Request for Proposals: Contractor for IDEA Policy & Consulting

Overview: Our Start Early Childhood Systems Consulting and Illinois Policy Teams support advocates and government leaders to ensure that early childhood systems are high-quality and aligned, are resourced to be sustainable, and meet the needs of children and families who have historically and currently are under-represented and face barriers to accessing the services they need. Due to parental leave and new opportunities, our team is looking to engage a contractor to partner with and support our team’s IDEA Part C and Part B - 619 efforts.

Location: Remote. Start Early is headquartered in Chicago with staff and partners nationally. Travel may be considered to meet with partners, depending on COVID guidelines.

Hours: 15- 30hrs week, November 1, 2021 – May 15, 2022. Flexible depending on interest and availability of contractor.

Reporting Structure: Consultant will report to Senior Director, Illinois Policy Team, and support Director, Early Childhood Systems Consulting.

Key Responsibilities:
As a contractor, conduct research and analysis and contribute to deliverables focused on IDEA Part C and Part B - 619, including support for the creation of a federal IDEA Part C and Part B - 619 policy agenda. Tasks vary in expertise and skill required and more than one consultant for this project will be considered. Examples of scope of work include:

- **Policy Writing & Presentations:**
  - Scan and synthesize recommendations and research from existing federal and state reports and support in drafting and writing of a federal policy agenda on IDEA Part C and Part B - 619.
  - Provide support in drafting articles and preparing webinars on IDEA issues to increase awareness of early childhood inclusion and how to support children across settings for school district leaders and community-based providers.

- **Outreach & Engagement:** Conduct outreach and engagement of key contributors to generate ideas and input on a federal IDEA Part C and Part B - 619 policy agenda (e.g., interviews, meetings, surveys, etc.). Manage process, create agendas and notes, schedule internal/external meetings, etc.

- **Policy Research:** Conduct and summarize research on issues related to IDEA Part C and Part B-619 focused on state policy and practice to inform Illinois advocacy and in response to requests from states participating in the IDEA Alliance grant. Possible examples include 1) equity in telehealth delivery under Part C; 2) analysis of use of medical diagnosis category for eligibility under Part C; 3) identification of promising models for supporting preschool aged children with disabilities in community settings; 4) identification of promising models for increasing engagement of families with complex needs in Part C services, and 5) best practice or promising models for ensuring family awareness of Part C service and their rights.

Experience & Competencies
- Excellent understanding of the national and state landscape of IDEA Part C and Part B - 619 with strong relationships to EI and ECSE systems leaders and advocacy/policy organizations.
- Knowledge of early childhood systems and programs, including knowledge of the challenges and solutions facing policy makers, advocates, and families. and other
providers exploring and implementing strategies to create more diverse, equitable, and inclusive systems.

- Understanding of legislative, administrative, and other systems change methods.
- Strong verbal and written communication with diverse audiences.
- Commitment to racial equity, including an understanding of institutional and structural racism and bias and their impact on underserved and underrepresented communities.
- Ability to work in a creative, evolving, and inclusive learning culture.
- Ability to travel as required for in-person meetings if allowable and consistent with public health guidelines.

**Request for Proposals**

To express interest in this position please submit a cover letter and resume through this form. Please be sure to include availability and hourly rate. Priority given to responses submitted by October 22 but will be reviewed on a rolling basis as needed. Please direct any questions about this opportunity to Karen Berman at kberman@startearly.org.