



## CHIEF OF STAFF NORTH MANHATTAN, NY

### **ABOUT US**

**West Harlem Environmental Action a/k/a WE ACT for Environmental Justice** is a non profit, community-based advocacy organization that works to build healthy communities by ensuring that people of color and low income residents participate meaningfully in the creation of sound and fair environmental health and protection policies and practices.

**WE ACT is a nationally recognized leader in the environmental justice (EJ) movement** and is known for its work in the areas of children’s environmental health; government accountability; and climate, energy and environmental justice. WE ACT’s deep roots in the community, track record of policy impact, integrity and reputation are driving exponential growth over the next year.

**WE ACT prioritizes the voices of longstanding community members, communities of color, lower-income communities and, most importantly, those who have been historically marginalized and subjected to environmental and other forms of racism and exclusion.** In accordance with the Jemez Principles, **we believe that communities must speak for themselves.** We work at the intersection of community engagement and activation, policy, research and education. WE ACT leverages our place at the table to push system actors, including elected officials, Big Greens, coalitions and allies to center racial justice and equity.

### **ABOUT THE ROLE**

**WE ACT seeks a Chief of Staff with a demonstrated passion for environmental justice and a track record as a highly effective and respected cross-functional support professional.** This is principally an internally calibrated role that reports to and provides high level support to WE ACT Co-founder and Executive Director Peggy Shepard. The Chief of Staff plays a critical and trusted role as the strategic thought partner to the Executive Director. They are responsible for maintaining strategic planning, facilitating change management and inspiring teamwork and collaboration. This role helps to translate the organization’s values, vision and mission into concrete goals and objectives that are adequately resourced and staffed and ensures the strong execution of the organization’s strategic plans. This includes support and coaching of organizing directors to ensure strong collaboration and effective campaigns.

*Strategic Planning, Evaluation & Learning*

- Support annual and ongoing planning, facilitating these processes in ways that ensure full participation, advance projects efficiently and generate operating plans that include ambitious and measurable key performance indicators and performance metrics.
- Collaborate with department leads to determine and prioritize project and organizational strategies and ensure collaboration, adequate staffing and financial resources for implementation.
- Serve as a trusted advisor and brainstorming partner to the Executive Director and other members of the executive team.
- Lead and initiate change throughout the organization, bringing best practice in change management and providing tactical support to implement ideas.
- Lead ongoing and annual evaluation and learning to refine operating plans, close gaps or course correct when needed and to provide quantitative and qualitative data in reporting to funders.
- Continuously propose refinements to WE ACT's organizational design and structure with a focus on excellence in execution, learning and impact.
- Support the Executive Director and executive team in the annual budgeting process, ensuring the alignment of resources to the organization's near-, medium- and long-term objectives.
- Lead cross-functional processes to evaluate and pursue new programmatic or partnership opportunities, ensuring a solid and consistent vetting process that aligns to WE ACT's mission.
- Serve as an entrepreneur-in-residence, helping strategic ideas take root and providing early facilitation until a more formal project is established.

#### ***Organizational Culture Building & Professional Development***

- Support WE ACT's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, integrating best-in-class practices into recruitment, hiring, team building, culture setting and professional development/advancement, while centering equity in all of our programs and operations.
- Develop an inspired and distinctive approach to all internal communications, all-hands meetings and organizational culture building opportunities.
- Partner with WE ACT's human resources functions around performance management and professional development programs.
- Proactively address pressing issues that need immediate attention, promptly resolving problems through timely consultation in an environment of mutual respect.

#### ***Supervision and Special Projects***

- Provide direct supervision of the workforce development and organizing directors, meeting weekly to provide support, guidance and performance appraisal and to build the skills of team members.
- Stay apprised of the evolving environmental justice movement, participating in network-building and learning opportunities when requested, while lifting up shifts in the landscape that may impact WE ACT.

#### **ABOUT YOU**

The incoming Chief of Staff is driven by their belief in and commitment to WE ACT's vision and mission. Through their track record as a support professional and cross-functional process designer, the successful candidate guides the standard for bridge-building across departments to ensure organizational priorities are cohesive and synergistic.

