



Smart Start of Mecklenburg County – Job Description

Title of Position:	Finance Manager
Position Type:	Full Time, Exempt
Department:	Finance
Reports To:	Chief Financial Officer
Direct Reports:	Senior Staff Accountant; Staff Accountant

General Information

Organization Overview

Smart Start of Mecklenburg County (Smart Start or SSMC) is a Charlotte-based non-profit that funds local programs for children ages birth to five and their families. The organization is a catalyst for improving the lives of the 85,000+ young children in our community, with a focus on health, family, early education, and literacy. We mobilize resources and forge partnerships to support evidence-based policies, practices, and programs to ensure all children enter kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed.

Smart Start has a budget of over \$41 million comprised of funding from the state of North Carolina, Mecklenburg County, and private donations and grants. SSMC funds approximately 26 programs annually serving over 40,000 young children, their families, and educators. SSMC administers Mecklenburg County's MECK Pre-K program, which provides free Pre-K to children in the community. SSMC's internal programs and campaigns include Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Guiding Parents to Services, The Basics Mecklenburg, Parent Powered, Family Engagement and Navigation, and Early Childhood Workforce Development. The organization is also the leader in advocacy, convening, and collaborating on issues related to children prenatal-to-five in the Greater Charlotte area.

Position Summary

The **Finance Manager** provides strategic leadership and oversight for all financial operations of the MECK Pre-K program, ensuring fiscal integrity, regulatory compliance, and long-term organizational sustainability. This role is responsible for financial planning and analysis, budgeting, forecasting, reporting, contract management, audits, grant and funding compliance, internal controls, and risk management.

As a key member of the leadership team, the Finance Manager serves as a trusted advisor to executive leadership, providing financial insights that support strategic decision-making and organizational objectives. The position supervises finance staff, manages audits and provider contracts, ensures compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and funding requirements, and drives continuous improvement of financial systems and processes to support program effectiveness and growth.

The Finance Manager reports directly to the Chief Financial Officer.



Essential Duties and Responsibilities

Financial Management

- Lead financial operations, including budgeting, forecasting, cash flow management, accounts payable, ACH processing, financial reporting, and data integration across multiple business systems.
- Analyze financial performance, monitor budget variances, and provide recommendations for leadership.
- Maintain strong internal controls, financial systems, and accounting processes.
- Manage monthly, quarterly, and annual financial close activities and fund accounting records.
- Support strategic planning through financial modeling and long-term forecasting.
- Serve as a financial advisor to program leadership by providing guidance on financial policies, procedures, and best practices.
- Serve as backup to the Finance Director and provide support to the Chief Financial Officer and Finance Director on special projects, strategic initiatives, and organizational priorities.

Contracts and Related

- Oversee financial administration and compliance for all MECK Pre-K related contracts.
- Review and approve provider payment requests and ensure expenditures comply with budgets and cost principles.
- Conduct financial monitoring and compliance reviews of contracted providers.
- Manage finance-related reporting and presentations for MECK Pre-K Directors' Meetings.

Audit, Compliance, and Reporting

- Ensure compliance with GAAP, NCPC Cost Principles, grant requirements, and organizational policies.
- Prepare financial reports for regulatory and contractual stakeholders.
- Coordinate internal and external audits, including audit schedules, support documentation, and Form 990 preparation.
- Conduct benchmarking, forecasting, and financial analysis to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

Supervision

- Directly supervise and develop finance team members.
- Foster accountability, collaboration, and continuous improvement.
- Lead recruitment, coaching, performance management, and succession planning efforts.

Leadership Competencies

The Finance Manager is expected to demonstrate the following leadership competencies:

- Strategic Thinking
- Comprehensive financial proficiency
- Results Orientation
- Decision Making & Problem Solving
- Communication & Influence
- Relationship Management
- Talent Development
- Change Leadership
- Accountability & Integrity
- Customer Focus



Education, Experience, and Other Job Functions

Education and Experience Required for Position

- Bachelor's Degree in Accounting or Finance
- 10+ years' experience in financial management and analysis (non-profit experience preferred).
- SAGE MIP fund balance accounting software preferred. Cognito and Microix knowledge a plus.
- Ability to synthesize large quantities of complex data into actionable information.
- Ability to work and effectively communicate with team members.
- Excellent business judgment, analytical, and decision-making skills.
- Strong demonstrated use and knowledge utilizing PC based tools (MS Outlook, Word, Excel and Power Point), and a willingness and aptitude to learn other technology.
- Ability to consistently meet all deadlines.
- Excellent judgment, communication (verbal and written) and listening skills.
- Conscientious, organized and very detail-oriented.
- Ability to work collaboratively and independently while managing multiple tasks and projects as well as to assess and change priorities based upon evolving agency needs.
- Knowledge of generally accepting accounting principles and budgeting practices.
- Motivated and results oriented.

Physical Demands

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to talk or hear. The employee frequently is required to stand; walk; use hands to finger, handle or feel; and reach with hands and arms. Specific vision abilities required job include close vision, distance vision, color vision, peripheral vision, depth perception and ability to adjust focus.

Position Type/Expected Hours of Work

This is a full-time exempt position, with flexibility in work scheduling. Regular on-site presence is expected.

Location & Travel

This position is based in Charlotte, NC with a minor amount of travel. Travel is primarily local during the business day, although some out-of-the-area and overnight travel may be expected.

Other Duties

Please note this job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee for this job. Duties, responsibilities and activities may change at any time with or without notice.

Smart Start of Mecklenburg County ensures that employment activities are conducted without discrimination against any person on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability.