

FIRST STEPS
Getting children ready for school.
SOUTH CAROLINA

Local Partnership Orientation Training
Module 3: Local Partnership Systems & Accountability Overview

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FIRST STEPS

Facilitator Note: It is recommended that this training be delivered immediately following Module 2: Local Partnership Structure Functions.

Estimated time needed to complete this training – 30 minutes

Training Modules for SC First Steps Local Partnership Orientation

- Module 1: Orientation - What is SC First Steps?
- Module 2: Local Partnership Structure & Functions
- **Module 3: Local Board Systems & Accountability Overview**
- Your Local SC First Steps Partnership



Explain:

This is the third module of the three part training series for all new local partnership staff and local board members. In Module 2 you learned about the basic structure and function of the local partnerships and boards, now you will learn general information on the current systems that are in place to ensure local partnerships run smoothly and effectively.

Additional resources and supports will be referenced in this training, specifically the “FY 17 Program and Partnership Accountability Standards”, and are available on the SC First Steps website at www.scfirststeps.com under the tab for “Local Partnerships” and “Local Partnership Resources.”

Agenda

- SC First Steps Partnership and Program Accountability Standards:
 - Governance and Operations Standards
 - Fiscal Accountability Standards
 - Collaboration/Community Engagement
 - Resource Development
- Data and Evaluation
- Annual Grant Process
- Annual Reporting



Facilitator Note: Briefly review agenda.

Facilitator Note: It is recommended to deliver the presentation either a) without taking questions during the presentation, but allowing significant time for questions after the presentation, or b) by stopping to take questions at strategic times during the presentation, and also allowing questions at the end of the presentation.

Intended Outcomes

- Participants will have a basic understanding of SC First Steps accountability systems including:
 - What the SC First Steps Partnership and Program Accountability Standards are and where to find them
 - Key local partnerships and board responsibilities as specified in the SC First Steps Partnership Accountability standards
 - The SC First Steps data and evaluation system
 - The annual grant process and annual reporting



Facilitator Note: Briefly review intended outcomes.

Documents Needed to Complete this Training

Please reference the following documents located on the SC First Steps website:

- SC First Steps Partnership and Program Accountability Standards (hyperlink: <http://scfirststeps.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/FY17-First-Steps-Standards-FINAL-3.17.16.pdf>)
- SC First Steps Operations Manual (hyperlink: <http://scfirststeps.com/operations-manual/>)



Facilitator Note: Briefly review documents needed to complete this training.

Accountability Standards

The **SC First Steps Partnership and Program Accountability Standards** outline the expectations of local SC First Steps Partnerships with regard to all programmatic, operational, financial, and administrative activities, including:

- Governance and Operations
- Fiscal Accountability
- Collaboration/Community Engagement
- Resource Development



Explain:

The following slides will summarize the partnership accountability standards and the responsibilities of both the board and partnership staff for each of the four areas listed. Please note that this list is not verbatim nor does it include EVERY requirement of the standards. It is recommended that you reference the FY17 **First Steps Partnership and Program Accountability Standards** while going through this training and take them with you for further review.

Governance and Operations Standards Overview

*("Governance and Operations" is found on Section 1, Page 5 of the FY17
[Partnership Accountability Standards](#))*

The local partnership board's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Developing a strategic long-term plan based on the county needs and the state strategic plan
- Adhering to local partnership By-Laws, Operating Procedures, and Grant Agreement *(ask your Executive Director or state office staff for copies to review)*
- Implementing program strategies in accordance with the Partnership and Program Accountability Standards
- Meeting as a full board AT LEAST once every quarter
- Conducting all meetings, elections, and record disclosures in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and IRS disclosure requirements
- Operating in accordance with applicable state and federal laws pertaining to non-profit organizations
- ANNUALLY adopting and reviewing the Conflict of Interest policy
- Adopting and maintaining a Whistleblower policy



Explain:

This is a summarized list of the responsibilities of the local partnership board. For the full list, please see *"Governance and Operations" is found on Section 1, Page 5 of the [Partnership Accountability Standards](#).*

Governance and Operations Standards Overview

*("Governance and Operations" is found on Section 1, Page 5 of the FY17 **Partnership Accountability Standards**)*

