

DIRECT AID | LOCAL IMPACT | PRACTICAL ESSENTIALS

Carolina Cares Essentials Kits

Practical help. Directly delivered.

A disciplined, twelve-month direct-aid program designed to procure, assemble, distribute, and document practical Essentials Kits for South Carolinians facing hardship, housing instability, financial stress, short-term crisis, or other immediate resource gaps.



THE CASE FOR SUPPORT

Hardship does not begin at the poverty line. In 2024, 41% of South Carolina households were below the ALICE Threshold - including households earning above poverty but still unable to afford a basic household budget for their family type and location.

\$30,000

12-MONTH PLAN

~1,000

PLANNING TARGET

~\$25

DIRECT-SUPPLY ASSUMPTION

93%

DIRECT PROGRAM COSTS

A SMALL PROGRAM BUILT TO OPERATE LIKE A SERIOUS ONE

Carolina Cares is intentionally narrow in scope: provide useful essentials, maintain clear financial and program records, protect recipient dignity, and report actual activity against the plan. The program does not claim to solve poverty, homelessness, hunger, or other structural problems. It is designed to meet immediate practical needs while larger systems address longer-term stability.



LEARN MORE / SUPPORT

NEED CASE

Financial pressure can become a basic-needs gap.

The strongest evidence is not a single poverty statistic. It is the combination of widespread income inadequacy, rapidly rising local costs, housing pressure, and visible housing instability.

SOUTH CAROLINA | 2024

41%

of households were below the ALICE Threshold

910,499 households were either below the Federal Poverty Level or above poverty but still below the household- and location-specific income needed to afford a basic household budget.

ALICE = Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. This is a household measure of income adequacy, not a statement that 41% of South Carolinians live in poverty.

RICHLAND COUNTY BASIC-NEEDS BENCHMARK

\$73,627

Annual Self-Sufficiency Standard in 2024 for the United Way of the Midlands example family of one adult, one infant, and one school-age child - 39% higher than in 2020.

RICHLAND COUNTY RENTERS

54.9%

Share of renter households reported as housing-cost burdened in 2023, meaning more than 30% of household income went to housing.

2025 MIDLANDS PIT COUNT

1,334

People counted experiencing homelessness across 13 Midlands counties; 63% of those counted were in Richland County.

What these numbers mean

Housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and other fixed costs compete for the same limited household income. A person does not need to meet the federal definition of poverty - or be chronically homeless - for soap, toothpaste, socks, water, basic first aid, or other low-cost essentials to become difficult to purchase at a particular moment.

Carolina Cares responds at that immediate level. The program removes several practical needs from the recipient's immediate spending burden without overstating what a kit can accomplish.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

44%

of South Carolina full-time workers did not earn enough in 2024 to meet the ALICE benchmark for one adult and one school-age child.

13.9%

estimated share of Richland County residents experiencing food insecurity in 2023.

ROLE AND LIMITS

Immediate relief. Disciplined claims.

Essentials Kits are not substitutes for housing, employment, health care, education, food assistance, or long-term social services. Their value is narrower and concrete: placing useful essentials directly into the hands of people who need them while providing reasonably current resource information when appropriate.

PROGRAM MODEL

Simple enough to repeat. Structured enough to report.

A narrow operating cycle keeps the program understandable to donors, practical for volunteers and partners, and measurable for internal and external reporting.

01 RECEIVE SUPPORT

Grants, charitable contributions, sponsorships, and documented in-kind support.

02 PROCURE SUPPLIES

Approved essentials purchased or received using documented sourcing and records.

03 ASSEMBLE KITS

Flexible kit contents prepared around need, season, distribution context, and available resources.

04 DISTRIBUTE AID

Direct or suitable partner-supported distribution through local outreach channels.

05 DOCUMENT ACTIVITY

Funds, purchases, supply or inventory records, preparation, in-kind support, and distributions.

06 REPORT RESULTS

Actual activity, financial performance, outputs, and lessons learned compared with the plan.

MEASUREMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

Success will be recorded, not merely described.

Outputs: kits prepared and distributed; supplies purchased or donated. Financial: funds received, expenditures documented, budget-to-actual reviewed. Operations: receipts, invoices, supply or inventory records, and distribution records maintained where practical. Privacy: no unnecessary identifying information collected or published. Reporting: concise project-period narrative and financial summaries.

Program objectives

- ✓ Build capacity: work toward approximately 1,000 kits over twelve months, contingent on funding, procurement, supply availability, and operational readiness.
- ✓ Deliver practical aid: provide useful essentials to people experiencing immediate resource gaps across South Carolina.
- ✓ Respond flexibly: adjust contents for season, need, distribution setting, and available resources.
- ✓ Strengthen systems: maintain repeatable purchasing, inventory, preparation, distribution, documentation, and reporting processes.
- ✓ Build partnerships: engage businesses, community groups, churches, civic organizations, and volunteers as appropriate.

Potential kit contents

HYGIENE

Soap, oral care, wipes, deodorant, and similar personal-care items.

FOOD & WATER

Shelf-stable snacks, bottled water, and similar provisions.

CLOTHING BASICS

Socks and other practical items selected for season and context.

RESOURCE INFORMATION

Relevant local service information when suitable and reasonably current.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Basic first-aid and suitable protective or seasonal items.

OTHER ESSENTIALS

Additional useful items based on need, availability, and funding.

FUNDING PLAN

\$30,000 for practical aid, distribution, and accountable execution.

The proposed budget concentrates resources on Essentials Kit contents and direct distribution while reserving a limited share for the administrative systems necessary to track, manage, and report the project responsibly.

BUDGET DESIGN

93%

approximately allocated to direct program costs - Essentials Kit supplies, packaging, printing, local transportation, distribution logistics, and other direct program needs.

BUDGET CATEGORY	PURPOSE	AMOUNT
Essentials Kit supplies	Hygiene, personal-care, clothing basics, first-aid, food, water, seasonal items, resource materials, and related contents.	\$25,000
Distribution & other direct costs	Packaging, local transportation, printing, storage, distribution support, and other direct project needs.	\$3,000
Administrative & indirect support	Donation tracking, recordkeeping, reporting, communications, compliance support, and limited program administration.	\$2,000
TOTAL PROJECT	Twelve-month Carolina Cares Essentials Kits program plan.	\$30,000

Planning assumptions: approximately \$25 average direct-supply cost per kit. Actual unit cost, contents, and total output may vary with item selection, purchasing conditions, donated supplies, season, and distribution needs. The approximately 1,000-kit figure is a planning target, not an unconditional guarantee. No salaries, fringe benefits, capital equipment, construction, contracts, or subawards are included.

Organizational readiness

- ✓ 501(c)(3) public charity founded in South Carolina in 2020; EIN 85-0559047.
- ✓ Three-member Board of Directors with adopted governance and internal-control practices.
- ✓ Budget discipline and recordkeeping designed to support compliance, transparency, and donor reporting.
- ✓ Conservative public claims that distinguish planning targets from actual results.
- ✓ Recipient dignity and privacy protected through limited data collection and practical reporting.

Ways to participate

- ✓ Program grants and charitable contributions
- ✓ Carolina Cares Essentials Kit Sponsorships
- ✓ In-kind donations of appropriate supplies
- ✓ Volunteer kit-packing support
- ✓ Distribution and referral partnerships
- ✓ Local business, civic, church, and community collaboration

FUND. SPONSOR. PARTNER. CONTRIBUTE IN KIND.

Help put practical essentials directly into local hands.

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Selected external sources: United For ALICE; United Way of the Midlands; City of Columbia / Midlands Area Consortium for the Homeless; NIMHD HDPulse / Feeding America. Program budget and planning figures: The Poston Foundation approved 2026 Carolina Cares planning materials.