



Meeting of the Board of Trustees

August 17, 2023 2:00PM

Via Zoom

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 June 15, 2023 minutes as submitted
Attachments: SC First Steps Board of Trustees June 15, 2023 Minutes
- IV. **First Steps Is Here: Parenting Programs** (Michelle Maxberry)
Rushell Pernel, Parent Participant, Barnwell County First Steps
- V. **Executive Committee** (David Morley)
Attachments: Executive Committee Report, Executive Committee Minutes
- VI. **Consent Agenda:** Motions Recommended by Committees (Dave Morley)
 - a. **Motion:** To approve the Interim Process for Local Partnership Executive Director Hiring Salary and Annual Evaluation (Executive Committee recommends)
 - b. **Motion:** To approve the awarding of the READY Sustaining and Expanding Effective Programs Serving Children and Families Grants in the amount of \$290,756.17 in READY funding and \$129,558.59 in recaptured state funding for a total of \$420,314.76 (see attached table) to four (4) Local Partnerships, Chesterfield, Darlington, Florence, and Williamsburg Counties for implementation beginning in grant year 2024. (Local Partnerships Programs and Grants Committee recommends)
 - c. **Motion:** To approve the corrective action determination as presented for the eleven (11) local partnerships identified (Aiken, Allendale, Beaufort, Charleston, Clarendon, Georgetown, Hampton, Horry, Kershaw, Lancaster, and Oconee Counties. As a result of corrective action, the local partnerships affected are not eligible to apply for competitive or targeted grants until they have satisfactorily resolved the deficiencies noted on their corrective action plan as determined by SC First Steps state staff (Local Partnerships Programs and Grants Committee recommends)
- VII. **Executive Session** (Dave Morley)
Motion: To enter into executive session for the purpose of a personnel matter: to review the board survey results, discuss and rate agency head performance for FY2023, and discuss the agency head salary.



Motion: To exit executive session.

Motion: To approve the agency head evaluation rating.

Motion: To approve agency head salary.

Attachments: FY23 Agency Head Performance Evaluation, FY23 Board Survey Results

- VIII. **Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee** (Dr. Amy Williams)
Attachments: Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee Report, Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee Meeting Minutes, Overview of Ready Early Childhood Innovation
- IX. **External Evaluation of First Steps Childcare Scholarship Program** (Dr. Cheri Shapiro)
- X. **Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee** (Wes Wooten)
Attachments: Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee Report, Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee Meeting Minutes, READY Recommendations to Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee, FY2023 Programmatic Corrective Action Recommendations
- XI. **Finance and Administration Committee** (Jessica Mackey)
Attachments: Finance and Administration Committee Report, Finance and Administration Committee Meeting Minutes, FY2023 Financial Status Report as of June 30, 2023, FY2023 Donations Report as of June 30, 2023, FY204 Financial Status Report July 31, 2023, FY24 Budget Summary, FY24 Financial Status Report
- XII. **Legislative Committee** (Sen. Gerald Malloy)
- XIII. **Executive Director's Report** (Georgia Mjartan)
Attachments: Executive Director's Report, 2023 READY Report
- XIV. **Motion:** To adjourn the meeting of the SC First Steps Board of Trustees



Board of Trustees Meeting

June 15, 2023 2:00PM

SC First Steps

Via Zoom

Minutes

Trustees Present (15):

Rep. Terry Alexander
Dr. Shelley Canright, Vice Chair
Jacque Curtin
Mary Lynne Diggs
Matthew Ferguson
John Hayes
Tim Holt
Dave Morley
Janie Neeley

Roger Pryor
Dr. Edward Simmer
Wes Wooten
Sue Williams
Dr. Amy Williams
Dr. Brenda Williams

Trustees Absent (7)

Rep. Shannon Erickson
Sen. Greg Hembree
Constance Holloway
Robert Kerr
Mike Leach
Jessica Mackey
Sen. Gerald Malloy

Attendees (74)

Georgia Mjartan
Avian Jones
Beth Moore
Laura Baker
Alie Boykin
Amber Gillum
Amy Engle
Andrea Larry
Ashlea Hatcher
Ben Gibson
Berry Kelly
Betty Gardiner
Betty Washington
Brandie Maness
Bruce Taylor
Candi Lalonde
Carletta Isreal
Chastine Dickey-Jackson
Cheryl Scales
Cindy Ellis
Cindy Galloway
Dana Yow
Darcy Huffman
Derek Cromwell
Dorian Young

Dwana Doctor
Faith McCaul
Felicia Battle
Francis Rushton
Gina Beebe
Jennifer Williams
Jenny May
Jon Artz
Joy Mazur
Kaitlyn Richards
Karen Martini-Waller
Karen Oliver
Kate Roach
Kathy Fitzgerald
Kathy Jenkins
Katie Perkins
Kelly Boniecki
Kendra McKinney
Kenna Hoover
Kerry Cordan
Khor Mitchell
Kim Trudell
Kristen Martocchio
Kristine Jenkins
LaMyra Dukes
Leah Crosby

Lexi Jones
Lis Guimaraes
Mark Barnes
Martha Strickland
Meredith Dickens
Myrelo King
Pauletta Plowden
Rachal Hatton
Riley Dixon
Roddrick Dugger
Ryan Shinn
Sally McClellan
Samantha Ingram
Sarah Eargle
Sarah Hocutt
Stacy Greenwalt
Shayla Pettigrew
Sheila Cornwell
SheKiah Reese
Shirley Johnson
Tamatha Kohler
Tricia Gordon
Wanda Nelson



Mr. Morley called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. Mr. Morley requested a motion to adopt the agenda. Ms. Neeley provided the motion. Mr. Pryor provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to approve the April 20, 2023 minutes. Dr. Canright provided the motion. Mr. Pryor provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Morley provided a chairman's report where he acknowledged guest speakers for the meeting and provided updates on board transitions. Alexia Newman fulfilled her commitment to the board by serving two terms. Dr. Brenda Williams was appointed by the Speaker of the House to fulfill the role of medical or childcare development provider.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to approve the following consent agenda with an amendment to motion C. Rep. Alexander provided the motion. Dr. Canright provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Consent Agenda: Motions Recommended by Committees (Dave Morley)

- a. **Motion:** To approve the corrective action determination as presented for Lancaster County First Steps. As a result of corrective action, the Lancaster County First Steps is not eligible to apply for competitive or targeted grants until they have satisfactorily resolved the deficiencies noted on their corrective action plan as determined by SC First Steps. (Local Partnerships Programs and Grants Committee recommends)
- b. **Motion:** To approve the Program and Operational Guidelines with updates by SCFS Staff for implementation for the Grant Year 2024 beginning July 1, 2023. (Local Partnerships Program and Grants Committee recommends)
- c. **Motion:** To approve the Formula Funding grant requests, with the exception of the Scholarship Program in which budgeted administrative cost that exceed 25% of the value of the scholarships received from DSS as recommended by SCFS Staff to the forty-six (46) First Steps Local Partnerships for Grant Year 2024 beginning July 1st, 2023. (Local Partnerships Programs and Grants Committee recommends)
- d. **Motion:** To approve thirteen (13) grant awards for the Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth (READY) Grants in order to serve more children and families in their communities. Twelve (12) Local Partnerships have been selected by the SCFS State Office staff review committee; Allendale, Bamberg, Charleston, Darlington (2), Dillon, Greenville, Greenwood, McCormick, Orangeburg, Pickens, Spartanburg, and York counties for amounts documented on attached table. (Local Partnerships Programs and Grants Committee recommends)
- e. **Motion:** To approve the Targeted grant applications funded through the Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth (READY) Grant opportunity for six (6) local partnerships for the Family Café; Barnwell, Darlington, Fairfield, Greenwood, Lee, and Williamsburg counties, and four (4) Local Partnerships for the Supporting Providers Through Visits (SCPV); Beaufort, Charleston, Colleton, and Williamsburg counties for amounts documented on attached table (Local Partnership Programs and Grants Committee recommends)
- f. **Motion:** To approve the Corrective Action Plan for Lancaster County First Steps as amended. (Finance and Administration Committee recommends)



Gina Beebe, Director of Parenting Programs, shared information on the Parents as Teacher program and introduced Talkea Guess, a parent participant with Orangeburg County First Steps. Ms. Guess shared her experience with her parent educator and how the Parents as Teachers program has impacted her family.

Dr. Jenny May, Director of Evaluation at the Education Oversight Committee, presented data on the kindergarten readiness assessment.

Dr. Williams reported on the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee. Dr. Williams shared that the committee discussed the idea of making Countdown to Kindergarten an evidence-based program and the statistics related to the idea provided by the University of South Carolina's Research, Evaluation and Measurement Center.

Dr. Canright reported on the Local Partnerships Programs and Grants Committee. Dr. Canright and Mr. Cromwell shared updates on current and upcoming grant awards. Dr. Canright brought forth a motion on behalf of the committee regarding the early care and education guidelines.

Motion: To approve the language change for the Enhanced Early Care Onsite Tutoring program as follows: Children that receive Enhanced Early Education Onsite Tutoring, must meet SCFS age-eligibility requirements of students age three (3) to entrance into 5k classrooms for implementation for Grant Year 2024 beginning July 1, 2024.

Dr. Simmer asked to amend the motion to add age 3. Dr. Simmer provided the motion. Dr. A. Williams seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Holt reported on the Finance and Administration Committee. He shared that the agency has received a record amount in donations. Mr. Holt also shared that SLED investigations remain ongoing related to local partnerships.

Rep. Alexander provided a legislative report where he provided an update on the FY23-24 budget that was sent to conference committee and the H. 4023 bill.

Ms. Mjartan gave the Executive Director's report she provided information and statistics on First Steps 4K for the end of the school year which included the new 2023-2024 tuition reimbursement rates. Ms. Mjartan provided an update on the First Steps AmeriCorps grant, an award increase for the Alliance for Early Success grant, and where the agency was in the process of applying for a Harvard Data Fellow via the Gates Foundation. Ms. Mjartan shared the FY24 formula funding allocations and the restructuring of the First Steps Local Partnership team which included two new roles. She concluded with an introduction of new staff members and vacancies.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Pryor provided the motion. Rep. Alexander seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:12 p.m. by Mr. Morley.



To: SC First Steps Board of Trustees
From: David Morley, Chairman, Executive Committee
Date: August 17, 2023
RE: Executive Committee Report

Acknowledgment of guest speakers at today's meeting:

- Dr. Cheri Shapiro, Director, Institute for Families in Society, University of South Carolina
- Rushell Pernell, Barnwell County First Steps

The Executive Committee of the Board of South Carolina First Steps met on August 9, 2023. The committee discussed Act 81 implementation. Minutes from the meeting are attached.

In the meeting, the committee approved an Interim Process for Local Partnership Executive Director Hiring, Salary, and Annual Evaluation. They also discussed the agency head evaluation and survey results and approved the ratings for the agency head evaluation. They discussed and approved a salary increase for the agency head. All of these actions were taken by the committee and will then be brought to the full board for approval.

SC First Steps Board of Trustees – Appointments & Transitions

Tim Holt fulfilled his service to board after having served two terms. Mr. Holt was appointed in 2014 by former Speaker of the House James Lucas for the role representing the business community. During his time on the board, he has served on and chaired the Finance and Administration Committee.

Dr. Shelley Canright fulfilled her service to the board. She was appointed by former Speaker of the House James Lucas in the role of early childhood educator in 2018. Dr. Canright served as Vice Chair of the board and was an active participant of the Local Partnership Programs and Grants Committee and the Night to Celebrate Community Committee.

Jack McBride joins the board to fulfill the role of business community, appointed by Speaker of the House G. Murrell Smith. Mr. McBride is the founder and CEO of Contec, Inc., a manufacturing company for sanitizing and disinfecting systems used in cleanroom environments and in healthcare. He is active in the community in many ways and served for eight years as a trustee for the Mary Black Foundation, the last year as Chairman of the Board. He is also on the board of the Spartanburg Regional Healthcare Foundation, the board for the United Way of the Piedmont, and is a member of the task force for Economic Mobility in the south.

The passing of H. 4023 created the following new positions on the board and the Early Childhood Advisory Council: director, Department of Mental Health and two executive directors from local partnerships to the Early Childhood Advisory Council. Dr. Robert Bank is the acting director of the Department of Mental Health. Dorothy Priestler, Cherokee County First Steps Executive Director was appointed to the ECAC by Rep. Shannon Erickson, Chairman of the House Education and Public



Works Committee. David Lisk, York County First Steps Executive Director was appointed by Sen. Greg Hembree, Chairman of the Senate Education Committee.

Jesica Mackey will chair the Finance and Administration Committee. Wes Wooten will chair the Local Partnerships Programs and Grants Committee. Jack McBride will serve the Local Partnerships Program and Grants Committee. Dr. Robert Bank will serve on the Interagency Collaboration Committee.



Executive Committee Meeting

August 9, 2023 8:30 a.m. via Zoom

Members present: Dave Morley, Dr. Shelley Canright, Jesica Mackey, Sen. Gerald Malloy, Wes Wooten
Members absent: Dr. Amy Williams
SCFS Staff present: Georgia Mjartan, Executive Director

The Executive Committee of the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees met on August 9, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 8:34 am by Chairman Dave Morley. The meeting began with Chairman Morley welcoming two board members to the Executive Committee and acknowledging that he had appointed Jesica Mackey to chair the Finance and Administration Committee and Wes Wooten to chair the Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee.

Director Mjartan directed the committee to an outline of the provisions of Act 81 that have already gone into effect or will need to take effect prior to July 1, 2024. Mjartan reminded the members that it has historically been their practice to involve the board in decision making through voting when the law indicates that the board will make a decision, establish a policy, or establish guidelines. When the law does not mention a role for the board, it has been First Steps' practice to *inform* the board of staff-level actions. Committee members agreed that this would be the right approach for working through implementation of Act 81. Mjartan also outlined that the work of reviewing and voting on Act 81 provisions will come through board committees and then flow to the full board. The committee agreed with this process.

The committee reviewed a draft Interim Process for Local Partnership Executive Director Hiring, Salary and Annual Evaluation. Following discussion, Shelley Canright motioned and Jesica Mackey seconded the following motion which was adopted unanimously:

Motion to adopt the Interim Process for Local Partnership Executive Director Hiring, Salary and Annual Evaluation.

Senator Malloy motioned and Jesica Mackey seconded the following motion:

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

The motion passed unanimously.

Shelley Canright motioned and Jesica Mackey seconded:

Motion to exit executive session.

The motion passed unanimously

Once out of executive session the following two motions were made by Shelley Canright and seconded by Jesica Mackey

Motion to approve the ratings for the agency head evaluation as discussed in executive session.

Motion to approve the salary increase for the agency head as discussed in executive session.

Both were voted on and passed with unanimous approval. At this point, Wes Wooten had exited the meeting.

Shelley Canright **motioned to adjourn the meeting.** Jesica Mackey seconded. All voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned.



Agency Head Evaluation Fiscal Year 2022 - 2023

Agency Director: Georgia Mjartan

South Carolina First Steps and Early Childhood Advisory Council

When Georgia Mjartan came to First Steps in 2017, the organization had experienced many challenges. With legislative concerns looming, the sunset for First Steps had expired and without reauthorization, the agency was existing on year-to-year proviso. No significant funding increases had been awarded to the agency for many years, and oversight committees questioned First Steps' impact. Over the past six years, Director Mjartan has led the organization through a complete turnaround. Fiscal Year 2023 was in many ways the culmination of that turnaround.

In 2023, the first year of a two-year session, South Carolina First Steps was permanently authorized and many positive changes to the law were made which the agency supported and had worked hard to see enacted. In a year in which only 4% of the bills that were introduced successfully became law, the fact that Act 81, permanently authorizing First Steps, became law and received unanimous support from both chambers is a testament to the leadership of Director Mjartan and the staff of the organization she has led for the past six years. In this year, the agency also received, for the first time, significant recurring state funds to support the Early Childhood Advisory Council.

Over the past six years, Director Mjartan has:

- rebuilt the organization adding needed evaluation, research, communications, fundraising, grantmaking and programmatic capacity
- more than doubled its reach and impact on children, most recently serving **57,000 children in FY2022**, more than ever before in the history of the organization
- grown the budget of the agency to fuel this transformation while simultaneously diversifying sources to include private philanthropy, competitive federal grants, and sub-awards in addition to more significant increases in state allocations than the agency had ever received
- established an outcomes and data focused culture, rigorously evaluating the impact of programs and services through external evaluations, rapid cycle client feedback loops and quarterly data-driven outcomes and implementation meetings, ensuring investments are wisely vetted, thoroughly monitored and programs are implemented with fidelity
- for the first time since its establishment in legislation years before, developed the Early Childhood Advisory Council into a true, collaborative, interagency governance structure capable of building integrated early childhood data systems, cross-agency family access portals, and a single state early childhood plan
- envisioned and built the nation's first-ever single eligibility and application portal into a complex, multi-agency early childhood system making South Carolina a model for the nation and the world (the innovation is being included in a United Nations report)
- developed a single identity and common eligibility screener for state, federal, and locally funded PreK programs, also the first of its kind nationally
- earned the agency and its initiatives state and national awards and recognition
- oversaw expansion of First Steps 4K statewide while developing a model of full-day, full-year and whole family care that innovatively braids state and federal dollars and increases the

value proposition for providers, in turn addressing seat availability shortages and challenges with provider recruitment and retention

Building upon these successes and with significant input and buy-in from all stakeholder groups including local partnership Executive Directors, board members, and 4K providers, in FY2023 Mjartan led agency's efforts to become *permanently* reauthorized.

