

Research Specialist and Senior Policy Associate (39133)
Northern Illinois University

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Posted Jan. 4, 2023, set to expire Dec. 7, 2023

Job Title	Research Specialist and Senior Policy Associate (39133)
Department	Education Systems Center
Institution	Northern Illinois University DeKalb, Illinois
Date Posted	Jan. 4, 2023
Application Deadline	Open until filled
Position Start Date	Available immediately
Job Categories	Research Scientist/Associate
Academic Field(s)	Social Sciences - General
Job Website	https://employment.niu.edu/postings/68710
Apply By Email	
Job Description	

Overview

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 through the Research and Data Collaborative (RDC).

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 a government systems change leader – working to improve ECEC polices with children and families at the center. Now, CELFE is building on that experience and the passion for systems-change of the diverse and skilled team of five (and growing) to focus more deeply on the funding adequacy and equity of the ECEC

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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 Massachusetts and Colorado in addition to Illinois.

CELFE is in start-up mode and has the need to quickly scale-up our internal capacity to meet the growing need of states and clients interested in understanding how to transition their own ECEC systems through an equity lens, with children and families remaining at the center. As such, we are hiring a **Research Specialist and Senior Policy Associate** to support current projects and develop new client-based work.

Position Summary

The Research Specialist and Senior Policy Associate will bring a diverse and extensive set of experiences that provides leadership to manage the current work of CELFE, while also generating ideas and strategies for additional work to build the ECEC field to see financing—and the mechanisms by which we distribute resources to providers and families – as a critical lever for transforming ECEC in the US. The successful candidate will bring a substantial track record of past work including data collection, analysis, and synthesis that resulted in policy proposals, change in program practice and/or a paper, policy memo or published article outlining the use of data and research to inform ECEC policy and practice.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

Specifically, responsibilities for the ideal candidate include, but are not limited to

- Prospect and develop clients, generating fee-for-service projects for CELFE
- Plan and execute projects to support client goals, including such tasks as:
- Leading meetings with clients to identify and clarify goals
- Planning and implementing stakeholder engagement processes
- Working with CELFE colleagues and clients to design solutions to meet client needs
- Plan and execute research projects, including such tasks as: Prepare literature reviews, Design and execute data analysis strategies, Prepare presentations, reports and journal submissions
- Manage team of staff assigned to projects
- Participate in team activities

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- In concert with the Deputy Director, promote CELFE with potential funders/foundations to support the 'field building' goals central to the CELFE MVV and strategic business plan/goals

Minimum Required Qualifications (Civil Service)

Specialty Factors (Civil Service)

Preferred Qualifications (Civil Service)

Minimum Required Qualifications (SPS)

- BA/BS in business, political science, public administration, or related field.
- 5 years of related research experience
- Possesses and applies comprehensive knowledge of principles, concepts, practices and methods
- Proven knowledge of Workforce Development, Apprenticeship initiatives, Project and grant management

Additional Requirements (SPS)

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 uncertainty and changes in work priorities
4. Can manage multiple projects simultaneously and meet client-driven deadlines and needs
5. Ability and willingness to travel for in-person meetings, attend and present at conferences and/or client-related meetings

Preferred Qualifications (SPS)

1. Master's Degree required (Ph.D. preferred) in social science, education, public policy or related field, with coursework in research methods and analysis
2. Minimum 5 years of experience (10 years preferred) managing projects and/or people
3. Bilingual Spanish/English a plus
4. Management of junior and mid-level data, research, and policy staff
5. Established track-record in fundraising, developing project budgets, and other business skills required in a start-up environment

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6. Working inside government and/or working closely with publicly funded programs and systems is helpful

1. Ability to identify gaps in data/research related to ECEC funding equity and develop a workstream and product to fill the gap and promote CELFE philosophies and Mission/Vision/Values
2. High comfort level with the use of technology-based platforms for project management, advanced research and data analysis, communication and presentation of information.
3. Skilled in quantitative and qualitative research design
4. Skilled in data analysis techniques, including use of statistical software packages.
5. Skilled in data visualization techniques
6. Strong project management experience and skills
7. Demonstrated ability to write/publish policy briefs, papers and project/research findings in early childhood, education (k-12), and/or economics/labor market/finance publications
8. High comfort level and skill with publicly presenting work, data, research findings at conferences, workshops, webinars as it emerges from CELFE's work
9. Meeting planning, convening and facilitation skills
10. Knowledge of ECEC policy and programs, including federal and state funding structures and mechanisms
11. Knowledge of public policy, ECEC systems and programs, and publicly-funded ECEC structures
12. Problem-solver with strong initiative to keep work moving; helping to establish clarity of goals and purpose if it doesn't already exist
13. Strong leadership and management of content, strategy, product and people
14. Strong communication skills, in person as well as in a virtual work environment.

Contact Information

Please reference Academickeys in your cover letter when applying for or inquiring about this job announcement.

Contact



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