



Chief External Affairs Officer

The Chief of External Affairs is a senior executive leader responsible for setting the vision, strategy, and accountability structure for how Essential Access Health engages the world beyond its walls. This role is the integrating force across the organization’s fund development, government affairs, community engagement, and communications functions—ensuring that every external-facing effort reflects a coherent direction, amplifies the organization’s influence, and advances its long-term mission and sustainability.

Reporting directly to the CEO, the Chief of External Affairs translates organizational priorities into external strategies that drive philanthropic revenue, shape policy outcomes, deepen community trust, and elevate Essential Access Health’s visibility as a leading voice in sexual and reproductive health care. This role is equally a strategic architect and a senior relationship holder—setting the frame and showing up in high-stakes spaces while equipping a strong team to execute with excellence.

The Chief of External Affairs leads an integrated team of five across two direct reports—the Vice President of Fund Development and the Vice President of Government & Community Affairs—and is accountable for the coherence, performance, and culture of the full external affairs function.

The salary for this position is \$222,813.00. This position can be based in our Los Angeles office with a hybrid work schedule.

Organizational Context + Reporting Structure

The Chief of External Affairs leads an integrated external affairs function comprising the following roles:

Role	Primary Focus
Chief of External Affairs	Sets the vision, strategy, and accountability across all external-facing functions — this role
VP, Fund Development	Leads philanthropic revenue strategy including individual giving, foundation relations, and major gifts
VP, Government & Community Affairs	Leads policy, public funding, advocacy, and community partnership strategy
Director, Government & Community Affairs	Manages day-to-day legislative and regulatory engagement, public funding pursuits, and policy analysis
Community Affairs Manager	Manage community partnerships, coalition engagement, grassroots relationships, and local stakeholder outreach

The Chief of External Affairs is responsible for ensuring this structure operates as a unified function—with shared goals, coordinated execution, and clear lines of accountability across fund development, government affairs, and community engagement.



Core Responsibilities

Vision + Strategy for External Affairs

Set and lead a unified external affairs vision that aligns all external-facing functions with organizational priorities and positions Essential Access Health for sustained influence and impact.

- Develop and steward a multi-year external affairs strategy that integrates fund development, government relations, community engagement, and communications into a coherent, mission-aligned direction
- Establish clear priorities, performance expectations, and measures of success across all external-facing functions, ensuring accountability at every level of the team
- Ensure alignment between external strategy and the organization's programmatic, policy, and learning priorities—so that external engagement reflects and advances what the organization does
- Translate the CEO's and Board's strategic direction into actionable external affairs roadmaps, making the connection between organizational vision and day-to-day external activity explicit and operational
- Guide long-term positioning to strengthen Essential Access Health's partnerships, influence, and financial sustainability across philanthropic, government, and community stakeholder ecosystems

Revenue Strategy + Sustainability

Provide executive oversight of the organization's diversified revenue strategy, ensuring Essential Access Health has the financial foundation needed to sustain and grow its mission.

- Partner with the Vice President of Fund Development to lead a comprehensive revenue strategy spanning individual donors, foundation grants, corporate partnerships, and government funding—with clear goals, timelines, and performance metrics
- Serve as an executive champion for philanthropy across the organization, cultivating a culture in which staff and Board members understand their roles in sustaining and growing the resource base
- Partner with the CEO, CFO, and Board to align fundraising strategy with organizational financial planning, ensuring revenue projections are realistic, diversified, and responsive to organizational needs
- Bring forward funding landscape intelligence—trends, risks, competitive dynamics, and emerging opportunities—to inform executive and Board decision-making
- Personally cultivate and steward a portfolio of high-value donor and funder relationships, including major individual donors, foundation program officers, and institutional partners

Government Affairs + Policy Influence

Oversee the organization's government relations and policy engagement strategy, ensuring Essential Access Health is a credible, influential, and proactive presence in the policy environments that shape its work.



- Set strategic direction for government relations, policy advocacy, and public funding pursuits at the state and federal levels, working through the VP of Government & Community Affairs and the Director of Government Affairs
- Ensure alignment between the organization's policy priorities, advocacy positions, and broader organizational strategy—so that government engagement reflects and advances the mission
- Represent Essential Access Health in senior-level government and policy forums, building and maintaining relationships with legislators, agency officials, and key stakeholders
- Guide the organization's approach to navigating complex and rapidly evolving policy environments, including reproductive health policy at the state, county, federal, and regulatory levels
- Ensure public funding opportunities are identified, prioritized, and pursued in coordination with the Fund Development team and appropriate program staff

Community Engagement + Coalition Strategy

Set the strategic direction for the organization's community-facing engagement, ensuring Essential Access Health is a trusted, visible, and authentic presence in the communities it serves.

- Establish the strategic frame for community engagement, ensuring the Community Affairs Manager's relationship and outreach work is aligned with policy priorities, fundraising strategy, and organizational positioning
- Strengthen Essential Access Health's presence and credibility within coalitions, advocacy networks, and community-based organizations—positioning the organization as a trusted connector and convener in the reproductive health ecosystem
- Ensure that community insights and the lived experience of the communities served consistently inform external positioning, advocacy strategy, and resource development
- Champion meaningful community partnership at the executive level, modeling the organization's commitment to equity-centered engagement in how it shows up externally

External Positioning + Narrative

Ensure a clear, compelling, and consistent organizational voice across all external channels and audiences, elevating Essential Access Health's visibility and reputation as a leader in sexual and reproductive health care.

