

POSITION TITLE: Policy Associate
ORGANIZATION: Maryland Association of Counties (MACo)
POSITION REPORTS TO: Legislative Director; Executive Director
SUPERVISES POSITIONS: None

SUMMARY:

Participates as an integral team member in the MACo legislative process by conducting legislative advocacy on behalf of MACo within a defined range of policy issues. Researches, analyzes, tracks, and presents on bills affecting county government and advocates MACo’s position as directed by the Legislative Committee. Serves as a research-driven analyst for the association on issues relating to county government in Maryland. Regularly prepares articles for MACo’s Conduit Street blog and engages social media to keep membership informed. Supports conference session development in specific policy issue areas. Collaborates with and supports assigned professional affiliate organizations.

DESCRIPTION:

The Policy Associate is a member of MACo’s Policy team and assists in covering and advocating on legislative and administrative policy issues affecting county governments. Responsibilities also include policy research, social media communication, blog writing, curation of assigned conference session content, and coordination with county professional organizations. Requirements: excellent written and oral communication skills, computer proficiency, and understanding of social media channels (particularly Twitter). Familiarity with Maryland state and local government and the Maryland legislative and policy process strongly preferred. Law or Master’s degree in relevant policy area desired. Salary is negotiable with generous benefits provided. Previous applicants need not apply.

DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES

PUBLIC POLICY

- Participate and contribute as part of the Policy Team for range of discussions and activities.
- Develop and maintain expertise in assigned policy areas.
- Develop and maintain rapport with the Affiliates related to assigned policy areas.
- Develop and maintain rapport with State agencies, members of the General Assembly, and interest groups regarding policy areas and specific issues as assigned.
- Attend and participate in meetings and conferences regarding policy areas and specific issues as assigned.
- Research and analyze assigned policy area issues relating to pending and anticipated legislation, MACo Initiatives, and general issues affecting county government in Maryland using resources such as federal and state codes, statutes, and regulations, Maryland General Assembly bill files and MACo files, archival or newspaper histories, publications, court cases, and the internet.

MACO LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

- Advocate MACo’s position on bills as directed by MACo’s Legislative Committee, developing strategies and leveraging research, relationships, and outreach to attain MACo’s desired outcome (passage, failure, or amendment of the bill).
- Conduct legislative histories, analyses, and other appropriate bill research in specialty areas.

- Secure and review all General Assembly bills and bill synopses, as soon as they are available.
- Review hearing schedule, identifying county-relevant events for MACo coverage, promotion to members, or other attention as appropriate.
- Analyze pending legislation affecting counties, focusing on history, purposes, meaning, and impacts; prepare reports for review meetings.
- Assemble pertinent bill information, fiscal impact and research for ongoing synopsis reviews with policy staff.
- Assist with identification of impact bills and communicate information among policy staff.
- Present bill summaries and make recommendations in preliminary meetings as to whether impact bills in specialty areas should be designated as action bills.
- Present bill summaries and make recommendations to the Legislative Committee as to whether MACo should oppose, support, or take no position on bills within specialty areas.
- Track progress of impact and action bills within specialty areas.
- Prepare written and oral testimony for action bills within specialty areas.
- Recommend to Executive Director use of grassroots advocacy efforts for specific bills and issues.
- Lobby individual members of the General Assembly.
- Participate in weekly Impact Bill Follow-Up meeting with policy staff.
- Participate in weekly Action Bill Meetings with MACo staff, county legislative staffers, and the Maryland Municipal League staff on which bills may pass; prepare reports and analyses as necessary; provide supporting documentation as requested.
- Monitor, attend, and report on relevant meetings, including General Assembly Committees, Task Forces, and MACo affiliate organizations.
- At conclusion of Session submit to Legislative Director individual bill summaries in specialty areas for inclusion in the annual Legislative Summary.
- Submit to Legislative Director relevant information regarding bills within specialty areas for use in compilation of post Session statistics.

OUTREACH

- Prepare daily articles for Conduit Street blog and other MACo communications, highlighting news of interest to county officials.
- Develop material for Conduit Street blog and other MACo communications to offer updates and analysis of policy issues, highlight relevant reports and research, and promote MACo efforts and advocacy.
- Engage social media to inform and educate MACo membership, and promote MACo events and activities.

CONFERENCE / EDUCATION PROGRAM COORDINATION AND LOGISTICS

- Assist in program development for Summer and Winter Conferences and other events as assigned, including topic identification, speaker selection, and confirmation for selected Affiliates or other speakers as assigned.

- Obtain speaker contact information, including biographies, and session presentation materials.
- Prepare education session summaries for conference publications and marketing materials.
- Provide supporting role as needed for conference preparation.
- Assist with preparation of participant, speaker, and VIP packets.
- Serve as on-site contact and coordinator for specific conference sessions, meetings, and events, as assigned.

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Draft correspondence and prepare memoranda for the Executive Director and MACo members as assigned.
- Manage electronic and paper files for policy areas and specific issues using standard file management techniques to ensure ease of retrieval.
- Purge and reorganize existing files in policy areas and specific issues as assigned.
- Answer telephones and other office administrative tasks on an as-needed basis.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- Carefully review the position details and MACo (www.mdcounties.org)
- Apply via email to Administration & Finance Director, Ms. Leslie Velasco, at lvelasco@mdcounties.org by 4:30 pm, May 31, 2019
- Include "Policy Associate - NAME" in the email subject line
- Attach the following documents (ALL ARE REQUIRED):
 - Cover Letter detailing present salary, desired salary with justification, and the reasons the applicant feels he/she is qualified for the Policy Associate position;
 - Resume, which must contain educational background and work experience (particularly any relevant to this position);
 - Persuasive writing sample; and
 - Three references - references will not be contacted without prior approval from the applicant.

An email response will be sent upon receipt of all applications. Previous applicants need not apply.