FY24 TARGETED GRANT APPLICATION GUIDANCE

INTRODUCTION

South Carolina First Steps is pleased to offer the enclosed Targeted Grant opportunities to eligible First Steps Local Partnerships for the FY 2023-2024 fiscal year, funded by federal ESSER and AmeriCorps funding and state READY funding. "Eligible" Local Partnerships are partnerships that do not have any active or unresolved Corrective Action Plans.

Within this one grant application there are several funding opportunities, or sections. This funding is considered “targeted” because each of the funding opportunities

contained in this application package supports a specific program or initiative. Information on

partnership eligibility and expectations for receiving funding are included within each application section. Local First Steps partnerships may apply for one, some, or all of the funding opportunities their partnership is eligible for, as determined by their partnership board.

It is the intent of South Carolina First Steps to award funding to all eligible Local Partnerships that submit complete requests and agree to the funding opportunity’s terms and conditions. In the event that more Local Partnerships apply for a particular opportunity than there is available funding or capacity, the selection criteria described within each application section will be used to prioritize awards.

There is no limit as to how many Targeted Grant awards a local partnership may receive for FY

2023-2024, with the following caveat: **no local partnership may receive more than 10% of the state’s annual allocation of READY funding,** which is currently 10% of $3 million or $300,000. Each Targeted Grant award will be signed as an amendment to the local partnership’s FY2023-2024 Grant Agreement, with an effective period from **July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024**.

Please review the following Fiscal and Reporting guidelines, which apply to all funding within this application package.

FISCAL GUIDELINES FOR FY 2023-2024 TARGETED GRANT FUNDING

**General**

* Targeted Grant funding may be included in the Local Partnership's FY 2023-2024 Budget Spending Plan that is submitted with their Formula Grant Application, IF the Partnership is applying for renewal funding (i.e., the Partnership received the grant in FY 2022-2023). Once Targeted and Competitive Grant awards are approved by the state board, Local Partnerships will then make necessary changes to their Budget Spending Plan and submit the revised BSP to their Program Officer for approval. Once approved, the Program Officer submits the revised BSP to the SC First Steps Finance Office. Partnerships applying for a new Targeted Grant should not include those funds in their BSP until after awards are made.
* Each grant opportunity section includes information on how grant funds may be used.
* Local Partnerships may choose to apply jointly for Targeted Grant funding, but one Local Partnership must be named as the lead applicant. The lead Partnership should be the one to submit the funding request.
* Targeted Grant funds must be used to **supplement, not supplant**, existing funding from state and other sources.

**Spending Grant Funding, Carryforward Guidelines**

* As a condition of receiving funding, Local Partnerships must commit to budgeting and expending grant funds in a timely manner and for eligible activities using the correct Fund Code and Program Code(s) as applicable. Coding guidelines and eligible uses of grant funding will be outlined within the grant award document. Note that the funding source (state READY vs. federal) will determine whether grant funds count toward required percentages for administration, core functions, evidence-based programs, and required match. Funding source information is included within each grant opportunity section.
* It is the expectation that all Targeted Grant funding to Local Partnerships be expended by the end of the grant period (June 30, 2024). Timely and accurate expenditures of grant funds help SC First Steps assure its funders that their investment is being deployed efficiently and effectively. Local Partnerships that have spent less than their Targeted Grant award by the end of the fiscal year will have any subsequent funding award reduced by the amount of excess carryforward, unless the Local Partnership can ensure that the excess carryforward funds are needed to complete the project and will be spent by June 30, 2024. This policy enables SC First Steps to direct needed funding to as many Local Partnerships as possible.
* Year-end balances of FY 2022-2023 Targeted Grant funding will be assessed based on completed transactions in Financial Edge through **July 15, 2023**.

**Shared Costs/Cost Allocation**

When allocating Targeted Grant funds into their Budget Spending Plan upon award, Local

Partnerships may include a reasonable allocation of grant funds toward shared costs (Personnel and Operations), taking into account:

* Size of the program
* Expansion vs. New programs
* Duration of the proposed program
* Other programs offered by the partnership
* Administrative costs charged to Targeted Funding must be described in detail.

