



Position Title: Mental Health Policy Associate

About Children First

Children First is a private nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives and chances of children through thoughtful and informed advocacy. Children First is a fast-paced child advocacy organization that uses research, people power, and coalition building to create the momentum for reform of public policies that enable more children to grow up healthy, well-educated, and ready to take the reins of their communities.

Position Summary

Children First is looking for a Mental Health Policy Associate to support the Strong Minds, Bright Futures Campaign, a statewide partnership of over 115 organizations dedicated to improving children's mental health in Pennsylvania. Working closely with the Mental Health Policy Director and the Health Policy team, the Associate will play a central role in advancing policy, advocacy, and systems-level reform to expand access to mental health services for children and youth across the Commonwealth.

The Associate will provide operational support for the policy advocacy initiatives of the Mental Health team by scheduling and coordinating meetings, including with policy makers and coalitions, and assist in policy research and the development of policy briefs, reports and factsheets covering areas including behavioral health, environmental health, and insurance coverage for children. This is an exceptional opportunity for someone who is passionate about children's mental health policy, coalition building, and community-driven advocacy.

Key Responsibilities:

- Serve as an administrative point of contact for the Strong Minds, Bright Futures Campaign, helping manage meeting logistics, communications, and follow-up with partner organizations and statewide stakeholders.
- Schedule and facilitate coalition meetings and committee meetings, track participation, prepare agendas, and meeting materials, and ensure timely follow-up.
- Support planning and execution of community meetings, webinars, legislative briefings, and public engagement events. Manage logistics for these events, including venue, staffing, registration, outreach, and materials.
- Assist with children's health policy research by identifying relevant reports, policy examples, trends, and potential data sources, and summarizing findings for review by senior staff.
- Maintain team calendars, project timelines, and tracking systems to ensure campaign milestones are met.
- Support project management across workstreams, ensuring coordination and follow-through with internal staff and external partners.
- Support the development of policy briefs, fact sheets, reports, testimony, and other advocacy materials.

- Coordinate within the Health Team and organization to develop and disseminate campaign content across multiple platforms.
- Support and facilitate community engagement activities
- Represent Children First and Strong Minds, Bright Futures at community events, stakeholder meetings, and public forums across the state.
- Collect and synthesize community input to inform advocacy priorities and campaign messaging.
- Engage families and young people in advocacy efforts.

Competencies

- Action Oriented - Full of energy for the things he/she sees as challenging; not fearful of acting with a minimum of planning; seizes more opportunities than others.
- Adaptability - Ability to work independently and with others in a hybrid, dynamic environment.
- Cultural Humility - Engages in continuous exploration of cultural identities and beliefs, is aware of one's own biases and background; treats others with respect, openness, and empathy.
- Creativity - Comes up with a lot of new and unique ideas; easily makes connections among previously unrelated notions; tends to be seen as original and value-added in brainstorming settings.
- Interpersonal Savvy - Relates well to all kinds of people – up, down and sideways inside and outside of the organization; uses diplomacy and tact; builds constructive and effective relationships; can diffuse even high-tension situations comfortably.
- Organizing - Can marshal resources to get things done; can orchestrate multiple activities at once to accomplish a goal; uses resources effectively and efficiently; arranges information in a useful manner.
- Problem Solving - Uses rigorous logic and methods to solve difficult problems with effective solutions; probes all fruitful sources for answers; can see hidden problems; is excellent at honest analysis; looks beyond the obvious and doesn't stop at the first answers.
- Technological Proficiency - Facility with Excel and Word, web-based research, social media platforms.

Qualifications, Education, Experience, & Skills

- Strong commitment to racial justice and desire to create safe, inclusive conversations on how to close gaps in mental health systems.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, including experience engaging community members and collaborating across teams and stakeholders.
- Background in and familiarity with key issues in children's health in Pennsylvania, at least one to two years' experience in health policy and advocacy work.
- Team player, able to coordinate, negotiate, manage, and work with coworkers of all levels.
- Degree in public health preferred.
- Working knowledge of data analysis software applications and tools, such as Excel or similar software; knowledge of MS Office, including online functionality using OneDrive/SharePoint.
- Project management skills, including process management, data tracking, and reporting.
- Ability to work independently and follow through on projects with minimal supervision.
- Ability to work occasional weekend or evening events.
- Willingness to travel throughout Southeast Pennsylvania and Harrisburg, must own a car.

Service Area / Industry Information:

This is a full-time, hybrid position located in Southeast Pennsylvania. The Strong Minds, Bright Futures Campaign operates statewide, with concentrated activity in the Southeast region. This position requires 10-15 days of travel to Harrisburg annually, periodic travel throughout Pennsylvania, and frequent travel in the five-county area. Travel costs are reimbursable.

Reports To: Mental Health Policy Director

Benefits & Salary: \$48,000 per year and a generous benefits package, including health care insurance coverage for the employee and their children and paid family leave.