



Meeting of the Board of Trustees

June 20, 2024 at 2:00 PM

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83722694987?pwd=dDhVLzIMYkRPMHIPYktkb0NwbFgzUT09>

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 April 18, 2024 minutes as submitted
Attachments: SC First Steps Board of Trustees April 18, 2024 Minutes
- IV. **Executive Committee** (Dave Morley)
Attachments: Executive Committee Report, Executive Committee Minutes, Local Partnership Executive Director Hiring, Compensation, and Performance Evaluation Policies, Local Partnership Core Personnel Policies
- V. **Consent Agenda:** Motions Recommended by Committees (Dave Morley)
 - a. **Motion:** To approve the Local Partnership Executive Director Hiring, Compensation, and Performance Evaluation Policies and Processes as submitted. (Executive Committee recommends)
 - b. **Motion:** To approve the Local Partnership Core Personnel Policies as submitted. (Executive Committee recommends)
 - c. **Motion:** To approve the formula and programmatic recommendations for the 46 local partnerships as presented by SC First Steps staff for grant year 2025 beginning July 1, 2024. (Local Partnership Programs and Grants Committee recommends)
 - d. **Motion:** To approve the use of READY and recaptured formula funding in the amount of \$2,214,232 to provide a one-year extension of discretionary funding to the local partnerships listed in Table 1 for PAT Affiliate, parenting expansion, and PASOs programs. (Local Partnership Programs and Grants Committee recommends)
 - e. **Motion:** To approve the use of \$216,000 in READY recaptured formula funding to 16 local partnerships serving as AmeriCorps sites for FY25: Calhoun, Charleston, Darlington, Dillon, Dorchester, Florence, Georgetown, Greenwood, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, McCormick, Orangeburg, Sumter, Williamsburg, and York. (Local Partnership Programs and Grants Committee recommends)
 - f. **Motion:** To approve the use of \$180,000 un READY recaptured formula funding to award one-year Infrastructure and Capacity grants to the following partnerships: Bamberg, Barnwell, Dillon, Greenwood, Lee, and Williamsburg. (Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee recommends)



Board of Trustees Meeting
April 18, 2024 2:00PM
SC First Steps
636 Rosewood Drive Columbia, SC 29201
Minutes

Trustees Present (13):

Dr. Robert Bank
Jacque Curtin
Dr. Matthew Ferguson
John Hayes
Sen. Greg Hembree
Mike Leach
Jessica Mackey
Jack McBride
Dave Morley, Chairman

Roger Pryor
Dr. Ed Simmer
Sue Williams
Dr. Amy Williams, Vice Chair

Constance Holloway
Robert Kerr
Sen. Gerald Malloy
Janie Neeley
Mary Anne Scott
Wes Wooten
Dr. Brenda Williams

Trustees Absent (10)

Rep. Terry Alexander
Mary Lynne Diggs
Rep. Shannon Erickson

Attendees (59)

Georgia Mjartan
Avian Jones
Amber Gillum
Alissa Durham
Amanda Bailey
Beth Moore
Betty Gardiner
Brandie Maness
Bridget Banner
Brittany Buckner
Candie Lalonde
Catherine Nolan
Chelsea Richard
Cindy Ellis
Cindy Galloway
Cindy Riley
De Daliam
Derek Cromwell
Eddie Marshall
Felicia Battle
Gina Beebe
Imagen Kinard
Jackson Wilkens
Jennifer Kelly
Jennifer Williams
Julie Greer

Joy Mazur
Kaitlyn Richards
Karen Troy
Kate Roach
Kathy Fitzgerald
Katrina Cummings
Kenna Hoover
Kenya Johnson
Kim Trudell
Kristen Martocchio
Kristine Jenkins
LaMyra Sanders
Lexi Jones
Lis Guimaraes
Mark Barnes
Martha Strickland
Mary Laney
Meghan Walters Branham
Penny Whiteman
Rachal Hatton-Moore
Rhonda Hollingsworth
Samantha Ingram
Sarah Crawford
Sarah Lewis
Shayla Pettigrew
Sheila Cornwell

Stacie Bryant
Tamatha Kohler
Tiffany Outlaw
Carletta Isreal
Clarissa Jones- Edwards
David Lisk
Dorothy Priester



Mr. Morley called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. He reported on the Executive Committee where he shared that the committee discussed and approved Local Partnership Executive Director compensation recommendations for Greenville County First Steps and York County First Steps. The committee approved the hiring and salary for the Berkeley County First Steps Executive Director. He also shared that the committee agreed that bonuses for Local Partnership Executive Directors be part of a predetermined incentive plan that must be pre-approved through the same process used to approve executive director compensation. These actions were taken on behalf of the full board due to their time sensitivity. The committee also made the decision to make the June and August board meetings virtual. He shared information on the upcoming Local Partnership Leadership Convening and the 25th anniversary event being held on June 26th and June 27th.

Mr. Morley requested a motion to adopt the agenda. Ms. Williams provided the motion, seconded by Mr. Pryor, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to approve the February 15, 2024 minutes. Dr. A. Williams provided the motion, seconded by Dr. Ferguson, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Strickland presented First Steps 4K Expansion grant awards to three 4K centers.

Mr. Cromwell shared more information on the Local Partnership Leadership Convening.

Mr. Barnes reported on the Finance and Administration Committee where he shared that the organization is in good financial position. He also provided an update on the separation from the Department of Education. He gave an update on the ongoing work with the local partnerships, moving their employees to PEBA and establishing HR policies in accordance with Act 81.

Dr. A. Williams reported on the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee where there was discussion around data that was shared on the external Local Partnership program evaluations. She also provided an invitation to a meeting providing an update Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation on July 24th at 11AM.

Sen. Hembree provided an update on the fiscal year 2024-2025 state budget and the SC Read to Succeed Act.

Ms. Mjartan gave the Executive Director's report where she gave an update on the agency's separation from SC Department of Education and the benefits of this process. She shared the progress with the implementation of Act 81 and the work with PEBA for benefits for the local partnerships. She shared data on First Steps 4K for the 2023 – 2024 school year and data progress for the 2024 – 2025 school year. Ms. Mjartan provided data on the success of a Night to Celebrate Community event over the three years the event has been held. She also shared the organization's large goals for 2024 and provided a human resources update.

Dr. A. Williams made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Sen. Hembree, and the motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:06 p.m. by Chairman Morley.



To: SC First Steps Board of Trustees
From: David Morley, Chairman, Executive Committee
Date: June 20, 2024
RE: Executive Committee Report

The Executive Committee of the Board of South Carolina First Steps met on May 6th, May 13th, and June 3rd. The committee discussed and approved the following motions:

To appoint Mark Barnes as interim executive director beginning July 1, 2024 for up to six months. The interim executive director will not be eligible for the permanent executive director position.

To approve the proposed Saluda County First Steps executive director compensation, as submitted by the local partnership board.

To approve the proposed Beaufort County First Steps executive director compensation, as submitted by the local partnership board.

These actions were taken on behalf of the full board due to their time sensitivity.

The committee discussed and approved the following motions to bring before the full board:

To approve the Local Partnership Executive Director Hiring, Compensation, and Performance Evaluation Policies and Processes as submitted.

To approve the Local Partnership Core Personnel Policies as submitted.

The minutes from the meetings are attached.

The committee also met during a joint meeting with the Finance and Administration Committee on May 13, 2024.



Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
May 6, 2024

Members Present: David Morley, Jessica Mackey, Sen. Gerald Malloy, and Wes Wooten

Members Absent: Dr. Amy Williams

Staff Present: Georgia Mjartan and Avian Jones

Meeting was called to order with a quorum present at 3:01pm. Jessica Mackey made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Sen. Malloy, and approved unanimously.

Sen. Malloy made the following motion, which was seconded by and was approved unanimously.

Motion to enter executive session for the purpose of a personnel matter.

With no action taken in session, the following motion was made by Jessica Mackey, seconded by Wes Wooten and approved unanimously:

Motion to exit executive session.

Jessica Mackey made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Wes Wooten and approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45pm.



Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2024

Members Present: David Morley, Jessica Mackey, Dr. Amy Williams, and Wes Wooten

Members Absent: Sen. Gerald Malloy

Staff Present: Georgia Mjartan and Avian Jones

Meeting was called to order with a quorum present at 3:51pm. Jessica Mackey made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Wes Wooten, and approved unanimously.

Jessica Mackey made the following motion, which was seconded by Wes Wooten and was approved unanimously.

Motion to enter executive session for the purpose of a personnel matter.

With no action taken in session, the following motion was made by Wes Wooten, seconded by Dr. Amy Williams and approved unanimously:

Motion to exit executive session.

The following motion was made by Jessica Mackey, amended by Dave Morley, seconded by Wes Wooten and was unanimously approved.

Motion to appoint Mark Barnes as interim executive director beginning July 1, 2024 for up to six months. The interim executive director will not be eligible for the permanent executive director position.

Jessica Mackey made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Wes Wooten and approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:59pm.



Executive Committee Meeting
June 3, 2024

Members Present: David Morley, Jesica Mackey, Sen. Gerald Malloy, and Wes Wooten

Members Absent: Dr. Amy Williams

Staff Present: Georgia Mjartan, Mark Barnes, Derek Cromwell, and Kaitlyn Richards

Meeting was called to order with a quorum present at 3:05pm. Chairman Morley proposed modifying the agenda to share a status update on the executive director search process. The motion to modify the agenda was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Wes Wooten, and approved unanimously. Chairman Morley provided an update on the process and requested feedback on whether the members could meet on June 17th or June 18th for a formal kickoff meeting of the search committee, which includes executive committee members as well as Rep. Shannon Erickson and Mike Leach.

Derek Cromwell indicated to the committee that there were two local partnership executive director pay salary raises requested for consideration. Jesica Mackey made the following motion, which was seconded by Wes Wooten and was approved unanimously.

Motion to enter executive session for the purpose of personnel matters: to discuss local partnership board recommendation regarding Saluda County First Steps executive director compensation; and to discuss local partnership board recommendation regarding Beaufort County First Steps executive director compensation.

With no action taken in session, the following motion was made by Wes Wooten, seconded by Jesica Mackey and approved unanimously:

Motion to exit executive session.

There was discussion of the proposed actions included on the agenda, and they took the following action.

Jesica Mackey made the following motion, which was seconded by Wes Wooten and approved unanimously.

Motion: To approve the proposed Saluda County First Steps executive director compensation, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Wes Wooten made the following motion, which was seconded by Jesica Mackey and approved unanimously.

Motion: To approve the proposed Beaufort County First Steps executive director compensation, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Kaitlyn Richards presented the Local Partnership Executive Director Hiring, Compensation, and Performance Evaluation Policies and Processes. The Committee discussed the policies and processes and modified what was presented to clarify that compensation data on local, similar-sized nonprofits with a similar focus could be compiled as supplementary materials, but should not be required. With this edit, the following single motion (combining with one edit) was made by Jessica Mackey, seconded by Wes Wooten and approved unanimously.

Motion to approve the Local Partnership Executive Director Hiring, Compensation, and Performance Evaluation Policies and Processes as submitted.

Kaitlyn Richards presented the updated Local Partnership Bylaws. After a robust discussion, it was determined that Kaitlyn Richards will reach out, via Sen. Gerald Malloy, to the SC Senate Parliamentarian to further discuss the edits. No vote was taken and the proposed action was tabled until a later date.

At 5:00pm, Jessica Mackey left the meeting; a quorum was still present.

Kaitlyn Richards and Mark Barnes presented the Local Partnership Core Personnel Policies. Wes Wooten made the following motion, seconded by Sen. Gerald Malloy, and approved unanimously.

Motion to approve the Local Partnership Core Personnel Policies as submitted.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:29pm.



South Carolina First Steps Local Partnership Executive Director Hiring Policy

Objective:

The objective of the South Carolina First Steps Local Partnership Executive Director Hiring Policy is to ensure a comprehensive and detailed process is conducted when a local First Steps partnership board of directors is to hire a local partnership executive director. All local partnership executive director hiring requests must be submitted for approval to the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees per state statute. This policy and accompanying process strive to ensure that the selected candidates are the most qualified, experienced, and suitable for the position, and that the hiring process is transparent, fair, and unbiased.

Policy:

S.C. Code § 59-152-70 provides that a local First Steps partnership board of directors shall submit for approval by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees requests to hire a local First Steps partnership executive director. Furthermore, it provides that such a request should provide the rationale for the request and include such information as qualifications of applicants, current and requested salaries of applicants, resumes of candidates, and any information to justify the salary requested.

Upon receiving notification of an upcoming or immediate vacancy in the local partnership executive director position, the local partnership board of directors must form a hiring committee. The hiring committee may be limited to a subcommittee of the local partnership board of directors or may additionally include a staff representative and/or local stakeholders. The hiring committee must have no fewer than 3 and no more than 5 members. A quorum of simple majority must be present and vote to make any recommendations to the full local partnership board of directors regarding posting the job description, reviewing candidates, offering interviews, and selecting the final candidates. The decision to select a final candidate must be voted on and approved by the full local partnership board of directors. The local partnership board of directors may choose to work with a search firm or hiring consultant to support the process.

In the event of an immediate vacancy, the local partnership board of directors must appoint an existing staff member or a member of the local partnership board of directors to serve as the Interim executive director until the hiring process is completed. The local partnership board of directors may opt to contract with a professional interim executive director until the hiring process is complete.

Upon request, South Carolina First Steps will provide a template that the local partnership board of directors may use or edit to post for hiring a local partnership executive director. The local partnership board of directors may also elect to use a job description drafted by the local partnership. The job description must clearly outline the position's essential duties, qualifications, and experience required. The hiring committee must also identify the desired qualities and attributes of the ideal candidate based on the projected priorities for the local partnership. Local partnership executive director



postings must include the salary range and indicate the availability of any paid or optional benefits. The local partnership board of directors must review the salary range provided by South Carolina First Steps and work with South Carolina First Steps to determine an appropriate range before posting the position. Any variance outside of the salary range suggested by South Carolina First Steps may not be approved by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees, unless adequate justification is provided.

South Carolina First Steps will provide a mandatory applicant review tool to assist with subjective applicant screening and identifying an inclusive applicant pool representative of the community served. The local partnership board of directors must submit the results of this mandatory tool with their hiring request to the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees. All hiring requests must demonstrate how applicants were screened and selected to participate in the hiring process.

When the local partnership board of directors identifies a final candidate, the local partnership board of directors may make an offer of employment to the candidate. The local partnership board of directors must notify the candidate that both the hiring decision and the initial compensation package are contingent upon approval by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees. Upon identification of a final candidate, the local partnership board of directors should submit a hiring request through the appropriate submission form to the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees. The initial compensation request must be submitted to the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees at the same time using the appropriate submission form. In addition to the fields on the form, the hiring request should include any supplemental materials related to their candidacy or the rationale for the request.

South Carolina First Steps will review hiring submissions for completion and immediately add the hiring request to the next scheduled South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees or designated Board Committee meeting. The designated Committee of the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees may convene outside of the regular schedule to review hiring decisions. The South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees or the designated Board Committee may request more information from the local partnership board of directors or from South Carolina First Steps in reviewing hiring recommendations. The South Carolina First Steps Executive Director or their designee will manage the response to any requests for additional information by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees. Local partnership board of directors are encouraged to reply as soon as possible and no later than 5 business days to any requests for more information made by South Carolina First Steps staff or the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees.

If the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees declines a local partnership executive director hiring request, the local partnership board of directors may appeal the decision by submitting a written request to the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees within 30 days of the decision. The South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees will review the appeal and provide a written decision within 30 days of receiving the appeal. If the appeal is not accepted, the local partnership board of directors is expected to either repost the job description and accept new applicants or consider an alternative candidate from the existing candidate pool.



It is important that all hiring request packages are fully completed and include all appropriate data. If it is determined that any decision was made based on incomplete or inaccurate information or action was not taken in accordance with this adopted policy and process, the local partnership may be placed on a corrective action plan, or other steps determined appropriate by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees may be taken.

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South Carolina First Steps Local Partnership Executive Director Hiring Process

Objective:

The objective is to establish a comprehensive and detailed process for a local First Steps partnership board of directors to hire a local partnership executive director. All local partnership executive director hiring requests must be submitted for approval to the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees per state statute. This process and the accompanying policy strive to ensure that the selected candidates are the most qualified, experienced, and suitable for the position, and the hiring process is transparent, fair, and unbiased.

Hiring Process Timeline: *The following is a suggested schedule to help guide a timely and efficient search. The quality of the search is of utmost importance and should take precedence over the suggested schedule.*

Day 0: The local partnership board of directors is notified of an impending local partnership executive director vacancy. They should immediately notify the First Steps Chief Partnership Officer.

By Day 15: The local partnership board of directors shall finalize membership of the hiring committee.

By Day 21: Host initial hiring committee meeting and determine a timeline for the hiring process based on the vacancy date, allowing at least 90 days for posting, candidate review, interviews, and identification of a final candidate.

By Day 30: Finalize the job description and work with appropriate staff at the local partnership and South Carolina First Steps on posting and publication.

