



Meeting of the Board of Trustees

October 19, 2023 2:00PM

SC First Steps

636 Rosewood Drive Columbia, SC 29201

AGENDA

- I. **Roll Call** (Avian Jones)
- II. **Public Comment Period**
The public is invited to provide comments relevant to the SC Early Childhood Advisory Council and/or South Carolina First Steps during this period. Members of the public wishing to speak must sign up before the meeting. Comments should be limited to no more than three minutes per speaker.
- III. **Call to Order and Approve Agenda** (Dave Morley)
Motion: To adopt the agenda as submitted
Motion: To adopt the August 17, 2023 minutes as submitted
Attachments: SC First Steps Board of Trustees August 17, 2023 Minutes
- IV. **First Steps Is Here: Service Learning** (Valencia Johnson)
Ivy Cousins, First Steps AmeriCorps Member (Barnwell County First Steps) and Child Care Scholarship Recipient (Aiken County First Steps)
- V. **Executive Committee** (Dave Morley)
Attachments: Executive Committee Report, Executive Committee Minutes, Lexington County First Steps Board Letter, Laurens County First Steps Executive Director Salary Recommendation Packet, Calhoun County First Steps Executive Director Hiring and Salary Recommendation Packet Lancaster County First Steps Executive Director Hiring and Salary Recommendation Packet
- VI. **Consent Agenda:** Motions Recommended by Committees (Dave Morley)
 - a. **Motion:** To approve the recommendation to increase the salary of the Laurens County First Steps Executive Director as proposed by the local partnership. (Executive Committee recommends)
 - b. **Motion:** To approve the proposed Calhoun County First Steps Executive Director candidate and salary as submitted by the local partnership. (Executive Committee recommends)
 - c. **Motion:** To receive the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year Financial Audit. (Finance and Administration Committee recommends)
- VII. **Executive Session** (Dave Morley)
Motion: To enter into executive session for discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements: to discuss the local partnership board's request to hire and establish the salary for the Lancaster County First Steps Executive Director candidate.



Motion: To exit executive session.

Motion: To approve the proposed Lancaster County First Steps Executive Director candidate and salary, as submitted by the local partnership board.

- VIII. **Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee** (Dr. Amy Williams)
Attachments: Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee Report, Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee Meeting Minutes, FY23 and FY24 Overarching Measures of Success
- IX. **Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee** (Wes Wooten)
- X. **SC First Steps Audit Presentation** (Emily Sobczak)
Attachments: 2022-2023 Fiscal Year Financial Audit
- XI. **Finance and Administration Committee** (Jesica Mackey)
Attachments: Finance and Administration Committee Report, Finance and Administration Committee Meeting Minutes, FY2023 Financial Status Report as of September 30, 2023, FY2023 Donations Report as of September 30, 2023
- XII. **Legislative Committee** (Sen. Gerald Malloy)
- XIII. **Executive Director's Report** (Georgia Mjartan)
Attachments: Executive Director's Report, First Steps AmeriCorps Map, 2023 All Team Survey Results
- XIV. **Motion:** To adjourn the meeting of the SC First Steps Board of Trustees



Board of Trustees Meeting

August 17, 2023 2:00PM

SC First Steps

Via Zoom

Minutes

Trustees Present (20):

Rep. Terry Alexander
Dr. Robert Bank
Mary Lynne Diggs
Rep. Shannon Erickson
Matthew Ferguson
John Hayes
Sen. Greg Hembree
Michael Leach
Jessica Mackey

Sen. Gerald Malloy
Jack McBride
Dave Morley, Chairman
Janie Neeley
Roger Pryor
Mary Anne Scott
Dr. Edward Simmer
Dr. Amy Williams
Dr. Brenda Williams

Sue Williams
Wes Wooten

Trustees Absent (3)

Jacque Curtin
Constance Holloway
Robert Kerr

Attendees (79)

Georgia Mjartan
Avian Jones
Beth Moore
Laura Baker
Amanda Bailey
Amber Gillum
Betty Gardiner
Brenda Cantey
Buetine Pressley
Candi Lalonde
Carletta Isreal
Caroline Sexton
Cathy Kovacs
Chastine Dickey-Jackson
Chelsea Richard
Cheri Shapiro
Cheryl Scales
Cindy Ellis
Cindy Galloway
Cindy Riley
Clarice Blakenley
Crystal Hill-Chapman
Darcy Huffman
David Lisk
Debora DePaoli

Derek Cromwell
Donna Mason
Dorian Young
Dorothy Priester
Dean Bryant
Dwana Doctor
Elizabeth Dudek
Georgia Beckett
Gina Beebe
Hannah Espeleta
Heather Googe
James Calhoun
Jane Farnell
Janice Kilburn
Javonna Lewis
Jennifer Williams
Jon Artz
Joy Mazur
Kaitlyn Richards
Karen Oliver
Kate Roach
Kathy Fitzgerald
Kenna Hoover
Kenya Johnson
Kerry Cordan

Kim Trudell
Kirsten Chapman
Kristine Jenkins
LaMyra Dukes
Leah Crosby
Lexi Jones
Mark Barnes
Martha Strickland
Michelle Maxberry
Myrelo King
Rachal Hatton-Moore
Rachel Amrhein
Rebecca Harris
Renita Barksdale
Roddrick Dugger
Rosa Linda Contreras
Ryan Shinn
Samantha Ingram
Shayla Pettigrew
Sheila Cornwell
Silvia Landrum
Spence Scott
Stacy Greenwalt
Tekethia Burrell
Teresa Jenkins

Tiffany Outlaw
Tricia Gordon
Tyshica McConner
Veronica Reynolds
Meghan Wood



Mr. Morley called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m. Mr. Morley requested a motion to adopt the agenda. Dr. A. Williams provided the motion. Mr. Hayes provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to approve the June 15, 2023 minutes. Dr. Simmer provided the motion. Mr. Ferguson provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Michelle Maxberry, Communications AmeriCorps VISTA, introduced Rushell Pernell, a parent participant of the Parenting Program with Barnwell County First Steps. Ms. Pernell shared her experience with the Early Steps to School Success program and how it has impacted her family.

