

# GREAT EXPECTATIONS FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

## Closing 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 maternal 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 equity. The Trust is interested in helping organizations convene and implement community-informed action plans for closing racial disparities in infant and maternal 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 infant and maternal mortality.

### Strategy

Conduct broad-based communications, community education, and advocacy efforts that advance goals.

Build community, network, organizational, and individual capacity so that historically marginalized populations, particularly Black, immigrant, Indigenous, and other leaders of color can drive community and health improvement efforts.

Convene, facilitate, and coordinate stakeholders to collectively address goals. This could include better coordination within and across systems and regularly convening community partners.

### Timeframe

Call-by date: **September 20, 2022**

Application deadline: **October 13, 2022**

### 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 39<sup>th</sup> 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.

Locally, the Trust is supporting organizations to convene and develop community-informed action plans for closing racial disparities in infant and maternal mortality rates. The goal of this work is to identify opportunities and gaps for what is needed to effect lasting change in Forsyth County. The Trust is interested in hearing from organizations implementing action plans. Efforts could include communications and advocacy campaigns, community engagement and public education work, capacity building, and convening partners. It could also involve grassroots groups working with health care delivery systems to address barriers to care. Organizations responding to this opportunity should have been involved, or show a willingness to get involved, in planning and convening with other community groups.

Creating a more equitable system requires that marginalized communities and grassroots organizations help drive the process. The Trust is particularly interested in proposals that center the voices of Black and Latinx residents and working people with low incomes. Interested parties should be prepared to discuss and map policies and practices that create barriers to services and propose solutions. These efforts could include technical assistance and evaluation but should include robust engagement of grassroots groups. Proposals should also name the set of safety net services that applicants plan to examine. These could include housing, income assistance, food, or related safety net programs.

### **Contact**

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