By Day 45: Review initial candidates to date and determine if additional posting or active recruitment may be necessary.

By Day 60: Use the mandatory screening tool to review the candidate pool and determine if at least 6 candidates are highly qualified for a phone or virtual interview.

By Day 70: Complete virtual interviews and establish if there are at minimum 2 highly qualified candidates to invite to an in-person interview.

By Day 80: Complete in-person interviews and determine if the hiring committee is able to make a hiring recommendation to the local partnership board of directors.

By Day 90: Local partnership board of directors submits the final local partnership executive director candidate for approval to the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees.



Extenuating Circumstances:

If the desired final candidate has competing offers or a circumstance that requires an expedited response, the local partnership board of directors must submit the Hiring Request Form and promptly notify the South Carolina First Steps Executive Director or their designee. The South Carolina First Steps Executive Director will work with the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees or the designated Board Committee to determine if an expedited response is possible. If so, the South Carolina First Steps Executive Director or their designee will promptly notify the local partnership board of directors of the expected process and timeframe.

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South Carolina First Steps Local Partnership Executive Director: Hiring Guidance

Hiring an executive director is one of the most critical tasks that a local partnership board of directors will undertake. The process begins when the local partnership board of directors is notified that an executive director vacancy will occur and continues through approval from the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees approving the hire of a new executive director. Local partnerships are encouraged to communicate actively with South Carolina First Steps throughout the executive director hiring process to ensure that the hiring approval process can be completed as efficiently as possible.

South Carolina First Steps provides a variety of tools to support the hiring process including, but not limited to sample job descriptions, interview questions, candidate review matrices, and job offer letter templates. South Carolina First Steps provides these templates as a guide, but does not prescribe utilization or provide legal guidance in their use. Local partnership hiring committees are encouraged to review the local partnership hiring process with an employment attorney, as well as a human resources professional to audit both the legality and quality of the planned hiring process.

Considerations for Hiring:

- Hiring is a legally complicated process that sets the tone for an employee's tenure with the organization. Local partnerships are encouraged to schedule adequate time for a comprehensive hiring process and to regularly review hiring and employment processes with legal counsel and human resources professionals.
- Hiring an executive director is an important time for the local partnership board of directors to ascertain the priorities for the next leader. The skillsets for extensive fundraising, program development, or operational management can be extremely diverse. Lack of clarity on these expectations can lead to hiring a highly qualified candidate who interviews well, but may not have the highest level of qualification in areas of critical necessity.
- After organizational priorities are determined, ensure that during the interview process the committee is focusing on candidates whose skillsets and experiences align with the priorities. A candidate is set up to fail if they are hired for their operational excellence, but the organization actually needed a skilled fundraiser in the leadership seat at that point in time.
- South Carolina First Steps requires local First Steps partnerships to be committed to fair and equitable hiring practices. Every possible step should be taken to ensure inclusive hiring processes and candidate pools that are representative of the community. Allowances should be made, when possible, for experience in place of education.



- If a local partnership board of directors has determined that the individual serving as Interim Director will be offered the permanent position, the local partnership board of directors must still complete the full hiring process, including the submission of this request to the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees for their approval. If time and resources allow, it is recommended that the local partnership hire an external interim director to allow the internal candidate to complete the hiring process in an unbiased manner.
- Hiring decisions must be approved by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees. If it is possible to align the interview process to finalize within a week of the regularly scheduled South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees meeting, this will facilitate a smooth approval process.
- It is a requirement that before hiring a candidate, the local partnership board of directors must complete reference checks. For the local partnership hiring committee to complete its due diligence, if a candidate has any prior professional affiliation with South Carolina First Steps, the local partnership, or another local partnership, they should promptly reach out to the South Carolina First Steps Chief Partnership Officer to discover any additional information that may help guide their decision.

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**South Carolina First Steps
Local Partnership Executive Director Candidate Review Matrix**

Local Partnership Name: _____
 Executive Director Candidate Review: _____
 Master Scoring Sheet: _____
 Committee Member Name: _____

Rating Scale:	1 - No experience or success
	2 - Not an area of strength
	3 - Normal experience and performance experience and success
	4 - Area of competency that highlights best in class experience and success
	5 - Area of competency that highlights best in class experience and success

Factors and Skillsets	[Insert Candidate 1 Name]	[Insert Candidate 2 Name]	[Insert Candidate 3 Name]	[Insert Candidate 4 Name]	[Insert Candidate 5 Name]
Governance					
Fiscal Management					
Resource Development					
Operations					
Accountability					
Program Strategies					
Leadership					
Self Awareness					
TOTAL SCORE					

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South Carolina First Steps Local Partnership Executive Director Compensation Policy

Objective:

The objective of the South Carolina First Steps Local Partnership Executive Director Compensation Policy is to ensure a comprehensive and detailed process is conducted to establish the initial compensation and any subsequent salary increases for a local partnership executive director per state statute. This policy is designed to ensure that local partnership executive directors receive competitive and fair compensation that reflects their performance, experience, and responsibilities. The policy and accompanying process aim to incentivize high performance, retain top talent, and promote consistency and fairness in the compensation process.

Policy:

S.C. Code § 59-152-70 provides that a local First Steps partnership board of directors shall submit for approval by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees justification of and recommendations for compensation and any compensation increases for the local First Steps partnership executive director. The local partnership board of directors will collaborate with the local partnership executive director candidate to establish an initial compensation package at the time of hire. The local partnership board of directors must notify the candidate that both the hiring decision and the initial compensation package are contingent upon approval from the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees.

Before determining an initial offer of compensation, the local partnership board of directors must request both the regional local partnership compensation data and the recommended salary ranges from South Carolina First Steps. If the local partnership board of directors would like to post a salary range that will exceed or fall below the range recommended by South Carolina First Steps, the local partnership board of directors must provide justification, which could include, but is not limited to, data on local, similarly sized nonprofits with similar focuses. If the proposed range is below the minimum recommended by South Carolina First Steps, the local partnership board of directors must provide a finite timeline to increase the salary to the appropriate range or provide justification for not paying within the range.

Any change in compensation must be submitted through the appropriate submission form to the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees. For any subsequent salary increases, the local partnership board of directors will collaborate with the local partnership executive director to ensure the local partnership board of directors has access to local and regional compensation data, current information about the organization's operational and strategic performance, and the executive director's direct responsibilities and accomplishments. The local partnership board of directors may determine based on the information provided that it would like to award a salary increase to the local partnership executive director. Bonus/Incentive pay compensation and the conditions of such an award must be determined in advance and submitted for approval by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees during the appropriate submission cycle.



Requests for compensation increases must be submitted by April 1 for approval by June 1 and by October 1 for approval by December 1. Compensation increases can be awarded retroactively if indicated clearly on the appropriate submission form. Increases will not be applied retroactively any earlier than the submission date nor can they be applied retroactively if the requested effective date and the approval date occur in different fiscal years.

The South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees may designate a Board Committee to review the compiled compensation increase requests during its regularly scheduled committee meetings. At any time, any member of the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees may request additional information regarding submissions or decisions from the South Carolina First Steps Executive Director.

The submission form must be fully completed for consideration. The South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees or the designated Board Committee will consider the rationale for the request, regional compensation data, and the local partnership executive director's performance evaluation as supplementary information during the review process. All types of compensation should be indicated on the appropriate submission form, including, but not limited to base salary, health insurance, dental/vision/disability/other insurances, retirement, health savings/childcare savings, any paid time off or vacation time, reduced work week or work hours, and any other direct or indirect benefits offered by the local partnership.

The South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees or the designated Board Committee may request more information from the local partnership board of directors or from South Carolina First Steps when considering compensation requests. The South Carolina First Steps Executive Director or their designee will manage the response to any requests for additional information by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees. Local partnership board of directors are encouraged to reply as soon as possible and no later than 5 business days to any requests for more information made by South Carolina First Steps staff for the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees. Any delay in response may delay the review process.

If the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees does not approve a compensation request, the local partnership board of directors may appeal the decision by submitting a written request to the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees within 30 days of the decision. The South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees or the designated Board Committee will review the appeal and provide a written decision within 30 days of receiving the appeal.

If stipends are offered, the stipend amount must be determined during the annual compensation review and submitted for approval during the annual compensation review period. The submission request for stipends should include details about the potential sources of funds and proposed timing.

Bonus or incentive compensation must be determined during the annual compensation review and submitted for approval during the annual compensation review period. Bonus or incentive pay may support a local partnership executive director in achieving goals, but should be justifiable with supporting data and within IRS guidelines as "not excessive."



If a local partnership board of directors determines that it would like to award the local partnership executive director a separate stipend, bonus, or otherwise increase compensation outside of the timeline outlined in the South Carolina First Steps Local Partnership Executive Director Compensation Process, that request must be submitted to the South Carolina First Steps Executive Director or their designee. The review date will be determined based on the urgency of the considered event, the date of the next scheduled meeting of the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees or designated Board Committee, and the ability of the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees and/or the designated Board Committee to convene. Local partnership board of directors are strongly encouraged to determine bonus and/or incentive package qualifications in advance. There is no guarantee that delayed requests will be approved.

It is important that all compensation request packages are fully completed and include all appropriate data. If it is determined that any decision was made based on incomplete or inaccurate information or action was not taken in accordance with this adopted policy and process, costs may be disallowed, the local partnership may be placed on a corrective action plan, or other steps determined appropriate may be taken by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees.

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South Carolina First Steps Local Partnership Executive Director Compensation Process

Objective:

The objective is to create a detailed and comprehensive process to establish the initial compensation and any subsequent compensation increase for local partnership executive directors per the requirements of state statute. This process and accompanying policy are designed to ensure that local partnership executive directors receive competitive and fair compensation that reflects their performance, experience, and responsibilities. The policy aims to incentivize high performance, retain top talent, and promote consistency and fairness in the compensation process.

Initial Compensation Establishment Timeline:

Starting Point: The local partnership board of directors must request both the regional local partnership compensation data and the recommended salary ranges from South Carolina First Steps. The local partnership board of directors will work with South Carolina First Steps to determine a compensation range to be included in the published job description. The published job description should include a comprehensive summary of any available benefits.

Step 1: The local partnership board of directors has determined it would like to make a compensation offer to a desired candidate. The local partnership board of directors will present the candidate with an offer within the published range. The local partnership board of directors must notify the candidate that the offer is contingent upon approval by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees. The offer must detail annual compensation, any bonus or incentive compensation, any benefits provided and the associated value, any paid time off, and any other benefits the candidate would receive upon accepting the offer. The candidate should ideally respond within 3-5 business days, or a timeframe established by the local partnership board of directors, with a counteroffer or their acceptance of the initial offer.

Step 2: If the candidate counters the initial offer, the local partnership board of directors must determine whether to accept or decline the offer or to issue their own counter offer within 3-5 business days. The candidate should again be allowed 3-5 business days to respond.

Step 3: When the local partnership board of directors and the local partnership executive director candidate agree on a compensation package, the local partnership board of directors should immediately submit the appropriate request forms to the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees. The South Carolina First Steps Executive Director or their designee will take steps to convene the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees or the designated Board Committee to review the local partnership executive director hiring and compensation requests.

Step 4: Following the regularly scheduled meeting of the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees or the designated Board Committee, the South Carolina First Steps Executive Director or their designee will relay the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees' decision or request for more information to the local partnership board of directors. If more information is requested, the local partnership



board of directors should respond as soon as possible and no later than 5 business days after receiving the request. Any delays in response may delay the final decision.

Step 5: If the hiring and compensation requests are approved by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees, the local partnership board of directors should notify the candidate of the approval and move forward with the hiring and onboarding process. If the compensation offer is rejected, the local partnership board of directors can renegotiate with the existing candidate. If the hiring decision is rejected, the local partnership board of directors should reopen the hiring process or review previously considered candidates. If this occurs, South Carolina First Steps staff are available to support the local partnership board of directors in determining the best course of action.

Compensation Increase Request Process Timeline:

January 1 or August 1: Suggested deadline for the local partnership executive director to compile all supporting data (regional and local compensation information, organizational strategic and operational achievements, achievements directly tied to the executive director's performance, most recent performance evaluation, and any other relevant information) and provide such to the local partnership board of directors.

March 17 or September 17: Suggested deadline for the local partnership board of directors to review all data and determine desired compensation, including bonus or incentive compensation, for a local partnership executive director.

April 1 or October 1: Deadline for the local partnership board of directors to complete the Local Partnership Executive Director Compensation Form and formally submit to the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees.

June 1 or December 1: The South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees or the designated Board Committee will review submissions during regularly scheduled meetings. Results of any action taken will be reported back to the local partnership board of directors by the South Carolina First Steps Executive Director or their designee.

Extenuating Circumstances:

In the event that a local partnership board of directors needs to submit a compensation increase request or a compensation request for a local partnership executive director candidate outside of the prescribed timeline, the local partnership board of directors must submit the Compensation Request Form and promptly notify the South Carolina First Steps Executive Director or their designee. This notification must clearly explain the reason for the request and the requested response period or any other deadlines for the local partnership. The South Carolina First Steps Executive Director or their designee will work with the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees or the designated Board Committee to determine if an expedited response is possible. If so, the South Carolina First Steps Executive Director or their designee will promptly notify the local partnership board of directors of the expected process and timeframe. Requests to hire a new local partnership executive director and set the initial compensation are automatically extenuating circumstances that will be accommodated.



**South Carolina First Steps
Local Partnership Executive Director: Compensation Guidelines**

Overview:

Setting compensation is complicated and should be driven by research. The following factors can influence compensation:

- Budget size of the local partnership
- Years of experience
- Education level
- Salary offered by local, similar-sized nonprofits with a similar focus
- Salary offered by similar-sized South Carolina First Steps local partnerships

Guidelines:

Organizations may be limited in their ability to pay within the recommended range due to financial constraints, but should actively plan to increase revenue and compensation to level as soon as possible. Organizations paying beyond the range should have a strong case based on similar-sized organizations, experience, and education. When an organization is operating as a multi-county partnership, the local partnership executive director’s compensation should be based on the combined factors of the organizations.

Budget Size	Years of Experience	Education Level	Direct Comp. Bottom of Range	Direct Comp. Top of Range
Under \$500,000	1-3 years	Some post-secondary education	\$50,000	\$60,000
\$500,000 - \$750,000	3-5 years	Bachelor’s Degree	\$60,000	\$80,000
Over \$750,000	5+ years	Master’s Degree or higher	\$70,000	\$110,000

Local partnership executive directors may cross multiple categories. For example, the executive director of a local partnership with a budget of less than \$500,000 may have a Master’s Degree and 3-5 years of experience. A reasonable salary for this executive director would average the three categories leading to a \$60,000 – \$83,000 range.

Stipends:

Stipends should be budgeted for in the annual compensation request. Stipends can demonstrate a commitment to competitive executive director pay when the organization feels like it cannot sustainably increase salary. The stipend can be dependent on funding availability, but should not be tied to performance goals as it would then qualify as incentive pay. Stipends may also be used to



acknowledge a temporary increase in responsibility if the local partnership executive director's workload and/or responsibility increases. For example, an organization may fall within a category of the \$50,000-\$60,000 recommended range, but only have the capacity to budget \$45,000 for salary. A \$10,000 stipend line, contingent on funding availability, would allow the organization to budget and plan for the compensation, but not require the 52-week commitment of salary.

Bonus/Incentive Pay:

Bonus/Incentive pay should be based on clear deliverables and tied to goal achievement. Bonus/incentive pay can be tiered so that the local partnership executive director is eligible for a percentage of the total pool available, proportional to the goals completed. Bonus/Incentive pay typically does not exceed 10% of salary.

Benefits:

The value of a benefits package may add value beyond what the organization can afford in cash compensation. A local partnership executive director may put higher value on retirement benefits or paid time off over direct compensation, depending on their personal circumstances. A standard average is that benefits value ranges between 25% – 40% of salary.

