



(/sp/smart_start_innovation)

Application ▾

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Agency Name (auto-filled in submission portal)

Program Name

Smart Start of Mecklenburg’s vision is that every child in Mecklenburg County enters kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed. To advance this vision, Smart Start of Mecklenburg County (SSMC) is seeking letters of intent for one time funding to encourage development of innovative ideas.

Focus: Systems Building

Priority Areas

I. Fostering social and emotional skills in children aged 0-5. Experiences during early childhood shape a child’s mental, emotional, and social development. By nurturing social and emotional development (also known as “mental health”) during the first years of a child’s life is one of the most important tools we have to help children become healthy and resilient. Research shows that early interventions and support for young children and their families can reduce the risk of mental health problems and promote healthy development. Smart Start seeks to foster an increased focus on the development of social and emotional skills, including the promotion of an integrated and effective system of care.

II. Parent/caregiver engagement and empowerment. Parents are the best advocates for their child and it’s important to equip parents/caregivers with the skills and confidence to advocate within all systems impacting their child. We seek partners working across existing community and parent organizations to test new models of parent/caregiver empowerment and advocacy education.

Funding is available for projects with a budget ranging from \$15,000 to \$100,000 that can provide evidence of success within 12 months and be completed by June 30, 2027.

Systems Building Overview (Smart Solutions - <https://smartsolutionscatalog.com/nc/> (<https://smartsolutionscatalog.com/nc/>)) Systems building refers to a process in which collaborative groups understand and take actions to shift interacting system root causes (e.g., mindsets, goals, decision-making, policies, connections, etc.) in ways that bring about improved outcomes and reduced disparities for children and families. The system root causes affecting a given set of child and family outcomes differ from place to place and require systems building/change strategies to be customized to fit the local context. Expected Impact Shifts in dynamic system root causes work together to build the supportive ecosystem to improve outcomes for children and families relevant to identified community needs. Core Components for Model Fidelity Collaborative groups engage individuals representing relevant diverse perspectives in an iterative cycle that includes the following three steps: I. Gather information to understand how interacting system root cause conditions are affecting local outcomes and disparities. II. Design strategies to shift these interacting system root causes in ways that bring about improved outcomes. III. Test out the strategies and gather rapid evaluation feedback in iterative cycles to understand how to adapt and/or scale the strategies over time. Minimal Outputs for NCPC Reporting I. Identification and prioritization of root cause(s) II. Root cause(s) strategies currently being implemented Minimal Outputs for NCPC Reporting I. Short-term outcomes of strategies that can contribute to changing prioritized root causes II. Community system root causes affecting desired impacts III. Long-term impacts identified

Has your organization received Smart Start funds previously?

Choose selected focus:

Why is this priority area important? What are the suspected root causes? What strategies are you currently implementing to address your prioritized root causes? (Name the root cause associated with each.) Please attach data relevant to Mecklenburg County.

Word Count: 0 / 300

Who are the primary stakeholders for this project (children, parents/caregivers, etc.) How do you know what your stakeholders want? Is this a project that you would like to do, or is it a project that your stakeholders would like to have done? Present any evidence you have about stakeholders needs.

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To your knowledge, what are the current actions to address the problem? What evidence exists in the literature about the efficacy or effectiveness of innovations like the one pursued in this project? Contextualize relevant studies to build an argument about why your project stakeholders.

Word Count: 0 / 250

Describe your project in detail, including proposed timeline and how you would use the funds.

Word Count: 0 / 300

Will this activity provide grants, stipends, scholarships and/or materials provided for free?

Word Count: 0 / 100

How will you engage your participants and ensure participation? If you plan to provide incentives, please describe here (and note on budget narrative). How will you ensure your program is equitable and inclusive? Please provide examples.

Word Count: 0 / 100

What expertise is required to execute this project? Does your team already possess such expertise? What new partnerships are required to access the relevant expertise? If so, have you begun to build those partnerships?

Why is your organization the appropriate organization to lead this work? How does it align with your mission? For NEW Applicants only: Please provide evidence that your organization and your proposed activity has a record of success.

How do you ensure that your staff is staying current with research and practice developments related to this activity?

What other groups or organizations are part of this work and at what level of engagement - advisory, active partner, funder? Please provide letters of support.

Budget: How much are you requesting?

Budget Narrative Upload

+ Select a file

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Innovation Grant Applicant Assessment Tool

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Activity Logic Model (template on webpage)

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Job Description Upload

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