FY2022 – 2023 was a banner year. The following report captures the progress Executive Director Georgia Mjartan led in FY2023.

Leadership

Rating: - Select Rating -

First Steps 4K

In FY2023, Director Mjartan led the continued expansion of First Steps 4K statewide (year two implementation), **increasing students served by 9%** compared to previous year (**3,650 students** in SY2022 – SY2023) and providing high-quality 4K options across more than **250 child care, private school and charter school providers**. Many factors have contributed to the success of the continued expansion including:

- legislative wins enabling a higher reimbursement rate to providers
- innovative braiding of state and federal dollars through interagency collaboration resulting in an offering that met both families' and providers' needs
- strategic investment in outreach, marketing, and enrollment / onboarding processes for both families and providers to participate in First Steps 4K
- significant training, professional development and coaching support for teachers and directors, and
- extended engagement options for families that built the pipeline (i.e. summer enrollment ahead of 4K year, Countdown to 4K), and encouraged full-year commitment (i.e. home visiting for families whose children were enrolled in First Steps 4K).

Recognizing the critical role teachers play in student's success and that early educator workforce shortages continue to compound an existing childcare scarcity challenge, First Steps strategically invested in teacher recruitment and retention, expanded professional development and coaching, and layered in additional support to build teachers' language and literacy development skills. These efforts leveraged federal funds on top of the recurring state dollars and were highly effective.

- **96% of classrooms** participating in the Language and Literacy Boost program **had an improvement in their average Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Tool (ELLCO) score**. Over **1,400 students have benefitted** from their teacher's participation in the language and literacy program, and participation in family literacy events offered by providers has increased.

- **366 First Steps 4K Lead Teachers received at least one recruitment or retention stipend** during the first two years of the initiative, and of those who received that first stipend, **39% received all four quarterly stipends**, meaning they were successfully retained. Notably, over half of the teachers who received all four stipends had less than three years' experience as the Lead Teacher for First Steps 4K, indicating that the intervention worked to retain newer teachers.
- More than **450 teachers and 350 leaders** (center directors, school leaders, and owners) **participated in intensive, multi-day, in-person professional development through First Steps 4K Academy** ahead of the 2022 – 2023 school year. First Steps 4K staff developed and offered over **90 hours of targeted training and professional development opportunities** throughout the year for teachers and directors.
- First Steps funded, staffed, and supported a cohort to participate in the national Aim4Excellence **director's credentialing program**. Expanding this program beyond First Steps 4K providers to also incorporate early childhood leaders participating in First Steps Local Partnership child care quality programs was an indicator of the way we are bringing knowledge and opportunities from one part of the organization (First Steps 4K) into another, breaking down internal silos and maximizing resources.

To ensure the maximum impact of the state's investment in a child during his or her PreK 4 year, First Steps has worked collaboratively with state, federal, and local partners to build out a nationally innovative suite of services that ensure children successfully transition into 4K and from 4K into kindergarten, parents are actively engaged in their student's education throughout the 4K year and beyond, and the siblings of the 4K student also have access to high-quality early education. Together, this sweet of interventions ensures families and their children get the most out of the First Steps 4K program. When support is layered, the program day and year are extended, and all children in the family have care, parents can *and do* work or continue their own education and children get more out of the program.

- In this fiscal year (which spans two summers), First Steps developed and piloted a new transition to 4K program, modifying Countdown to Kindergarten, a long-standing, evidence-informed program, while simultaneously expanding Countdown to Kindergarten. First Steps' school transition programs served 1,982 children during summer 2022 with Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) reaching 1,372 children and Countdown to 4K (CT4K) impacting 610 children during its first year of implementation. **2708 children are projected to be served in the summer of 2023, a 42.6% increase**, with 1838 in Countdown to Kindergarten and 870 in Countdown to 4K. The program is a three-way collaboration involving First Steps local partnerships, First Steps 4K, and public schools.
- Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), which involves the families of First Steps 4K students in a weekly, academically enriching, home-based

program throughout the school year, served **106 families** (95% of projected to serve) and was delivered by First Steps AmeriCorps members. Director Mjartan initiated and has overseen the establishment of this evidence-based program in South Carolina to fill a gap in home-visiting offerings for preschoolers and parent engagement in the academic development of their 4K student.

- First Steps 4K Plus, a partnership between DSS and First Steps 4K, completed its second year with **4,447 children approved for the extended day, extended year or sibling voucher** (since inception) and with **84% of children successfully connecting with a child care provider** (3,723). For First Steps 4K providers to participate in this partnership, they must participate in the voluntary child care quality rating and improvement system. It has been a longstanding goal to increase participation in this program, and in FY2023, **the percentage of First Steps 4K providers enrolled in ABC Quality and therefore able to accept the additional support through First Steps 4K Plus rose to 85%.**
- National recognition – First Steps 4K Plus garnered South Carolina **national attention** and was featured as **a state innovation worth replicating** in the policy brief, "[Sustaining Child Care Gains After the Pandemic Emergency.](#)"

Under Mjartan's leadership, there has been an intentional effort to move toward a two-generation model across all program areas (First Steps 4K, local partnership programs, etc.) Part of this commitment includes moving beyond child-only outcomes to parent-child interactive outcomes and parent-level outcomes such as workforce participation. For the second year in a row, parent-level data was collected for caregivers of First Steps 4K students. Intentional investment in the whole family, support for siblings, and extended day worked together to produce meaningful economic mobility and workforce results. **Three in four parents / caregivers whose children are in an extended day or extended year program report that they are now working a full-time job or going to school full-time because their 4-year-old is enrolled in First Steps 4K.** The Governor's Office has championed the dual priority of 4-year-old enrollment in high quality PreK along with parental engagement in the workforce or school, both through investments like GEER, which funded extended day and year and proviso language that codified the commitment to tracking parental workforce / school involvement.

When Mjartan came to First Steps in 2017, she brought a rigorous **focus on data-driven decision-making and clarity about outcomes.** Additional staffing, reorganization, qualitative and quantitative data gathering practices and a clear focus on key performance indicators (KPI's) within First Steps 4K have all been a key contributors to the positive growth and quality outcomes cited above. In FY2023, we further developed the data and evaluation infrastructure and systems within First Steps 4K to ensure all team members are knowledgeable about performance indicator targets and are working collaboratively to ensure goal attainment across First Steps.

- The First Steps 4K team meets monthly to discuss progress on achieving targets for child enrollment and the recruitment and retention of child care providers. With a clear and unified vision, the First Steps 4K team achieved their FY 23 goal for percentage of slots filled. **On Day 45 of the 2022-2023 school year, 67% of licensed, approved 4K slots were filled (goal: 60%).**
- In the Spring and Fall of each year, First Steps 4K uses online survey instruments to gather feedback from First Steps 4K families and First Steps 4K providers. The 4K leadership team meets biweekly to discuss opportunities to respond to feedback gathered during the surveys. In response to feedback shared by families, **First Steps 4K has begun using text messages to notify families on the status of their child's 4K application.** First Steps 4K also responded to teachers and directors who identified the need for **additional training in challenging behaviors and identification of developmental delays** by incorporating these topics into ongoing professional development opportunities, such as Palmetto Pre-K Jamboree and First Steps 4K Academy. A professional development opportunity designed for parents and caregivers is planned for August 2023 (Preschool Power Hour). This is in direct response to requests by our families for more information on how to help their children have the best start to school.
- The State Director of First Steps 4K and the Chief Partnership Officer also lead a cross-agency team whose goal is to increase the number of children enrolled in high-intensity programs funded by First Steps (a board-approved measure of success as outlined in Every Child Ready, First Steps' 5-year strategic plan). Through this partnership, the **First Steps 4K and Local Partnership team collaborate to recruit, enroll, and refer children and families to each other's programs.** This was a Senate Oversight Committee recommendation.

First Steps Local Partnerships

During her tenure as Executive Director of South Carolina First Steps, Mjartan has made it a priority to expand the reach of evidence-based and evidence-informed programs. First Steps Local Partnerships, operating programs for children birth to age five in every county of the state, were directly serving just under 25,000 children annually when Mjartan joined the agency six years ago. **The reach has now more than doubled to 57,000 children.** In FY2023, Mjartan continued to build the infrastructure, funding mechanisms, organizational capacity, local buy-in, and, perhaps most critically, political will to sustain these gains into perpetuity.

In FY2023, after 24 years of existing with a sunset – effectually a “pilot” – the **General Assembly unanimously voted to make South Carolina First Steps permanent. Signed into law as Act 81 by Governor McMaster** in June 2023, the permanent authorization of First Steps also included significant changes to the structure of the local partnership boards, new mechanisms for executive director oversight and accountability, and a direct link between the local partnerships and the state

early childhood system through seats on the Early Childhood Advisory Council. The process for developing the legislation was inclusive of all key stakeholders, with Mjartan leading the charge both at the State House and also with local partnership executive directors, board members, and state board members.

When the Board of Trustees hired Mjartan in 2017, they made it clear that they wanted to see the organization leverage its status as a nonprofit, public-private partnership to deliver additional, non-state capital to the partnerships. Mjartan has exceeded this expectation. In FY2023 alone, South Carolina First Steps was able to deliver to local partnerships millions of dollars in non-state funds including private grant dollars from the **Duke Endowment, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and Enterprise Holdings Foundation**, competitively awarded federal funds through **ESSER III** (via SDE), **Preschool Development Grant Birth - Five** (via DSS), and **private donations** through event fundraising (Night to Celebrate Community), annual appeals and online giving, and a robust tax check-off campaign.

In addition to fueling local partnership program growth through private and federal funds, in FY2023, for the first time ever, South Carolina First Steps deployed significant state funds granted out to partnerships through competitive and targeted processes. The **READY funds - \$3 million in recurring state funds secured in the 2022 legislative session** (the most significant increase to the partnerships' recurring budgets ever) – **were distributed in strategic and targeted ways through multiple grant-making cycles in FY2023**. These dollars are expanding child care and parenting programs in high-need areas, rural communities, and communities with persistently low Kindergarten Readiness Scores. Additionally, and in response to high inflation, years of no formula (base) funding increases, and the articulated needs of the partnerships, First Steps was also able to deliver infrastructure grants with these READY funds. By making full use of this funding tool in our toolkit enabled First Steps to more proactively enact the priorities of Every Child Ready, the board-approved five-year plan.

To ensure maximum impact, First Steps continued to build out programmatic, strategy, data, and operational support through local partnership team restructuring, local needs assessment and strategic planning support, the design and development of KITS, a customized case management and data system for local partnerships and 4K client data, investment in “core functions” like family and community outreach through AmeriCorps members, parent knowledge-building efforts like the state-level Countdown to Kindergarten campaign, and enrollment and referral mechanisms including the First Steps is Here campaign and the launch of local partnership online applications through First5SC.org.

In FY2023, for the first time ever, **all local partnerships had a streamlined, online eligibility and application process through First5SC.org**, making programs and services more accessible to the families who benefit most from our programs (infants and toddlers) and reducing the administrative burden for families. The **number one application** completed by families on the First5SC common application **was for First Steps Local Partnership programs**, with the **largest percentage of**

applicants having children birth to age one and with more than half of families completing the application after business hours.

Just as the 4K innovations garnered South Carolina national attention, so too has the work of our First Steps Local Partnerships. In FY2023, **First Steps' model for addressing challenging early childhood concerns was highlighted by the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine** in the publication, "[Responding to the Current Youth Mental Health Crisis and Preventing the Next One](https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/26669/chapter/1)," In these proceedings, Mjartan offered a playbook for how public-private partnerships like South Carolina First Steps can be leveraged to positively impact infant, early childhood and maternal mental health and wellbeing. (<https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/26669/chapter/1>)

Mjartan and her team also presented at numerous national conferences, lifted up examples in online publications, and spoke on national webinars throughout FY2023 sharing the work of First Steps in using state, federal and private funds to engage more families in home visiting; how feedback loops are used to improve program service deliver, and how blending and braiding of funds results in better impact for children and families (**Director Mjartan - Parents as Teachers International Conference, Listen4Good / Fund for Shared Insight Publication, Ronald Reagan Institute National Education Conference**).

Early Childhood Advisory Council

A 2023 Aspen Institute publication, [Co-Creating and Accelerating Solutions](https://ascendstories.aspeninstitute.org/2022-ascend-impact-report/co-creating-and-accelerating-solutions/index.html) describes the ground-breaking, nationally-innovative work led by Mjartan through the Early Childhood Advisory Council. <https://ascendstories.aspeninstitute.org/2022-ascend-impact-report/co-creating-and-accelerating-solutions/index.html>

Excerpt: "In 2019, South Carolina started a new initiative guided by a core principle: families deserve a responsive, one-stop portal to learn about public programs and services to help with their child's growth and development. Georgia Mjartan knew that it was necessary to hear from the families closest to these services, but co-creating solutions often requires some creativity.

"We not only used a survey instrument, an online survey instrument, but we also did county level focus groups in every single county of South Carolina," said Georgia, a 2018 Ascend Fellow and executive director of South Carolina First Steps.

In February 2022, First Five SC went live. The co-designed, online platform is the nation's first comprehensive portal into all of a state's publicly funded early childhood programs. South Carolina families can simply fill out a quick form, and then they are shown what programs they are eligible for.

First Five SC, which is funded by the Preschool Development Grant Birth through 5, provides a model that Georgia hopes states around the country will be able to follow. "We've actually had visitors to our website from every single state in the nation," Georgia said. "We've gotten a lot of interest, both nationally and also with some larger municipalities, about how they can learn from our work."

From the launch of First Five SC in February 2022 through June 2023, First Five SC has drawn **149,000 unique visitors**; **15,446 visitors completed the eligibility screener** and **78.5%** of those who completed the eligibility screener were eligible for at least one program. In FY2023, **12,903 eligibility screeners were completed**, and **78% (10,023) were successful** in finding they were **eligible for at least one program**.

In FY2023, working together with partner agencies across the early childhood system, the Early Childhood Advisory Council successfully developed and launched a common application for 27 of South Carolina's publicly-funded early childhood programs, harnessing technology to dramatically improve the way families with young children get the services they want, need and deserve. Since the launch of the common application (soft launch in April and public launch in May 2023), **697 applications have been received** for child care scholarships, WIC, First Steps Local Partnership Programs, and First Steps 4K (numbers include first month of FY2024). A preliminary review of First Steps applications received in May, the month the common application formally launched, indicated that the largest percentage of application was for children **birth to age one** and **59% of application were submitted after business hours**. The responsive technology not only meets of the needs of families, streamlining their eligibility and application process and saving them time in government waiting rooms. It also produces efficiencies that save the state time and money by directly connecting applications received on the portal to the systems used by each agency or entity through API or secure file and aiding in the move from paper processes to online application.

Palmetto PreK, South Carolina's single portal into all publicly-funded PreK programs for 3 and 4 year olds, also continued to be promoted, further developed, and used as a mechanism for co-promotion of programs that are federally, state and locally funded and had, prior to the launch of this site, been disconnected and siloed. **Mjartan chairs the Palmetto PreK committee** responsible for continuously unifying Head Start, Department of Education, First Steps, and Child Care Scholarships outreach and enrollment processes to ensure families are aware of their choices and children eligible for these high-quality programs are successfully enrolling in them. **Palmetto PreK was featured by the Hunt Institute** as a solution worth replicating during a panel presentation of which Mjartan was a part. In addition to the portal, Palmetto PreK has become a unifying umbrella for other interagency efforts targeting families, providers, and teachers of 3 and 4 year old students in South Carolina. Notably, in FY2023, through **Palmetto PreK Jamboree**, the Early Childhood Advisory Council provided training and professional development to over one thousand teachers of three and four year olds from Head Start, public school, and child care including First Steps 4K providers. An interagency **Palmetto PreK Transitions** working group supported by the **national organization Education Commission of the States** developed a cohesive state plan and toolkit for engaging families in the transition from PreK to K, a time of significant change and opportunity for children and their parents that sets the stage for a successful start to school.

The Early Childhood Advisory Council is also responsible for regularly assessing early childhood needs, developing a statewide early childhood plan to respond to these needs, and ensuring implementation and operationalization of this plan. In FY2023, the team invested significant time and resources into connecting the state plan to local, county-level plans (vertical integration) as well as developing an operational plan that involved all agencies and their relevant department and division level staff (horizontal integration). Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five funds

were used to support **local partnerships in conducting local early childhood needs assessments**. State level data (like demographics, child care and other information), templates, and technical assistance were provided by First Steps. **Data from surveys conducted by the Research Evaluation and Measurement Center (REM Center) were disaggregated so that each partnership with at least eight responses received a county-level report.**

In February 2022, the South Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) released *For Our Future: South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan* (Birth through Five Plan). The plan represents the collaboration of numerous state agencies, input from dozens of leaders, and the voices of thousands of parents and caregivers. The Interagency Collaboration Council (ICC) and a number of working groups meet to drive work in areas of specific interest and to share progress in meeting goals of the plan.