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**South Carolina First Steps
Local Partnership Executive Director: Total Compensation Worksheet**

Local Partnership Name: _____

Date of Completion: _____

Executive Director Years of Tenure: _____

Highest Level of Education Completed by Executive Director: _____

Direct Compensation	
Regular Salary	
Bonus/Incentive Pay	
Paid Annual Leave	
Paid Sick Leave	
TOTAL	

Indirect Compensation	Total Cost	Employer Contribution
Medical		
Dental		
Vision		
Long-term disability		
Short-term disability		
Life Insurance		
Retirement Savings		
Flexible Spending Accounts		
Other		
TOTAL		



	Compensation
Direct Compensation	
Indirect Compensation	
TOTAL	

	Projected Range
Range for Organization Size	
Range for Years of Experience	
Range for Education Level	

Please provide justification for any variance:

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**South Carolina First Steps
Local Partnership Executive Director Compensation Matrix**

Budget Size	Years of Experience	Education	Direct Compensation - Bottom of Range	Direct Compensation - Top of Range	Total Compensation - Bottom of Range	Total Compensation - Top of Range
Under \$500,000	1-3 years	Some post-secondary education	\$50,000	\$60,000	\$65,000	\$78,000
\$500,000-\$750,000	3-5 years	Bachelor's Degree	\$60,000	\$80,000	\$78,000	\$104,000
Over \$750,000	5+ years	Master's Degree or higher	\$70,000	\$110,000	\$91,000	\$143,000
Direct Compensation			Years of Tenure	Total PTO		
Regular Salary			Years 1-3	10-15 days		
Annual Stipend			Years 3-5	15-20 days		
Bonus/Incentive Pay			Years 5-8	20-25 days		
Paid Annual Leave			Years 8-11	25-30 days		
Paid Sick Leave			Years 11+	30-35 days		
TOTAL						
Indirect Compensation	Total Cost	Employer Contribution				
Medical						
Dental						
Vision						
Long-term disability						
Short-term disability						
Life Insurance						
Retirement Savings						
Flexible Spending Accounts						
Other						
TOTAL						
	Compensation			Projected Range		
Direct Compensation			Range for Organization Size			
Indirect Compensation			Range for Years Experience			
TOTAL			Range for Education			



South Carolina First Steps Local Partnership Executive Director Performance Evaluation Policy

Objective:

The objective of the South Carolina First Steps Local Partnership Executive Director Performance Evaluation Policy is to ensure an annual performance evaluation is conducted for each local First Steps partnership executive director per state statute. The evaluation process will provide feedback to the local partnership executive director regarding their performance, areas of improvement, and achievements. The feedback will be used to improve the performance of the local partnership executive director and the organization as a whole.

Policy:

S.C. Code § 59-152-70 provides that a local partnership board of directors shall implement and document an annual performance evaluation for the local First Steps partnership executive director. Furthermore, the completed document shall be submitted annually to the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees. Local partnership executive directors should complete at minimum six months of tenure prior to any performance evaluation being conducted. Local partnership executive directors should go no longer than 18 months from date of hire without completing the performance evaluation process.

The local partnership board of directors must collaborate with the local partnership executive director to complete the performance evaluation process. The local partnership executive director must ensure the local partnership board of directors has access to all current information about the organization's operational and strategic performance and the executive director's direct responsibilities and accomplishments. The performance evaluation process should be completed annually and the final document must be submitted to the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees on the prescribed timeline.

Local partnership board of directors must complete the performance evaluation form provided by South Carolina First Steps. The document is mandatory to create baseline data for use by both South Carolina First Steps and the local partnerships. South Carolina First Steps may provide supplemental, optional templates to the local partnerships. Local partnerships may also use performance evaluation tools already in existence or specifically created by their organization to supplement the mandatory section provided by South Carolina First Steps. The final performance evaluation submitted to the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees should be inclusive of mandatory, supplemental, and any additional tools used to formally evaluate the local partnership executive director. The performance evaluation must be fully completed for consideration.

Performance evaluations that are honest assessments including a measurable plan for performance improvement will not be used to penalize local partnerships. The performance evaluation process and any included feedback or commentary will be kept confidential by the reviewing parties.



The South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees or the designated Board Committee may request more information from the local partnership board or from South Carolina First Steps during their review of the performance evaluations. The South Carolina First Steps Executive Director or their designee will manage the response to any requests for additional information by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees. Local partnership board of directors are encouraged to reply as soon as possible and no later than 5 business days to any requests for more information made by South Carolina First Steps staff or the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees.

If a local partnership board of directors is unable to complete the performance evaluation during the prescribed evaluation period, a request for an exception must be submitted as soon as it is recognized that deadline compliance is not possible. Requests for an exception should be submitted in writing to the South Carolina First Steps Executive Director or their designee who will work with the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees or the designated Board Committee to review the request.

If a performance evaluation submission lacks the mandatory section or does not reflect the spirit of the review process, the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees may elect not to accept a performance evaluation until additional materials are provided. It is important that performance evaluations are fully completed and include all appropriate data. If it is determined that any decision was made based on incomplete or inaccurate information or action was not taken in accordance with this adopted policy and process, the local partnership may be placed on a corrective action plan, or other steps determined appropriate by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees may be taken.

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South Carolina First Steps Local Partnership Executive Director Performance Evaluation Process

Objective:

The objective is to establish a comprehensive and detailed process for a local First Steps partnership board of directors to conduct an annual performance evaluation for the local First Steps partnership executive director. The evaluation process will provide feedback to the local partnership executive director regarding their performance, areas of improvement, and achievements. The feedback will be used to improve the performance of the local partnership executive director and the organization as a whole.

Performance Review Process Timeline:

April 1 or October 1: Suggested deadline for the local partnership executive director to compile their initial response to the performance evaluation form(s) and submit such to the local partnership board of directors to review and respond.

May 1 or November 1: Suggested deadline for local partnership board of directors to review the local partnership executive director's initial responses to the performance evaluation and compile, complete, and approve their response.

May 31 or November 30: Suggested deadline for local partnership board of directors to present the local partnership executive director with the performance evaluation.

June 15 or December 15: Suggested deadline for any response by the local partnership executive director to be included in the performance evaluation submission.

June 30 or December 31: Deadline for the local partnership board of directors to submit the final performance evaluation to the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees.

Extenuating Circumstances:

In the event that a local partnership board of directors is unable to complete the performance evaluation during the prescribed timeline, the local partnership board of directors must immediately notify the South Carolina First Steps Executive Director or their designee. This notification should include the reasoning for why the evaluation cannot be completed during the prescribed time frame. The South Carolina First Steps Executive Director or their designee will notify the local partnership executive director and board of directors if the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees will accept the performance evaluation outside of the prescribed time frame. Local partnership board of directors must complete an evaluation for the local partnership executive director every 12 months as required by state statute.



South Carolina First Steps Local Partnership Executive Director: Performance Evaluation Guidance

Considerations for Performance Evaluations:

- It is important for the local partnership board of directors to be familiar with all the actions and activities of the executive director and they should take these into account when preparing a performance evaluation. The performance evaluation should include all relevant information for the entire period being evaluated. For example, one source might be the data and reports that are regularly submitted to South Carolina First Steps.
- The performance evaluation scale allows for N/A when a local partnership board member is new to the board or does not have experience interacting with the executive director in that specific capacity. N/A responses should be limited to a local partnership board member's first year of service. Beyond the introductory year of service, each board member should be engaged and educated on each aspect so they may fairly and reasonably assess performance.
- Annual performance evaluations are not intended to function in lieu of active support and engagement throughout the year. A local partnership executive director should not learn of a performance concern for the first time during the performance evaluation process. If the local partnership board of directors is concerned about any area of performance, the local partnership board of directors should immediately bring that concern to the local partnership executive director and allow them time to adjust their performance to meet the expectations of the local partnership board of directors.
- Performance evaluations are an opportunity to recalibrate expectations. If extenuating circumstances or factors changed the operating environment of the local partnership or performance capacity of the local partnership executive director, those circumstances should be considered, but are not a comprehensive reason for incomplete goals and performance objectives.
- Having clearly stated goals and identifying responsible parties for each goal makes it easier to evaluate performance. If goals have not been clearly stated and communicated, the performance evaluation process may be more successful if it is framed as a conversation on what went well, what could have been more successful, and opportunities for improvement. In this situation, the performance evaluation process is an opportunity to set clearly stated goals and identify responsible parties for the next year which can then be evaluated during the proper time period.
- The performance evaluation process requires an extensive amount of time and discussion. When performance evaluations are completed without adequate time, chaos and conflict can diminish or eliminate the opportunity for positive, forward-thinking, mutual reflection.
- Performance evaluations are intended to be a reflective opportunity for both the local partnership executive director and the local partnership board of directors. Even the most successful executive director has opportunities for growth and development. The South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees expects to see opportunities for growth and development in each performance evaluation and will not penalize the local partnership for submitting an honest, comprehensive performance evaluation with plans to address in areas of improvement. The South Carolina First



Steps Board of Trustees would rather see an honest evaluation with plans to address any performance issues than learn later that performance was inflated or inaccurately portrayed.

- Success is achieved through mutually supportive collaboration, planning, and execution of tasks and goals. If the local partnership board of directors finds that the local partnership executive director is not achieving expectations, the local partnership board of directors should use this opportunity to reflect on their management of the local partnership executive director. Did the executive director receive clear direction from the board of directors? Did the board of directors fully and actively participate in their duties and provide the executive director with the necessary resources for success?
- Performance evaluations often fall victim to the professional equivalent of grade inflation. Being normal or average at a task or subject matter is acceptable and should be acknowledged without being misconstrued as failure. When average, normal, or expected performance is graded as exceptional it leaves no room for meaningful documentation of improvement. Local partnership board of directors should be intentional and communicate about the grading scale ensuring the local partnership executive director knows that recognizing most areas as “meeting expectations” or the equivalent allows recognition of areas that are truly exceptional and also honestly assesses those areas that may need improvement.

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**South Carolina First Steps
Local Partnership Executive Director Mandatory Performance Evaluation**

Date: _____
 Local Partnership Name: _____
 Executive Director Name: _____
 Local partnership Board of Directors Chair Name: _____
 Local partnership Board of Directors Chair Email: _____

Evaluation Scale:
N/A - I don't have experience or knowledge in the area under evaluation
1 - Area of concern in need of future attention
2 - Needs improvement
3 - Normal, expected performance
4 - Above expectations
5 - Far exceeding expectations

Demographics:	
Cummulative years of nonprofit executive director experience:	
Total years of local partnership executive director experience:	
Highest level of education completed:	
Has the local partnership been issued a corrective action plan during the evaluation period?	

Governance Performance Area	Score	Executive Director Comments	Local Partnership Board of Directors Comments
Effectively collaborates with external stakeholders to secure board appointments			
Supports the board in using a self-evaluation tool annually to collect board-related performance evaluation data			
Provides all relevant and timely information to the board about key issues for discussion, analysis, and decision-making that keep the board focused on strategic oversight			
Supports the board in understanding best practices for governance and provides opportunities for education about the board's role and responsibilities			

Fiscal Management Performance Area	Score	Executive Director Comments	Local Partnership Board of Directors Comments
Ensures financial systems are operated with fidelity, ensuring internal controls			
Ensures compliance with all provisions of the Finance Operations Manual Can accurately explain financial statements and financial status of the organization			
Demonstrates mastery of the budget and cash flow management			
Manages all funds according to appropriate use and fund restrictions			

Resource Development Performance Area	Score	Executive Director Comments	Local Partnership Board of Directors Comments
Works with the board to develop, implement, and monitor a realistic fundraising plan that includes funding from grants, corporations or sponsorships, special events, and individual and major donors			
Documents gifts received and acknowledges them in a timely fashioned			
Establishes a base donor retention rate and updates the board regularly on donor retention rate and activities			
Establishes a plan to engage new donors and regularly updates the board on number of new donors, and total dollars in new gifts			

Participates actively in identifying, cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding potential donors and grantmakers			
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Operations			
Performance Area	Score	Executive Director Comments	Local Partnership Board of Directors Comments
Annually reviews policies, procedures, and employee handbook with the board of directors			
Recruits, develops and retains a competent staff and manages staff performance effectively through clear job descriptions, regular feedback, training, and performance reviews			
Provides regular supervision to employees and ensures an annual performance review, that includes goals for the next year, is completed for each employee			
Demonstrates sound judgment in prioritization, delegation, and project management leading to achievement of stated goals			

Accountability			
Performance Area	Score	Executive Director Comments	Local Partnership Board of Directors Comments
Maintains website, email addresses, and print materials. Ensures all documents are well-designed and error free			
Regularly updates the board on the results of program evaluations and any steps to address issues identified in evaluations			
Maintains compliance with all required laws, regulations, and policies			

Program Strategies			
Performance Area	Score	Executive Director Comments	Local Partnership Board of Directors Comments
Engages the community in coalition-building that leads to support for the local partnership and addresses the issues that impact First Steps' clients			
Conducts, monitors, completes, and evaluates projects and routinely reports on the results of such to the board of directors			
Effectively communicates the vision and work of the local partnership in a way that inspires others to take action supporting the partnership			

Leadership			
Performance Area	Score	Executive Director Comments	Local Partnership Board of Directors Comments
Regularly pursues, considers, and acts on opportunities to improve and grow the local partnership			
Identifies, develops, and maintains key relationships in the community necessary for local partnership success			
Demonstrates sound judgment when engaging with internal and external stakeholders			

[COVER PAGE/DESIGN]

DISCLAIMER

ALL EMPLOYEES OF _____ COUNTY FIRST STEPS ARE EMPLOYED AT-WILL AND MAY QUIT OR BE TERMINATED AT ANY TIME AND FOR ANY OR NO REASON. NOTHING IN ANY OF FIRST STEP'S RULES, POLICIES, HANDBOOKS, PROCEDURES OR OTHER DOCUMENTS RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT CREATES ANY EXPRESS OR IMPLIED CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT. NO PAST PRACTICES OR PROCEDURES, WHETHER ORAL OR WRITTEN, FORM ANY EXPRESS OR IMPLIED AGREEMENT TO CONTINUE SUCH PRACTICES OR PROCEDURES. NO PROMISES OR ASSURANCES, WHETHER WRITTEN OR ORAL, WHICH ARE CONTRARY TO OR INCONSISTENT WITH THE LIMITATIONS SET FORTH IN THIS PARAGRAPH CREATE ANY CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT UNLESS: 1) THE TERMS ARE PUT IN WRITING, 2) THE DOCUMENT IS LABELED "CONTRACT," 3) THE DOCUMENT STATES THE DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT, AND 4) THE DOCUMENT IS SIGNED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AFTER AFFIRMATIVE VOTE OF THE BOARD.

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Acknowledgment:

I acknowledge receipt of the foregoing [name of document] and UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS NOT A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Instructions: Sign, date, print name and return this to your manager.
Manager Instructions: Return form to your Executive Director or your assigned Human Resources representative.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Federal and state laws prohibit discrimination in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral, and other aspects of employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical condition), sexual orientation or gender identity, national origin, genetic information, disability, age, military or veteran status, or other protected category.

If you believe that you have been discriminated against in violation of the law, you should immediately contact the Executive Director. Complaints about the Executive Director should be made to the Chair of the Board. Every complaint will be investigated.

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ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

Policy

First Steps policy, as well as various laws and regulations, generally prohibit employment decisions from being made on the basis of race, gender, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or similar distinctions. In addition, it is our policy to provide a working environment in which employees are free from discomfort or pressure resulting from jokes, ridicule, slurs, threats and harassment either relating to such distinctions or simply resulting from a lack of consideration for a fellow human being.

Your local First Steps Partnership will not tolerate harassment of any kind. This includes behavior that creates a hostile working environment, “jokes” and “teasing,” and other unwelcome and offensive actions or language that harass, demean, or otherwise abuse an individual. Your local First Steps Partnership also forbids retaliation against anyone who has reported harassment in good faith.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment warrants special mention. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other physical, verbal, or visual conduct based on sex constitute sexual harassment when:

- (1) Submission to the conduct is an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment; or
- (2) Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision; or
- (3) The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment may include explicit sexual propositions, sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, sexually oriented “kidding” or “teasing,” “practical jokes,” jokes about gender-specific traits, foul or obscene language or gestures, displays or transmission of foul or obscene printed or visual material, “put-downs” or condescending or derisive comments or terms based on gender, and physical conduct, such as patting, pinching, brushing against another person, or unwanted sexual contact. Although sometimes the “perpetrator” of such conduct is male and the “victim” is female, this

policy prohibits such conduct regardless of the gender or gender identity of the perpetrator or victim.

Scope

This policy applies regardless of where the conduct occurs and when it occurs, so long as the conduct has an impact on our workplace. Conduct that is prohibited by this policy at work and during working hours is also prohibited away from the workplace and during non-working time. In addition, conduct that would violate this policy in person also violates this policy when it occurs by E-mail, texting, or social media.

Complaint Procedure and Investigation

If you feel that this policy has been violated by anyone with whom you come in contact on the job, regardless of whether it is by a fellow worker, a supervisor, or a member of the general public, you should report the incident(s). Reports should be made to your supervisor or to a higher level in your "chain of command." If your local First Steps Partnership has a designated human resources representative, you may report to that person as well. However, reports of harassment may be made to any member of management. Complaints against your supervisor should be made to the next highest level of management. Complaints from or about the Executive Director should be made to the Chair of the Board. If you feel you are not getting the appropriate response from management, you may report your concerns to the SC First Steps Chief Partnership Officer. Your local First Steps Partnership will keep the information it gathers as confidential as possible, consistent with state and federal laws and the needs of the investigation.

Supervisors and managers who receive complaints of or become aware of harassment should coordinate with the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is the subject of a complaint, supervisors and managers should inform the Chair of the Board.

Every harassment allegation will be investigated. Investigatory procedures may vary from case to case, depending upon the circumstances. All employees have a responsibility to cooperate fully with the investigation. In cases in which the circumstances require it, employees may be asked to keep the matter confidential. In those cases, people who are interviewed will be given instructions specific to the case. Confidentiality does not mean, however, that employees may not complain to civil rights or government agencies. As stated above, your local First Steps Partnership will keep the information it gathers as confidential as possible, consistent with state and federal laws and the needs of the investigation.