Mr. Morley reported on the Executive Committee. The committee reviewed the agency head performance evaluation for FY 2022-2023. They voted on a recommendation for the evaluation rating and a salary change. Mr. Morley provided updates on board transitions. Dr. Shelley Canright and Tim Holt have fulfilled their commitments to the board. Jack McBride was appointed by the Speaker of the House to fulfill the role of business community. He will serve on the Local Partnerships Program and Grants Committee. Dr. Robert Bank joined the board as the Acting Director of the Department of Mental Health. He will serve on the Interagency Collaboration Committee. Mary Anne Scott was appointed by the Speaker of the House to fulfill the role of early childhood educator. As a result of Act 81, two local partnership executive directors will serve on the ECAC. Dorothy Priester, Executive Director of Cherokee County First Steps, was appointed by the Chairwoman of the House Education and Public Works Committee. David Lisk, Executive Director of York County First Steps, was appointed by the Chairman of the Senate Education Committee. Jessica Mackey will chair the Finance and Administration Committee. Wes Wooten will chair the Local Partnerships Program and Grants Committee. Dr. Brenda Williams will serve on the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to approve the following consent agenda. Mr. McBride provided the motion. Dr. A. Williams provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Consent Agenda: Motions Recommended by Committees (Dave Morley)

- a. **Motion:** To approve the Interim Process for Local Partnership Executive Director Hiring Salary and Annual Evaluation (Executive Committee recommends)
- b. **Motion:** To approve the awarding of the READY Sustaining and Expanding Effective Programs Serving Children and Families Grants in the amount of \$290,756.17 in READY funding and \$129,558.59 in recaptured state funding for a total of \$420,314.76 (see attached table) to four (4) Local Partnerships, Chesterfield, Darlington, Florence, and Williamsburg Counties for implementation beginning in grant year 2024. (Local Partnerships Programs and Grants Committee recommends)
- c. **Motion:** To approve the corrective action determination as presented for the eleven (11) local partnerships identified (Aiken, Allendale, Beaufort, Charleston, Clarendon, Georgetown, Hampton, Horry, Kershaw, Lancaster, and Oconee Counties. As a result of corrective action, the local partnerships affected are not eligible to apply for competitive or targeted grants until they have satisfactorily resolved the deficiencies noted on their corrective action plan as determined by SC First Steps state staff (Local Partnerships Programs and Grants Committee recommends)



Rep. Alexander made a motion to enter into executive session for the purpose of a personnel matter: to review the board survey results, discuss and rate agency head performance for FY2023, and discuss the agency head salary. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pryor and unanimously approved. Ms. Mackey made a motion to exit executive session, seconded by Rep. Alexander, and unanimously approved. Rep. Erickson made a motion to approve the agency head evaluation rating of exceeds in all categories, seconded by Rep. Alexander, and unanimously approved. Mr. Pryor made a motion recommend to the Agency Head Salary Commission an agency head salary of \$160,446, seconded by Mr. McBride, and unanimously approved.

Dr. A. Williams reported on the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee. Dr. A. Williams shared that the committee focused on the Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation which is a grantmaking process that uses READY funds to fund innovative projects. The committee also discussed the work that is taking place in the South Carolina Early Learning Extension through the State Longitudinal Data System.

Ms. Roach shared that First Steps is legislatively required to contract with an external vendor to evaluate the prevalent programs on a 5-year schedule. She shared how the organization changed how they operated the Child Care Scholarships program in collaboration with the Department of Social Services. DSS reserves scholarships for the local partnerships at no cost to the partnerships to connect families to childcare. At the start of FY23 the qualifying criteria for the scholarships required families who receive the scholarship must be participating in an evidence-based program with the local partnership. This resulted in 99% utilization of the available scholarships. Ms. Roach then introduced Dr. Cheri Shapiro, Research Associate Professor and Director of the Institute for Families and Society in the College of Social Work at the University of South Carolina, who presented the preliminary analysis of the Child Care Scholarship program.

Mr. Pryor reported on the Local Partnerships Programs and Grants Committee. He shared that four local partnerships were recommended for READY grant awards. He also shared that there were eleven local partnerships recommended for corrective actions.

Ms. Mackey reported on the Finance and Administration Committee. She shared that the committee reviewed the financial report and the upcoming budget. She shared that the agency continues to work with SLED on an ongoing investigation regarding two local partnerships.

Ms. Mjartan gave the Executive Director's report where she highlighted the agency's permanent authorization, the Governor's ceremonial bill signing of Act 81, and the plan for implementation of the new bill. She shared the success of the recent 4K Academy for 350 leaders and 550 4K teachers. Ms. Mjartan shared that there was a 62% increase in the number of students approved to enroll in First Steps 4K, a 16% increase in 4K providers, and an 18% increase in the number of 4K classrooms compared to the same time last year. She concluded with an update on AmeriCorps recruitment, an introduction of new staff members, and current vacancies.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rep. Alexander provided the motion. Mr. Pryor seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:34 p.m. by Mr. Morley.



To: SC First Steps Board of Trustees
From: David Morley, Chairman, Executive Committee
Date: October 19, 2023
RE: Executive Committee Report

Acknowledgment of guest speakers at today's meeting:

- Ivy Cousins, First Steps AmeriCorps (Barnwell County First Steps) and Child Care Scholarship Recipient (Aiken County First Steps)
- Emily Sobczak, CPA Partner, Greene Finney, LLP

The Executive Committee of the Board of South Carolina First Steps met on October 2, 2023. The committee discussed and approved Local Partnership Executive Director hiring and salary recommendations from Laurens County First Steps and Calhoun County First Steps. Minutes from the meeting are attached. They were provided with the Lancaster County First Steps Executive Director hiring and salary recommendation at a later date. The actions were taken by the committee and will then be brought to the full board for approval.

