



Placement Organization: Voices of Tomorrow

Position Title: Early Childhood Policy Fellow

Supervisor: Sarah Loeffler

Location: Burien, WA. This will be a hybrid position with some days in the office. Typical office hours are: Mon-Fri 8am-5pm

Organizational Background

Voices of Tomorrow (VOT) is a community-based organization providing early learning and family support programs to low-income families and childcare providers in Seattle and King County's East African immigrant and refugee community. We work to break the cycle of educational disparity to create better futures for East African children. We weave together community voice, language, cultural heritage, and parenting practices with evidenced based, culturally responsive early learning for children -- and the parents and providers that make up their world. We also advocate for the needs of our communities and prepare community members to advocate for the needs of their families.

More about Voices of Tomorrow's ("VOT").

VOT's mission is to preserve immigrant & refugee children's identity through culturally responsive child-focused programs. Our agency works closely with community partners to eliminate racial inequities in the Early Learning System which deeply affect Immigrant and Refugee children's growth, development, and academic performances. Early childhood is the most critical phase of human development. The focus of VOT is to create early learning programs that preserves the child's culture and language, while advancing African indigenous parenting practices and community-driven narratives. Substantial research shows that early adversity, including loss of a language, is associated with diminished health across the life course and across generations.

Our work is guided by the following foundational principles:

RACIAL EQUITY. Community representation is paramount in all of Voices of Tomorrow's programs, policies, and activities. Program components are grounded in community needs and programs are designed with the input of the communities we serve.

CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS. We strive to create opportunities to preserve culture through the celebration of diversity. We welcome all who apply their resources, cultural knowledge, and experience to address solutions for removing barriers facing our community.

HEALTH AND SAFETY. Embedded in our work is an understanding that good prenatal and early childhood mental health is foundational to reducing long term stressors and negative impacts into adulthood.

STRENGTHS-BASED. Our programs are designed to empower families and communities to use the existing knowledge of their families and communities enabling resiliency in a manner in which they can share their knowledge through the education of core life skills.

CHILD FOCUS. We encourage parents and caregivers to foster positive relationships with children and caregivers, as strong family bonds give children their best start in early childhood development.

Position Summary/Overview

The Early Childhood Policy Fellow will engage in the interconnected work of supporting the newly formed Public Policy and Advocacy department in advancing VOT's efforts to address structural inequities in systems and institutions that affect the health and wellbeing of East African Immigrants and refugee children. This position will entail extensive policy research to help VOT understand the current early childhood education policy landscape in Washington state to help shape our legislative priorities for active change efforts. The scope of work and primary outcome goals of this fellowship includes but not limited to:

1. Research and understand the shape of public policy initiatives at the federal, state, and local level affecting our work and communities we serve to develop a theory of change framework; Ready internal systems to start lobbying, with defined legislative priorities by the of 2023.
2. Help build core partnerships and coalition groups to advance our policy aims with community support and advisory on critical policy objectives.
3. Assist with the design and implementation of Advocacy 101 trainings and topical Civic Boot Camps

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

Antiracist Leadership:

- Fosters a sense of community and shared purpose via collaboration and cooperation with others inside and outside VOT
- Partners with and is accountable to children, families, immigrant/refugees, and communities of color
- Actively demonstrates a commitment to supporting equity and inclusion, and serves as an advocate with colleagues, partners, and communities to meet programmatic goals and the mission of VOT
- Articulates and applies historical context of racism and understands the current reality of families and communities of color in order to support racial equity
- Demonstrates awareness of biases, internalized racial superiority and oppression

Policy Research/Tracking/Analysis:

- Develop expertise in early childhood policy issues such as dual language learning, childcare access, and equitable workforce development strategies
- Conduct policy and legal research and analysis on topics related to impacts of inequities in the early learning system on immigrant, refugee, and BIPOC communities
- Identify, monitor and analyze all relevant legislation at the local, state and federal level that impacts the service ability of Voices of Tomorrow utilizing a racial equity lens; Develop internal policy and recommendations to strengthen VOT's role in the Early Learning Public Policy
- Conduct quantitative and/or qualitative analysis on legislative priority topics.
- Develop legislative priorities and agenda, Co-author reports and other publications, Draft testimony and position papers on public policy issues
- Attend and report on briefings, hearings, coalition meetings, and other constituent meetings as needed
- Develop policy recommendations or proposals in partnership with community stakeholders and organizations

Communications

- Manage and produce web content, electronic policy updates, legislative alerts, position statements and research reports for members and other key stakeholders
- Develop presentations, legislative summary reports, policy briefs, one-pagers, and other materials to frame policy discussion with key stakeholders and for use in external communications and engaging with media, policymakers and their staff, and community organizations
- Assist with development of advocacy communications plans, including creation of tools to inform staff, community members, policymakers, and other stakeholders
- Help organize and lead quarterly Policy Advisory Calls with internal and external committees
- Draft, proofread, and edit policy and strategy documents

Community Mobilization/Advocacy/Coalition work:

- Help department coordinate special events such as the annual VOT Legislative Reception, Policy brunch, Equity Policy framework seminar etc.
- Collaborate with community-based advocates to engage the public on the impacts of public policies on their communities
- Coordinate with department to ensure a robust, relevant program of learning opportunities related to advocacy and public policy for VOT's staff and board members
- Engage and/or train advocacy leaders and networks
- Develop community engagement strategies
- Represent VOT at stakeholder meetings, coalitions, committees, hearings, and in discussions with potential partners and funders

Qualifications

In addition to meeting the WA Early Childhood Policy Fellowship’s minimum requirements, we are looking for candidates who hold the following experience and skills:

Experience and Skills:

- Understanding of and commitment to social change through building the capacity and power of low-income people and people of color to change their communities and to participate directly in changing public policies.
- Excellent advocacy, consensus-building, coalition-building, and leadership skills; demonstrated ability to work collegially and collaboratively with other staff and other organizations; demonstrated ability to work with groups and individuals across the political spectrum.
- Exceptional communication skills, both written and oral; experience as a public spokesperson and advocate; ability to analyze and articulate legal concepts and other complex issues and to communicate them to a variety of audiences; a “quick study” on a dynamic array of issues.
- Extensive knowledge of legislative and administrative processes.
- Ability to build relationships with relevant policy partners (government, advocacy groups, academic institutions, etc).
- Experience analyzing and interpreting legislative and regulatory language.
- A broad understanding of federal policies that pertain to low-income families and communities of color is required; expertise in immigration issues is especially helpful.
- The ability to produce consistent, quality work in a fast-paced environment is essential.
- Bilingual applicants with knowledge of English and Somali, Amharic, or Oromo oral and written communication skills highly desired, **but not required**.
- Established interest in early childhood development and a desire to improve quality access to education for immigrant and refugee communities.
- Strong computer skills, including proficiency in Microsoft Office.
- Proven planning and analytical skills to evaluate complex situations and recommend next steps/solutions
- Public speaking and presentation skills, as well as strong written communication skills
- Must pass Department of Early Learning’s Portable Background Check (PBC).

Compensation and Application

As a Pathwaves Fellow you will receive an annual salary of \$62,000 plus employer-sponsored health, dental, and vision coverage. To read more about the Pathwaves Fellowship, [visit our website here](#).

Please submit your application and resume via our [application portal here](#).