The local partnership responsibilities, include, but are not limited to:

- Adhering to the policies and practices outlines in the SC First Steps Operations Manual
- Collecting and entering data in a timely matter in the FS Data Collection System for all programs/strategies
- Ensuring that an equitable work environment is provided
- Complying with all contractual and legislative deadlines (Annual Report and Renewal Plan)



Explain:

This is a summarized list of the responsibilities of the local partnership. For the full list, please see *"Governance and Operations" is found on Section 1, Page 5 of the **Partnership Accountability Standards** .*

The SC First Steps Operations Manual is available on the SC First Steps website at <http://scfirststeps.com/operations-manual/>.

Fiscal Accountability Overview

This is a general overview of the fiscal responsibilities of local SC First Steps partnerships. The following resources will be helpful in learning the fiscal system:

- SCFS Operations Manual (on the FS website under “Local Partnership Resources”)
- Local Partnership Budget Spending Plan (BSP)
- Annual partnership audits



Explain:

- **The SCFS Operations Manual** lays out the policies and procedures for operating a SC First Steps local partnership with specific regard to the fiscal system.
- **Local Partnership Budget Spending Plan** - (from the SCFS Operations Manual): “The BSP is the tool that will serve the counties during appropriation planning and evaluation to open discussion between the county partnership and SC First Steps (SCFS) and it will be used each year to manage your programs as they grow and change. The BSP explains what funding is needed to support the priorities and strategies the county is funding, serves as the document that will set up your accounts, and will establish your quarterly allocation levels. The BSP is also the document will be used by SCFS, the RFM and auditors to monitor spending levels and ensure that spending occurs as planned. The SCFS fiscal office will speak with each county each year about the cash flow needs for each program and will work with each county to complete the BSP. Items agreed upon in the BSP will be coded and entered into the accounting system. Your Regional Finance Manager (RFM) will be assisting you with spending plan management.”
- **Annual partnership audits** - Auditors will produce annual financial reports each year.

Fiscal Accountability Overview

A **Regional Finance Manager** (RFM) serves as local partnerships' fiscal agent. Some major tasks of the RFMs are listed below:

- Only RFMs have access to bank accounts and authorization to sign checks
- Manage county bank accounts and balances; reconcile bank accounts
- Compile payment authorizations and invoices
- Enter spending and revenue data into the accounting system
- Provide quality control for all invoices and payments
- Ensure proper classification of expenditures
- Pay/issue checks for all
- Process payroll
- Perform cash-on-hand analysis
- Generate audit financial reports
- Assist in the development of annual budgets



Explain:

This is a summarized list of the responsibilities of the RFM. For the full list, please see *The SCFS Operations Manual, Section 2-B, pages 1-3.*

Fiscal Accountability Standards Overview

(“Fiscal Accountability” is found in Section 1, Page 7 of the FY17 [Partnership Accountability Standards](#))

On an ongoing basis, the local partnership board and staff will monitor the financial condition of the partnership.

Responsibilities include:

- Adhering to fiscal deadlines in SC First Steps Operations Manual
- Monitoring the financial condition of the partnership
- Ensuring that funds granted to the partnership by SC First Steps BOT are spent in a timely manner in service to children w/in service area
- Presenting/reviewing financial reports at ALL local partnership meetings
- Reviewing financial controls annually



Explain:

This is a summarized list of the responsibilities of the local partnership. For the full list, please see *“Fiscal Accountability” is found in Section 1, Page 7 of the [Partnership Accountability Standards](#).*

Resource Development Standards Overview

(“Resource Development” in found in Section 1, Page 9 of the FY17 [Partnership Accountability Standards](#))

The local partnership board responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Engage in resource development responsibilities that maximize the use of in-kind and cash contributions to the partnership
 - Develop and submit a Resource Development Plan (as part of Renewal Plan)
- Conduct fundraising activities in an ethical and fiscally responsible manner
- Seek opportunities to collaborate with other partnerships and/or agencies/organizations to raise funds to meet the needs of at-risk children



Explain:

This is a summarized list of the responsibilities of the local partnership. For the full list, please see *“Resource Development” in found in Section 1, Page 9 of the FY17 [Partnership Accountability Standards](#).*

