We strongly encourage all Candidates review credentials required before applying via our website to improve being selected for interview. Review details of all opportunities listed on our website: https://www.oceaninc.org/employment

Head Start & Early Head Start Director

Opening: (1FT) Services 4 sites in Ocean County– Hours 40 hours per week
Rate $80,000 - $95,000 based on education and experience
Head Start / Early Head Start

The Director is responsible for the overall leadership, administration, compliance, and daily operations of O.C.E.A.N., Inc.'s Head Start and Early Head Start programs. This position provides direct oversight of four center based Head Start locations and the Home Based Early Head Start program to ensure high quality, comprehensive services for children, pregnant women, families, and the community.

The Director ensures that program operations are implemented in accordance with the Head Start Act, Head Start Program Performance Standards, federal and state licensing requirements, grant requirements, agency policies, and best practices in early childhood education and family support services.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

*Program Leadership and Administration

*Provide leadership, direction, and oversight for all Head Start and Early Head Start operations, including four center-based programs and the Home-Based Early Head Start model.

*Ensure full compliance with Head Start Program Performance Standards, the Head Start Act, federal grant requirements, state licensing requirements, local health and safety codes, and O.C.E.A.N., Inc. policies.

*Develop, implement, and monitor program goals, school readiness goals, service delivery plans, policies, procedures, and continuous quality improvement efforts.

*Supervise program management staff, including education, family services, health, nutrition, disabilities, mental health, ERSEA, home based services, facilities, transportation, and data management staff.

*Prepare reports, updates, and recommendations for the President and CEO, governing body, Policy Council, federal reviewers, auditors, and funding agencies as required.

Compliance and Performance Standards Oversight

*Ensure that the program maintains effective management systems for program governance, planning, communication, recordkeeping, reporting, ongoing monitoring, and continuous improvement.

*Lead preparation for federal monitoring reviews, Focus Area reviews, CLASS reviews, fiscal reviews, licensing inspections, and other program assessments.

*Ensure timely correction of deficiencies, areas of noncompliance, licensing concerns, audit findings, or monitoring concerns.

*Monitor implementation of Head Start Performance Standards across all program service areas.

*Maintain documentation to demonstrate compliance with applicable federal, state, and agency requirements.

Center Based Head Start Oversight

*Provide direct oversight of four Head Start centers to ensure safe, developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and high-quality learning environments.
*Ensure classrooms implement approved curricula, child assessment systems, individualized instruction, and school readiness goals.
*Monitor classroom quality, teacher child interactions, child outcomes, attendance, staffing patterns, ratios, supervision, and licensing compliance.
*Ensure coordination among education, family services, health, mental health, nutrition, disabilities, and transportation teams.
*Support center leadership in maintaining a safe, welcoming, inclusive, and well managed environment for children, families, and staff.

Home Based Early Head Start Oversight

*Provide leadership and oversight for Home Based Early Head Start services, including home visits, group socializations, family engagement, child development services, and service coordination.
*Ensure home based services comply with Head Start requirements, including caseload expectations, weekly home visits, service duration, and required group socializations.
*Ensure home visitors partner with families to support parent child relationships, child development, family well being, health, nutrition, mental health, disabilities services, and school readiness.
*Monitor home visitor caseloads, documentation, visit completion, family goal progress, referrals, and follow up services.
*Ensure group socializations are planned with families and include both child and parent participation in appropriate settings.

ERSEA and Enrollment

*Ensure effective implementation of Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance systems.
*Monitor enrollment, waitlists, attendance, recruitment strategies, and vacancy timelines to ensure funded enrollment is achieved and maintained.
*Ensure children and families are selected and enrolled in accordance with federal eligibility requirements and agency approved selection criteria.
*Work with community partners, school districts, childcare providers, health providers, and social service agencies to support recruitment and referrals.
*Monitor enrollment trends, community needs, and barriers to participation, and recommend strategies to improve enrollment and attendance.

Fiscal and Grant Management

*Work collaboratively with the fiscal department to develop, monitor, and manage Head Start and Early Head Start budgets.
*Ensure program expenditures are allowable, reasonable, allocable, documented, and aligned with approved grant budgets.
*Monitor staffing, supplies, contracts, training, travel, facilities, transportation, and other program expenses.
*Support grant applications, continuation applications, budget narratives, refunding applications, and required federal reports.
*Participate in budget planning, cost allocation discussions, nonfederal share tracking, and fiscal monitoring.

Supervision and Staff Development

*Supervise, coach, evaluate, and support management staff and assigned program leadership.
*Ensure staff receive orientation, ongoing training, professional development, supervision, and performance feedback.
*Support recruitment, onboarding, retention, corrective action, performance improvement plans, and succession planning for Head Start and Early Head Start staff.
*Ensure education managers, family services managers, health managers, disabilities managers, teachers, home visitors, and other staff meet applicable Head Start qualification requirements.
*Promote a culture of professionalism, accountability, teamwork, compliance, safety, and continuous improvement.

