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**For Immediate Release**

June 28, 2012

**JAG-SC Graduates Exceed National Standards**

More than 250 high school students enrolled in the state's Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG-SC) program received a high school diploma this year. This marks the second consecutive year that the program has seen a high school graduation rate of 95 percent, which is five percent higher than the program's national standards. Coordinated by the SC Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW), JAG-SC is a statewide high school dropout prevention program that focuses on academic success and career readiness skills. Currently in its seventh year, the program has served more than 5,500 students who face several documented barriers to success. With the help of a dedicated career specialist at each school, 267 JAG-SC high school seniors this year mastered 81 skills identified by businesses as essential to successful employment.

The following schools graduated 100 percent of their JAG-SC students: C.A. Johnson High School in Columbia, Calhoun County High School, Carolina High School and Academy in Greenville, Clinton High School, Darlington High School, Lake Marion High School in Santee, Lancaster High School, Manning High School, McCormick High School, Rock Hill High School, Swansea High School, Wade Hampton High School in Greenville, West Florence High School and Wilson High School in Florence.

JAG-SC graduates of the Class of 2011 exceeded all of the national standards. Ninety-one percent of last year's graduates attended college, enlisted in the military or accepted full or part-time job positions, an outcome that is well above the organization's national standard of 80 percent. Additionally, 82 percent of last year's graduates also received full-time jobs, a percentage that is well above the national standard of 60 percent.

"The JAG program has seen tremendous growth during the past seven years, and I am pleased to see so many students enrolled in the program graduate from high school this year and during recent years. For many of the students, this is the first exposure they have to concepts that raise their personal expectations of themselves," said JAG-SC State Coordinator Elaine Midkiff. "This is a great program that helps students form a personal connection between their interests and abilities. I look forward to seeing this program, and the students, grow in the future."

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