

# Fund Summer Developmental Day Care for Rising Kindergarteners in Need

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*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*

## ***Irene Wortham Center***

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# Application Form

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## Question Group

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Buncombe County requests proposals for projects to help the community recover from and respond to COVID-19 and its negative economic impacts.

Buncombe County has been awarded \$50,733,290 in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (Recovery Funding), as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. To date, Buncombe County has awarded projects totaling \$23,093,499, leaving a balance of \$27,639,791 available to award.

Visit <http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding> for details.

This infusion of federal resources is intended to help turn the tide on the pandemic, address its economic fallout, and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery.

Buncombe County is committed to investing these funds in projects that:

- Align to county strategic plan and community priorities
- Support equitable outcomes for most impacted populations
- Leverage and align with other governmental funding sources
- Make best use of this one-time infusion of resources
- Have a lasting impact

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP and any addenda issued hereto.

[Click here for the full terms and conditions of the RFP](#)

## Organization Type\*

Nonprofit

## Nonprofit documentation

If nonprofit, attach IRS Determination Letter or other proof of nonprofit status.

[IWC Tax Exempt.pdf](#)

## Name of Project.\*

Fund Summer Developmental Day Care for Rising Kindergarteners in Need

## New/Updated Proposal\*

Is this a new project proposal or an updated version of a proposal submitted during the earlier (July 2021) Recovery Funding RFP?

Updated version of previously submitted proposal

## Amount of Funds Requested\*

\$60,754.98

## Category\*

Please select one:

- Affordable Housing
- Aging/Older Adults
- Business Support/Economic Development
- Environmental/Climate
- Homelessness
- K-12 Education
- Infrastructure and/or Broadband
- Mental Health/Substance Use
- NC Pre-K Expansion
- Workforce

NC Pre-K Expansion

## Brief Project Description\*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

This project will fund three months of Developmental Child Care for the next five Summers, so that developmentally disabled and low-income rising Kindergarteners can have the best chance at reaching all of their milestones before entering Kindergarten. Each year, there are students at the Early Learning Center (ELC) whose families can't afford to keep them enrolled through June, July, and August. The ELC provides year-round developmental day, so if these children received subsidized enrollment, they would be guaranteed access to the 5-star rated developmental day program through the summer. Year 1 of funding would cover the cost of summer enrollment for six children who are currently enrolled. The subsequent four years of funding will cover the cost for five children each year, who will be selected using a lottery system. The children who will qualify for this funding are facing more adversity than the average child, so maximum enrollment time to hit their benchmarks is critical.

## Project Plan\*

Explain how the project will be structured and implemented, including timeframe.

The project plan is straightforward and will be easily implemented through the oversight of the Early Learning Center Director, Aimee Spooner. Aimee will be in charge of managing and tracking the grant budget and distributing the funds to families to use for summer enrollment.

The funds from this project will be distributed during June, July, and August of 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026. All funds will be distributed by end of August, 2026.

For the first funding year, the six children who will receive the funds are already determined; these are the Rising Kindergarteners who, without subsidized funding, would have to unenroll for those three months and risk not reaching developmental milestones before entering Kindergarten. The parents of these children will be notified immediately if the funding is awarded\*.

For the subsequent years, the funds will be distributed using a lottery system. Aimee Spooner will determine which five Rising Kindergarteners will get three months of summer enrollment subsidized by randomly choosing from a pool of all Rising Kindergarteners who require financial aid to stay enrolled through the summer. A random number generator will be used to keep the process entirely unbiased. The lottery will happen in March of each year, so that families will have time to decide whether they will keep their child enrolled for those three months. If a family wishes to enroll their child for only part-time or select time-frames during the three months, the remaining funding will be granted to another child, randomly chosen through the lottery, for part-time/select timeframe enrollment.

\*Ideally, the funding will be awarded in late May 2022, as suggested by the funding committee in Addendum #1, so that funding will be available for all of June, July, and August 2022. However, if funding is awarded later in the year, funds received for months passed will roll over to 2023 and will fund more subsidized lottery slots for that year.

## Statement of Need\*

Describe the need that this project will address. Include data to demonstrate the need, and cite the source of the data.

ELC staff take COVID precautions seriously and have remained compliant with county and federal safety protocols to keep everyone safe. As a result, there have been many closures over the past school year, August 23rd - present. The classroom closures have been a developmental impediment for all of the children in the ELC, including those as young as 6 weeks to those as old as 5 years. It's therefore paramount that lost classroom time is made up for during the summer months, so that children can enter Kindergarten on time and equipped with skills to learn. These funds are needed to close the gap in lost classroom time that was caused by pandemic-related classroom closures.

