

Please note, this is an informal position description. An official Position Vacancy Listing will be available soon through the UW-Madison web site.

Direct Certification Improvement Implementation Project

Associate Outreach Specialist

Required qualifications

Degree and area of specialization: BA/BS degree in health education, public health, public policy, health policy, public administration, sociology, social work, policy analysis, or related field, with an emphasis on research methods and/or program evaluation is required. Advanced degree desirable.

Minimum number of years and type of relevant work experience: Minimum of three years professional experience in public policy administration, community outreach, and/or program evaluation. Must have demonstrated ability to 1) understand and distill complex public education and health programs, 2) design and carry out large scale program evaluation including writing research reports, 3) work both independently and as part of a team setting. Administrative and/or outreach experience with public education and/or health programs and/or non-profit organizations highly preferred.

Excellent writing and communication skills are required. At least three years of experience working with Wisconsin's educational, child nutrition and/or public health program systems highly preferred. Experience with data software systems also highly preferred.

Some travel within Wisconsin will be required.

Description of vacant position

Covering Kids and Families (CKF), housed at UW-Madison and affiliated with UW-Extension, is a statewide coalition of more than 65 organizations dedicated to improving health and reducing health disparities in Wisconsin by cultivating a network of informed individuals and organizations and thereby enhancing capacity to maximize participation in public health insurance programs. We seek two highly motivated individuals to lead implementation of numerous improvements to Wisconsin's Direct Certification program.

Direct Certification is the process by which the names of students enrolled in elementary and secondary schools are electronically matched against the state's Food Share and Wisconsin Worksenrollment files. Matched student names are returned to schools indicating that those children should be automatically certified as eligible for free meals. Direct Certification is intended to remove administrative barriers that may otherwise prevent low-income students receiving free meals at school.

The Direct Certification process became mandatory for schools participating in the National School Lunch Program beginning with the 2008-2009 school year. Schools throughout Wisconsin implement the Direct Certification process differently, and some struggle to efficiently and effectively complete it each year.

CKF was contracted by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to identify ways to improve the Direct Certification process in Wisconsin. DPI is now contracting with CKF to implement those improvements through a three-year project beginning this spring. The full planning grant report, as well as the goals, objectives and activities of the implementation project are available at <http://www.ckfwi.org/2other.html>.

Three critical elements are: 1) editing, creating and disseminating eye-catching written materials translating direct certification policy into simple, user-friendly yet guides relevant to school staff charged with running the process; 2) organizing and leading in-person teaching/training sessions; and 3) providing support to state agency staff charged with the technical/data side of the grant requirements.

CKF seeks individuals who combine experience working with public benefit programs with a deep familiarity with Wisconsin's communities and school systems, a community organizer's mentality, strong writing skills and a dedication to program evaluation.

Contact Michael Jacob at 608-261-1455 or mbjacob@wisc.edu for more information.