

**POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT**  
**Project Coordinator, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Justice**  
**September 2022**

The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Justice (DEIRJ) Project Coordinator will join the Early Childhood Transformation Team (ECTT), at the Center for Early Learning Funding Equity (CELFE) at Northern Illinois University (NIU), to design and implement a process to develop a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Justice Plan for the newly created Division of Early Childhood (DEC) within the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS). The Project Coordinator will work closely with CELFE staff, DEC leadership, and other key stakeholders and partners to develop a DEIRJ Plan outlining equity goals and implementation roadmap aligning with the Division's strategic objectives that will contribute making Illinois the "best state in the country to raise young children."

**NOTE: This is a time-limited position and project with guaranteed funding through June 30, 2024. All positions are one-year contractual engagements with NIU, renewable based on available funding.**

## About the Division of Early Childhood (DEC)

In 2019, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker declared his goal "to make Illinois the best state in the country to raise young children," and subsequently created the Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education & Care (ECEC) Funding. Following the recommendations of the Commission, in April 2021, Governor Pritzker announced the creation of a new Division of Early Childhood as part of the Illinois Department of Human Services. The Division of Early Childhood was established to strengthen and centralize Child Care, Home Visiting, and Early Interventions services within the Department.

In June 2022, the DEC [\*publicly released its Strategic Roadmap\*](#), which includes five interconnected strategic goals to drive system change, prioritized objectives for immediate action, as well as identifies robust stakeholder engagement and a continued focus on equity as priorities cutting across and embedded within DEC operations. The DEC is embarking on Phase II of its road mapping efforts, which includes developing the division's Strategic Plan, as well as its Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Justice Plan.

## About the Early Childhood Transformation Team (ECTT)

The ECTT was established by Governor JB Pritzker in June 2021 to lead further investigation of the recommendations that emerged from the Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education & Care (ECEC) Funding. Established in partnership with Northern Illinois University, the ECTT works closely with the ECEC state-administering agencies,

partners with private philanthropy to enhance our work, relies on the input of advocates, providers, and stakeholders across our ECEC system, and answers to the Office of the Governor. All staff at the ECTT are employees of Northern Illinois University.

The ECTT maintains a dual focus on ECEC governance and funding mechanisms as the primary drivers of a more equitable early childhood system. ECTT is committed to ensuring ECEC policy is influenced by community voice & data, building a structure for equitable funding allocation, and creating a blueprint for future state-level governance.

## Why You Should Apply

- You are committed to equity, transparency and building a high-quality early childhood system that is accessible to all families and prioritizes those who have been historically marginalized in our society.
- You are a strategic leader who is adept at connecting directly to communities, providers, government agencies and families in your day-to-day work.
- You are committed to centering equity, diversity, inclusion, and racial injustice in systems change & improvement efforts.
- You are excited about the opportunity to be part of Illinois' transformation to improve and expand access and quality for the state's early care and education system.
- You are interested in being a part of a small, collaborative, and supportive 'start-up'-like work environment. The ECTT and IDHS-DEC main offices are in Chicago, and they employ a hybrid in-office/remote working environment.

## Job Responsibilities

- Develop and implement an overarching process to create a DEC DEIRJ plan detailing equity goals and establishing clear, defined strategies and metrics related to implementation, accountability, and external transparency
- Collaborate with DEC leadership and staff to coordinate plan development and create alignment with DEC workstreams and other IDHS guiding documents
- Carry out internal & external stakeholders & community engagement strategies and processes throughout project duration to inform DEIRJ plan focus and content
- Develop a self-assessment tool to outline staff training and support needs and strategy to develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to implement the DEIRJ plan
- Identify sustainability needs and transition strategy for DEC to take full, ongoing responsibility of plan implementation and achievement upon project completion
- Work with the supervision and support of the ECTT Equity Impact Manager to achieve plan development, implementation, and monitoring



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## Minimum Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in relevant discipline, or equivalent experience
- A minimum of two years of project and/or strategic management experience in a public or private organization
- Demonstrated experience in developing professional work/action plans related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice
- Demonstrated experience navigating and managing complex projects requiring engagement and consensus-building with multiple stakeholders
- Demonstrated understanding of principles of diversity, equity, inclusion and racial justice and ability to translate concepts into actionable items

## Additional Requirements

- Highly organized and detail-oriented with the ability to drive project progress and completion effectively and in accordance with deadlines
- Ability and desire to work in a collaborative environment, including with external workgroups, task forces, committees, and community members
- Basic ability and experience to synthesize and apply data to determine criteria to measure progress towards improved equity

## Preferred Qualifications

- Knowledge of the early childhood field a plus

## How to Apply

This position will be housed in the Center for Early Learning Funding Equity at Northern Illinois University in Chicago. CELFE operates in a hybrid remote and in-person working environment. All applications will go through the NIU employment portal for full consideration.

For full consideration, applicants should submit applications materials by October 3, 2022. Applications received after this date are welcome but will be considered as needed.

Please visit <https://employment.niu.edu/postings/66227> create an application profile and submit the following materials:

- Resume
- Cover Letter
- List of three professional references

Please direct any inquiries to Etonde Awaah, CELFE's Equity Impact Manager, at [eawaah@niu.edu](mailto:eawaah@niu.edu).