Early Learning Action Alliance (ELAA) Director
Seattle, WA or Olympia, WA

POSITION SUMMARY

Children’s Alliance seeks a senior-level Early Learning Action Alliance (ELAA) Director, tasked with facilitating and staffing the powerful and dynamic advocacy work of the statewide Early Learning Action Alliance in Washington. As the Early Learning Action Alliance transitions to becoming a Special Initiative of the Children’s Alliance, this newly designed position elevates and clarifies the distinct work of convening ELAA members across the state to lead powerful, equity-focused policies for young children.

Reporting to the Executive Director of the Children’s Alliance and accountable to the ELAA Steering Committee, this new ELAA Director will have an opportunity to help strengthen and re-define the practices of this well-established coalition, working to prioritize anti-racist principles, clarify shared power structures, and drive bold, visionary policy agendas that will build a brighter and equitable future for Washington’s children.

Successful candidates bring a demonstrated commitment to dismantling racist and anti-Black policies and practices, as well as expertise in policy advocacy, coalition building, and facilitation. This person will effectively lead the coalition through a period of significant change by prioritizing relationship building, working to reinforce a culture of shared accountability and building and maintaining trust within the coalition. Leading with confidence, fearlessness, and a well-developed sense of strategic analysis, the ELAA director works to harness the power of an ever-growing group of advocates in demanding that Washington state invest in our future, by investing in our children.

This search is being conducted with assistance from Carolyn Ho and Catherine Seneviratne, of the search firm NPAG. Please see the end of this document for details on how to apply.

ABOUT CHILDREN’S ALLIANCE

Over more than three decades, Children’s Alliance has been a fierce advocate for Washington’s children by effecting positive change in public policies, priorities, and programs. As an organization, we believe that our mission to secure opportunity for every child in Washington will only succeed if we unapologetically, actively, and effectively fight to end racism and anti-Blackness in our policies and practices.

In our work to expand opportunity for Washington state’s children, we speak directly to decision makers and seek to influence the policymaking process. We collaborate with like-minded organizations and leaders. We mobilize thousands of individuals and groups. We listen and learn from our allies and members, and to the children and families who are directly affected by the policies we advocate for along with them.
ABOUT THE EARLY LEARNING ACTION ALLIANCE (ELAA)

As part of its statewide advocacy work for children, Children’s Alliance convenes the Early Learning Action Alliance (ELAA) – a broad coalition of over 60 organizations representing a diverse array of Washington nonprofits, professional associations, businesses, and industries. The coalition is designed to benefit from and strengthen the efforts of each member organization. ELAA is united by the belief that all children in Washington State deserve to have the opportunities and support they need in their first five years of life to be prepared for school and a bright future.

ELAA’s mission is to ensure that every Washington child, regardless of their race, ethnicity, geography, ability, family structure, or family economics, has equitable access to the relationships, education, and opportunities they need to be thriving by the time they enter kindergarten.

Membership & Governance
The Early Learning Action Alliance brings together a constellation of diverse organizations, each contributing their expertise to early learning advocacy. Success requires participating organizations to devote organizational resources to activities that contribute to effective policy advocacy. As needed, sub-committees form to examine topics and issues in greater depth to inform the broader coalition’s positions and agenda.

The full coalition is staffed and convened by the Children’s Alliance, and governed by the ELAA Steering Committee, a group of ELAA leaders from statewide organizations who have lobbying presence in Olympia, a public state-level early learning policy agenda, capacity to mobilize grassroots supporters, and willingness to coordinate with ELAA members beyond the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is tasked with effectively mobilizing the entire table to bring in new functional capacity – both human and funding – for advocacy – and therefore lead to stronger policy outcomes. Currently, 21 statewide early childhood organizations serve on the Steering Committee.

As ELAA works to broaden the voices of those advocating for addressing the needs of very young children, we acknowledge that we have not done enough to listen to and amplify the voices of leaders of color. We commit to the long-term work of identifying, addressing, and combating the impacts of racism both within the policies we support and within the internal structure and work of our coalition.

