

**2025-2026 SERVICE SITE AGREEMENT**

 **between**

**FIRST STEPS AMERICORPS (SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS TO SCHOOL READINESS)**

**and**

**AMERICOPRS SERVICE SITES (LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS, EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL -ECAC, AND FIRST STEPS 4K)**

**1. AWARD AND MEMBER RECRUITMENT**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(Partnership”) has been selected as a placement site for participation in the 2025-2026 program year as approved by SC First Steps. As a result, SC First Steps has awarded your organization AmeriCorps service positions to engage individuals in service activities that support the project objectives as outlined in this Service Site Agreement. The specific Member role(s) and slot type(s) awarded are listed in the partnership’s 2025-2026 Grant Agreement Amendment.

AmeriCorps Members (“Member(s)”) serving under this Attachment will tentatively be scheduled to begin their service during the following Member orientation dates (more dates will be added if required):

* + - August 19, 2024
		- September 2, 2024

Member placements are contingent on Partnership meeting all requirements listed in the applicable Roles and Responsibilities section of this Attachment. SC First Steps reserves the right to temporarily or permanently suspend Member placements if Partnership is found to be out of compliance.

The recruitment and interview of applicants to fill the Member slot(s) is considered a joint effort between First Steps AmeriCorps (SC First Steps) and Partnership, and success of the project relies on a strong commitment from both parties. However, the ultimate responsibility for recruiting and retaining Members falls on Partnership. Partnership commits to taking all steps to ensure that recruitment and enrollment efforts are successful and that all allocated slots are filled.

Partnership further commits to strive for a minimum ninety percent (90%) retention of all Members enrolled in the program. Retention is defined not only by Members remaining with the program for the duration of their contract period, but also completing the minimum number of hours required for their AmeriCorps slot type (i.e., 1,200 hours, 900 hours, etc.).

If Partnership successfully fulfills the expectations outlined in this Agreement, First Steps AmeriCorps may also allocate additional Member slots at the request of Partnership, depending on slot availability.

**2. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

Partnership shall participate in meeting the following **First Steps AmeriCorps program objectives**. These are Partnership specific performance targets that will result in First Steps AmeriCorps achieving its statewide AmeriCorps Performance Metrics.

* PARENT EDUCATOR AMERICORPS implementing HIPPY NATIONAL: Members will provide direct service in the issue area of education and family support. Implementing the HIPPY NATIONAL curriculum; each Member will serve a minimum of eight (8) to ten (10) families.
* FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Members will strive to recruit, orient, lead, and engage the community in Partnership services, complete referrals, and increase the number of families served through outreach activities. Members will achieve an average service target of 10-12 family referrals each month using the First Five QR coded printed materials. The statewide performance metric is 180 family connects by Engagement AmeriCorps members by the end of each program year.

MEMBER ACTIVITIES

Partnership agrees to abide by the Position Descriptions for the approved Member services activities as outlined in the Attachment Appendix and located on the SC First Steps website. Members may not perform duties of staff members or supplant the hiring of staff. In addition, Partnership will monitor for the prohibited and unallowable activities as outlined in the Attachment Appendix and immediately report to SC First Steps any Members’ engagement in these activities so that corrective action may be taken.

Note: Federal funding for Members is approved with the understanding that Members' service remains in the approved scope of activities. Contrary circumstances could lead to the removal of Members from Partnership.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

