



NEFHSC Awarded Federal Funding to Address Infant Health Equity

Coalition One of Four Healthy Starts Involved in White House's Blueprint for Addressing the Maternal Health Crisis

Jacksonville, Fla. (Nov. 3, 2022) – The Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition (NEFHSC) is one of four Healthy Start organizations receiving funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), to improve maternal and infant health. NEFHSC was awarded \$500,000 annually as part of the multimillion, five-year effort aimed to help reduce disparities in maternal and birth outcomes and other significant issues detailed in the Catalyst for Infant Health Equity Program.

Although the NEFHSC has been working for more than 30 years to increase awareness of the high rate of infant mortality locally, the HRSA funding will help NEFHSC go beyond individual-level direct service interventions to policy and holistic systems changes with the intent to alter the social, physical, and economic environment that shapes health behaviors and outcomes.

“This grant will allow us to more fully research and address the root causes contributing to our babies and mamas dying including taking a more upstream approach with dedicated focus on preconception health,” said Faye Johnson, CEO of NEFHSC. “There is a significant disparity in infant deaths, especially in certain ZIP Codes in Duval County with Black infants being up to three times more likely to die in infancy compared to White babies. All babies regardless of circumstances deserve a healthy start.”

The HRSA grant will help establish the Northeast Florida Maternal and Child Health Policy and Research Center to advance evidence-based policies to address infant health equity. It will also help NEFHSC expand its outreach efforts focused on improving community systems and services that influence health outcomes.

“To make meaningful change, we need to center our work on the individuals and families we are serving, and that is what these investments aim to do,” said HRSA Administrator Carole Johnson. “The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to prioritizing equity and reducing the unacceptable disparities in maternal and infant health.”

The Catalyst for Infant Health Equity, is one of four programs receiving HRSA funding to implement the [White House Blueprint for Addressing the Maternal Health Crisis](#), a five-goal report aimed to support safe pregnancies and childbirth, eliminate pregnancy-related health disparities, and improve health outcomes for parents and infants across the U.S.

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About the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition

The NEFHSC leads the community effort to reduce infant death and improve the health of children, childbearing women, fathers and their families in Northeast Florida. For more information, view [our media kit](#) or contact Erin Addington at eaddington@nefhsc.org or 904.447.9853.

Disclaimer: The Catalyst for Infant Health Equity grant is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$2.5 million with 5 percent financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent official views of, nor an endorsement by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. government. For more information, please visit HRSA.gov.

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