To demonstrate the quantity of classroom closures that have happened over the past school year, numbers have been provided on Classroom B and Classroom C - the two classrooms from which the six children who will receive Year 1 funding are enrolled in. From August 23rd, 2021 through March 31, 2022, Classroom B averaged a 58% open rate, meaning 42% of the days that school should have been open, it was actually closed due to COVID. For the same time period, Classroom C averaged a 48% open rate. These rates vary because classroom closures were dependent on where COVID exposures occurred.

The funding that will be used for years two through five will give future Rising Kindergarteners additional classroom time and exposure to teachers who will help them work towards developmental and social-emotional benchmarks. It's hard to know now the impact that wearing masks for the past two and a half years will have on children as they grow older and social skills become more important. Children at the ELC have been limited in their exposure to seeing and learning how to interpret facial expressions. These funds would give 26 children the best chance at developing social-emotional skills that have been hindered by the pandemic.

## Link to COVID-19\*

Identify a health or economic harm resulting from or exacerbated by the public health emergency, describe the nature and extent of that harm, and explain how the use of this funding would address such harm.

School closures due to COVID have taken a toll on children and their families. Every time the ELC closed, parents who did not have the luxury of being able to work remotely had to either finance childcare or stay at home and miss work to care for their child. According to Suzanne Egan from the Early Childhood Education Journal, "Parents described the negative impact of Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) closures on their children's social and emotional well-being as resulting in more tantrums, anxiety, clinginess, boredom and under-stimulation."

ECEC closures meant that children missed out on the nurturing environment of classrooms that provide structure and routine. According to Deborah Wheeler of the Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, "parents of preschoolers with disabilities reported several challenges including: finding a work-life balance, navigating changes in daily rhythms, isolation, childcare, emotional support, preventing boredom, and financial woes." The parents of the children in the Early Learning Center have attested to experiencing many of the above-mentioned challenges.

Notably, 90% of the children in the ELC come from low-income families. Many of the parents of children in the ELC must be able to work in order to remain financially stable. The classroom closures put an extreme financial burden on many families who had unexpected childcare costs and missed work opportunities. Funding from this grant will not only provide critical support to the children and their development before Kindergarten, but it will also provide much needed support to parents who have faced prolonged financial challenges over the past two and a half years.

In addition to supporting children whose progress towards developmental benchmarks has been hindered from COVID, this funding will also guarantee 3 months of support for parents of 26 children. The parents will be able to work and make up for unexpected periods of lost income from the pandemic.

## Population Served\*

Define the population to be served by this project, including volume and demographic characteristics of those served.

This project will serve 26 Rising Kindergarteners (4-5 year-olds) and their parents, who are living below the poverty level.

In the first year, four of the six students who will receive funding have an intellectual developmental disability (IDD) and are on an Independent Education Program. IDDs make a child's journey to reaching developmental milestones more complicated than that of a typically developing student. For all children, but especially those with an IDD, the more time spent in a high-quality learning environment, working closely with a teacher, and learning alongside peers, the better.

In years two through five of this project, all of the students who will receive funding will be from low-income families, but will not necessarily have an IDD, since the funding will be distributed through a lottery system.

## Results\*

Describe the proposed impact of the project. List at least 3 performance measures that will be tracked and reported. If possible, include baselines and goals for each performance measure.

This project will allow children to continue quality of care and education throughout the summer leading up to Kindergarten. Due to the impacts of COVID and the resulting classroom closures, all children in the ELC have not had consistent education and care over the past two and a half years. Inconsistent attendance to an educational program, especially for children receiving individual education plans and therapy due to developmental delays, negatively impacts developmental gains.

Using the software, CorAdvantage, data is collected on every child in the Early Learning Center throughout the duration of their time in the program. Progress towards developmental milestones and benchmarks is tracked with a close eye to ensure children have made adequate progress towards goals prior to entering Kindergarten. These reports reveal that children have shown developmental losses over the past year due to classroom closures.

The data from Classroom B, which is representative of the ELC as a whole, is concerning. Below are the percentages of students, before and after the classroom closures, who were meeting or above each benchmark (students not included in these percentages are performing below the benchmark).

Approaches to Learning - Before: 85% versus After: 79%  
Social and Emotional Development - 85% versus 64%  
Physical Development and Health - 85% versus 79%  
Language, Literacy, and Communication - 85% versus 43%  
Mathematics - 77% versus 29%  
Creative Arts - 77% versus 43%  
Science and Technology - 85% versus 36%  
Social Studies - 77% versus 71%

The importance of developing strong foundations during the first 2,000 days of life can't be underemphasized. Providing continuation of care prior to entering Kindergarten for the next five years will lessen developmental backslides, like the ones noted above, that were caused by COVID. Progress towards all of these benchmarks, with consideration for the additional three months of enrollment, will be closely tracked.