Collaboration/Community Engagement Standards Overview

(“Collaboration/Community Engagement” is found on Section 1, Page 8 of the FY17 [Partnership Accountability Standards](#))

The local partnership responsibilities, include, but are not limited to:

- Annually submitting a needs and resource assessment and update the assessment every three years
- Participating in and documenting efforts to mobilize the community to focus efforts on providing support to families and young children
- Developing an annual Community Education and Outreach Plan
- Serving as a “local portal” connecting families of preschool children to community-based services



Explain:

This is a summarized list of the responsibilities of the local partnership. For the full list, please see “*Collaboration/Community Engagement*” in found in Section 1, Page 9 of the FY 17 [Partnership Accountability Standards](#).

Data and Evaluation

This is a general overview of the data and evaluation responsibilities of local SC First Steps partnerships.

The SC First Steps Data System:

- Lists performance standards by strategy
- Specifies what data should be collected
- Specifies where data should be stored
- Data system reports can be generated, if applicable



Data and Evaluation

First Steps Data System (FSDC)

- Web-based, password-protected
- Used by local partnerships and vendors to track program data:
 - Projected to Serve – all strategies
 - Cases Data – intensive programs such as home visitation, scholarships that track individual client data
 - Outputs – numbers served for non-intensive programs such as child care training



Data and Evaluation

External Evaluation

- Required by legislation, and local partnerships required to participate.
- The SC First Steps external evaluation schedule must include:
 - Overall impact evaluation every 5 years (used to be 3 years)
 - Latest evaluation: 2014 (Completed by Compass)



Data and Evaluation

2014 External Evaluation Findings:

- SC First Steps' public-private structure and model of shared governance generate a high degree of value-added at both the state and local levels.
- SC First Steps is finding and serving the state's most high-need clients.
- SC First Steps is meeting legislated goals.
- SC First Steps has a statewide fiscal and programmatic accountability structure in place to guide and provide oversight to local partnerships. This structure supports the translation of state-level priorities into practice.
- At the state and local levels, SC First Steps serves as the "battery" powering many of the state's key early childhood conversations and practices.

Recommendations:

- Review and refine its evaluation design to align with new evaluative and accountability requirements.
- Consider discussions and strategies for ongoing systems development.



Annual Grant Process

- SCFS State Board of Trustees (BOT) sets proposed allocations (based on funding formula) and approves standards for the coming year (March)
- Renewal Plan Application (due early May)
- SCFS TA review of renewal plan and data system for compliance with Partnership and Program Accountability Standards
- SCFS staff recommend approvals to SCFS BOT Program and Grants (P&G) Committee
- P&G Committee presents to full board as action item (June)
- Grant Agreement
 - Sets terms and conditions for local partnership funding from the SC First Steps Board of Trustees
 - Any conditional approvals included in separate attachment.
 - Local partnerships must develop and implement a compliance plan for each conditional approval.



Annual Reporting

- Partnership annual report due October 1
(per SC First Steps legislation)
 - Template provided by SCFS
 - Numbers Served Spreadsheet
- SC First Steps annual report due December 1



Program Accountability Standards

- In this training, you learned general information on the current systems that are in place to ensure local partnerships run smoothly and effectively. There are also **Program Accountability Standards** for each SC First Steps program that a partnership operates. Please review *SC First Steps Partnership and Program Accountability Standards* for specific accountability information on your county's programs.



Training Modules for SC First Steps Local Partnership Orientation

- Module 1: Orientation - What is SC First Steps?
- Module 2: Local Partnership Structure & Functions
- Module 3: Local Partnership Systems & Accountability
- Your SC First Steps Partnership



Explain:

You are now finished with the Local Partnership Orientation Training. This training was intended as a general overview of the key aspects of a local SC First Steps partnership, including an overview of SC First Steps, information on the structure of the SC First Steps state office and local partnerships, an explanation of the roles and responsibilities of executive directors and local board members, and information on the current standards and systems that are in place to ensure local partnerships run smoothly and effectively.

Facilitator Note:

Now you may choose to present information specific to your local SC First Steps partnership.