 **PARTNERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES:**

* Abide by all policies and procedures applicable to Partnership as outlined in the 2024-20254 First Steps Member Handbook and the AmeriCorps SC Operations Manual (provided to the Program coordinator by SC Service Commission.
* Identify and assign at least one (1) staff person from Partnership (“site supervisor”) who has expertise in the program objectives (i.e., client services, etc.) to serve as the direct supervisor for the Member(s) for technical assistance. The site supervisor must:
	+ Possess relevant career experience in Program Objective areas.
	+ Train, mentor, and support Members in completing their service activities.
	+ Commit adequate time to the training, support, and supervision of Members.
	+ Oversee Member attendance tracking and review/approve Member timesheets in the America Learns timekeeping system on a weekly basis, as stipulated by the AmeriCorps Program Coordinator.
	+ Document and report data associated with the program objectives listed above and report that information as requested.
	+ Participate in monitoring and training events as requested.
	+ Site supervisor or Executive director must attend Community of Practice Meetings
* Members will be required to meet with their site supervisor at varying rates based on their position description. Parent Educator AmeriCorps Members will meet with their site supervisor for a minimum of one (1) hour each week as outlined in the HIPPY NATIONAL curriculum. Family and Community AmeriCorps Members will meet with their site supervisor for a minimum of thirty (30) minutes bi- weekly.
* Support member recruiting, interviewing, and selection in conjunction with SC First Steps. Specifically, Partnership agrees to the following:
	+ Post the position using local job boards and disseminate information regarding the AmeriCorps service opportunity within the organization’s networks (to include social media, organizational newsletter, and volunteer list) and direct applicants to apply through the SC First Steps website (https://scfirststeps.org/get-involved/americorps/). Partnerships must provide SC First Steps with an overview of the local recruitment methods that they will facilitate and a timeline for implementing the strategies that have been identified. Upon execution of the Amendment, SC First Steps will incorporate Partnership opportunity into the organization’s online AmeriCorps Member Application. Applicants sourced by Partnership should be instructed to select to serve with Partnership.
	+ Schedule staff time to conduct second-round interviews of applicants recommended by First Steps AmeriCorps to be completed within seven (7) business days following the recommendation. An inability to return a definitive yes or no decision to First Steps AmeriCorps within the allotted time frame may result in the candidate being offered to another partner organization.
* If Partnership offers childcare assistance, consider reserving scholarship slots for Members needing childcare who do not qualify for the SC Voucher Program and publicizing this benefit as part of local recruitment activities.
* Attend and participate in required staff trainings with First Steps AmeriCorps throughout the program year. At a minimum, this will include an initial orientation training with the First Steps AmeriCorps program coordinator and at least one monitoring visit.
* Provide guidance, support and site-specific orientation and training to Members — ensuring Members are aware of relevant organizational operating procedures and safety/emergency procedures, as well as how to confidently carry out their service activities. Members should be provided with a copy of either Partnership’s employee or volunteer manual. SC First Steps will further discuss Partnership’s ability to adequately train Members to fulfill the activities listed in their position description during the initial site supervisor orientation process. If it is determined that Partnership does not have a fully developed Member training curriculum, SC First Steps reserves the right to retain the Members past the initial Member orientation and engage them in SC First Steps’ bi-monthly trainings.
* Inform all Members about expectations for rules of conduct, professionalism, and appropriate behavior — including methods for communicating service hours and absences.
* Provide appropriate supplies for Members to carry out service activities — desk space, computer, phone access, tools, construction materials, etc.
* Provide a mileage reimbursement to Members at the current Federal reimbursement rate (currently $0.65 mile through December 31, 2023, $0.67 after that date) for service-related travel (other than from the Member’s residence to their primary service site) and/or grant Members access to drive Partnership vehicles for service activities. These reimbursements will be based on the travel policy provided by SC First Steps. Local partnerships experiencing financial hardship with meeting this requirement should contact Betty Gardiner, Director of Grantmaking and Development (bgardiner@scfirststeps.org).
