



Position Title: Youth Career Readiness Policy Director

Children First is a leading child advocacy and policy organization dedicated to ensuring every child has the opportunity to thrive. Headquartered in Philadelphia and working across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Children First champions policies and programs that expand access to quality health care, education, and family supports for children and youth in the Greater Philadelphia region.

Position Summary:

The Youth Career Readiness Policy Director sets strategic priorities and goals for our campaigns and expands coalitions and partnerships. The Director works to improve the lives of our region's children through initiatives and advocacy for the building blocks of opportunity – equitable access to high-quality early education and childcare, public education, healthcare, and dependency and delinquency systems that heal. As the Youth Career Readiness Policy Director, you mobilize coalitions and play a critical leadership role in setting and advancing local and state policy priorities that include 1) exploring alternative pathways to education, 2) accessing career and technical education, 3) expanding access to and enrollment in advanced coursework for youth that will lead to prosperous careers and boost economic growth in southeast PA. While this role is primarily focused on leading advocacy efforts the Director is expected to stay closely connected to implementation by engaging directly in high-priority relationships, key campaign moments, and select outreach activities to ensure alignment and impact.

Key Responsibilities:

- Lead the development and implementation of advocacy strategies to advance state and local policy priorities that meet the needs of youth workforce readiness by:
 - Developing messaging documents
 - Recruiting community leaders to participate in Children First's advocacy
 - Creating and expanding broad based coalitions
 - Managing staff
 - Oversee grants and ensure deliverables are met
 - Manage the team budget
- Write compelling policy reports, develop and execute dissemination plans.
- Draft key details for statutory and regulatory changes.

- Write social media posts, blog posts, advocacy emails, short briefs and power point presentations that explain and disseminate analysis based on data and anecdotes that highlight the need for improved youth workforce readiness through career preparation programs and policy reforms.
- Orchestrate convenings and large scale meetings by planning agendas, identifying speakers and attendees, as well as supervising meeting logistics.
- Collaborate with the Education and Economic Mobility Teams, and the Strategy team, to advance organizational priorities.
- Communicate with key policymakers about youth career readiness priorities.
- Monitor trends and collect and analyze data on youth career readiness and workforce participation in order to (1) identify unmet needs and persistent challenges and (2) establish priority issues.
- Contribute to grantwriting and funder relationship management.

Key Competencies

- 1) Policy Knowledge: Knowledge of CTE policy issues and experience developing and executing strategy & tactics to advance policy improvement and adoption.
- 2) Advocacy Knowledge: Professional experience understanding and advancing legislative goals and leading coalitions, including the ability to develop strategies and tactics that persuade legislators and elected officials, and the ability to organize, mobilize, and facilitate widespread community participation.
- 3) Stakeholder Relationship Management Skills: Ability to cultivate, manage, and grow relationships with diverse policymakers, parent/caregivers, and other networks and coalitions.
- 4) Advanced Communication Skills: Exceptional written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to communicate policy issues and priorities, relevant data, etc., clearly and persuasively.
- 5) Strategic and Critical Thinking: Ability to see the big picture and develop strategy and aligned tactics to achieve policy outcomes. Ability to critically assess a situation, information, etc., and (re)calibrate strategy accordingly.
- 6) Data and Trend Analysis Skills: Strategic and detail-oriented ability to collect, interpret, and simplify large datasets in support of policy priorities and advocacy goals.
- 7) Media Savvy: Professional experience using social, news, and other media to amplify efforts towards a cause and policy improvement.

- 8) Management/Supervision Experience: Minimum 3 years of experience managing and supervising a team with a spirit of collaboration and empowerment to help achieve team goals.
- 9) Adaptability/Flexibility: Ability to work independently and with others in a hybrid, dynamic environment.
- 10) Planning Skills: Strong project management and strategy development skills aligned with policy priorities and legislative calendar, etc.
- 11) 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.
- 12) Proficiency with Technology: Facility with Excel and Word, web-based research, social media platforms.

Service Area / Industry Information:

Southeastern Pennsylvania; Counties of Philadelphia, Montgomery, Delaware, Chester, and Bucks

Notes / Additional Information:

This is a full-time hybrid position requiring 25-30 days of annual travel to Harrisburg; in addition, this role requires periodic in-person meetings in the counties and a weekly in-office staff meeting.

Salary & Benefits: \$125,000 and a generous benefits package, including health care insurance coverage for the employee and their children and paid family leave.

Reports To: Executive Director