

COORDINATION OF A STRENGTHENING FAMILIES™ INITIATIVE

Every Strengthening Families™ initiative needs someone to convene the leadership team and drive the work forward, often identified as the “state lead.” Ideally, this is someone in an existing leadership position within the early childhood, child welfare or child abuse and neglect prevention field. Many states in the Strengthening Families National Network use co-leads, often a representative from early care and education or child welfare, and someone from the child abuse prevention arena.

In addition to the team leadership, many states have hired a **Strengthening Families Coordinator**. This individual often plays a crucial role in keeping leadership teams engaged, active and functional. In 2012, 22 states in the Strengthening Families National Network had a designated Strengthening Families coordinator. Six states had full-time coordinators, two states had part-time coordinators and there were 14 states with an individual who had Strengthening Families included as a part of their position description along with their other responsibilities.

Individuals in this role vary from a senior level person who is viewed as the public leader of the initiative to someone whose role is more limited to keeping the work moving forward and completing day-to-day tasks in support of a higher-placed Strengthening Families leader.

A Day in the Life of a Strengthening Families Coordinator

On any given day, a Strengthening Families Coordinator's time is spent on a combination of meetings, trainings, materials development and management of efforts.

Scheduling, planning and running meetings take a large portion of the coordinator's time. Meetings might be between members of the Leadership Team, with potential new partners in Strengthening Families or between state-level staff and service providers or parents. The coordinator's responsibilities might include scheduling meetings; reserving meeting space; putting together meeting agendas and PowerPoint presentations; facilitating conversations; keeping meeting minutes and following up with participants as needed.

Coordinators also spend time arranging and providing Strengthening Families trainings. This could include scheduling trainings, providing content and/or actually facilitating trainings for partner organizations, child care providers, child welfare workers, parents or other constituencies. To meet training goals across a state or jurisdiction, the Strengthening Families coordinator may work with and provide content to others who provide training in specific sectors or fields. The coordinator may present Strengthening Families information at professional conferences or as part of professional development systems.

A central part of the coordinator's job is keeping partners and other interested parties informed of the work that is going on around the state. As such, a significant portion of their time is spent developing and disseminating materials such as newsletters, websites and presentations, and making in-person connections through events and site visits.

Coordinators tend to be the point person for data collection, report writing and report submission (for example, annual reporting to the Center for the Study of Social Policy and to funders). They also oversee the state Strengthening Families budget to ensure that the initiative is not over or underspending its funding.

See the next page for a sample Strengthening Families coordinator job description.

Sample Job Description

Position Title: Strengthening Families Coordinator

Job Summary: Facilitate the statewide implementation of the state Strengthening Families initiative.

Job Responsibilities:

- Coordinate activities of the Strengthening Families Leadership Team, including organizing quarterly committee meetings and special work group meetings (drafting agendas and preparing handouts), facilitating the meetings, writing meeting minutes, distributing minutes and other materials, sharing information and keeping lines of communication open with team members as appropriate
- Revise promotional materials as needed
- Assist with the development and upkeep of a state Strengthening Families website
- Facilitate the development of county, regional and state Strengthening Families parent leadership teams
- Work with parent leaders to ensure their involvement/input in all Strengthening Families activities
- Manage the reporting process for the state initiative, which includes completing and submitting required reports (state profile, data, other) from the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) and the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds
- Contribute to the implementation of a state Strengthening Families program evaluation and other quality improvement activities
- Keep Strengthening Families state supporters and others informed of Initiative happenings and accomplishments via a quarterly electronic newsletter
- Assist with Parent or Community Cafés trainings and follow-up with already trained teams
- Oversee state Strengthening Families budgets and program expenses
- Assist with fundraising activities as needed
- Serve on community task forces, coalitions, committees, etc. as a Strengthening Families representative
- Develop relationships with other early childhood care and education, child welfare and economic development professionals to share information regarding Strengthening Families
- Communicate with other states, as appropriate, and participate in the Strengthening Families National Network

This position requires in-state travel and occasional evening and weekend events.