

Rise

Chief Executive Officer

Arizona, California, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, or
Remote



Background

Rise is a grassroots student- and youth-led nonprofit fighting for free college, student debt relief, and youth participation in democracy.

Founded by students in 2017, Rise builds the political power of college students and youth to fight for free college and student debt relief in the United States. Rise (which includes Rise, Inc. a 501(c)(4) and Rise Education Fund, a 501(c)(3)) hires, trains, and empowers college students and young people (ages 18–30) to lead electoral and advocacy campaigns. Rise’s democracy work -- including year-round organizing, large-scale youth voter mobilization programs, and voting rights litigation -- builds the political power necessary to advocate for changes to the public higher education system. Rise’s policy agenda centers around tuition-free public higher education, addressing students’ food and housing needs, and providing relief from crushing student loan debt. Most recently, Rise organizers helped propel youth voter turnout to decide the outcome of key 2022 midterm elections and tied the 2018 record turnout in battleground states.

Over the last five years, Rise organizers have led multi-year campaigns at the federal and state level. Rise organizers played an instrumental advocacy role in winning student debt relief for 40 million Americans and continue to lead the fight for student debt relief in the face of litigation challenges. At the state level, Rise has helped enact or expand tuition-free college programs in California, Michigan, New Mexico, and Wisconsin. Rise was founded on the belief that college students and young people most affected by the college affordability crisis must be central to advocating for the solution of making college free and accessible for all.

More information can be found at www.risefree.org.

Position

Rise is conducting a nationwide search for a new CEO. The CEO will be responsible for accelerating and sustaining Rise’s growth and impact. Over the last five years, Rise has grown rapidly from a “start up” into a high-impact nonprofit organization and seeks a new leader who is prepared to lead the next phase of organizational development. Rise is looking for a dynamic leader who is effective at:



- Working with prospective and existing donors to raise the \$3-\$4M+ combined annual budget for Rise's 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) entities (primarily in 501(c)(3) contributions)-- in 2023, approximately 75% of the budget will be in 501(c)(3) contributions.
- Honing Rise's programmatic focus, including achieving the right balance between college affordability policy advocacy, direct service to support students, and get-out-the-vote/other democracy-focused work.
- Continuing to develop innovative approaches to youth civic engagement implementing President Biden's student debt relief plan and advocating for greater relief for student loan borrowers.
- Advancing free college tuition through state policy change.
- Communicating the organization's impact, successes, and overall brand and reputation.
- Preparing for the 2024 elections and institutionalizing gains in youth voter engagement.
- Supporting and managing a team of approximately 20 full-time staff members, and the team's professional and leadership development.

The CEO will have overall strategic and operational responsibility for Rise's vision, staff, programs, and execution of its mission. The CEO will build and engage the Board of Directors and collaborate with the dedicated team of 20 full-time staff and hundreds of student organizers across the country.

The CEO must be an experienced fundraiser and political organizer who will build upon Rise's success, maximize impact, and increase the visibility of its work.

The CEO must be an authentic, inspiring, strategic leader who manages with empathy and brings stellar operations and workplace development skills, strong relationship-building, ambitious innovative ideas, and a deep commitment to youth organizing.

The CEO must know how to develop and manage an organization, build and steward deep relationships, inspire passion for the work of Rise with existing and new donors, broaden and strengthen the already committed and dedicated Board while communicating a clear vision for Rise in making college free or affordable to all students.

Responsibilities include:

Vision and Strategy

- Provide strategic vision and leadership for Rise in service of its mission and to lead the organization into its next phase of development and impact.
- Ensure that Rise's vision and values -- especially diversity, equity, and inclusion -- are expressed in every aspect of the organization, including its culture, policies, personnel, and programs.



- Collaborate with the staff and engage the Board to develop the organization's strategic plan.

Institutional Advancement

- Strengthen, develop, and steward relationships with existing funders and new potential funding sources including high net worth individuals and foundations (e.g., grant writing and relationship building with program officers).
- Develop Rise's brand as a high-impact nonprofit organization in order to increase awareness among potential funders.

Organizational Development

- Develop the Rise, Inc. Board of Directors by recruiting 2-4 new board members.
- Promote a compassionate, supportive, hard-working, and accountable organizational culture.
- Ensure the efficacy of Rise's advocacy, organizing, and direct student support programs and identify strategies that further increase the organization's impact.
- Nurture a collaborative workplace where diversity, equity, and inclusion are guiding values.
- Ensure clarity and consistency throughout the organization's strategy, operational methods, and data collection processes to support the continued development and management of a professional and efficient and data-informed organization.
- Oversee the financial status of the organization including working with the Chief Operating Officer, developing long and short-range financial plans, monitoring the budget and ensuring sound financial controls are in place; set accurate financial priorities to ensure the organization is operating in a manner that supports the needs of the program and staff in partnership with Rise's external accounting firm.

Qualifications

The CEO must have a track record of political organizing and a strong commitment to training and empowering college students and youth to have a significant impact with elected officials and policy makers. The CEO should have some experience in scaling small-to-midsize organizations, fundraising, and/or communications experience in the nonprofit sector or electoral campaigns in a senior leadership role.

The CEO will have the following experience and skills:



- Established track record of fundraising six-figure 501(c)(3) gifts and eager to scale up Rise's development and fundraising work.
- Leadership experience in and management of complex nonprofit organizations or political campaigns.
- Basic understanding of the legal and compliance parameters of 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) entities.
- Demonstrated interest in and passion for youth organizing.
- Proximity or credibility with a student and youth audience.
- A keen understanding of and connection to young people; a Pell grant recipient and/or, a first-generation college student, or experience serving as a campus organizer, is a plus.
- A strong commitment to free college as a goal as well as a theory of change for engaging young people in building democracy.
- Strategic thinker.
- Visionary approach, eager to tackle big problems, and delegate responsibilities to staff.
- Skilled relationship builder across stakeholder groups.
- Reimagine, manage, and maintain a unified culture with staff, Board, and organization.
- Exceptional communication skills, including experience serving as the face of an organization or campaign, and raising awareness for its work.
- Strong manager with a deep commitment to the professional development of staff; successful track record of recruiting and retaining a diverse team.
- Proven ability to build a strong organizational culture while overseeing a large team.
- Innovative, entrepreneurial spirit with an openness to trying new things and paving the way for others to follow.
- Commitment to inclusive strategy development.

Salary and Employee Benefits

- Salary range is \$130,000-\$150,000, depending on experience.
- Employee benefits include health insurance, generous paid leave, sick leave, and remote work.

Location

With a preference for someone in Arizona, California, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, or Wisconsin, the CEO can be based anywhere in the US.



This position description is based upon material provided by Rise, an equal opportunity employer that does not discriminate on the basis of national origin, race, religious belief, gender, gender identify or expression, sexual orientation or disability in admission or access to, or employment in, its programs and activities.

To apply to this position, please click [HERE](#).

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