

Leader of Strategic Communications (V3)

Location: Buffalo, NY

About the John R. Oishei Foundation

The John R. Oishei Foundation is a private, place-based foundation working to advance racial equity and financial prosperity in the Buffalo-Niagara region. With \$315 million in managed assets and an annual operating budget of approximately \$15 million, the Foundation supports community-led solutions that build long-term systems change and a more racially just and vibrant Western New York.

We are transforming how we work—centering values in every part of our operations, showing up in community with humility and accountability, and sharing power with those most impacted by systemic injustice. We are especially focused on Buffalo's East Side, working alongside community members and organizations to build prosperity, grow community-owned assets, and elevate joy, resilience, and restoration.

Read more about our [strategic direction](#).

Our Values

- **Act Against Racism** – We challenge racism and dismantle systemic barriers.
- **Build on Strengths** – We honor the assets, agency, and brilliance of communities.
- **Be Trustworthy** – We show up with transparency, accountability, and humility.
- **Work Together** – We collaborate across difference, grounded in deep listening and respect.
- **Make a Difference** – We invest in learning, innovation, and long-term change.

The Opportunity

Reporting directly to President Christina Orsi and serving as a key member of the Leadership Team, the Leader of Strategic Communications will shape and steward the Foundation's voice—helping to advance our mission, strengthen relationships, and shift narratives toward racial and economic justice.

This new leadership role will guide all aspects of communications, from messaging and media relations to internal alignment and narrative change strategy. The successful candidate will be a

thoughtful, collaborative communicator who can synthesize complexity, center community perspectives, and inspire shared purpose within and beyond the Foundation.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Communications Leadership

- Lead the development and execution of a strategic communications plan aligned with the Foundation's mission and goals.
- Steward a clear, cohesive public voice and brand across all platforms and channels.
- Maintain and evolve internal messaging frameworks that guide all public-facing content.
- Commission or conduct research to ensure language is community-informed and aligned with values (e.g., "equity," "financial prosperity").

Messaging, Storytelling & Narrative Change

- Develop and elevate stories that reflect community brilliance and challenge harmful narratives.
- Partner with the Leader of Policy & Advocacy to design narrative campaigns that advance advocacy priorities.
- Support the creation of communications tools and training that build narrative power among partners and staff.
- Directly engage leaders of color to amplify liberatory, community-rooted narratives.

Internal Communications & Capacity-Building

- Develop talking points, presentations, and communications tools to support staff and board.
- Build internal communications capacity through training (e.g., asset framing, media coaching).
- In partnership with the Leader of People & Culture, lead internal communications strategy and culture-building aligned with our values.

Media Strategy & Brand Stewardship

- Build authentic relationships with local and national media aligned with our mission.
- Lead proactive media outreach, storytelling partnerships, and issue response strategy.
- Ensure brand consistency and community-centered imagery across print, digital, and experiential touchpoints.
- Manage the Foundation's website, social media, and digital platforms.
- Retain and manage consultants (e.g., designers, writers, photographers) as needed.

Partnerships & Field Leadership

- Serve as a visible ambassador for the Foundation in public forums, conferences, and collaborative spaces.
- Build relationships with communications and philanthropic partners to support aligned messaging, especially around racial equity and prosperity.
- Share tools and research findings that strengthen the field's collective narrative efforts.
- Support grantees and partners in strengthening their communications and influence strategies.

Organizational Strategy & Culture

- Collaborate with the Leadership Team on strategic planning, risk management, and community engagement.
- Manage communications budget and contribute to organization-wide planning.
- Cultivate trust with the Board and support them as external ambassadors.
- Model leadership grounded in feedback, learning, and shared accountability.

Candidate Profile

We recognize that no candidate will meet every qualification. We're seeking someone who brings many of the following strengths:

A Strategic Storyteller & Communicator

- Exceptional writer and synthesizer who can make complex ideas clear and compelling.
- Confident communicator who navigates conversations about race, equity, and justice with care and clarity.
- Skilled at aligning internal voices around shared messaging frameworks.
- Experienced in managing integrated communications campaigns and channels.

A Collaborative Culture-Builder

- Builds authentic relationships across race, class, and positional power.
- Champions community voice and lived experience in both strategy and storytelling.
- Provides mentorship and support to teammates and partners.
- Brings humility, humor, and generosity to collaboration.

A Systems Thinker with a Builder's Mindset

- Thrives in a dynamic, evolving organization where structure is still emerging.
- Balances vision and execution, strategy and detail.
- Brings innovation, curiosity, and adaptability to their leadership.
- Invested in Buffalo's future and committed to advancing racial and economic equity.

Location

The Leader of Strategic Communications must reside in or be willing to relocate to Buffalo, NY. Hybrid work is available, with at least three days per week expected in the office.

Compensation & Benefits

The anticipated salary range is \$125,000 - \$150,000, commensurate with experience. The Foundation offers a comprehensive benefits package, including:

- 100% employer-paid health, dental, and vision insurance (including family coverage)
- 401(k) with 7% employer match
- Generous paid time off and holiday schedule

Note: The title of this role may evolve as the Foundation continues its organizational transformation. Final title alignment will be led by the Leader of People & Culture.