Racial Equity Analysis
ELAA uses a Racial Equity Policy Evaluation Tool to evaluate policy proposals recommended for the ELAA legislative agenda. The tool is intended to support our efforts to identify the racial equity impacts of policy proposals and strengthen the coalition’s advocacy capacity. Specifically, this analysis asks:

- Does the policy include a data component that is disaggregated by race and ethnicity on an ongoing basis?
- Who benefits most, and why? Who does not benefit? Why? What are the unintended consequences for communities of color?
- How have impacted community members been consulted? How has their feedback been integrated? Is an ongoing feedback loop embedded? What kind of accountability is there for institutions to implement feedback?
- Who is this accountable to? How are power/structures functioning?
Coalition History, Success, and Current Context

For over 12 years ELAA has worked to expand opportunity for young children across Washington State, and has often had to defend and protect these wins, especially in times of financial crisis. With the most regressive tax structure in the nation, Washington’s social safety net and support system for children is particularly vulnerable.

Now, in the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic, crucial programs that support young children in Washington state are in danger of suffering major budget cuts. We know that these budget cuts will lead to harmful, cumulative outcomes that will ripple through families and communities, with a disproportionate impact on communities of color. Child care providers are serving an essential frontline role by caring for children of first responders and children of families who simply cannot afford to stay home. And while there are many unknowns about how COVID-19 will affect our economy and our society in the future, one thing is clear: ELAA will be at the table, advocating for Washington’s earliest learners.

THE ELAA DIRECTOR’S ROLE

Building on the foundation of more than 12 years of powerful advocacy and relationship building, the ELAA Director will help lead the Early Learning Action Alliance into an era of growth and transformation. As a Special Initiative of the Children’s Alliance, the ELAA Director will report directly to the Executive Director of Children’s Alliance and will have access to support in policy and advocacy management, communications, mobilization, and lobbying from other Children’s Alliance staff and resources. In the next 12-18 months, the ELAA director should expect to engage in the following opportunities:

Strategically Lead Coalition Efforts in Response to the Impacts of COVID-19

The ELAA Director will facilitate vital communication and collaboration across ELAA members to pivot legislative priorities during the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to short and long-term threats posed by COVID-19, they will work to advance consolidated communication efforts across the coalition, fostering collaboration, partnership, and unity between members to identify policy and budget solutions, organize efforts, implement actions, and then track impact. By fostering a culture of shared responsibility and accountability, the ELAA Director will help support the Steering Committee in effectively responding to emerging opportunities and needs, communicating with state and federal leaders, and garnering earned media coverage to draw attention to the exacerbated early learning crisis due to the pandemic.

Facilitate the Assessment and Transformation of Coalition Accountability to Anti-Racism Work

With a relentless commitment to an inclusive and visionary coalition, the ELAA director will work with the Steering Committee and other members to plan and provide facilitation support for a comprehensive assessment and dialogue around ELAA’s membership, practices and structure as they relate to principles of anti-racism and dismantling anti-Black policies and practices. Utilizing external supports and consultants, they will help guide the development of long-term, meaningful practices to assess how racism and anti-Blackness affect the coalition’s work, both internally and externally. In addition, the ELAA Director will work with key members to help communicate findings to the broader coalition and develop key recommendations to inform the coalition’s broader structural and long-term planning development.

Implement and Encourage a Strengthened Shared Leadership Model

The ELAA Director will work to continually clarify roles and responsibilities in implementing an improved shared leadership structure for the Steering Committee in the development of and advocacy for a shared legislative agenda. As membership and legislative priorities shift, the ELAA Director will work with Children’s
Alliance supporting staff to improve continuous knowledge transfer of the coalition’s work, structures, and history.

**Build and Sustain Trust Among Key Internal and External Leaders**
As any successful organizer or advocate knows, relationships drive change. The ELAA Director will work to maintain critical relationships with key decision makers, including coalition members, Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) staff, the Office of Financial Management (OFM), and the Governor’s Office. With gravitas and political savvy, the ELAA Director will work to preserve unity in the early learning community by building confidence in the ELAA legislative agenda and supporting strategies for bringing new and unexpected voices in support of early learning.

**Envision and Shepherd a Stronger Early Learning System for the Future**
The ELAA Director will help clarify, articulate, and refocus the coalition on a shared vision for the future, identifying opportunities to bring proven interventions and programs to scale that will help families and children in Washington state thrive. Working to hold both the day-to-day work and this long-term vision, the ELAA Director will provide valuable leadership that allows the coalition to continue to work toward their shared goals.

**QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE**
While the ideal candidate will embody many of the following abilities, attributes, skills, and experiences, the Children’s Alliance anticipates that no one candidate will possess all the qualifications listed below. In areas where aptitude and/or interest are greater than actual experience, candidates are encouraged to propose a plan for support:

**Alignment on Core Values and Commitments**
- Possess a deep passion for the mission of ELAA and an understanding of the importance of a child’s earliest caregivers.
- Demonstrated commitment to dismantling anti-racism and anti-Blackness, an ability to analyze privilege and power, and credibility in driving racial justice work with diverse stakeholders.

