Agency Name:	First Steps		
Agency Code:	H620	Section:	2

Fiscal Year FY 2027-2028
Agency Budget Plan

FORM A - BUDGET PLAN SUMMARY

	For FY 2027-2028, my agency is (mark "X"):	
OPERATING REQUESTS *(FORM B1)*		Requesting General Fund Appropriations.
	X	Requesting Federal/Other Authorization.
		Not requesting any changes.

	For FY 2027-2028, my agency is (mark "X"):	
NON-RECURRING REQUESTS *(FORM B2)*		Requesting Non-Recurring Appropriations.
		Requesting Non-Recurring Federal/Other Authorization.
	X	Not requesting any changes.

	For FY 2027-2028, my agency is (mark "X"):	
CAPITAL REQUESTS *(FORM C)*		Requesting funding for Capital Projects.
	X	Not requesting any changes.

	For FY 2027-2028, my agency is (mark "X"):	
PROVISOS *(FORM D)*		Requesting a new proviso and/or substantive changes to existing provisos.
		Only requesting technical proviso changes (such as date references).
	X	Not requesting any proviso changes.

Please identify your agency's preferred contacts for this year's budget process.

	Name	*Phone*	*Email*
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Ann Vandervliet	(803) 734-0391	avandervliet@scfirststeps.org
SECONDARY CONTACT:	David O'Kelly	(803) 734-8079	dokelly@scfirststeps.org

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2027-2028 Agency Budget Plan, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

	Agency Director	*Board or Commission Chair*
SIGN/DATE:	Ann Vandervliet	
TYPE/PRINT NAME:	Ann Vandervliet	

This form must be signed by the agency head – not a delegate.

Agency Name:	First Steps
Agency Code:	H620
Section:	2

BUDGET REQUESTS			FUNDING					FTES				
Priority	Request Type	Request Title	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total
1	B1 - Recurring	Reducing Consultant Reliance and Expanding 4K Coaching Capacity	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	2.00
TOTALS			0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	2.00

Agency Name:	First Steps		
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FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	**1**

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	**Reducing Consultant Reliance and Expanding 4K Coaching Capacity**

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	**General: $0** **Federal: $0** **Other: $0** **Total: $0**

What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2027-2028? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	**2.00**

Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	**Mark "X" for all that apply:**
	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
X	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
X	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	IT Technology/Security related
X	HR/Personnel Related
	AI Related
	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	**Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:**
X	Education, Training, and Human Development
	Healthy and Safe Families
	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	This request supports the agency's Strategic Plan by strengthening 4K quality and kindergarten readiness. Success will be measured by: • Classrooms-per-coach ratio • Monthly coaching hours per classroom • CLASS scores • 4K teacher retention • Reduction in external training consultant costs

What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

	Funds will pay the salary and fringe benefits for two new SC First Steps positions, a

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS	4K Coach and an Instructional Designer and Training Coordinator.

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST	We are requesting the addition of an Instructional Designer and Training Coordinator position (CA20 Curriculum Coordinator II). Without internal capacity for instructional design, SC First Steps is currently reliant on using external training consultants to annually develop and present on specialized topics, including but not limited to 4K curriculum for 4K teachers, the CLASS assessment and PracticeBased Coaching for 4K coaches, and Local Partnership parenting education program training for home visitors. To reduce some of the longterm procurement costs related to these external consultants, SC First Steps is requesting a new FTE that will focus on the internal development of training programs for education personnel in these specialized curriculum areas and related staff instructional needs. The Instructional Designer and Training Coordinator position will apply proven instructional design frameworks and adult learning best practices to design, test, and institutionalize training programs by researching subject matter and translating complex concepts related to First Steps Local Partnerships, First Steps 4K, and the agency atlarge into trainthetrainer formats. This individual will also be responsible for ensuring that all training programs and assets are regularly updated to align with current standards so that previously developed materials are reusable. With the ability to build these sustainable training assets within the SC First Steps agency, we believe this position will support the elimination of the agency's reliance on external training vendors and the costs of procuring them. As a part of our commitment to refinement of the 4K model, we are reducing the ratio of classrooms per 4K coach to ensure that every classroom receives enough monthly coaching to support kindergarten readiness. Data has shown that increases in the number of hours a coach spends oneonone with a teacher can lead to increases in CLASS assessment score, reduced teacher turnover, and better outcomes for students. With the pending expansion of 4K eligibility, we anticipate needing to further grow the 4K network of providers in the future. Because of this, we will need another 4K Coach FTE to support these new classrooms as they are onboarded and begin to participate in the First Steps 4K program. An additional 4K Coach FTE will ensure we are able to keep pace with the needs of the growing 4K program without sacrificing our renewed commitment to 4K program quality and ensuring our students are ready for kindergarten.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

Agency Name:	First Steps		
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FORM E – AGENCY COST SAVINGS AND GENERAL FUND REDUCTION CONTINGENCY PLAN

TITLE

SCFS Cost Savings and General Fund Reduction Contingency Plan

AMOUNT

$617,991

What is the General Fund 3% reduction amount? This amount should correspond to the reduction spreadsheet prepared by EBO.

ASSOCIATED FTE REDUCTIONS

No FTEs would be reduced. Any general fund reductions for staffing would be covered by other sources of funds.

How many FTEs would be reduced in association with this General Fund reduction?

PROGRAM / ACTIVITY IMPACT

Proposed General Fund Reductions: $617,991

Media and Marketing ($617,991): The agency will reduce General Fund spending on media purchases and other marketing activities by $617,991, either by renegotiating vendor contracts to lower costs or by shifting these expenses to other available fund sources.

Total General Fund Reduction: $617,991

What programs or activities are supported by the General Funds identified?

SUMMARY

3% General Fund Reduction Plan

A 3% reduction to the agency's recurring General Fund appropriation of $20,599,694 equals **$617,991**, allocated as follows:

Reduction	**Amount**
Media purchases and other marketing expenditures	$617,991
Total General Fund Reduction	**$617,991**

Please provide a detailed summary of service delivery impact caused by a reduction in General Fund Appropriations and provide the method of calculation for anticipated reductions. Agencies should prioritize reduction in expenditures that have the least significant impact on service delivery.

AGENCY COST SAVINGS PLANS

N/A

What measures does the agency plan to implement to reduce its costs and operating expenses by more than $50,000? Provide a summary of the measures taken and the estimated amount of savings. How does the agency plan to repurpose the savings?