



Senior Policy Advisor, Early Childhood Job Description

Title: Senior Policy Advisor, Early Childhood

Full-Time Exempt

Organization Overview

Advance Illinois is a not-for-profit policy and advocacy organization that works toward a healthy public education system that prepares students to achieve success in college, career and civic life. We are committed to an aligned education system across the B-20 continuum that strives for equity, stresses college and career readiness and completion, and supports the whole child from the earliest years through adulthood. We believe every child should have access to high-quality education and care, regardless of geography, income, or race.

Spanning the early childhood through higher education continuum, Advance Illinois analyzes research, data and best practice; engages practitioners, families and partners; and develops and promotes policies designed to strengthen public education, higher education, and early childhood education and care in Illinois. We are seeking a passionate and committed individual who is looking to grow in the not-for-profit space and is able to thrive in a fast-paced and high-energy workplace to work on the Policy Team, supporting initiatives related to early childhood education and care in Illinois.

Position Summary

Advance Illinois seeks an experienced Senior Policy Advisor to work on issues related to early childhood education and care policy. The ideal candidate is a systems thinker, with strong knowledge of the early childhood field – including system challenges and opportunities – preferably with knowledge of and experience with Illinois-specific policies, stakeholders, and context.

The Senior Policy Advisor will report to the Director of Policy and will support the policy needs of the organization. We are looking for a strategic thought partner and self-starter who is able to work independently and is comfortable working in a small team environment and partnering not only with staff members but with a diverse network of outside partners and stakeholders.

Competencies

- A systems thinker, with the ability to identify key policy levers, opportunities, challenges, and solutions to align the early childhood education and care field and to develop a stronger ECEC system, including strong governance and funding for Illinois.
- Excellent research, analytic, and problem solving skills, including the ability to quickly synthesize large amounts of information.
- Excellent communication skills, including writing, speaking, listening, and advising.
- Deep knowledge of early childhood education and care policy, programs, systems that support young children, as well as understanding the context at the state and national level.
- Understanding of the systems and structural barriers that lead to inequities in the early childhood system, especially those related to funding and governance.
- Knowledge of the political, policy, and partner landscape, preferably with existing relationships with stakeholders in the Illinois early childhood landscape.
- Proficiency in using software such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and Power Point, and willingness to master additional software and systems.

Essential Functions

- Provide leadership and thinking around organization strategy in early childhood through delivering relevant and timely expertise to Advance Illinois staff.
- Provide policy analysis and technical assistance to partners, the state, coalitions, committees, task forces, and work groups in which Advance Illinois participates.
- Lead and influence meaningful conversations around levers, practices, and system structures to promote equity and address barriers to equity within the early childhood system.
- Make connections around the intersection of early childhood and the rest of the B-20 spectrum.
- Independently engage external stakeholders around policy solutions and common goals.
- Seek out and develop innovative solutions, ideas, and best practices to impact early childhood system transformation.
- Create issue briefs, fact sheets, testimony, presentations and slide decks, and memoranda on policy issues and best practices for internal and external stakeholders.
- Organize, participate in, and conduct workshops, conference sessions, and seminars.
- Organize and lead internal and external meetings.
- Promote growth of others by sharing knowledge and experience.
- Actively engage diverse stakeholders and ensure inclusion of diverse viewpoints (both internally and externally).
- Perform other duties as required.

Education and Experience

- Bachelor's degree
- Minimum of 5 years' experience in a similar role

Working Environment

Due to the current COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak, this position is temporarily remote. This arrangement is expected to be short term, and Advance Illinois will continue to monitor guidance from health officials and the need for remote work arrangements. Staff are expected to be vaccinated, and when staff return to in-office setting, the position is located in Chicago.

Compensation

Competitive salary commensurate with experience, along with excellent benefits such as: health/dental insurance; short-term/long-term disability plans; 401K with a company match plan; flexible spending account; holidays and vacation accrual.

To Apply

Submit a resume and cover letter to: policy@advanceillinois.org. All submissions will be acknowledged. Applicants selected for an interview will be contacted. Please do not call Advance Illinois.

Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

Advance Illinois is an equal opportunity employer with a commitment to engaging the skills and leadership of people of color, low-income persons, LGBT persons, differently abled people, and other people from diverse backgrounds. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, political affiliation, mental or physical disability, age, marital status, family status, or veteran status. People from these and other historically marginalized backgrounds and communities are strongly encouraged to apply.