

JOB LISTING: Child Care Reform Pro Bono Coordinator JULY, 2006

with:

The Mississippi Low Income Child Care Initiative (MLICCI), a statewide organization of child care providers, parents, and community people who are working together to:

- Build a strong, grassroots constituency for poor children and families in Mississippi;
- Advocate improved child-care policies and greater public investment in child-care subsidy programs for poor families; and,
- Enhance the quality of child development experiences for all poor children living in Mississippi.

Studies show that while quality early childhood experiences benefit all children they make the most significantly positive difference in outcomes for poor children; hence MLICCI's focus on poor children in name and mission.

About MCJ: The Mississippi Center for Justice, which opened its doors in June 2003, gives Mississippi a critical capacity the state lacked for almost a decade: a home-grown, nonprofit public interest law firm to advance racial and economic justice statewide. MCJ scored its first legal victory in a Holmes County voting rights case in August 2003. Its 2004 litigation in *Vinson v. Barbour* resulted in continued Medicaid coverage for 50,000 poverty-level aged and disabled Mississippians. In April 2005, MCJ's extensive work on educational and juvenile justice reform achieved a significant milestone when the Mississippi legislature enacted the 2005 Juvenile Justice Reform Act, hailed by the Jackson Clarion Ledger as the "most important legislation to emerge from the 2005 session." In late 2005, MCJ opened a Katrina Recovery Office in Biloxi that is focused on affordable housing and rebuilding more just and inclusive communities on the Mississippi coast.

About the Child Care Reform Project: Because the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) is a federal block grant program, states are allowed broad discretion in the design of child care subsidy programs. Mississippi's child care subsidy program is administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS). It is estimated that less than 10 percent of the families who are eligible for the subsidy program actually receive assistance, and even these families and their child care providers experience difficulties in the administration of the program.

Mississippi Low Income Childcare Initiative, working in partnership through a Memorandum of Agreement between MLICCI and MCJ, the Child Care Reform Project will:

1. Develop, train and support a panel of pro bono attorneys who will provide counsel, advice and representation to parents and child care centers in their effort to secure the benefits of the child care subsidy program.

2. Review and make use of the State Auditor's evaluation and findings to propose fiscal reforms that would improve the child care subsidy program.
3. Meet with parents and providers around the state to identify and build consensus around strategic reform priorities.
4. Organize meetings with parents and providers and key legislative committee chairs and allies such as the Black Caucus and Women's Caucus to promote the reform agenda.
5. Develop a communications strategy to promote the need for child care certificate reforms.

Who Should Apply

The ideal candidate is an energetic, creative, strategic leader who understands the importance of quality early childhood experiences for young children and that affordable child care is critical for the economic well being of low income families - particularly those headed by single mothers. The ideal candidate is an attorney licensed to practice in Mississippi who has legal experience relevant to developing an understanding of federal and state child care policy and its impact on low income families and communities. The ideal candidate is able to communicate well and work effectively with parents, child care center personnel, child care subsidy program personnel, legislators, pro bono attorneys and others.

Compensation: This will be a one-year contract position, with compensation depending on experience.

How to Apply: Apply immediately by e-mail and U.S. Mail with cover letter; resume; and names of three references to: cburnett@mschildcare.org

And

Mississippi Low Income Child Care Initiative
Box 204
Biloxi MS 39533.

This position will be open until filled.