They discussed the agency head planning evaluation for FY24-25. They were provided with information regarding the Board's year end activities. This included the annual board meeting on December 6th which requires in-person attendance, the year end reception on the evening of December 6th, and the 2023 Summit on Early Childhood on December 7th.

The committee received information on the SC First Steps' FY2025 budget request, the agency's accountability report and progress toward 5 year agency goals. They were informed that agency once again had no findings and received a clean audit. The committee was provided information about a classification and compensation study along with details on the conflict-of-interest disclosure forms and guidance developed for the board, staff, and local partnerships.

The state board received a letter from the Lexington County First Steps Board of Trustees, thanking the state board and the staff of SC First Steps for their work on permanent authorization.



Executive Committee Meeting October 2, 2023

The Executive Committee of the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees met on October 2, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 2:03 pm by Chairman Dave Morley. The following members were present, constituting a quorum: Dave Morley, Jessica Mackey, and Wes Wooten. Sen. Gerald Malloy and Dr. Amy Williams were not present. Executive Director Georgia Mjartan and Executive Assistant Avian Jones were present.

Director Mjartan informed the committee that the Lancaster County board is preparing to make a recommendation to hire a new Executive Director and that recommendation would be ready ahead of the October board meeting. The committee agreed to be informed of the recommendation and to provide their recommendation to the full board for a vote. Mjartan shared that the Spartanburg County Executive Director announced her upcoming retirement and the board would have a recommendation for a replacement by the December board meeting.

Jessica Mackey motioned and Wes Wooten seconded the following motion which was adopted unanimously:

Motion to enter executive session for the purpose of personnel matters: to discuss local partnership board recommendations to hire and establish the salary of an executive director for Calhoun County First Steps and to increase the salary of the Laurens County First Steps executive director.

Wes Wooten motioned and Jessica Mackey seconded the following motion which passed unanimously:

Motion to exit executive session.

Once out of executive session the following motion was made by Jessica Mackey and seconded by Wes Wooten which passed unanimously:

Motion to accept the proposal of Laurens County First Steps Executive Director salary increase request and the Calhoun County First Steps Executive Director hiring and salary request as discussed in executive session.

Mjartan discussed the agency head planning document where she will incorporate agency metrics from agency accountability report and will follow same format and structure as in the past before submitting to the Agency Head Salary Commission by the October 12th due date.

Mjartan shared year end board activities. The annual board meeting, which requires in-person attendance, will be held on December 6th. A year end reception will be held for trustees, leadership, and other key individuals the evening of the December 6th. The Summit on Early Childhood will be held on December 7th and trustees are encouraged to attend.

Mjartan provided the committee with information on SC First Steps' FY2025 budget request. She shared the details of the agency's accountability report and progress toward 5 year agency goals. She highlighted the fact that the agency once again had no findings and a clean audit. There was discussion about bringing the auditor to the board meeting to present and it was determined that this would be done. Mjartan presented information about a classification and compensation study and closed with details on

the conflict-of-interest disclosure forms and guidance developed for the board, staff, and local partnerships. Jessica Mackey motioned, and Wes Wooten seconded that the meeting would adjourn.



September 26, 2023

South Carolina First Steps Board of Directors,

We wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to the South Carolina First Steps Board of Directors for the tenacity, determination and persistence in pursuing permanent authorization for South Carolina First Steps. We are very aware of the frequent efforts each time the program approached the date of the "Sunset Clause" for consideration of permanent authorization resulting in repeated extensions, but never permanently authorized until this year. The road has been long and challenging, but patience and fortitude have finally prevailed.

The Board of Lexington County First Steps is especially grateful to Georgia Mjartan, Executive Director of SC First Steps, and to the excellent staff she has assembled in this effort to reach the long-sought goal of permanence for the sake of the most vulnerable and youngest citizens of our state. It is truly an amazing accomplishment and one that is now a model across our entire country.

Lexington County First Steps is very proud to be a part of South Carolina First Steps and we pledge our cooperation to continue to support all efforts SC First Steps as we grow, change and mature as the exemplary early childhood initiative.

Lexington First Steps Board of Directors Signatures

Mary C Brooks, Chair
Mike Taylor, Vice Chair
Robert H. Jackson
Julia C. Johnson
Ada Jane Setzler, Secretary
Debbie Poole

Nicole Mitchell
Amy K. Brant
Jennette Samuels
Kelly Poole
Vickie C. Roberts
Jaw a Ya
Anya Bryant
Chante Zeigler
Glenn Boozar
Mary Kennerly

Staff

Sandra Butler
Hebbie Lee
Sheri Stewart
Marie Perez
Jim Rissale
Art Smith



Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee Report

CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

The committee meeting took place on Monday, September 25, 2023 via Zoom and was called to order at 2:01PM. There were several staff and guests present. It opened with welcoming Dr. Brenda Williams to the committee and with an introduction to Emma Boswell, a former First Steps intern.

Ms. Boswell presented the findings to her study entitled, "Home Visiting Program Participation and Healthcare Utilization amongst Children Enrolled in South Carolina Medicaid, 2017-2021". The study, which has recently been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Health Visiting*, had the following features:

- utilized a propensity score matched sample of children who participated in five home visiting programs between fiscal years 2017 and 2021 implemented by First Steps local partnerships and compared them to non-participant children using Medicaid data
- compared home visiting participants to non-participants on the following health outcomes before their sixth birthday: average number of well-child visits; compliance to American Academy of Pediatrics' well-child visit recommendations; average number of emergency department visits
- found, most notably, an association between home visiting participation and well-child visit compliance
- novelty in that it takes a model-neutral approach to defining the exposure of home visiting participation

Emma is continuing to work with the First Steps team through her current role at the University of South Carolina's Rural and Minority Health Research Center to delve deeper into between and within group differences of First Steps' home visiting participants, in terms of their health care utilization.

Then, the meeting switched to discuss First Steps' FY23 Accomplishments and FY24 Goals for the five-year strategic plan, *Every Child Ready's*, Overarching Measures of Success. The attached document includes what was presented and discussed. The meeting was adjourned at 2:59PM.



Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee Meeting Minutes Monday, September 25, 2023 2-3PM via Zoom

Committee members present: Dr. Amy Williams (Chair); Dave Morley; Janie Neeley; Dr. Brenda Williams

Staff present: Georgia Mjartan; Gina Beebe; Dr. Chelsea Richard

Invited guests present: Emma Boswell (UofSC's Rural and Minority Health Research Center)

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 2:01PM. It opened with welcoming Dr. Brenda Williams to the committee and with an introduction to Emma Boswell, a former intern, who worked on her Applied Practicum and Integrated Learning Experiences at First Steps for her MPH in Epidemiology. Ms. Boswell presented the findings to her study entitled, "Home Visiting Program Participation and Healthcare Utilization amongst Children Enrolled in South Carolina Medicaid, 2017-2021". This study has been presented at several state-level conferences and was recently accepted for publication to the *Journal of Health Visiting*. Emma utilized a propensity score matched sample of children who participated in five home visiting programs between fiscal years 2017 and 2021 implemented by First Steps local partnerships and compared them to non-participant children using Medicaid data. She compared them on the following health outcomes before their sixth birthday: average number of well-child visits; compliance to American Academy of Pediatrics' well-child visit recommendations; average number of emergency department visits. While, like any study, there are limitations, Ms. Boswell's study showed, most notably, an association between home visiting participation and well-child visit compliance. This study is novel in that it takes a model-neutral approach to defining the exposure of home visiting participation. Emma is continuing to work with the First Steps team through her current role at the University of South Carolina's Rural and Minority Health Research Center to delve deeper into between and within group differences of First Steps' home visiting participants, in terms of their health care utilization. There was a brief discussion with the committee regarding the impacts of COVID and the importance of whole family interventions. Emma's presentation closed with a discussion regarding return on investment.

Then, the meeting switched to discuss First Steps' FY23 Accomplishments and FY24 Goals for the five-year strategic plan, *Every Child Ready's*, Overarching Measures of Success. The attached document includes what was presented and discussed. There was brief discussion regarding the residual impacts of COVID on young children, as well as digging deeper into communities to understand how they have moved the needle on kindergarten readiness. The meeting was adjourned at 2:59PM.



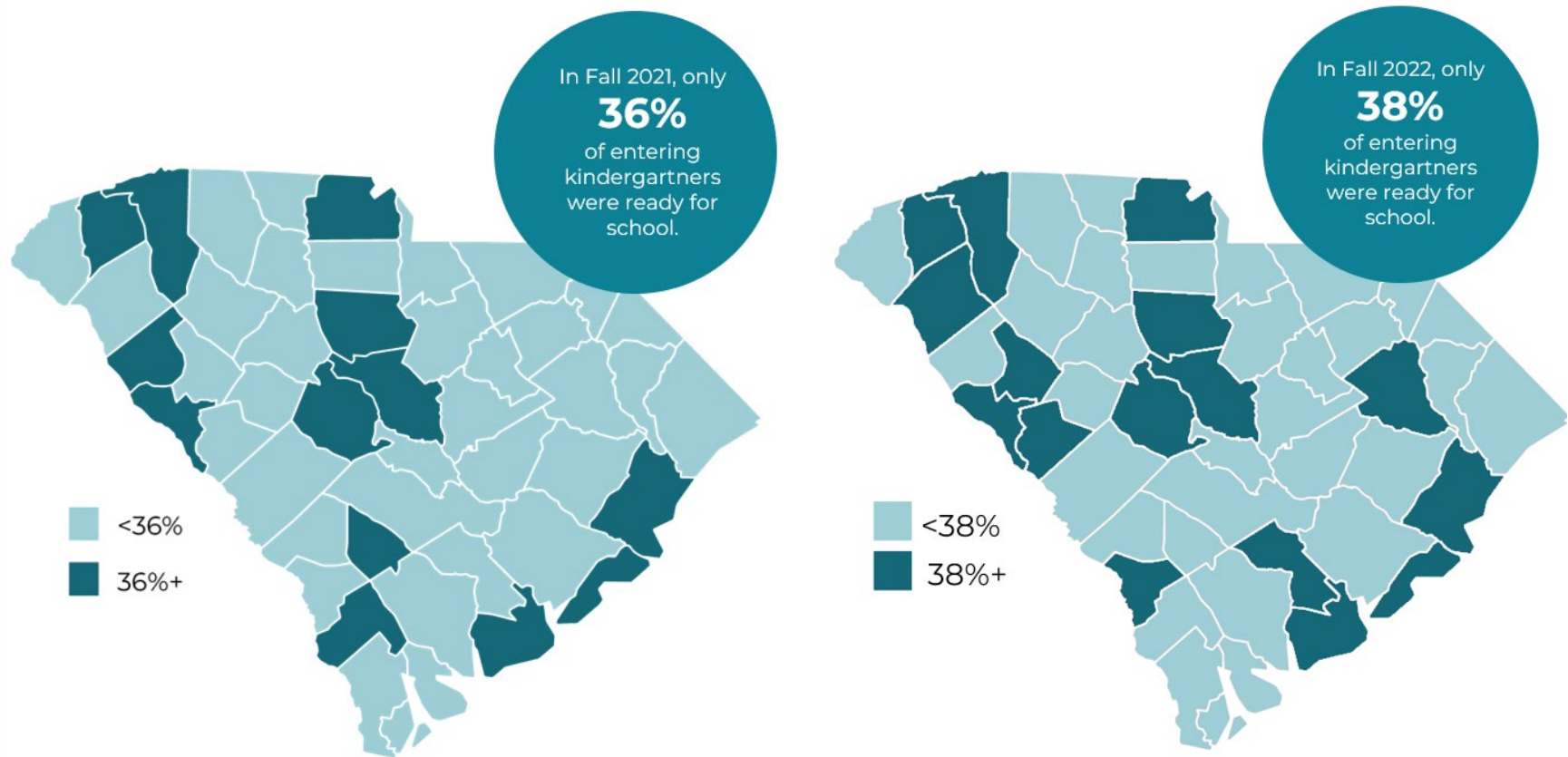
FY23 Accomplishments and FY24 Goals

- In South Carolina, there are 336,095¹ children under age 6, of which about 44% (147,050) are eligible for First Steps services (under age 6 <185% poverty).
- Last year (FY23), First Steps served 54,241 children directly, which is 37% of 147,050 children eligible for First Steps services.
- Last year (FY23), First Steps served 11,548 children directly in high-intensity programs, which is 8% of the 147,050 children eligible for First Steps services.

