

Overview of Kinnect

Kinnect is an Ohio-based non-profit organization dedicated to developing KinFirst strategies and delivering programs that strengthen kinship connections and inclusive support networks for families, young people, and children. Kinnect has spent 20 years collaborating with families, public agencies, and private providers to ensure young people and families have the belonging, resources, and relationships they need to thrive.

Kinnect's purpose, vision, and guiding principles center family and kin and promote a KinFirst culture in every aspect of our service delivery and advocacy efforts for families, young people, and children. Kin is family, family is kin, and whether relationships involve relatives or chosen family connections, a KinFirst culture is the way we work and live each day.

Kinnect is proud to be a nationally recognized leader and pioneer in the field, which led to the development of KinnectU, a training, consulting, and replication branch of Kinnect, to provide these services to all child- and family-serving organizations. Our programs include the Ohio Kinship and Adoption Navigator (OhioKAN) program, Kinnect to Family (KTF), and Youth Centered Permanency Roundtables (YCPRT). Kinnect is grateful to receive support from a variety of sources, including contracts with government entities, partnerships with nonprofits, generous grants, and invaluable donations from foundations and private donors.

Position Summary

The Advocacy & Innovation Project Manager is responsible for coordinating, implementing, and advancing strategic initiatives for the organization within the Center of Excellence & Innovation. A primary focus will be on efforts to strengthen access to high-quality legal representation for children, parents, kinship caregivers, and families involved with or at risk for involvement with the child welfare system. This position manages complex projects involving legal, child welfare, judicial, public agency, and community partners while supporting pilot development, stakeholder engagement, data-informed decision-making, and continuous quality improvement. The Project Manager will coordinate initiatives that advance legal advocacy, policy advocacy, systems advocacy, and organizational change; support implementation of innovative service models; engage individuals with lived expertise; and drive project planning through strong communication, facilitation, and virtual presentation skills. Successful candidates will bring experience working with families navigating complex systems and will ensure project activities align with Kinnect's mission, values, and commitment to family-centered system transformation.

Essential Functions

Project Design and Execution

- **Establish a framework** to support multi-disciplinary and innovative child welfare legal representation models
- **Support the rollout** of pilot initiatives providing legal services to kinship and adoptive families
- **Utilize implementation science and change management** principles to design, pilot, evaluate, and scale systemic programmatic improvements while supporting stakeholder adoption of new practices and processes
- **Maintain comprehensive records** of project milestones, outcomes, deliverables, and reporting metrics using Microsoft Office tools
- **Develop professional reports and presentations** that summarize project progress, implementation learning, stakeholder feedback, outcomes, and recommendations for internal and external audiences
- **Identify pipeline opportunities** to grow legal representation models that support KinFirst organizational practices

Stakeholder Collaboration and Network Management

- **Manage vital partnerships** with public agencies, private providers, and judicial or legal advocacy

organizations

- **Facilitate multi-disciplinary teams** comprised of attorneys, caseworkers, consultants, and individuals with lived experiences
- **Engage People With Lived Experience** in project planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement activities to ensure strategies reflect the perspectives of children, families, kinship caregivers, and communities impacted by child welfare systems
- **Support meaningful participation** of lived experience partners by helping prepare, coordinate, and structure inclusive engagement opportunities for planning and decision-making activities
- **Lead remote collaborations** and cross-functional team coordination seamlessly utilizing virtual platforms
- **Serve as liaison** between legal associations, child welfare agencies, and internal team leadership
- **Host training workshops** and brainstorming sessions to improve legal training frameworks and system capability
- **Facilitate virtual and in-person convenings** with attorneys, public agencies, child welfare professionals, community partners, and families to translate complex information into clear, actionable next steps

Advocacy, Policy, and Funding Support

- **Monitor legal developments** and policy shifts impacting child welfare system delivery and funding
- **Contribute to proposals** aimed at securing philanthropic, state contract, or government funding streams
- **Build data visualizations** using Tableau (Salesforce) or Power BI to track and present key program success metrics
- **Align program operations** with state child welfare mandates, statutory revisions, and continuous improvement metrics
- **Deliver regular, periodic updates** to the Chief Strategy Officer and the supervising COE & Innovation Manager

General Skills and Competencies

- **Project management:** Ability to plan, organize, monitor, and complete multiple complex projects on time while balancing competing priorities, deadlines, and stakeholder expectations.
- **Communication and facilitation:** Excellent written, verbal, and facilitation skills, including the ability to produce professional reports, executive summaries, presentations, training materials, and funder updates; present complex information clearly in virtual and in-person settings; and communicate effectively with internal teams, external partners, funders, people with lived experience, and multidisciplinary audiences.
- **Collaboration:** Demonstrated ability to build and maintain effective working relationships with team members, attorneys, courts, public agencies, child welfare professionals, consultants, community partners, and people with lived experience expertise.
- **Strategic thinking:** Ability to connect day-to-day project activities to broader organizational goals, system transformation priorities, and long-term sustainability strategies.
- **Data-informed practice:** Ability to use data, dashboards, reports, and evaluation findings to monitor progress, identify trends, communicate outcomes, and support continuous improvement.
- **Adaptability:** Comfort working in a fast-paced and evolving environment with the ability to adjust plans, solve problems, and respond effectively to emerging opportunities or challenges.
- **Innovative and creative mindset:** Ability to think beyond conventional approaches, generate practical and imaginative solutions to complex or “wicked” problems, and engage partners in testing new ideas that advance permanency, family stability, and system transformation.
- **Equity and inclusion:** Commitment to advancing practices that are family-centered, culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and grounded in dignity and respect for all children, families, and partners.