Reallocation approvals will consider the cost per client for similar programs and the overall

cost-benefit of the project to children, families, providers, and the community.

**Personnel Costs**

* Targeted Grant funds may be used to fund new program staff positions or increase the hours worked per week or scope of work (up to 40, w/o overtime) of existing staff.
* Targeted Grant funds may not be used to increase the compensation rates of EDs and/or supervisory staff outside the funded program. Such compensation increases must be paid for with other funding.

REPORTING GUIDELINES FOR FY 2023-2024 TARGETED GRANT FUNDING

Timely and accurate reporting is needed for targeted grant funding, in order for SC First Steps to submit required program reports to its funders. Therefore:

* Submit timely, complete, and accurate data in the First Steps Data Collection system, as applicable; and
* Provide program data as requested, using report templates provided by SC First Steps as applicable.

SC First Steps will submit all required program and expenditure reports for the ESSER and AmeriCorps to the appropriate funder:

* ESSER progress reports due each quarter to include time sheets, paystubs
* AmeriCorps: progress reports due each fall and spring, year-end report due in October

**AMERICORPS**

**Introduction**

First Steps Local Partnerships have the opportunity to express their interest in continuing their participation as an AmeriCorps Site, or express their interest in becoming an AmeriCorps Site, for FY 2023-2024 by completing this section

**Eligibility**

All Local Partnerships interested in recruiting an AmeriCorps Member(s) to support service delivery to families.

**Selection**

1. Local Partnerships that are continuing AmeriCorps sites will request the number of service positions and service hours of interest. These continuing sites will be prioritized for selection, regardless if a member was recruited in FY 2022-2023 or not.
2. Continuing AmeriCorps sites may request changes in terms of the number of members, member role(s), and member service hours. Fulfilling AmeriCorps change requests to existing AmeriCorps sites will take priority prior to the review of newly-interested Local Partnerships.
3. Remaining service positions will be provided to Local Partnerships who are interested in becoming a NEW AmeriCorps site. New sites will be selected based on the availability of the desired role. If more Local Partnerships are interested than there are available service positions, then program staff will move through the following options, in the order listed, as required by the submissions:
4. appeal to the SC AmeriCorps Commission to add member slots for SC First Steps
5. request a conversion of service hours to accommodate the request
6. prioritize placement within priority counties as defined by the SC AmeriCorps Commission:

**High Need:** Allendale (Promise Zone), Bamberg (Promise Zone), Cherokee

**Significant Need:** Colleton (Promise Zone), Barnwell (Promise Zone), Hampton (Promise Zone), Jasper (Promise Zone), Florence, Chester, Darlington, Dillion, Marlboro, Marion

**Need:** Abbeville, Clarendon, Aiken, Chesterfield, Edgefield, McCormick, Oconee, Union

**Description of AmeriCorps Roles and Available Funding**

**Parent Educator Role:** AmeriCorps Members provide the National HIPPY Network (NHN) curriculum to prioritized First Steps 4K families and local families with four-year-olds who are not receiving any preschool services.

Funding: AmeriCorps Sites will receive $7,000 in ESSER funds per Parent Educator, less carryforward from prior years, to budget for member professional development/training, incentives, mileage, and Site Supervisor support costs.

**Family and Community Engagement Role:** AmeriCorps member activities should include outreach for the Local Partnership (service site) and support for client-level engagement, referral, and follow-up.

Service functions for this role align with Local Partnership Core Function guidance, which includes program promotion, family follow-ups, resource development, and operating group connections. The Family and Community Engagement role provides the ability to undertake new initiatives when staff capacity is a concern, although, there is no guarantee for recruiting or retaining an AmeriCorps member.

Please see **Appendix A: AmeriCorps and NHN** for information on AmeriCorps or the National HIPPY Network.