* Introduce Members to the organizational staff and invite Members to participate in staff functions, meetings, and trainings as appropriate to breed a team oriented, inclusionary culture.
* Ensure the general accuracy and review of Member timesheets by the required deadline (weekly).
* Participate in the Member performance evaluation process at the mid-term and end-of-term for each Member, abiding by the format and deadline specified by SC First Steps.
* Communicate with the program coordinator difficulties and participate in the progressive discipline policy to extinguish misbehavior and or program infractions.
* If required, submit any Member documentation as requested by the deadline specified by SC First Steps.
* Agree to release time for Members to attend required program professional development/training events, leadership service projects and team meetings with SC First Steps.
* Clearly communicate the service activities and role that Members will perform within your Partnership — as reflected in the approved SC First Steps Position Descriptions. Ensure that Members do not supplant or replace any established staff roles or engage in other prohibited activities or unallowable activities. Seek immediate approval from SC First Steps for any service activities not included on the approved Position Descriptions prior to allowing Members to engage in these activities, especially in connection to activities documented in the Outside Service Form.
* Develop communication materials, including but not limited to press releases and social media content in promotion of your Partnership’s AmeriCorps program. Please send copies of all communication materials developed to the AmeriCorps program coordinator.
* Ensure Members and Partnership office(s) are branded to include the AmeriCorps logo through t-shirts, yard signs, stickers or other items provided at all times. SC First Steps will provide Members serving at Partnership with a lanyard/wallet, mask, and t-shirt featuring the AmeriCorps and SC First Steps logos. Partnership partners may also choose to *co-brand* the project shirt with their Partnership’s logo – the cost of doing so would need to be covered by Partnership. Partnership shall submit co-branding designs to the SC First Steps program coordinator for approval to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps branding standards.
* Participate in SC First Steps’ program reporting and evaluation by collecting and communicating program impact data through the First Steps Data Collection System and provide templates to the SC First Steps program coordinator.
* Actively participate in SC First Steps monitoring efforts, either electronic or in person, throughout the program period. SC First Steps will conduct 2 formal annual monitoring visit per project period. Additionally, SC First Steps will incorporate its Partnership partners into the organization’s Spot Check and Timesheet Accuracy monitoring procedures. This procedure entails random Member service site visits to occur on a monthly basis by SC First Steps or Partnership staff.
* If necessary, actively participate in the SC First Steps and AmeriCorps Grievance Procedure (included in Member Handbook).
* Provide adequate opportunities for Members to meet their service hour commitment by providing, on average, the minimum hours served per week as listed on the Member Position Description(s). Ensure Members take a lunch break of at least fifteen (15) minutes for every six (6) consecutive hours of service performed. Lunch breaks must be reflected on the Member's timesheet and cannot count as service hours.
* Communicate immediately and regularly with SC First Steps regarding AmeriCorps performance issues, injuries/incidents, or other program concerns.
	+ Provide documentation of any Member performance issues in writing and work with SC First Steps staff to build a performance improvement plan for Member success.
	+ Report any Member injury immediately to SC First Steps staff and provide relevant supporting documentation within twenty-four (24) hours and follow the guidelines for documentation as outlined in the Member Handbook for incident reporting.
	+ Be proactive in seeking resolution should problems or issues arise and work with the SC First Steps program coordinator to follow the Corrective Action Procedures outlined in the AmeriCorps Member Service Agreement.
* Document Partnership’s financial support to the SC First Steps as a Partnership, both direct costs and a documented portion of shared costs, following guidance provided by the SC First Steps Finance Office and contracted Fiscal Manager.
* The Member(s) will be asked to comply with rules, regulations, policies, provisions, and guidance provided by the three separate entities (i.e., AmeriCorps (formerly known as The Corporation for National and Community Service), SC First Steps, and their Partnership). The expectation is that Members will adhere to the most stringent policy that applies to each situation. Partnership agrees that it will not diminish any expectations provided to Members by AmeriCorps or SC First Steps.

