

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR: State & Local Policy Strategy Team Leader, RWJF Center

STATE TITLE: Team Leader/Policy Development – UAMS Job No. 50034700

CLASS CODE/PS GROUP: Non-classified

DEPARTMENT: Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI)

SUMMARY: The Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI) is a nonpartisan, independent health policy center whose vision is to be a trusted health policy leader committed to innovations that improve the health of Arkansans. ACHI at UAMS in partnership with PolicyLink (Oakland, CA) established the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity. The Center serves as the lynchpin of the Foundation's strategy to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015. The vision of the Center is to provide a healthy future for children by reversing the childhood obesity epidemic. Its overarching goals are to:

- reduce the prevalence of overweight and obesity among children within the U.S.;
- decrease disparities in childhood obesity among communities of color, impoverished areas, and regions disproportionately affected by obesity; and
- create systematic changes using an empiric base that will have long-lasting impact and change the environment beyond 2015.

Reversing the epidemic will require strategic coordination and leveraging of RWJF programs and affiliated resources, as well as additional programs, institutions, and resources. The RWJF Center's strategic framework recognizes policy and environmental change as the key to reversing childhood obesity. The center comprises four teams with the following objectives:

- **Policy:** Prioritize strategies and advocate for policy and environmental change at the federal, state, and local levels to enhance environments that support healthy eating and physical activity
- **Technical Assistance (TA):** Support capacity for advocacy and implementation of policy and environmental change; create resources for advocates at the federal, state, and local levels to use in seeking policy change; and disseminate information to policymakers and the field
- **Engagement & Coordination:** Facilitate interactions among RWJF programs and grantees; mobilize networks of national leaders to advance policy reforms; convene RWJF and external partners and stakeholders in the movement to create synergy and collaboration; support policy and TA efforts by engaging with specialized science consultants, coordinating surveys of best available evidence, and assisting with translation of evidence into policy briefs and TA resources
- **Communications:** Support infrastructure of center as a whole through internal communications among center sites (New York, Washington DC, Little Rock, and Oakland), between the center and Foundation, and between the center and a network of partners; provide underlying support structure for the center by communicating messages to the movement at large including policymakers, partners, and advocates, and by disseminating center resources to the field

The center has three levels of policy engagement: (1) providing a national framework for the movement that details a broad list of policy and environmental changes to combat obesity; this is a wide spectrum of change within which many affiliated organizations can identify a common cause within the movement; (2) providing support to other leaders in the field who are advancing needed policy changes by adding the center's "voice" to the cause and linking its

network with these leaders; and (3) taking an active and targeted leadership role in advancing policies through direct support of the field and generating campaign strategies to effect change.

The State & Local Policy Team Leader will direct the RWJF Center's strategy and objectives related to this area of focus. Specific tasks include developing a coordinated approach and continuous systematic assessment of the policy arena related to childhood obesity to optimize opportunities and manage risk at regional, state, and local levels. The State & Local Team Leader will work with Center leadership to create a shared strategy with others in the field and a unified voice to effect optimal change in both the nutrition and physical activity environments that contribute to the childhood obesity epidemic. He/she will work closely with the Federal Policy Team Leader (based in Washington, D.C.) to ensure federal, state, and local policy agendas are complementary, and liaise with other center team leaders to coordinate efforts across the Center and accomplish its overall goals.

TYPICAL FUNCTIONS:

The State & Local Policy Team Leader will:

- Monitor state and local policy strategies proposed by advocates (or opponents) in the field to enhance legislative, judicial, regulatory and industry policies related to preventing childhood obesity and, in conjunction with other team leaders, assess and report the evidence that supports policies.
- Develop and oversee implementation of Center activities related to policy strategy and advocacy at the state and local levels, and coordinate this strategy with federal efforts through D.C.-based staff and Center leadership.
- Creating and regularly update a written policy strategy plan that includes a timeline for policy opportunities, assessment of assets among leadership, threats to the movement, and analysis of the places and audiences who can carry forward the movement to reverse the epidemic.
- Develop and implement a Center policy strategy plan focusing on assisting targeted states and regions (defined by those bearing the greatest burden of childhood obesity or those with the greatest disparities). The goal of assistance is for states to adopt policy strategies that result in environmental change, leading to a reversal of the childhood obesity epidemic at the state and local level.
- Work with the Center teams to ensure messages and strategies are coordinated.
- Liaise with selected advisors and consultants to develop and deploy center strategies.
- Liaise with the RWJF grantees, other field leaders, Center teams, and the RWJF to coordinate messages and strategies.
- In conjunction with RWJF Center staff in D.C., liaise with Federal policymakers (Congress, Senate, Administrative staff and Federal agency staff), and liaise with State policymakers (Governors Office, State General Assembly or Legislative body and State agencies), and local policy makers (mayors, city government) to educate and encourage adoption of policies and strategies that enhance the nutrition and physical activity environments for children.
- Monitor and stay abreast of developments related to the Center's mission and goals; make recommendations for and carry out improvements in Center activities and operations; and liaise closely with all other team members to ensure integration among all Center activities.

KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES, and SKILLS:

The successful candidate will possess:

- Experience in successfully interacting with multiple, diverse programs and settings, especially with key players in policy development at local, state, and federal levels

- Experience assessing policy targets and implementing strategies
- Understanding and ability to evaluate the legal, political, economic, historic, and intergovernmental context of policy issues
- Knowledge of factors that influence the childhood obesity epidemic
- Knowledge of how to utilize and engage in policymaking from the grassroots level through agency and elected policymaker levels
- Experience with health policy and other policies that influence nutrition and physical activity environments
- Ability to act independently, assume responsibility, and implement strategies developed in conjunction with leadership
- Effective team- and consensus-building skills
- Project management and planning experience
- Excellent interpersonal skills and oral and written communication skills
- Skills in synthesizing evidence and developing messages for various audiences
- Highly functional skills in Microsoft office products including Word, Excel, Powerpoint, and Outlook

MINIMUM EDUCATION and/or EXPERIENCE:

- Master's degree in Public Health, Law, Public Policy or related field, and 5 years of experience in policy strategy and advocacy or an equivalent combination of relevant education and/or experience. Requires policy advocacy experience at the state or community level with a preference for direct experience working with policymakers' and/or state agency staff on health-related policies.