## Evaluation\*

Describe the data collection, analysis, and quality assurance measures you will use to assure ongoing, effective tracking of contract requirements and outcomes.

CorAdvantage will be the primary software used to track children's progress towards developmental benchmarks. This software tracks data on an individual child level and also aggregates data on a classroom and whole center level. Aimee Spooner, the Director of the school, shares this data with parents on a regular basis to ensure that work towards benchmarks can continue when the child is at home as well as in the classroom.

The behavioral therapist from Higher Ground Pediatric Therapy also has access to the developmental benchmark data. The therapist will use this data to hone in on specific areas for which a child may need more attention during the three months leading up to Kindergarten.

Data on all Rising Kindergarteners will be analyzed with consideration for a child's upcoming transition into Kindergarten. The question will always be asked: Is the child ready to enter Kindergarten and equipped with the necessary academic skills to learn in the classroom and necessary social-emotional skills to interact

with their peers? Progress towards benchmarks guides the answer to this question and the three additional months of learning leading up to Kindergarten will be spent closing any gaps.

## Equity Impact\*

How will this effort help build toward a just, equitable, and sustainable COVID-19 recovery? How are the root causes and/or disproportionate impacts of inequities addressed?

IWC highlights the potential of every individual by providing equitable access to early education. COVID classroom closures made equitable access to early education and childcare difficult. Parents who rely on the ELC to feed their children healthy food, provide a safe learning environment, and help their children thrive, were deprived of this resource. When classrooms closed, parents were forced to make financial sacrifices, while their children missed out on critical stages of development.

Even without COVID there are obvious inequities around access to early childhood education, and the pandemic exacerbated these. The classroom closures throughout the pandemic were incredibly tough for parents, especially those living below the poverty level.

If IWC receives this funding, it will help low-income families - those who suffered more harshly from classroom closures - recover from the pandemic more quickly. Three months of additional subsidized childcare will be hugely impactful for these families. For parents it means three more months of holding down a job and getting an income to purchase healthy food. It means not sacrificing rapport with their employer because they have to choose between staying home with their child or going to work. For children it means three more months of developing social-emotional skills that they will carry with them for the rest of their lives. It means three more months of working with a behavioral therapist to address individual needs before heading off to Kindergarten.

The project addresses inequities in access to year-long learning. About 10% of the families who attend the ELC are private pay and do not receive subsidized tuition. These families are able to keep their children enrolled throughout the entire year and are not the ones who will be considered for the funding. Those who will be considered for funding are the low-income families who receive subsidized tuition, which does not include funding for June, July, and August.

## Project Partners\*

Identify any subcontractors you intend to use for the proposed scope of work. For each subcontractor listed, indicate:

- 1.) What products and/or services are to be supplied by that subcontractor and;
- 2.) What percentage of the overall scope of work that subcontractor will perform.

Also, list non-funded key partners critical to project.

There are no subcontractors that will be involved with this project.

A behavioral therapist from Higher Ground Pediatric Therapy, who works in the Early Learning Center year-round, will work with the children who enroll for the summer months.

## Capacity\*

Describe the background, experience, and capabilities of your organization or department as it relates to capacity for delivering the proposed project and managing federal funds.

There are three individuals who will be responsible for delivering the project and managing the funds.

Aimee Spooner, the Director of the Early Learning Center, will be in charge of distribution of funds and delivering the project. Aimee completed her associates in Early Learning then moved to Germany and worked in a military child care program before moving to Asheville. She completed her Bachelor's degree in Birth to Kindergarten from Western Carolina University, while being the lead teacher in an NC PreK classroom. Aimee then completed her Early Childhood Administration Classes and moved into mentoring and training teachers. She was responsible for training of teachers, mentoring new teachers, and was the enrollment specialist for head start. She worked closely with the Early Head Start director to maintain compliance with three locations and up to 300 children being served at a time. This experience, plus her five years at Irene Wortham Center, have given her the knowledge to be an effective Director of the Early Learning Center and to make the most of this grant funding.

The Development and Finance Departments will work together to ensure funds are managed and reported on appropriately. IWC has a long history of receiving federal funding and its staff understand the importance of timely and accurate reporting. For instance, IWC receives an annual food grant through the US Department of Agriculture. IWC has a proven track record of following all guidelines for the management and reporting of these funds, which is reflected in the continued receipt of these funds year after year.

A letter of support from Pisgah Health Foundation states, "As a grateful funder of Irene Wortham Center, Inc., our grant making staff observed firsthand their hard work and dedication to our grant relationship. The grantee achieved various levels of superiority in filing all required grantee reports in a timely manner and evidenced fiscal responsibility throughout the grant term."