Since the publication of the Birth through Five Plan, a range of **reports relating to young children and their families were produced, posted on the earlychildhoodsc.org website, and discussed at ECAC meetings**. Reports and presentations also served to share work and progress of ECAC and its partners in meeting goals of the Birth through Five Plan. The following reports and presentations were posted from July 2022 through June 2023. They have a direct relationship with the Birth through Five Plan:

October 2022 [2022 Family Voice Council Report: A Year of Family Voice](#)

February 2023 [Preschool Development Grant Caregiver Survey Report 2023](#)

April 2023 [Needs Assessment Parent/Caregiver Survey Summary](#)

In April 2023, the ECAC reviewed the [Birth through Five Plan Progress Report](#), and approved Birth through Five plan priorities for the remainder of 2023. This progress report included updates on needs and resource assessments, key achievements in the previous year that impact young children and their families, and priorities for 2023. The report is posted on the ECAC website, www.earlychildhoodsc.org.

In FY2023, The Early Childhood Advisory Council continued to support the development of **South Carolina's Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)**. This system initially includes the following: 1. **Palmetto Drive to Five (PDt5)** initiative, a state and county-level data dashboard including disaggregated early childhood program data. Currently there are **11 agencies with a total of 15 programs participating** to date and 2. **Early Learning Extension (ELE)**, an integration of early learning data from **3 entities, Head Start (22 grantees), First Steps (both 4K and Partnerships) and SC DSS Child Care Scholarships into the K-12 Statewide Longitudinal Data System**. The ELE initiative also includes the establishment of a data governance framework for the ECIDS to manage all initiatives. This will include the establishment of a system-wide early childhood data request process by FY25. In FY24 the ELE and PDt5 are focused on answering Key Question #4 "How many young children are enrolled in early childhood programs?" Throughout FY25 the focus will address the remaining Key Questions identified for the ECIDS. Plans are in place to discuss and develop a Data Hub visualization for the ELE initiative and will look to include links to all early childhood related dashboards offered in South Carolina. The **Palmetto Drive to Five Dashboard went live in April 2023.**

It currently shows historical data from 8 agencies for the years 2020-2022. The Dashboard's data will continue to build out to full capacity by the end of FY24. Further, the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation invited First Steps to apply for and then awarded a two-year Strategic Data Fellowship to support data use for the South Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council.**

With a continuous focus on family voice and user experience, in FY2023, the Early Childhood Advisory Council convened for the second year a Family Voice Council, which met monthly, involved 18 – 20 members representing parents and caregivers whose children participate in public early childhood programs, and who are committed to advising the state early childhood system. Family Voice Council members presented to the ECAC board, participated in a gubernatorial press conference, and produced their first report – Year of Family Voice – offering recommendations for ways to deliver more family-friendly services. The Council listed to and provided feedback for the REM Center's report, [Needs Assessment Parent/Caregiver Survey Summary](#). Members of the Council along with other parent stakeholders recruited for the express purpose of user testing offered significant feedback on the First Five SC application through User Acceptance Testing (UAT). Through the year, the Family Voice Council also led curation of content for the 2023 SC Summit on Early Childhood.

As highlighted throughout, South Carolina First Steps and the Early Childhood Advisory Council have produced many innovations worth replicating, staff have garnered national attention, and Director Mjartan and her team have become sought-after advisors to state and national leaders. In FY2023, the CEO of the Pritzker Children's Initiative, one of the most prominent funders of early childhood programs and policy development nationally, reached out to Director Mjartan with an invitation to apply for support **to develop a toolkit and provide support to other states interested in replicating First 5 SC.** Indicative of the tremendous interest in how South Carolina successfully harnessed political will, interagency commitments, and technology to streamline eligibility and application processes, in this first year of Pritzker funded support, **Mjartan and her team have presented about First Steps at four national conferences or webinars, four state conferences, and are providing direct support to seven states and one large municipality** with additional states reaching out for advise and partnership at least once per month.

Strategic Planning

Rating: - Select Rating -

Director Mjartan, together with the Board of Trustees, leads the development, implementation and evaluation of two strategic plans - a **South Carolina First Steps strategic plan called "Every Child Ready" (2020 - 2025) and South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan (2022 - 2027).** For 24 years, South Carolina First Steps has existed without the stability that comes from permanent authorization. In fact, there have been times when First Steps existed on year-to-year proviso, making implementation of a long-term strategy particularly challenging. With this in mind, Director Mjartan, the Board of Trustees, and staff committed to spending the 2023 and 2024 two-year session aiming to secure permanent authorization for South Carolina First Steps. The time frame of these efforts was key, as the legislation indicated a June 2025 sunset.

In the first year of the two-year session, the South Carolina General Assembly **unanimously passed H4023 making South Carolina First Steps permanent, and Governor McMaster signed the billed into law as Act 81** on June 19, 2023. The Act was **one of only 4% of bills introduced in the '23 / '24 session that passed within the first year** of the two year session. With bipartisan bill sponsorship and significant input from key stakeholders including local partnership executive directors and board members and state office staff and board, **the law also includes positive changes** that lay the groundwork for an even more effective, streamlined and accountable organization.

In FY2023, Mjartan and the Early Childhood Advisory Council team began the process of operationalizing South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan, beginning with state-level interagency operational team formation (around the goal areas), agency commitments to specific objectives, and operational work planning with a particular focus on shared efforts and goals requiring interagency collaboration. Capturing the work of this group, the **Birth through Five Plan Progress Report** was presented to the ECAC in April 2023. In addition to outlining commitments and operational priorities for 2023, the report also took into account an updated statewide early childhood needs assessment and integrated another early childhood plan (PDG B5 strategic plan) into the single, comprehensive state plan. Responding to the documented needs of families, their young children, and employers, the planning and prioritizing process engaged more deeply with issues relating to child care availability, the child care workforce, and PreK. A joint, interagency application to the federal government for one more year of PDG B5 funding and both First Steps and SDE's state budget requests also prioritized these areas within the Birth through Five Plan. Using state funds through South Carolina First Steps as the required 30% match for the federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five, **since 2019 SC DSS as the lead applicant and First Steps as the match partner have brought \$40.6 million to build and improve the early childhood system in the state.**

With South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan formally adopted in December 2021 and presented to Governor McMaster in February 2022, FY203 was the right time to disseminate the plan widely to key stakeholders beyond the agency and elected leaders who had helped write the plan. In FY2023, the plan was presented to a legislative oversight committee (Commerce Oversight hearings) in the context of better integrated the early childhood state system with the education and workforce pipeline. Similarly, the plan has been used as a reference for the Coordinating Council on Workforce Development as we work toward a unified workforce plan for the state of South Carolina.

In FY2023, *For Our Future: South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan* won both state and national awards. **The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) chose the plan was one of the top 15 documents with relevance to state legislators in the nation produced in the past two years.** The plan also **won the Notable State Document Award by the South Carolina State Library.** The plan was lauded for significantly contributing to the knowledge of the state and of legislators, being innovative and accurate in its presentation of materials, using graphics that are readily grasped, and providing a balanced perspective from various sides of the political spectrum. Additionally, the state award recognized the attention to citations and data as key features worth noting.

South Carolina First Steps' strategic plan "Every Child Ready" continues to guide agency decisions including: legislative, budgetary, programmatic, and grant-making. Agency "rocks" (big, measurable, SMART goals) for 2023, team priorities, and individual objectives and evaluations tied directly to the strategic plan, ensuring agency-wide alignment and a unified focus. All new staff and board members were orientated to the plan by the Executive Director herself. First Steps Local Partnership plans and grant proposals were also required to tie back to the state plan. Significant support was provided to local partnerships in their development of 3-year needs assessments and strategic plans. Assistance included county-level data dashboards, virtual and in-person trainings, support for community convenings to solicit qualitative data, and templates.

Strategic plans are only worthwhile, living documents if they are connected with clear operational plans that are then measured and regularly evaluated. When Director Mjartan came to First Steps, she made building a research and evaluation team a key priority. This team has led the charge to implement and support staff across the organization in engaging with data to measure progress toward strategic plan and grant-specific goals. Quarterly data-driven implementation progress meetings involve approximately 20 staff members who engage in cross-team data presentation and analysis to discuss the reach and impact of our agency. Programmatic, communications, grantmaking and development and research and strategy staff all participate in these meetings. To build data literacy and capacity, the research and strategy team developed data visualization guidelines and provide technical assistance to staff as they prepare their quarterly data reports.

Customer Focus

Rating: - Select Rating -

South Carolina First Steps' customers are, first and foremost, young children and their families. Other customers include early care and education, PreK, and early childhood health providers and practitioners, local First Steps partnerships, community stakeholders, the business community, agencies providing early childhood services, and the taxpayers of South Carolina.

Director Mjartan has implemented a three-pronged approach to ensuring a meaningful and consistent focus on the customer:

1. Solicit and take action based on the feedback of customers
2. Engage stakeholders at every step - from planning to implementation to evaluation
3. Communicate clearly, transparently, and frequently always with respect, valuing the time, wisdom and relationships of all involved

South Carolina First Steps and the Early Childhood Advisory Council continued to prioritize client and provider feedback, family voice, and user experience in the design, development, planning, and continuous quality improvement efforts of the agency. Since Mjartan joined First Steps and initiated a formal and nationally supported process for obtaining client feedback and making changes based on this input, First Steps has completed **17 feedback loops with clients involved in First Steps local partnership and First Steps 4K programs** as well as **early childhood educators and home visiting professionals**. Our feedback work has won us national attention, with staff sharing findings at local

and national conferences and being recognized in a [case study](#) published by Listen4Good. Through these ongoing efforts, First Steps has heard from over **4,900 individuals** who have interacted with First Steps, either as a recipient or a provider of our services.

The **Family Voice Council**, a formal parent leadership group consisting of 20 parents, grandparents and primary caregivers to young children who participate in public programs, continues to be an active and supported part of the early childhood system’s mechanism for learning from and modifying programs and services based on customer feedback.

In FY2023, Director Mjartan and her team led a **comprehensive effort to engage key stakeholders in the legislative process that ultimately resulted in Act 81**. This stakeholder engagement included externally-facilitated in-person and online feedback sessions with local partnership executive directors, local board members (by region), state board members (two sessions), state office staff (by team), and key legislators and decision-makers.

By modeling this customer focus at the state level and directly supporting it at the local partnership and First Steps 4K center level, we have embedded in our work the expectation that clients and community members will be informed, engaged, and feedback will be solicited and heard. This year, we provided **targeted support to First Steps Local Partnerships to build their capacity as local convenings, early childhood service and support hubs, and community educators**. With AmeriCorps members placed at the local partnership level for community and family outreach and engagement and a Family Café “core function” pilot funded and implemented in FY2023, the capacity of our local partnerships to play this important role was greatly enhanced.

South Carolina First Steps and the Early Childhood Advisory Council made full use of all communications avenues to serve customers well – by offering new avenues to build parents’ knowledge, to share information with families, and to respect and value the time, knowledge and self-efficacy of parents of young children.

FY23 Communications

SC First Steps

In FY23, **scfirststeps.org** drew **217,617** unique visitors. This marks a **68% increase** in web traffic compared to the prior year. By June 30, 2023, the agency grew its **social media** presence with a total following of **10,425 followers** across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram—an **82% increase**. The agency’s **email newsletter subscriptions are now more than 10,408 contacts**, a **67%** increase.

First Five SC

During FY23, **first5sc.org** drew **122,299 unique visitors**. Of these, **12,051 individuals completed the eligibility screener, and 78% were eligible for at least one program**. The First Five SC common application was introduced in May. In the initial three months spanning from March 28 to June 30, it saw **493 families completing applications for First Steps programs, DSS child care scholarships, and WIC**.

Our marketing strategy primarily aimed to amplify brand visibility and encourage parents and caregivers to engage with the portal. This digital outreach generated **25,366,747 impressions and successfully drove 213,875 clicks to the site**. Analysis of the traffic source reveals that **16% of visitors discovered the site organically**, while a dominant **84% stemmed from paid campaigns**.

Palmetto Pre-K

In FY23, **palmettoprek.org** attracted **71,299** unique visitors. A total of **7,257** completed the eligibility screener.

Again, marketing efforts were focused on boosting brand recognition and motivating parents and caregivers to utilize the portal. Digital outreach generated **23,948,358 impressions and led to 200,586 direct clicks to the site**. Of this traffic, **22% was organic**, while the remaining **78% was attributed to paid advertising**.

Countdown to Kindergarten

In FY23, **countdownsc.org** drew **22,929** unique visitors.

First Steps 4K

First Steps 4K site visitor numbers are included within **scfirststeps.org**, above. With a fully-online application and dedicated communication staffing for prospective student and provider outreach, the success of engaging First Steps 4K customers was the best it has ever been in FY2023. On the 4K team, **a new staffing model and regional structure for the data team has resulted in faster communication with parents and families and shorter wait times between application completion and approval**. First Steps 4K sends a monthly **Parent Connection newsletter via text and email to families enrolled in a First Steps 4K program**. The monthly newsletter connects families to resources and information in the community and also provides a ReadyRosie family engagement activity. The newsletter is sent to **over 3,000 families** enrolled in First Steps 4K on a monthly basis. In March of 2023, we implemented a **texting system** that sends families **text messages with their application status** in addition to the existing email communication. **2,850 approval texts** have been sent out using this new platform, **299 texts have been sent to families informing them they are missing documentation** needed for approval, and of those who received the “needed documents” text, **more than half (51%) have now turned in the necessary documents and are now approved**. The hiring of a **bilingual, Spanish speaking part-time enrollment staff (an intern)**, Spanish translation for the application, and increased use of **translation services** have enabled better communication with non-English speaking families. **First 5 SC and Palmetto PreK are also generating “leads”** or potentially eligible families who staff can then reach out to proactively. First 5 SC has generated 762 leads and Palmetto PreK has generated 7,104 leads since inception.

Workforce and HR

Rating: - Select Rating -

Workforce and HR priorities for FY2023 fell into two primary categories: 1. Recruitment and successful training and onboarding of employees to meet the demands of programmatic and fiscal growth and organizational complexity stemming from increased and more diversified funding and 2. Retention of employees and assurance that existing team members are supported in their professional development, have the tools they need to be productive, collaborative, and engaged at work, and are provided with the tools, supports, and policy frameworks necessary for success in a variety of platforms including in-office, remote, or hybrid.

In FY2023, South Carolina First Steps made significant progress toward the goal of utilizing all FTE's allocated to the agency by the legislature, most notably by retaining and / or filling vacant positions promptly. On June 30, 2023, First Steps had a **9% FTE vacancy (6 / 68) compared with a 13% rate** on July 1, 2022 (9 / 68)

The 68 FTE positions did not constitute the total workforce and associated human capital contributions and recruitment and retention "lift" the agency undertook in 2023. Including all position types, there were **108 team members on June 30, 2023 out of 121 total positions, constituting an overall 9% vacancy rate**. This included: 61 of 68 FTE's; 33 out of 35 AmeriCorps positions; 3 out of 6 AmeriCorps VISTA positions; 3 out of 3 full-time, temporary grant-funded positions; 3 out of 4 full time, time-limited positions; 2 full-time, temporary employees; 1 part-time, temporary employee; and 2 interns.

In FY2023, **pursued and successfully received an AmeriCorps VISTA grant award** providing the agency with resources for **6 full-time, federally-funded team members**. First Steps also achieved **100% recruitment of AmeriCorps positions with an exceptionally high number of returning members**, validating the positive experience they had in their previous term or terms of service.

The demographic profile of the South Carolina First Steps team is as follows:

Race/Ethnicity

- 55% Black/African American
- 42% White
- 2% Hispanic
- 2% Two or more races

Gender

- 89% Female
- 11% Male

South Carolina First Steps embraced the State of South Carolina's **veteran's preference** and has been very successful in recruiting and hiring **active members of the military and veterans**. In FY2023, social media campaigns thanking the agency's veterans, featuring national service

members (AmeriCorps and VISTA), and highlighting fathers on the team were used as intentional tools for recruitment and retention.

First Steps continued to prioritize being a family-friendly workplace through policies, procedures, and practices. Over **91% of respondents** to the Annual All Staff Survey conducted anonymously by an outside evaluator agreed that **First Steps is a family-friendly workplace**. In October of 2022, First Steps began implementing an OHR supported **partial telecommuting** policy, with **55% of eligible state office staff participating** by June 30, 2023. In 2022, the organization implemented pay for performance increases for eligible staff. This has proven to be a useful tool, resulting in increased attention to the EPMS (Employee Performance Management System) planning and evaluation process. **80%** of respondents to the anonymous All Staff Survey reported that they felt their team provided **fair and equitable processes for determining compensation**.

In FY2023, First Steps continued to solicit anonymous feedback from staff through an **annual all staff survey**, conducted an **annual all staff retreat** as well as team retreats supported by the Department of Administration, established monthly “lunch and learn” opportunities and a “fun committee,” and implemented **LinkedIn Learning** for all staff, with **70 staff users**, 8,438 videos viewed and **383 courses completed**.

