

## **Request for Proposals Government Relations and Legislative Advocacy Services**

### **About the Ohio Children's Alliance**

The Ohio Children's Alliance brings together community organizations, leaders, and partners committed to improving the lives of children, youth, and families across Ohio. Alliance members serve children and families through behavioral health, child welfare, foster care, adoption, residential treatment, prevention, community-based services and programs focused on supporting the well-being and success of young people and families.

Through advocacy, collaboration, and shared expertise, the Alliance works to strengthen the systems supporting children, youth, and families. The Alliance brings policymakers information about the real-world opportunities and challenges facing providers, communities, and the young people and families they serve.

### **About the Alliance's Advocacy Work**

The Alliance's advocacy work is grounded in the experience of its members, the needs of children, youth, and families across Ohio, and the Alliance's experience administering and supporting statewide programs. The Alliance works with members, policymakers, state agencies, partner organizations, and community leaders to advance practical solutions that improve access to services, strengthen the workforce and child- and family-serving systems, and support the effective implementation and sustainability of programs.

Current areas of focus include children and youth behavioral health, child welfare, foster care and adoption, Medicaid, OhioRISE, workforce development, residential treatment, prevention, community-based services, state-funded initiatives, and state budget issues affecting children, families, provider organizations, and Alliance-led programs.

### **Purpose of the Request**

The Ohio Children's Alliance is seeking proposals from qualified government relations firms or consultants to provide legislative advocacy, government relations, public policy guidance, strategic counsel, and representation of Alliance priorities before state policymakers.

The selected firm, or consultant, will work closely with Alliance leadership, policy staff, and program leadership to advance legislative and budget priorities affecting children, youth, families, provider organizations, and state-funded programs and initiatives administered or supported by the Alliance.

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The Alliance maintains responsibility for establishing its policy positions and advocacy priorities. The selected firm will serve as a strategic partner in implementing and advancing those priorities. Legislative advocacy will be the primary focus of the engagement, with additional emphasis on strengthening relationships between policymakers and Alliance members through Advocacy Day, site visits, district meetings, and other engagement opportunities.

Ongoing engagement with the Governor's administration and relevant state agencies will also be important to maintain strong state partnerships, stay informed about policy and program developments, and advance Alliance priorities, particularly during the state budget process.

### **Scope of Services**

The selected firm, or consultant, will work with the Ohio Children's Alliance to provide services including, but not limited to, the following:

#### **1. Legislative Advocacy and Government Relations**

- a. Represent Alliance priorities before members of the Ohio House of Representatives, Ohio Senate, legislative leadership, committees, caucus staff, and other relevant state officials at the direction of Alliance leadership and policy staff.
- b. Monitor legislation, hearings, amendments, budget activity, and policy developments relevant to Alliance priorities and member organizations.
- c. Provide strategic guidance on legislative developments, political dynamics, stakeholder engagement opportunities, timing, and emerging issues.
- d. Coordinate meetings with legislators, legislative staff, committee staff, caucus staff, and other policymakers.
- e. Support Alliance-directed legislative advocacy efforts and recommend opportunities, engagement strategies, and responses to emerging challenges.
- f. Assist Alliance staff in developing and refining testimony, talking points, issue briefs, letters, and other advocacy materials as requested.

#### **2. State Budget and Public Policy Strategy**

- a. Provide strategic counsel on state budget opportunities and challenges, including the operating budget, capital budget, and other relevant appropriations issues.
- b. Advise Alliance leadership on legislative timing, stakeholder interests, coalition opportunities, and political considerations.
- c. Help communicate complex policy issues clearly and effectively to policymakers and stakeholders.
- d. Support Alliance-directed advocacy related to policy implementation, regulatory issues, and administrative or budgetary decisions affecting member organizations, Alliance-led programs, and the children and families they serve.
- e. Advise on budget and policy issues affecting the continuation, expansion, implementation, or sustainability of state-funded programs administered or supported by the Alliance.

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**3. Member Advocacy and Policymaker Engagement**

- a. Support member advocacy efforts aligned with Alliance priorities.
- b. Identify, cultivate, and strengthen relationships with policymakers and potential legislative champions.
- c. Facilitate connections between Alliance members and policymakers when appropriate.
- d. Prepare members for meetings, testimony, site visits, and other advocacy opportunities.
- e. Help position Alliance members as trusted local resources for policymakers on issues affecting children and families in communities across Ohio.