Every Child Ready's Overarching Measures of Success						
1. INCREASE THE REACH OF FIRST STEPS SERVICES. By 2025, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by First Steps will increase from 17% to 20%.						
Year	Baseline	FY19-20	FY20-21	FY21-22	FY22-23	FY23-24 Goal
Value	17%	19%	24%	37%	37%	20%
2. INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN HIGH INTENSITY PROGRAMS FUNDED BY FIRST STEPS. By 2025, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by First Steps high intensity programs will increase from 5% to 8%.						
Year	Baseline	FY19-20	FY20-21	FY21-22	FY22-23	FY23-24 Goal
Value	5%	3%	4%	5%	8%	8%
3. INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF HIGH QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY FIRST STEPS. By 2025, the percentage of children under age 6 who benefit from First Steps quality enhancement and training efforts will increase from 12% to 15%.						
Year	Baseline	FY19-20	FY20-21	FY21-22	FY22-23	FY23-24 Goal
Value	12%	12%	18%	15%	19%	15%
4. MORE CHILDREN ARRIVE AT KINDERGARTEN READY FOR SUCCESS. By 2025, the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will increase by 2% each year to 47%.						
Year	Baseline	FY19-20	FY20-21	FY21-22	FY22-23	FY23-24 Goal
Value	37%	39%	27%	36%	38%	42%
5. REDUCE THE RACIAL/ETHNIC GAP IN KINDERGARTEN READINESS. By 2025, the gap in the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment between White Kindergartners and Black/Hispanic Kindergartners will reduce by 1% each year to 15%.						
Year	Baseline	FY19-20	FY20-21	FY21-22	FY22-23	FY23-24 Goal
Value	20%	20%	19%	23%	19%	16%
6. CREATE AN ACCESS PORTAL TO INCREASE SOUTH CAROLINA CHILDREN'S KNOWLEDGE OF AND ACCESS TO SERVICES. By 2025, First5SC.org will launch and include five categories: child care & early education, health & safety, special needs & early intervention, food & nutrition and parenting & family support.						
Year	Baseline	FY19-20	FY20-21	FY21-22	FY22-23	FY23-24 Goal
Value	-	Funding secured; RFP posted	Procurement done	Eligibility screener launched	Common application launched	Add more programs to common app

¹ American Community Survey (Five-Year Estimates 2017-21). US Census Bureau. Table B17024.

Proportion of Incoming Kindergartners scoring “Demonstrating Readiness” on the South Carolina Kindergarten Readiness Assessment: Fall 2021 vs. Fall 2022 Administrations by County (Data from the South Carolina Department of Education)





To: SC First Steps Board of Trustees

From: Jessica Mackey, Chairman, Finance and Administration Committee

Date: September 27, 2023

RE: Finance and Administration Report

The Finance and Administration Committee met via Zoom conference call on September 27, 2023, to take up action items and receive updates from staff. Detailed meeting minutes are attached. The committee brings forward the following action item and updates.

ACTION: Receipt of the 2022-23 Financial Audit

Presentation by Emily Sobczak, CPA, Partner, Greene Finney, LLP. Ms. Sobczak presented the Financial Statements and Audit for SC First Steps for the 2022-23 state fiscal year. She mentioned the auditor issued an unmodified opinion, which is the best an agency can receive. In addition, she mentioned that the agency has also received no findings or discuss with management concerns. The agency has had perfect audits for the last seven years, which is an excellent achievement. Additional information is in the audit, which is being given to each member of the Board. Ms. Sobczak will present this item to the Board for their consideration.

The Committee voted unanimously to receive the Audit and send it to the Board of Trustees. The Committee makes the following Motion outside of the Consent Agenda:

Motion: To receive the 2022-23 Fiscal Year Financial Audit.

First Steps State Office

Financial Report

Mr. Barnes shared the updated financial status of the agency. The total budget for this year is more than \$79 million. Expenditures to date are in line with projections for the new year. And the organization is in good financial condition.

Local Partnership Update

State Office staff are working with SLED on two ongoing investigations related to the Local Partnerships and we received updates on the implementation of Act 81. The Local Partnerships have started submitting paperwork to PEBA to initiate enrollment of their organizations for both Health Insurance and State Retirement.

4K Program

The program is starting the year with a record number of classrooms, and enrolled students. We expect to spend more on this program this year than our appropriated state funds for 2023-24.

Other updates can be found in the meeting minutes.



Minutes from Finance and Administration Committee Meeting

September 27, 2023

Members present: Jesica Mackey, Chairman, Jacque Curtin, CPA,

Members not present: None

Nonmembers present: Emily Sobczak, CPA, Mark Barnes, Director of Administration; Lavinia Tejada, CPA, Director of Finance and Audits

With all public notices being provided, the Zoom meeting was called to order by Jesica Mackey at 10:04 am. After introductions, a quorum was available, so the Committee was called to order.

