



Empowering people, transforming lives

WNCSource.org

February 8, 2024

Board of Directors
Policy Council Members

RE: New Rutherfordton Children's Center
Construction Funding Request

WNCSource currently offers Early Head Start programs in Rutherford County, NC at the Forest City Children's Center and Kid's Kingdom (Ellenboro). Rutherford County is an economically depressed community that has long been considered a "Child Care Desert" with very few child care options for children under 4-years old. In addition, there are extremely limited commercial lease options for properties that would be suitable for establishing an Early Head Start center.

In 2023, the Dogwood Health Trust and Gateway Foundation generously donated a 1-acre parcel of land adjoining an affordable housing development in Rutherford County. WNCSource has accepted this gift and would like to construct a new Rutherfordton Children's Center to support Early Head Start programs for up to 24 children. The new center will be approximately 6,500 square feet and modeled after the Columbus Children's Center which is currently under construction. The center will feature up to five classrooms, kitchen, office and storage space, and outdoor learning environments. Construction is expected to take 12 to 16 months.

In order to fund the cost of construction, WNCSource will file a 1303 Capital Funding application through the Office of Head Start. We will request to use Carry-Over funds that were previously awarded, yet unspent between 2022 and 2024 for our EHS Expansion Grant (#04HP000443). Together, these funds will support \$2.2 million of the estimated \$2.4 million construction cost. The remaining balance will be raised through community funding and public/private grants.

As stakeholders and decision makers for WNCSource and our Children's Services program, your guidance, input, and approval is needed to move forward with filing a 1303 Capital Funding application and prepare the Carry Over request.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

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Working with communities and partners, WNCSource improves people's lives by creating pathways to self-reliance and healthier living

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