



## YOUTH POLICY ADVOCATE: *Ahlquist Center for Policy, Practice and Innovation*

Children's Home + Aid is a leading child and family service agency in Illinois. Our mission is to partner with children, youth and families whose potential is at risk to create hope, opportunity, and bright futures. In 2013, Children's Home + Aid launched the Ahlquist Center for Policy, Practice and Innovation to expand our mission impact by creating a center of gravity where practice knowledge, innovation insight and policy and advocacy experience combine. The Ahlquist Center extends the agency's mission impact through three powerful strategies:

- **Incubating** innovative practices and models;
- **Improving** outcomes within our the agency's services and within the field;
- **Achieving** effective state and federal policies.

Improving outcomes for older children and youth is one of the Ahlquist Center's signature policy priorities. Illinois is home to 3.1 million youth ages 8-25. They come from different families, backgrounds, financial situations and communities. The Ahlquist Center is committed to working with youth and families, service providers, advocates and organizers to guide youth in building their own exceptional lives.

The Start to Finish Coalition is an advocacy coalition focused on the needs of youth older children to young adults. We believe that young people can and will thrive if they are safe, stable, healthy, educated, employable and connected. The Youth Development Advocate has an opportunity to lead great change for youth ages 8-25 across the state. The Youth Development Advocate will coordinate the statewide Start to Finish Coalition and promote the community schools model as one strategy to improve outcomes for young people.

### Core Responsibilities of YOUTH POLICY ADVOCATE:

#### **Advocacy (40 percent)**

- Coordinates the advocacy strategy to advance the Start to Finish and Federation for Community Schools' yearly legislative priorities. The Federation is an initiative of Children's Home + Aid. Develops messages and connects Coalition and Federation members, youth and families to their elected officials to push the legislative agendas.
- Cultivates, maintains and tracks relationships with local, state and federal legislators.
- Produces written advocacy materials, including calls to action and fact sheets for state and federal level youth development advocacy priorities.
- Maintains regular communications with Start to Finish Coalition and Federation for Community Schools members on policy and legislative priorities
- Presents the state and federal legislative and policy priorities at local, regional and state meetings.
- Represents youth development issues at external coalition meetings.



### ***Coalition Building (30 percent)***

- Builds Start to Finish coalition membership and communicates directly with coalition members, collecting information on funding, policy and advocacy priorities to inform the Start to Finish agenda. Keeps apprised of shifts in needs and priorities.
- Implements, with the Public Policy Manager, a plan for incorporating the ideas of young people into the Start to Finish Coalition's agenda, possibly developing youth coalitions.
- Serves as an ambassador for the Start to Finish Coalition and the Federation for Community Schools at local, state and regional meetings. Promotes the interconnectedness of the six developmental goals - stable, safe, healthy, educated, employable and connected - that all youth need to achieve to be successful.
- Assists the Public Policy Manager in staffing the Start to Finish Coalition steering committee and statewide meetings, setting the meetings, taking notes and communicating with members on action steps.

### ***Communications (20 percent)***

- Researches and writes community schools and positive youth development content, including blog posts, short spotlights on community schools and lessons from the field updates.
- Collects and develops content for regular communications, at least twice monthly, with Federation for Community Schools members.
- Collects content and drafts e-alerts highlighting the Start to Finish Coalition efforts. Maintains e-alert lists.
- Maintains twitter and Facebook presence for the Federation for Community Schools.

### ***Administrative (10 percent)***

- Organizes the logistics for training and technical assistance webinars and symposia.
- Organizes logistics of advocacy days in Springfield.
- Tracks the status of current legislation and administrative issues related to youth development during the state and federal legislative sessions.
- Coordinates the work of consultants and contractors where directed by the Public Policy Manager, including tracking expenses and submitting invoices.
- Maintains Coalition and Federation member lists.
- Attends required training sessions.
- Participates in regular supervision and staff meetings as required by the department.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

### ***Additional Requirements***

- Travel locally and to other locations in the state, including Springfield (up to 30 percent.) Occasional travel for conferences outside of the state.



## Qualifications:

- Bachelor's Degree and at least 1-2 years experience post-graduation working with human services or community organizations OR high school diploma or equivalent plus a minimum of three years relevant advocacy/community organizing experience required.
- Experience in youth services, promoting social justice, community organizing and coalition building is strongly preferred. Experience in marketing, communications or journalism is a plus.
- Commitment to improving outcomes through advocacy and policy change for the 3.1 million children and young adults ages 8 to 25 living in Illinois.
- Creative, strategic and analytical thinker with the ability to manage multiple projects
- Able to work with and be open to learning about new communities and the varying issues that impact those communities, youth and families.
- Ability to communicate clearly, maturely and compassionately with youth and families.
- Flexibility to meet changing work needs and demands.
- Ability to work collaboratively on a high functioning team.
- Openness to feedback and desire to grow professionally.
- Strong organizational skills and attention to detail.
- Valid driver's license, auto insurance, and reliable transportation required.

Compensation includes paid time off, as well as medical, dental, vision and life insurance and a 401(k) Employee savings plan. Children's Home + Aid is an equal opportunity employer: minority/female/disability/veteran.

*To learn more about the  
Ahlquist Center for Policy, Practice and Innovation,  
please visit our website: [Policy Center](#)*

*For details on this position, or to **apply**, please visit our Careers Page:  
[www.childrenshomeandaid.org/careers](http://www.childrenshomeandaid.org/careers)*



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