2022-23 Fiscal Year First Steps Financial Audit

Required Action Item: Receipt of the 2022-23 Fiscal Year Financial Audit

Presentation by Emily Sobczak, CPA, Partner, Greene Finney, LLP. Ms. Sobczak presented the Financial Statements and Audit for SC First Steps for the 2022-23 state fiscal year. She mentioned the auditor issued an unmodified opinion, which is the best an agency can receive. In addition, she mentioned that the agency has also received no findings or discuss with management concerns which is excellent. The agency has had perfect audits for the last seven years which is an excellent achievement. She mentioned that the total fund balance increased to \$28.2 Million in FY 2023. The majority of which is restricted for specific programs. She mentioned there are several reasons that it is important to maintain an adequate fund balance, and it's very important during uncertain economic times. Total revenues decreased to a total of \$57.1 Million in FY 2023 which is down \$5.8 million from the prior year. This drop came from a net reduction \$2.5 million in state funds from the prior year, and decreases in several grants, which included some covid funding. During 2023, the total expenditures increased to \$55.4 Million. This was an increase in \$1.1 million from the prior year. Jacque Curtin requested several changes based on her review of the financial statements and Ms. Sobczak mentioned those would be made. Ms. Curtin also requested that the auditor present to the Board the audit as well as the Committee. Ms. Mackey mentioned she would suggest that to the Executive Committee and ask for a decision.

With the changes Ms. Curtin requested being made to the financial statements, she motioned that the Audit be accepted, seconded by Ms. Mackey, and unanimously to accept. The motion will go to the Board of Trustees to accept the audit.

First Steps State Office

Financial Report

Mr. Barnes reviewed the monthly financial reports. The agency is in good financial condition. This discussion also included the amount spent to date and he reviewed the donations to date for this year.

He mentioned that we will be updating the reports as we are realigning some of the details in our budget and the Committee will see some minor changes over the next few months.

State Budget Update

SC First Steps has submitted its request for the state budget to the Governor for the FY 24-25 fiscal year. The request is for a total of \$15,022,699 in additional recurring funds. This includes 6 basic requests in priority order; they are as follows:

1. Unfunded Personnel Cost Increases	\$362,089
2. Classification, Compensation and Capacity Study	\$304,824
3. SC First Steps Separation from Department of Education	\$279,724
4. Local First Steps Partnerships	\$4,769,076
5. ECAC	\$242,272
6. Full-Day 4K	\$9,064,714

This request includes 10 additional FTE's and two changes to the 4K proviso, which would allow us to add Language and Literacy and Teacher Recruitment and Retention efforts to the program.

There was general discussion about the requests including the possible separation from the Department of Education and the priorities of the various requests.

Local Partnerships

Local Partnership Update

1. Mr. Barnes provided an update on the Local Partnerships. He updated the Committee on the two investigations that are ongoing by SLED. Mr. Barnes will keep the Committee up to date on any changes or new information.
2. Additional information was provided related to the status of Act 81 implementation. He mentioned work being done by our Legislative Liaison on the Board changes that needed to be done immediately, a virtual meeting was provided by PEBA for all Local Partnerships discussing steps necessary to establish an account with PEBA for Health Insurance and Retirement benefits. They participated in answering many questions.

4K Program Update

As of the beginning of the year, the program had enrolled a record number of participants for the new year as well as a record number of participating child care centers.

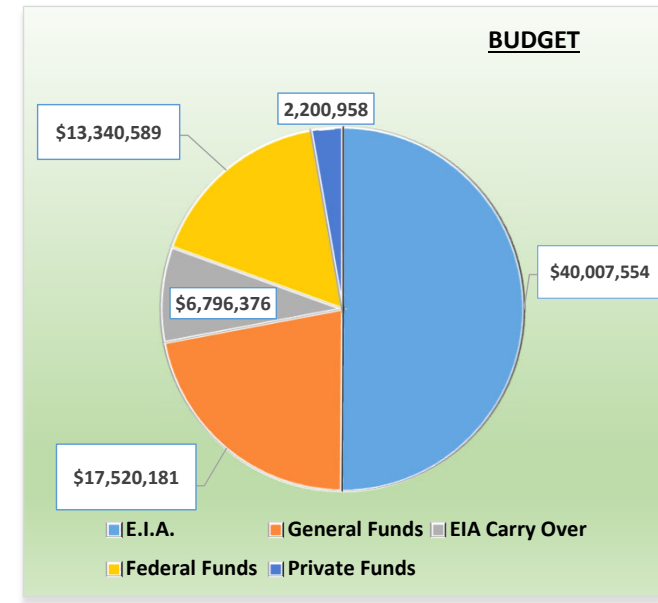
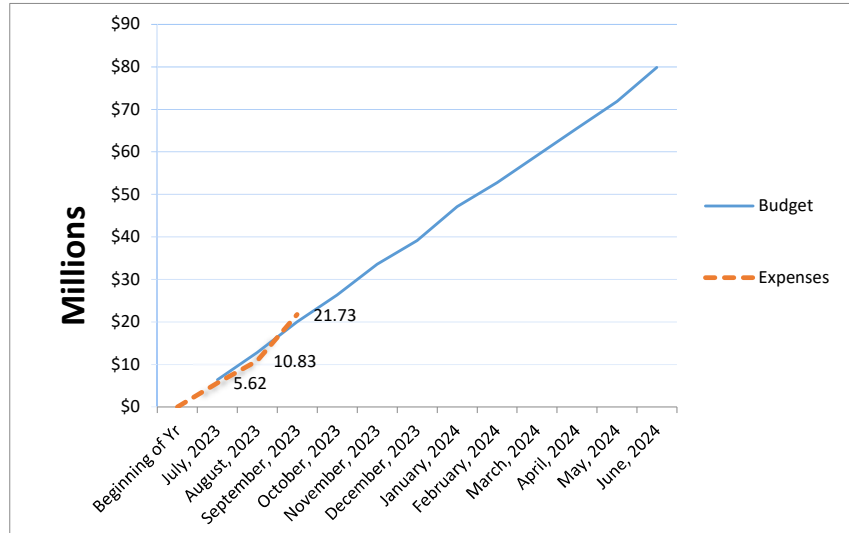
Other

With no further business to discuss for the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:56 am.

