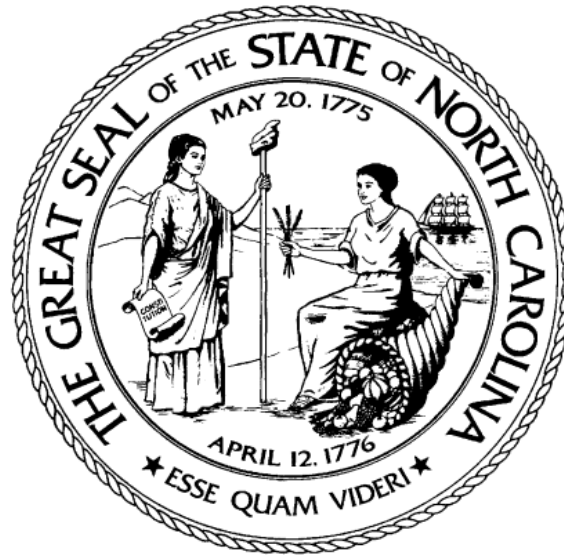


**North Carolina Children's Trust Fund Expenditures
State Fiscal Year 2022-2023**

N.C.G.S. § 7B-1301-1302



Report to

The Joint Legislative Commission on

Governmental Operations

by

NC Department of Health and Human Services

May 1, 2024

Introduction

Pursuant to N.C.G.S. §7B-1302(b), the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) shall report revenues and expenditures of the Children's Trust Fund to the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations. DHHS, through the Division of Social Services (DSS), provides the staff and support services for implementing the Children's Trust Fund in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 7B-1301 and offers this report on the Fund's revenues and expenditures for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022-2023.

SFY 2022-2023 Children's Trust Fund Activities

The North Carolina Children's Trust Fund programming supports cross-agency collaborative, community-based initiatives to provide outreach, support, and services to individuals and families identified as being at-risk of compromised health and safety. They strive to eliminate or reduce those risks by promoting protective factors that strengthen and support families.

In SFY 2022-2023, North Carolina Children's Trust Program Services supported eight community-based agencies to provide Respite programs, which is a short-term service provided in the temporary absence of the regular caregiver to children who are at risk of victimization, who have experienced victimization, and/or who have disabilities, chronic or terminal illness. This service is provided within or outside the child's home and is intended to enable the family to stay together and to keep the child(ren) living at home and in the community.

These voluntary, free services helped increase the capacity of parents and caregivers to care for their children, helped children develop healthy coping mechanisms, improved caregiver-child relationships, and reduced family stress. In addition, these eight Children's Trust Fund Programs demonstrated collaborative relationships with community partners and meaningful family engagement.

Children's Trust Fund Programs were required to meet the following requirements:

1. Provide voluntary services based on the Principles of Family Support Practice.
2. Demonstrate a commitment to meaningful parent engagement and leadership opportunities.
3. Provide prevention services that target populations most at risk of child abuse or neglect.
4. Promote the five protective factors linked to lower incidence of child abuse and neglect.
5. Describe emerging evidence that demonstrates respite services' positive impact on children and their families in their application.
6. Use evaluation tools to demonstrate positive outcomes for children and families.
7. Promote racial equity, diversity and inclusion within the agency and programs.

In SFY 2022-2023, the Division of Social Services obligated \$307,295 in NC Children's Trust Fund dollars in addition to a 25% agency match of \$103,138 to support the following eight community-based agencies. The eight agencies listed in this report were funded with the NC Children's Trust Fund through a competitive Request for Applications (RFA) process starting in SFY 2021-2022 as part of a 3-year grant cycle with a one-year extension.

Caring for Children - Buncombe County

Caring for Children has provided respite services to children and their families for 15 years to build behavioral and developmental skills, reduce out-of-home placements, and strengthen families. The Respite Scholarship program offers a voucher-based program, where qualified families can select their own respite provider. Caring for Children served 82 parents/caregivers and 170 children in SFY 2022-2023.

The Children's Center of Surry County - Surry, Stokes, Yadkin, and Wilkes Counties

The Children's Center of Surry County has provided group foster care since 1998 and respite services to children and their families since 2009. Their respite program provides a safe and nurturing environment to give caregivers and families support by providing a short time stay at the Center, either during the day or at night. Children's Center of Surry County served 30 parents/caregivers and 30 children in SFY 2022-2023.

