



**Position Description:** Local Partnership Program Officer

**Organization:** South Carolina First Steps (SCFS) is both a nonprofit and state agency and is the only dedicated, comprehensive early childhood agency in South Carolina focused on getting children ready for school and life success. Annually, we serve more than 30,000 children. Established by the South Carolina General Assembly in 1999, SC First Steps provides funding and support to a network of 46 local, First Steps partnerships, one in every county. Through the partnerships, First Steps provides evidence-based parenting, literacy, and development programs; training for early childhood educators; child care scholarships; child care quality enhancement; and a slate of other early interventions. Through First Steps 4K, the agency partners with over 200 child care centers to offer free, high-quality, educational Pre-K 4 to more than 2500 children. In addition to developing, funding and supporting programs and initiatives statewide, South Carolina First Steps coordinates the activities of the South Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council, a collaborative body representing the state's early childhood system. The Early Childhood Advisory Council works to ensure that South Carolina's children arrive at school ready to reach their highest potential, are healthy and safe, and are actively supported by their families and communities.

The diverse workforce that makes up the 65+ member team at SCFS includes salaried and hourly positions and is governed by a State Board of Trustees. As an organization, we value: children, relationships, equity, high quality, and results. 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 20 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 Director of Parenting Programs, 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.
- \*6. **Focus area** will be home visiting and parenting programs; participating as a member of the Local Partnership Parenting Programs team.
7. Other duties as assigned.

### **Qualifications and Skills:**

Required:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited university (minimum) in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Social Work, Business Management, or related field with at least
- 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



- 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 Avian Jones at [hr@scfirststeps.org](mailto:hr@scfirststeps.org).**