**Enhanced Core Functions: Innovation and Family Cafés**

**Introduction**

South Carolina First Steps will fund up to ten (10) partnerships that are interested in participating in the Innovation Café or Family Café (Be Strong Families model) as an opportunity to extend services and document efforts to mobilize communities to families while collaborating with community leaders, businesses, faith-based organizations, civic organizations, elected officials /government agencies, health care entities, school personnel and other early childhood agencies and organizations. Local Partnerships will focus their efforts on providing enhanced core services to support families and their young children to enable children to reach school healthy and ready to succeed by doing the following:

* Being a community convener around the needs of preschool children and their families
* Serving as a local portal connecting families of preschool children to community-based services they may need or desire to ensure the school readiness of their children and
* Supporting the state-level school readiness priorities as determined by the State Board.

This goal can be accomplished by utilization of the Innovation or Family Café Model. According to Be Strong Families, “Family Cafés are physically and emotionally safe spaces where parents and caregivers talk about the challenges and victories of raising a family”. Through individual deep self- reflection and peer-to-peer learning, participants explore their strengths, learn about the Protective Factors, and create strategies from their own wisdom and experiences to help strengthen their families.

Cafés are structured discussion groups that use the principles of adult learning and family support. They are highly sustainable with training reinforcement, institutional support, and a commitment to an approach that engages and affirms parents as leaders. Participants leave Cafés feeling inspired, energized, and excited to put into practice what they’ve learned. The foundation of the Café is created through the utilization of Protective Factors. Protective Factors are defined as characteristics associated with a lower likelihood of negative outcomes or that reduce a risk factor's impact. Protective factors may be seen as positive countering events and have been known to reduce incidences of child abuse and neglect.

**Innovation and Family Café Protective Factors are:**

* Resilience: Parent Resilience
* Relationships: Positive Social Connections
* Support: Concrete Support in Times of Need
* Knowledge: Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
* Communication: Social and Emotional Competence

**Be Strong Family Café**

The Be Strong Family Café utilizes the Be Strong curriculum model. Parents/caregivers participate in sessions that provide support and guidance for families with a focus on one or more of the 5 protective factors. Content for this model is prescribed by Be Strong Families.

**Innovation Café**

The framework for Innovation Cafes is the same as that for Family Café and will be implemented in the same fashion. Content for sessions will be created based on the FY24-26 Needs and Resource Assessment and Strategic Plan.

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| General Requirements for all Cafe models: |
| Must complete Be Strong Families trainingMust submit program outline for each session per cohortCafé delivery:Two (2) cohorts per program yearEach cohort must include 10 families7 sessions per cohortSessions must be at least 2 hours eachChildcare should be provided for in-person sessionsThe foundation of each session must utilize at least 1 of the 5 protective factorsSessions can be delivered virtually, hybrid, or in-person; the delivery method should be established prior to starting a cohortCommunity advocates, resources, and connections are required at each sessionSuccessful program participant completion is defined as 75% participation in program sessions (attendance at 5 of 7 sessions) |
| Innovation Café | Family Café  |
| Sessions must be tied to needs assessment and strategic plan | Sessions follow the Be Strong Families implementation model curriculum |

**Funding Uses and Financial Requirements**

In FY23, Family Cafes were connected to AmeriCorps. For FY24, partnerships are no longer required to utilize an AmeriCorps FCE member to facilitate cafés. AmeriCorps members can support the partnerships in café program implementation, as with any other program, but cannot be the primary facilitator.

Local Partnerships will be granted $12,000.00 in READY funds for implementation of FY 2023-2024. Enhanced Core Functions funds can be utilized to purchase program and curriculum materials, facilitator stipends, childcare, training, and room rental. Up to 10 local partnerships will be awarded funding. Partnerships that participated successfully in the Family Café in FY23 will receive funding priority. If awarded, partnerships will have any carryforward balances in Family Café funding deducted from their FY24 award.

