Search for
President
Education Commission of the States

1  OVERVIEW

2  WHAT IS EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE STATES?

5  THE OPPORTUNITY

6  CANDIDATE PROFILE

9  QUALIFICATIONS

11 COMPENSATION, BENEFITS & APPLICATION FOR POSITION

12 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT
OVERVIEW

Position         President

Reports to      Executive Committee

Location        Denver, Colorado

MISSION

The mission of Education Commission of the States (ECS) is to advocate for attaining educational excellence for all and to help state leaders identify, develop and implement public policy for education that addresses current and future needs of a learning society.
WHAT IS ECS?

Education Commission of the States (ECS) serves as a partner to state policymakers by providing personalized support and helping education leaders come together to learn from one another. Through ECS programs and services, policymakers gain the insight and experience needed to create effective education policy.

ECS is the trusted, unbiased and non-partisan source for comprehensive knowledge and resources on education policy issues ranging from early learning to postsecondary and workforce. The four pillars of the organization’s work are Research, Report, Counsel and Convene.

The Research pillar is foundational for all of ECS’ work. ECS compiles information on education policies from early childhood through workforce so state policymakers can make informed decisions. It tracks education policies across all 50 states and the District of Columbia, from early learning through workforce development and reviews education to spot trends and provide state leaders with unbiased overviews and context for pressing and emerging education issues. ECS maintains searchable summaries of enacted and vetoed legislation dating back to the early 1990s and spanning the entire education spectrum.

ECS also maintains a State Education Policy Watch List, which captures pending, enacted and vetoed bills pertaining to trending education topics. The list changes annually and includes topics such as career and technical education, early learning, health, high school, K-12 finance, postsecondary affordability and finance, postsecondary financial aid, postsecondary workforce development and teaching.

The Report pillar builds on research work. ECS produces relevant and timely reports highlighting trends, identifying legislative examples and providing important context for the education policy decisions leaders are making in their states.

The Counsel pillar encompasses assistance to states including trusted advice on policy plans and proposed legislation, testimony, technical assistance, presentations and other face-to-face engagements with ECS experts.
The Convene pillar encompasses events, large and small, that prioritize bringing together education leaders within and across states to interact, collaborate and learn from each other.

One of the organization’s most valued services is responding to state education leaders’ requests for information, typically within 48 hours, on pressing education needs or topics in their states. Policy staff annually complete hundreds of personalized responses to State Information Requests from education leaders and legislative staffers from across the country. These requests came from every state, plus the District of Columbia and Virgin Islands. Top categories include assessments, curricula, K-12 accountability, finance and governance, postsecondary academic affairs, student health and wellness, teacher certification and licensure.

In addition, ECS currently manages initiatives and projects including the Arts Education Partnership and the Strong Start to Finish network. The Arts Education Partnership is a national network of more than 200 organizations dedicated to advancing arts education. AEP has been supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Department of Education since 1995.

Founded in 2018, Strong Start to Finish is a network of policy and research partners, institutions and systems leaders and foundations advancing system reforms in developmental education. It works to scale the use of proven, proactive strategies that remove barriers that typically impede racially minoritized students, students with low incomes and returning adults from earning essential college credits in English and math courses in their first year. ECS is governed by the Commission comprised of seven members from each state. In most states, these appointees include the governor, four individuals appointed by the governor and a representative from each chamber of the state’s legislature. Often, gubernatorial appointees include the head of the state education agency, the governor’s education policy advisor, a representative from higher education, a state board member and/or industry and community partners. However, state statute governing each of these appointments can vary across the states.
ECS has a total annual budget in the range of $5-$7 million. Approximately 50% of the budget is from state dues and the other 50% results from grants and fundraising support. The Arts and Strong Start Initiatives account for approximately $2 million of the total organizational budget. The organization’s staff, including those employed by initiatives, is approximately 44 full time roles. ECS currently has offices in Denver, Colorado and is open to evolving into a virtual organization.

SEE THE ECS WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING ECS SERVICES, GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS.
The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the urgency of improving education at all levels, from early learning through workforce. ECS is unique in serving leaders and policymakers responsible for policies that affect the full education spectrum from early childhood to workforce development. The stakes have never been higher for creating effective education policy that serves learners of all ages. ECS has an unparalleled opportunity to support state leadership in this critical work.

The President will shape, guide and execute the organization’s vision for the future. This is an opportunity to build on ECS’ legacy of fostering effective education policy while evolving to meet the needs of 21st Century state leadership. The Commissioners seek a leader who will partner with them in thinking boldly and creatively about this organization’s future. Strategies for the future include these priorities:

- **Engage** policymakers, partners and funders in developing the education policies necessary for attaining educational excellence for all.
- **Support** education policymakers as the needs of a learning society change and technology innovation accelerates.
- **Leverage** the reputation, partnerships, research, programs and services of ECS.
- **Explore** opportunities to further diversify, grow and leverage the organization’s resources.
ECS seeks an experienced leader who will collaborate with the Commissioners and staff to establish the organization’s future trajectory. This person will be a passionate advocate for ECS’ mission and will inspire others to support the organization’s impact. This individual has experience leading and directing complex organizations with diverse internal and external constituencies. This individual is a change agent, with the capacity to implement effective organizational practices, while creating a nimble institutional culture that can quickly adapt to a changing strategic landscape.
ECS seeks a nonpartisan leader who is passionate about the positive impact that effective education policy can have on all learners. This individual understands state policy formation, implementation and impact. This individual is politically astute, deftly navigates ambiguity and consistently seeks to find common ground to advance outcomes that achieve results. Responsibilities include:

- **Leadership.** Provides leadership and vision to the executive committee, Commissioners, ECS staff and other constituents in achieving the organization’s goals and purpose. Adroit at implementing organizational change in response to the shifting needs of states and a dynamic education policy environment. This is a high-profile position, requiring a self-directed individual who is comfortable working with a wide variety of elected officials, state education executives, leaders of nonprofit entities and associations and other constituents with diverse interests.

