



2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Bamberg County First Steps:



43 children

were directly served in Bamberg County



63 parents & caregivers

received services and support to be their child's first and most important teacher



41 educators

participated in First Steps training and professional development, benefitting 500+ children

PROVEN RESULTS

A 2019 study found that children who received First Steps local partnership services were:



74% more likely

to score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment



34% less likely

to be chronically absent in kindergarten

THE NEED PERSISTS IN BAMBERG COUNTY

First Steps works but we need to expand our reach to ensure that all children are ready.

803

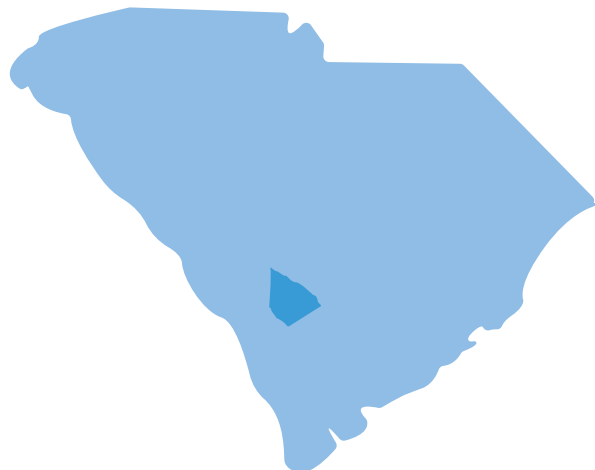
children under 6

61%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

69%

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



OUR MISSION

To collaborate with community partners, empower local families and caregivers to prepare young children for school success by maximizing public and private community resources to ensure that every child arrives at school prepared to learn.



Pauletta Plowden

Executive Director

"Children are our greatest asset and most valuable resource. Investing in our youngest learners is the most cost effective, socially responsible investment that our small rural county of Bamberg, South Carolina can make!" Bamberg County First Steps' mission is to ensure that every child arrives at the first grade healthy and ready to learn! A National Blue Ribbon Parents As Teachers Affiliate, our partnership works diligently to provide high quality early childcare services to underserved families with children ages 0-5. With many families living below the poverty level, our partnership, in collaboration with local key stakeholders is committed to excellence in providing comprehensive parenting services, high quality childcare scholarships, professional earlycare teachers and childcare directors training. Bamberg County First Steps would like to thank all of our local and state leaders for over twenty five years of helping to build a stronger community, with thriving families and children who are healthy, safe and ready to succeed!



Johnell Gaines

Board Chair

I am delighted to serve as the Board Chair for Bamberg County First Steps. As a team, we strive daily to reach out to families and provide resources to ensure that every child is prepared to be successful when they enter school. It is an honor to work with a group of compassionate First Steps Board Members who enjoy supporting our youngest learners!

Our First Steps Board connects families with resources so they can excel. We plan activities and trainings that foster a positive and welcoming environment. Families and their children enjoy the quality time with other families and board members.

Our First Steps Board has established enduring relationships with community partners who are passionate about the services they provide. Our community partners are instrumental in strengthening, our Board, so we can do even more for the families that we serve.

Bamberg County First Steps is committed to providing exceptional services to the children we serve in Bamberg County and celebrate their wonderful achievements!

PROGRAMS

PARENTING

Parents as Teachers

Offers research-based curricula that help families raise children to be healthy, safe, learning, and ready for school.

43

children served

12

group meetings
and events

699

home visits

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

278

children served

9

providers served

22.5

certified training
hours

Child Care Scholarships

Eligible children receive tuition-free enrollment at quality child care centers.

15

children served

15

families served

Serving Bamberg County's children birth through age five.

"The First Steps program has been incredibly beneficial in supporting the development of my 18-month-old son. During each visit, he engages in stimulating, play-based learning activities. Our parent educator is extremely supportive and has played a significant role in my child's learning experience. The visits with our parent educator provide me with activities I can do with my child to support his development. Thanks to this program, my child is developing a love for reading. We are happy to be part of this program, and I encourage others to join as well."

Bamberg County First Steps parent



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

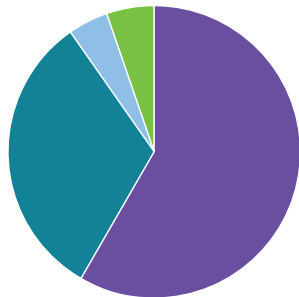


\$1 = \$2.11

Bamberg County First Steps leveraged \$297,623.14 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$1.11 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

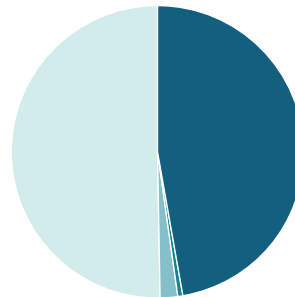
Total: \$463,934.72



- Parenting - \$339,821.71
- Early Care & Education - \$184,862.54
- Administrative - \$24,964.81
- Core Functions - \$30,265.82

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$487,589.14



- State Funding - \$267,100
- Federal Funding - \$3,055
- Private Funding - \$12,095.14
- In-kind Contributions - \$282,473

FUNDING SUPPORT BY SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS

- State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding
- State READY Funding*
- Federal ESSER Funding**
- State Income Tax Check-off and Private Donations to SC First Steps

*Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth (READY) Proviso 1.105

**American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, awarded to the South Carolina Department of Education

Federal AmeriCorps funding awarded to SC First Steps from the SC Service Commission at the United Way Association of SC

Note: Revenue amounts may show a difference between allocations and revenue based on penalties imposed by the SC First Steps Board of Trustees for non-compliance with organizational policies. The figures provided are based on unaudited financial statements and, as such, are subject to change.

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Tarea Grimes
Linda Fair
Ernestine Barnwell
Lindsey Toomer
Imagen Kinard
Jannette Stokes
Mabel Frazier

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CONTACT US

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