

PRACTITIONERS' VOICE CALIFORNIA FUND

a new funding opportunity to elevate practitioner voice in early childhood systems change with a focus on compensation

At the end of 2021, the Heising-Simons Foundation seeded a new collective action fund at Tides Foundation, the Practitioners' Voice CA Fund (the "Fund") with a \$1 million + investment. In 2022, Tipping Point Community (\$400,000) and the Blue Shield Foundation of California (\$500,000) have joined the effort. The Fund welcomes up to two additional funders to join this effort.

Why Practitioners' Voice CA? California's children develop optimally when they receive quality early learning experiences and interactions with well-compensated, well-prepared, well-supported, and experienced educators. Unfortunately, today's reality is that childcare providers are undervalued, underpaid, and excluded from policy conversations in California and across the country. To ensure care workers' wages, benefits, and job quality are addressed in system improvement and policy improvement, the early learning and care field needs to build *with* communities and not *for* them. Resourcing practitioners to organize and engage in policy reforms at the local, regional, and statewide levels is a key role for philanthropy.

What will Practitioners' Voice CA do? With the support of the Tides Foundation, the Practitioners' Voice CA Fund will design an accessible, open call application process to offer two-year, flexible funding to practitioner-led organizations to engage in policy processes to improve pay and working conditions. Priorities for selection of grantees will reflect Practitioners' Voice CA Fund's commitment to California communities that have been marginalized. Careful attention will be paid to building a diverse portfolio of grantees in terms of background and lived experience, geography, and care setting. Successful applicants will be California based practitioner and leadership organizations that:

- Are a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization or equivalent (includes fiscal sponsors of an eligible project/program),
- Directly work with practitioners who care for young children (0-5) to advance equity through engagement, leadership development, and/or organizing,
- Are rooted in an understanding of the historical and current systemic barriers to opportunity and committed to addressing these barriers,
- Have a demonstrated commitment to working with practitioners to identify issues and priorities and to co-create solutions,
- Have a vision for building practitioner power to effect practice and policy changes, and
- Are interested in opportunities for peer learning, capacity building, and collaboration.

When? We seek to identify two additional funder members by May 2022, issue funding applications to the community in June 2022, and award grants by September 2022.

How will the Fund be managed? Tides Foundation will serve as the implementation partner. A Steering Committee of the five funder members will provide high-level strategy and oversight. An Independent Advisory Committee comprised of a sub-set of interested funder members along with field leaders will advise on the grantmaking process and make recommendations about the grants to be funded.

Who can you contact to learn more?

September Jarrett of Heising-Simons Foundation, sjarrett@hsfoundation.org or (415) 336-8071 who is serving as initial convener of the Practitioners' Voice California Fund.