Corrective Action

If management concludes that a complaint of harassment has merit, appropriate action will be taken. Employees are subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Non-employees may be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency and/or barred from the premises or services provided by this organization.

Important

In order to avoid misunderstandings, complaints made under this policy must involve completion of a written report describing the incident. The complaint should include the date(s) and place(s) of the event(s), whether there were any witnesses, and the action the complainant thinks is warranted under the circumstances. The complainant may request a copy of the completed report. Local First Steps Partnerships are encouraged to seek professional guidance to ensure investigations are conducted properly.

These procedures have been established to enable you to get relief if you feel that you are the victim of harassment. The U.S. Supreme Court has said that, as a general rule, you may not sue your local First Steps Partnership for a violation of your rights unless you first give us notice and an opportunity to end the harassment. The reporting procedures we have adopted are intended to establish a clear record of what has been reported.

BUSINESS ETHICS AND CONDUCT

The successful business operation and reputation of your local First Steps Partnership is built upon the principles of ethical conduct by all employees. Our reputation for honesty, respect, caring, integrity, and excellence requires employees to carefully observe the spirit and letter of all applicable laws and regulations, as well as to exhibit the highest standards of personal and professional integrity and conduct, and to refrain from illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct.

The continued success of your local First Steps Partnership is dependent upon the trust of our clients, our stakeholders, and the public, and we must be dedicated to preserving that trust. Employees owe a duty to their local First Steps Partnership to act in a way that will merit the continued trust and confidence of the public. In general, the use of good judgment, based on high ethical principles, will guide you with respect to acceptable conduct. If a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, the matter should be discussed openly with your immediate supervisor and, if necessary, with the Executive Director. Compliance with this Policy is the responsibility of every First Steps Partnership employee. Disregarding or failing to comply with this Policy may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your local First Steps Partnership is committed to safeguarding confidential information entrusted to it. Confidential information is all information disclosed to or known by you because of your employment with your local First Steps Partnership that is not generally known to people outside of our organization. Your local First Steps Partnership employees may not use confidential information for any purpose other than performing their local First Steps Partnership work responsibilities. Employees may not share or otherwise disclose confidential information acquired at your local First Steps Partnership to anyone outside of your local First Steps Partnership without proper authorization or consent. This duty of confidentiality also extends to internal First Steps Partnership business information such as client names, security codes, passwords, and information about individuals served. Failure to adhere to this expectation can place offending employees in violation of federal and state law. Additionally, employees who improperly use or disclose confidential information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, or criminal prosecution.

The protection of confidential information requires continual employee vigilance as well as awareness that the sharing of such information can occur unintentionally. Employees must take reasonable steps to assure security in the transmission of confidential information. Employees shall also take reasonable steps to verify the accuracy of mailing addresses, email addresses, and FAX numbers prior to transmitting confidential information in an appropriate manner, which may include the use of encryption of data. Each employee is responsible for ensuring that any confidential data goes only to an individual with a legal and authorized right to the data.

Your local First Steps Partnership provides employees with access to confidential information on a need-to-know basis only and only the minimum amount of information necessary for any role. Employees may not browse or otherwise explore confidential information beyond the need to carry out their First Steps Partnership job responsibilities.

Employees who are uncertain whether information is confidential shall seek guidance from their supervisor, the Executive Director, or the Executive Director's designee.

DRUG FREE WORKPLACE

Employees of local First Steps Partnerships are expected to be free from the effects of illegal drugs and alcohol while working. Accordingly, all employees of local First Steps Partnerships are prohibited from swallowing, inhaling, injecting, dealing in, or otherwise using illegal drugs and substances (such as marijuana, cocaine, LSD, heroin, etc.) and prescription drugs which are not prescribed for the employee's own use. Given that the successful business operation and reputation of your local First Steps Partnership is built upon the principles of ethical conduct by all employees, this prohibition applies to use at any time.

Notice By Employee To Employer, State And Federal Grantor/ Contracting Agencies

As a condition of employment, employees agree to notify their local First Steps Partnership within 5 calendar days after any criminal conviction for the workplace manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of illegal drugs and prescription drugs not prescribed for the individual employee's use. As required by the state and federal Drug Free Workplace Acts, your local First Steps Partnership must notify all state and federal grantors/contracting agencies of such employee convictions. "Conviction" means a finding of guilt, imposition of a sentence, a plea of no contest, or a plea of guilty.

Notice By Employer To Law Enforcement Authorities

Your local First Steps Partnership may notify law enforcement authorities whenever illegal drugs are found in the workplace.

MANDATED REPORTER STATUS

Because your local First Steps Partnership employees have unique opportunities to observe and interact with children, South Carolina law requires that we report known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. This obligation is known as Mandated Reporting. Depending on the services your Local Partnership provides, it may be necessary for you to have annual or periodic training on this topic.

Under the law, we must report abuse or neglect when, in our professional capacity, we receive information giving us reason to believe that a child's physical or mental health has been, or may be, adversely affected by abuse or neglect. A decision to report must be based upon a reasonable belief that a child has been, or may be, abused or neglected. In other words, we do not need to have conclusive proof that a child has been abused or neglected prior to reporting abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

To report suspected child abuse or neglect **by a child's parent, guardian, or person responsible for the child's welfare**, contact the SCDSS 24-hour, toll-free hotline at **1-888-CARE4US** or 1-888-227-3487. This hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Intake staff will assist the person making the report and assess the information provided to determine if an investigation is necessary. Reports may also be made online at <https://benefitsportal.dss.sc.gov/#/ran/home>, or you may contact local law enforcement. Employees must notify the Executive Director after making notification to DSS.

To report suspect child abuse or neglect **by someone who is not the child's parent, guardian, or person responsible for the child's welfare**, you must report to local law enforcement.

Call 911 immediately if the situation is a life-threatening emergency. An emergency situation is when a child appears to face an immediate risk of abuse or neglect that could result in death or serious harm.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Your local First Steps Partnership is judged by the collective and individual performance of its employees. We have an interest in preserving our reputation and the reputation of our employees. Thus, your local First Steps Partnership holds itself and its employees to the highest standards of lawful and ethical conduct. In that regard, your local First Steps Partnership requires all employees to sign and abide by a Conflict of Interest agreement.

Employees must be very careful that their relationships with clients, partners, and community members, as well as their other activities, do not involve or give the appearance of self-dealing. Your local First Steps Partnership employees must refrain from engaging in any activity that could be in conflict with their status as a First Steps Partnership employee. This includes the use of an employee's position with your local First Steps Partnership for personal profit, advantage, or entering into transactions or relationships where it may appear that an employee has a conflict of interest, is improperly benefiting from an affiliation with your local First Steps Partnership or is violating laws governing fiduciary relationships. Good judgment should supplement these provisions to avoid even the appearance of impropriety.

Certain activities are not allowed by your local First Steps Partnership which would appear as a conflict of interest. These include a prohibition of an employee being both a vendor and an employee of the local First Steps Partnership. It also includes a prohibition of any member of an employee's immediate family from being employed by the Partnership while either being supervised by them, or in their chain of command.

Examples of Conflicts of Interest:

- If, as secondary employment, you work for a service provider utilized by your local First Steps Partnership, that would be considered a conflict of interest.
- If you choose to buy work-related supplies from your spouse's company without determining the best valuation/service, it would be considered a conflict of interest since you stand to gain financially from the transaction.

If an employee has questions about a transaction or activity, the employee should seek guidance from his or her supervisor, Executive Director, or Chair of the Board.

WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

Your local First Steps Partnership requires directors, officers, and employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As employees and representatives of your local First Steps Partnership, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

It is the responsibility of all directors, officers, and employees to report ethics violations or suspected violations in accordance with this Whistleblower Policy.

No director, officer, or employee who in good faith reports an ethics violation will suffer harassment, retaliation, or an adverse employment action for doing so. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable directors, officers, and employees to raise serious concerns within your local First Steps Partnership prior to seeking resolution outside of your local First Steps Partnership.

Your local First Steps Partnership has an open-door policy, meaning employees should share their questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints with someone who can address them properly. In most cases, an employee's supervisor is in the best position to address an area of concern. However, if you are not comfortable speaking with your supervisor, or you are not satisfied with your supervisor's response, you are encouraged to speak with your Executive Director. If your concern involves the Executive Director, or if you are not comfortable speaking to your Executive Director, you are encouraged to speak to the Chair of the Board. If your concern involves the Chair of the Board, or if you are not comfortable speaking to the Chair of the Board, you are encouraged to speak to the First Steps Chief Partnership Officer.

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicated a violation. Any allegations that are not substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or with knowingly false information may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment.

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation, and controlling laws.

The person to whom the employee reports a complaint will notify the employee and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within 2

business days. All reports will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

DRAFT

DOCUMENT RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION

This policy specifies how important documents (hardcopy, online, or other media) should be retained, protected and eligible for destruction. The policy also ensures that documents are promptly provided to authorities during legal investigations or lawsuits. At least one copy of each of the following types of documents will be retained, either in hard copy or electronically, for the specified duration.

Corporate Records, as described below, are maintained permanently.

- Articles of Incorporation
- Letter of Determination granting tax exempt and/or charitable status
- SC Registration as a charitable organization
- By-laws
- Board policies and resolutions
- Board meeting minutes
- Sales tax exemption documents
- Tax identification number
- Annual corporate filings
- Annual Audits and Financial Statements

Tax Records

- Annual tax filings, including IRS Form 990 Permanent
- IRS Application for Tax-Exempt Status (Form 1023) Permanent
- IRS 1099s 7 years

Payroll and Employment Tax Records

- Payroll Registers Permanent
- Unemployment Tax Records Permanent
- Earnings Records 7 years
- Garnishment Records 7 years
- Payroll Tax returns 7 years
- W-2 Statements 7 years

Financial Records

- Fiscal Policies and Procedures Permanent
- Audits/Financial Statements Permanent
- Property/Asset Inventories 7 years
- Business Expenses Documents 7 years
- Invoices 7 years
- Credit Card Receipts 7 years

Procurement Records

- Contracts 7 years

- MOAs 7 years
- Vendor Agreements 7 years
- RFPs 7 years

Employee Records

- Employee offer letters Permanent
- Confirmation of employment letters Permanent
- Employee applications and resumes 7 years after termination
- Promotions, demotions, letters of reprimand, termination 7 years after termination
- Job descriptions, performance goals 7 years after termination
- I-9 Forms 5 years after termination
- Payroll and timekeeping reports 5 years after termination
- Salary ranges per job description 5 years

Insurance Records

- Property Insurance policies Permanent
- Directors and Officers policies Permanent
- Workers' Compensation Insurance policies Permanent
- General Liability Insurance policies Permanent
- Insurance claims applications Permanent
- Insurance disbursements/denials Permanent

Program Records (unless a longer time frame is required by the Program)

- Client Files 7 years (unless client says longer)
- Group Meetings 7 years
- Training 7 years
- Surveys 7 years

MILITARY LEAVE

Your local First Steps Partnership will grant a military leave of absence and reinstatement to employees who are absent from work because they are serving in the U.S. uniformed services in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). You are required to give your supervisor advance notice of upcoming military service, unless military necessity prevents advance notice or it is otherwise impossible or unreasonable. You must also provide a copy of your orders as soon as they are available.

The military leave will be unpaid. However, you may use any available paid time off to be compensated for unpaid military leave.

Continuation of health insurance benefits is available as required by USERRA based on the length of the leave and subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of the applicable plans for which you are otherwise eligible.

Benefit accruals, such as vacation, sick leave, or holiday benefits, will be suspended during a military leave of greater than two weeks and will resume when you return to active employment.

If you have questions about military leave, contact your supervisor or Executive Director for more information.

JURY DUTY

At your local First Steps Partnership, we encourage you to fulfill your civic responsibilities by serving jury duty when required. You may request up to 5 days of paid jury duty leave for the length of the absence. You may also use any available paid time off to be compensated for unpaid jury duty leave above 5 days.

If you receive a jury duty summons, provide a copy of it to your supervisor as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made to accommodate your possible absence from work. You are expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits and when you are released from service during working hours.

Subject to the terms of the applicable plans, your local First Steps Partnership will continue to provide health insurance benefits for the full period of unpaid jury duty leave. It is the employee's responsibility to arrange a deduction catch-up for their portion of the insurance premium upon their return to work, or to pay their share of premiums on the dates they would normally be deducted from their pay. The deduction catch-up schedule can be arranged through your Executive Director or Financial Manager.

Vacation and holiday benefits will continue to accrue during unpaid jury duty leave.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

In accordance with the ADA, Local Partnership employees with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit a major life activity may receive reasonable accommodations that allow them to perform the essential functions of their position so long as the accommodation does not create an undue burden. We will accept requests for such accommodation, which should include:

- the nature of the disability;
- the requested accommodation with as much specific information as possible regarding how the job, working conditions, or work environment might need to be altered and for how long the accommodation might be needed; and
- permission to contact the staff member's physician, the physician's name, and telephone number.

We will review the essential functions of the employee's position and will engage in dialogue with him/her to determine the appropriate accommodation, if any. Requests for accommodation, and all related information, will be documented and kept in a locked file, separate from the employee's personnel file. Information regarding an employee's disability will be kept as confidential as possible and will only be shared with individuals who have a legitimate need to know.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

(ONLY FOR LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH 50 OR MORE EMPLOYEES; APPLIES ONLY TO INDIVIDUALS EMPLOYED 12 MONTHS OR LONGER AND WHO HAVE WORKED 1250 HOURS OR MORE IN THE PRECEDING 12 MONTHS, BOTH PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF LEAVE.)

General: Employees who meet the length of service and hours worked requirement described above have rights under the Family and Medical Leave Act. Generally, employees must request leaves of absence under the law and this Policy, but in appropriate situations, employees may be placed on leave status without application.

Reason for Leave of Absence

1. Medical and Family Leave. An eligible employee may be entitled to a leave of absence under this law and policy if a serious health condition, including disability resulting from an on-the-job injury, prevents the employee from being able to perform his/her job, if the employee's spouse, child or parent has a serious health condition and the employee must be absent from work in order to care for that relative, or to care for a natural child, adopted child, or formally placed foster child, provided that entitlement to leave to care for a child who is newly born or newly received in the employee's household shall end 12 months after a natural child is born or 12 months after an adopted or foster child is received in the employee's household.

2. Military Caregiver Leave. An eligible employee whose spouse, parent, child or next-of-kin is a covered service member or covered veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States may be entitled to a leave of absence to care for the service member or veteran if he/she is, or was, injured while on covered active duty, including if h/she aggravates an existing injury.

3. Qualifying Military Exigency Leave. An eligible employee whose spouse, parent or child is a member of the regular Armed Forces of the United States and is on active duty or called to active duty on a foreign deployment, or who is a member of the National Guard or Reserves and is on or called to qualifying active duty in federal service, may be entitled to a leave of absence due to one or more qualifying exigencies arising out of the active duty or call to active duty. Qualifying exigencies are: (1) Short-notice deployment (*i.e.*, notice of 7 days or less); (2) Military events and related activities; (3) Childcare and school activities (regular or routine childcare by the employee does not count); (4) Financial and legal arrangements; (5) Counseling; (6) Rest and recuperation; (7) Post-deployment activities; (8) Parental care (regular or routine parental care by the employee does not count); and (9) Additional activities not encompassed in the other categories, but agreed to by the employer and employee.

Proof of need for leave of absence may be required regardless of the type of leave taken.

Length of Leave

1. Medical and Family Leave. An eligible employee may take the equivalent of a total of 12 work weeks of leave during any 12 consecutive months for his own serious health condition, that of a parent, spouse or child, or to care for a newly born or newly received child. Leave to care for a newly born or newly received child must be taken consecutively. Leave required because of the employee's own serious health condition or that of a spouse, child, or parent, may be taken intermittently or by means of a modified work schedule when necessary.

2. Military Caregiver Leave. Leave to care for an injured service member or covered veteran may be taken for up to 26 work weeks in a single 12-month period. Any leave taken by the employee for any other FMLA-qualifying reason will count against the 26 weeks of leave permitted to care for an injured service member.

3. Qualifying Military Exigency Leave. Leave taken because of a qualifying exigency is available for up to 12 work weeks in any 12 consecutive months. Leave taken because of a short notice deployment is limited to 7 days from the date of notice, and leave taken to be with the service member during periods of rest and recuperation are limited to 15 days per period of rest and recuperation. Leave taken to attend post-deployment activities must be taken within 90 days of the end of active duty service.

4. Calculation of Available Leave. A rolling 12 months is used for purposes of calculating leave available. Under this approach, the 12-month period for FMLA leave is a rolling 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee takes leave. For example, when an employee begins FMLA leave on November 1st, the employee's available FMLA leave is 12 workweeks less any FMLA leave used in the previous 12 months.

Coordination of Annual Leave and Sick Leave

An employee who must be absent due to his own serious health condition will be paid for time lost from work from accrued sick leave balances, if any. An employee who must be absent for any other FMLA-qualifying reason will be paid for time lost from work from accrued annual leave balances, if any. Leave taken under this policy counts towards the employee's 12 weeks of leave (or 26 weeks, where appropriate) regardless of whether all or part of the employee's leave is paid. In other words, the 12 weeks of leave is unpaid unless the employee has paid leave available.

Effect of Leave on Accrual of Fringe Benefits

1. Health benefit plan. Employees taking leave under this Policy must continue to pay their portion of health benefit plan premiums on the same date that such portion of premiums would be deducted from the employee's wages.

2. Accrual of paid leave. Unpaid time lost from work due to leave granted under this policy is not considered time worked for the purpose of accrual of paid time off.

Employee Responsibility

Employees who request leave under this policy must give 30 days' advance notice or such lesser amount of notice as is possible in the particular circumstance. When the need for leave is unforeseeable, the employee must follow the normal procedure for reporting an absence. Employees may not engage in side employment or work for another employer without the express written permission of the Executive Director.

Termination of Leave of Absence

A leave of absence under this policy will end when the need for the leave of absence ends, or when the maximum leave described above has been taken, whichever occurs sooner.

Reinstatement

At or before the conclusion of the FMLA leave of absence, the employee is entitled to reinstatement to his/her former position or to a position equivalent to his/her former position. The employee must demonstrate that he/she is fit for duty and must give reasonable notice of intent to return to work.

Extension of Leave Without Benefits

An employee who is unable to perform the duties of his/her position due to his/her own disability and who has exhausted his/her entitlement to leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act by taking 12 consecutive weeks of leave may, in the discretion of the Executive Director, upon written application, be granted up to an additional 14 weeks of leave. This additional leave of absence does not entitle the employee to reinstatement or to payment of any portion of his/her health benefit plan premiums unless plan terms require otherwise. If the employee is able to return to work prior to the exhaustion of

his/her extended leave, he/she may be returned to his/her previous position if it is vacant and is to be filled, or to some other position of equal or lesser compensation for which he/she is qualified and where there is a vacancy to be filled. If the employee is not returned to active employment, he/she may be continued on extended leave of absence status until he/she is returned to active duty status or his/her extended leave of absence expires, whichever occurs sooner.

Employees who have exhausted their FMLA leave under other circumstances, but who continue to require leave which would qualify for FMLA leave if such leave had not been exhausted, may apply for an extended leave of absence for personal reasons. Such extended leaves are granted only in the discretion of the Executive Director.

Separation of Employment

An employee's employment may terminate if he/she does not return to full active employment status at the conclusion of their leave of absence or extended leave of absence. This does not affect the employee's ability to reapply for the position at a later time. Further, employees with circumstances that warrant special consideration should bring those circumstances to the attention of management.

Special Situations

1. Spouses. When both a husband and a wife are employed, their combined right to a leave of absence because of the birth or placement of a child, or to care for a newly born or placed child or to care for a parent with a serious health condition, is 12 weeks in a 12 month period, or 26 weeks in a single 12 month period to care for an injured service member or covered veteran.

2. Key Employees (salaried employee in highest paid 10% of all employees). Such employees may be denied reinstatement rights if reinstatement would cause substantial and grievous economic injury to operations.

Notice of Rights

Federal law requires that we provide you with the notice of your rights that appears on the following pages.

Basic Leave Entitlement

FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons:

- for incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth;**
- to care for the employee’s child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;**
- to care for the employee’s spouse, son, daughter or parent, who has a serious health condition; or**
- for a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee’s job.**

Military Family Leave Entitlements

Eligible employees whose spouse, son, daughter or parent is on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered servicemember during a single 12-month period. A covered servicemember is:

(1) a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness*; or (2) a veteran who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable at any time during the five-year period prior to the first date the eligible employee takes FMLA leave to care for the covered veteran, and who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness.*

***The FMLA definitions of “serious injury or illness” for current servicemembers and veterans are distinct from the FMLA definition of “serious health condition”.**

Benefits and Protections

During FMLA leave, the employer must maintain the employee’s health coverage under any “group health plan” on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work.

Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

Use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee’s leave.

Eligibility Requirements

Employees are eligible if they have worked for a covered employer for at least 12 months, have 1,250 hours of service in the previous 12 months*, and if at least 50 employees are employed by the employer within 75 miles.

***Special hours of service eligibility requirements apply to airline flight crew employees.**

Definition of Serious Health Condition

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

Use of Leave

An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block.

Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave

Employees may choose or employers may require use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave. In order to use paid leave for FMLA leave, employees must comply with the employer's normal paid leave policies.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with an employer's normal call-in procedures.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously

taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

Employer Responsibilities

Covered employers must inform employees requesting leave whether they are eligible under FMLA. If they are, the notice must specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If they are not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for the ineligibility.

Covered employers must inform employees if leave will be designated as FMLA-protected and the amount of leave counted against the employee's leave entitlement. If the employer determines that the leave is not FMLA-protected, the employer must notify the employee.

Unlawful Acts by Employers

FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to:

- interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under FMLA; and
- discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA.

Enforcement

An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination, or supersede any State or local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

FMLA section 109 (29 U.S.C. § 2619) requires FMLA covered employers to post the text of this notice. Regulation 29 C.F.R. § 825.300(a) may require additional disclosures.



To: SC First Steps Board of Trustees

From: Wes Wooten

Date: June 12th, 2024

RE: Local Partnerships Program and Grants Committee

The Local Partnerships Program and Grants Committee met on Wednesday, May 22nd, 2024, and Thursday, June 6th, 2024. Minutes of the meetings are attached. The following motions were approved unanimously in each meeting.

1. Action Item- Formula Funding recommendations for fiscal year 2025. (May 22nd, 2024)

Committee was asked for approval of the recommended programming and the formula dollar amounts for grant year 2025, for each local partnership (see attached).

Motion

The Local Partnership Program & Grants Committee approves the formula and programmatic recommendations for the 46 local partnerships as presented by SC First steps staff for grant year 25, beginning July 1st, 2024.

2. Action Item- Discretionary funding for fiscal year 2025. (June 6th, 2024)

Betty Gardiner, Director of Grant Making and Development gave an overview of the discretionary funding and what the fund sources are, and what to expect in the upcoming year. Betty also explained that we have some counties that are on program or fiscal corrective action and are ineligible for any new discretionary grant funding. Discretionary grant making had three (3) motions that were approved. They are as follows.

a. Approve READY and recaptured formula dollars for one-year extension of discretionary funding for PAT affiliate support, parenting expansion, and PASO's programs. (See attached Table 1)

Motion

The Local Partnership Programs and Grants committee approves the use of READY and recaptured formula funding in the amount of \$2,214,232 to provide a one-year extension of discretionary grant funding to the local partnerships listed in Table 1 for PAT Affiliate support, parenting expansion, and PASOs programs. The motion was brought Wes Wooten, seconded by Roger Pryor, and unanimously approved for consent agenda.

b. Approve READY and recaptured formula dollars for funding for 16 AmeriCorps Sites.

Motion

The Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee approves the use of \$216,000 in READY recaptured formula funding to 16 local partnerships serving as AmeriCorps sites for FY25: Calhoun, Charleston, Darlington, Dillon, Dorchester, Florence, Georgetown, Greenwood, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, McCormick, Orangeburg, Sumter, Williamsburg, and York. The motion was brought Roger Pryor, seconded by John Hayes, and unanimously approved for consent agenda.



c. Approve READY and recaptured formula funding for one-year infrastructure and capacity grants.

Motion

Approve the use of \$180,000 in READY and recaptured formula funding to award one-year Infrastructure and Capacity grants to the following local partnerships: Bamberg, Barnwell, Dillon, Greenwood, Lee, and Williamsburg. The motion was brought Roger Pryor, seconded by John Hayes, and unanimously approved for consent agenda.

3. **Action Item- Family Café Program Guideline Update- Kerry Cordan (June 6th, 2024)**

Kerry Cordan went over the changes to the Family Café guideline changes and that the changes were required after realization that after moving program under the parenting team, inconsistencies were noted with the current guidelines significant enough where staff felt it should be brought back to the Board for approval.

Motion

The Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee approves the recommended changes to the Family Café Program Guidelines for fiscal year 2025 beginning July 1, 2024. The motion was brought Roger Pryor, seconded by John Hayes, and unanimously approved for consent agenda.



Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee Meeting

May 18th, 2024

In-Person

1:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.

Minutes

Attendance:

Committee: Wes Wooten, Jack McBride, John Hayes Absent Rodger Pryor

SCFS Staff: Derek Cromwell, Betty Gardiner, Kaitlyn Richards, Kate Roach, Kerry Cordan, Gina Beebe, Tyshica McConner, Jade Wright, LaMyra Dukes, Jon Artz, Janice Kilburn, Carletta Isreal, Lis Guimaraes, Andy Jenson, Tia Robertson, Jaiden Branch, Kathy Fitzgerald

Open – Wes Wooten, called the meeting to order at 1:02pm and then turned floor over to Chief Partnership Officer Derek Cromwell.

Derek started out by explaining the process the formula grant application and then went into the action item parts A,B,C and D. The floor was then turned over to Kerry Cordan, who went over the power point presentation on projected local partnership budget. The floor was then turned back to Derek Cromwell, where he continued going over the action item (bullets E,F, and G) At this point in going over the scholarships Derek had Kate Roach give an explanation of how scholarships work. Upon the completion of this action item the floor was opened up for questions and then the motion was read.

Action Item: 2024 Formula Grant Application

- a. Today, we are asking for approval of the recommended programming and the formula dollar amounts for grant year 2025, for each partnership (see attached).
- b. This is the first part of the 3-part formula grant process. The process is 1) State Board approving the recommended funding amounts and programs for the local partnerships, 2) Review of previous grant years programs and governance to determine compliance, and 3) Review previous years financial compliance.
- c. This year also marks the ending of grant funds for ESSER and PDG. This federal funding was used over the last 4-5 years to expand programing, in particular parenting programming. Because of this, all programming that was funded by ESSER or PDG is now being converted to READY funding, which are state dollars.
- d. As ESSER and PDG was federal funding, local partnerships were able to use this funding to meet match requirements of their state funds. Transitioning to READY grants, which are state funds, the funding will now be required to meet the same requirements as state formula dollars, i.e., match at 15%, Administrative limit at 13% and core functions at 12%, and will no longer be available for use to meet match.



- e. Because READY dollars are state dollars, they require approval of the State Board just as formula dollars. The READY grant recommendations will be presented at a separate, called meeting of this committee the first week of June.
- f. Once the READY grants are approved, FS Finance and LP team will work with partnerships to update their budgets to reflect the requirements for state funding as mentioned above.
- g. **Scholarships:** As you all are well aware, the scholarships line item in the budgets we present today, are required to be less than 25% of the value of the scholarships that the partnership receives. The value of a scholarship per DSS is currently \$6,493. All partnership budgets meet this requirement. (See attached)
- h. We submit the following motion for your approval of grant year 2025 formula and programmatic recommendations.

Motion: The Local Partnership Program & Grants Committee approves the formula and programmatic recommendations for the 46 local partnerships as presented by SC First steps staff for grant year 25, beginning July 1st, 2024.

Motion was read by Derek Cromwell,

Called to motion: by Jack McBride

Seconded: by John Hayes

Vote: All said Yes

Meeting was called to adjourn **by Wes Wooten at 2:00 pm seconded by Jack McBride and all voted yes.**

- 2. **Next meeting:** Called, virtual meeting for June 6th, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. for consideration of READY Grant recommendations. It was agreed upon that the committee would meet for a special meeting on June 6, 2024 at 1:00 virtually to go over the READY funding which will be presented to the committee by Betty Gardiner
- 3. **Adjourn:** Meeting was called to adjourn **by Wes Wooten at 2:00 pm seconded by Jack McBride and all voted yes.**



Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee Meeting

June 06, 2024

Virtual

1:00 p.m.- 2:00 p.m.

Minutes

Attendance:

Committee: Wes Wooten, Jack McBride, John Hayes, Rodger Pryor

SCFS Staff: Derek Cromwell, Gina Beebe, Kerry Cordan, Kate Roach, Kathy Fitzgerald, Delores Rock, Andy Jensen

- **Open** – Jack McBride, called the meeting to order at 1:05pm in the absence of committee chief officer Wes Wooten.

The floor was then turned over to Chief Local Partnership Officer Derek Cromwell, who explained the process of the agenda and why we have 2 action items and 4 motions.

The floor was then turned over to Betty Gardiner Director of Grant Making and Development Who gave an overview of where the funds come from and what to expect in the coming year and where it is all going to in the coming year. Betty also explained that we have some counties that are on program or fiscal corrective action and are ineligible for any new discretionary grant funding. Upon completion of Betty Gardiners presentation, the floor was opened up for questions and then the floor was turned over to Derek Cromwell, who read the 3 motions for this action item. After motions were read and voted on Derek Cromwell went into the second action item where the floor was turned over to Kerry Cordan. Kerry went over the changes to the Family Café guideline changes. The floor was turned back over to Derek Cromwell who read the motion.

1. Action Item: Ready Grants.

- a. Approve READY and recaptured formula dollars for one-year extension of discretionary funding for PAT affiliate support, parenting expansion, and PASO's programs. (See attached Table 1)

Motion: The Local Partnership Programs and Grants committee approves the use of READY and recaptured formula funding in the amount of \$2,214,232 to provide a one-year extension of discretionary grant funding to the local partnerships listed in Table 1 for PAT Affiliate support, parenting expansion, and PASOs programs.

Motion was read by Derek Cromwell,

Called to motion: by Wes Wooten

Seconded: by Roger Pryor



Vote: All said Yes

- b. Approve READY and recaptured formula dollars for funding for 16 AmeriCorps Sites.
(See attached)

Motion: The Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee approves the use of \$216,000 in READY recaptured formula funding to 16 local partnerships serving as AmeriCorps sites for FY25: Calhoun, Charleston, Darlington, Dillon, Dorchester, Florence, Georgetown, Greenwood, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, McCormick, Orangeburg, Sumter, Williamsburg, and York.

Motion was read by Derek Cromwell,

Called to motion: by Roger Pryor

Seconded: by John Hayes

Vote: All said Yes

- c. Approve READY and recaptured formula funding for one-year infrastructure and capacity grants. (See attached)

Motion: Approve the use of \$180,000 in READY and recaptured formula funding to award one-year Infrastructure and Capacity grants to the following local partnerships: Bamberg, Barnwell, Dillon, Greenwood, Lee, and Williamsburg.

Motion was read by Derek Cromwell,

Called to motion: by Roger Pryor

Seconded: by John Hayes

Vote: All said Yes

- 2. **Action Item:** Family Café Program Guideline Update- Kerry Cordan (see attached)

Motion: The Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee approves the recommended changes to the Family Café Program Guidelines for fiscal year 2025 beginning July 1, 2024.

Motion was read by Derek Cromwell,

Called to motion: by Roger Pryor

Seconded: by John Hayes

Vote: All said Yes

- 3. **Next Meeting:** July 18, 2024, (In-person in Upstate?)

- 4. **Adjourn:** Wes Wooten called the meeting to adjourn at 2:00pm

Called to motion: by Roger Pryor

Seconded: by John Hayes

Vote: All said Yes

For Program and Grants Committee Approval, June 2024

Background

Starting with the FY2022-23 fiscal year, South Carolina First Steps has received \$3 million recurring annually from the General Assembly in General Funds, entitled READY (Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth) funding, of which at least 97% (\$2.91 million) is **to be awarded by the SC First Steps Board of Trustees to local partnerships through competitive and targeted grants**. The purpose of these funds is to prioritize evidence-based programs for children birth through age three, who live in rural communities and in communities where kindergarten readiness scores are consistently below the state rate. No more than 10% of appropriated READY funds may be distributed to any one county.

To date, the Board of Trustees has made \$2,738,687.32 in READY grant awards to strengthen infrastructure and capacity, sustain and expand evidence-based programs, and test innovative approaches to serving young children and families.

For FY25, SC First Steps has a total of **\$5,991,312.68 in available READY funding** (\$2,910,000 in new funding + \$3,081,312.68 in carryforward funding) and **\$445,686.94 in recaptured state formula funding** from which to fund previously approved targeted and competitive grants, extend grant awards for an additional year, and to make new grants.

Previously awarded grants READY grants that will continue in FY25 include (see **Table 1** for further details):

READY Infrastructure and Capacity Grant Awards, Rounds 1 and 2

Three-year awards. Round 1: 11/1/22 – 10/31/25; Round 2: 3/1/23 - 2/28/26

Two rounds of multi-year funding, awarded in FY23 to assist local partnerships with recruiting and retaining a qualified workforce and/or providing the physical space and infrastructure to implement effective programs. Awards are capped at \$30,000 per year and partnerships must report quarterly on both client and staff outcomes. Twenty-nine local partnerships are slated to receive continuation funding in FY25, totaling \$721,381.72.

