



NEWS RELEASE

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\$1 Million Grant Will Help At-Risk Wake County Families Thrive

Every day, hundreds of Wake County social workers provide at-risk families with support and services to ensure children thrive in safe, stable homes. A new \$1 million grant from [The Duke Endowment](#) will provide innovative resources to help families thrive.

Officially accepted at the [August 19 Board of Commissioners meeting](#), the grant allows the county to hire four nurses to work alongside social workers to visit homes and recommend and coordinate needed resources for children at-risk of entering foster care.

“We have a profound responsibility to ensure that children in Wake County are safe and living in stable homes,” said Wake County Board of Commissioners Chair Jessica Holmes. “I commend our team for always looking for new approaches and funding to provide children with permanency and to help ensure that our most vulnerable families are as strong as possible. We’re very grateful for this grant and the opportunity to strengthen families.”

The nurses will review the medical and behavioral health records of children involved with Wake County Human Services' Child Welfare Division and will work with families to help them understand the services their child needs. The nurses will also help reduce the waiting time to access services.

Additionally, the nurses will attend home visits, planning meetings and appear in court to advise decision makers on hazards to infant/toddler safety, environmental impacts on chronic illnesses, behavioral health interventions and more.

The grant provides the \$1 million funding over the course of three years, with each year focusing on specific aspects of child welfare:

- Year 1 focuses on includes working with older youth that are involved in the juvenile justice system, families being assessed for child welfare involvement and those currently receiving services to prevent out-of-home child placement.
- Year 2 includes at-risk families who do not meet the criteria for child welfare involvement but for whom concerns have been raised.
- Year 3 will focus on post-service care including recently reunited families, those previously receiving in-home services and youth who have recently aged out of foster care.

Per the terms of the grant agreement, the nurses will also spend one day each week in the Wake County Human Services' Public Health clinics assisting staff with the high volume of patients obtaining services.

Based in Charlotte and established in 1924 by industrialist and philanthropist James B. Duke, [The Duke Endowment](#) is a private foundation that strengthens communities in North Carolina and South Carolina by

nurturing children, promoting health, educating minds and enriching spirits. Since its founding, it has distributed more than \$3.7 billion in grants. The Endowment shares a name with Duke University and Duke Energy, but all are separate organizations.

Wake County Human Services' Child Welfare Division comprises nearly 300 staff who work with families at-risk of child abuse, neglect or dependency. In 2018, the Division received 10,000 reports of suspected abuse or neglect with 5,000 cases requiring follow-up. Of those, 800 families were able to remain together while addressing concerns due to prevention and in-home support while another 800 children were placed outside the home. Currently, there are about 170 foster families in Wake County with about 560 children in care.

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