- **Relationships.** Engages and values the perspectives and contributions of others. Builds strong and sustainable relationships that translate into engaged, effective collaborations and fundraising results.

- **Business Acumen.** Leads the creation of strategic, financial and operational plans, ensuring coordination and alignment of all activities, initiatives and programs within ECS’s mission and purpose. Runs a fiscally sustainable organization and brings mission criteria and financial rigor to opportunity assessment. Establishes metrics for performance and measures of success for all facets of the organization’s operations. Assesses organizational capacity to implement strategies, identifies gaps in systems and staffing and develops plans for correction, contingency and succession; anticipates factors accelerating or impacting success.

- **Communications.** Presents complex information clearly, accurately and transparently, internally and externally. Spokesperson who will serve as the ECS public representative, speaking on behalf of the organization in the states and to the media, policy makers, funders, partners, staff and a diverse range of constituents. Demonstrates facility with digital media and has outstanding written and oral communication skills.
- **Fundraising.** Supports the development of the organizational plans, systems and metrics necessary to foster and sustain successful fundraising. Understands the dynamics of fundraising and builds lasting relationships with funders and donors to position ECS for resource diversification and growth. Has experience with a multi-million dollar fundraising budget and personally raising money.

- **Governance.** Has experience working with and/or serving on governing boards. Advocates and supports the executive committee’s, steering committee’s and Commissioners’ performance and accountability in furthering this organization’s outcomes.

- **Manager.** Committed to having a dynamic and diverse ECS staff that is representative of the 50 states that ECS serves. Genuinely values ECS employees and their well-being.

- **Integrity.** Is honest and consistent in dealings with others and has a reputation for doing so. Maintains stewardship and accountability for the organization’s overall operational, ethical and fiduciary integrity within the guidelines and policies set by the executive committee and applicable laws and/or regulations.
We seek a proven leader who has a passion for the work of and is driven to enhance ECS’ efficacy in serving its purpose and goals. The ideal candidate has had extensive experience and success leading nonpartisan high-performance teams that deliver excellent results. This person must exhibit success in collaborating with a wide variety of partners and stakeholders. Experience with convening diverse groups of people, to address common interests in a collegial, transparent and highly participatory manner is essential. An understanding of policy development and impact are required.
The successful candidate must demonstrate the ability to understand and operate effectively within a nonprofit governing environment. This person will support active and engaged governance leadership.

This executive will be experienced in and enjoy building teams, structures and systems to support a sustainable organization. This individual has experience leading effective fundraising strategies and enjoys actively participating in nonprofit fundraising.

This role will require extensive out-of-state travel, approximately 40-60% is required.

As a key spokesperson for ECS, this individual must have strong oral and written communication skills. High integrity and sound judgment are essential to success in this role.

The President will report to the Executive Committee which is composed of ECS Commissioners and includes the Chair, a sitting Governor; Vice Chair, a legislator of the opposite party of the Chair; Treasurer; and up to five additional members. In addition to overseeing the President, the Executive Committee also provides strategic direction and oversight for ECS’ management, operations and financial policies.
ECS offers a competitive salary and benefits package.

The salary range for this position is between $250,000 and $275,000 and will be commensurate with experience. ECS is proud to offer a robust benefits program to all employees as part of a comprehensive compensation package. Benefits include: medical, dental, vision, wellness and EAP, a retirement savings plan, 12 paid holidays, extensive PTO accrual and commuter benefits, just to name a few.

How to apply

If you want to lead this dynamic organization, please confidentially submit a current resume and cover letter to Kittleman & Associates. The cover letter is an opportunity to showcase your passion for ECS’ mission, as well as organizational impact in current or prior roles.

The position will remain open until filled, but applicants are highly encouraged to submit their materials as soon as possible to ensure full consideration.

→ SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION TO KITTLEMAN ONLINE (CLICK THE APPLY BUTTON AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE)

All qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.
ECS is dedicated to equal employment opportunities. The Commission provides equal employment opportunities to all individuals based on job-related qualifications and ability to perform a job without regard to age 40 and over, sex, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, genetic information, disability or veteran status or any other status protected by applicable state or federal law. It is the guideline of ECS to maintain a nondiscriminatory environment free from intimidation, harassment or bias based upon these grounds.

ECS complies with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment in every location in which ECS has facilities. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including, but not limited to, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation and training.

ECS complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and applicable state and local laws providing for nondiscrimination in employment against qualified individuals with disabilities. ECS also provides reasonable accommodation for such individuals in accordance with these laws. An employee who feels he or she is a qualified individual with a disability and requires an accommodation must contact their supervisor. ECS will make reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship to the organization. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination and access to benefits and training.
Religious, and Pregnancy Accommodation (Colorado Only)

ECS will make reasonable accommodation for employees whose work requirements interfere with a religious belief, unless doing so poses undue hardship on the Commission. ECS will make reasonable accommodation to otherwise qualified employees due to pregnancy, a health condition related to pregnancy or the physical recovery from childbirth absent undue hardship. ECS will not deny employment opportunities based on the need to make a pregnancy-related reasonable accommodation and will not retaliate against employees and applicants that request or use a pregnancy-related accommodation. An employee seeking pregnancy-related accommodations may request such accommodations by informing their supervisor and the human resources office.

ECS expressly prohibits any form of unlawful employee harassment based on age, sex, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, disability, status as a Vietnam-era or special disabled veteran, or status in any group protected by state or local law. Improper interference with any ECS employee’s ability to perform his/her expected job duties is not tolerated.