

## **11. Annual Reports, Plans and Audits**

### **11-A. County Partnership Accountability Tool**

The purpose of this tool is to assist county partnerships in preparing for successful future audits and assessing progress in the implementation of the strategies outlined in annual renewal plan. The County Partnership will conduct a self-assessment of its overall operations in the following areas (if applicable):

Board Membership Composition, Terms, Attendance and Board Chair Election  
Freedom of Information and Conflict of Interest  
Board Powers and Duties  
Fiscal Stewardship  
Program Assessment Data  
Parenting and Family Strengthening  
Child Care Quality Enhancement  
Early Childhood Education  
Other Strategies e.g. Health

An annual review may be conducted by your OFS Regional Technical Assistant. A written report with program compliance and recommendations will be submitted by OFS to the County Partnership. Technical assistance to County Partnerships will be available by OFS.

### **11-B. Fiscal Closeout Reports**

The fiscal closeout reports are invaluable and legislatively mandated items that will lead to better program management, accountability and to the development of a more precise spending plan in future years.

Each Regional Finance Manager (RFM) will be responsible for producing these reports following fiscal year closeout. Reports will be provided to you within 45 days after the fiscal year ends and will be considered final within 60 days of the year's end. In addition, you will see how "actual" program spending is compared to "plan" spending. As you know, you are required to have all invoices submitted to your RFM for processing on July 31<sup>st</sup> for year-end. Invoices that are submitted later than this data will not be booked against the previous fiscal year but will be applied to the following fiscal year. This may result in fiscal issues, so counties are encouraged to require its contractors to submit invoices in a timely manner throughout the year, but especially at the end of a fiscal year.

Executive Directors (ED) should review the fiscal reports with their RFM for accuracy, understanding, potential audit issues and future BSP development. Although the ED is not responsible for producing these reports, the Ed may be required to explain them to OFS and/or an independent auditor. These reports are key in maintaining a proper audit trail and to producing good budgets in subsequent fiscal years. RFMs will seek ED approval on these fiscal reports before they are submitted as final.

### **11-C. Annual Reports**

County Partnerships are mandated to collect data and submit an annual report to the Office of First Steps by October 1 of each funding year. The report must include all information required by section 59-152-70(A)(7) of the enabling legislation.

### **11-D. Strategic Plan and Needs and Resources Assessments**

Strategic planning is both a process and product, which includes the assessment of the needs and resources in your community; both guide the development and implementation of First Steps programming. Section 59-152-70 states that "First Steps Partnership Board(s) shall, among other powers and duties: coordinate a collaborative effort at the county level which will bring the community together to identify the area needs related to the goals of First Steps to School Readiness; develop a strategic long-term plan for meeting those needs; and create and annually revise a county needs assessment."

County Partnerships should complete the strategic plan every three (3) years. This plan should be based on the findings of the needs and resource assessment, which should be updated annually. If you have specific questions concerning strategic planning, contact your regional technical assistant.

### **11-E. Volunteerism report**

On the following page, you will find a template for your volunteerism report. You are free to make this report as long or as short as you would like. We developed this tool because we received feedback from counties stating that the simple match report did not include information on many valuable community resources that are not allowable match because they have been funded with state dollars or because they have been deemed "unessential." (See Chapter 6)

Some key items that you would want to include are:

- Board time
- State-funded items
- The value of state agency collaboration
- Local volunteer events
- Fund-raising events

Remember this report is your opportunity to be a "cheerleader" for your partnership and your community. Please make it your own by writing as much as you would like and adding pictures, appendices, quotations, etc. to tell your local story.



**COMMUNITY SUPPORT/VOLUNTEERISM ANNUAL REPORT**

**FIRST STEPS COUNTY PARTNERSHIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FISCAL YEAR** \_\_\_\_\_

*It is important to document all support for First Steps initiatives, not only official match items. Each fiscal year, community members, state-funded agencies, and organizations will donate goods, services, and hours that enhance First Steps programs in each county. Without this support, First Steps could not achieve as great a level of success.*

*Because the values of contributions are not included in county accounting systems or fiscal reports, OFS developed the Community Support/Volunteerism Annual Report to document and measure these services. The services include, but are not limited to:*

- *Contributions funded with state dollars:* services, space, or time that does not count as official match and is therefore not entered into the accounting system.
- *Other non-essential, in-kind contributions:* donations of unpaid services that support First Steps initiatives but are not essential to program operations.
- *Volunteer hours:* donations of unpaid time provided by individuals or organizations that are non-professional. This time can be fairly valued at \$14/hour.

The reporting forms for Volunteer Services, Community Support, and the Volunteer Tracking Form found in Chapter 6 will aid in generating this report. As always, backup documentation should be maintained and readily available for review.

**Contribution Summary:**

TYPE OF CONTRIBUTION	EQUIVALENT COST OF GOOD OR SERVICE (if applicable)	TOTAL NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS (if applicable)	TOTAL HOURS (if applicable)
STATE FUNDED			
IN-KIND, NON-ESSENTIAL			
VOLUNTEER SERVICES			
OTHER _____			
TOTAL			



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**Please provide written detail on the above contribution costs and activities:**

*State-funded (not counted as match but critical to your program operations):*

*Other in-kind contributions (donations of unpaid services that support First Step program initiatives but are not essential to program operations):*

*Volunteer services and/or programs (donations of unpaid time provided by individuals that are non-professional):*

**Please highlight events, activities, and/or achievements attained through state-funded contributions, other in-kind contributions, or volunteer services/events:**

**Please include other relevant information:**

### **11-F. Record Retention**

Please remember that you are bound by certain record retention policies. These rules require that you maintain all records for a minimum of three years and longer if you are involved in an actual audit. These rules are spelled out in your contract and are required by law. If and when a partnership receives federal funds record retention rules may be even more stringent and the county partnership should be certain that it is aware of all grantee responsibilities in this area for each funding source received.

It is important that when you enter into an agreement with a sub-contractor that you remind the sub-contractor that they are bound by the same laws. We recommend that you visit your sub-contractors at least annually to review their documentation and record storage policies. You might wish to make these visits unannounced.

Many documents will only be maintained on the vendor site. If this vendor is not maintaining records in an acceptable manner, you may find yourself in a difficult situation later. If changes are required in a vendor's record retention systems, it is better to learn this before an audit.

EDs should determine who is keeping audit records and original documents. EDs may wish to develop a system in which two different individuals and locations maintain two sets of documents in the event either party ever misplaces a document.

Each partnership should develop a record retention and document disposal policy in the first year of operation that is followed by all subcontractors, the RFM and the partnership staff.

### **11-G. Annual Financial Statements (County Partnership Audits)**

Auditors will produce annual financial reports each year. Please be aware that you may be required to provide explanations and justifications on any item. Please be sure to review the final report carefully and ask your RFM about any items that are not clear to you.