**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**[DATE]**

Contact: [NAME]

 [TITLE]

 [PHONE NUMBER]

 [EMAIL ADDRESS]

**[YOUR COUNTY] FIRST STEPS RECEIVES GRANT TO EXPAND PARENTING PROGRAM THROUGH AMERICORPS**

**[LOCATION], S.C.–** [YOUR COUNTY] First Steps has received [DOLLAR AMOUNT] in federal funds to expand its [EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM]. South Carolina First Steps awarded the grant competitively as part of a $1 million effort to meet the changing needs of young children and families in South Carolina.

“These grant awards come at a critical time for young children and families in our state,” said South Carolina First Steps Executive Director Georgia Mjartan. “We know that access to child care is limited, social networks are strained, and parents are overwhelmed.”

[DISCUSS SPECIFIC PROGRAM EXPANSION PLANS; REFER TO COMPLETED APPLICATION]

[OPTIONAL QUOTE FROM LOCAL PARTNERSHIP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR]

**OR**

“Our local partnerships have the training and experience to support parents where they are, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to succeed in being their child’s first and best teacher,” said Mjartan. “We are pleased to award these grants, knowing that they will have a direct and positive impact on young children and the families who care for them.”

Funding for the Family Services Expansion Grant comes from Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5), a federal grant awarded to South Carolina by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration for Children and Families.

In addition, [YOUR COUNTY] First Steps will expand its [name of parenting program or “services for families”] through a new AmeriCorps service program, thanks to funding and support from South Carolina First Steps. The state’s early childhood agency awarded the AmeriCorps grant competitively as part of a new effort to increase family support services and community outreach through national service.

“Recruiting a diverse cadre of AmeriCorps Members allow us to expand access to services for young children and families, and do so in a way that reflects the diversity of our state and builds on the skills, knowledge, and experiences that exist within the communities we serve,” said South Carolina First Steps Executive Director Georgia Mjartan.

The grant award provides [YOUR COUNTY] First Steps with the funding and support to recruit and deploy [#] AmeriCorps service member(s) as [parent educator(s)/family support specialist(s)/community outreach specialist(s)]. [SPECIFIC PROGRAM EXPANSION PLANS; REFER TO COMPLETED APPLICATION]

[YOUR COUNTY] First Steps is now recruiting applicants for the AmeriCorps program. The positions are for a 10-month term of service beginning October 1. An online application is available at [scfirststeps.org/americorps](https://scfirststeps.org/get-involved/americorps/).

[OPTIONAL QUOTE FROM LOCAL PARTNERSHIP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR]

The First Steps AmeriCorps program is funded by a three-year grant from the United Way Association of South Carolina.

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**ABOUT SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS**

[YOUR COUNTY] First Steps is one of 46 local First Steps partnerships that collectively served 28,427 children across the state last year.

South Carolina First Steps is both a nonprofit and state agency and is the only statewide, dedicated comprehensive early childhood agency in South Carolina focused on getting children ages birth through five ready for school and life success.

Learn more about South Carolina First Steps and its local partnerships at **SCFIRSTSTEPS.ORG.**

**ABOUT AMERICORPS**

AmeriCorps is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the federal agency for volunteering, service, and civic engagement. CNCS engages millions of Americans in citizen service through its AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs and leads the nation’s volunteer and service efforts.

For more information, visit **NATIONALSERVICE.ORG**