Mental Health Policy Fellow Job Description

**Position Title:** Mental Health Policy Fellow

**Reports to:** Director of Impact

**Location:** Austin, Texas, with statewide oversight

**Status:** Fulltime; temporary

Girls Empowerment Network ignites the power in girls by teaching them the skills to thrive and believe in their ability to be unstoppable. Girls are at risk of not reaching their potential, especially if adolescence affects them too adversely. When girls experience our 20-module curriculum, their self-efficacy increases. When they increase their self-efficacy, they strengthen their internal belief in their power. When they feel powerful, they can be unstoppable. Through programming at schools, camps and conferences, Girls Empowerment Network creates so many safe spaces across Texas for girls to gain access to role models, positive peers, and new resources and skills which increase their social, emotional, and mental health. Annually, direct services impact over 6,000 girls and the adults who care about them by teaching them skills like self-compassion, drug/alcohol resistance, stress management, and resiliency.

While there is so much Girls Empowerment Network has accomplished as an agency since its founding in 1996, the agency has not yet had the opportunity to pursue mental health policy work, which has the potential to deeply enrich mission fulfillment. The new Mental Health Policy Fellow is a special addition to the staff for a two-year, temporary term, to establish critical mental health policy work at the agency, generously funded by the Hogg Foundation. Under the oversight of the Chief Executive Officer and the direct supervision of the Director of Impact, the Mental Health Policy Fellow will leverage the agency’s 24 years of experience working with girls to meaningfully contribute to adolescent girl mental health policy in Texas widely and enhance our programs and services. The Mental Health Policy Fellow will oversee a two year project plan development and execution, informing public officials about the state of Texas girls (amplifying their needs and concerns) as well as carrying forward relevant information from state policy to agency programs and translating its potential impact on girls into the wider community through our network.

**Duties and Responsibilities:** The Mental Health Policy Fellow will serve a two-year fellowship term with the primary objectives of:

1. establishing mental health policy work at the organization in order to better represent the realities and needs of girls in grades 3-12 at the state policy level,
2. track and analyze state and local legislation that impacts girls, and
3. identify opportunities for policy to enrich mission fulfillment and improve adolescent girls’ mental health.

**Project Year One—Overview:**

- Oversee state-level policy analysis and advocacy related to Texas girls’ mental health.
- Work with Director of Impact to expand agency literature review of mental health needs specific to Texas girls and to identify potential partner agencies for legislative policy initiatives.
- During the legislative session, track progress of bills related to adolescent mental health, identify opportunities for direct legislative advocacy, and draft testimony related to bills, aimed at sharing out our agency’s expertise and experiences with adolescent Texan girls to amplify their voices, experiences, and needs at the state level.
- Play a key planning role in Girl Advocacy Day, which provides direct policy advocacy training to Texas middle and high school girls, leading groups interested in learning more about mental health advocacy.
- By the close of the legislative session, present to Girls Empowerment Network staff on relevant legislative outcomes and increase all staff competencies in this space, equipping them to communicate out the information to partner school districts, collaborative organizations, and girls’ families.

**Project Year Two—Overview:**

- Expand upon the state-level work through focusing on the specific regional needs of Girls Empowerment Networks’ service area in Central Texas, Houston, and Dallas.
• Research key mental health indicators across and within Texas regions as well as potential regional partnerships for mental health advocacy.
• Further develop a literature review on gendered mental health outcomes and interventions for youth, making recommendations for curriculum adaptations.
• Work in with Director of Impact to evaluate our programs’ impact on longer term mental health outcomes and use the results to advocate for regional funding for programming.
• Lead Girl Advocacy Day(s) in individual regions, teaching middle and high school girls how to advocate within their local governments.
• Make recommendations for policy advocacy initiatives for the 2023 legislative session.
• Delivery of a final report for ongoing policy strategy to improve girls’ mental health for the agency’s advocacy at the local, regional, and state levels and including recommendations for how Girls Empowerment Network can best sustain policy work after the fellowship concludes.

Other duties as assigned.

Critical Skills and Qualifications:
• Deep personal commitment to the mission and values of the organization.
• Bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university in public health, psychology, behavioral health, counseling or related field. Master’s degree in Health Policy strongly preferred.
• At least 2 years’ experience in health policy work in any local, state, or federal governmental space; Texas legislature experience strongly preferred.
• Spanish language proficiency preferred.
• Comfort with a high level of autonomy; strong professional judgement; commitment to creating inclusive cultures and working with people from diverse backgrounds.
• Ability to manage multiple projects with competing deadlines; ability to switch easily from discussions of details to big picture, future forward thinking.
• Positive, welcoming attitude, and natural confidence owning a room.
• High level of integrity, personal motivation, ethics, and cultural sensitivity.
• Ability to work cooperatively, courteously, and effectively with a broad spectrum of people and comfort translating dense statistical information and policy jargon with lay people (ranging from program staff, fundraising staff, executive leadership, school districts, program participants, board members, volunteers, and donors.)
• Has reliable transportation and the ability to travel to statewide regions like Houston and Dallas approximately 3-5 times a year as necessitated by workflow and projects.

Compensation
The Mental Health Policy Fellow is a full-time, temporary position for two years; 2020-2022. Based on the required experience, skills, responsibilities, and work demands, the annual salary for this position is $48,000. Compensation also includes full benefits package with employer provided health care, reimbursements for travel, and generous time off.

To Apply
Interested individuals should submit a cover letter, resume, and 3 professional references via email to employment@girlsempowermentnetwork.org. Please save files as PDFs and use “Mental Health Policy Fellow” as your email subject line. The application deadline is June 26th, 2020.