Staff reported concerns about the physical office space. In response, the agency worked hard to **improve HVAC** system issues, additional **work locations were built out** to accommodate a growing team, and **vehicles were purchased** for 4K which will reduce the travel costs while providing additional capacity.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Rating: - Select Rating -

Since becoming Executive Director of South Carolina First Steps, Mjartan has been focused on building the capacity of the organization in key areas that support process management and CQI. Notably, she established a Research and Strategy Team, appointed a leader for grantmaking and development, and has significantly increased the staff of the finance and administration teams responsible for fiscal, procurement, contracting, grants accounting, process implementation, legislative and legal accountability, and oversight. The agency continues to receive favorable audits with no findings and is in good standing with all funders.

In FY2023, First Steps contracted with an external evaluator (Institute for Families in Society at the University of South Carolina) to **evaluate the reach and impact of child care technical assistance and training programs** implemented by First Steps Local Partnerships between FY18-19 and FY20-21. This aligns with legislative requirements to evaluate prevalent programs on a five-year schedule (SC State Code 59-152-50). The report was provided to the General Assembly and posted publicly on the agency’s [website](#) in October 2022. Key findings from the report include:

1. At the end of FY21, 6,265 unique child care providers participated in training programs offered by First Steps Local Partnerships.

2. Child care providers who received technical assistance and were enrolled in the ABC Quality Program showed an increase in their ABC Quality rating.

First Steps has led an internal **evaluation of First Steps 4K student outcomes**. First Steps 4K uses GOLD® by Teaching Strategies to assess children’s readiness across six domains: language, literacy, cognitive, math, physical, and social-emotional. Preliminary data show that First Steps 4K students show an improvement in their readiness in the six domains across their year in 4K. An evaluation report with findings will be completed by December 2023.

First Steps used funding from the Preschool Development Grant to contract with the Research, Evaluation, and Measurement (REM) Center at the University of South Carolina (UofSC) to **evaluate Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK)**, the agency’s evidence-informed school transition program developed by First Steps in 2004. The multi-level evaluation of CTK aligns with the agency’s strategic plan (Strategy 1.4.8: “Evaluate the impact of Countdown to Kindergarten using both quantitative and qualitative methods”) and with the program’s goal of establishing a robust evidence base for consideration of moving the program’s designation from evidence-informed to evidence-based. **Through the partnership with UofSC, staff have submitted four scientific manuscripts to peer-reviewed journals.**

The Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee of the Board met in March 2023 and established a plan to enter into a five-year contract with a consistent evaluation team to address four legislatively mandated evaluations to be completed between FY 24-28. The five-year evaluation request for proposal was submitted to SDE/MMO in May 2023.

To ensure continuous quality improvement and process management related to First Steps Local Partnership programs, in FY2023, First Steps began a **multi-part evaluation of the agency’s portfolio of evidence-based and evidence-informed programs**. One component of this is a collaborative project with North Carolina’s early childhood public-private partnership, Smart Start, where the two agencies are working together to establish a searchable program catalogue that includes details about model implementation, evidence-based outcomes and average cost. Spinning out of this partnership was a new rapid cycle evaluation and CQI process for piloting and testing innovations through the **Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation**. Using READY funds, this initiative, developed in FY2023, will roll out in FY2024. Another component of the local partnership quality improvement process involved the utilization of a graduate intern and now external evaluator who helped us dive more deeply into the **effects of Local Partnership evidence-based parenting programs on well-child visits and health outcomes**.

Through **quarterly implementation progress meetings** with executive leadership, program directors, local partnership team members, and 4K team members, key stakeholders come together to monitor the reach and impact of the agency’s First Steps 4K and Local Partnership programs.

In FY2023, staff presented the findings and lessons learned from their rapid-cycle feedback work at local and national conferences, establishing the agency as an emerging leader in the field of CQI.

Across the agency, **administrative, operational, and internal process changes have reflected our top-to-bottom commitment to continuous quality improvement**. Examples from FY2023 include

improvements in procurement processes, the building of a digital “bridge” between two First Steps 4K data systems that increased efficiencies and saved staff from reentering data, the development and piloting of a timekeeping system for grant billing, and the initial roll out of an agency-wide CRM system (to name just a few examples).

Fiscal

South Carolina First Steps 3 Year Summary Data

August 7, 2023

Summary Data 3 Years	FY 2022 (Expenses)	FY 2023 (Expenses)	FY 2024 (Budget)
State funds (general)	6,581,300	7,325,734	14,944,982
State funds (EIA)	34,254,077	40,157,188	47,066,796
Federal funds	9,858,608	6,904,982	14,212,054
Private funds	1,160,106	1,267,757	2,373,106
Total	51,854,091	55,655,661	78,596,938

In FY2023, South Carolina First Steps secured and successfully leveraged **state, federal, private and philanthropic dollars – diversified funding streams** – to ensure long-term sustainability of programs and services offered to infants, toddlers, young children and their families by South Carolina First Steps. Director Mjartan and her team presented four requests to the General Assembly, three of which were successful. Specifically, through the state budget process, First Steps was able to **secure recurring funds to address unfunded but mandatory personnel cost increases at the state level (EIA funded personnel), to obtain recurring state funds to support the work of the Early Childhood Advisory Council – the first significant allocation of funds for this work since its creation nearly a decade ago, and to increase funding for First Steps 4K and the statewide expansion efforts.**

While securing additional state, federal, and philanthropic funds, South Carolina First Steps also put in place new mechanisms for grant-making, grants management and grants accounting to ensure optimal and timely use of funds, compliance with complex federal, state and private grants and contracts, and timely implementation of activities supported by time-limited grants. **First Steps developed grant-making, fiscal and programmatic oversight processes for a new, competitive and targeted \$3 million grant fund established by the General Assembly to support local partnerships called READY.**

Making full use of the nonprofit status of South Carolina First Steps, in FY2023 we raised **\$154,262 in private contributions from 118 donors including \$98,448 through the organization’s signature**

fundraising event Night to Celebrate Community. We also helped local partnerships raise an additional \$27,871 by supporting their local giving day campaigns.

As the fiscal back-office for a network of 46 county-level, nonprofit, First Steps affiliates, we continue to develop and refine the technical, fiscal, and staff support offered to partnerships to ensure effective use of funds, compliance, and efficient reporting and oversight. During FY2023, the Finance and Administration team added capacity by hiring a permanent, full-time Grants Accountant and replaced retiring fiscal staff supporting the Local Partnerships. This team has worked closely with First Steps grants staff to meet the reporting and accountability standards for multiple federal and foundation grants. Guidance and training have been provided continuously over the last year to Local Partnership staff to ensure compliance with very complicated federal and philanthropic requirements. Significant changes to the processes for financial reporting and tracking have been implemented. This has added significant complexity to the financial systems and the demands on the Local Partnerships and associated state office fiscal staff. Even with this significantly increased workload and complexity, processes were improved, and the workload was completed timely.

Each of the last three years has placed considerable additional workload on the very limited staff in Finance and Administration. During the last year we have continued with budget meetings and summary reporting, as well as the very extensive grant budgeting and reporting, with no additional staff in this area until very recently. Meetings were held with each responsible manager to review and evaluate the plan for the 2023-24 budget. From those meetings adjustments have been made. In the new year, we will continue to upgrade and improve the budget monthly and quarterly reports as well as quarterly meetings with staff. Each year we have improved our ability to handle these challenges. With many funds involving multiple managers and operational areas, this has become more important, and our processes will be expanded to meet the needs.

- Overall Assessment -

AHSC 2022-2023 Survey Questions and Overall Scores

Survey Questions	Total Average Score	Average Score by Trustee Category			
		Legislature	Agency Directors	Appointed	New Trustees (appointed for 2 or less meetings)
1. The agency head reflects the core values of the agency.	4.85	5	5	4.72	4.8
2. The agency head provides timely information about matters affecting the agency including legislative initiatives.	4.7	5	4.83	4.55	4.4
3. The agency head communicates and demonstrates a clear understanding of the goals and mission of the agency.	4.65	5	5	4.55	4.2
4. The agency head is well prepared, informed, and offers solutions when presenting budgetary and programmatic request/reports.	4.7	5	5	4.45	4
5. The quality of customer service and the programs administered by the agency head equals or exceeds the needs of the community.	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.36	3.8
6. The agency head ensures that his decisions, actions, and customer interactions are ethical.	4.8	5	5	4.63	4.4
7. The agency head anticipates needs and problem areas and makes sound decisions regarding the solutions.	4.55	5	4.83	4.45	4.2
8. The agency head makes customer service a high priority for the agency.	4.6	5	5	4.36	4
9. The agency head effectively aligns organizational strategy, structure, and processes in order to become more responsive to external and internal change demands.	4.55	4.67	5	4.27	4
10. The agency head ensures the workforce represents diversity in recruitment, promotions, and placement.	4.68	4.67	5	4.5	4.25
11. The agency head's leadership has a positive influence on employee morale and performance.	4.72	5	4.67	4.67	4.75

12. Leadership trusts and has confidence in this director.	4.55	5	4.83	4.27	4.2
13. The agency head effectively collaborates with other agencies and entities.	4.73	5	4.67	4.7	4.75
14. The agency head has established a good working relationship with the General Assembly.	4.73	5	4.83	4.6	4.5
15. The agency head is effective in managing the financial resources of the agency.	4.68	5	4.83	4.5	4.5
Final Average Score for Survey	4.66	4.90	4.87	4.5	4.32

AGENCY HEAD SURVEY COMPOSITE FORM Overall

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Average Score
	5	4	3	2	1	
Question 1	_17__	_3__	_____	_____	_____	_4.85__
Question 2	_15__	_4__	_1__	_____	_____	_4.7__
Question 3	_17__	_2__	_____	_1__	_____	_4.65__
Question 4	_17__	_1__	_1__	_1__	_____	_4.7__
Question 5	_11__	_7__	_1__	_1__	_____	_4.4__
Question 6	_17__	_2__	_1__	_____	_____	_4.8__
Question 7	_15__	_4__	_____	_1__	_____	_4.55__
Question 8	_15__	_3__	_1__	_1__	_____	_4.6__
Question 9	_14__	_4__	_1__	_1__	_____	_4.55__
Question 10	_14__	_4__	_1__	_____	_____	_4.68__
Question 11	_13__	_5__	_____	_____	_____	_4.72__
Question 12	_14__	_4__	_1__	_1__	_____	_4.55__
Question 13	_14__	_5__	_____	_____	_____	_4.73__
Question 14	_15__	_3__	_1__	_____	_____	_4.73__
Question 15	_14__	_4__	_1__	_____	_____	_4.68__

Subtotal (Total Average Scores for Questions 1-15) **_69.89__**

Final Average Score for Survey (Subtotal / 15) **_4.66__**

I acknowledge that the above composite represents the scores from the individual surveys of the Board/Commission members.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

For use by the Agency Head Salary Commission only.

*Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. Section 30-4-70 (a) (1) (1976), the Agency Head Salary Commission plans to discuss this employment matter in a meeting closed to the public. Therefore, this Agency Head Evaluation Survey Composite should be considered a document which will be used in a closed meeting.

Q16 Comments:

Answered: 9 Skipped: 12

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	We could not ask for a better communicator & child advocate who manages finances & regulations as well as intra and inter-agency relationships.	7/21/2023 7:27 PM
2	South Carolina is lucky to have Georgia Mjartan as the leader of Early Childhood programs. She is a outstanding leader and responsive to the needs of clients and legislators.	7/20/2023 10:39 AM
3	Ms. Mjartan is a strong, dynamic, professional, personable, and capable leader. It is a pleasure working with her.	7/20/2023 9:55 AM
4	We are fortunate to have such a dynamic and visionary leader and I look forward to all the future accomplishments of the team!	7/20/2023 9:34 AM
5	As I have been on the board for about a day, I've answered many questions neutral simply because I haven't experienced much of Georgia's leadership style and performance. Obviously from what I have seen as an outsider, I've been very impressed by my experience so far.	7/20/2023 8:57 AM
6	Georgia has demonstrated consistent and superb leadership as the Executive Director of First Steps. She is thoughtful, engaged and proactive in providing what is necessary to run the agency as fiscally and socially responsible as possible. The passage of First Steps legislation this year to make it a permanent structure in South Carolina is due to the work of many but could not have been done without Georgia's vision and leadership. The agency and children of South Carolina are better off because of Georgia's commitment to them both.	7/18/2023 3:50 PM
7	Georgia continues to excel on every category. She holds her team to a high standard that she holds for herself. As a result, the organization is well respected with legislators and community.	7/18/2023 10:33 AM
8	None at this time.	7/18/2023 10:24 AM
9	I was appointed to serve on this Board in June 2023 and have not yet had the opportunity to interact with the agency director, Georgia Mjartan.	7/18/2023 10:06 AM

AGENCY HEAD SURVEY COMPOSITE FORM

Legislature

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Average Score
	5	4	3	2	1	
Question 1	_3___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 2	_3___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 3	_3___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 4	_3___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 5	_1___	_2___	_____	_____	_____	_4.3___
Question 6	_3___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 7	_3___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 8	_3___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 9	_2___	_1___	_____	_____	_____	_4.67___
Question 10	_2___	_1___	_____	_____	_____	_4.67___
Question 11	_3___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 12	_3___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 13	_3___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 14	_3___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 15	_3___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___

Subtotal (Total Average Scores for Questions 1-15) 73.64

Final Average Score for Survey (Subtotal / 15) 4.90

I acknowledge that the above composite represents the scores from the individual surveys of the Board/Commission members.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

For use by the Agency Head Salary Commission only.

*Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. Section 30-4-70 (a) (1) (1976), the Agency Head Salary Commission plans to discuss this employment matter in a meeting closed to the public. Therefore, this Agency Head Evaluation Survey Composite should be considered a document which will be used in a closed meeting.

AGENCY HEAD SURVEY COMPOSITE FORM Agency Directors

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Average Score
	5	4	3	2	1	
Question 1	_6___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 2	_5___	_1___	_____	_____	_____	_4.83___
Question 3	_6___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 4	_6___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 5	_3___	_3___	_____	_____	_____	_4.5___
Question 6	_6___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 7	_5___	_1___	_____	_____	_____	_4.83___
Question 8	_6___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 9	_6___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 10	_6___	_____	_____	_____	_____	_5___
Question 11	_4___	_2___	_____	_____	_____	_4.67___
Question 12	_5___	_1___	_____	_____	_____	_4.83___
Question 13	_4___	_2___	_____	_____	_____	_4.67___
Question 14	_5___	_1___	_____	_____	_____	_4.83___
Question 15	_5___	_1___	_____	_____	_____	_4.83___

Subtotal (Total Average Scores for Questions 1-15) 72.99

Final Average Score for Survey (Subtotal / 15) 4.87

I acknowledge that the above composite represents the scores from the individual surveys of the Board/Commission members.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

For use by the Agency Head Salary Commission only.

*Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. Section 30-4-70 (a) (1) (1976), the Agency Head Salary Commission plans to discuss this employment matter in a meeting closed to the public. Therefore, this Agency Head Evaluation Survey Composite should be considered a document which will be used in a closed meeting.

AGENCY HEAD SURVEY COMPOSITE FORM Appointed

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Average Score
	5	4	3	2	1	
Question 1	_8___	_3___	_____	_____	_____	_4.72___
Question 2	_7___	_3___	_1___	_____	_____	_4.55___
Question 3	_8___	_2___	_____	_1___	_____	_4.55___
Question 4	_8___	_1___	_1___	_1___	_____	_4.45___
Question 5	_7___	_2___	_1___	_1___	_____	_4.36___
Question 6	_8___	_2___	_1___	_____	_____	_4.63___
Question 7	_7___	_3___	_____	_1___	_____	_4.45___
Question 8	_7___	_2___	_1___	_1___	_____	_4.36___
Question 9	_6___	_3___	_1___	_1___	_____	_4.27___
Question 10	_6___	_3___	_1___	_____	_____	_4.5___
Question 11	_6___	_3___	_____	_____	_____	_4.67___
Question 12	_6___	_3___	_1___	_1___	_____	_4.27___
Question 13	_7___	_3___	_____	_____	_____	_4.7___
Question 14	_7___	_2___	_1___	_____	_____	_4.6___
Question 15	_6___	_3___	_1___	_____	_____	_4.5___

Subtotal (Total Average Scores for Questions 1-15) 67.58

Final Average Score for Survey (Subtotal / 15) 4.5

I acknowledge that the above composite represents the scores from the individual surveys of the Board/Commission members.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

For use by the Agency Head Salary Commission only.

*Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. Section 30-4-70 (a) (1) (1976), the Agency Head Salary Commission plans to discuss this employment matter in a meeting closed to the public. Therefore, this Agency Head Evaluation Survey Composite should be considered a document which will be used in a closed meeting.

