Single Stop USA

Chief of Staff to the Chief Executive Officer

OVERVIEW
The Chief of Staff to the CEO (“the COS”) is a critically important role, enabling the CEO to work most effectively with internal and external stakeholders and fulfill her commitments to Single Stop USA’s (“SSUSA”) partners, funders, and the Board of Directors. This is not an administrative role; it is highly strategic and facilitative one that requires a combination of focus and flexibility, as well as a willingness to play an active, behind-the-scenes role. As the CEO’s ‘trusted counsel’, the role requires a highly-resourceful individual with strong emotional intelligence, self-motivation, and strong analytical skills.

This director-level, full-time position reports directly to Elisabeth Mason, SSUSA’s CEO, and encompasses six primary accountabilities:

- **Preparation for, and facilitation of, “critical path” CEO meetings** (e.g., with SSUSA executive leadership, current or potential SSUSA partners, funders, Community College and CBO leaders, government officials, and peer executives). While members of any one of these groups may initiate these meetings through the CEO’s Executive Assistant and be responsible for inviting and preparing participants, the COS is accountable to ensure that the meeting objectives are realistic, that preparation is appropriate, and that the CEO is well-prepared. This responsibility is less about logistics and more about content and the COS’s judgment about the appropriateness and sufficiency of the intended preparation. In other words, the COS’s role is to make sure the CEO’s time is leveraged most effectively in a meeting context. This may mean querying and pushing back on senior executives and assisting in their preparation for their interactions with the CEO.

- **Coordination/orchestration of projects or commitments** directly involving the CEO and her direct reports. This responsibility primarily focuses on ensuring alignment among the often disparate stakeholders and, when such alignment is absent, sharing this fact with the CEO and recommending mitigating approaches. While this responsibility envisions the COS “going deep” on a relatively limited number of projects, s/he would also need to understand the breadth of the projects within the CEO’s purview. The CEO and the COS would agree in advance on the schedule of projects requiring COS involvement. Tact, diplomacy, and persistence are essential qualities in executing this dimension of the role.

- **Independent leadership of special CEO-initiated projects**, ranging from written products to be authored by the CEO to convening thought leaders on various topics. While the vast majority of CEO-initiated projects will find homes among the executive team and their staffs, some confidential or time sensitive issues will need to reside within the office of the CEO and be led
by the COS and the CEO. From time to time, the Board asks the CEO to come back with specific analyses—these, too, would fall within the COS’ purview.

- **Development of draft communication on behalf of the CEO and/or research in support of these.** Communications range from the CEO update at Board meetings, to follow up correspondence related to the CEO’s various meetings with Single Stop funders, partners and staff, to various speaking engagements involving external audiences. In addition to the drafting of key communications, the COS should also be able to accurately reflect the CEO’s position in internal meetings to help drive understanding of her views, though the role does not entail devolved responsibility to act for the CEO unless so specified.

- **Proactive identification of issues that could impact the successful execution of the CEO’s commitments:** This responsibility involves elevating those issues about which the CEO should be aware and framing/positioning ideas to resolve the problem/mitigate the risk. This is among the most challenging aspects of the job and will require the COS to focus on the underlying interests of the parties working with the CEO, understand their intentions, and creatively identify alternative means of handling pressing issues.

- **Support the executive team’s communications with the CEO:** The COS will help facilitate decisions the executive staff need receiving feedback on from the CEO. S/he will support the needs of the executive staff in their ability to raise critical issues with the CEO and receive needed responses, guidance and decisions.

There is limited travel involved (a minimum of 4 days per month), as the COS will accompany the CEO to selected meetings and, occasionally, work with her at her home. This role is based in the New York office.

**SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Key Meeting Preparation/Facilitation**

- Work closely with CEO’s Executive Assistant to remain apprised of/schedule upcoming CEO commitments
- Confirm objectives for the meeting and recommend participants and best approach
- Develop backgrounders for CEO on the meeting *(Note: CEO’s Executive Assistant will assist with basic preparation)*
- Help ensure participants are aware of and prepared for the meeting
- Attend meetings, capture major take-aways, and work with executive team to ensure follow up
- Work with CEO’s Executive Assistant to ensure appropriate and timely communication to participants
- Monitor progress/achievement of next steps

