

# NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2024 – 2026



# Acknowledgments

Berkeley County First Steps is dedicated to meeting all challenges faced by the early education and care community with innovative solutions and partnerships that fund them. We are thankful to the families, community partners, board members and staff that attended our 4 focus groups this winter. We are also grateful to our Latinx families who completed a needs survey that also informed the development of this document.

Thank you to Carmen Landy, MPA, CPEC for providing expert facilitation and support during the development of this process and document.

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# Message from the Executive Director



## Adrienne Troy Frazier

Executive Director  
Berkeley County First  
Steps

We have a lot to do!

Families with young children in our community face difficult and inter-related issues of economic security, access to quality child care, domestic violence, transportation and access to affordable housing. Every day, we work to tackle these complicated, controversial, sometimes life-threatening problems with budget limitations that make it difficult for all young children in Berkeley County to meet their fullest potential. Let's continue to talk about the best ways to develop strong, healthy and secure communities.

With highest hopes for the future,

*Adrienne Troy-Frazier*

# Needs Assessment Process

## CONVENE

Held 4 community convenings with 63 participants and developed a vision for young children and their families

October 2022 – January 2023



## UNDERSTAND

Reviewed local data and map assets to understand the state of young children, their families, and the early childhood system

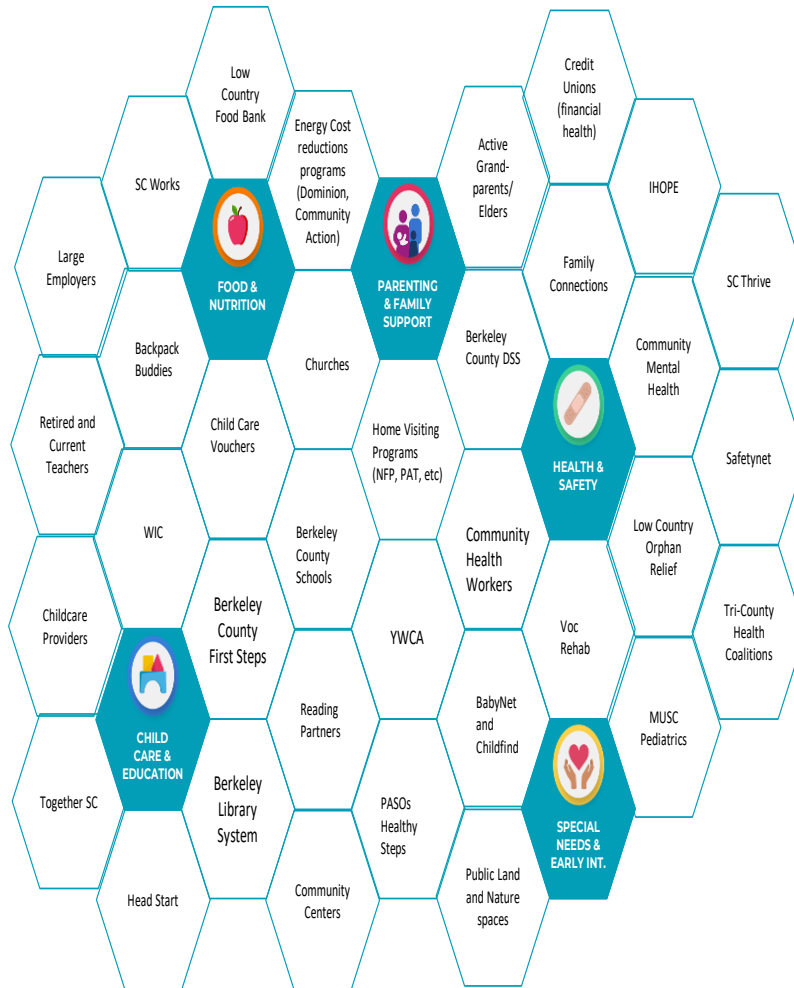
October 2022 – March 2023

## PRIORITIZE

Organized the insight gathered from the convenings and data to prioritize the concerns, needs, and gaps the partnership wants to address and formalized Needs Assessment

January 2023 – March 2023

# Berkeley County Asset Map



# Priorities: Summary

## 1. Child Care deserts

Focus group participants expressed the need for both more child care centers and better quality among those that exist. Subordinate to this was the shortage of personnel in early childcare, the lack of facilities, and the availability of childcare in rural areas. Also included here would be afterschool care and infant- toddler care

## 2. Affordable Housing

Berkeley County has the lowest median household income in the Tri-County region, resulting in residents paying a higher percentage of their incomes for housing. Rental rates are increasing faster than median household income, resulting in a decline in affordability.

## 3. Transportation

Once rural and agricultural in nature, Berkeley County is now one of the fastest growing regions in the nation with a booming employment opportunities. We've exceeded the threshold for needing a commuter-oriented transit system that can increase access for all residents, especially low-income families to jobs, health care and other services.



