READY FOR SCHOOL, READY FOR LIFE

CEO
ABOUT READY FOR SCHOOL, READY FOR LIFE

Ready for School, Ready for Life (“Ready/Ready”) is an organization that is leading a collaborative effort to design and build an innovative system of care for Guilford County, North Carolina’s youngest children and their families. Grounded in well-documented brain science and socio-economic research that demonstrates the great value of quality experiences from the pre-natal stage through age 8, Ready/Ready is on a mission to greatly enhance support for parents and other caregivers who are responsible for our young children’s development. When children enter kindergarten developmentally on track, their chances of success in school and life increase dramatically. Guilford County has built a vision for assessing what families want and need, connecting them with the right services at the right time, using data to drive decisions, and rigorously measuring outcomes and impact.

Guilford County’s diverse population and demographics make it an ideal place to scale and pattern solutions. The county is populated by approximately 520,000 people principally living in two cities: Greensboro and High Point. Approximately 6,000 children are born in Guilford County each year, and about half of these babies are born into poverty. Guilford County Schools, one of the 50 largest school districts in the country, boasts a diverse student population with 120 languages spoken.

Through passionate interest in early childhood development and support from several local foundations, Ready/Ready was formed in 2014. A 60+ member Steering Committee was assembled to represent a broad cross-section of community stakeholders, and a small staff was hired via a partnership with a local agency. With a strong emphasis on “family voice”, a number of strategic priorities were developed and we began executing around those priorities.

As our work progressed and through a highly competitive process, The Duke Endowment (TDE) selected Guilford County as their community partner in order to achieve transformational results in their strategic area of early childhood. Simultaneously, TDE had joined forces with Blue Meridian Partners, a national group of results-driven philanthropists seeking to transform the life trajectories of our nation’s young people and families living in poverty by investing in strategies that work.

In 2018, through nearly 2 years of intense work on the part of TDE and Ready/Ready, Guilford County was selected for a major, multi-year investment from Blue Meridian Partners for the Get Ready Guilford Initiative. The first phase of the 10-12 year investment was approved in August of 2018 and is a performance-based grant of up to $32.5 million. As a result of this tremendous opportunity, Ready/Ready has recently received 501c3 status and formed a strong board of local leaders to guide the initiative and growing body of work.

For a detailed explanation of our organization, mission and strategic priorities, please visit www.getreadyguilford.org.

THE OPPORTUNITY
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With the recent decision by national and regional funders to invest heavily in Ready/Ready, we seek a dynamic and seasoned executive to lead the organization through this exciting growth stage and guide the execution of strategies necessary to achieve our bold objectives. Reporting to the Board of Directors and working closely with partners from TDE and Blue Meridian Partners, the CEO will bring a deep commitment to serving the children and families of North Carolina, demonstrated organizational leadership, and a strong focus on community partnerships. Internally, the CEO will motivate and retain a top-notch staff and maintain excellence in the content and delivery of Ready/Ready’s work, ensuring that it meets the desired outcomes of its community partners and supporters. This position is a unique opportunity for a service-oriented, passionate leader to help create a system that can become a model for the country in the early childhood development field.

The ideal candidate will be a proven and respected leader in the education/human service field with demonstrated skills in operationalizing a strategic plan, stakeholder engagement and revenue generation. She/he will be skilled managing in a collaborative environment, with significant experience working with expert staff, consultants, funders, service providers and policy makers. Since long term sustainability of the organization is critical, the successful candidate will possess strong experience in the public policy arena and bring an ability to balance passionate advocacy with practical reality. Significant managerial and operating experience and skills are a must. The CEO will be someone of the highest personal integrity with the ability to serve as a change agent and inspire others to disrupt the status quo. The successful candidate will be patient yet persistent, collaborative and able to encourage a wide range of voices and perspectives. She/he will genuinely seek alternative – even contrarian – opinions and views, demonstrating the ability to handle difficult situations without escalating them.