Because READY funding cannot pay for food or financial incentives, additional state private funding may be used to supplement grant awards.

**Partnerships will be required to:**

* Include community advocates who can provide support services, resources and information at every session. Maintain a list of community advocates who attended and the type of resources that have been provided to program participants.
* Maintaining attendance records and sign-in sheets
* Serving families having at least two of the South Carolina First Steps approved risk factors
* Use the provided evaluation tool and sharing results as well as sharing lessons learned through participation in the cafés
* Enter case level data in the FSDC to include case (family) information, group meeting information, and connections
* Report on program outcomes, implementation successes and challenges, and the level of resources needed (money, staffing, etc.) for successful implementation
* Quarterly meetings with South Carolina First Steps for support and debriefing on the project

EXAMPLE OF SAMPLE BUDGET (template provided)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Amount** | **Quantity** | **Total** |
| Facilitator Stipend  | $150.00 | Max. 14Sessions | $2,100.00 |
| Child care for 10 families  | $150.00 | Max. 14Sessions | $ 2,100.00 |
| Room Rental | $200.00 | Max. 14Sessions | $ 2,800.00 |
| Supplies for Café | $1500.00 |  | $1,500.00 |
| Be Strong Families Training | $3500 (for 4 people) |  | $3,500.00 |
| **Total** |  |  | $12,000.00 |

**PARENTS AS TEACHERS AFFILIATE SUPPORT FUNDS**

**Introduction**

In order to build capacity within Parents as Teachers (PAT) affiliates to engage in quality improvement and achieve/retain Blue Ribbon affiliate status, Local Partnerships will receive $2,000 in ESSER funding for each partnership-funded PAT affiliate in their county, as well as up to $275 in ESSER funds for each Parent Educator/ Supervisor within partnership-funded PAT affiliates to assist with expenses related to annual PAT fees, including national affiliation and Parent Educator annual certification. If awarded, partnerships will have any carryforward balances in PAT Affiliate Support funding deducted from their FY24 award.

**Eligibility and Selection**

All Local Partnerships that intend to fund one or more PAT affiliates in FY 2023-2024 are eligible for funding. There is sufficient funding allocated for all eligible Local Partnerships to receive funding. This funding is eligible for all PAT affiliate, Parent Educator and Supervisor renewal costs, regardless of funding source.

**Funding Uses and Financial Requirements**

Funds cannot be used outside of PAT and must be spent on national affiliation renewal fees and Parent Educator/Supervisor annual renewal fees.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Amount** | **Due** |
| Affiliate renewal fee | $2000 | 10/01/2023 |
| Foundational renewal fee | $220/per individual | 10/01/2023 |
| Foundational 2 renewal fee | $55/per individual | F2 anniversary date |

**Benefits of Grant Award**

PAT Programs in South Carolina receive several benefits from the PAT State Office located at SC First Steps, including but not limited to:

* Provision of available training for PAT model, screenings, and assessments
* Support for the Career Compass learning management system for SC’s home visitor workforce including stipends for achieving credentials within the system
* Regular leadership and professional development sessions, in-person and via webinar
* Technical assistance, including program site visits on a regular basis or as needed/requested
* Support for Annual Performance Report submission and Quality Endorsement process

**Minimum General Requirements**

PAT affiliates must be in good standing with the PAT National Center.

**Conditions of Receiving Funds**

As a condition of receiving funding, the Local Partnership agrees to:

* Implement the Parents as Teachers program in accordance with the SC First Steps FY24 Program and Operational Guidelines including, but not limited to, submission of the Affiliate Performance Report (APR) by the required deadline, participation in the Quality Endorsement and Improvement Process (QEIP) as required and remain in good standing with the PAT National Center.
* Strongly encourage its PAT Parent Educator and home visitor workforce to participate in Career Compass’ web-based professional development specific to home visiting core competencies.