# Priority One: Child Care Deserts

## 47% of Berkeley County is a child care desert

SC B-5 Early Childhood Needs Assessment

### QUOTES:

*"I quit my job because I could not find child care that I could afford and that was quality in my area" Parent of 3 young children*

*"There are no centers that accept infants in the Huger and Cainhoy area right now." Mom of 2 children*

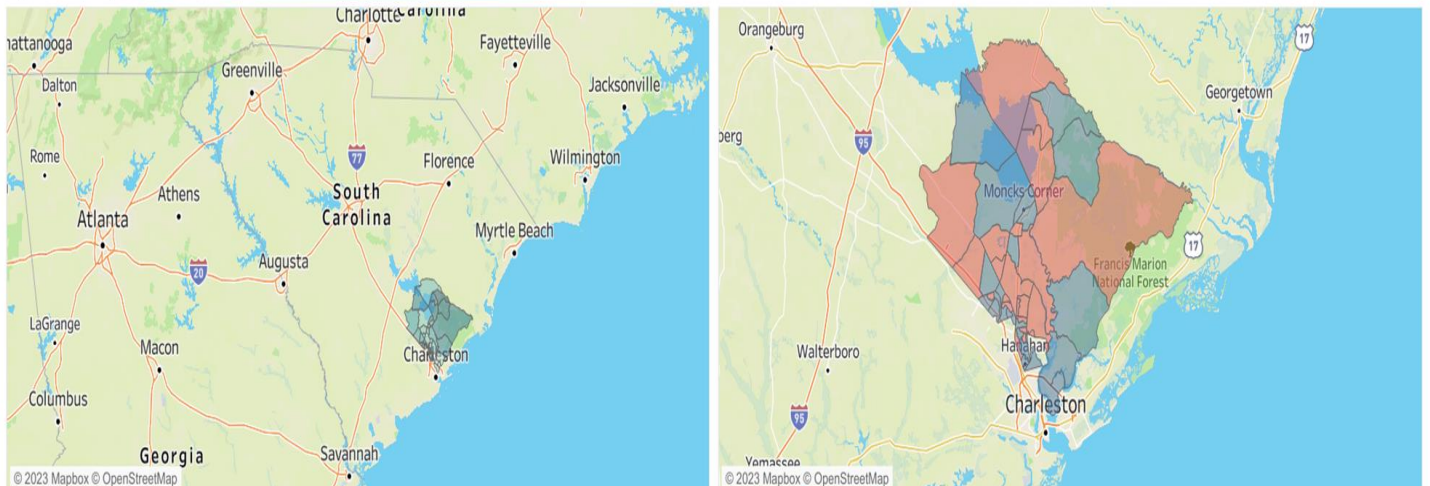
**"I worked in child care but left for a job at Amazon because the pay and benefits were better. I loved my job with kids but I have to support my own children first." Former Child Care Worker**

SC B-5 Early Childhood Needs Assessment

MAPS: Compare county distribution of..	BARS: Compare distribution of two m..	MAPS: Explore census tracts in a county or c..	MAP: Explore child care access in a count..	MAP & BARS: Kindergarten readine..
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Select a Co.. Berkeley

Population .. 0.0% 95.0% Child care d..  No  Yes



Provider location and center capacity obtained from [sccchildcare.org](http://sccchildcare.org) on October 16, 2022. Definition of a child care desert obtained from the Center for American Progress, "A child care desert is any census tract with more than 50 children under age 5 that cont..

## Priority Two: Affordable Housing

### **45% of Berkeley County renters are paying more than 30% of their household income towards housing.**

2019 ACS

The median rent in Berkeley County is \$1,109. Census tracts that are close to Charleston County have a much higher median rent than those located in the northern rural areas which are home to a large Black population with lower household income.

*Source: Berkeley County Government, February 2021 Community Needs Assessment*

*“Although the U.S. Census ranks Berkeley County in the top 100 fastest growing counties in the U.S., the average single-family home price has increased by over \$103,000 and more than 40% since 2015”*

**Source:** Charleston Trident Association of Realtors.

*“Safe housing for immigrant families in Berkeley is non-existent because it is unaffordable. Many families who are undocumented simply don’t have the paperwork to rent an apartment”* BCFS staff member

*“I left an abusive partner last year and have jumped from one hotel to another with my children because I can’t afford to rent anywhere. But hotels aren’t cheap either. I’ll never save up enough because it is so expensive here.*

*”Sisters of Charity Crisis Fund parent*



John Eleby helps set up tents for three Berkeley County pastors and other community leaders to sleep in for three nights beside a U.S. Highway 52 gas station on Jan. 24, 2022, to raise awareness about homelessness in Berkeley County. Gavin McIntyre/Staff



## Priority Three: Transportation

**The poorest families in the U.S. spend nearly 40% of their budget on transportation, while middle-income families spend about 19%..**

“Berkeley county is a transportation desert” PAT parent

“There is no transportation in Berkeley County”

“The Tri-County has been talking about a light rail system since 2015. We are still waiting. There are no updates given to the community about this and the traffic is getting worse each day.” Community Partner



# Next Steps



## PLAN

Write the partnership's three-year Strategic Plan using the Needs Assessment

March 2023 – May 2023



## APPLY

Utilize the Strategic Plan to inform the partnership's Annual Formula Funding Grant Application

May 2023, May 2024, May 2025



## IMPLEMENT

Execute the programs and services outlined in the Strategic Plan

July 2023 – June 2026



## MONITOR

Track the partnership's progress on implementing programs to fidelity and on achieving the Strategic Plan

July 2023 – June 2026