As of
September 30, 2023

Spending Rates

Projected	25%
Actual	27%



PROGRAMS / OPERATIONS	STATE APPROPRIATIONS			FEDERAL GRANTS			PRIVATE FUNDS			GRAND TOTAL		
	Description	Budget	Expended	Balance	Budget	Expended	Balance	Budget	Expended	Balance	Budget	Expended
LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS	23,506,624	8,490,699	15,015,925	7,335,241	-	\$ 7,335,241	2,020,458	14,093	2,006,365	32,862,323	8,504,792	\$ 24,357,531
PRIVATE 4-K	36,719,794	12,162,838	24,556,956	2,607,565		2,607,565			-	39,327,359	12,162,838	\$ 27,164,521
EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL	1,160,993	4,487	1,156,506	2,654,066	266,721	2,387,345	78,000		78,000	3,893,059	271,208	\$ 3,621,851
POLICY & ACCOUNTABILITY	2,936,700	688,505	2,248,195	743,717	58,534	685,183	102,500	41,222	61,278	3,782,917	788,260	\$ 2,994,657
GRAND TOTAL:	64,324,111	21,346,529	42,977,582	13,340,589	325,255	13,015,334	2,200,958	55,315	2,145,643	79,865,658	21,727,099	\$ 58,138,559

Notes:

1) Local Partnerships:

- a. Funding Sources: Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funds and General Funds
- b. Formula allocation cash advances are disbursed on a quarterly basis
- c. Expenditures reflect disbursements from SC First Steps (state-level)
- d. Includes local-level actual expenses to staff and vendors
- e. Contracted Accounting Firm, Accounting Software Network Support & Programmatic Data Housing
- f. OFS program & finance staff (payroll, rent, contractual, supplies, travel, etc.)

Federal Funds:	40,007,554	E.I.A.
VISTA	50,000	17,520,181
AmeriCorps:	427,523	6,796,376
SLDS:	266,194	13,340,589
PDG:	2,654,066	2,200,958
ESSER Funds	9,942,806	79,865,658
	13,340,589	

Local Partnerships (Cont'd):

- g. External programmatic evaluation
 - h. Financial audits-annually each LP
 - i. Workers' compensation insurance coverage
 - j. Includes LP Countdown to Kindergarten program
- 2) Private budgets based on Private Grants, Projected Fund Raising, & prior year cash.
- 3) State Appropriations Include EIA Funds & General Funds along with carry forward cash.

Donations

FY 2024

As of September 30, 2023



DATE RECEIVED	GENERAL	DONOR/PAYOR	FUNDS	PURPOSE / COMMENTS
Jul 7, 2023	\$ 1,000	SC Head Start	Restricted	2023 Summit
Jul 24, 2023	\$ 2,500	DHEC	Restricted	2023 Summit
Aug 3, 2023	\$ 500	Lewis T. Smoak	Restricted	NTCC
Aug 3, 2023	\$ 25	Gwen Cook	Restricted	Laurens County FS
Aug 3, 2023	\$ 25	Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Aug 3, 2023	\$ 25	Chevelle Gilyard	Restricted	Richland County FS
Aug 16, 2023	\$ 2,500	SC ETV	Restricted	2023 Summit
Aug 28, 2023	\$ 100	Judy and Walter Newman	Restricted	Sumter County FS
Aug 28, 2023	\$ 100	Shirnetha Belk	Restricted	Lancaster County FS-Honoring Lora Bryson
Aug 31, 2023	\$ 1,250	Sisters of Charity	Restricted	2023 Summit
Sep 1, 2023	\$ 2,500	John S. McBride Jr.	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Sep 1, 2023	\$ 50	Laura Baker	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Sep 5, 2023	\$ 1,000	Institute for Child Success	Restricted	2023 Summit
Sep 5, 2023	\$ 250	Peter A. Miller	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Sep 18, 2023	\$ 10,000	Morley Family Fund	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Total	<u>\$ 21,825</u>			



To: SC First Steps Board of Trustees

From: Georgia Mjartan

Date: October 19, 2023

RE: **Executive Director's Report**

I. Act 81 Implementation

- First Steps Local Partnership Boards: DSS & DHEC recommendations made, some Head Start recommendations made, legislative delegations have begun making appointments
- Local Partnership executive director hiring and salary interim process applied to 3 ED's
- PEBA offered a training to Local Partnership directors on the new process they will use to enroll their employees directly in state retirement, and partnerships have begun submitting enrollment forms to PEBA for their organizations to be able to offer state benefits.

II. FY2025 Budget Request

- Unfunded Personnel Cost Increases \$362,089
- Classification, Compensation, and Capacity \$304,824, 2 FTE's
- Separation from SDE \$279,724
- Local Partnerships \$4,769,076, 4 FTE's
- Early Childhood Advisory Council \$242,272
- First Steps 4K \$9,064,714, 2 FTE's

III. First Steps 4K

2023-24 School Year (comparisons with previous year)

SY23-24 Day 35 (October 10, 2023) compared to SY22-23 Day 35 (October 5, 2022)

Enrollment

- **3,712** students enrolled for at least one day (**18.6%** increase (SY23 n = 3,129))
- **3,577** students enrolled point-in-time (**17.9%** increase (SY23 n = 3,035))

Student Applications

- **5,547** student applications received (**14.1%** increase (SY23 n = 4,861))
- **5,523** applications processed (**15.3%** increase (SY23 n = 4,790))

Providers

- **300** total providers approved to date (**19.5%** increase (SY23 n = 251)) with 347 classrooms (**15.7%** increase (SY23 n = 300))
- **335** active classrooms (**15.5%** increase (SY23 n = 283))

First Steps 4K Plus

- DSS and SC First Steps will hire a shared staff member to support this initiative

IV. AmeriCorps

- 40 members enrolled at the Local Partnerships for Parent Educator and Family & Community Engagement roles (45 service slots outlined in grant)
- 6 New HIPPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) Sites:
 - o Aiken
 - o Charleston - supported through 4K



- Dorchester
- Georgetown
- Richland - supported through 4K
- Sumter

V. HR Updates

- Fall 2023 All Team Survey Conducted & Feedback Loop Completed
- SC First Steps welcomes the following new staff members:
 - Julie Greer, 4K Coach (Spartanburg)
 - Fotima Tukhtasunova, First 5 SC Intern
 - Anna Layton, Development VISTA
- Currently, the organization has the following vacancies:
 - 4K Coach (Midlands)
 - Accounting Interns (2)
 - Early Care and Education Quality Coordinator
 - ECAC Communications Coordinator (new FTE)
 - Finance Administrative Assistant
 - First 5 SC Tech Support Specialist
 - Fiscal Specialist
 - Two-Generation Coordinator (new FTE)
 - 2 AmeriCorps VISTA Members
 - Communications
 - ECAC