**Project Coordination/Orchestration**

- Develop and maintain an inventory of critical path projects in which the CEO is especially interested and/or for which her awareness and involvement is essential
- Work with Executive staff to align their actions and communications in support of agreed upon goals. COS’s role will be to work with all staff to ensure that the CEO’s needs are conveyed, that progress is being made in a timely way, and that any demands on CEO’s schedule are understood and agreed upon. The COS will also work to ensure the Executive team’s needs are conveyed to the CEO for consideration.
- Be prepared to apprise the CEO of project status and variations from schedule or scope
Leadership of Special Projects
- Scope, plan and execute multiple, often quick-turnaround projects with minimal outside assistance
- Present ideas for special projects that might facilitate the CEO’s/leadership’s objectives
- Work with appropriate stakeholders, including outside parties, to undertake analysis
- Present findings to CEO, Executive staff, or Board, as appropriate
- If necessary, oversee transfer of the project to other stakeholders within the organization

Communication
- Create inventory of upcoming communication “events”—including articles, columns, speeches, panel discussions, etc.
- Create, maintain and leverage a relationship mapping of the CEO’s and Single Stop’s key external relationships and their respective interconnectivity.
- Work with CEO to determine the role the COS will play in outlining, drafting, and/or researching in support of each event.
- Perform agreed upon work—including coordinating with others who might be involved; communication must be clear, concise, and compelling and adhere to SSUSA guidelines
- Prepare follow up correspondence for internal and external meetings, as directed by the CEO.
- Conduct fact checking-in support of all communications.
- Present timely work-in-progress updates to the CEO on the status of the communication materials mentioned above.
- Represent the CEO in outside forums that the CEO cannot attend. Often, this will mean accompanying another SSUSA executive to a meeting.
- Follow up with copies of communication materials (such as pamphlets, DVDs, etc…) as appropriate.

Issues Identification
- Engage in root cause analysis—often without prompting from the CEO or others—on issues and opportunities that could impact the SSUSA executive agenda
- Confirm hypotheses through tactful and discrete engagement with the relevant parties
- Develop alternative approaches to addressing the problem or opportunity
- Succinctly update the CEO on the issues, supported with facts and recommendations
- Engage in coalition building in support of mitigation approaches

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
The incumbent will gain highly valuable skills enabling him or her to more readily attain a general management perspective/role that encompasses the strategic, financial, and operational aspects of leading a non-profit organization.

Specifically, the COS will:
- Become aware of issues from an integrative, executive leadership perspective
- Obtain an up close and personal understanding of leadership and decision-making related to the simultaneous execution of a complex growth strategy and the transformation of an industry sector.
- Be exposed to senior executives and Board members, with the opportunity to learn from their strengths and developmental areas
- Be mentored by the CEO
- Have access to formal developmental opportunities that augment their responsibilities as COS.
CORE COMPETENCIES
Critical core competencies for successful performance in this role are:

- Highly-developed communications skills (written/verbal) and interpersonal savvy
- Results/action-orientation; project management skills
- Organizational and political agility; developed negotiation skills
- Unquestionable personal code of ethics, integrity, diversity and trust
- Able to successfully navigate within varying degrees of ambiguity in a fast-paced environment
- Strong strategic/financial analysis skills

QUALIFICATIONS
This role provides privileged access to the inner workings of SSUSA and to highly sensitive information. The successful candidate will be discrete, high-energy, agile-minded, strategic, proactive, a direct communicator, highly-organized and committed to the vision and values of SSUSA. In addition, the following standards will generally define the successful incumbent:

- Minimum - two year commitment to the role that would prepare the incumbent for a more general management role at SSUSA or beyond;
- MBA, JD or MPP required. Minimum of 5 years work experience required
- Applicable/transferable experience: private sector roles in law, business strategy or consulting; public sector policy roles; campaign aides/strategists;
- Mission-driven; passionate about Single Stop and related constituencies.
- Good sense of self and strong personal presence
- Market research experience a plus
- Prior publications preferred, as the successful candidate will be required to draft articles that are publishable.
- Willingness to work hard and take direction—but also creatively solve problems for which the answers aren’t always obvious
- Knowledge of SSUSA and key stakeholders desirable but not essential

ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS
- CEO
- SSUSA Executive staff
- SSUSA’s Board and Advisory Council

SALARY
Salary is commensurate with qualifications.

TO APPLY:
Email resume and cover letter to jobs@singlestopusa.org with “Chief of Staff” in the subject line. No phone calls please.

Single Stop USA is an equal opportunity employer. For more information please see www.singlestopusa.org