## Budget\*

Provide a detailed project budget including all proposed project revenues and expenditures, including explanations and methodology. For all revenue sources, list the funder and denote whether funds are confirmed or pending. For project expenses, denote all capital vs. operating costs, and reflect which specific expenses are proposed to be funded with one-time Buncombe County Recovery Funds.

Download a copy of the budget form [HERE](#). Complete the form, and upload it using the button below.

Recovery-Funds-budget-template.xlsx

## Special Considerations\*

Provide any other information that might assist the County in its selection.

Classroom Closures.xlsx

Please see "Detailed Budget" tab on budget document for further explanation of funding distribution.

Note: Rate changes over the five years will be taken into consideration and number of slots included in the lottery will be adjusted accordingly. Part-time and/or select timeframe slots will be considered depending on rate changes.

Attached below is the data on classroom closures for Classrooms B and C from August, 2021 - March, 2022.



## File Attachment Summary

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### *Applicant File Uploads*

- IWC Tax Exempt.pdf
- Recovery-Funds-budget-template.xlsx
- Classroom Closures.xlsx

CINCINNATI OH 45999-0038

In reply refer to: 0248181619  
July 25, 2017 LTR 4168C 0  
56-0733452 000000 00  
00018163  
BODC: TE

IRENE WORTHAM CENTER INC  
916 W CHAPEL RD  
ASHEVILLE NC 28803



009220

Employer ID Number: 56-0733452  
Form 990 required: Yes

Dear Taxpayer:

This is in response to your request dated July 14, 2017, regarding your tax-exempt status.

We issued you a determination letter in May 1964, recognizing you as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(3).

Our records also indicate you're not a private foundation as defined under IRC Section 509(a) because you're described in IRC Sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).

Donors can deduct contributions they make to you as provided in IRC Section 170. You're also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, legacies, devises, transfers, or gifts under IRC Sections 2055, 2106, and 2522.

In the heading of this letter, we indicated whether you must file an annual information return. If a return is required, you must file Form 990, 990-EZ, 990-N, or 990-PF by the 15th day of the fifth month after the end of your annual accounting period. IRC Section 6033(j) provides that, if you don't file a required annual information return or notice for three consecutive years, your exempt status will be automatically revoked on the filing due date of the third required return or notice.

For tax forms, instructions, and publications, visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or call 1-800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676).

If you have questions, call 1-877-829-5500 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., local time, Monday through Friday (Alaska and Hawaii follow Pacific Time).



<b>Total</b>	\$	60,754.98		
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2021 - 2022 Summer Developmental Day Care Enrollment costs for 6 currently enrolled students					
D1	Child's Initials	Classroom	June Cost	July Cost	August Cost
	EH	B	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	NG	B	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	EH	C	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	AL	C	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	TH	C	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	LL	B	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
<b>Total June, July, August 2022 Cost</b>			<b>\$</b>	<b>14,020.38</b>	

2022 - 2023 Summer Developmental Day Care Enrollment costs for 5 Rising Kindergarteners (to be selected through lottery system)					
D2	Child	Classroom	June Cost	July Cost	August Cost
	#1	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	#2	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	#3	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	#4	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	#5	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
<b>Total June, July, August 2023 Cost</b>			<b>\$</b>	<b>11,683.65</b>	

2023 - 2024 Summer Developmental Day Care Enrollment costs for 5 Rising Kindergarteners (to be selected through lottery system)					
D3	Child	Classroom	June Cost	July Cost	August Cost
	#1	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	#2	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	#3	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	#4	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	#5	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
<b>Total June, July, August 2024 Cost</b>			<b>\$</b>	<b>11,683.65</b>	

2024 - 2025 Summer Developmental Day Care Enrollment costs for 5 Rising Kindergarteners (to be selected through lottery system)					
D4	Child	Classroom	June Cost	July Cost	August Cost
	#1	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	#2	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	#3	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	#4	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	#5	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
<b>Total June, July, August 2025 Cost</b>			<b>\$</b>	<b>11,683.65</b>	

2025 - 2026 Summer Developmental Day Care Enrollment costs for 5 Rising					
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Kindergarteners (to be selected through lottery system)

D5	Child	Classroom	June Cost	July Cost	August Cost
	#1	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	#2	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	#3	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	#4	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
	#5	TBD	\$ 952.00	\$ 952.00	\$ 432.73
<b>Total June, July, August 2026 Cost</b>			<b>\$</b>	<b>11,683.65</b>	

	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22
Classroom B	17%	43%	67%	25%	46%	39%	60%
Classroom C	88%	46%	41%	66%	76%	51%	19%

These are the percentage of days that Classrooms B and C were closed due to COVID during August - March 2022. These are the classrooms that the 6 students who are at risk of not receiving Supplemental Developmental Day Care are enrolled in.

Mar-22
35%
28%

August 2021
Summer '22