



2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Orangeburg County First Steps:



464 children

were directly served in Orangeburg County



553 parents & caregivers

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

PROVEN RESULTS

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



74% more likely

to score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment



34% less likely

to be chronically absent in kindergarten

THE NEED PERSISTS IN ORANGEBURG COUNTY

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

5,057

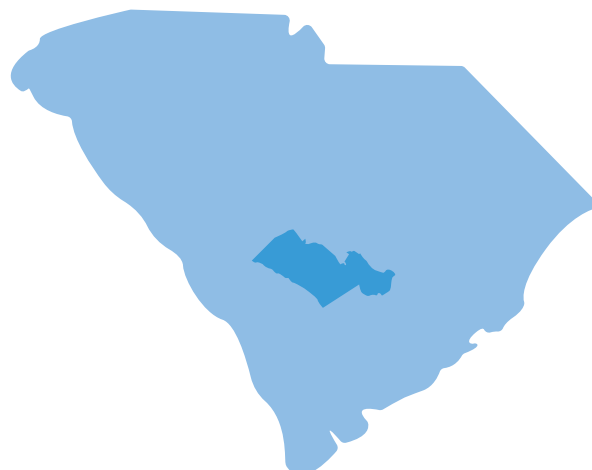
children under 6

61%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

64%

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



OUR MISSION

To help families and caregivers prepare their children for school success by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance, and expand high-quality early childhood services.



Kathy Jenkins

Executive Director

Dear Stakeholders,

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the remarkable progress we have made together. This annual report not only chronicles our achievements but also illustrates the profound impact of our collective efforts.

Among our many accomplishments, I am particularly proud of the 500+ families who received direct services, participated in group meetings, or were connected with early intervention services and resources. This milestone reflects our commitment to investing in our community, supporting families and caregivers of children birth to age 5, improving school readiness, and ensuring children realize their full potential. We've set a new standard for what we can achieve together.

Our financial health remains robust, thanks to the unwavering support of our donors and partners. We are prudently investing in initiatives that align with our strategic goals. This year's report provides an overview of our financial status, demonstrating our commitment to transparency and accountability.

As we move forward, our focus will be on initiatives like the Together We Can Family Leadership Initiative, funded by philanthropist, MacKenzie Scott, in support of strong communities, thriving families, and children that are healthy, safe, learning and ready for school. We remain committed to expanding outreach, enhancing programs, and increasing community engagement. We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and are confident that with your continued support, we will achieve even greater milestones.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our staff, the generosity of our supporters, and the partnership of our community. Your belief in our mission fuels our drive and inspires us every day. I extend my deepest thanks to each of you for your unwavering commitment and support.

In closing, I am both optimistic and eager about the future. Together, we will continue to make a meaningful difference and advance our shared vision.

Serving Orangeburg County's children birth through age five.

"First Steps is a blessing to my family...it's not just a program, we are family. The Parent Educators are special people who support and assist us realize our goals."

C. Britton
Parents As Teachers parent



PROGRAMS

PARENTING

Parents as Teachers

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

65

children served

15

group meetings
and events

955

home visits

HIPPY

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is a home visiting program that supports parents in their role as a child's first and most important teacher.

18

children served

10

group meetings
and events

536

home visits

Raising a Reader - Enhanced

Helps families develop, practice, and maintain home literacy habits.

65

children served

65

families served

9

group meetings
and events

HEALTH

HealthySteps

A pediatric primary care program that supports early childhood development and effective parenting.

127

children served

1

clinics served

SCHOOL TRANSITION

Countdown to Kindergarten

Supports transitions into kindergarten by connecting incoming students, their families, and their teachers in a series of one-on-one sessions during the summer.

29

children served

3

schools served

174

home visits

Countdown to 4K

Supports transitions into pre-kindergarten by connecting incoming students, their families, and their teachers in a series of one-on-one sessions during the summer.

49

children served

4

schools served

294

home visits

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

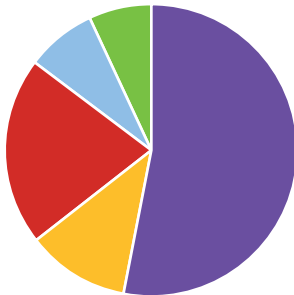


\$1 = \$1.74

Orangeburg County First Steps leveraged \$242,876.14 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.74 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

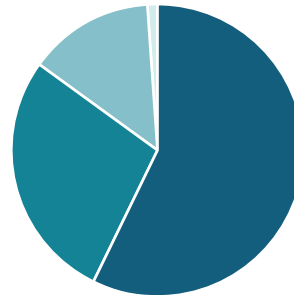
Total: \$514,024.98



- Parenting - \$273,257.25
- School Transition - \$59,259.36
- Health - \$107,058.69
- Administrative - \$39,298.39
- Core Functions - \$35,151.29

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$571,429.62



- State Funding - \$328,553.48
- Federal Funding - \$158,210.52
- Private Funding - \$79,549.59
- In-kind Contributions - \$5,116.03

FUNDING SUPPORT BY SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS

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

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

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

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

Henry Miller

Board Chair



Greetings,

I am honored to serve as the chairman of the Orangeburg County First Steps (OCFS) Board of Directors and privileged to support the First Steps mission, which focuses on investing in our community, assisting families and caregivers of children from birth to age 5, enhancing school readiness, and ensuring that children reach their full potential.

With the passing of the Act 81 legislation in June 2023, the Orangeburg County First Steps' Board of Directors received tremendous support from our County Delegation, County Council, Orangeburg County School District, and social service partners in achieving our governance goals. Dedicated board members have played a vital role in educating the community, conducting outreach initiatives, and connecting families with the various programs and resources offered by First Steps.

I encourage you to visit www.orangeburgfirststeps.org and our social media platforms for the latest updates on programs, services, and opportunities to engage in the First Steps mission. These resources serve as a guide for our community and partners, outlining the available assets for the citizens of Orangeburg County.

OCFS Board members are ready and committed to serving the community and I am enthusiastic about the upcoming work! We are here to help in any way possible, to connect with individuals who support the vision of Orangeburg County First Steps.

It's truly a wonderful day in Orangeburg County.

Our Local Supporters

National Supreme Court DOI

Orangeburg Aktion Club

Absolute Total Care

Hope Health

JennAffairs

Albemarle Foundation

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