



Position: 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 Team

Over the past 20 years, the SC First Steps Local Partnership 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) and consultation 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 Officer. Local Partnership Program Officers also have an area of expertise which includes evaluation and data management, parenting and home visiting, early education and child development, non-profit management and governance, health, and transitions. The Local Partnership 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 a region of 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 strong non-profit management and implementation of services that 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 core functions:**
 - Ensure Local Partnerships are effective local portals connecting families of preschool children to community-based services
 - Facilitate the Local Partnership role as a community convener around the needs of preschool children and their families
 - Strengthen the Local Partnership connection to state-level school readiness priorities as determined by the State Board
 - Support Local Partnership Community education and outreach to promote knowledge of early childhood development and available services for families
7. Other duties as assigned.

Qualifications and Skills:

Required:

Bachelor's degree from an accredited university (minimum) in Non-profit Management, Social Work, Public Administration, Early Childhood Education, Public Health, Communications, or related field

- At least five years of related work experience required
- Experience in project management, non-profit leadership development or non-profit management.

- Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite
- 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 public administration, social work , communications or related field
- Knowledge of early childhood programs and services 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, visit <https://bit.ly/3xSiirG> and submit your cover letter and resume to Avian Jones at hr@scfirststeps.org.