

# **VOCAL-NY**

## **Field Organizer, Compassionate Use Campaign**

### **Organizational Background**

VOCAL-NY is a grassroots membership organization dedicated to building power among low-income people affected by HIV/AIDS, the drug war and mass incarceration to create healthy and just communities. We do this through community organizing, leadership development, participatory research, policy advocacy and direct action with the belief that true social change must come from the bottom up and be led by those directly impacted. During the past couple of years alone, VOCAL-NY's advocacy has won significant policy change around affordable housing, prison-based gerrymandering, overdose prevention and HIV/AIDS prevention. We have chapters in New York City, Westchester and Albany.

### **Field Organizer, Compassionate Use Campaign**

The Field Organizer will develop and implement a statewide field strategy to win legislation that legalizes marijuana for medicinal purposes. VOCAL-NY believes that medical marijuana should be a legal option for improving the quality of life of patients with chronic and debilitating health conditions, including managing nausea, wasting, pain and other symptoms.

A primary role will be promoting the active involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS, cancer, multiple sclerosis and other life-threatening illnesses who use marijuana medicinally, including meeting with elected officials, speaking with the media and shaping campaign strategy. This statewide campaign will require travel to Long Island and Upstate areas in addition to NYC-based organizing.

The Field Organizer will also be expected to provide support for other community organizing and campaigns around the drug war, mass incarceration and HIV/AIDS within VOCAL-NY as needed. We have a highly collaborative office environment where staff provide regular support for each other's campaigns, which is in part a function of our limited resources and ambitious scope of work.

### **Responsibilities will include:**

Identifying, recruiting and developing patient leaders and family members in key legislative districts, including Long Island and parts of Upstate. This will include conducting one-on-one relational meetings, creating an understanding of policy issues involved, and developing patients and family members into spokespersons who can effectively communicate campaign messages and engage with policymakers.

Coalition building and grassroots organizing that promotes the active involvement of medical providers, community & religious leaders, civic organizations and social service providers in the campaign. Outreach and recruitment activities will include one-on-one's and presentations to ensure understanding and support for the campaign among a diverse group of allies.

Coordinate and implement a range of tactics, including town halls, press conferences, rallies, protests, lobby days and in-district meetings. Mobilizing patients, family members and allies will be a central responsibility.

Maintain ongoing campaign communication with patients, allies and the general public, and work with a communications firm to highlight individual stories for earned and paid media. The Field Organizer will identify and profile patients, family members and community leaders for media and communications activities.

Promote a racial justice analysis of medical marijuana that acknowledges blacks and Latinos who use medical marijuana are most likely to be targeted for current drug law enforcement, such as the widespread marijuana arrests crusade linked to stop and frisks in NYC.

Coordinate the field strategy with campaign partners on an ongoing basis through calls, email and in-person meetings.

Potentially develop and implement a plan for non-partisan voter and candidate education and GOTV efforts among campaign constituents.

**Requirements:**

Minimum two years community organizing or related experience.  
Valid drivers license (extensive travel will be required with expenses reimbursed)  
Excellent oral and written communication skills.  
Excellent organizational skills, particularly maintaining a database of contacts  
Willingness to work long hours and occasional weekends.  
Past experience working on health advocacy and/or drug policy reform preferred.  
Basic computer skills, including ability to use the internet, email, word processing (e.g. Microsoft Word) and spreadsheets (e.g. Excel) programs.

**TO APPLY:**

Please submit a cover letter, resume, writing samples (not necessary, but helpful) and three reference contacts (name, phone number and email) in Microsoft Word or PDF format to [jobs@vocal-ny.org](mailto:jobs@vocal-ny.org). In the subject line, please put "Field Organizer Job [Your Name]". Your email application may be lost otherwise.

We are currently accepting applications and scheduling interviews. Those interested should send an application now.

Your cover letter should, at a minimum, include answers to the following questions:

Why are you interested in this position?

Have you had experience in issue advocacy campaigns? If so, what issues?

How does your past community organizing experience relate to this position?

What are your salary expectations?

How did you hear about this opening? (Please be specific, telling us who referred you or what publication or website listed the position)

Salary is commensurate with experience. VOCAL-NY offers a generous benefits package of four weeks of vacation (pro-rated) and 100% employer-covered health plan.

VOCAL-NY is an equal opportunity employer. People of color and people who are HIV-positive, formerly incarcerated, active or former drug users, women and/or LGBT are strongly encouraged to apply.