



Request for Allocation Process

Frequently Asked Questions

How much funding is available through SSMC?

As with most foundations and funding agencies, our funding fluctuates from year to year. Smart Start of Mecklenburg County expects to make grants totaling \$13.8 million this year.

Who is eligible to receive funds?

Smart Start may provide funds to organizations that are designated a non-profit by the IRS through a 501(c) designation, or to public organizations, for projects that serve Mecklenburg County residents who are 0-5, but not enrolled in kindergarten, and their families.

What kinds of projects do you fund?

SSMC is required by state mandate to allocate 70% of state funds to activities impacting early care and education, such as subsidy, quality improvement, access and teacher education. The remaining 30% is allocated for activities in family support and health. For more information about our funded activities, please visit our website, www.smartstartofmeck.org.

What size grants does SSMC award?

Our award size varies widely and is very project dependent. We have made awards as small as \$50,000 all the way up to \$1million+ during our last award cycle.

When are grants accepted?

SSMC's grant cycle is July 1 to June 30. The application process typically begins in January of each year with a Bidder's Conference, and awards are announced in May or June for the fiscal year beginning July 1.

Are multiyear grants accepted?

Yes, we do accept multiyear (up to 3 years) applications for projects where the program model requires a multiyear approach. We accept these cyclically and FY24-25 was the beginning of our current multi-year funding cycle. No new multiyear awards will be made this fiscal year. Funding for year 2 and 3 is dependent on satisfying evaluation and contracting requirements and on the General Assembly of North Carolina.

What is the application process?

Applications are accepted through an online portal that is open for a minimum of 1 month each year during the bidding window. The portal can be accessed through our website. The page with the link also has all the supporting forms that are required to be uploaded with your application.

Who will review our application?

SSMC's standing Community Investment Committee, and subject matter expert volunteers, review the applications in teams. The Community Investment Committee is comprised of SSMC Board members and Mecklenburg County resident volunteers who meet monthly. This committee's purpose is to provide leadership and oversight for the implementation of SSMC's strategic plan, ensuring that strategies, investments, and evaluation are aligned to achieve SSMC's goals and oversees the annual application process. It determines funding priorities based upon our **Early Childhood Profile**, and establishes a rating scale for evaluating applications with a rubric of defined criteria based upon the application questions. It establishes a recommended slate of activities for funding that is submitted to the Mecklenburg Partnership for Children's Board of Directors. The Board then makes the final determination of funding award.

What if I still have questions?

The staff of Smart Smart are here to help you and would be happy to answer your questions. Feel free to reach out to us at info@smartstartofmeck.org.