READY Child Care Technical Assistance (TA) Program Grant Awards

Three-year awards. 3/1/23 – 2/28/26 or 5/1/23 – 4/30/26

Awarded in FY23 to eight local partnerships to establish or expand child care quality programs, as well as sustain the expansion of child care programs made possible by short-term Preschool Development Grant funding. Funding priorities were to incentivize provider enrollment in ABC Quality, the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System for child care; establish new Child Care TA programs; and target home-based providers, a traditionally underserved segment of the state's child care provider network. Seven partnerships are to receive continuation funding in FY25 to serve 32 providers, totaling \$450,407.29.

READY Children and Families Grant Awards

Two-year awards. 7/1/23 – 6/30/25

Funding to sustain the reach of effective programs funded by Preschool Development Grant and/or other short-term funding sources; expanding effective parenting, health, and early learning programs; and/or establishing new programs or services. Fifteen partnerships are to receive continuation funding in FY25 to serve more than 5,000 children, totaling \$1,511,909.79.

READY Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation (CC4ECI) Grant Awards

Two-year awards. 1/1/24 – 12/31/25

Funding to implement, test, and support innovative approaches to serving children and families. Awarded partnerships are part of a cohort learning community with SC First Steps to implement rapid-cycle testing and evaluation within early childhood programs to learn what works, for whom does it work, and in what context. Three partnerships are to receive continuation funding in FY25, totaling \$347,560 in READY funding and \$7,500 in private funding from the Enterprise Mobility Foundation.

Previously Approved READY Grant Awards

READY Grant Award	# Partnerships	FY25 Award
Infrastructure and Capacity	29	\$721,381.72
Child Care	7	\$450,407.29
Children and Families	15	\$1,511,909.79
CC4ECI	3	\$347,560.00
	TOTAL	\$3,031,258.80

New READY and State Recapture Funding Recommendations

In addition to the previously-awarded READY grants outlined above, SC First Steps staff issued multiple discretionary grant opportunities as part of the local partnership’s FY25 Comprehensive Grant Application. Funding priorities were to:

1. Provide one-year funding for successful multi-year program expansions that are currently in their final year of ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funding that ends September 30, 2024, including:
 - a) local partnerships that were successful in expanding their evidence-based parenting programs, reaching more than 600 children ages 0-5 per year
 - b) local partnerships operating successful Parents as Teachers programs, to fund affiliate fees
 - c) local partnerships that expanded services to Latino families through the PASOs Connections for Child Development program, reaching 320 families per year
2. Provide one-year funding to local partnerships serving as AmeriCorps sites:
 - a) Continue support for AmeriCorps members serving as parent educators delivering the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) evidence-based home visiting model
 - b) Offer NEW funding to local partnerships that host Family and Community Engagement AmeriCorps members
3. Provide NEW, one-year Infrastructure and Capacity funding (Round 3) to Local Partnerships with anticipated funding gaps in FY25.

READY Capacity Round 3 Requests

Ten local partnerships applied for up to \$30,000 in one-year funding to address anticipated funding gaps in FY25 in salary compensation, benefits, infrastructure, technology, and other needs. Each application was evaluated by the Director of Grantmaking and Development using a 15-point scale:

- a) Need for Funding: up to 5 points
- b) READY Priority for Rural Counties: 5 points for rural, 0 points for urban
- c) READY Priority for Low KRA Scores: 0 to 5 points

Applications scoring 10 or higher out of 15 possible points have been recommended for funding (see Table 1).

Impact of Current and Pending Corrective Actions on FY25 Discretionary Awards

It is the policy of the SC First Steps Board of Trustees that **local partnerships on Corrective Action are ineligible for new, discretionary grant funding**. However, much of the funding awarded for FY25 is either continuing funding on a multi-year grant award, or extending the same amount of funding for an additional year in order to continue existing services and retain current personnel. SC First Steps staff recommends the definition of a “new” discretionary grant is funding over and above what the partnership was awarded in FY24, regardless of fund source. Therefore, local partnerships on Corrective Action as of the June 2024 state board meeting will be ineligible to receive:

- READY Round 3 Capacity Grant funding
- Additional AmeriCorps member slots and associated funding, if they were an AmeriCorps site in FY24
- \$5,000 AmeriCorps Award for Family and Community Engagement members
- Funding that exceeds their original request if a continuation award, or their FY24 amount if an extension award

Local partnerships whose potential grant awards were impacted by Corrective Action determinations are **highlighted** in Table 1 below.

Use of State Recaptured Funding

State formula funding that has been taken back from local partnerships due to non-compliance with Program and Operational Guidelines is to be redistributed to local partnerships during the following fiscal year. Recaptured funding occurs when carryforward formula funding is not spent after the second year; if the partnership has excessive carryforward (higher than 15%) of formula funding for consecutive years; or if the partnership fails to meet the 15% non-state match requirement for consecutive years.

The current balance of recaptured state funding, \$445,686.94, will be used to make awards to local partnerships that otherwise would exceed the 10% READY funding cap and to preserve a balance of READY funding for later use, such as Summer 2025 Countdown to Kindergarten or FY26 grantmaking.

**READY and State Recapture Funding for Continuing and New Awards
2024-25**



FY25 READY and STATE RECAPTURE GRANTS

County	Continued Funding					Extended Funding			New Funding		TOTAL AWARD	TOTAL READY	TOTAL STATE RECAPTURE
	Capacity Round 1	Capacity Round 2	Child Care	Children and Families	CC4ECI	Parenting	PAT Affiliate	PASOs	AmeriCorps	Capacity Round 3			
Abbeville							2,770				\$2,770	\$2,770	
Aiken							Excess CF				\$0	\$0	
Allendale				25,990							\$25,990	\$25,990	
Anderson		30,000									\$30,000	\$30,000	
Bamberg		30,000		37,100			3,055			30,000	\$100,155	\$100,155	
Barnwell		30,000				Declined				30,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	
Beaufort	30,000						2,770	162,892			\$195,662	\$195,662	
Berkeley		30,000	84,967			47,495	3,210				\$165,672	\$165,672	
Calhoun		30,000					3,275		5,000		\$38,275	\$38,275	
Charleston				10,855			4,480	91,594	5,000		\$111,929	\$111,929	
Cherokee	30,000					81,124					\$111,124	\$111,124	
Chester							2,485				\$2,485	\$2,485	
Chesterfield	28,366			62,404		205,666					\$296,435	\$296,435	
Clarendon						119,926	3,055				\$122,981	\$122,981	
Colleton	19,440		50,000			43,141	3,340				\$115,921	\$115,921	
Darlington	30,000			251,720		applied last yr	2,925		5,000		\$289,645	\$289,645	
Dillon	27,846		61,374	227,341		applied last yr			5,000	30,000	\$351,561	\$275,000	\$76,561
Dorchester	Withdrew		85,000						19,000		\$104,000	\$104,000	
Edgefield	23,346					5,000					\$28,346	\$28,346	
Fairfield						53,758	2,770				\$56,528	\$56,528	
Florence				179,277					47,000		\$226,277	\$133,685	\$92,591
Georgetown						109,567			14,000		\$123,567	\$123,567	
Greenville		30,000		110,000							\$140,000	\$140,000	

**READY and State Recapture Funding for Continuing and New Awards
2024-25**



County	Capacity Round 1	Capacity Round 2	Child Care	Children and Families	CC4ECI	Parenting	PAT Affiliate	PASOs	AmeriCorps	Capacity Round 3	TOTAL AWARD	TOTAL READY	TOTAL STATE RECAPTURE
Greenwood		30,000		30,972			2,770		12,000	30,000	\$105,742	\$105,742	
Hampton	8,220						2,770				\$10,990	\$10,990	
Horry										Not Priority	\$0	\$0	
Jasper	27,700						2,990				\$30,690	\$30,690	
Kershaw	7,800						2,485				\$10,285	\$10,285	
Lancaster						256,058	3,055				\$259,113	\$259,113	
Laurens	11,411					Declined					\$11,411	\$11,411	
Lee		23,800			115,000	163,579			19,000	30,000	\$351,379	\$275,000	\$76,379
Lexington						199,708	15,005	81,517			\$296,230	\$296,230	
Marion						148,266			28,000		\$176,266	\$176,266	
Marlboro						Not Eligible	2,485		-		\$2,485	\$2,485	
McCormick	23,660			50,164		18,768			5,000		\$97,592	\$97,592	
Newberry	29,838					33,775	3,340				\$66,953	\$66,953	
Oconee						22,750					\$22,750	\$22,750	
Orangeburg	30,000			22,000			3,340		7,000		\$62,340	\$62,340	
Pickens	25,000			78,500	115,000		2,770				\$221,270	\$221,270	
Richland		30,000	Withdrew		Withdrew		2,640				\$32,640	\$32,640	
Saluda	5,122					Declined					\$5,122	\$5,122	
Spartanburg		30,000	85,000	71,323							\$186,323	\$86,323	\$100,000
Sumter	9,833					95,250	5,410		7,000		\$117,493	\$117,493	
Union						58,305	3,055				\$61,360	\$61,360	
Williamsburg	30,000			111,663		115,188	4,920		33,000	30,000	\$324,771	\$275,000	\$49,771
York	30,000		84,067	79,023	117,560		9,735		5,000	Not Priority	\$325,385	\$275,000	\$50,385
TOTAL	\$427,582	\$293,800	\$450,407	\$1,348,331	\$347,560	\$1,777,324	\$100,905	\$336,003	\$216,000	\$180,000	\$5,477,912	\$5,032,225	\$445,687
											Available:	\$5,991,313	\$445,687

Committee Motions:

Approve the use of READY and recaptured formula funding in the amount of \$2,214,232 to provide a one-year extension of discretionary grant funding to the local partnerships listed in Table 1 for PAT Affiliate support, parenting expansion, and PASOs programs.

Approve the use of \$216,000 in READY and recaptured formula funding to 16 local partnerships serving as AmeriCorps sites for FY25: Calhoun, Charleston, Darlington, Dillon, Dorchester, Florence, Georgetown, Greenwood, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, McCormick, Orangeburg, Sumter, Williamsburg, and York.

Approve the use of \$180,000 in READY and recaptured formula funding to award one-year Infrastructure and Capacity grants to the following six local partnerships: Bamberg, Barnwell, Dillon, Greenwood, Lee, and Williamsburg.

Program Name	Family Café	Code	185
Program Area	Parenting		

Program Description

Cafés are structured discussion groups that use the principles of adult learning and family support. They are highly sustainable with training reinforcement, institutional support, and a commitment to an approach that engages and affirms parents as leaders. Participants leave Family Cafés feeling inspired, energized, and excited to put into practice what they've learned.

The foundation of the Family Café is created through the utilization of Protective Factors. These factors are seen as positive countering events and have been known to reduce incidences of child abuse and neglect. Family Café in a Box Protective Factors are:

- Resilience: Parent Resilience
- Relationships: Positive Social Connections
- Support: Concrete Support in Times of Need
- Knowledge: Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Communication: Social and Emotional Competent

The Family Café is a Peer-to-Peer model, and all sessions should be facilitated by a partnership staff or team member who has completed curriculum training sponsored by Be Strong Families.

All activities will come from the Be Strong Family Café in a Box curriculum.

Local partnerships funding Family Café shall work in collaboration with SC First Steps to ensure full compliance with national model guidelines. The following guideline includes both the expected Measurement Criteria for Family Café and SC First Steps minimum requirements.

Unit of Service	Evidence Based?	High Intensity?	Expected First Steps' Child-Level Outcomes
<input type="checkbox"/> Families <input type="checkbox"/> Children <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adults <input type="checkbox"/> Providers	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Healthy and Safe <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Actively Supported by Their Families and Communities <input type="checkbox"/> Arrive at School Ready to Reach Their Highest Potential

Data Collection Requirements

In KITS: Client-level Monthly outputs

If monthly outputs in KITS, is client-level data required by model elsewhere? Yes No

If yes, client-level data required by model elsewhere, then name of external data system(s):

THE CRITERIA OUTLINED BELOW REPRESENT ALL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS. THOSE MARKED WITH AN ASTERISK (*) ARE USED IN THE ONGOING EVALUATION OF LOCAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM PERFORMANCE.

Targeting Criteria: Who does this program target?

Age	
Age Criteria	Prenatal to kindergarten entry.
Risk Factors	
*Risk Factor Criteria 1	100% of families must have at least one First Steps risk factor at the time of enrollment.
*Risk Factor Criteria 2	60% of families must have at least two First Steps risk factors at the time of enrollment.

Service Criteria: How is this program implemented?

Group Connections	
*Group Connection Criteria 1: Duration	Group Connections should last at least 2 hours.
*Group Connection Criteria 2: Frequency 1	Minimum of 7 sessions per cohort.

Group Connection Criteria 2: Frequency 2	Minimum of 2 cohorts a year.
Group Connection Criteria 3: Group Size	Minimum of 10 families per cohort.
Group Connections Delivery	In-person is the preferred method, but virtual sessions are allowed after approval from program leads

Reach Criteria: What are this program's goals for client reach	
*Reach Criteria: Projected to Serve	Local Partnerships must reach 75% of their projected to serve by the end of the program year.

Retention Criteria: What are this program's goals for client retention?	
Retention Criteria	At least 75% of participating families (minimum of 10 families per cohort) must complete 7 sessions.

Workforce Criteria: Who are the service providers implementing this program?

Program Role	Group Facilitator	Maximum Number of Cases	N/A
KITS Related Job Title or Role	Service Provider	Minimum Education Level	High School diploma or GED
*Required Certifications and/or Training	<p>The Family Café is a Peer-to-Peer model, and all sessions should be facilitated by a partnership staff or team member who has completed curriculum training sponsored by Be Strong Families. When training is completed, the participant must submit a certificate of completion to the Family Café Program Lead.</p> <p>Being a parent of a young child supports the implementation of program reflection practices; however, it is not a requirement.</p> <p>Each staff member should have knowledge of both the language and culture of the community served.</p>		

NOTE: At least one (1) partnership facilitator must be trained in the Family Café model in the delivery mode(s) being used by Be Strong Families and must submit certification of training completion.

Program Role	Program Lead	Maximum Number of Cases	N/A
KITS Related Job Title or Role	Program Manager	Minimum Education Level	High School diploma or GED
*Required Certifications and/or Training	<p>Program Lead must complete curriculum training sponsored by Be Strong Families and submit certification of training completion.</p> <p>Each staff member should have knowledge of both the language and culture of the community served.</p>		

Screening and Assessment Criteria: How are program participants screened and/or assessed?

Assessment 1: Be Strong National Office Evaluation	
Be Strong Evaluation Criteria 1	A pre-assessment will be completed during the first session.
Be Strong Evaluation Criteria 2	A post-assessment will be completed during the final session (7 th session or greater).
Be Strong Evaluation Criteria 3	Evaluations must be submitted to SCFS State Office within 10 days of assessment.

Referral Criteria: What are this program's requirements for client referrals and connections?

Referral Criteria 1: Referrals	Partnership staff and/or team members shall maintain (within the designated First Steps Data Collection System) referral records to include information on the outcome/disposition of each First Steps-initiated referral.
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*Referral Criteria 2: Connections	The goal is 100% of participants served should have at least one successful connection per program year. 80% is the minimum requirement for compliance.
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Other Criteria: Are there other program criteria that exist?	
*Other Criteria 1	All data must be entered within the First Steps Data Collection System within 5 days of service.
Other Criteria 2	<p>Café facilitators must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain attendance records, sign-in sheets, a list of community advocates attending each session, and materials provided. • serve meals and provide childcare at each session. • provide incentives.
Other Criteria 3	<p>Cohorts will also be serviced by community advocates at every session. A community advocate will attend each session, and three (3) different community advocates are required to present at at least 3 of the 7 sessions for the purpose of sharing information and community resources with program participants. On remaining sessions, Family Café staff will share community resources with attendees.</p> <p>Community advocates may include but are not limited to: officials from publicly funded agencies and entities, nonprofits, school district personnel, etc.</p> <p>Community advocates must distribute materials regarding community resources and support services.</p>
Other Criteria 4	Monthly staff meetings will be held by program supervisors to support implementation and debrief on the project. The meeting agenda will include reports on program outcomes, implementation successes, and challenges, and the level of resources needed.
Other Criteria 5	Meals are served and childcare is provided at each in-person session.
Other Criteria 6	<p>Family Café sessions are not to be used in place of parent/group meetings/connections for any other program. Clients from other programs may be invited to participate in Family Café but should commit to attending all 7 sessions of that cohort's café sessions.</p> <p>Group connections for other programs will be held independently from Family Café sessions according to model protocols.</p>



To: SC First Steps Board of Trustees
From: Jessica Mackey, Chairman, Finance and Administration Committee
David Morley, Chairman, Executive Committee
Date: May 14, 2024
RE: Finance and Administration and Executive Committee Report

The Finance and Administration Committee and the Executive Committee met in a joint meeting via Zoom conference call on May 14, 2024, to take up two action items and receive updates from staff. Detailed meeting minutes are attached. The committees approved two action items and forwards the following updates.

Both the Finance and Administration Committee and the Executive Committee in turn, approved the following two motions.

