



Child Poverty Action Lab

Position Title: Community Resource Navigator, Dallas County Child Protection Permanency Court

Status: Contractor

Location: Dallas, Texas

Who We Are: At the Child Poverty Action Lab (CPAL), we believe every child deserves a life filled with opportunity. CPAL operates as an unofficial Research and Development (R&D) lab for Dallas, using data to rethink public systems and equipping community partners at the neighborhood level to be successful in collectively achieving our mission to reduce childhood poverty in Dallas by 50% by 2040 — within a single generation. CPAL works across five key areas to reduce child poverty in Dallas - Benefits Delivery, Maternal Health, Housing, Safety, and Criminal Justice. These five “big bets” are rooted in a growing body of evidence that connects experiences in childhood to economics in adulthood.

Three key principles underpin CPAL’s approach:

- **Design for scale:** Child poverty is a problem of massive scale and requires the magnitude of government resources to fund solutions of equal scale. CPAL brings together the leaders of nine Dallas public agencies with a collective annual operating budget of over \$10 billion to align local resources and take collective action on promising interventions.
- **Center on evidence:** CPAL develops and applies evidence-based outcomes frameworks on child poverty alleviation programs. Data is used to determine where to develop interventions and to evaluate if those interventions are working. CPAL equips our partners and community leaders to use data so they can make better decisions.
- **Power with community expertise:** By empowering community based organizations, residents, families, or frontline teams with tools, resources, and access to leaders, CPAL builds a broad coalition for sustainable efforts to combat child poverty.

With more than 18,000 Child Protective Services (CPS) assigned intakes of abuse and neglect annually in Dallas County and more than 1,200 children in DFPS temporary or permanent substitute care, CPAL believes in strengthening the system and delivery of resources to families to enhance overall wellbeing and future economic conditions of children who come into contact with the child protection system so that we can learn but also take immediate action to serve this public-private system in a way that enhances children and caregiver lives and outcomes.¹

Overview of Position and Project Scope:

This part-time position will have the opportunity to design and test a pilot program to help children and families involved with the local public-private child welfare system to navigate and access resources and services. This pilot will partner with the local Dallas County Child Protection and Permanency Court to contract for a family engagement and resource navigator who will act as a liaison between the court, advocates, legal representatives, families, parents, and community resources.

The child welfare and foster care systems can be extremely difficult to navigate and resources often go underutilized due to fragmentation, lack of easy access, and overwhelm on behalf of parents and caregivers. This position will work directly with the court to understand the needs of children and youth, their caregivers, families that are at risk of having their child removed due to abuse and neglect and parents whose child(ren) have been removed and are working towards reunification or other permanency goals - and develop a better system approach to customer service.

¹ CPAL acknowledges the correlation between child maltreatment and poverty, but not the causation. This project’s objective is to understand at the child and caregiver level the current needs and barriers of accessing much needed, but often underutilized resources and services, design a better system, and successfully connect those children and families to services in a much more human-centered approach.

Why We Need You: We need a deeply committed and engaging individual to bring this project to fruition. More than 400 families come through the local permanency court each year and the innovation to help children and families access services is needed now. Key activities that will be included in the pilot include:

- Partnering with child protective investigators, caseworkers and advocates to ensure referrals are made in coordination with and in support of safety plans and family plans
- Working directly with birth parents, kin caregivers, foster parents and youth to identify needs and resources
- Creating and maintaining a community system of care, developing a local referral network to better connect and inform families of services available
- Develop and nurture relationships with community resources and services
- Identifying and maintaining an updated list of resources
- Identifying gaps in needed community resources so the broader community can grow to meet these needs over time

Qualifications (*Skills, Experience, and Attributes*)

Must Have

- Experience working with children and families in a caseworker/case management, community health worker, advocate, or other social service role
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships and a high level of trust
- Considerable knowledge of community resources and community based organizations that deliver services in domains of health, social service, education, financial literacy, mental/behavioral health, and concrete resources
- Excellent communication skills, written and verbal, with the ability to convey complex information (often in legal form) to various stakeholders (caregivers, children, project team)
- Proficient in basic Microsoft Office or related suite of programs (Excel, Word, etc.)
- Flexibility and able to self-motivate and project manage
- Dependability, always showing up for families when and where needed

Nice-to-Have

- Experience within Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a Child-Placing Agency, a Community-Based Care role(s), or Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)
- Bi-lingual strongly preferred
- Experience working in multi-disciplinary, culturally competent teams
- Case management systems experience
- Experience building a program or initiative from the ground up with a level of resourcefulness and innovative thinking with strategies or paths not taken before

Compensation, Benefits, and Work Environment

- This position is an independent contractor for the duration of the pilot through April 2025. The position is initially grant funded with continuation dependent upon success of the pilot and future funding. This position will be paid a flat monthly contracted rate not to exceed \$60,000.
- As a contracted role, this position is not eligible for benefits including health, retirement, or PTO.
- This position will primarily office out of the Dallas County Child Protection and Permanency Court so that the individual is immediately available to support children and families during and after their court hearing. The position will need to be present each day there is a docket, which is typically three (3) days per week, but the schedule may vary. To be successful in this position, it is anticipated that support to families and navigation of services will need to occur outside of court hearings and days there is no docket.
- Remote work when court is not occurring is possible; this position may also office from CPAL's office space at GoodWork, a co-working space in the Cedars neighborhood just south of Deep Ellum in Dallas if desired.
- Reliable transportation is needed.

How to Apply

Email a current resume and a customized cover letter describing your interest in the position and the strengths you'd bring to the team to hiring@childpovertyactionlab.org. We are eager to meet you!