

# Great Expectations Funding Opportunity

## Planning and Capacity Building to Close Racial Disparities in Birth Outcomes

Every expectant family in Forsyth County deserves a healthy birth outcome for their newborn— regardless of their race or economic status. That's how children begin to thrive, right from the start. But too often, there are disparities in birth and postpartum outcomes. At the state level, Black children are more than twice as likely as white children to die in their first year of life. In Forsyth County, Black and Hispanic infant mortality rates are higher than infant mortality rates for whites. This funding opportunity is intended to help address disparities and ensure healthy birth outcomes for all families.

The aim of the Great Expectations initiative is to ensure that children in Forsyth County enter kindergarten ready to learn and leave set for success in school and life. To achieve these aims it is critical to support healthy births and birth justice. The Trust is interested in helping organizations convene and develop community-informed action plans for closing racial disparities in infant mortality rates. In particular, we want to hear from groups based in communities that have been marginalized to help address upstream causes of disparities such as poverty and systemic racism.

### **Goal**

Narrow racial disparities in birth and postpartum outcomes for Medicaid and uninsured populations.

### **Strategies**

Conduct community-based evaluation, research, and planning that engages residents in the process to collect data, identify gaps, and determine best practices to address goal.

Build community, organizational, and individual capacity in areas with low incomes so that historically marginalized populations can participate in economic, education, and health improvement efforts.

## **Timeframe for Applications**

Call-by date: July 20, 2021

Application deadline: August 10, 2021

## **Geographic Focus**

Forsyth County

## **Opportunity Details**

North Carolina and Forsyth County are making progress on efforts to promote healthy birth outcomes and reduce infant mortality rates. The state Department of Health and Human Services announced that in 2018 the infant death rate reached its lowest point in 31 years, decreasing for a third straight year. Still a task force convened by the North Carolina Institute of Medicine notes that our infant mortality rate ranks 39th nationally. And racial disparities stubbornly persist. At the state level, Black children are more than twice as likely as white children to die in their first year of life. These racial disparities are reflected in Forsyth County rates where Black and Hispanic infant mortality rates are higher than infant mortality rates for whites. Overall, infant mortality rates are steeper in Forsyth County than the state average. The state Early Childhood Action Plan makes reducing the statewide infant mortality disparities a top priority.

The aim of the Great Expectations initiative is to ensure that children in Forsyth County enter kindergarten ready to learn and leave set for success in school and life. To achieve these aims it is critical to support healthy births and birth justice. The Trust works with partners statewide to promote Medicaid expansion and enrollment in Affordable Care Act insurance policies. We know that mothers gaining access to insurance before pregnancy improves birth outcomes. Studies show that Medicaid expansion states are better able to close disparities in infant mortality rates. The Trust also invests in the Nurse-Family Partnership program, based at the Forsyth County Health Department, to connect pregnant mothers with the resources and information they need for a healthy birth. More needs to be done.

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## **Contact**

To schedule a conversation about this opportunity, please contact Program Coordinator Alison Duncan for an initial consultation at [alison@kbr.org](mailto:alison@kbr.org) or 336-397-5521.