Role Competencies

- **Legal systems orientation:** Understands or demonstrates the ability to quickly learn the intersection of child welfare, juvenile court practice, civil legal advocacy, and family-serving systems.
- **Implementation leadership:** Applies structured implementation approaches to support pilot design, testing, refinement, documentation, and scale-up of legal representation strategies.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Creates inclusive spaces for meaningful input from cross-system partners and individuals with lived experience, ensuring project planning reflects diverse perspectives and practical realities.
- **Policy and funding awareness:** Monitors relevant policy, funding, and practice developments and helps translate them into actionable project strategies, proposals, tools, and recommendations.
- **Systems change mindset:** Identifies barriers within existing systems and works collaboratively to design improvements that promote permanency, family stability, and timely access to legal supports.
- **Professional judgment:** Exercises discretion, sound decision-making, and confidentiality when working with sensitive information, partner relationships, and project-related risks.

Additional Competencies

Communicate Effectively

- Develop and deliver communications using various methods that convey a clear understanding of the unique needs of the different audiences we communicate with.

Leadership Acumen

- Understands the complexities involved in organizational functioning as it relates to people, to overall strategy, and to policies/procedures. Is able to achieve high quality results through informed decision making and applying knowledge from experience, education and through partnerships.

Effective Team Development

- Ability to build strong identity teams that are inclusive and can apply their diverse skills and perspectives to achieve common goals.

Administers and Supports Efforts to Achieve Goals

- Provides leadership and direction to the team to ensure success in achieving common goals. Is able to provide appropriate support, guidance and accountabilities to achieving organizational goals.

Manages Complexity and Innovation

- Understands and is skilled in making sense of complex situations and challenges to effectively resolve issues. Has skills and an understanding on how to support the use of innovation and implementation science to understand opportunities and challenges that arise at the organizational level and within teams.

Education and Qualifications

Minimum Requirements

- Bachelor's Degree or equivalent work experience in Social Work, Public Administration, Pre-Law, Business, Communications, Policy, Human Services, or a relevant related field

- Demonstrated experience in project planning, coordination, implementation, and management of complex initiatives involving multiple stakeholders, competing priorities, timelines, and deliverables
- Demonstrated experience engaging, facilitating, and guiding multi-disciplinary workgroups, legal advocacy collaborations, public agency partnerships, community partners, or family-serving systems
- Strong written, verbal, and virtual communication skills, including experience developing reports, presentations, meeting materials, and stakeholder updates

Preferred Qualifications

- Advanced Degree or extensive work experience in Social Work/Social Services, Policy and Government, or Law/Legal Services
- Strong working knowledge of Ohio's child welfare infrastructure, juvenile court systems, civil legal services, legal advocacy, systems advocacy, and/or public policy advocacy
- Familiarity with funding mechanisms such as Title IV-E allocations, benefits and financial resources for kinship families, and/or child welfare legal training standards
- Experience applying implementation science, change management, continuous quality improvement (CQI), and data-driven evaluation strategies
- Professional, personal, or lived experience expertise related to kinship, adoption, child welfare involvement, family navigation, legal services, or systems change

Software Proficiencies

- Strong proficiency in the Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint for resource, tool, and report development)
- Strong proficiency in Microsoft Teams and SharePoint for executing remote, hybrid, and cross-functional team collaborations
- Experience with data analytics and dashboard platforms like Tableau (Salesforce) or Power BI to support data-informed decision-making

Working Conditions

- Travel required, as needed. Must have own access to transportation.
- This job requires occasional overnight travel.
- Kinnect as an organization has a Hybrid Work Model that combines remote and on-site work at Kinnect, as well as routine on-site or in-person work with team members, legal partners, child welfare partners, public agencies, courts, consultants, and community stakeholders.
- This role will utilize standard office equipment that will be provided by Kinnect.

Hiring Process

Candidates offered employment at Kinnect are required to successfully complete a criminal background check and drug screening. Criminal convictions do not necessarily preclude an applicant from consideration for a position. An individual assessment of an applicant's prior criminal convictions will be made before excluding an applicant from consideration.

American's with Disabilities Act

This position involves sitting in a stationary position for at least 50% of the time and the ability to ambulate without assistance to attend on-site meetings, as needed. The job requires movement in a typical office environment with file cabinets, office machinery, office furniture and typical hallway and access doorways. The

position must operate typical office equipment, such as copiers, telephones, computers and peripherals. This job requires that the person must have the ability to access transportation to attend meetings and special events. The organization provides reasonable accommodations for this position.

Disclaimer

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work to be performed. They are not intended to be construed as an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and skills required of employees assigned to this position.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Kinnect maintains a policy of nondiscrimination toward all employees and applicants for employment. All aspects of employment with us will be governed on the basis of competence and qualifications and will not be influenced in any manner by race, color, religion, gender, or gender identity or expression, age, sexual orientation, sexual expression or identity, national origin, physical, intellectual or emotional ability, marital or partnership status, parental or family status, medical or genetic status, veteran's or disabled veteran status, in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment. Employment Posters stating current regulatory and legal requirements are posted in Kinnect's main office and on the intranet.

Pay Range: \$55,000 - \$63,000 per year

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