education policy, legislative advocacy, youth development, and the OST field.

Qualifications & Skills

- Earned an undergraduate or graduate degree in public policy, public administration, education, political science, child and youth development, social work, or a related field.
- Demonstrated interest in education policy, afterschool and out-of-school time programming, youth development, or community advocacy; familiarity with legislative processes, public funding, or grassroots organizing preferred.
- Strong research, analytical, and written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to synthesize information and communicate complex topics clearly to diverse audiences.
- Excellent organizational skills, attention to detail, and the ability to manage multiple priorities, meet deadlines, and work both independently and collaboratively.
- Experience with data collection, analysis, program evaluation, or reporting preferred; proficiency in Microsoft Office and Google Workspace required, with familiarity with Canva, Mailchimp, SurveyMonkey, or similar tools a plus.
- Strong interpersonal skills and a demonstrated commitment to equity and working effectively with individuals and communities from diverse backgrounds.
- Ability to travel within Illinois for meetings and events as needed.

Duration and Compensation

The Policy and Communications Fellowship will begin on a flexible start date on or before January 1, 2027, and conclude on December 31, 2027. The fellowship may be extended based on funding, project availability, and organizational needs.

A salary of \$50,000 to \$55,000 will be provided based on the candidate's experience and available fellowship funding. The position will be based in Chicago, Illinois, with hybrid work flexibility considered in accordance with organizational needs.

Application Process

ACT Now is an equal opportunity employer committed to fostering a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace. Individuals from underrepresented backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

To apply, please submit a resume, cover letter, and contact information for three professional references to **Emma Giamberdino** at spencere@actnowillinois.org. Please use the subject line "ACT Now Policy Fellow Application." **Applications will be accepted until December 1st, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. CT.** Applicants should indicate their availability and earliest anticipated start date in their materials. Candidates selected for further consideration will be contacted for an interview.