Organization
Employment Security Department

Project Title
Evaluating best approaches for Paid Family and Medical Leave’s engagement with direct social service providers and their client populations

Organizational Background
The Paid Family and Medical Leave program is a new state program, administered by the Employment Security Department, that will provide leave to eligible WA workers beginning on January 1, 2020. Leave under this program can be taken for a serious medical condition, bonding with a new child, caring for a family member, or for certain military-related events. More information is available at https://paidleave.wa.gov/about.

Project Description
Part of the intended purpose for the Paid Family and Medical Leave program was to reduce disparities in access to paid leave among WA workers, and we know that without thoughtful outreach and attention to reducing the higher access barriers experienced by lower income, immigrant, and other populations, we are likely to see continued inequities. The purpose of this project is to help inform these efforts, through obtaining a thorough understanding of how social workers and other direct service providers perceive this new program and how the program can best work with them and with their client populations. We envision focus groups/interviews with direct service providers and possibly other subject matter experts, through which consultants will have the opportunity to explore these issues and craft recommendations for the program. We are open to consultant team suggestions on specific factors to investigate and/or expanding to include related consultant team interests that would add value for the program.

Travel Required?
Maybe
**Deliverables**
A written report of the research findings and program/policy recommendations deriving from these analyses. And a summary presentation of findings and recommendations to program leadership.

**Key Tasks for Consultants**
Consultants will plan, develop interview guide, and recruit participation in interviews/focus groups. They will conduct in-person interviews or focus groups with direct service providers, as well as video/telephone interviews, if consultant travel is not possible, to speak with providers outside the Seattle metropolitan area. Literature review or review of social service program websites/materials may be useful in the development of the project. And consultants will ideally present the results of their findings to Paid Family and Medical Leave program leadership.