AGENCY HEAD SURVEY COMPOSITE FORM

New Trustees
(appointed for 2 or
less meetings)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Average Score
	5	4	3	2	1	
Question 1	_4__	_1__	_____	_____	_____	_4.8__
Question 2	_3__	_1__	_1__	_____	_____	_4.4__
Question 3	_3__	_1__	_____	_1__	_____	_4.2__
Question 4	_3__	_____	_1__	_1__	_____	_4__
Question 5	_2__	_1__	_1__	_1__	_____	_3.8__
Question 6	_3__	_1__	_1__	_____	_____	_4.4__
Question 7	_3__	_1__	_____	_1__	_____	_4.2__
Question 8	_3__	_____	_1__	_1__	_____	_4__
Question 9	_3__	_____	_1__	_1__	_____	_4__
Question 10	_2__	_1__	_1__	_____	_____	_4.25__
Question 11	_3__	_1__	_____	_____	_____	_4.75__
Question 12	_3__	_1__	_____	_1__	_____	_4.2__
Question 13	_3__	_____	_1__	_____	_____	_4.75__
Question 14	_3__	_____	_1__	_____	_____	_4.5__
Question 15	_3__	_____	_1__	_____	_____	_4.5__

Subtotal (Total Average Scores for Questions 1-15) 64.75

Final Average Score for Survey (Subtotal / 15) 4.32

I acknowledge that the above composite represents the scores from the individual surveys of the Board/Commission members.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

For use by the Agency Head Salary Commission only.

*Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. Section 30-4-70 (a) (1) (1976), the Agency Head Salary Commission plans to discuss this employment matter in a meeting closed to the public. Therefore, this Agency Head Evaluation Survey Composite should be considered a document which will be used in a closed meeting.



Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee

CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

The committee meeting took place on Monday, July 31, 2023 via Zoom and was called to order at 2:05PM. The committee members present were myself and Dave Morley. There were several staff members present.

The meeting focused on the Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation (CC4ECI), a grantmaking process using READY funding to support innovation projects. The presentation described the purpose of the project, the four components of the CC4ECI model, and the expected grant process and timeline.

The four components of the Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation project include:

- 1) Infusing family and community voice throughout the program design, implementation, and evaluation process;
- 2) Using the [IDEAS \(Innovate, Develop, Evaluate, Adapt, Scale\) Impact Framework](#), developed through the Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University, as a toolkit for implementing rapid-cycle testing and evaluation within early childhood programs;
- 3) A cohort model for implementation with state support;
- 4) A two-state learning community with the North Carolina Partnership for Children (Smart Start).

Details about the CC4ECI project are included in the attached fact sheet. There was a deep discussion between the committee and presenters on how the CC4ECI project is aligned with the agency's Strategic Plan and how this process can be sustained through future multi-state partnerships that leverage joint funding to accelerate shared learning.

Details regarding the annual All Team Survey and All Team Retreat can be found in the meeting minutes.

The meeting closed with an update on the progress of the data governance work group for the Early Learning Extension of the K-12 Statewide Longitudinal Data System.

The meeting adjourned at 3:04PM.



Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee Meeting Minutes Monday, July 31, 2023 2:00-3:00PM via Zoom

Committee Members Present: Dr. Amy Williams, Dave Morley
Staff Present: Lexi Jones, Betty Gardiner, Dr. Janice Kilburn

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 2:05PM and opened with an announcement that Betty Gardiner, Director of Grantmaking, will give a presentation on an upcoming Early Childhood Innovation grantmaking process.

Betty introduced to the committee the Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation (CC4ECI), a grantmaking process using READY funding to support innovation projects. This meeting focused on identifying the rationale for the CC4ECI project, the history of innovation grantmaking at SC First Steps, the four-component model of the CC4ECI project, and the expected grant process and timeline. A main goal of the CC4ECI project is to serve more children and families and achieve higher impact in programs and outcomes. Details about the CC4ECI project are included in the attached fact sheet.

The four components of the Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation project include:

- 1) Infusing family and community voice throughout the program design, implementation, and evaluation process;
- 2) Using the [IDEAS \(Innovate, Develop, Evaluate, Adapt, Scale\) Impact Framework](#), developed through the Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University, as a toolkit for implementing rapid-cycle testing and evaluation within early childhood programs;
- 3) A cohort model for implementation with state support;
- 4) A two-state learning community with the North Carolina Partnership for Children (Smart Start).

There was a rich discussion between the committee members and the presenter regarding the CC4ECI project. Questions were raised regarding the connection between the CC4ECI grantmaking process and the agency's Strategic Plan ("Every Child Ready"). The discussion focused on two key questions:

- 1) How does the CC4ECI overlay and align with the agency's Strategic Plan?
- 2) How can the CC4ECI grantmaking process be developed to establish multi-state partnerships to secure additional funding and accelerate shared learning?

A key takeaway from the discussion was to ensure that the grant application asks applicants how their proposed early childhood innovation project will advance priorities outlined in the agency's Strategic Plan. Further, the CC4ECI will have clearly articulated outcomes that can be

measured and are tied to the goals of serving more children and achieving higher impact in programmatic outcomes.

Another key takeaway from the discussion was to focus on future multi-state partnerships to advance shared learning. Through strategic partnerships, partners can brainstorm and test adaptations that focus on a shared outcome. By conducting intentional, collaborative research that tests “what works” for a shared outcome, the CC4ECI project may accelerate learning and generate a stronger case for joint philanthropic and federal funding.

Then, Lexi Jones relayed information about the procurement and planning of the All Team Survey and All Team Retreat (which will be held on October 10, 2023). The planning of the All Team Survey and Retreat aligns with the agency’s 2023 Rock goals (Rock 2: Increase job satisfaction and provide cross-departmental trainings that improve efficiency and effectiveness of our teams). The annual All Team Survey will be released in mid-August to allow staff time to provide feedback prior to the All Team Retreat. The results of the All Team Survey will be used by an external evaluator to facilitate a discussion during the annual All Team Retreat.

Lexi also provided an update about the Early Learning Extension of the K-12 Statewide Longitudinal Data System. The data governance work group will meet in August to discuss the data transfer process and will do a test run of the data by year end. The agency’s work on the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) will be shared at a national conference in August by the Data Governance Coordinator.

The meeting adjourned at 3:04PM.

READY Funding for Innovation Projects

introducing the Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation



BACKGROUND

South Carolina First Steps is proposing to create a grantmaking process using READY funding that fills an unmet need of local partnerships for resources. Our current grantmaking with READY and other funding has been largely help local partnerships to establish, sustain, or expand programs that are approved by the SC First Steps board as evidence-based or evidence-informed. We have an extensive program catalog for local partnerships to choose from, yet we know that programs aren't recruiting, retaining, and/or achieving positive outcomes with all underserved communities. We are seeking a roadmap for local partnerships to test what works, using evaluation processes that are focused on learning and improving and not just compliance.

For the past several months our Local Partnership, Strategic Impact, and Grantmaking staff have been in conversations with the North Carolina Partnership for Children (Smart Start), as they share a similar state-local infrastructure with First Steps. Our two state offices convened multiple meetings in Spring 2023 to develop an overall process for implementing, testing, and supporting innovation that we wish to pilot with select local partnerships through grantmaking.

The four components of our Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation model include:

1. Infusing family and community voice throughout the program design, implementation, and evaluation process
2. Using the IDEAS (Innovate, Develop, Evaluate, Adapt, Scale) Impact Framework, developed through the Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University as a toolkit for implementing rapid-cycle testing and evaluation within early childhood programs
3. A cohort model for implementation, with state support
4. A two-state learning community with Smart Start

We will select 3-5 local partnerships to become the first South Carolina cohort for the Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation. Our proposed process allows for extended time during the application phase and during the first six months of implementation for project refinement and learning, as follows:

FY24 (Q1-Q2): Application phase, awards made at December 2023 board meeting

FY24 (Q3-Q4): Start-up phase for refining each project's Theory of Change

FY25 (Q1-Q4): Implementation phase

FY26 (Q1-Q2): Learning and wrap-up

We propose a maximum award of \$100,000 per year for at least two years.

Our two proposed "tracks" for the types of projects we wish to fund in our first cohort:

1. Adapt, modify, or enhance a current EB/EI program operated by the partnership that isn't effectively reaching or serving one or more target populations.
2. Pilot a program not represented in the First Steps Program and Operational Guidelines.



To: SC First Steps Board of Trustees

From: Roger Pryor (7/20/2023) & Shelley Canright (8/7/2023)

Date: July 20th, 2023 & August 7th, 2023

RE: Local Partnerships Program and Grants Committee

The Local Partnerships Program and Grants Committee met on July 20th, 2023 and on August 7th, 2023. Minutes of the meetings are attached. The following motions were approved unanimously.

A. READY Grant- Sustaining and Expanding Effective Program Serving Children and Families. (7/20/2023)

Derek explained that at our last meeting we presented 10 local partnerships for recommendation for READY Grant- Sustaining and Expanding Effective Program Serving Children and Families. At that meeting we determined we had 5 counties that needed further evaluation and follow up. That has been completed. The floor was turned over to Betty Gardiner who gave us a quick update as to where we stand with those 5 counties. She also gave a quick recap as to what READY is (Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth). Betty then shared the packet that was sent to the committee members as she went over each of the 5 counties that we had further evaluation and review on. Berkeley county has decided to not go with the READY grant.

Motion

The Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee recommends the awarding of the READY Sustaining and Expanding Effective Programs Serving Children and Families Grants in the amount of \$290,756.17 in READY funding and \$129,558.59 in recaptured state funding for a total of \$420,314.76 (see attached table) to four (4) Local Partnerships, Chesterfield, Darlington, Florence, and Williamsburg Counties for implementation beginning in grant year 2024. The motion was brought by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Wes Wooten, and unanimously approved for the consent agenda.

B. Corrective Action recommendation (8/7/2023)

Derek explained the purpose of our special meeting. Before reading the motion, some edits were made to the agenda; 1:00am was changed to 1:00pm on agenda heading, "effected" was changed to "affected" in motion language, State staff was added at the end of the last sentence in the motion language, and Marlboro has now become compliant and were removed from corrective action recommendation, and twelve (12) was changed to eleven (11) local partnerships in motion language.

Motion

The Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee approves the corrective action determination as presented for the eleven (11) local partnerships identified (Aiken, Allendale, Beaufort, Charleston, Clarendon, Georgetown, Hampton, Horry, Kershaw, Lancaster, and Oconee Counties. As a result of corrective action, the local partnerships affected are not



eligible to apply for competitive or targeted grants until they have satisfactorily resolved the deficiencies noted on their corrective action plan as determined by SC First Steps state staff. Motion was brought by Jack McBride, seconded by Roger Pryor, and unanimously approved for the consent agenda.

C. Informational- READY Funding for Innovation Projects- Introducing the Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation. (7/20/2023)

Betty Gardiner presented on the Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation Grant process. South Carolina First Steps is proposing to create a grantmaking process using READY funding that fills an unmet need of local partnerships for resources. Our current grantmaking with READY and other funding has been largely help local partnerships to establish, sustain, or expand programs that are approved by the SC First Steps board as evidence-based or evidence-informed. We have an extensive program catalog for local partnerships to choose from, yet we know that programs aren't recruiting, retaining, and/or achieving positive outcomes with all underserved communities. We are seeking a roadmap for local partnerships to test what works, using evaluation processes that are focused on learning and improving and not just compliance.

D. Informational- Chief Partnership Officer Updates- (7/20/2023)

Derek Cromwell presented updates from the Local Partnership team pertaining to the new legislation (Act 81), and Local Partnership team re-organization.

**E. Adjourn- 7/20/2023 at 12:24 p.m. BY Roger Pryor
8/7/2023 at 1:40 p.m. by Shelley Canright**



Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee Meeting

Monday July 20, 2023

Virtual

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Minutes

Attendance:

Committee: Roger Pryor, John Hayes, Wes Wooten, and Jessica Mackey

SCFS Staff: Derek Cromwell, Georgia Mjartan, Gina Beebe, Janice Kilburn, Cheryl Scales-Chavis, Kerry Cordan, LaMyra Sanders Dukes, Jade Wright, Beth Moore, Betty Gardiner, Delores Rock, Roddrick Dugger, Lexi Jones, Jon Artz, Kathy Fitzgerald.

Guest: Jack McBride, new SCFS Board member, and Catilin Ashaugh, Live 5 News Charleston.

1. **Welcome** - Roger Pryor was acting chair and opened the meeting up at 11:05 a.m. Attendees introduced themselves. Recognized guest who were in attendance. Roger announced we have quorum and moved to the first action item.
2. **Action Item- READY Grant- Sustaining and Expanding Effective Program Serving Children and Families.**

Derek explained that at our last meeting we presented 10 local partnerships for recommendation for READY Grant- Sustaining and Expanding Effective Program Serving Children and Families. At that meeting we determined we had 5 counties that needed further evaluation and follow up. That has been completed. The floor was turned over to Betty Gardiner who gave us a quick update as to where we stand with those 5 counties. She also gave a quick recap as to what READY is (Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth). Betty then shared the packet that was sent to the committee members as she went over each of the 5 counties that we had further evaluation and review on. Berkeley county has decided to not go with the READY grant. The amended motion is below.

- a. In May, this committee recommended the funding of 10 Partnerships for this READY opportunity.
- b. Five partnerships at that time were tabled and needed additional follow up by SCFS staff before determination could be made.
- c. We are now ready to recommend funding for the remaining 4 partnerships(Berkeley withdrew interest): Chesterfield, Darlington, Florence, and Williamsburg.

Motion: The Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee recommends the awarding of the READY Sustaining and Expanding Effective Programs Serving Children and Families Grants in the amount of \$290,756.17 in READY funding and \$129,558.59 in recaptured state funding for a total of \$420,314.76 (see attached table) to four (4) Local Partnerships, Chesterfield, Darlington, Florence, and Williamsburg Counties for implementation beginning in grant year 2024.

Motion: Jessica Mackey

Second: Wes Wooten

Vote: All said yes



3. Informational- READY Funding for Innovation Projects- Introducing the Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation.

- a. Betty Gardiner presented on the Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation Grant process. South Carolina First Steps is proposing to create a grantmaking process using READY funding that fills an unmet need of local partnerships for resources. Our current grantmaking with READY and other funding has been largely help local partnerships to establish, sustain, or expand programs that are approved by the SC First Steps board as evidence-based or evidence-informed. We have an extensive program catalog for local partnerships to choose from, yet we know that programs aren't recruiting, retaining, and/or achieving positive outcomes with all underserved communities. We are seeking a roadmap for local partnerships to test what works, using evaluation processes that are focused on learning and improving and not just compliance.
- b. For the past several months our Local Partnership, Strategic Impact, and Grantmaking staff have been in conversations with the North Carolina Partnership for Children (Smart Start), as they share a similar state-local infrastructure with First Steps. Our two state offices convened multiple meetings in Spring 2023 to develop an overall process for implementing, testing, and supporting innovation that we wish to pilot with select local partnerships through grantmaking.

4. Informational- Chief Partnership Officer Updates-

Derek Cromwell presented updates from the Local Partnership team pertaining to the new legislation (Act 81), and Local Partnership team re-organization.

- a. Act 81- New legislation that governs Local Partnerships
 - i. Board Structure
 - ii. ED Hiring, Salary and Annual Evaluation
 - iii. Multicounty Partnerships.
- b. Local Partnership State Office reorganization.
 - i. Number of Program Officers from 7-5.
 - ii. Number of Regions from 7-5
 - iii. Two new roles.
 1. Compliance Coordinator
 2. School Transitions Coordinator

5. Corrective action called meeting for August.

- a. August 7th or 9th are suggested. Meeting has been set for August 7th at 11:00-1:00 and will be virtual.

6. Adjourn Next Meeting: Meeting was called to adjourn at 12:24 p.m. by Roger Pryor.



Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee Meeting

Monday August 07, 2023

Virtual

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Minutes

Attendance:

Committee: Shelley Canright (acting Chair), John Hayes, Roger Pryor, James McBride (New appointed member).

SCFS Staff: Derek Cromwell, Kate Roach, Kerry Cordan, LaMyra Sanders Dukes, Jade Wright, Jon Artz, Kaitlyn Richards, Andrew Jensen, and Kathy Fitzgerald

Guest- Dr. Brenda Williams(guest)

1. Open – Shelly Canright was acting chair and opened the meeting up at 1:11pm, then turned the floor over to Derek Cromwell, Chief Partnership Officer.

2. Action Item

Derek explained the purpose of our special meeting. Before reading the motion, some edits were made to the agenda; 1:00 a.m. was changed to 1:00 p.m. on agenda heading, “effected” was changed to “affected” in motion language, State staff was added at the end of the last sentence in the motion language, and Marlboro has now become compliant and were removed from corrective action recommendation, and twelve (12) was changed to eleven (11) local partnerships in motion language. The action item was returned back to committee for questions. Upon having no questions Derek read the motion.

- a. FY 23 Corrective Action (see attachment)
- b. Twelve (11) counties have been identified to be deficient in accordance with the FY23 Program and Operational guidelines and are recommended for corrective action.

Motion

The Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee approves the corrective action determination as presented for the eleven (11) local partnerships identified (Aiken, Allendale, Beaufort, Charleston, Clarendon, Georgetown, Hampton, Horry, Kershaw, Lancaster, and Oconee Counties. As a result of corrective action, the local partnerships affected are not eligible to apply for competitive or targeted grants until they have satisfactorily resolved the deficiencies noted on their corrective action plan as determined by SC First Steps state staff.

Motion: Jack McBride

Second : Roger Pryor

Vote : All said aye, and vote was passed

3. Adjourn Next Meeting: Meeting was called to adjourn at 1:40 p.m. by Shelley Canright. Next meeting will be September 21st and will be virtual.