To approve the draft 990 Form for SC First Steps for tax year 2022, as submitted by Manley Garvin and recommended by staff, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To approve a Corrective Action Plan for Kershaw County First Steps Board of Directors and their Interim Executive Director to provide improved oversight, and update policies and procedures which will meet the requirements of the Operations Manual for Local Partnerships as well as improve internal controls. This motion also is being made to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

These actions were taken on behalf of the full board due to their time sensitivity.

An update was provided on the following.

First Steps State Office

Financial Report: Mr. Barnes shared the updated financial status of the agency along with the updated Donations Report. Expenditures to date are in line with projections for the new year and the organization is in good financial condition.

The minutes for the meeting are attached.



Minutes from Joint Finance and Administration Committee and Executive Committee Meeting

May 14, 2024

Members present: Jesica Mackey, Chairman, Jacque Curtin, CPA, David Morley, Wes Wooten

Members not present: Gerald Malloy, Dr. Amy Williams

Nonmembers present: Mark Barnes, Director of Administration; Towanda Prior, Grants Accountant, CGFO; Derek Cromwell, Chief Partnership Officer; Josh Garvin, CPA Manley Garvin, LLC

With all public notices being provided, the Zoom meeting was called to order by Jesica Mackey at 4:10 pm. After introductions, a quorum was available, so the Committee was called to order.

Required Action Item: Review and approval: 2022 990 Form; Presentation by Josh Garvin, CPA, Principle, Manley Garvin, LLC.

The Form 990 was presented by Josh Garvin, CPA. Mr. Garvin reported vital financial information: Two year comparison, revenue sources, statement of functional expenses, number of employees, number of board members, number of 1099s distributed, pension liability, the local partnerships, etc.

There was general discussion, and a motion was made by Jesica "To approve the draft 990 Form for SC First Steps for tax year 2022, as submitted by Manley Garvin and recommended by staff, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter." Jacque Curtin seconded the motion. The vote was taken, and the motion was passed by the Finance and Administration Committee.

Chairman Morley made a motion for the Executive Committee, "to approve the draft 990 Form for SC First Steps for tax year 2022, as submitted by Manley Garvin and recommended by staff, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter." The motion was seconded, and the vote was taken with the motion being passed by the Executive Committee.

Required Action Item: Review and approval: Corrective Action Plan: Kershaw County First Steps Recommendation by Staff

Mr. Barnes gave an update on Kershaw County First Steps; after the Executive Director position became vacant. It became evident the Board needs to work to improve their internal controls and oversight. The recommendation is to develop a corrective action plan to accomplish the needed actions.

Motion: To approve a Corrective Action Plan for Kershaw County First Steps Board of Directors and their Interim Executive Director to provide improved oversight, and update policies and procedures which will meet the requirements of the Operations Manual for Local Partnerships as well as improve internal

controls. This motion also is being made to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

There was general discussion, and a motion was made by Jesica Mackey to approve the corrective action plan, the motion was seconded, a vote was taken, and the motion was approved by the Finance and Administration Committee.

Chairman Morley made a motion for the Executive Committee "To approve a Corrective Action Plan for Kershaw County First Steps Board of Directors and their Interim Executive Director to provide improved oversight, and update policies and procedures which will meet the requirements of the Operations Manual for Local Partnerships as well as improve internal controls. This motion also is being made to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter."

Wes Wooten seconded the motion. The vote was taken, and the motion was passed.

Action Item: Update on Corrective Action for Aiken County First Steps

Mr. Barnes and Mr. Cromwell reported on Aiken County First Step's ability to efficiently to utilize their State fund allocation for at least 3 years. There were a number of things that impacted their spending the amounts in the annual allocation. There was general discussion about these concerns. Mr. Morley requested to postpone this item until there was more time for discussion.

First Steps State Office

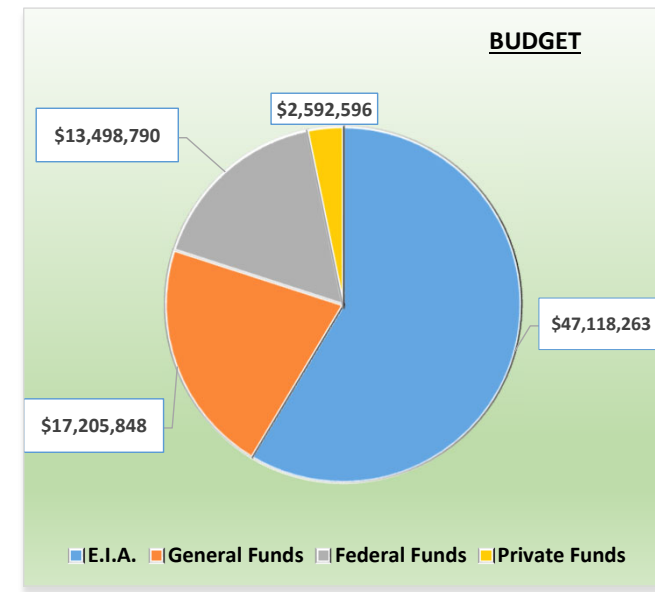
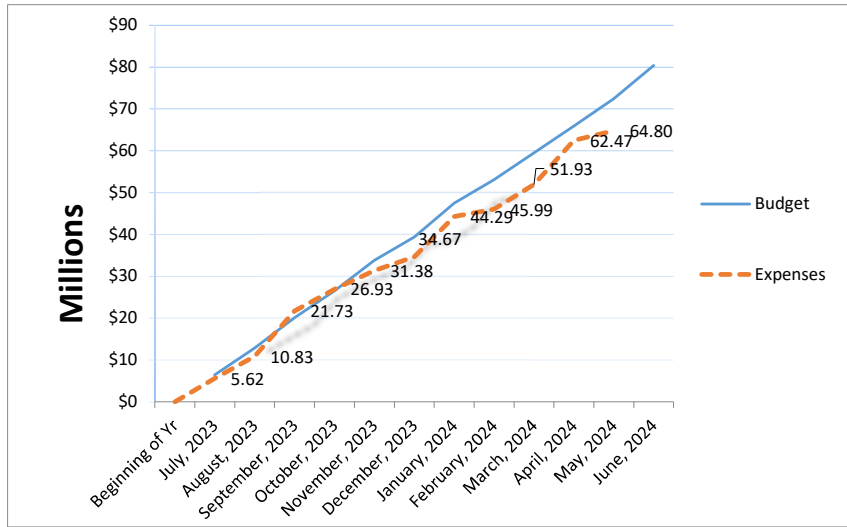
Financial Report

Mr. Barnes referred to attached the monthly financial reports: FY 2024 Finance Report Template and Donations. He mentioned we continue to be in good financial shape. He also mentioned the attached donations report.

With no further business to discuss for the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.

As of
May 31, 2024

Spending Rates	
Projected	92%
Actual	81%



PROGRAMS / OPERATIONS	STATE APPROPRIATIONS			FEDERAL GRANTS			PRIVATE FUNDS			GRAND TOTAL			
	Description	Budget	Expended	Balance	Budget	Expended	Balance	Budget	Expended	Balance	Budget	Expended	Balance
LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS		23,506,624	19,593,956	3,912,668	7,970,965	5,108,859	\$ 2,862,106	1,761,130	1,146,480	614,650	33,238,719	25,849,295	\$ 7,389,424
PRIVATE 4-K		36,719,794	34,184,126	2,535,668	2,607,565	676,166	1,931,399			-	39,327,359	34,860,292	\$ 4,467,067
EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL		1,160,993	142,580	1,018,413	2,920,260	1,592,302	1,327,958	334,328	58,724	275,604	4,415,581	1,793,606	\$ 2,621,975
POLICY & ACCOUNTABILITY		2,936,700	2,068,695	868,005	-	-	-	497,138	224,780	272,358	3,433,838	2,293,475	\$ 1,140,363
GRAND TOTAL:		64,324,111	55,989,357	8,334,754	13,498,790	7,377,327	6,121,463	2,592,596	1,429,984	1,162,612	80,415,497	64,796,668	\$ 15,618,829

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 & Programatic Data Housing
- f. OFS program & finance staff (payroll, rent, contractual, supplies, travel, etc.)

Federal Funds:	47,118,263	E.I.A.
VISTA	50,000	17,205,848
AmeriCorps:	585,724	13,498,790
SLDS:	266,194	2,592,596
PDG:	2,654,066	80,415,497
ESSER Funds	9,942,806	
	13,498,790	

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 May 31, 2024



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	Night to Celebrate Communities
Aug 3, 2023	\$ 25	Gwen Cook	Restricted	Laurens County FS
Aug 3, 2023	\$ 25	Joe Nation - NFG	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
Oct 12, 2023	\$ 25	Hazel Bachman	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Oct 16, 2023	\$ 5,500	Kaplan	Restricted	\$2,500 NTCC, \$3,000 Summit
Oct 18, 2023	\$ 713	Expo Pass	Restricted	2023 Summit
Oct 20, 2023	\$ 25	Bob Reeder-NFG	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Oct 20, 2023	\$ 110	Betty Gardiner-NFG	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Oct 20, 2023	\$ 50	Erin Hall-NFG	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Oct 20, 2023	\$ 110	Elizabeth Dudek-NFG	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Oct 20, 2023	\$ 25	Rutledge long-NFG	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Oct 20, 2023	\$ 25	Joe Nation - NFG	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Oct 26, 2023	\$ 200	Cheryl and Dennis Wiese-NFG	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Oct 26, 2023	\$ 300	Karen Waller-NFG	Restricted	Chesterfield County FS
Oct 26, 2023	\$ 25	Joe Nation - NFG	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Nov 2, 2023	\$ 27	Susan Jones	Unrestricted	Horry County FS
Nov 6, 2023	\$ 27	Jim Riddle	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 6, 2023	\$ 2,500	Mia Flores (Lakeshore Learning)	Restricted	2023 Summit Sponsorship
Nov 8, 2023	\$ 75	Franklin Schools	Restricted	2023 Summit
Nov 17, 2023	\$ 20	Glenn Wright	Unrestricted	Lancaster County FS
Nov 21, 2023	\$ 1,000	Janice Kilburn	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 22, 2023	\$ 25	Joe Nation - NFG	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Nov 22, 2023	\$ 2,500	Blake Family Fund	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 120	Sue Williams	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 100	Deborah Robertson	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 50	Chelsea Richard	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 120	Christopher and Janie Neeley	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 120	Karen Oliver	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 27	Avian Jones	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 120	Marie Fadeley	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 50	Valencia Johnson	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 50	Christine McFadden	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 150	Georgia Mjartan	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 100	Elizabeth Dudek	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 500	Barbara Manoski	Unrestricted	Spartanburg County FS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 25	Sarah Eargle	Unrestricted	Newberry County FS

Nov 30, 2023	\$ 100	Michael Leach	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 50	Ben Gibson	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 27	Holly McGlothin	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 2,000	Tom Lacas	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 27	Mary Anne Matthews	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Nov 30, 2023	\$ 10	Lee Patterson	Unrestricted	Richland County FS
Dec 4, 2023	\$ 27	Myrelo King	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Dec 8, 2023	\$ 500	Kimberly-Clark Beech Island	Unrestricted	Aiken County FS
Dec 8, 2023	\$ 50	Antionette Alston	Unrestricted	Newberry County FS
Dec 15, 2023	\$ 1,000	Lourie Consulting	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Dec 15, 2023	\$ 2,500	Sunshine House	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Dec 18, 2023	\$ 27	Matthew Orozco	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Dec 19, 2023	\$ 50	Mary Lee Author	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Dec 19, 2023	\$ 500	J. Gregory Hembree	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Dec 22, 2023	\$ 100	Sharon O'Bryant	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Dec 28, 2023	\$ 3,000	Enterprise	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Jan 2, 2024	\$ 27	Delores Rock	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Jan 2, 2024	\$ 1,000	Russ Purdy	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Jan 2, 2024	\$ 500	Russ Purdy	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Jan 3, 2024	\$ 250	Valencia Johnson	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Jan 11, 2024	\$ 5,000	First Citizens Bank	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Jan 11, 2024	\$ 50	Billy & Lillie Bennet	Restricted	Sumter County FS
Jan 11, 2024	\$ 1,000	G3 Wealth Advisors	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Jan 11, 2024	\$ 1,500	Hal Kaplan	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Jan 17, 2024	\$ 25	Regis McElveen	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Jan 30, 2024	\$ 100	Nicole Matheny - NFG	Restricted	Pickens County FS
Jan 30, 2024	\$ 25	Victoria Tate - NFG	Restricted	Pickens County FS
Jan 30, 2024	\$ 25	Joe Nation - NFG	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Jan 30, 2024	\$ 100	Sharon O'Bryant - NFG	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Jan 30, 2024	\$ 150	Porcha Nelson - NFG	Restricted	Orangeburg County FS
Jan 30, 2024	\$ 100	Kent Washington - NFG	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Feb 7, 2024	\$ 185	Elizabeth & Ben Dudek	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Feb 8, 2024	\$ 50	Coles Lawton	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Feb 14, 2024	\$ 200	Robin Waites	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Feb 14, 2024	\$ 100	Karen Oliver	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Feb 14, 2024	\$ 27	Bethany Counts	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Feb 21, 2024	\$ 185	Timothy & Carolyn Sutherland	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Feb 22, 2024	\$ 2,500	Parker Poe	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Feb 22, 2024	\$ 25	Joe Nation - NFG	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Feb 22, 2024	\$ 1,000	Mark & Debbie Robinson	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Feb 22, 2024	\$ 7,500	Contec	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Feb 22, 2024	\$ 2,400	Contec	Restricted	Legislative Breakfast
Feb 22, 2024	\$ 250	SC State Federal Credit Union	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Feb 22, 2024	\$ 1,000	Trinity Partners - COLA, LLC	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Feb 22, 2024	\$ 300	Marilyn & Ronald Artz	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Feb 22, 2024	\$ 2,500	John McBride Jr.	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Feb 26, 2024	\$ 185	Barbara & Douglas Rice	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Feb 26, 2024	\$ 185	Mark Barnes & Joy Mazur	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Feb 26, 2024	\$ 200	Janice Kilburn	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Feb 26, 2024	\$ 5,000	Palmetto Garage Works	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Feb 28, 2024	\$ 185	Elizabeth & Bradley Petit	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Feb 28, 2024	\$ 200	Jim Riddle	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Feb 28, 2024	\$ 200	Marla Herlong	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities

Feb 28, 2024	\$	185	Mary Anne & Tony Scott	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Feb 28, 2024	\$	185	Chelsea Richard	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 1, 2024	\$	1,000	The MIL Corporation	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 1, 2024	\$	185	Mary Steppling	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 1, 2024	\$	100	Betty Gardiner	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 4, 2024	\$	185	Deborah Robertson	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 4, 2024	\$	100	Kathy Jenkins	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 4, 2024	\$	50	Nancy Gibbes	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Mar 7, 2024	\$	100	Jennifer McConnell	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 8, 2024	\$	125	Julia-Ellen Davis	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 8, 2024	\$	125	Rodney Jenkins	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 11, 2024	\$	100	Ryan Shinn - Lakeshore Learning	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 11, 2024	\$	100	Karen Oliver	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 11, 2024	\$	185	Stephen Sizemore	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 11, 2024	\$	185	Marsha Elrod	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 11, 2024	\$	1,000	Dominik Mjartan	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 11, 2024	\$	185	Pamela Hastings	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 13, 2024	\$	100	Kimberly Russell	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 13, 2024	\$	185	Melanie Hansen	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 14, 2024	\$	185	Matthew Zion	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 14, 2024	\$	1,000	Rhodes Branding	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 14, 2024	\$	685	Night to Celebrate Ticket Sales	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 15, 2024	\$	100	Cheri Shapiro	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 15, 2024	\$	185	Allison Orvin	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 18, 2024	\$	1,000	Peter & Karen Miller	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 18, 2024	\$	10,000	Palmetto Citizens	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 18, 2024	\$	120	James Glenn	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Mar 18, 2024	\$	1,000	Mia Flores (Lakeshore Learning)	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 18, 2024	\$	127	Darnell McPherson	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 18, 2024	\$	235	Virginia Owens	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 18, 2024	\$	100	Mary Steppling	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 18, 2024	\$	100	Mary Priester-Clarke	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 19, 2024	\$	187	Adrienne Hoefler	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 19, 2024	\$	187	Cassandra Barber	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 19, 2024	\$	187	Makala Smith	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 20, 2024	\$	5,000	37 Gears - Tom Lacas	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 20, 2024	\$	235	David Lisk	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 20, 2024	\$	185	Institute for Child Success - Karen Cantu	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 21, 2024	\$	185	Anna Twitty	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 21, 2024	\$	185	Susan Devenny	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 21, 2024	\$	125	Kate Roach	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 22, 2024	\$	2,500	Riley, Pope & Laney, LLC	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 22, 2024	\$	1,000	Pollock	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 22, 2024	\$	1,000	Scott & Company	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 22, 2024	\$	5,000	Cheryl & Dave Morely	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 22, 2024	\$	400	W. Dubose	Unrestricted	Donation to SCFS
Mar 22, 2024	\$	335	Grayson Posey	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 22, 2024	\$	1,000	Carolina Pediatrics	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 22, 2024	\$	185	April Spitz	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 22, 2024	\$	100	Rebecca Herring	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 22, 2024	\$	25	Tanya Youngblood	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 22, 2024	\$	250	Alexandre Gryzinski	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 25, 2024	\$	100	Christopher Terlinden	Unrestricted	Richland County FS

Mar 25, 2024	\$ 100	Sharon Bruton	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 25, 2024	\$ 350	Raffle Ticket Sales	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 25, 2024	\$ 986	Night to Celebrate Donations	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 29, 2024	\$ 1,000	David Moffat	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 29, 2024	\$ 1,000	Bonnibel Moffat	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 29, 2024	\$ 1,000	Nelson Mullins	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Mar 29, 2024	\$ 25	Joe Nation - NFG	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Mar 29, 2024	\$ 300	Raffle Ticket Sales	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Apr 1, 2024	\$ 25	Betty Gardiner	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Apr 1, 2024	\$ 50	Elizabeth Dudek	Unrestricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Apr 3, 2024	\$ 1,000	Molina Healthcare	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Apr 3, 2024	\$ 5,000	Russ & Simons Purdy Family	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Apr 3, 2024	\$ 2,500	Asana Partners	Restricted	Night to Celebrate Communities
Apr 25, 2024	\$ 500	Molina Healthcare	Restricted	General Donation
May 7, 2024	\$ 50	Nicole Schmidt	Restricted	Anderson County FS
May 9, 2024	\$ 8,000	The Lipscomb Family Foundation	Restricted	Calhoun County FS
May 9, 2024	\$ 8,000	The Lipscomb Family Foundation	Restricted	Saluda County FS

Total \$ 148,311



To: SC First Steps Board of Trustees

From: Senator Gerald Malloy

Date: June 20, 2024

RE: Legislative Committee Report

FY 2024-25 Budget – Updates

The state budget has been sent to conference committee, which is scheduled to meet to discuss negotiations the week of June 10th.