Child and Family Services

*Ensure comprehensive services are provided to enrolled children, pregnant women, and families, including education, health, oral health, mental health, nutrition, disabilities, family engagement, and transition services.
*Ensure children with suspected or identified disabilities receive timely referrals, evaluations, individualized supports, and coordinated services.
*Ensure health and developmental screenings, assessments, follow up, and referrals are completed within required timelines.
*Ensure family partnership agreements, goal setting, referrals, and follow up services are implemented consistently and documented appropriately.
*Support parent engagement, fatherhood engagement, Policy Council participation, parent committees, family events, and community partnerships.

Data, Monitoring, and Continuous Quality Improvement

*Use program data to assess compliance, child outcomes, family outcomes, enrollment, attendance, staffing, fiscal performance, and service quality.
*Monitor data systems, including ChildPlus or other agency approved systems, to ensure accurate and timely documentation.
*Conduct regular file reviews, classroom observations, home visit reviews, center visits, and management team meetings.
*Use data to identify trends, risks, gaps, and corrective actions.
*Lead continuous quality improvement efforts and ensure program improvement plans are implemented and monitored.

Governance and Community Partnerships

*Work collaboratively with the governing body, Policy Council, parent committees, and agency leadership to support shared governance.
*Ensure Policy Council receives appropriate training, reports, consultation, and opportunities for meaningful participation.
*Build and maintain partnerships with school districts, child care providers, health providers, mental health providers, social service agencies, housing providers, higher education institutions, and community organizations.
*Represent O.C.E.A.N., Inc. professionally at meetings, coalitions, public events, and partner discussions.

*Support transition planning for children entering Head Start, moving from Early Head Start to Head Start, and transitioning from Head Start to kindergarten.

Required Qualifications

*Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Human Services, Public Administration, Education Administration, Social Work, Nonprofit Management, or a closely related field.
*Minimum of five years of progressively responsible leadership experience in Head Start, Early Head Start, early childhood education, human services, or a related federally funded program.
*Minimum of three years of supervisory experience, including supervision of managers, coordinators, center leadership, or multidisciplinary teams.
*Demonstrated experience with staff supervision, fiscal management, and administration as required by 45 CFR §1302.91(b).
*Strong knowledge of Head Start Program Performance Standards, Head Start Act, ERSEA, child development, school readiness, family engagement, health and safety requirements, and comprehensive service delivery.
*Experience overseeing center based early childhood programs.
*Experience with or strong working knowledge of Home Based Early Head Start services.
*Demonstrated ability to lead multiple sites, manage competing priorities, analyze data, implement corrective action, and ensure compliance.
*Strong written and verbal communication skills.
*Ability to work effectively with children, families, staff, governing bodies, Policy Council, community partners, funders, and regulatory agencies.

Preferred Qualifications

*Master's degree in Early Childhood Education, Educational Leadership, Human Services, Public Administration, Social Work, Nonprofit Management, or a related field.
*Direct experience serving as a Head Start Director, Early Head Start Director, Education Director, Program Director, or senior manager in a Head Start or Early Head Start program.
*Knowledge of New Jersey childcare licensing requirements.
*Experience with ChildPlus, Teaching Strategies GOLD, ASQ, ASQ SE, CLASS, ERSEA systems, and federal monitoring reviews.
Bilingual ability is preferred.
Experience leading programs through federal monitoring, designation renewal, grant competition, corrective action, or quality improvement processes.

Required Skills and Competencies

*Leadership and staff supervision
*Fiscal and grant management
*Head Start compliance and monitoring
*Early childhood education and child development
*Home Based Early Head Start service delivery
*ERSEA and enrollment management

*Family engagement and community partnerships
*Data analysis and continuous quality improvement
*Written communication and report preparation
*Conflict resolution and problem solving
*Cultural responsiveness and trauma informed leadership
*Policy implementation and accountability
*Staff coaching, development, and performance management

Physical and Work Requirements

*Ability to travel between four Head Start centers, home based service locations, administrative offices, community partner sites, and meetings.
*Ability to sit, stand, walk, bend, and move throughout early childhood centers and office settings.
*Ability to occasionally lift or carry program materials.
*Ability to work a flexible schedule when needed for evening meetings, parent events, Policy Council meetings, board meetings, monitoring visits, or community events.

Must complete required background checks, health screenings, child abuse registry checks, and other employment clearances as required by federal, state, and agency policy.

Performance Expectations

*Compliance with Head Start Program Performance Standards and state licensing requirements.
*Maintenance of full enrollment and effective attendance follow up.
*Quality of center based and home based services.
*Timely completion of screenings, assessments, referrals, and child outcome reporting.
*Effective supervision and development of staff.
*Fiscal responsibility and budget compliance.
*Successful monitoring outcomes and timely correction of findings.
*Parent, family, and community engagement.
*Accurate data management and reporting.
*Progress toward school readiness goals, program goals, and continuous improvement priorities.

Eligible for FT paid time off, paid holidays and fringe benefits such as health, life, dental, vision, and 403b plan. Requires Fingerprint and CARI Clearances per New Jersey Office of Licensing.