SUMMARY

In FY2022-23, South Carolina First Steps intended to award up to \$1,435,000 per year in Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth (READY) competitive grants to local First Steps partnerships, renewable for at least one additional year, to serve more children and families in their community. READY priorities include evidence-based programs for children birth through age 3 who live in rural communities and in communities where kindergarten readiness scores are consistently below the state average. No more than 10% may be distributed to any one county and no more than 3% retained by the state office for administering, monitoring, and evaluating the program.

Priorities for this opportunity were to partnerships:

- applying to sustain the reach of effective programs funded by Preschool Development Grant and/or other funding sources whose grant periods have ended or are ending soon
- expanding existing, effective programs; and/or
- establishing new programs or services.

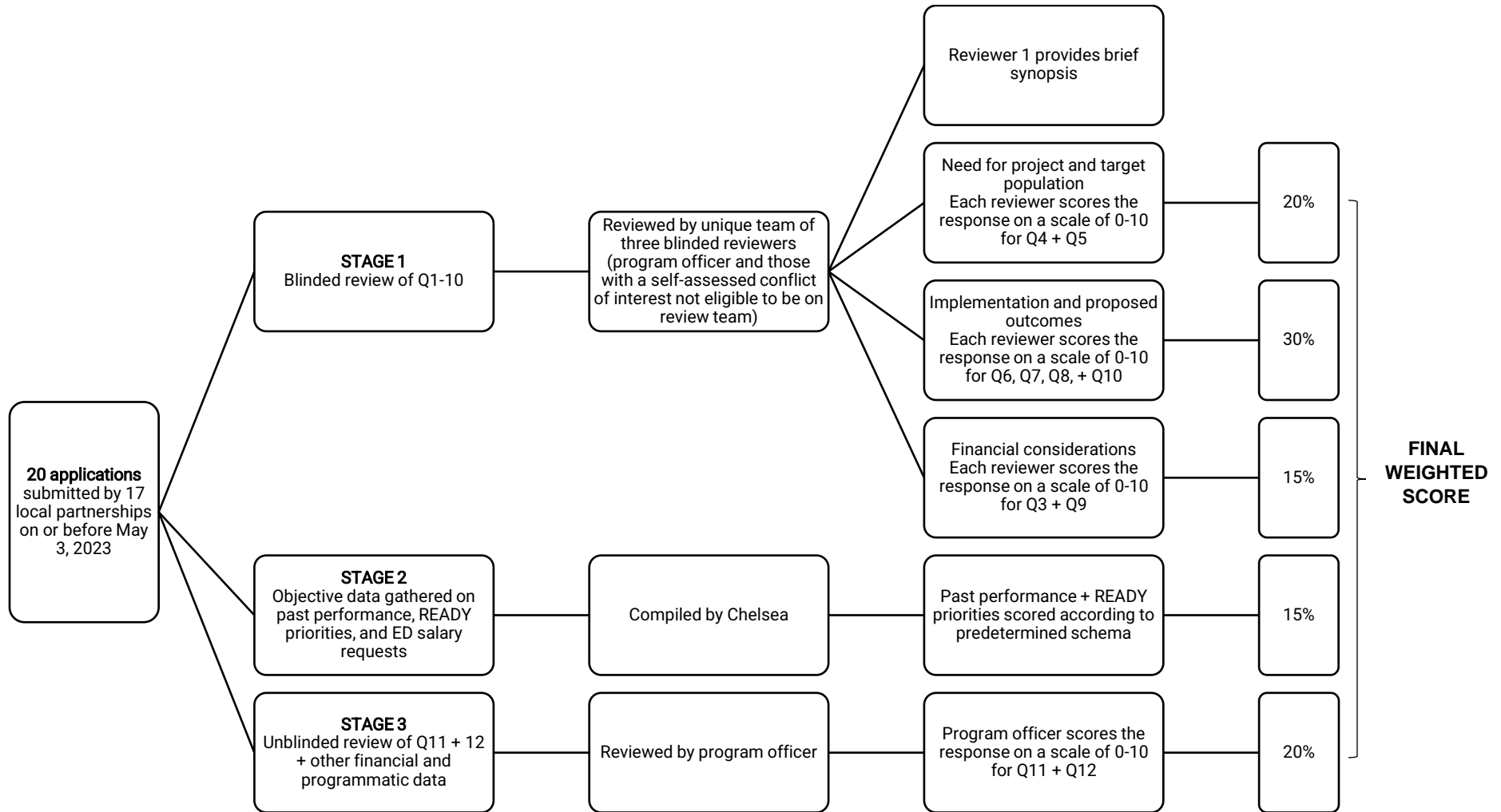
Applications were due on May 3, 2023, and twenty applications from seventeen local partnerships were received. Each application was blind reviewed by a unique team of three reviewers (see process on next page). Reviewers and other staff came together to blindly discuss each application and make recommendations for funding. The decision at that time was to recommend 13 applications for funding, not recommend two applications, and “table” the remaining five applications to allow time for additional questions and requests for clarification.

Of those five tabled applications, one applicant (Berkeley) has withdrawn their application SC First Steps staff is recommending the remaining four tabled applications for funding at the upcoming August 2023 state board meeting, **subject to any Corrective Actions recommended by this committee**. A summary of each grant award is included on page 3 of this report. Full grant applications are available upon request.

We are also recommending that **state recaptured funds of \$129,558.59** be allocated to these READY awards in order to increase the amount of funding available to local partnerships with program wait lists.

READY Children and Families Awards	FY2023-24	FY2024-25
Total Funding Being Recommended, Aug. 2023	\$420,314.76 (\$129,558.59 recapture, \$290,756.17 READY)	\$446,533.74
Approved Awards, June 2023	\$690,675.80	\$901,797.05
TOTAL READY Children and Families Awards	\$1,110,990.56	\$1,348,330.79

TOTAL IMPACT: 17 programs in 15 counties, impacting 3,892 children/adults in FY24 and 5,097 children/adults in FY25.



After scoring completed		
Step 1: Blind Review	Step 2: Unblinded Review	Step 3: Program and Grants Committee Consideration
Purpose: review blinded applications from highest to lowest score to determine staff recommendations	Purpose: review staff recommendations with counties identified	Purpose: Program and Grants committee considers staff recommendations and receives all grant applications recommended for funding

READY Sustaining and Expanding Effective Programs
Serving Children and Families Grants (originally tabled from June 2023 consideration)
 Recommendations to Program and Grants Committee, rev. 7/20/23



RECOMMENDATIONS							
County	Program	Priority	FY24 PTS	FY25 PTS	FY24 Budget Proposed Award	FY25 Budget Proposed Award	Synopsis
Chesterfield	Early Education for Children Under 4	Sustain and Expand	24	24	\$61,993.51	\$62,403.70	Provide staff support and other resources for the Compass Point Preschool's 3K and 4K classrooms in order to increase the number of children served.
Darlington	Motheread/Fatheread/Babyread	Expand	20	30	\$91,134.25	\$93,190.98	Funding will sustain the partnership's Motheread program and expand services via Fatheread and Babyread.
Florence	Parent Child+	Sustain and Expand	35	35	\$176,312.50	\$179,276.56	Funding will sustain ParentChild+ home visiting services in Florence School District One, which recently discontinued the program, as well as increase ParentChild+ services in rural areas of Florence County.
Williamsburg	Parents as Teachers	Sustain and Expand	83	101	\$90,874.50	\$111,662.50	To expand the number of families served in Parents as Teachers to address current waiting lists for the program and maintain expanded services after ESSER funding ends at the end of FY24.



Local Partnerships Program & Grants Committee

FY2023 Programmatic Corrective Action Recommendations

8-7-2023

County Name	Deficiency
Aiken	PAT PTS- 66% of 75% requirement
Allendale	Scholarships- 10 old not utilized- 75% requirement
Beaufort	PAT VPM- 1.71- of 1.80 requirement
Charleston	Childcare Training PTS- 22% of 75% requirement
Clarendon	ACIRI 44% of 75% requirement
	Avg. VPM 1.5 of 1.8 requirement
Georgetown	Overall timeliness of data entry/responsiveness to State Office request.
Hampton	ACIRI 33% of 75% requirement
Horry	Ready4k PTS- 66% of 75% requirement
Kershaw	No ASQ or Connections for Raising a Reader
Lancaster	Incredible years PTS- 30% of 75% requirement
Marlboro	ASQ SE 3.4% of 80% requirement
	HFPI- non entered.
Oconee	Child Care training PTS 56% of 75% requirement



To: SC First Steps Board of Trustees

From: Jessica Mackey, Chairman, Finance and Administration Committee

Date: August 10, 2023

RE: Finance and Administration Report

The Finance and Administration Committee met via Zoom conference call on August 10, 2023, to receive updates from staff. Detailed meeting minutes are attached. The committee brings forward the following updates.

First Steps State Office

Financial Report

2022-23: The FY 2022-23 YTD financial report was presented by Mr. Barnes. In addition, he shared the starting budget for FY 2023-24 and summary reports for the same. The upcoming year will have a record budget for the upcoming year of over \$78 million. Expenditures to date are in line with projections for the new year.

Local Partnership Update

State Office staff are working with SLED on two ongoing investigations related to the Local Partnerships and we received updates on the implementation of Act 81.

4K Program

The program is starting the year with a record number of classrooms, 340, number of centers, 292, and number of students 4,300 applications accepted to date. The actual number enrolled may change but this looks to be the biggest year ever for the program.

Other updates can be found in the meeting minutes.



Minutes from Finance and Administration Committee Meeting

August 10, 2023

Members present: Jesica Mackey, Chairman, Jacque Curtin, CPA,

Members not present: None

Nonmembers present: Dr. Brenda Williams, Georgia Mjartan, Executive Director, Mark Barnes, Director of Administration; Lavinia Tejada, CPA, Director of Finance and Audits

With all public notices being provided, the Zoom meeting was called to order by Jesica Mackey at 9:04 am. After introductions, a quorum was available, so the Committee moved to the first item on the agenda, information from staff.

First Steps State Office

Financial Report

Mr. Barnes reviewed a number of financial reports. They included the end of the year financial status report and donations. 2023 saw the largest number of dollars raised and donated for SC First Steps. The agency received over \$217,000. He mentioned that the agency has statutory authority to carry forward all funds received from one year to the next and that we spent almost \$56 million in 2023. He also presented the initial draft of the total budget for FY 2023-24. The new year's budget totals almost \$79 million which is another record budget amount. He reviewed the breakdown by fund source and the summary 4 program and cost areas for the agency. This discussion also included the amount spent to date and he reviewed the donations to date for this year.

He reviewed several other summary reports for the new fiscal year, breaking down the budget amounts, both by source of funds, and a break down of the actual costs by objective for each of the primary 4 program areas.

There was general discussion on the expenditures to date and how we distribute funds to the Local Partnerships and the 4K centers. Mr. Barnes mentioned that some of the final numbers for FY2023 may have minor changes as we close out the year which may affect some of the carry forward amounts that are budgeted in FY2024.

The financial statements and audit will be under way for the next 6 to 7 weeks, as they have to be delivered to the state before Oct 1. They will be presented to the Committee at the next meeting.

State Budget Update

SC First Steps has started working on its request for the FY 24-25 fiscal year. Generally, the Governor requests this information early in September. Mr. Barnes mentioned that there will probably not be as

much money available in recurring funds for state agencies as the General Fund revenue was down a little for May and June of 2023. Some of this decrease was due to tax cuts implemented at the state level. We know there are several things we will probably include in our request, but no decisions have been made at this point.

Local Partnerships

Local Partnership Update

1. Mr. Barnes provided an update on the Local Partnerships. He mentioned that there are a couple of investigations that are ongoing by SLED. We are following up on these and will be taking appropriate actions. There was general discussion about the Local Partnerships liability for any of the current investigations. At this point, there does not appear to be any concern for their liability or ours. Mr. Barnes will keep the Committee up to date on any changes or new information.
2. Additional information was provided related to the status of Act 81 implementation. He mentioned work being done by our Legislative Liaison on the Board changes that needed to be done immediately, work being done for retirement benefits through PEBA as a result of those changes, and an intermediate process for our Board to approve hiring and salaries of Local Partnership Executive Directors. Additional work will be ongoing over the next year and will include things like new Procurement policies and procedures, as well as new Human Resource policies and procedures.

4K Program Update

The program is implementing an increase to the tuition base rate for the program. We took the rate from \$5,100 to \$5,500. For the first time we will have a difference between what the State Department of Education pays their school districts and what First Steps pays to our contractors. In addition, we have seen a large increase in the number of student applications, a total of over 6,000 received to date with over 4,300 approved which is a record. In addition, we'll have the largest number of classrooms and centers who are participating. At this point we have an all-time record 292 centers/schools and 340 classrooms.

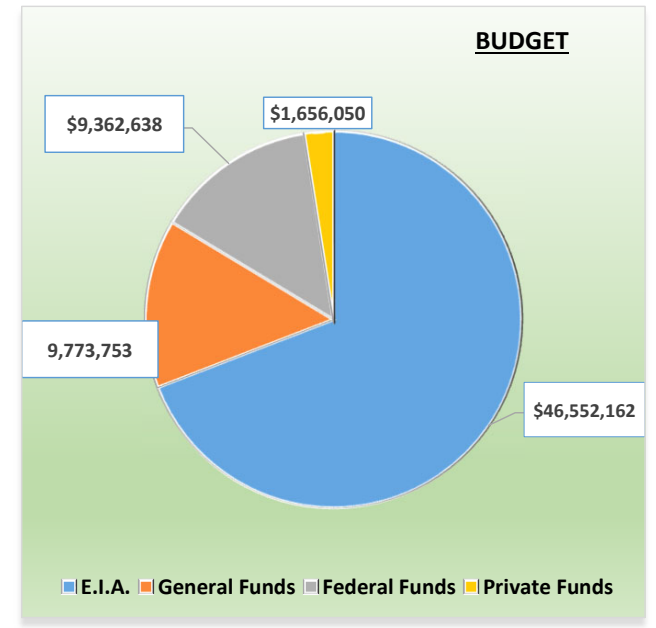
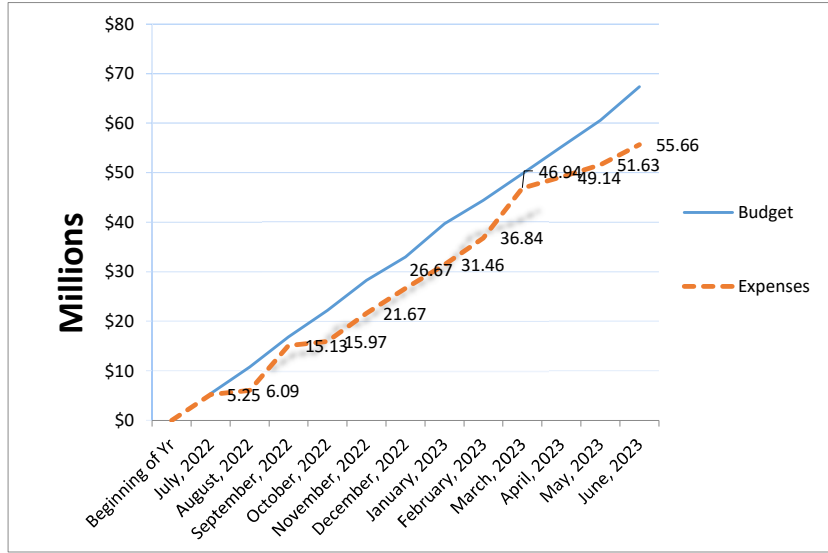
Other

Ms. Curtin requested that the Committee have more time to review the financial statements and audit when they are completed this year. Mr. Barnes mentioned that he will get that out to the Committee as soon as they are ready. He did mention that the state does not provide much time for agencies as they can't really start on the financial statements until mid-August, and then have an independent auditor complete and deliver the audit by October 1. This only allows about 6 to 7 weeks for both processes to take place, with an agency with almost \$60 million in costs. We will do our best to give the Committee as much time as possible to review the documents.

With no further business to discuss for the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:05 am.

**As of
June 30, 2023**

Spending Rates	
Projected	100%
Actual	83%



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	17,345,228	15,992,901	1,352,327	2,612,457	2,811,796	\$ (199,339)					19,957,685	18,804,697	\$ 1,152,988
LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS SUPPORT & TECH ASST.	2,151,504	1,866,369	285,135			\$ -	1,495,624	50,000	1,445,624		3,647,128	1,916,369	\$ 1,730,759
PRIVATE 4-K	32,496,679	27,419,184	5,077,495	1,873,457		1,873,457	142,058		142,058		34,512,194	27,419,184	\$ 7,093,010
EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL	176,000	13,611	162,389	4,289,918	3,801,853	488,065			-		4,465,918	3,815,464	\$ 650,454
AMERICORPS				326,703	291,333	35,370			-		326,703	291,333	\$ 35,370
POLICY & ACCOUNTABILITY	2,774,872	2,190,857	584,015	260,103		260,103	1,400,000	1,217,757	182,243		4,434,975	3,408,615	\$ 1,026,360
GRAND TOTAL:	54,944,283	47,482,922	7,461,361	9,362,638	6,904,982	2,457,656	3,037,682	1,267,757	1,769,925		67,344,603	55,655,662	\$ 11,688,941

Notes:

1) Local Partnerships:

- a. Funding Sources: Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funds
- b. Formula allocation cash advances are disbursed on a quarterly basis
- c. Expenditures reflect disbursements from SC First Steps (state-level)
- d. Does not include local-level actual expenses to staff and vendors

2) Private budgets based on Projected Fund Raising and

income & prior year cash.	46,552,162	E.I.A.
	9,773,753	General Funds
	9,362,638	Federal Funds
	1,656,050	Private Funds
	67,344,603	

3) LP Support & Technical Assistance

- a. Contracted accounting firm (Manley Garvin, LLC)
- b. Accounting Software network support & Data Housing
- c. Programmatic data housing & network support

Federal Funds:

AmeriCorps:	326,703
SLDS:	260,103
PDG:	3,729,725
PDG-Planning	560,193
ESSER Funds	4,485,914
	9,362,638

3) LP Support & Technical Assistance (cont.)

