



Position Description: Local Partnership Program Officer

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 partners,” 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. The diverse workforce that makes up the 50+ member team at SCFS includes salaried, hourly, and grant-funded 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: Local Partnership Technical Assistance and Support

Over the past 19 years, the SC First Steps Local Partnership Technical Assistance and Support team has evolved to meet the changing needs of local county partnerships and to adapt to the opportunities provided as the early childhood education field advances its knowledge and experience within our state and nation. First Steps Enabling Legislation describes Technical Assistance (TA) as a duty of the state office to, *“provide technical assistance, consultation, and support to county partnerships to facilitate their success including, but not limited to, model programs, strategic planning, leadership development, best practice, successful strategies, collaboration, financing, and evaluation.* The state is divided into seven regions comprised of six to seven counties. Each region has an assigned Local Partnership Program Consultant. Local Partnership Program Officers also have an area of expertise which includes: resource development and grant writing, evaluation and data management, parenting and home visiting, early education and child development, non-profit management and governance, and community and business engagement. The Local Partnership Technical Assistance and Support team share questions and issues across the counties they are individually assigned to support.

Position Description:

Reporting to the Chief Partnership Officer, a Program Officer at SC First Steps supports a territory of local nonprofits, one in each county, formally affiliated and funded by SC First Steps. This position serves as a state-level resource for quality improvement and accountability using relationship-based principles and practices to drive improvement. The Local Partnership Program Officer implements the review and approval process for early childhood services, tracks local partnership compliance with standards through analysis and monitoring, provides guidance and referrals to experts and resources and promotes and implements evidence-based practices in the field of early education and non-profit

management. This position supports the functions of community-based organizations including fundraising and communications while advocating for and educating about populations that are underrepresented and/or racially and ethnically diverse. This position is based in Columbia, SC.

Responsibilities and Duties:

1. Serves as a coach to local partnerships in program operations to facilitate sound management practices and strong board functioning.
 - Identify and document successful strategies and promising practices from the field.
 - Cultivate relationships with local partnerships, state partners and issue area experts to develop, fund and implement innovative initiatives.
2. Ensures that services implemented are consistent with agency goals, effective practices and organizational performance measurement systems.
3. Provides technical assistance for accountability including: collection of required documentation and data, finance and budgeting, support in non-profit management, fund development, networking, collaboration and community outreach.
4. Plans and prepares trainings, targeted consultation, and development of written materials and guidelines for local partnerships.
5. Facilitates communication and information sharing between local partnerships. Supports state level communication and offers timely responses to local partnership questions and needs. Commits to working for diversity awareness and cultural competency in all communications and practices.
7. Other duties as assigned.

Qualifications and Skills:

Required:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited university (minimum) in Child Development, Family Consumer Sciences, Social Work, Public Administration, Early Childhood Education, or related field
- At least five years of related work experience required
- Experience in business or education consultation, project management, or non-profit management.
- Proficient in Microsoft Word and Excel software usage
- Strong problem solving, leadership and analytical skills
- Excellent oral, written, and interpersonal communication skills; attention to detail; be reliable and prompt; and be able to work in a team environment.
- Ability to work well with people and exhibit awareness and sensitivity to diversity
- Ability to demonstrate and promote inclusivity and cross-cultural competence

Preferred:

- Master's degree from an accredited university in early childhood or related field
- Knowledge of SC First Steps Programs and Non-Profit management
- 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
- Ability to possess Initiative and problem-solving capabilities
- Ability to work well with people

Other Requirements:

- Valid South Carolina Class "D" Driver's License and ability to travel in-state and out of state
- Maintain and show proof of personal auto insurance
- Limited in-state travel, with an occasional overnight
- Limited after hours work required

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.

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