Local Partnership Orientation Training

Module 3: Local Partnership Systems & Accountability Overview

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

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

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

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/)

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

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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

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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)

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

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

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

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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

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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

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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

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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.

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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.

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