- d. Workers' compensation insurance coverage
- e. External programmatic evaluation
- f. Financial audits-annually each LP
- g. Does not include local-level actual expenses to staff and vendors
- h. OFS program & finance staff (payroll, rent, contractual, supplies, travel, etc)
- i. Includes LP Countdown to Kindergarten program

4) State Appropriations Include EIA Funds and General Funds.

Donations

FY 2023

As of June 30, 2023



DATE RECEIVED	GENERAL	DONOR/PAYOR	FUNDS	PURPOSE / COMMENTS
Jul 12, 2022	\$ 120	Jennifer Humphries-NFG	Restricted	Cherokee County First Steps
Jul 12, 2022	\$ 10,000	DSS	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Jul 14, 2022	\$ 10,000	Childrens Trust	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Aug 2, 2022	\$ 500	Sisters of Charity	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Aug 2, 2022	\$ 1,000	Head Start Collaboration-SCDSS	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Aug 11, 2022	\$ 2,000	Enterprise Holdings Foundation	Restricted	SC First Steps
Aug 18, 2022	\$ 2,000	Enterprise Holdings Foundation	Restricted	SC First Steps
Sep 8, 2022	\$ 2,500	Institute for Child Success	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Sep 8, 2022	\$ 2,500	Kaplan Early Learning Co.	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Oct 24, 2022	\$ 15,500	Enterprise holdings	Restricted	SC First Steps
Nov 3, 2022	\$ 1,500	SCDDSN	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Nov 9, 2022	\$ 200	SCIMHA	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Nov 14, 2022	\$ 200	SC Legal Services	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Nov 15, 2022	\$ 158.44	Spartanburg Comm. College	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Nov 15, 2022	\$ 600	Children's Trust	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Nov 22, 2022	\$ 1,485	NFG - Replacement Check 1/22 Donations	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Nov 22, 2022	\$ 1,275	USC-Columbia	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Nov 22, 2022	\$ 200	Palmetto Shared Alliance	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Nov 22, 2022	\$ 250	NFG-Rosemary Paterson	Restricted	Laurens County FS
Nov 22, 2022	\$ 50	NFG-Erin Hall	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Nov 22, 2022	\$ 100	NFG-Mary Dell Hayes	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Nov 22, 2022	\$ 25	NFG-Elizabeth Dudek	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Nov 22, 2022	\$ 100	NFG-Dana Ritchie	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Nov 22, 2022	\$ 25	NFG-Joseph Knapp	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Nov 30, 2022	\$ 500	USC-Columbia	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Nov 30, 2022	\$ 25	NFG-Joe Nation	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Nov 30, 2022	\$ 25	NFG-Elizabeth Dudek	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Nov 30, 2022	\$ 25	Mary Lee Arthur	Restricted	Lee County FS
Nov 30, 2022	\$ 10,000	Dave & Cheryl Morley	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Dec 5, 2022	\$ 200	Newberry Family Literacy	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Dec 6, 2022	\$ 100	Mary Lynne Diggs	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Dec 13, 2022	\$ 50	Jacob Baker	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Dec 13, 2022	\$ 250	American Endowment Foundation	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Dec 14, 2022	\$ 2,500	Lakeshore Learning	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Dec 14, 2022	\$ 14,480	Expo Pass- Summit Sponsorship	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Dec 15, 2022	\$ 71	Expo Pass- Summit Sponsorship	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Dec 19, 2022	\$ 125	Columbia Int.University	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Dec 19, 2022	\$ 500	KRJ Consulting	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Dec 19, 2022	\$ 2,000	Comm.Foundation of Greenville	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Dec 19, 2022	\$ 50	Mary Ann & Alan Mathews	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Dec 19, 2022	\$ 570	Expo Pass- Summit Sponsorship	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Dec 20, 2022	\$ 200	NFG-Melissa Sanders	Restricted	Pickens County FS
Dec 20, 2022	\$ 1,000	NFG-Kimberly Clark-Cort Beach Island	Restricted	Aiken County FS
Dec 20, 2022	\$ 50	NFG-Barbara Scott	Restricted	Richland County FS
Dec 20, 2022	\$ 50	NFG-Betty Gardiner	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Dec 20, 2022	\$ 25	NFG-Sara Eargle	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Dec 20, 2022	\$ 25	NFG-Shirley Hackett	Restricted	Richland County FS
Dec 20, 2022	\$ 50	NFG-Beatrice Brown	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Dec 20, 2022	\$ 20	NFG-Candace Bush	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Dec 20, 2022	\$ 100	NFG-Nancy Priester	Restricted	Beaufort County FS
Dec 20, 2022	\$ 20	NFG-Beth Shelton-Brooks	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Dec 20, 2022	\$ 25	NFG-Valerie James	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Dec 20, 2022	\$ 30	Network for Good	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Dec 20, 2022	\$ 100	Peter & Karen Miller	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Dec 20, 2022	\$ 689	Expo Pass- Summit Sponsorship	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Dec 21, 2022	\$ 356	Expo Pass- Summit Sponsorship	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps

Dec 30,2022	\$ 1,000	Hal Kaplan	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Dec 30,2022	\$ 25	Elizabeth Dudek	Restricted	Anderson County First Steps
Jan 5, 2023	\$ 50	Pamela Lynn Bradley	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Jan 5, 2023	\$ 1,000	TS Holt Co.	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Jan 5, 2023	\$ 1,000	Central Carolina Comm. Found.	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Jan 5, 2023	\$ 1,350	Schwab Charitable	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Jan 5, 2023	\$ 2,500	State Library	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Jan 6, 2023	\$ 25	Avian Jones	Unrestricted	SC First Steps
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 25	NFG-Vanessa Jefferies	Restricted	Cherokee County FS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 50	NFG-Janice Moore	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 485	NFG-Janice Kilburn	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 100	NFG-Janice Kilburn	Restricted	Anderson County FS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 100	NFG-Janice Kilburn	Restricted	Greenville County FS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 100	NFG-Janice Kilburn	Restricted	Laurens County FS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 100	NFG-Janice Kilburn	Restricted	Oconee County FS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 100	NFG-Janice Kilburn	Restricted	Pickens County FS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 100	NFG-Janice Kilburn	Restricted	Spartanburg County FS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 100	NFG-Janice Kilburn	Restricted	Union County FS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 50	NFG-Erin Hall	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 25	NFG-Susan Jones	Restricted	Horry County FS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 100	NFG-Alston & Susan DeVenny	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 25	NFG-Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 100	NFG-Elizabeth Dudek	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 500	NFG-Rogers Pender	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 25	NFG-Delores Rock	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 75	NFG-Ben & Mallory Gibson	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 100	NFG-Amy Williams	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 250	NFG-Scott Smoak	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 2,500	NFG-Snider Fleet Solutions	Restricted	Spartanburg County FS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 2,500	NFG-Snider Fleet Solutions	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 350	NFG-Ross Turner	Restricted	Greenville County FS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 250	NFG-Jesica Mackey	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 100	NFG-Brianne Tillirson	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 500	NFG-Shirley Von Beck	Restricted	Aiken County FS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 175	NFG-Margaret Deans Grantz	Restricted	Richland County FS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 75	NFG-Margaret Deans Grantz	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 350	NFG-Simmons Purdy	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 500	NFG-Scott Smoak	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 50	NFG-Laquitta Bowers	Restricted	Hampton County FS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 200	NFG-Karen Oliver	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 25	NFG-Tracy Darby	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 250	NFG-Rosemary Patterson	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 100	NFG-Kent Fiedor	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 100	NFG-Barbara Rackes	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 175	NFG-Posey & Posey	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 50	NFG-Jim Riddle	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 100	NFG-Lavinia Tejada	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 50	NFG-Kenneth Vaughn	Restricted	Spartanburg County FS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 1,000	NFG-Georgia Mjartan	Unrestricted	SCFS
Jan 19, 2023	\$ 5,000	Manley Garvin	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Feb 5, 2023	\$ 2,500	Enterprise holdings	Unrestricted	SCFS
Feb 9, 2023	\$ 75	USC-Columbia	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Feb 9, 2023	\$ 225	USC-Columbia	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Feb 10, 2023	\$ 1,000	Lourie Life & Health	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Feb 11, 2023	\$ 1,000	Scott & Co.	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Feb 12, 2023	\$ 1,000	Midas Auto Serv. - Palmetto Garage Works	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
	\$ 2,500	Dominion Energy	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Feb 21, 2023	\$ 2,500	Truist Corp.	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Feb 23, 2023	\$ 25	Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Feb 28, 2023	\$ 1,000	American Endowment Foundation:Mark Robertson	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Feb 28, 2023	\$ 1,125	York County First Steps	Restricted	Summit Sponsorship-SC First Steps
Feb 28, 2023	\$ 1,000	Nelson,Mullins, Riley, & Scarborough	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Mar 9, 2023	1000	Synovus	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Mar 9, 2023	\$ 2,500	Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein LLP	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Mar 9, 2023	\$ 1,000	Kaplan Early Learning Co.	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate

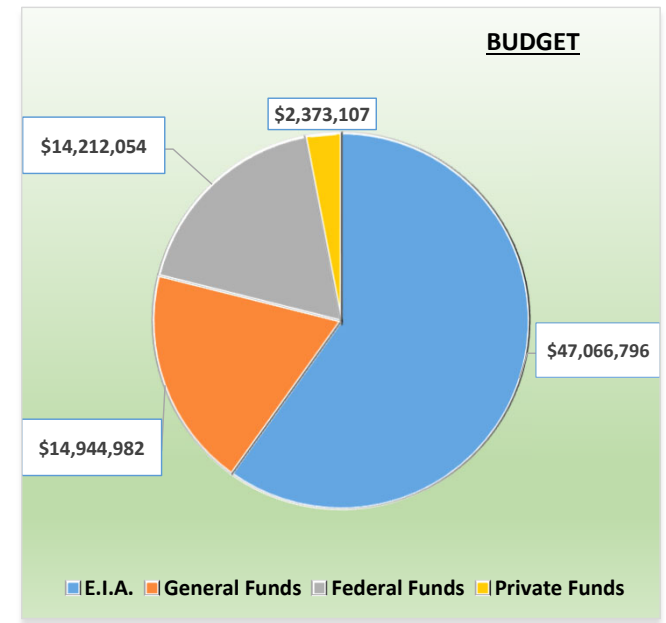
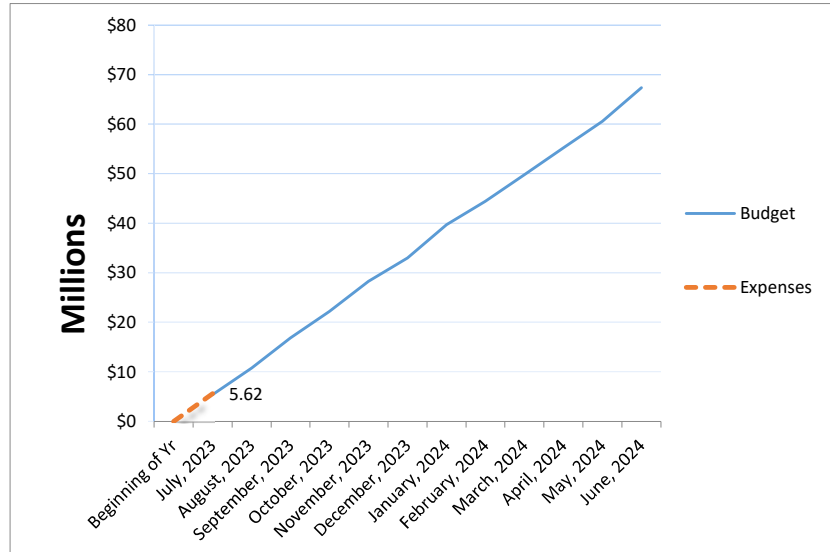
Mar 13, 2023	\$ 100	Karen Oliver	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Mar 13, 2023	\$ 250	Ronald and Marilyn Artz	Unrestricted	SCFS
Mar 16, 2023	\$ 2,500	Shelley Canright-Schwab Charitable	Unrestricted	SCFS
Mar 16, 2023	\$ 1,000	Robinson Gray Stepp & Liffitte	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Mar 20, 2023	\$ 2,500	Founders Fed.Cr.Union	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Mar 20, 2023	\$ 1,000	Spinks Family Foundation	Unrestricted	SCFS
Mar 21, 2023	\$ 1,250	Riley, Pope and Laney, LLC	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Mar 21, 2023	\$ 1,000	AmeriHealth Caritas Svcs, LLC	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Mar 29, 2023	\$ 1,000	Molina Health Care	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Mar 29, 2023	\$ 5,000	Palmetto Citizens FCU	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Mar 29, 2023	\$ 200	J. Gregory Hembree	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Mar 31, 2023	\$ 25	NFG-Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Mar 31, 2023	\$ 110	NFG-Lauren Cunliffe	Unrestricted	SCFS
Mar 31, 2023	\$ 50	NFG-Barbara Scott	Restricted	Richland County FS
Apr 3, 2023	\$ 100	Martha Strickland	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Apr 10, 2023	\$ 1,250	Riley, Pope and Laney, LLC	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Apr 14, 2023	\$ 5,000	Dave & Cheryl Morley	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Apr 14, 2023	\$ 200	Mark Robertson	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Apr 19, 2023	\$ 5,000	Aflac	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Apr 19, 2023	\$ 1,000	Humana	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Apr 18, 2023	\$ 2,500	ASANA Partnership	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 200	NFG-Cheryl & Dennis Wiese	Restricted	Greatest Need
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 25	NFG-Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington FS
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 200	NFG-Billy and Leigh DuBose	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 1,000	CSX Transportation	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 5,000	Capital Waste Services	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 5,000	The Boeing Co.	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 40	Grayson Posey	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 20	Meredith Rhodes	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 35	Paige Bryant	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 40	De'Andra Washington	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 35	David Lisk	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 25	Phillips McWilliams	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 20	Alexis Juneja	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 40	Brad Smith	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 30	Brian Moore	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 35	Kate Roach	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 20	Taylor Roach	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 20	George Whiteside	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 20	Jennifer Williams	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 40	Derek Cromwell	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 35	Kathy Jenkins	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 40	Darcy Huffman	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 20	Beth Kienzlen	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 45	Payton Bryant	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
Apr 26, 2023	\$ 40	Lyndey Zwing	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate Raffle
May 4, 2023	\$ 10,000	DHHS	Restricted	2023 Summit
May 9, 2023	\$ 10,000	First Citizens Wealth Management	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
May 9, 2023	\$ 850	Georgia Mjartan	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
May 15, 2023	\$ 2,500	Unicare Life and Health Ins.	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
May 15, 2023	\$ 2,500	Delta Dental of Missouri	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Jun 5, 2023	\$ 1,000	NFG - Davis C. Whittle	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Jun 5, 2023	\$ 5,410	NFG - EventBrite Inc.	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Jun 5, 2023	\$ 1,000	NFG - Chernoff Newman	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Jun 5, 2023	\$ 25	NFG - Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington FS
Jun 5, 2023	\$ 1,000	NFG - Tricia Ryel Richter	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Jun 5, 2023	\$ 50	NFG - Chelsea Richard	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Jun 5, 2023	\$ 200	NFG - Carolina Pediatrics	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Jun 5, 2023	\$ 970	NFG - Jim Hodges	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Jun 5, 2023	\$ 500	NFG - Alexis Juneja	Restricted	A Night to Celebrate
Jun 21, 2023	\$ 10,000	NFG - Children's Trust of SC		A Night to Celebrate
Jun 21, 2023	\$ 25	NFG - Joe Nation		Lexington FS
Jun 21, 2023	\$ 25	NFG - Orlando Britton		Georgetown FS

\$ 217,926

Total

**As of
July 31, 2023**

Spending Rates	
Projected	100%
Actual	7%



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		21,108,982	196,878	20,912,104	7,809,475	-	\$ 7,809,475	2,020,458	4,027	2,016,431	30,938,915	200,905	\$ 30,738,010
PRIVATE 4-K		37,096,751	5,187,059	31,909,692	3,132,494		3,132,494			-	40,229,245	5,187,059	\$ 35,042,186
EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL		1,160,993	-	1,160,993	2,802,562	44,024	2,758,538	178,000		178,000	4,141,555	44,024	\$ 4,097,531
POLICY & ACCOUNTABILITY		2,645,053	150,483	2,494,570	540,136	29,584	510,552	102,035	8,685	93,351	3,287,224	188,752	\$ 3,098,472
GRAND TOTAL:		62,011,779	5,534,421	56,477,358	14,284,667	73,608	14,211,059	2,300,493	12,711	2,287,782	78,596,939	5,620,740	\$ 72,976,199

Notes:

1) Local Partnerships:

- a. Funding Sources: Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funds
- b. Formula allocation cash advances are disbursed on a quarterly basis
- c. Expenditures reflect disbursements from SC First Steps (state-level)
- d. Does not include local-level actual expenses to staff and vendors

2) Private budgets based on Projected Fund Raising and income & prior year cash.

