



Position Description: Director of Strategic Impact

Organization

Created by the SC General Assembly in 1999, South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness is the state's comprehensive early childhood education agency and a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. SC First Steps (SCFS) takes a holistic approach to accomplishing our mission of preparing all kids for success in school, work and life, offering services that improve children's health, strengthen families, expand access to quality child care, increase participation in four-year-old kindergarten (4K) programs and help transition rising kindergartners into school. Through a network of 46 affiliates, called "local partnerships," SCFS reaches children 0-5 and their families in every county of the state. With funding from the state, annually, SCFS provides over 2200 four-year-olds with access to Pre-K 4 across 64 school districts. SCFS is a public-private partnership with the ability to leverage state, federal and private funds to accomplish our state-wide mission. In addition to developing, funding and supporting programs and initiatives statewide, South Carolina First Steps also operates as a connector and convener serving as the Early Childhood Advisory Council for the state of South Carolina. In this capacity, the work of First Steps includes integrating government and private systems to ensure all children begin school ready to success. The diverse workforce that makes up the 50+ member team at SCFS includes salaried and hourly positions and is governed by a State Board of Trustees. Our office is in downtown Columbia, SC. As SCFS is a state-wide organization, some positions are remote, and some require travel.

Team: Administrative

The SC First Steps Administrative Team integrates core, cross-cutting functions including communications, strategy, evaluation, data management, human resources, fundraising, grants management and compliance across the organization, with local partnerships, 4K providers and with other agencies and systems. The Administrative Team is led by the Executive Director.

Position Description

Reporting to the Executive Director, the Director of Strategic Impact oversees strategic planning, impact and evaluation processes – both those mandated by legislation and by funding agreements and those initiated by the agency including ongoing goal-setting and tracking and progress toward outcomes and impact; establishes and manages outcomes and assessment data systems; works closely with other agencies and local partnerships to ensure integration of data and development of longitudinal data systems; develops and provides reports, infographics, and communication regarding outcomes and impact; ensures compliance with state requirements regarding evaluation, data-collection and reporting; leads ongoing quality improvement through the use of data including internally and with local partnerships; responds to legislative requests for data; provides data and data analysis to state and federal entities and funders; and works closely with the Board of Trustees Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee and the Early Childhood Advisory Council.

The Director Strategic Impact will be responsible for working collaboratively with all areas of the SC First Steps team, including program staff, fiscal and administrative staff, fundraising, communications and grants management staff, and senior leadership.

Responsibilities

General

- Develop, evaluate, connect, utilize and train others on the use of data and data systems.
- Develop, evaluate and continuously improve data collection systems.
- Analyze data, make meaning out of it and provide recommendations based on it, develop tools for others – internally and externally – to use data to improve programs and systems, to evaluate impact, and target focus, resources and investments.
- Communicate about data, including producing graphs, charts, infographics, briefs, white papers and presentations.
- Serve as a system leader in the collaborative, inter-agency work of data integration building mechanisms for understanding how data connects across agencies and direct experiences to tell a story and to inform our work.
- Represent South Carolina First Steps and the Early Childhood Advisory Council on cross-agency data committees and on data teams and data groups.
- Serve as the staff liaison and support for committees of the Board of Trustees, the Early Childhood Advisory Council and the Executive Directors leadership group related to strategic planning, evaluation, and data.
- Ensure compliance with all requirements and mandates related to evaluation and data collection including from the legislature (i.e. organizational and program evaluations), oversight bodies (i.e. the Education Oversight Committee), and funders (i.e. federal or private funders often have evaluation and data collection requirements).
- Lead the organization's process for setting goals, establishing outcomes measures, developing logic models and theories of change, and serve as the lead convener of ongoing efforts to understand and measure how we are doing in our progress toward goals and what strategies we can use to improve, all within the dual context of the organization's direct efforts (SC First Steps) and as a state early childhood system.
- Develop and lead the process for establishing and operationalizing a strategic plan for the organization.
- Oversee the strategic development and management, including program reporting and compliance, of grants including public and private through supervision of a Grants Manager.
- Ensure programmatic data and reports of the agency are in compliance with statutes and reporting requirements of the South Carolina General Assembly, other government entities, and funders.

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in a relevant field of study
- At least 5 years of relevant professional experience.
- Significance experience developing and managing monitoring, evaluation and/or measurement programs, especially building new programs and projects.
- Strong data and analytic capabilities, including a working understanding of data systems and management and data analysis.

- Experience in survey design and experimental design.
- Relationship builder with the flexibility and finesse to “manage by influence.”
- Sincere commitment to work collaboratively with all constituent groups, including staff, board members, local affiliates (partnerships), childcare partners, volunteers, donors, and clients.
- A strong track record as an implementer who thrives on managing a variety of key initiatives concurrently.
- Possess leadership ability and organizational skills.
- Good interpersonal and communication skills, including the ability to work as part of a team, communicate effectively both orally and in writing, receive and provide feedback, and manage dynamic interchanges in meetings.
- Possess Initiative and problem-solving capabilities.
- Ability to work well with people.
- Ability to demonstrate and promote inclusivity and cross-cultural competence.
- Experience evaluating programs and implementing new practices.
- Grants management experience.

Preferred

- Master’s degree in a relevant field of study
- Background in or understanding of civic participation and engagement.
- A track record of generating creative and innovative solutions to problems.
- Experience thriving in a fast-paced, dynamic environment.

Other Requirements

- Must possess a valid driver’s license and vehicle to use in performance of job. Position requires some travel within South Carolina.
- Must be able to pass criminal background and child and adult maltreatment screens and a pre-employment drug screen.
- Ability to lift up to 25 pounds

Benefits:

This position is eligible for a variety of benefits from a comprehensive health and dental insurance program and generous annual and sick leave policies, to a solid and secure retirement system. The State of South Carolina offers a competitive benefits program for state employees.

SC First Steps is an equal opportunity employer.

SC First Steps is a drug-free workplace.

To apply, submit your cover letter and resume to Samantha Ingram at HR@scfirststeps.org.