

Early Childhood Education - Cohort 1 Project Summaries

Organization	Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College Foundation \$510,932
Project	Project Blazing Trails: Early Childhood Collegiate Supports
Purpose	A-B Tech has clear data regarding the academic pain points of its ECE students, specifically, which classes have the highest fail rate and result in individuals not continuing in the program. The focus of this project is to employ two ECE faculty members to provide academic support to first-generation, BIPOC, and/or rural students. Students will access remedial courses, taught through Continuing Education, to improve completion rates of their ECE coursework.
Contact	Tamara Reynolds, tamaraereynolds@abtech.edu

Organization	Blue Ridge Community College Education Foundation Inc \$1,000,000
Project	Blue Ridge Community College ECE Recruiting and Success Initiative
Purpose	To expand and enhance the local ECE workforce, BRCC will use grant funds for two ECE recruiting and success coaches, additional adjunct faculty, professional development, and Spanish translation of courses and teaching materials. The ECE success coaches will be ECE professionals possessing the same credentials as the ECE faculty, be available to teach one class, work different hours from the current coaches, and help in the recruitment of students. Offering courses in Spanish provides dual language learners the opportunity to pursue an ECE credential, certificate, and/or degree in the field. The goal is to double enrollment in the ECE program and increase retention and completion rates.
Contact	Shelah Combs, sk_combs@blueridge.edu

Early Childhood Education - Cohort 1 Project Summaries

Organization	Children & Family Resource Center of Henderson County Inc \$1,000,000
Project	Workforce Development - Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania Counties
Purpose	The purpose of this workforce development project is to recruit and train individuals to become ECE substitutes, which are in incredibly high demand. A secondary goal is for these substitutes to gain permanent employment by a center. The training includes 24 hours of paid ECE training and observation, at the conclusion of which individuals will have met state requirements to be an ECE substitute. The project also seeks to provide participants from BIPOC communities with opportunities to be part of a leadership and development program that will focus on enhancing their leadership skills. During the duration of the leadership work, participants will collaborate to address situations that arise in their positions as teachers and administrators.
Contact	Kim Guice, kimg@childrenandfamily.org

Organization	McDowell Technical Community College \$985,000
Project	A Model Community College Childcare Center: Developing a Playbook to Create More Equitable Workforce Solutions for Early Childcare
Purpose	MTCC operates a profitable and sustainable childcare center. This program will help strengthen the center's working conditions and capacity to deliver the HighScope curriculum. By partnering with Centro Unido Latino Americano to employ a Latinx workforce coordinator, MTCC plans to triple the number of students of color in its ECE program. Another goal is to increase the number of ECE students also graduating from MTCC's entrepreneurship program, with the intention to open ECE centers in McDowell County. MTCC will create a playbook designed to outline strategies for sustaining a successful, profitable center and engage WNC community colleges to share learned experiences.
Contact	Rhonda Steele, rasteele52@go.mcdowelltech.edu

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Organization	Mountain Projects Inc \$649,286
Project	Mountain Projects, Head Start Workforce, Hispanic Equity & Inclusion
Purpose	Mountain Projects (MP) hosts 10 Head Start classrooms in Haywood and Jackson counties. Several classrooms are closed due to staffing shortages. Additionally, nearly 30% of children enrolled in its Head Start program are dual language learners. To address the workforce issues, MP plans to provide ECE staff with opportunities for subsidized educational attainment, professional wages, longevity bonuses, and a developed career path with leadership opportunities that increase with education. To support Spanish-speaking Head Start students, MP will hire Spanish-speaking Outreach Coordinators to assist families, a Spanish translator to implement dual-language classrooms, purchase classroom materials in Spanish, and provide multicultural training to staff.
Contact	Christie Paxton, cpaxton@mountainprojects.org

Organization	Southwestern Child Development Commission \$1,000,000
Project	Pathways to Early Learning
Purpose	Southwestern Child Development Commission (SWCDC) will continue to build the infrastructure and operate the first ApprenticeshipNC program devoted to the ECE workforce. SWCDC's program exceeds ApprenticeshipNC standards and has received attention from across the state. Every community college in the far western 13 counties will partner with SWCDC to enroll students in the apprenticeship program simultaneously with their community college enrollment. Local high schools will also partner on enrollment. The program will include on-the-job learning, related instruction, a progressive pay scale, and bilingual apprenticeship offerings. Apprentices will complete their associate or bachelor's degree and earn their state ECE credentials.
Contact	Deidre McMahon, mcmahon.deidre@swcdcinc.org

Early Childhood Education - Cohort 1 Project Summaries

Organization	The Enola Group Inc \$617,697
Project	The Three Rs: Recruitment, Retention, and Reinforcement of Early Childhood Education
Purpose	The focus of this project is to provide ECE teachers in Burke County with professional learning opportunities to improve work conditions. The Enola Group will recruit high school and community college students into the field and provide paid on-the-job experiences that will supplement their academic instruction. This will strengthen the current workforce by creating a stream of experienced and licensed ECE professionals. The goals are that participating centers will increase their teacher retention rates and at least 70% of the students will be employed in ECE programs after graduation.
Contact	Nancy Wood, nancy.wood@enolagroup.org

Organization	Verner \$748,497
Project	Developing the Center for Resilient Educators & Families
Purpose	This project will allow Verner to offer interventions to support ECE teacher mental health, in the form of group therapy services, to ECE center-based teachers and family childcare providers. Verner will also provide resources to partner providers to support using emotionally responsive practices (ERP) in their classrooms or home. ERP is “the process of informing teacher-child interactions, daily routine, and pro-social curriculum with a deep knowledge of both child development and children’s life experience.” In addition to these services, wrap-around supports for dealing with challenging classroom behavior will be provided. Verner will begin by serving its own teacher population, and then extend services to other Buncombe County ECE teachers.
Contact	Laura Martin, lmartin@verneremail.org

Early Childhood Education - Cohort 1 Project Summaries

Organization	WNCSource \$987,914
Project	Building Blocks for the ECE Workforce
Purpose	This project will increase access to jobs in the ECE profession for individuals in Henderson, Polk, Rutherford, and Transylvania counties by providing training, support, and career advancement opportunities. WNCSource's ECE Training Program provides assistance with tuition and supply costs, tutoring expenses, teaching mentors, and a Trainee Coach to help ensure all trainees have an opportunity to succeed in the program. The program prioritizes recruitment of Head Start families and WNCSource Housing clients, cultivating new ECE workers who are familiar with the Head Start model, are racially and culturally diverse, and represent the population being served. Additionally, through recruitment, training, and licensing incentives, this project will focus on increasing more high-quality family childcare providers in the area.
Contact	Margit Nelson, mnelson@wncsource.org

Organization	Western Carolina University \$868,885
Project	LEAF in ECE: Leadership, Equity, and Access Fellowship in Early Childhood Education
Purpose	LEAF in ECE will offer a new track for BK licensure by supporting unlicensed ECE teacher candidates who live in WNC to "fast-track" through a conventional teacher licensure program while maintaining a comprehensive curricular focus on equity. Candidates can complete the program in as few as 18 months. The purpose of this project is to increase the number of classrooms in the region which are led by LEAF fellows. The goal is to have graduates contribute to the growth in the workforce, which means at least 540 more children will be served by a licensed teacher in the region. The recruitment efforts will focus on increasing the representation of the BIPOC community and culturally and linguistically diverse individuals who serve in lead teaching positions.
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