Coastal Horizons Center - New Hanover County

Coastal Horizons Center offers child, adolescent, and family services to Southeastern North Carolina. Since 1972, the agency's Open House Emergency Youth Shelter & Residential Services has provided shelter and respite services for youth ages 6-18 who are at risk of or have experienced child abuse or neglect. Coastal Horizons Center served 25 parents/caregivers and 27 children in SFY 2022-2023.

Exchange Club /SCAN – Alamance and Orange Counties

The Exchange Club's Family Center in Alamance County is a non-profit agency that was founded in 1997. The mission of the agency is the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect, and Respite services are a natural fit for the continuum of prevention services offered at the agency. These Respite services in Alamance and Orange counties help lower financial costs, decrease children in foster care, and prevent both new and reoccurring incidents of maltreatment. The Exchange Family Center served 42 parents/caregivers and 54 children in SFY 2022-2023.

Parenting Path (Exchange Club) - Forsyth County

Exchange Club Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse of North Carolina (Parenting PATH) was founded in 1981 and provided respite services to families at risk of abuse or neglect due to poverty, domestic violence, or young children under 5 years old. Parenting PATH provides short term respite placements for children, age birth through 17, including those with emotional or physical disabilities in Alamance and Forsyth counties. In particular, they focus on families who are experiencing stress, crisis, or illness. Parenting Path served 37 parents/caregivers and 53 children in SFY 2022-2023.

Wake County Human Services - Wake County

Since the early 1990s, the Family Services Program at Wake County Human Services has provided child abuse and neglect prevention services to children and their families. In 2008, the program launched its first Kinship Care support group which provided respite for the caregivers and education programming for the children and youth. The Family Services Program specifically targets children in Wake County from birth through 18 years and their caregivers to reduce the risk of abuse and/or neglect. These services include information, linkage and referral; monthly respite support groups with child/youth educational programming; overnight youth "Lock-In"; weekend respite youth groups; and

case management. Wake County Human Services served 60 parents/caregivers and 75 children in SFY 2022-2023.

Wayne Uplift Resource Association - Wayne County

Since 2007, Wayne Uplift Resource Association, Inc. has provided respite services to children and their families in Wayne County through Parents Anonymous® Empowerment Program. These services will include weekly, 2-hour parent-led support sessions using the Parents Anonymous® model offered to caregivers who are domestic violence victims, weekly 2-hour children group sessions utilizing the Parents Anonymous® Children curriculum offered to dependent children of domestic violence victims, and resources/referral services. Wayne Uplift Resource Association served 28 parents/caregivers and 36 children in SFY 2022-2023.

Youth Focus Inc. - Guilford County

Since 1981, Youth Focus Inc. has provided respite services to children and their families. The Act Together Crisis Care program specifically targets children in Guilford County from age 10 through 17 years and their caregivers in an effort to reduce the risk of child maltreatment. Act Together is a 12-bed facility for youth who have run away, are experiencing a family crisis, are the victims of abuse or neglect, or become homeless for other reasons. The maximum stay is 21 days. Youth Focus served 29 parents/caregivers and 29 children in SFY 2022-2023.

Children's Trust Fund Fiscal Data

SFY 2022-2023 Revenues

In SFY 2022-2023, a total of \$481,931 in revenue was generated for the North Carolina Children's Trust Fund. Of this total:

- \$362,218 was received from marriage license fees
- \$16,575 was received from the special license plate fees (Kids First)
- \$103,138 was provided from required contractor match

SFY 2022-2023 Expenditures

In SFY 2022-2023, a total of \$410,433 was expended through eight community-based agencies to deliver child abuse and neglect prevention programming. Of this total:

- \$307,295 was expended through NC Children's Trust Funds
- \$103,138 was expended through provider match

American Rescue Plan Act Funds

In November 2021, the Governor's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) budget was ratified as part of Senate Bill 105 to support families' recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, protect children's safety, and promote healthy development. During SFY 2022-2023, federal ARPA funds in the amount of \$23,283 supplemented NCDSS Respite programs to provide emergency relief and concrete supports such as food, diapers, housing, utilities, transportation, and education to 185 families. North Carolina will have access to ARPA funds in SFY 2023-2024 and SFY 2024-2025 as well.