

Think Babies™ NC

Request for Applications

November 2021



Request for Applications: Improve Access to Early Head Start/Head Start Regrants

Purpose and Background:

On behalf of the Think Babies NC Alliance, The NC Early Education Coalition is seeking applicants to conduct a national and statewide study of existing EHS and quality infant-toddler programs to determine barriers and opportunities for expansion. We want to learn directly from current grantees about their experience and hopes for the future, and we want to learn from those grantees who do not currently offer EHS what their perceived barriers are to offering this program in their communities. We will also want to review other states' experiences with expanding EHS/HS services so that we can learn about ways to address the inequities facing the EHS/HS system in North Carolina.

Both Early Head Start and Head Start have had a long history and connection to North Carolina's early childhood system, but each program has operated mostly outside the purview of state and local policymakers because of the way EHS/HS is funded directly by the federal Office of Head Start to local grantees. To date, North Carolina does not directly fund or integrate Early Head Start or Head Start as part of its early care and education system. Currently, Head Start serves 16,638, 19% of all eligible children, and Early Head Start serves 4,629 young children ages 0 to 3, 6% of all eligible children.

When it comes to quality early care for infants and toddlers, North Carolina is known as a child care desert. Overall, only 18.7% of the infant-toddler population can be served in the existing supply of licensed infant-toddler programs. On average, more than five families with infants and toddlers are competing for every one available licensed child care space. Quality infant toddler is scarce in all 100 counties but is even more scarce and more unaffordable in rural counties.

To date, little state funding has been made available to address this infant toddler care crisis. Early Head Start has expanded in North Carolina only when federal funding was made available to additional local grantees. In 2018, there were just 37 EHS programs serving about 5,000 young children across the state, including about a dozen Early Head Start/Child Care Partnerships.

The purpose of this study is to determine barriers and opportunities for expansion of Early Head Start services. The study should also review other states' approaches to expanding EHS/HS services so that we can learn about ways to address the inequities facing the EHS/HS system in North Carolina. In addition, the study should include current NC grantees experiences and hopes for the future, along with HS grantees who do not currently serve infants and toddlers.

For the purposes of this study infant toddler child care is defined as licensed child care programs, including both licensed family child care homes and child care centers and Early Head Start programs. Infants and toddlers are defined as young children, birth up to age three.

The study should consider other relevant studies, reports and special projects that relate to infant toddler child care in North Carolina, and be willing to work with the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education, the Child Care Resource and Referral Council, the NC Partnership for Children, Child Care Services Association and other key organizations to acquire the necessary data and information for this study.

Key Questions

Applicants should use the following questions as a general guide in developing the methodology for this study, but this list is not intended to be all-inclusive.

- What is the current status of Early Head Start (EHS) in every North Carolina county?
- If there is a program, which program option(s) is/are offered?
- Who is the grantee?
- How many children are served?
- How many children are on the waitlist?
- If there is no program, why not, has there been any efforts to begin one and if so, what were the barriers?
- How does the supply of EHS compare between urban, suburban, and rural counties?

Scope of Work

- Conduct a study of the status on the availability of Early Head Start services in North Carolina that considers the following factors:
 - Location of EHS services by county
 - Type of EHS services offered in counties with EHS (home based, center based, child care partnership)
 - Age of children served
 - Star-rating of licensed child care programs who have EHS slots
- Survey current Early Head Start grantees to gather their experiences and hopes for the future if granted an opportunity to expand.
- Survey current Head Start grantees who do not offer EHS to determine their perceived barriers to the program.
- Review other states' experiences with expanding EHS/HS services so that we can learn about ways to address the inequities facing the EHS/HS system.

Deliverables:

- Meet with study design team to review application and revise if needed prior to starting the work.
- Prepare a report and Executive Summary on findings from the study
Make a presentation to The Stakeholder Coalition and Parent Leadership Team on the study findings and recommendations.

Study Funding:

Total funding available for this study is approximately \$10,000.

Application Components:

- Statement describing the Applicant's organization and qualifications, including experience and expertise of key personnel on similar projects.
- Detailed narrative describing the proposed study methodology for completing the scope or work, including a timeline.
- Study costs estimate, including an overall budget with line items for major costs.

Application Due Date: Applications must be submitted by November 29, 2021

All applications must be sent by email to:

Angela Burch-Octetree, Project Manager, Think Babies™ NC Alliance

AngelaB@NCEarlyEducationCoalition.org

Timeline:

Deliverables must be received before or by February 28, 2022.

Applicants will be asked to make a presentation to the Think Babies NC Alliance study review committee.

Final decisions will be made by December 6, 2021.

Resources

- National Head Start Association (2020). 2020 Head Start Fact Sheet- North Carolina.
- Jessen-Howard, S., Malik, R., Workman, S., & Hamm, K. (2018). Understanding Infant and Toddler Child Care Deserts. Center for American Progress.

For questions or more information, please contact:

Angela Burch-Octetree, Project Manager, Think Babies™ NC Alliance

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Think Babies™ NC Alliance

The Think Babies™ NC Alliance seeks to ensure that North Carolina's youngest children, prenatal to age 3, benefit from effective and equitable public policies, programs, and funding so that all children have what they need to thrive: healthy beginnings, supported families, and quality early care and learning experiences. The NC Early Education Coalition serves as the backbone organization for the Think Babies™ NC Alliance, which is led by a cross-sector Leadership Team of state and local organizations focused on advancing public awareness and policy solutions for infants, toddlers, and their families.

For more information:

www.ThinkBabiesNC.org

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