

# Connecticut

## Greater New Haven

United Way of Greater New Haven (UWGNH) is one of the EHS-CCP grantees in Connecticut. Their partners include three center-based child care programs, one of which is located within a high school, and All Our Kin, an organization that supports a network of FCC providers. UWGNH first received an Early Head Start grant through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and they used that grant to partner with child care providers to deliver services. They designed their partnership grant as an extension of that work.

### FAST FACTS

62	50	4	3	\$936,888
Children Directly Benefiting	Children Indirectly Benefiting	Child Care Partners	Local Communities Affected	Total Grant Amount

### THE MODEL STANDOUTS

**Expanding to a Previously Underserved Community:** UWGNH is a regional organization and prioritizes service delivery in communities that are underserved. New Haven continues to have the largest population of children who need Early Head Start in the state, but as communities in the region change and populations shift, it is important to reconsider services placement and add services to these communities.

**A Focus on FCC:** UWGNH prioritizes FCC in their EHS-CCP grant by partnering with All Our Kin. All Our Kin is a non-profit dedicated to building high-quality, sustainable FCC programs. Their model is a cost-effective way to build a network of FCC providers with the supports necessary to offer high-quality services to children and families. All Our Kin contracts with FCC providers to offer direct services to children in the area. They also have a centralized team that goes out to each FCC partner site monthly to deliver professional development coaching and trainings, as well as host of comprehensive services for children and families. The complete set of network services is estimated to cost about \$833 per child, per year.

**Supporting Teen Parents:** One of UWGNH's partner sites is a child care center housed within a high school that provides care to children while their parents finish school. UWGNH recognizes young parents as a particularly vulnerable population. The EHS-CCP grant provides additional resources to this program to ensure that families have the wraparound supports they need to succeed and the quality enhancements in the classroom that support children.

**Expanding Access to Higher Education:** In addition to offering coaching and training to partner staff, UWGNH contracts with a local community college to offer CDA infant/toddler courses. Groups of early educators take the courses as a cohort in the evenings or on weekends, which provides a sense of community and peer learning. Contracting directly with the community college is a cost-effective method for enhancing staff credentials. For example, the cost of a three-credit course for an individual is \$569, while the cost per student (for a 25-student class in the cohort model) is \$400; that's a savings of \$4,225 per class.

**Family Engagement:** UWGNH prioritizes engaging with families. All partner sites employ a family advocate whose job is to work with families to identify their strengths and develop family goals. Advocates help connect families to services, such as medical and dental services, and assist them in scheduling appointments and securing follow-ups. Last year, 100 percent of children in the program had a medical and dental home or a primary care provider that the family visited on a regular basis, and all children were up to date on their child well-visits and immunizations. UWGNH encourages families to get involved in the program, and families receive supports, such as meals, transportation, and child care, to ensure they can attend meetings. Even when their children age out of the program, many parents continue to stay involved through the program's policy council.



## THE RESULTS

- **All partners received increased salaries for their staff.**
- **All partners improved their facilities**, including indoor and outdoor learning spaces. They installed new playgrounds, enhanced security measures, and restructured classrooms.
- **There was an expanded focus on family engagement.** One partner hired their first family advocate. Another partner increased the hours of their family advocate, who works with teen parents to help them attain needed services.
- **Seven FCC providers and one assistant are pursuing infant/toddler credentials or CDAs.**
- **Prior to the EHS-CCP, none of the FCC providers had access to nutrition, disabilities, mental health, or educational consultants. Now, all of them do.**
- **Before the EHS-CCP, none of the FCC providers offered dental services or vision and hearing screenings to children. Now, all of them do.**
- **Prior to the partnership, none of the FCC providers were using research-based tools for observation, curriculum planning, or implementation. Now, 100 percent use research-based tools.**
- **Pre and post assessments showed quality improvements in the FCC programs across a variety of outcomes.**



*Ciera had her son, Jayceon, when she was just 15. She was a high school freshman. Now 3 years old, Jayceon recently aged out of United Way of Greater New Haven's Early Head Start program. "I knew I wanted to stay in school, I just didn't know how that was going to be possible," Ciera said. The program provided Ciera with a family advocate who supported her by checking in with her on grades, as well as by guiding her through the college application process. Now, Ciera is beginning her second semester at Southern Connecticut State University, with ambitions of becoming a teacher, and Jay is flourishing in preschool.*

## THE TAKEAWAYS

UWGNH uses the partnership model as a mechanism to increase the quality of the early childhood system for all children. This is most evident in the partnership's ripple effects on the children who are not directly enrolled in the program but who share a classroom or center with enrolled children. These children benefit through access to improved learning spaces, more highly trained teachers, and new curricula and assessments. This ripple effect is particularly salient in FCC homes, where the EHS-CCP typically funds only about half of the children they serve.

The partnership program is an important model for how systemic change can occur. To bring about more wide-scale change across

the community and state, the partnership must be expanded. The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood's 2017 *Unmet Needs Report* found that approximately 32,002 families with infants and toddlers in Connecticut require full-time care. Currently, there are just 20,015 spaces for infants and toddlers in licensed or regulated full-time child care programs statewide, indicating an 11,988-slot shortage. Plus, the existing spaces are not all high-quality, which means there's an even larger deficit between need and high-quality care and learning spaces.<sup>8</sup>

FCC is an important part of the early learning system that is often overlooked. In many cases, FCC providers are a solution to lack of supply in rural and underserved communities. They may also be the



best fit to provide more culturally responsive early care and education to diverse families. UWGNH and its partners note how transformative it is for families to have access to high-quality, affordable infant/toddler care in their neighborhoods, within walking distance, that is also representative of their language and culture. Network models, such as All Our Kin, provide a promising direction for FCC providers seeking access to professional development and comprehensive services so that they, too, can continue to be recognized as high-quality options for families.

A strong collaboration with the state agency that administers the CCDF is critical to the success of the partnership. Though aligning the subsidy system with Head Start can be challenging, it is necessary for the EHS-CCP to succeed. UWGNH refers Early Head Start-eligible children to apply for a child care subsidy through the regular process. However, if referred families are not eligible, the state has funding set aside to ensure that those families also have access to some financial support and that, in turn, the partnership gets the revenue they need to stay afloat.