Key responsibilities of the CEO include:

- Effectively guide the growth, enhancement and integration of a complex set of social services that provide support for families and young children throughout the County.
- Provide successful leadership and staff direction over multiple years for a set of collaboratively adopted priorities including: expansion and integration of evidence based programs, design and execution of an integrated data system, design and execution of a family friendly navigation system, implementation of continuous quality improvement practices among service providers, rigorous evaluation of implementation and impact, strengthening the organization, building public will for support of the effort, implementation of an early literacy strategy, enhancing pre-K to K transition, and strengthening the system of care and education for young children.
- Be a champion for collaboratively adopted values associated with the organization including family voice, equity and sustainability.
- Manage a staff and network of community-based partners so that all feel involved and valued, and are comfortable and committed to working together to create a seamless suite of services.
- Effectively guide, engage, and collaborate with a local Board of Directors.
- Ensure all reporting and accountability requirements of funders are met.
- Partner with the Board of Directors to frame and execute a resource strategy that ensures the future sustainability of the organization.
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- Create and maintain a sense of confidence in the community of her/his ability to effectively lead the organization.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

The ideal candidate will have the following professional and personal skills, competencies and characteristics:

A Strategic and Visionary Leader

The CEO will be a strategic and innovative thought leader with the ability to set priorities decisively, assure accountability and allocate resources to ensure results. The CEO will retain and attract an empowered team and ensure that they have the support needed to achieve Ready/Ready’s vision. This individual will have a track record of motivating and inspiring others to achieve impact through creativity and teamwork and of leveraging individuals’ strengths to meet organizational goals. This leader will embody Ready/Ready’s strong commitment to children and families and will promote the organization, accelerating its impact, fund development and brand recognition.

Executive Management

The CEO will be a seasoned executive with strong operational and financial management experience. With a strong track record of sound financial planning, oversight and accountability, s/he will be committed to frequent, transparent reporting on organizational performance to the Board, funders and other community, state and national partners. With prior experience in a time of growth and/or transition for an organization, the CEO will ensure that proper systems and structures are built internally to accommodate the planned growth. Experienced in managing a large and diverse Board, the CEO will possess the knowledge and ability to ensure that the Board is achieving its primary responsibilities of strategic vision, governance and fundraising. The CEO will be able to work with both public and private funders and will have a fundamental understanding that successful fundraising and the development of partnerships with allied organizations are core responsibilities.

Community/Relationship Focus

The CEO will be a servant leader who brings a deep respect for the history of the initiative and understands that Ready/Ready has been, and will continue to be, a community effort. The CEO will recognize and value the importance of establishing strong relationships with all stakeholders and will built that trust by listening and demonstrating empathy. An articulate and informed leader, the CEO will be able to effectively articulate and convey Ready/Ready’s mission and vision to a range of constituents including donors, partners, families, the Board of Directors and staff. With a sharp focus on delivering what is promised, the CEO will be a highly ethical and transparent leader with a willingness to serve as a partner to others and embrace community ownership of the effort.
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A Passion for the Mission

The CEO will have a demonstrated passion for serving children and families and a deep belief in both the power of collective impact and the need for systems change. With a strong commitment to “family voice”, the CEO will recognize the diversity of Guilford County as an asset and embrace Ready/Ready’s history of working in partnership with the community and its focus on equity. The CEO will bring cultural competence and an ability to work collaboratively with the Board, funders, staff and community partners all in service of the mission of improving outcomes for children.

A Bachelor’s degree is required; an advanced degree in a related field is preferred.

CONTACT

Erin Reedy and Shelby Woods of Koya Leadership Partners have been engaged by Ready/Ready to help in this hire. Please submit a compelling cover letter and resume here.

Ready/Ready is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law.

ABOUT KOYA LEADERSHIP PARTNERS

Koya Leadership Partners is a national retained executive search and human capital consulting firm that works exclusively with mission-driven organizations, institutions of higher education and social enterprises. We deliver measurable results, finding exceptionally talented people who truly fit the unique culture of our client organizations and ensuring that organizations have the resources and strategies to support them. For more information, visit www.koyapartners.com.