**Facilitation, Listening, and Convening Skills**
- Proven success in creating, sustaining, and engaging inclusive spaces for all people by demonstrating a commitment to dismantling white supremacy, advancing racial equity, and operating with an understanding of how power is manifested in the intersection of a myriad of identities, including race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ability, language, immigration status, and socioeconomic position.
- Collaborative spirit that includes soliciting and delivering feedback, engaging diverse thought partners, and innovating strategies to drive change and success.
- Excellent planning, meeting design, and facilitation skills that have been tested within diverse, mission-driven environments; proven capacity to develop decision-making processes that foster participation, mutual accountability, and increased trust.
- Strong relationship-building skills and an authentic interest in listening to and learning from others; the ability to act with intentionality, establish trust, engage stakeholders, and cultivate belonging.
- An active listener with high emotional intelligence and an ability to engage in productive conflict resolution
• Collaborative leadership style, demonstrated by knowing when to step in and direct, when to delegate, and when to share leadership.

Policy Advocacy, Political Savvy, and Coalition Building Expertise
• A strong and well-developed sense of political savvy and strategic analysis coupled with a deep understanding of state-level policy work.
• Demonstrated credibility and integrity in navigating complex political environments; known for building trusting relationships with lawmakers, agency decision makers, staff, and lobbyists by providing clear, ethical, fact-based information and analysis.
• Substantial experience in policy-related advocacy, including direct lobbying and/or grassroots organizing.
• Experience working in coalition with diverse partners unified around a shared interest.
• Excellent organization and time management skills to manage and successfully address competing commitments.

The Basics
• Ability and willingness to travel across Washington State, with sustained time in Olympia during the legislative session. The adaptability to work effectively in a wide variety of geographic, political, and cultural settings.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND RESOURCES

Children’s Alliance is a mission- and values-driven organization, with a staff team that takes its work, and the quality of that work, very seriously. Our culture is warm, informal, and collaborative. We work hard to be inclusive as we plan strategies, campaigns and events. We are committed as a team to shared learning and work on undoing institutional racism. We dedicate time in supervisory, team, staff, and board meetings to better understand how racism shows up in the public policies and child-serving systems we seek to change, and in our own internal policies and practices. This work is challenging. It calls for each of us to be vulnerable and to take risks. We handle the challenges that arise with care and compassion and learn from them together. For us, this work is central to our mission.

Our Hiring Practices
Children’s Alliance recognizes and honors diversity in race, ethnicity, culture, age, abilities, gender, sexual orientation, and places where people live. We seek to reflect this diversity in all aspects of our work, including the composition of our membership, board, committees, staff, and volunteers. Further, Children’s Alliance seeks to be a multicultural and culturally competent organization that works for equity among all people. We have a racial equity theory of change adopted by the Board of Directors and utilized throughout our work.

We strongly encourage applications from people of color, immigrants, refugees, women, people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and other underrepresented and historically marginalized groups.

Compensation and Benefits
This is a full-time exempt position reporting to the Children’s Alliance Executive Director. The annual salary range is $75,000 - $90,000. The ELAA Director will be primarily based in the Children’s Alliance Seattle office, with significant travel to Olympia during legislative session. This position requires some work in the evenings
and on weekends for meetings and events. However, at this time, Children’s Alliance has implemented a temporary remote work policy, reflecting the phased reopening status of King County, where Children’s Alliance’s office is located.

Children’s Alliance encourages its staff to maintain a healthy work-life balance, and it recognizes the significant disruptions that COVID-19 is causing in our society, particularly for individuals with caregiving responsibilities. To that end, the organization offers a flexible work environment and 12 days of paid vacation in the first year (with incremental increases each year of employment) as well as 13 days of paid holidays, including three floating holidays. This position also offers sick leave and paid family and medical leave, as well as employee and dependent health and dental coverage.

**TO APPLY**

This search is being conducted with assistance from Carolyn Ho and Catherine Seneviratne, of the search firm NPAG. Nominations and applications including a cover letter describing your interest and qualifications, and your resume (in Word format) should be submitted to: ELAA-Director@nonprofitprofessionals.com. In order to expedite the internal sorting and reviewing process, please type your name (Last, First) as the only contents in the subject line of your e-mail.

More information about Children’s Alliance and the Early Learning Action Alliance can be found at: www.childrensalliance.org.