**PARENTS AS TEACHERS: CONTINUE/JOIN SUPPORTING CARE PROVIDERS THROUGH VISITS (SCPV)**

**Introduction**

Supporting Care Providers through Visits (SCPV) is an expansion of the successful Parents as Teachers (PAT) model curriculum of home visitation to the home-based child care setting. Learning occurs within the context of the relationship between the Provider Educator and child care provider during instructional personal visits. During personal visits, child development, nutrition, health and safety information, and developmentally appropriate practices are shared.

Local Partnerships that fund one or more PAT affiliates in their county are eligible to receive $3,000 in READY funding per participating child care provider for up to five (5) providers to: a) offset the cost of delivering services; and b) to provide program and curriculum materials or other program related items to child care providers and parents. If awarded, partnerships will have any carryforward balances in SCPV funding deducted from their FY24 award.

**Eligibility and Selection**

Local Partnerships funding one or more established PAT affiliates in FY 2023-2024 and are interested in providing SCPV services to Family Child Care Home providers or Family Friends and Neighbors (FFN) providers within their county are eligible.

In the event more Local Partnerships apply than there is funding available, preference will be given to Local Partnerships that are currently participating in SCPV and meeting program requirements. Thereafter, funding priority will be given to a) new sites that do not operate a Quality Enhancement or Quality Counts program; and/or b) new sites located in rural areas.

Local Partnerships that do not receive grant funding are still welcome to participate in SCPV, using their state formula allocation or other funding.

**Funding Uses and Financial Requirements**

Funds must be used within SCPV using program code 226.

A minimum of 50% of the incentive funding received by the Local Partnership must be used to directly benefit the participating child care providers and parents. The remaining funds are available to the Local Partnership to help with the cost of delivering services.

SCPV grant funds are intended to purchase program and curriculum materials, other program related items, or items related to health and safety such as books, educational toys, art supplies, rugs, chairs, etc.

If you are considering playground equipment such as swing sets, it cannot be anything that requires installation or fixed attachment to the ground or a structure. However, outdoor items like balls, hula hoops, games, etc. are acceptable.

**Benefits of Grant Award**

* Funding to offset the cost of delivering services and to get providers individualized items that will enrich the learning environment for their families.
* Training and materials for the PAT SCPV curriculum and online training and materials for the FCCERS (Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale). Training slots and materials may be limited due to funding limitations.

**Minimum General Requirements**

PAT affiliates in good standing with the PAT National Center.

**Conditions of Receiving Funds**

As a condition of receiving funding, the Local Partnership agrees to:

* Implement with fidelity the Supporting Care Providers through Visits Parents as Teachers (PAT) Curriculum with up to five (5) Family Child Care Home providers and/or Family, Friends, and Neighbors (FFN) providers in their county, in compliance with the SC First Steps FY 24 Program and Operational Guidelines.
* Program requirements include:
	+ Two (2) visits per month by a Provider Educator who has received full curriculum training
	+ Monthly group connection meetings are expected to be offered; however, the ability to offer group connections will vary among local partnerships depending on provider participation and logistics
	+ Commit to using and keeping on file approved consent forms and evaluation surveys provided by SC First Steps for participating child care providers and parents, as well as the PAT SCPV Curriculum forms, such as the Personal Visit Record and Service Record
	+ Ensure that the opportunity for child developmental screenings using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) is made available to all participating child care providers and parents
	+ Facilitate the completion of pre and post assessments using the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS) by a trained ERS assessor (a group of trained ERS assessors will be made available by SC First Steps)
	+ Enter provider profile and assessment data, and in some cases, child and parent data in the First Steps Data Collection system (SC First Steps will provide instruction to assist with data entry)
	+ Report on program outcomes, implementation successes and challenges, and the level of resources needed (money, staffing, etc.) for successful implementation

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| --- | --- |
| Number of Child Care Providers | Maximum Allowable Funding Amount |
| 1 | $3,000 |
| 2 | $6,000 |
| 3 | $9,000 |
| 4 | $12,000 |
| 5 | $15,000 |