The Chief of Staff is an emotionally intelligent, roll-up-your-sleeves, administrator and facilitator who brings strong listening, empathy and self-awareness and whose success is ultimately dependent on facilitative, collaborative and horizontal leadership with colleagues. The Chief of Staff must have an incisive strategic mindset, mission-focused orientation and a relentless commitment to excellence and results in all facets of the organization.

We are looking for a supporter and collaborator in this role, someone who recognizes that the stakes of what we are trying to accomplish depend on a high-functioning, passionate and trusting team. The Chief of Staff is the organizational glue who quickly and authentically builds rapport with our Directors, connects the dots internally and externally and operationalizes values and vision for maximum impact.

The selected candidate will also possess most of the following *Core* and *Preferred* qualifications:

### *Core*

- Strong commitment to the mission, policies and goals of WE ACT.
- At least 5 years as a chief of staff or senior manager with a proven track record of accomplishments in organizational and administrative support and experience managing others.
- Trusted professional with track record in delivering complex large-scale projects and partnerships, often managing a range of internal and external stakeholders with strong personalities and driving open items to effective resolution.
- Experience designing and executing equity-centered, inclusive processes that generate a strong and cohesive organizational culture, actionable operating plans and dynamic tools for continual evaluation and iteration.
- Demonstrated experience working across lines of race, class and gender and an analysis of how climate change intersects with historically marginalized communities.
- Demonstrated understanding of how organized movements create change and accomplish policy objectives.
- Outstanding oral and written communications skills in order to communicate WE ACT's strategies passionately and without jargon.
- Outstanding project management abilities to ensure that WE ACT works in a highly cohesive manner and that projects advance on time and on budget.
- Innovation, creativity and championship of new ideas with the ability to balance strategic visioning with tactical implementation.
- Outstanding relationship-building skills with a wide range of diverse constituencies and diplomatic abilities that build the trust-based relationships necessary for internal and external stakeholders.
- Demonstrated ability to prioritize and be flexible in a fast-paced, constantly evolving and collaborative environment, where working on a team and working individually are required.
- Strong financial analysis, budget planning and management experience and skills.
- Experience working with human resource professionals around organizational culture building, employee engagement and professional development.
- Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills with a focus on structure and execution.

- Seeks out and delivers timely and direct feedback that contributes to the ongoing development of oneself, team members and a positive organizational culture.
- Highly collaborative work style with the ability to operate as a thought partner to the Executive Director and other executive team members.

***Preferred***

- Bachelor's or advanced degree.
- Background in operations, strategic planning, impact evaluation/learning, people management or leadership development.
- Prior community organizing and/or campaign experience.
- Hands on experience with software and system integrations.
- Content knowledge and networks in environmental justice.

**SALARY & BENEFITS**

WE ACT offers competitive nonprofit compensation and is committed to justice in salary transparency and wage equity. The salary range for this position is \$110,000 - \$125,000, based on experience and qualifications. WE ACT offers a generous suite of benefits, including comprehensive health care (medical, dental and vision), flexible spending account, life insurance, pre-tax transit program, retirement programs and paid holidays and vacation, along with onsite HR support. WE ACT follows a **3-2 hybrid work policy**, requiring 3 days in the office per week. All staff are fully vaccinated.

**OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

**WE ACT is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages applications from people of color, women, persons with disabilities, reentry and LGBTQIA+ communities.** We are committed to transparent and equitable recruitment, hiring and promotion processes that foster inclusion and belonging. If you've read this job description, are excited by it and can see yourself in this role, we hope you apply. If you need a reasonable accommodation during the application or interview process, please email David Hudson at [david.hudson@weact.org](mailto:david.hudson@weact.org).

**HOW TO APPLY**

To apply or nominate a candidate, please send to [david.hudson@weact.org](mailto:david.hudson@weact.org) with "Chief of Staff" in the subject line a resume and cover email or letter answering the following:

- 1) Why are you passionate about environmental justice?
- 2) Describe a relationship in which you were tasked to support and provide guidance to a senior leader. How did you practice discernment? What did you do to build trust with the leader?
- 3) Describe an experience in which you played a key role in developing organizational culture. How did you influence the culture? What intentional steps did you take to create positive change?

Submission in a combined PDF or Microsoft Word file is preferred. This position is open until filled and applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.