



Grant Opportunity: Innovations in Early Childhood

Our vision is that every child in Mecklenburg County enters kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed. Smart Start of Mecklenburg County (SSMC) is seeking proposals for one time funding to encourage development of innovative ideas to bring us closer to this vision.

Smart Start of Mecklenburg County's second annual innovation grants will support efforts committed to championing equitable access and opportunities for all in early childhood. We value change centered on community, collaboration, and collective action as integral to shifting entrenched power structures. Smart Start is interested in funding projects that engage community voices, particularly communities of color, to build equitable solutions. Community initiatives that do not currently receive Smart Start funding are encouraged to apply.

This funding opportunity is for projects costing \$10,000 – \$30,000 impacting Mecklenburg County. Our funding is restricted to nonprofit organizations that are either implementing or supporting the project. Pilots or one-time, non-capital expenses are allowed. We welcome initiatives that:

- Seek to understand and support the formal and informal networks of family childcare, including the families, friends and neighbor network.
- Address racial and economic barriers to high quality, affordable early care and education.
- Explore technology designed to meet both the educational and social support needs of families with young children.
- Support community organizing, coalition building, and/or enhancing communication amongst marginalized populations in the early childhood community

Please submit your proposal to Jennifer Stamp, jstamp@smartstartofmeck.org by October 15. Funding decisions will be made by November 15.

Please address the following in your proposal:

1. Need statement or the change you are seeking
2. Target Population
3. Program or elements of the activity
4. Evaluation metrics - benchmarks for progress and how it is tracked and verified.

The Mecklenburg Partnership for Children (aka SSMC) conducts its' funding process according to the requirements mandated by the General Assembly. Awards are subject to approval by the Smart Start of Mecklenburg County Board of Directors.