The House of Representatives passed their first version of the state budget bill on March 13, 2024. The following items related to First Steps were included:

- Unfunded Personnel Cost Increases (EIA) \$362,089
- Separation from Dept. of Education \$279,724
- Full Day 4K (CERDEP) \$6,897,691

Proviso Deletion: SDE-First Steps Transfer Plan

The Senate passed their version of the state budget bill on April 24, 2024. The following items related to First Steps were included:

- Unfunded Personnel Cost Increases (EIA) \$362,089
- Separation from Dept. of Education \$279,724
- First Steps Local Partnerships \$2,000,000
- Full Day 4K (CERDEP) \$8,897,691

Proviso Deletion: SDE-First Steps Transfer Plan

NEW Proviso: SDE-First Steps Transition July 1

Legislative Session – Updates

Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children:

- The Children's Committee (JCLCC) met on June 18, 2024. Committee staff presented revised preschool suspension data, a number of speakers presented on available resources and programs, and the Department of Education presented on the subject of public preschool suspension and expulsion.



Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee

CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

The meeting was held on Wednesday, June 5, 2024 via Zoom and was called to order at 12:05 PM. For committee members, myself, Dave Morley, and Janie Neeley were present. For staff, Dr. Chelsea Richard, Betty Gardiner, Jaiden Branch, Molly Tuck, and for external guests, Van-Kim Lin and Tracy Gebhart from Child Trends were present.

Motion: Adopt the meeting agenda as submitted.

Motion made by Dave Morley, seconded by Janie Neeley, all voted in favor.

Motion: Adopt the minutes from last committee meeting.

Motion made by Dave Morley, seconded by Janie Neeley, all voted in favor.

The bulk of the meeting was spent discussing Child Trends' approach to evaluation, as they have been commissioned to serve as First Steps' external evaluator over the next five years. The first evaluation they will complete is of local partnerships overall, which is due November 1, 2024. Additionally, First Steps is required to evaluate prevalent programs on a five-year schedule (SC State Code § 59-152-50). Prevalent programs are defined as >10% of total expenditure of Local Partnership state funding spent on programs. The details of the most recent evaluations and the financial data supporting the below motion can be found in the meeting minutes.

Motion: Select Parents as Teachers (FY19-20 through FY23-24) as the subject of the next prevalent program evaluation (due November 1, 2025).

Motion made by Dave Morley, seconded by Amy Williams, all voted in favor.

After a brief discussion about the following topics: Child Trends team collaborating with the Parents as Teachers National Center and First Steps staff on the scope of the evaluation; the upcoming 2025-2030 First Steps' strategic planning process; the upcoming Preschool Development Grant (PDG) renewal grant application deadline (July 31), the below motion was made.

Motion: Adjourn the June meeting of the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee.

Motion by Amy Williams, seconded by Dave Morley, all voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 12:39PM.



**Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee Meeting
Wednesday, June 5, 2024 12-1 PM via Zoom**

Committee members present: Dr. Amy Williams, Dave Morley, Janie Neeley

Staff present: Dr. Chelsea Richard, Betty Gardiner, Jaiden Branch, Molly Tuck

Guests present: Van-Kim Lin, Tracy Gebhart

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 PM.

Motion: Adopt the meeting agenda as submitted.

Motion made by Dave Morley, seconded by Janie Neeley, all voted in favor.

Motion: Adopt the minutes from last committee meeting.

Motion made by Dave Morley, seconded by Janie Neeley, all voted in favor.

The meeting opened with an introduction to new staff members – Jaiden Branch, the Local Partnership Evaluation Coordinator, started on May 17, and Molly Tuck, the Strategic Data Fellow, will start on July 2. Then, the external guests from Child Trends were introduced – Van-Kim Lin, Senior Research Scientist for Early Childhood and Interim Program Area Director for Early Childhood Development, and Tracy Gebhart, Data Scientist for Early Childhood Development. First Steps has commissioned Child Trends to serve as their external evaluator over the next five years.

Then, the meeting transitioned to talking about the prevalent program evaluations. Legislatively, South Carolina First Steps is required to evaluate prevalent programs on a five year schedule (SC State Code § 59-152-50). Prevalent programs are defined as >10% of total expenditure of Local Partnership state funding spent on programs, which includes formula funding, state recapture, and Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth (READY) discretionary funding.

On May 18, 2020, the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee voted “to adopt a flexible evaluation schedule for the next five years”. This was adopted by the full board at their June 18, 2020 meeting. The table below details the three most recent prevalent program evaluations:

Program (years)	Evaluator	Submitted
Parents as Teachers (FY17-FY19)	UofSC Institute for Families in Society and Pacific Research & Evaluation	October 29, 2021
Child care technical assistance and training (FY19-FY21)	UofSC Institute for Families in Society	November 1, 2022
Child care scholarships (FY18-FY22)	UofSC Institute for Families in Society	November 1, 2023

The below table outlines the top three local partnership programs state dollars were expended on for the past three years by year, as well as the three-year average.

Program	FY20-21 State Funding	FY21-22 State Funding	FY22-23 State Funding	Three-year Average of State Funding
Total State Funding Spent on all Programs	\$11,659,291.52	\$12,014,802.16	\$12,121,157.82	\$11,931,750.50
Parents as Teachers	\$3,440,926.52	\$3,668,557.26	\$4,044,396.41	\$3,717,960.06 (31.2%)
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$1,531,308.45	\$1,664,310.62	\$1,771,184.32	\$1,655,601.13 (13.9%)
Child Care Training	\$1,303,258.07	\$1,305,676.06	\$1,515,579.30	\$1,374,837.81 (11.5%)

Motion: Select Parents as Teachers (FY19-20 through FY23-24) as the subject of the next prevalent program evaluation (due November 1, 2025).

Motion made by Dave Morley, seconded by Amy Williams, all voted in favor.

There was a brief discussion about the Child Trends team collaborating with the Vice President of Research at the Parents as Teachers National Center on the scope of the evaluation, as well as the inclusion of First Steps’ Parents as Teachers initiatives that took place during this time, like Connected Families. This committee will be kept abreast of the evaluation’s scope and sample design as it progresses.

Then, Chelsea shared about the upcoming 2025-2030 strategic planning process, which includes four distinct phases of data synthesis, facilitated listening, writing, and graphic design. The intention is for the facilitated listening to take place late summer and early fall 2024. The full board will have a dedicated facilitated listening session. Details to come.

The meeting transitioned into talking about the Early Childhood Advisory Council. An update was given regarding the upcoming Preschool Development Grant (PDG) renewal grant application deadline. First Steps and the Early Childhood Advisory Council are partnering, along with other stakeholders, with the South Carolina Department of Social Services, who is the lead applicant. South Carolina can apply for up to \$8 million/year for three years for the period of October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2027. Similar to previous PDG opportunities, the grant application has a strong focus on: early care and education workforce, social-emotional learning, and historically underserved populations. The grant application is due July 31, and First Steps and ECAC staff are supporting the grant writers.

The meeting wrapped up with a brief mention of a recent presentation at the Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency in Washington, DC about First Five South Carolina titled, “Family-Centered Information Portals: Aligning Public Systems to Increase Access to Services”.

Motion: Adjourn the June meeting of the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee.

Motion by Amy Williams, seconded by Dave Morley, all voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 12:39PM.

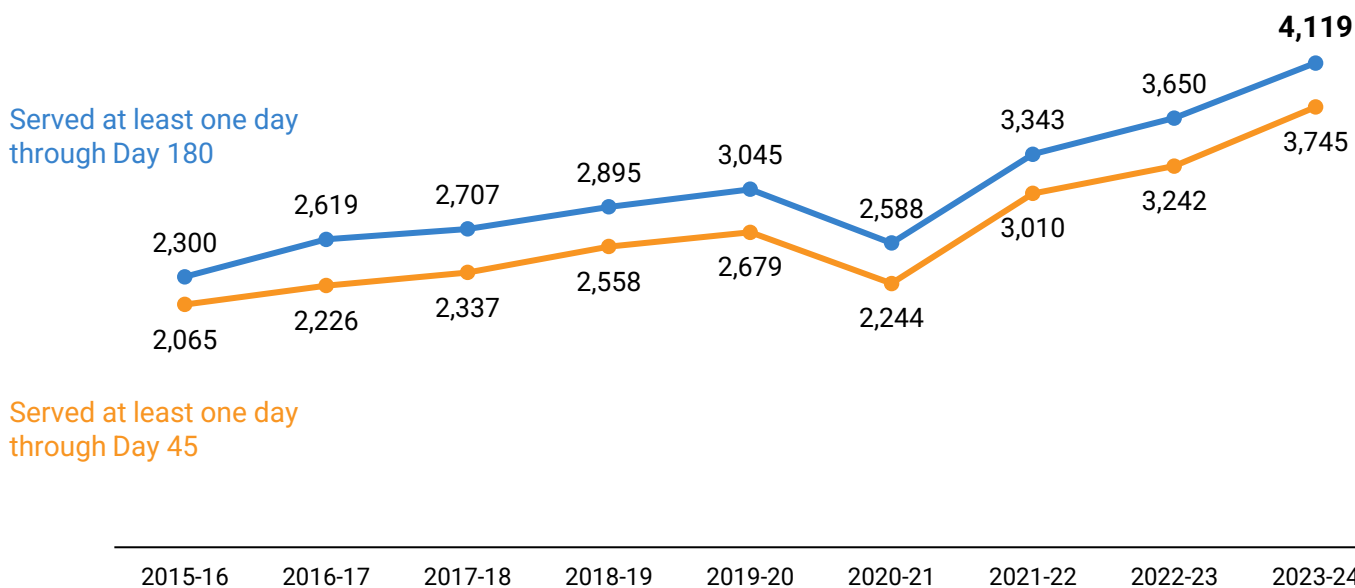
First Steps 4K is providing high-quality early education to more children



First Steps 4K offers free, full-day four-year-old kindergarten to eligible children in South Carolina. South Carolina First Steps partners with over 270 licensed child care centers and private schools across the state making it easy for families to find a high-quality program that meets their needs.

First Steps 4K celebrated Day 180 of the 2023-2024 school year on May 31, 2024.

First Steps 4K served 4,119 students for at least one day through Day 180 of the 2023-2024 school year.



First Steps 4K is reaching more children and providers across the state.

+12%

in number of students enrolled on Day 180 of the 2023-2024 school year (n=3,416; compared to Day 180 of the 2022-2023 school year).

+13%

in number of students served for at least one day through Day 180 of the 2023-2024 school year (n=4,119; compared to Day 180 of the 2022-2023 school year).

+13%

in number of providers approved on Day 180 of the 2023-2024 school year (n=279; compared to Day 180 of the 2022-2023 school year).

First Steps 4K supports family choice.

77%

of First Steps 4K providers offer summer school.

83%

of First Steps 4K providers are eligible to accept 4K + scholarships.

79%

of parents whose children are in an extended day or extended year program are able to work or attend school full-time.


Fall 2023 First Steps 4K Provider Engagement Survey

First Steps 4K values hearing feedback from our providers. Each year, First Steps 4K administers a survey to gain insight on areas of success and opportunities for growth directly from our leaders and teachers who provide a high-quality, First Steps 4K experience in classrooms throughout the state.

First Steps 4K leaders and teachers were invited to participate in the Fall 2023 First Steps 4K Provider Engagement Survey between December 4 and December 18, 2023. The survey was sent via email by First Steps 4K Coaches to their providers. A reminder message to participate in the survey was also posted on the private First Steps 4K Provider Facebook page by the First Steps 4K Outreach Coordinator. There were 181 responses to the survey (estimated response rate: 26%). There was a 33% increase in estimated response rate compared to the Fall 2022 survey.

First Steps 4K pairs providers with a dedicated Coach to support their program.

 **89%**
of First Steps 4K providers are always treated with respect by their First Steps 4K Coach.

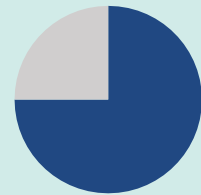
 **76%**
of First Steps 4K providers communicate with their First Steps 4K Coach at least a few times a month.

2 **61%**
of First Steps 4K providers are visited by their First Steps 4K Coach at least twice per month.

“To ensure the program succeeds, they provide all the materials and tools to use. They provide continuous education for you as a teacher, and when you’re in doubt there is always someone you can call to help you along the way.”

Lead Teacher,
Horry County

75% of First Steps 4K providers would highly recommend our program to other child care providers in their county.



First Steps 4K supports high-quality education.


60%
of First Steps 4K providers better understand what high-quality 4K looks like because of their involvement in First Steps 4K.

57%
of First Steps 4K providers better understand the SC Learning Standards because of their involvement in First Steps 4K.


52%
of First Steps 4K providers have seen improvements in the classroom environment because of their involvement in First Steps 4K.

First Steps 4K equips providers with knowledge and technical assistance.

According to First Steps 4K providers, the top 3 most valuable parts of the First Steps 4K program are:

1 
the information learned at First Steps 4K Academy

2 
the information learned during coaching sessions with the First Steps 4K Coach

3 
the relationship built with the First Steps 4K Coach

Spring 2024 First Steps 4K Family Engagement Survey

First Steps 4K values feedback from families enrolled in our program in classrooms throughout the state. Each year, First Steps 4K administers an annual family engagement survey to gain insight on areas of success and opportunities for growth directly from families we serve.

Over 3,000 families were invited to participate in the Spring 2024 First Steps 4K Family Engagement Survey between March 4 and March 25, 2024. The survey was sent via text message (93% delivery rate) by the First Steps 4K Outreach Coordinator on March 4, 2024. A reminder message to participate in the survey was included in the March First Steps 4K Family Newsletter that was sent via email/text to families on March 20, 2024. The survey was available in English and Spanish. There were 286 responses to the survey (estimated response rate: 9%). There was a 167% increase in response rate compared to the Spring 2023 survey. Families who participated in the survey had the opportunity to enter a drawing for one of ten educational toys valued at \$13.

First Steps 4K empowers parents to work and attend school.



79%

of parents whose children are in extended day or extended year programs report being able to work or attend school full-time because of First Steps 4K.

"[First Steps 4K] is good at providing a great way for parents to work so they can support their families and letting younger kids get a head start on school."

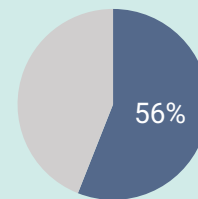
Parent,
Richland County

88% of families would highly recommend First Steps 4K to a friend or family member with a 4-year-old child!

"First Steps 4K is the best school/childcare my kids have attended. I know when I drop my boys off they're safe, loved, and learning well. ...As a parent I find myself thankful and filled with joy that my kids are able to experience and go to school with such an amazing atmosphere of loving staff & teachers."

Parent,
Lexington County

Over half of families have received a child care scholarship through the First Steps 4K + program.



Through a partnership with the SC Department of Social Services, siblings (0-12 years) of 4-year-olds enrolled in the First Steps 4K program now qualify for child care and after-school scholarships.

First Steps 4K prepares children for kindergarten.



89%

of First Steps 4K students can recognize the alphabet



89%

of First Steps 4K students are beginning to write their first name



88%

of First Steps 4K students have improved their social interactions with other children