- Oversee alignment between communications, fund development, government affairs, and community engagement messaging, ensuring the organization speaks with one coherent voice across stakeholder audiences
- Identify and elevate opportunities to amplify the organization's impact through media coverage, speaking engagements, published thought leadership, and strategic partnership announcements
- Provide executive guidance on crisis communications and rapid-response messaging in close coordination with the CEO, ensuring the organization responds to sensitive public moments with clarity and confidence
- Champion a strong, mission-aligned organizational brand that resonates with funders, policymakers, community partners, and the public—and reflects the organization's values and identity

Leadership + Team Development



Lead, develop, and align a high-performing external affairs team, ensuring strong coordination across functions and clear pathways for growth at every level.

- Directly coach and support the VP of Fund Development and VP of Government + Community Affairs, providing strategic direction, professional development, and accountability for team performance
- Through the VP of Government + Community Affairs, ensure the Director of Government Affairs and Community Affairs Manager have clear scopes, performance expectations, and support for their development
- Build an integrated, collaborative external affairs function with clear roles, shared goals, and minimal silos—where teams coordinate naturally and information flows effectively across workstreams
- Champion equity, inclusion, and belonging within the external affairs function and in how the organization presents itself externally
- Build organizational capacity for external engagement beyond the external affairs team, supporting staff and Board members in understanding and contributing to the organization's external presence

Board + Executive Partnership

Serve as a strategic partner to the CEO and Board, providing the intelligence, framing, and coordination needed to strengthen external engagement at the highest levels of organizational leadership.

- Partner with the CEO to align on external affairs priorities, ensure strong executive coordination in donor and government relationships, and support the CEO's external presence and engagement
- Support the development of clear, active Board roles in fundraising, advocacy, and external positioning—equipping Board members with the context, relationships, and asks needed to contribute effectively
- Provide the Board with regular, substantive updates on revenue performance, government affairs developments, community engagement, and the broader external landscape
- Staff relevant Board committees and task forces as appropriate, including development and/or government affairs committees

Risk Management + Opportunity Identification

Monitor the external environment proactively, identifying risks and opportunities with implications for organizational strategy, funding, and reputation—and ensuring the organization is positioned to respond with agility.

- Identify and assess external risks—including funding volatility, reputational exposure, policy shifts, and stakeholder relationship dynamics—and develop proactive mitigation strategies
- Monitor trends across philanthropy, public funding, government policy, and community dynamics to provide executive leadership with timely, actionable intelligence
- Lead scenario planning around major shifts in the federal and state policy environment affecting reproductive health funding, access, and the organization's operational context
- Ensure the organization is positioned to move quickly and credibly on emerging funding and partnership opportunities, with the relationships and materials needed to respond effectively

Qualifications



Required Experience

- 15+ years of senior leadership experience in external affairs, fund development, government relations, public policy, communications, or a closely related field—ideally spanning multiple of these disciplines
- Demonstrated success leading large-scale, diversified fundraising efforts, including major gifts, foundation funding, corporate partnerships, and government grants and contracts
- Proven experience shaping and leading external strategy at an organizational or enterprise level, with accountability for setting direction across multiple functions
- Strong understanding of state and federal policy environments, public funding systems, and government relations strategy—preferably in health care, public health, or reproductive rights contexts
- Track record of leading and aligning high-performing, cross-functional teams—including experience managing senior managers and building cohesive, integrated functions
- Experience working in close partnership with executive leadership and Boards of Directors on strategy, fundraising, and external engagement
- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree in public policy, public health, nonprofit management, or a related field preferred

Skills + Competencies

- Visionary strategic leader who can set direction with clarity, translate strategy into action, and hold a team accountable for coherent execution across complex, multi-stakeholder environments
- Exceptional relationship builder with earned credibility across funders, policymakers, community organizations, media, and executive peers
- Compelling communicator with strong executive presence—able to represent the organization persuasively in high-stakes settings and adapt messaging across audiences
- Skilled at navigating complexity, ambiguity, and rapidly shifting external environments without losing strategic focus or team alignment
- Collaborative and decisive, with the judgment to know when to build consensus and when to move forward—and the accountability to own outcomes either way
- Experienced coach and developer of senior talent, with a genuine commitment to building leadership capacity across a team
- Politically astute and nonpartisan—able to operate with integrity and effectiveness across the political spectrum while maintaining the organization's credibility as a mission-driven, nonpartisan actor
- Deep commitment to Essential Access Health's mission and to advancing equitable access to sexual and reproductive health care

What Success Looks Like (6–12 Months)

The following indicators reflect strong performance in this role during the first year:



Focus Area	Indicators of Success
External Affairs Strategy	A documented, aligned external affairs strategy is in place that integrates fund development, government affairs, community engagement, and communications — understood and owned across the function
Revenue + Funding	Clear revenue goals established; early progress toward diversification of the funding portfolio across philanthropy, public funding, and earned revenue; Board engaged in development activity
Government + Policy	The organization is actively and credibly engaged in key state and federal policy spaces; government relationships are strengthened; public funding opportunities are identified and pursued
Community Positioning	Essential Access is visibly and credibly connected to priority communities and coalitions; community insights are informing advocacy and organizational strategy
External Visibility	Consistent organizational voice across external channels; emerging opportunities for thought leadership and media presence are identified and pursued
Team Alignment	Both VPs are well-supported and coordinated; the full external affairs team operates with clear roles, shared accountability, and strong collaboration across functions
Board + CEO Partnership	Board members are actively engaged in fundraising and external relationships; CEO is well-supported with timely intelligence, strategic framing, and coordinated external representation
Risk + Opportunity	External risks (funding volatility, policy shifts, reputational) are identified and proactively managed; the organization is positioned to move quickly on emerging opportunities

We will consider for employment all qualified applicants, including those with criminal histories, in a manner consistent with the requirements of applicable state and local laws, including the City of Los Angeles' Fair Chance Initiative for Hiring Ordinance.

Essential Access offers a competitive salary + benefits. Essential Access is an M/F, Disabled, and Vet EEO/AA Employer.