



<p><b>\$175,000 in Funding for the NC Healthy Start Foundation (part of the Healthy Babies Bundle)</b></p>
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**For almost 25 years, the NC Healthy Start Foundation (NCHSF) has been working to eliminate preventable infant death and illness in North Carolina:** In 1990, the Foundation was established as a nonprofit agency to coordinate the activities of Governor Martin's Commission on Reduction of Infant Mortality. This unique public/private partnership relationship has resulted in a high level of collaboration with state government agencies, local health departments, community-based organizations and others.

**The NC Healthy Start Foundation provides community-based organizations in all 100 counties with evidence-based strategies and communications to improve the health of women of reproductive age and their babies:** NCHSF staff researches the complex issues that affect birth outcomes and the best practices designed to improve birth outcomes and infant health. The NCHSF then distills this information into practical actions for local agencies. Results from the most recent year of their RICHES project show that NCHSF reached 800 organizational members from all 100 counties, held 13 regional meetings (327 agencies), hosted 8 webinars and trainings (391 participants) and provided 32,978 technical service encounters; 571 of these groups, in turn, reported local activities as a result of their participation.

**NCHSF makes it easier for over-stretched local organizations to use best practices:** The NC Healthy Start Foundation analyzes data and efficiently targets geographic areas and demographic groups in greatest need. Staff also conduct focus groups in order to develop and promote strategies that incorporate best practices to improve infant health and which are effective in NC. Examples include: 1) *College and university peer education programs* that use trained peer educators to provide education in the areas of sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, preconception health, pregnancy and parenting; 2) *Young Families Connect Project* that offers support and resources to pregnant teens/young women and new parents; and 3) *The Friendship Project* that trains and pairs volunteers with pregnant women to provide emotional and social support throughout pregnancy and for six weeks after delivery. However, NCHSF has recently reduced its programs and support for local programs due to state budget cuts resulting in a loss of more than \$700,000.

**NCHSF strengthens local capacity and avoids duplication:** The NC Healthy Start Foundation builds the capacity of participating community-based organizations by bringing them together to discuss shared concerns and create local solutions and by serving as a centralized clearinghouse and disseminating up-to-date resources and research; best practices and promising models; downloadable materials and tools; and information about grants, conferences and trainings. The NCHSF also provides assistance to community-based organizations on content and effective strategies (such as texting, web-based, social media, TV/radio, etc.) NCHSF's award-winning public service announcements are available to organizations to distribute to local media. This resource sharing assures that best communication practices are used and accurate information is disseminated while reducing the need for each community or agency to use scarce resources to "reinvent the wheel."

**Funding NCHSF with state dollars will draw down additional federal dollars and will be matched by the private sector:** For example, in FY11-12 NCHSF received approximately \$434,000 in state general fund dollars which was matched with approximately \$260,000 in federal dollars. In addition, a private foundation will match, dollar for dollar, up to \$250,000 for new funds received by the NCHSF in 2014.