



First Children's Finance

First Children's Finance Receives \$199,659 Grant from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation

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First Children's Finance has received a \$199,659 Healthy Start grant from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation.

The Healthy Start award will help the First Children's First Nations (FCFN) initiative build upon and integrate improvements to the previously piloted FCFN process, which included three Minnesota Tribes: the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, and the Lower Sioux Indian Community.

Through the award, FCFN will provide ongoing technical assistance to the Tribes, offer the FCFN process to an additional Minnesota Tribe, and conduct focus groups with elected Tribal leaders to inform the development of a knowledge product to build Tribes' capacity to make policy, financing, and other systems changes that increase the supply of high quality, affordable, culturally and linguistically relevant care.

"Despite the provision of pandemic-era child care stabilization grant funding to Tribal Nations, there remains a severe child care shortage throughout Tribal communities in Minnesota," said Jannan Cotto, First Children's Finance Tribal Child Care Systems Coordinator. "The FCFN team is thrilled to continue partnering with Tribes to innovate and ensure a sustainable and robust child care system."

The FCFN initiative is the result of a unique partnership between First Children's Finance (FCF) and All Nations Rise (ANR). Launched in 2020, the First Children, First Nations Child Care Collaborative (FCFN) is a first-of-its kind community engagement

process that leverages Tribal sovereignty and community assets to increase the supply of high quality, affordable, culturally and linguistically relevant child care in Tribal Nations and Tribal communities. The purpose is to guide communities in identifying the scope and size of their child care challenges and to empower and support Tribal Nations and Tribal communities to develop local solutions to address these challenges.

“Tribal Nations all across the U.S. are experiencing child care shortages, and the Minnesota Tribes are no exception. The Healthy Start funding from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation will enable FCFN to support Minnesota Tribes’ efforts to increase culturally and linguistically relevant care in their communities,” said Barb Fabre, CEO/President of Indigenous Visioning and All Nations Rise.

FCFN will identify an additional Tribal partner by January 2025.

About First Children’s Finance

First Children’s Finance is dedicated to growing the supply and business sustainability of excellent child care. Founded in 1991, First Children’s Finance addresses the business and finance needs of child care in three ways: building the financial sustainability of child care entrepreneurs, partnering with communities to preserve and grow their child care supply, and influencing state and federal systems to provide supports and investments needed to sustain child care businesses.

About All Nations Rise

All Nations Rise (ANR) is a non-profit agency established by Indigenous Visioning (IV) in 2021 to strengthen tribal communities, both rural and urban, by promoting and enhancing high quality early childhood programs that support children and families through a cultural lens.

All Nations Rise is an entity that helps strengthen support for indigenous communities to enhance and maintain high quality child care and early childhood systems and improve lived experiences of Indigenous children in rural and urban Tribal communities. All Nations Rise works with the philanthropic community to establish partnerships in reaching shared goals.

About the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation builds strong community partnerships to advance racial and health equity, awarding more than \$75 million to over 600 nonprofits since it was established in 1986. For more information on Blue Cross’ grantmaking programs, visit bluecrossmnfoundation.org.