

**Mecklenburg County, NC Response to US Department of Education CFDA 84.419C  
Preschool Development Grants - Preschool PFS Feasibility Pilot Grant**

**Abstract: Public Pre-K in Mecklenburg County PFS Feasibility Pilot Grant Proposal**

Mecklenburg County (County), in partnership with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS), and other stakeholders, is submitting this proposal to receive a grant award under this funding opportunity to conduct a feasibility study to determine whether and how the Pay For Success (PFS) financing mechanism can be employed to enhance CMS' Bright Beginnings preschool model and to serve more educationally and/or economically at-risk four-year-old children (up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level).

This program will be known as Public Pre-K for eligible four-year-olds in Mecklenburg County (*PPKMC*). There are an estimated 2,700 four-year-old children (many of whom are minorities) living in households at less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level who cannot yet be served within current funding levels for either public pre-K or high quality subsidized child care. These unserved eligible children will be our target population.

Key activities include creating a highly effective PFS stakeholder team, engaging a reputable intermediary to guide the technical work, developing knowledgeable working groups to address every aspect of necessary feasibility analysis, and using expert subject advisors to support the PFS stakeholder team and working groups.

The County's priorities for the feasibility study include: 1) demonstrating the efficacy of PPKMC with use of existing research and the integration of existing robust data from the

County, CMS and providers; 2) developing outcome measures that can be monetized to payers, funders, and others; and 3) applying performance-based contracting to leverage accountable early childhood education innovation and investment.

The application features we believe make Mecklenburg County a compelling candidate include:

1) a clear need and strong commitment to meet that need; 2) the opportunity to test a high quality pre-K model; 3) a high likelihood of successful completion of quality PFS feasibility study within a year, 4) commitment of appropriate resources and strong community collaboration; and 5) our openness to learning and sharing.

If awarded this grant, the County intends to use PFS feasibility study results to:

- Inform expansion of public pre-k to meet the needs of all at-risk four-year-olds;
- Demonstrate a return on investment (ROI) for critical transaction participants (payers, funders, etc.) that can be recognized as children enter kindergarten and progress; and
- Build public will for investment in universal pre-k for four-year-olds (beyond the confines of PFS) with county residents seeing the value of high quality preschool education for their community and seeking to support its further expansion through public means.