Programs and activities must be accessible to persons with disabilities, and Partnership must provide reasonable accommodations to the known mental or physical disabilities of qualified Members, service recipients, applicants, and program staff. All Member selections and project assignments must be made without regard to the need to provide reasonable accommodation. The Office of Disability Employment Policy operates a toll-free, confidential, free resource for employers on reasonable accommodation requirements and options for accommodating persons with disabilities at (866) 633-7365(V) or (877) 889-5627 or [www.dol.gov/odep.](http://www.dol.gov/odep)

**SC FIRST STEPS AMERICORPS PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES:**

* Secure funding from and maintain relationship with the Corporation for National and Community Service and the United Way Association of South Carolina Service Commission in support of the SC First Steps.
* Review and select Partnership for program year participation.
* Issue a program year Attachment, SC First Steps Member Handbook, and AmeriCorps SC Operations Manual to each Partnership.
* Support the recruitment, interviewing and selection of Members with Partnership. Specifically, SC First Steps will:
* Conduct national and statewide recruitment efforts to generate applications and interest in SC First Steps. During the application process, SC First Steps will educate applicants as to our internal and external Member offerings. When and where appropriate, SC First Steps will refer nationally sourced applicants to a Partnership when deemed an optimal fit for the potential Member and host Partnership.
* SC First Steps will fast track and provide priority consideration for any applicant sourced by Partnership as indicated by the Member selecting Partnership during their initial online application.
* Add the specific Partnership service opportunity to SC First Steps’ online AmeriCorps Member application in order for Member candidates to learn about Partnership opportunities and apply directly to serve with that site.
* Provide comprehensive recruiting strategies and resource guide to include SC First Steps’ local recruiting strategies and marketing materials as well as ongoing, as needed, consultative support for Partnership to execute their local recruiting strategy.
* Conduct initial application vetting.
	+ Make recommendations for second-round interviews to be conducted by Partnership.
	+ Communicate the onboarding process with candidates who have been selected to serve with Partnership.
* Complete all pre-service criminal history checks for Members. The following criteria will be utilized in determining an applicants’ eligibility to serve in the AmeriCorps program:
* Ineligible if convicted of murder or a violent felony.
* Ineligible if convicted of a crime that would require the individual to be placed on a sex offender registry.
* If it is found that an applicant makes false statements, does not fully disclose prior convictions, or has prior criminal convictions outside of the disqualifiers listed above, SC First Steps senior management staff will determine the individual’s eligibility to serve on a case-by-case basis.
* Conduct orientation and training to Partnership prior to program launch, as needed, to guarantee a successful and compliant program.
* Maintain Member paperwork and enroll/exit Members according to expectations of the Corporation for National and Community Service.
* If requested by Partnership, provide additional training to Members to ensure their success with program activities.
* Conduct regular site visits and monitoring exercises with Partnership to identify ways to continue to improve program operations.
* Provide training and technical assistance to Partnership, site supervisors, applicants for the AmeriCorps Program, and Members, as needed.
* Provide living allowance payment, health coverage, workers compensation, ID badge, t-shirt, time tracking system, and email accounts to Members to support their service activities.
* Collect impact data from Partnership on a monthly basis.
* Complete all required program and financial reports for the United Way Association of South Carolina Service Commission, SC First Steps AmeriCorps, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and other stakeholders.
* Develop communication materials including, but not limited to, press releases and social media content in promotion of the SC First Steps.
* Work with Partnership to monitor Member hours and troubleshoot any performance or personnel issues that arise during the course of the term, including injuries, poor performance, corrective action, suspension, removal, transfer, or other items that impede the effectiveness of program operations.
* Work with Partnership to retain and archive all program year records and files in compliance with federal and state regulations.
* Provide Partnership with AmeriCorps branding materials, such as project t-shirts, AmeriCorps lawn signs, and AmeriCorps stickers.
* Provide annual documentation of matching funds regarding SC First Steps’ direct support to the SC First Steps program on behalf of Partnership.

**3. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

All fiscal responsibilities, funding, and resources provided for in this Attachment are referenced in the Grant Amendments between SC First Steps and Partnership as well as the Operations Manual for SC First Steps.

**4. SIGNATURES**

A copy of the signed Grant Amendment and Service Site Agreement may be supplied to the United Way Association of South Carolina Service Commission and/or Corporation for National and Community Service if requested.

Should a problem occur between the Member, Partnership, SC First Steps, United Way Association of South Carolina Service Commission and/or AmeriCorps (formerly the Corporation for National and Community Service), the SC First Steps program coordinator with SC First Steps Senior Management staff will work with the appropriate parties involved to resolve the problem.

Signing below confirms that you were training on and agree to adhere to all governance procedures and policies for First Steps AmeriCorps.

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Executive Director Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Site Supervisor (if different from Executive Director) Date

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First Steps Executive Director Date

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AmeriCorps Program Coordinator Date