First Steps AmeriCorps

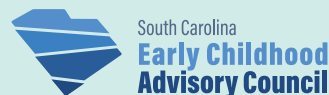
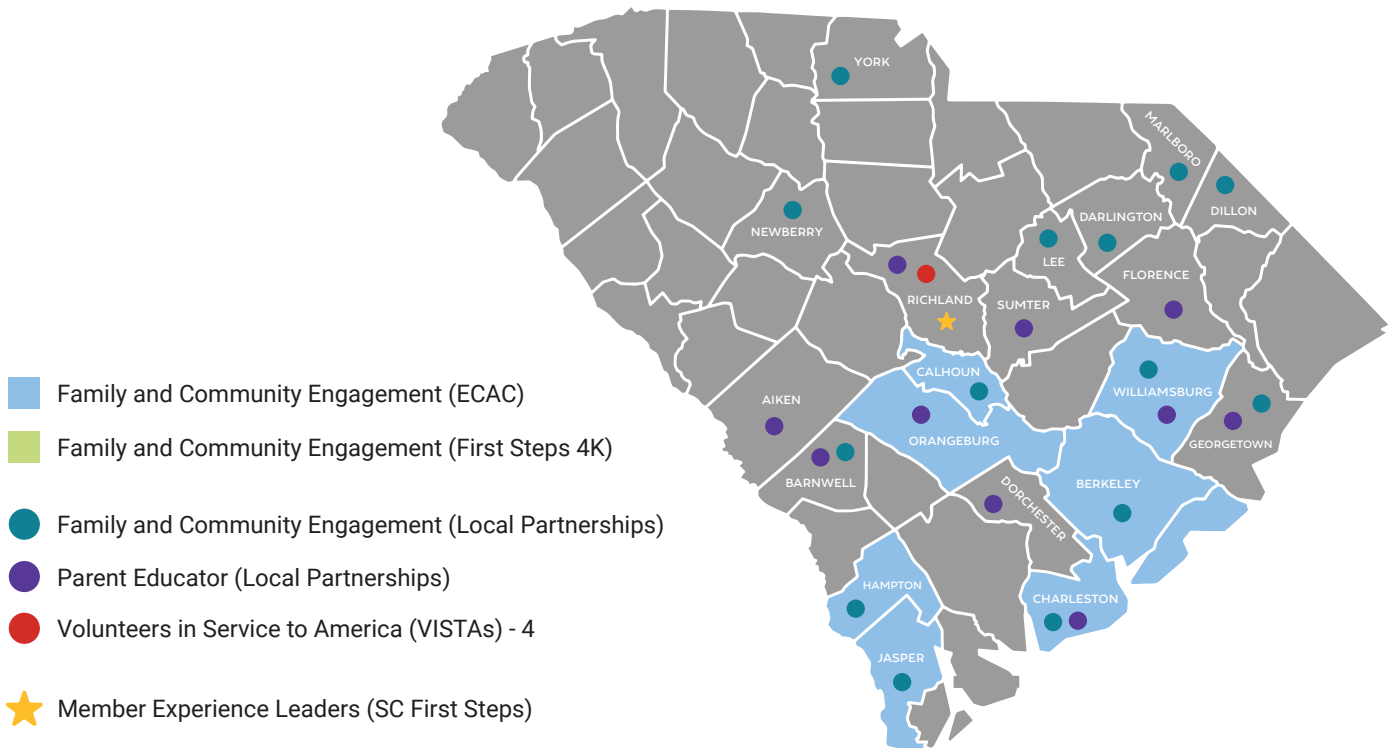
Gain valuable experience and give back to your community through service with South Carolina First Steps. Our AmeriCorps Members engage directly with families and communities to help ensure that all children start school ready to reach their highest potential. AmeriCorps opportunities are available with local First Steps partnerships, the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), First Steps 4K, and at the South Carolina First Steps office in Columbia, SC.

Family and Community Engagement Members conduct community engagement activities and meetings to educate families on school readiness and accessing community services. (Opportunities available with the ECAC, First Steps 4K, and Local Partnerships)

Parent Educator Members provide HIPPIY home-based curriculum to participating families. They also design and lead HIPPIY group sessions for families to engage, support, and share experiences with each other. (Opportunities available with Local Partnerships)

The **Member Experience Leader** provides guidance and supports the overall experience of the First Steps AmeriCorps team. (Opportunity available with SC First Steps state office)

Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) Members provide full-time capacity building support to Local Partnerships in key focus areas such as Communications, Volunteer & Partnership Engagement, Fundraising, and Nonprofit management. (Opportunity available with SC First Steps state office)



South Carolina First Steps

2023 Annual All-Team Survey Findings

First Steps commissioned **ISI Consulting** to develop, distribute, analyze, and support meaning making of the 2023 annual all-team survey. Here is what they found...



Sent via email to 80 people



Administered from August 15 to 23, 2023



Heard from 65 people (81% participation rate)

63%

would highly recommend First Steps services to a friend or family member. (65% last year)

38%

would highly recommend First Steps as a place to work to a friend or family member. (50% last year)

Over 90% of respondents agreed that First Steps...



incorporates the voices of families in its work



keeps staff well informed about important news, events, and activities



is data-driven and committed to continuous quality improvement

Over 80% of respondents agreed that First Steps...



is a place where they can perform up to their full potential



is a place where they feel valued and respected

Areas of Strength	Areas of Opportunity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good environment for employees • Mission • Growth of organization • Achieving permanent authorization • Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling micromanaged while telecommuting • Feeling overwhelmed by number of internal communication platforms • Optimizing internal meetings • Reducing internal silos/ promoting cross-team collaboration