

Position Announcement Program and Policy Analyst

Who We Are

The Center for Early Learning Funding Equity (CELFE) was established to develop and promote research- and data-informed strategies to transform funding of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) programs for children ages 0-5. Housed in Northern Illinois University's Division of Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development (OERD), CELFE works in collaboration with academic, data, and research partners across the NIU system as well as with external partners.

CELFE began its work focused primarily on Illinois' ECEC system, in which our Director, Theresa Hawley, Ph.D. has spent almost 30 years in as a researcher, advocate, and government systems change leader – working to improve ECEC policies with children and families at the center. Now, CELFE is building on that experience and the passion for systems change to focus more deeply on the funding adequacy and equity of the ECEC system. The scope and reach of CELFE is expanding to include all states and municipalities interested in transformation. CELFE is currently engaged in projects with Maine, Nebraska, and Colorado in addition to Illinois.

CELFE is only in its third year and needs to *scale up* our internal capacity to meet the growing needs of states and clients interested in understanding how to transform their own ECEC systems through an equity lens, with children and families at the center. As such, we are hiring a **Program and Policy Analyst** to support current projects and help develop new client-based work.

The Opportunity

This position includes responsibilities to support the overall work of the center, including project development, workflow management, communication, and a strong focus on data collection and analysis. The position contributes to research papers, public presentations, collateral development, website maintenance, as well as policy and data analysis. Examples of some of this work are outlined below:

- Coordinate projects and help manage and meet project deliverables and deadlines, including meeting management, client communication, and more
 - Fluency in project management platforms/technology, including MS Teams, Smart Sheet, etc.
- Contribute to the 'ideation' of innovative and transformative ECEC policy and funding strategies to support children ages 0-5 and their families
- Build financial models for early childhood programs and funding streams using Excel

- Capture and develop project and product ideas, including writing outlines for papers, sketching out and managing project plans, ensuring client and project deliverables are met, and ensuring appropriate stakeholders are engaged
- Support the coordination and integration of CELFE workstreams to align with and support the mission, vision, values and help to realize the business goals of CELFE
- Policy and background research to support project and product development, including web-based and academic research
- Track and maintain (for CELFE) new/emerging research relevant to the work of CELFE to use in blog posts, link to through CELFE's website, and/or inspire potential partnerships and complementary projects
- Work closely with the senior staff on the development of papers, policy briefs, and PowerPoint presentations to meet client expectations and further the work of CELFE
- Support the Deputy Director in grant writing and meeting deliverables, including reporting and data collection.
- Help develop, support, and promote the work of CELFE as opportunities arise and are needed
- Other duties as assigned

The ideal candidate will bring the following skills to the position.

1. Ability to manipulate, translate, and communicate data to inform and support ECEC policy and program development/innovations
2. Strong writing and editing skills
3. Advanced knowledge of and experience with collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing data
4. Strong Excel skills
5. An understanding of ECEC policy and programs; including federal and state funding structures and mechanisms
6. Interest in and demonstrated ability to write policy memos and briefs, project outlines and summaries, and other products that help manage and communicate the ideas and work of CELFE
7. General (high) comfort level with using technology-based platforms for project management, basic research and data analysis, communication, and presentation of information.
8. Strong project management experience and skills
9. Meeting planning and facilitation skills, interest, and comfort with presenting work publicly, to a variety of audiences
10. Problem-solver with strong initiative to keep work moving; helping to establish clarity of goals and purpose if it doesn't already exist
11. Good communicator in person as well as in a virtual work environment.

Education & Experience

1. Bachelor's Degree (master's degree preferred) in social science, education, public policy, or related field, with basic coursework in research methods and analysis
2. Minimum 5 years of work experience, preferably in education-related field
3. Bilingual Spanish/English a plus
4. Finance and/or budget skills

Attributes

1. Strong commitment to equity
2. Passion for early childhood education and care with children and families at the center
3. Comfortable with a start-up environment and flexibility to adapt to changes in work priorities and deadlines
4. Willingness to ask questions, learn from others and share ideas and talents with your colleagues
5. Can manage multiple projects simultaneously and meet client-driven deadlines and needs
6. Ability and willingness to travel for in-person meetings, attend and present at conferences and/or client-related meetings

This position is a hybrid, Chicago-based position with a requirement to be in person a portion of every week. 100% remote candidates will not be considered for this position.

The salary range for this position is \$55,000-\$75,000 based on experience and skill.

Qualified candidates will be required to complete the NIU online application below.

Direct any questions and letters of interest with resume to Sessy Nyman at nnyman@niu.edu by October 23, 2023.