47,066,796	E.I.A.
14,944,982	General Funds
14,212,054	Federal Funds
2,373,106	Private Funds
78,596,939	

3) LP Support & Technical Assistance

- a. Contracted accounting firm (Manley Garvin, LLC)
- b. Accounting Software network support & Data Housing
- c. Programmatic data housing & network support

Federal Funds:

VISTA	50,000
AmeriCorps:	427,523
SLDS:	266,194
PDG:	2,536,368
ESSER Funds	10,931,969
	14,212,054

3) LP Support & Technical Assistance (cont.)

- d. Workers' compensation insurance coverage
- e. External programmatic evaluation
- f. Financial audits-annually each LP
- g. Does not include local-level actual expenses to staff and vendors
- h. OFS program & finance staff (payroll, rent, contractual, supplies, travel, etc.)
- i. Includes LP Countdown to Kindergarten program

4) State Appropriations Include EIA Funds and General Funds.

Donations

FY 2024

As of July 31, 2023



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
	<u>\$ 3,500</u>			



South Carolina First Steps
Budget Period: July 01, 2023 - June 30, 2024 (SFY)

FY 24 Budget Summary:

Policy & Accountability	3,287,224
4K	40,229,245
Local Partnerships	30,938,916
ECAC	4,141,555
	78,596,939

Fund Source:

State	EIA	39,911,631
	EIA Carry Forward	7,155,165
	General Funds	14,944,982
Federal	PDG	2,536,368
	ESSER	10,931,969
	AmeriCorps	427,523
	SLDS	266,194
	VISTA	50,000
Grants	Doris Duke	801,778
	Duke Endowment	1,206,680
	Pritzker	100,000
	Alliance	75,000
	PAT	12,000
Donations	SCFS	177,649
		78,596,939



South Carolina First Steps-Financial Status Report

Budget Period: July 01, 2023 - June 30, 2024 (SFY)

As of: 7/31/2023

Summary of All Program Areas

Projected Spending Rate	8%
-------------------------	----

	FY 23 Total Exps.	FY 24 Budget	FY 24 Expenditures	FY 24 Commitments	FY 24 Exps. & Commitments	FY 24 Balance	Usage %
Policy & Accountability							
Salaries	1,094,886	1,681,471	132,716	-	132,715.64	1,548,755	8%
Fringe	437,976	613,438	51,184	-	51,184.44	562,254	8%
Contractual	522,196	584,600	1,427	-	1,427.00	583,173	0%
Supplies & Materials	150,656	145,486	-	-	-	145,486	0%
Rental/Leases	177,326	180,000	2,264	-	2,264.00	177,736	1%
Travel	32,746	47,864	-	-	-	47,864	0%
Equipment/Assets	33,095	13,000	-	-	-	13,000	
Indirect Costs		21,364	-	-	-	21,364	0%
Total	2,448,881	3,287,223	187,591	-	187,591	3,099,632	6%
4K							
Salaries	1,795,387	1,976,348	144,232	-	144,232.00	1,832,116	7%
Fringe	766,831	882,332	42,827	-	42,827.00	839,505	5%
Contractual	502,418	1,396,000	-	-	-	1,396,000	0%
Supplies & Materials	411,291	914,356	-	-	-	914,356	0%
Rental/Leases	130,883	201,278	-	-	-	201,278	0%
Travel	115,603	240,000	-	-	-	240,000	0%
Equipment/Assets	100,584	250,000	-	-	-	250,000	0%
Private Sector	23,500,000	34,368,931	5,000,000	-	5,000,000.00	29,368,931	15%
Total	27,322,997	40,229,245	5,187,059	-	5,187,059	35,042,186	13%
Local Partnerships							
Salaries	1,117,816	1,328,494	151,631	-	151,630.64	1,176,863.36	11%
Fringe	589,988	797,697	48,452	-	48,452.21	749,244.79	6%
Contractual	983,543	2,182,746	822	-	821.87	2,181,924.43	0%
Supplies & Materials	61,320	200,625	-	-	-	200,625.00	0%
Rental/Leases	119,739	119,625	-	-	-	119,625.00	0%
Travel	54,564	60,100	-	-	-	60,100.00	0%
Equipment/Assets	4,182	50,000	-	-	-	50,000	0%
LP's Direct	16,751,288	26,199,628				26,199,628	
	19,682,440	30,938,916	200,905	-	200,905	30,738,011	1%
Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)							
Salaries & Wages	627,991	734,408	31,854	-	31,853.72	702,554.72	4%
Fringe	167,956	253,780	13,332	-	13,331.91	240,448.49	5%
Contractual	1,849,537	1,536,972	-	-	-	1,536,972.04	0%
Supplies & Materials	199,167	44,464	-	-	-	44,463.57	0%
Rental/Leases	5,734	24,000	-	-	-	24,000.00	0%
Travel	48,828	42,613	-	-	-	42,612.73	0%
Direct Allocations	2,152,299	1,505,318				1,505,318.00	0%
Indirect Cost	1,382						
Total	5,052,894	4,141,555	45,186	-	45,186	4,096,370	1%
Grand Total :	54,507,213	78,596,939	5,620,740	-	5,620,740	72,976,198	7%

Category Totals	FY 23 Total Exps	FY 24 Budget	FY 24 Expenditures	FY 24 Commitments	FY 24 Exps. & Commitments	FY 24 Balance	Usage %
Salaries & Wages	4,636,080	5,720,721	460,432	-	460,432	5,260,289	8%
Fringe	1,962,752	2,547,247	155,796	-	155,796	2,391,452	6%
Contractual	3,857,694	5,700,318	2,249	-	2,249	5,698,069	0%
Supplies & Materials	822,435	1,304,931	-	-	-	1,304,931	0%
Rental/Leases	433,682	524,903	2,264	-	2,264	522,639	0%
Travel	251,741	390,577	-	-	-	390,577	0%
Equipment	137,861	313,000	-	-	-	313,000	0%
Direct Allocations	18,903,587	26,199,628	-	-	-	26,199,628	0%
Private Sector	23,500,000	34,368,931	5,000,000	-	5,000,000	29,368,931	15%
Indirect Costs	1,382	21,364	-	-	-	-	0%
Total	54,507,213	77,091,621	5,620,740	-	5,620,740	71,449,516	7%

Fund Source	FY 23 Total Exps	FY 24 Budget	FY 24 Expenditures	FY 24 Commitments	FY 24 Exps. & Commitments	FY 24 Balance	Usage %
E.I.A	39,911,631	39,911,631	5,508,749	-	5,508,749	34,402,882	14%
E.I.A Carry Over	858,898	7,155,165	-	-	-	7,155,165	0%
General Funds	7,155,165	14,944,982	-	-	-	14,944,982	0%
PDG	3,470,208	2,536,368	34,563	-	-	2,536,368	0%
DD/DE	926,917	2,008,458	4,027	-	-	2,008,458	0%
SLDS	139,814	266,194	9,461	-	-	266,194	0%
ESSER	1,663,347	10,931,969	-	-	-	10,931,969	0%
Alliance	49,938	75,000	3,464	-	-	75,000	0%
Pritzker	32,878	100,000	-	-	-	100,000	0%
AmeriCorps/Vista	291,333	477,523	29,584	-	29,584	447,939	6%
PAT	7,085	12,000	-	-	-	12,000	0%
SCFS - Private Funds	-	177,648	30,892	-	30,892	146,756	17%
	54,507,213	78,596,939	5,620,740	-	5,569,225	73,027,714	7%



To: SC First Steps Board of Trustees

From: Georgia Mjartan

Date: August 17, 2023

RE: **Executive Director's Report**

I. H. 4023

- Governor's bill signing August 10th
- Act 81 Implementation

II. Report of READY submitted to General Assembly

- See attached

III. First Steps 4K

- 2022-23 School Year (comparisons with previous year)
 - 4,285 students served for at least one day through Day 220 of the 2022-2023 school year (3% increase)
 - 3,650 students served through Day 180 (9% increase)
 - 2,830 students served in summer 2023 (8% increase)
 - 2,194 continued from day 180 through day 220
 - 636 students served in summer only
 - 201 providers participated in summer 2023
 - Of those who participated in summer 2023, 182 (91%) participate in ABC Quality
- 2023-24 School Year (as of August 13, 2023)
 - 4,852 student applications received
 - 4,496 applications processed
 - 3,923 students approved to enroll (27% increase compared to August 10, 2022)
 - 276 are not yet approved, but are approvable
 - Recruitment and retention of First Steps 4K providers was successful
 - 293 total providers approved to date (16% increase) with 353 classrooms (18% increase)
 - 52 new providers (86% increase compared to new providers added for the 2022-2023 school year) with 62 new classrooms offering First Steps 4K (121% increase compared to new classrooms added for the 2022-2023 school year)
 - 89% offer either an extended day or extended school year
 - 83% participate in ABC Quality
 - Only lost 1 provider from the 2022-2023 school year
 - 2 classrooms are "on pause" and are waiting on teachers to be hired
 - Over 30,000 families were mailed a First Steps 4K postcard during the week of July 31 and August 4, 2023
 - This was the 2nd postcard mailed to let families know that there are openings & that enrollment is still open
- 4K + Siblings (as of June 1, 2023)



- 4,447 children have been approved for a 4K+Siblings voucher to date
 - 3,723 (84%) have successfully connected with a child care provider
- First Steps 4K Academy held the *largest attended* in-person Academy for Teachers and Directors! Over 550 Teachers and 350 Directors attended Academy between August 7 and August 11, 2023.

IV. AmeriCorps and VISTA

AmeriCorps

- 20 returning members starting on Aug. 17
- 14 new member scheduled for September 5 and 17 orientations
- Seeking 11 members in the following areas:
 - two (2) Barnwell, (1) Hampton, (1) Jasper, (1) Charleston, (1) Member Experience Leader, and (1) ECAC- 7 total Family and Community Engagement positions
 - 4 remaining roles with HIPPY- Parent Educators are already identified, just wanting on official applications

VISTA

- 6 roles- writing a VAD for the 6th role and a new team leader role
- 3 filled- Communications, LP Communications, Volunteer & Partnership development
- 3 open- Nonprofit management, Development/ Fundraising, third role focus area is TBD

V. HR Updates

- SC First Steps has the following new staff members:
 - Bresheca Funches, Grants Coordinator
 - Andrew Jensen, Compliance Coordinator
 - Tyshica McConner, AmeriCorps Program Coordinator
- Currently, the organization has the following vacancies:
 - 4K Coach (Richland & Spartanburg)
 - Early Care and Education Quality Coordinator
 - Finance Administrative Assistant
 - First5 SC Intern
 - 3 AmeriCorps VISTA Members
 - Development
 - ECAC
 - Nonprofit Management

READY

**Resources for Early Acceleration
and Development in Youth**

June 30, 2023



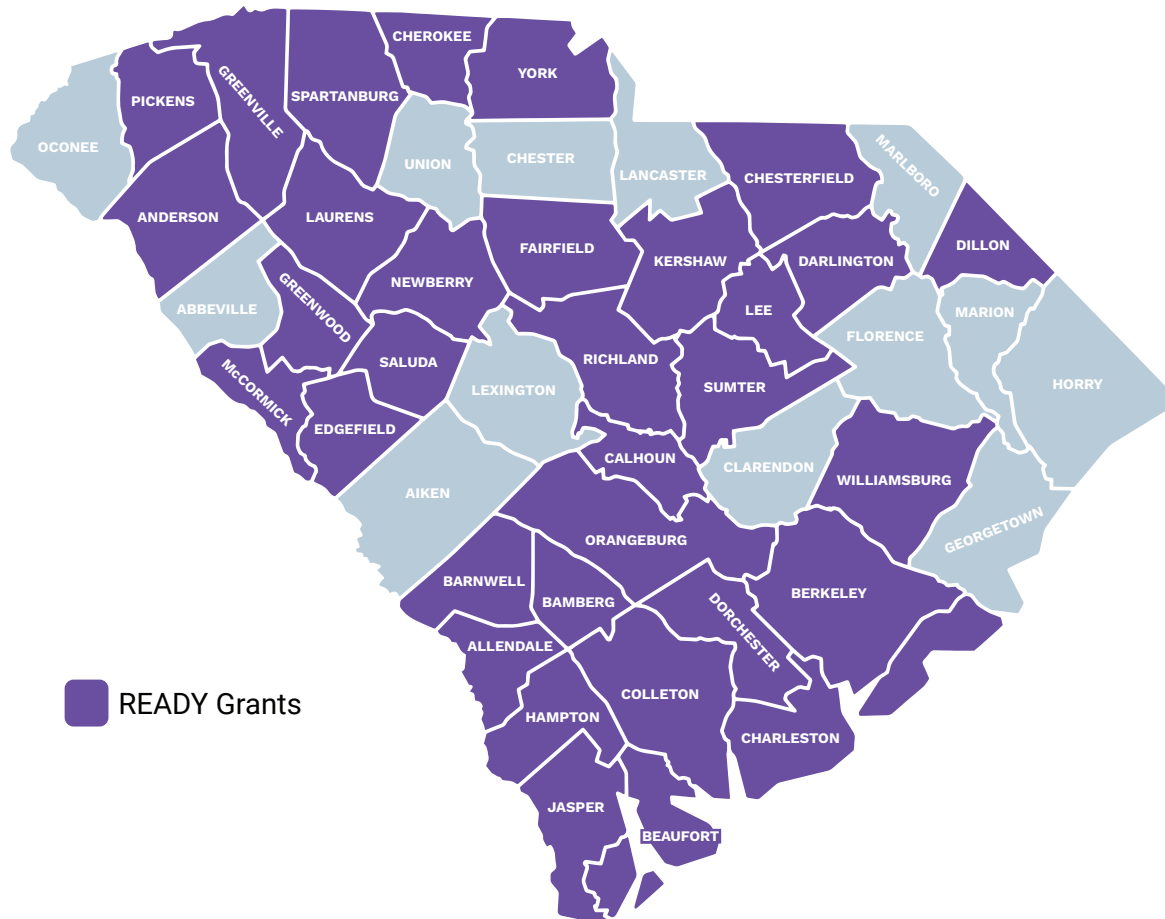
In 2022, the General Assembly made a historic investment in South Carolina's children, allocating \$3 million in recurring funds to be awarded to local First Steps partnerships through a grant-making process.

South Carolina First Steps has since awarded **Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth (READY)** grants across 33 counties, prioritizing programs for children ages 0-3, rural communities, and counties where Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) scores are consistently below the state average.

In its inaugural year, READY funds have enabled First Steps to sustain and expand evidence-based parenting programs, increase the quality of child care, and address pressing workforce and infrastructure challenges.



In Spartanburg County, where KRA scores are consistently below the state average, Spartanburg County First Steps is using READY funds to improve the quality of child care in underserved areas.





Kershaw is a rural county where KRA scores are consistently below the state average. Kershaw County First Steps used a READY grant to establish a presence in a high-need area of public housing, offering improved access to families and needed space for parenting group meetings, child care trainings, and community resources. In May, the local partnership hosted a preschool graduation for a local child care center participating in their quality enhancement program.

READY Grants Awarded

The following amounts indicate the total funding committed for each of the grant program streams.

Create or Expand Child Care Technical Assistance Programs

\$1,651,583 over 3 years

Berkeley
Colleton
Dillon
Dorchester
Richland
Spartanburg
York

Sustain and Expand Effective Programs Serving Children and Families

\$1,592,473 over 2 years

Allendale
Bamberg
Charleston
Darlington
Dillon
Greenville

Greenwood
McCormick
Orangeburg
Pickens
Spartanburg
York

Support Family Child Care Providers through Parents as Teachers

\$48,000 for 1 year

Beaufort
Charleston
Colleton
Williamsburg

Pilot Family Cafés in Underserved Communities

\$71,900 for 1 year

Barnwell
Darlington
Fairfield

Greenwood
Lee
Williamsburg

Build Infrastructure and Capacity

\$2,203,034 over 3 years

Anderson
Bamberg
Barnwell
Beaufort
Berkeley
Calhoun
Cherokee
Chesterfield
Colleton
Darlington
Dillon
Edgefield
Greenville
Greenwood
Hampton

Jasper
Kershaw
Laurens
Lee
McCormick
Newberry
Orangeburg
Pickens
Richland
Saluda
Spartanburg
Sumter
Williamsburg
York



SCFIRSTSTEPS.ORG

803-734-0479 | 1-877-621-0865

