

Building momentum for postsecondary success

JOB DESCRIPTION
DIRECTOR, STRONG START TO FINISH

Job Title: Director, Strong Start to Finish

Status: Exempt

Reports To: ECS Vice President, Policy

Date Prepared: August 2017

Position Purpose

A part of the Postsecondary and Workforce Development Institute at Education Commission of the States, the Strong Start to Finish (SSTF) campaign unites postsecondary administrators and faculty, philanthropists, policymakers, researchers and nonprofit leaders committed to creating systematic change to set students up for long-term success. The project's goal is to scale reforms designed to dramatically increase the number of low-income students, students of color and returning adults who complete first-year math and English gateway courses and enter a family-wage earning program of study. The SSTF Director will provide leadership to the overall campaign, manage and support the strategic direction for the project, and maintain a high national visibility among education policymakers, national partner organizations, and funders. The successful candidate will have a demonstrated track record of systemic and strategic thinking, extensive experience in project management and staff development, familiarity with relevant state policy and a track-record of successful grant development.

Essential Duties:

- Lead all aspects of the SSTF project on a day-to-day basis
- Serve as a first point of contact for project scaling sites, postsecondary partners, funders and others interested in Strong Start to Finish
- Engage the chairs of the funder and expert advisory boards to secure input on overall strategy, knowledge management, work plans, problem-solving and communications
- Facilitate Funder Advisory Board meetings
- Facilitate a RFP scoring process for site proposals
- Serve as spokesperson for SSTF in diverse forums, including media, state policy context, and national events
- Support the Funder Advisory Board and Vice President of Policy in relevant fundraising activities
- Approve all external contractors and disbursement of funds for knowledge management, communications and other functions as needed
- Work with the Funder Advisory Board to achieve alignment of grants that are part of (or complementary to) the initiative but made outside of pooled funding
- Facilitate the Strong Start to Finish network of scaling sites, technical assistance providers and funders.
- Serve as a "concierge" connect scaling sites with needed technical assistance
- Help others navigate the network by building connections between organizations and opportunities to strategically optimize synergistic funding

Financial Authority:

Working with the ECS Chief Financial Officer and Vice President the SSTF Director manages the SSTF project budget and oversees management of multiple subcontracts and grants.

Supervisory Responsibility:

The SSTF Director leads SSTF staff, including hiring, supervising, creating professional development plans, and conducting performance evaluations; manages and coordinates the work of independent consultants. Directly supervises up to three staff positions.

Communication:

The SSTF Director communicates daily with SSTF and ECS constituents including state policymakers, education leaders, foundation program officers, peer organizations, and other ECS staff.

Job Qualifications:*Required*

- Master's Degree in related field, including public policy, education leadership, or related field.
- Experience in policy research and analysis and/or policy implementation.
- Knowledge of issues related to developmental education policy and related state/institution issues.
- Extensive expertise in grant management, development, and staff supervision.

Preferred

- Doctoral Degree in applicable field.
- Demonstrated success in managing multiple grant funded projects.
- National profile in the education community.

Working Conditions:

Normal. Approximately 30% travel required.

Profile:

This position requires extensive knowledge of state and education policy and policymaking, close familiarity with the role of organizations like ECS and a high degree of comfort working with state policy leaders, institutional and system leadership, and members of the education philanthropic community.

Compensation and Benefits:

ECS offers competitive compensation and benefits, including health, dental, life, long term disability, and vision insurance, a flexible spending account, a health reimbursement account, and a yearly contribution to your 403b retirement plan. The preferred location for this position is Denver, CO. The salary range for this position is commensurate with experience.

Applying for the Position:

To be considered for this position, please send a resume and a cover letter/e-mail to Melissa Aguilar at maguilar@ecs.org. The subject line in your e-mail should read "DIRECTOR - SSTF" and your cover letter should highlight appropriate professional expertise.

Deadline to apply: Applications will be accepted until qualified candidates are identified.