**4. Advocacy Day and Member Engagement**

- a. Assist in planning and implementing the Alliance's annual Advocacy Day or Lobby Day at the Ohio Statehouse.
- b. Coordinate legislator outreach, meeting requests, schedules, and day-of meeting support.
- c. Work with Alliance staff to develop event goals, priority issues, participant materials, member preparation, and follow-up communications.
- d. Attend and support Advocacy Day activities as requested and assist with follow-up actions that strengthen policymaker relationships and advance Alliance priorities.
- e. Help identify and coordinate opportunities for policymakers to visit Alliance member organizations and programs.
- f. Assist with site visits, member tours, roundtables, listening sessions, district meetings, and other relationship-building opportunities throughout the year.
- g. Work with Alliance staff and members to identify strategic locations, relevant programs, regional opportunities, and priority issues that would benefit from direct policymaker engagement.
- h. Support preparation of agendas, briefing materials, talking points, background information, and follow-up communications.

**5. Executive Branch and State Agency Engagement**

- a. Support strategic engagement with the Governor's administration, relevant state agencies, boards, commissions, and executive branch staff when aligned with Alliance advocacy, policy, budget, or program priorities.
- b. Facilitate meetings and engagement opportunities with relevant agencies and departments, including efforts to maintain strong working relationships with state partners connected to Alliance-led or state-funded programs.
- c. Provide guidance on administrative, regulatory, budget, funding, and implementation issues that may affect Alliance priorities, member organizations, or programs administered or supported by the Alliance.
- d. Coordinate with Alliance policy and program staff to ensure government relations strategies reflect program realities, state partnership needs, and emerging opportunities or concerns.

## **6. Reporting and Coordination**

- a. Participate in monthly strategy meetings with Alliance leadership, policy staff, and program staff as appropriate.
- b. Provide regular legislative and budget updates during active session, including relevant bill activity, committee developments, budget updates, policymaker feedback, and recommended actions.
- c. Develop an annual legislative engagement strategy in coordination with Alliance staff.
- d. Develop an Advocacy Day workplan and support implementation of related legislative engagement.
- e. Develop a member tour and policymaker engagement plan to support relationship-building throughout the year.
- f. Provide a quarterly relationship-building update summarizing key contacts, member connections, follow-up items, and recommendations for continued engagement.
- g. Maintain ongoing disclosure of actual or potential conflicts of interest and promptly notify the Alliance of any new conflicts that arise during the engagement.

## **Proposal Requirements**

Proposals should include the following information:

- Firm or consultant overview: Background, organizational structure, location, and government relations services provided.
- Relevant experience: Experience representing associations, nonprofit organizations, healthcare, behavioral health, child welfare, Medicaid, education, human services, or similar clients.
- Track record: Examples of successful legislative, budget, regulatory, or relationship-building efforts.
- Policymaker engagement experience: Experience coordinating Advocacy Days, member engagement activities, site visits, tours, roundtables, or similar opportunities.
- Proposed team: Names, biographies, primary point of contact, and role of each team member assigned to the Alliance engagement.
- Proposed approach: Approach to legislative advocacy, budget strategy, executive branch and state agency engagement, member engagement, Advocacy Day, site visits, reporting, and coordination with the Alliance's internal policy, advocacy, and program teams.
- Conflict disclosure: Current clients, policy positions, or relationships that could create an actual or perceived conflict with Alliance priorities, including conflicts related to child welfare, behavioral health, Medicaid, managed care, county government, provider associations, or budget advocacy.
- References: At least three references from association, nonprofit, healthcare, human services, public policy, or related clients.

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### **Cost Proposal**

Respondents should provide a proposed fee structure, including any monthly retainer, hourly rate, project-based fee, or other compensation arrangements.

Proposals should clearly identify services included in the proposed fee and any additional expenses, travel, expanded event management, or reimbursable costs that would be billed separately.

### **Selection Process and Evaluation Criteria**

The Alliance may select a firm, or consultant, based on written proposals alone or may invite finalists to participate in interviews. Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Legislative advocacy experience and relationships with Ohio policymakers.
- Strategic counsel, political intelligence, understanding of the state budget process, and ability to support priorities related to state-funded programs and initiatives.
- Experience serving associations and membership organizations.
- Ability to understand and communicate complex policy issues.
- Ability to support member engagement, Advocacy Day, site visits, and relationship-building opportunities.
- Fit with the Alliance's internal policy, advocacy, and program teams.
- Conflict disclosures, references, cost, and overall value.

### **Submission Instructions**

Proposals should be submitted electronically in PDF format to [Sarah.LaTourette@ohiochildrensalliance.org](mailto:Sarah.LaTourette@ohiochildrensalliance.org) no later than September 25, 2026.

Questions regarding this RFP may be submitted to [Sarah.LaTourette@ohiochildrensalliance.org](mailto:Sarah.LaTourette@ohiochildrensalliance.org).

The Alliance reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal, request additional information, conduct interviews, negotiate scope or pricing, or discontinue the process at any time.