

SECURE Matched Savings for Buncombe County Childcare Workers

FY2021 Early Childhood Grants

CCCS of WNC, Inc. DBA OnTrack Financial Education & Counseling

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Application Form

INSTRUCTIONS

Buncombe County requests proposals for community based projects to enhance outcomes for young children and their families in our community. Grants made through the Early Childhood Education and Development Fund will be focused on access to quality early childhood care and education.

Please refer to the Grant Guidelines published on the Early Childhood Grants website at buncombecounty.org/grants for complete information about the grant program, including: Purpose; Funding; Eligibility; Timeline; Grant writing workshop; Review process; Awards; and more.

Applications are due by 5:00 pm on February 14, 2020.

BASIC INFORMATION

BASIC INFORMATION – Before completing the application, please tell us a little about the request.

Project Name*

SECURE Matched Savings for Buncombe County Childcare Workers

Strategy*

Recognizing that some projects will use more than one strategy, select the strategy that most closely applies to this project:

Implementing workforce development strategies to recruit and retain qualified teachers

Funding Request*

How much funding is this project requesting for FY2021?

\$99,975.00

Grant Guidelines*

Have you read and understand the information presented in the FY2021 Grant Guidelines for Early Childhood Grants (Grant Guidelines)?

If no, please contact County staff to request assistance: Rachael Nygaard, (828) 250-6536 or rachael.nygaard@buncombecounty.org.

Yes

APPLICATION

APPLICATION QUESTIONS – Responses to these questions will be scored by the grant committee. Each question is worth 10% of the final score.

Organization*

Give a brief history, including date of founding, focus, services, and record of success.

Founding/focus: Our agency was established in 1973 as Consumer Credit Counseling Service of WNC. In 2007 we changed our name to OnTrack Financial Education & Counseling to better convey the broad programs and services we offer. Our mission is to help people achieve their money and housing goals through financial education, counseling, and support so they can overcome crises, afford basic needs, improve money-management skills, and make sound financial choices rooted in their values. We advance economic self-sufficiency by increasing our clients' financial capability with knowledge, skills, action and access to appropriate financial products.

History/Services: Through recessions, foreclosure crises, high unemployment, and inflation, OnTrack has helped clients stabilize their financial/housing, repay debt, learn money management skills, create emergency savings, and build assets. We have a history of strategic innovation to meet community needs, and exceptional staff members who provide high-quality client-centered services.

Success (relevant to this grant): OnTrack's extensive experience with matched savings for homeownership led Community Foundation of WNC (CFWNC) to ask us to design a matched savings program to impact people in poverty. Based on numerous studies showing the stabilizing impact of emergency savings, we created the SECURE Matched Savings Program to help low-income clients build savings while learning money management knowledge/skills. The success of the 2016 pilot led to three subsequent grants from CFWNC, our first-ever workforce program in partnership with a local employer, and a regional expansion which includes Haywood Habitat for Humanity, United Way of Henderson County and Recovery Ventures Corp. (substance use rehabilitation). By the end of the 2019-2021 grant at total of 785 people will have benefitted from SECURE's financial education/counseling and 550 will graduate with a savings match of at least \$540!

Need for the Project*

What is the main issue this project is established to address? What data or qualitative factors/stories are available to show that need?

The main issue is that SAVINGS are important to financial stability, but low-wages and high housing costs make it difficult for childcare workers to build an emergency fund. EARN.org's findings support our approach with SECURE: "Families with savings of just \$250 to \$749 are less likely to be evicted, miss a payment, or receive public benefits after a financial shock like losing a job."

According to the 2020 State of Child Care report, the median hourly wage for teachers ranges from \$13 - \$17.05; for assistant teachers \$11.60 - \$13, as compared to the Living Wage of \$13.65/hour without employer provided health insurance and \$12.15/hour with employer provided health insurance (Just Economics Jan. 2019).

With wages at this level childcare workers face living paycheck-to-paycheck. LIVING in our community is expensive! The August 2019 Bowen Report for Buncombe shows housing affordability is not improving. 46%

of renters and 21% of homeowners are paying over 30% of income towards housing (cost burdened). 19.4% of renters and 7.9% of homeowners are paying over 50% (severely cost burdened). Even with a higher rental vacancy rate, rents have increased at a “relatively rapid rate of 5.4% annually.”

High housing costs and low wages often leave no room for saving. Emergency expenses, such as a car repair or illness can wreak havoc on a person’s ability to get to work and provide for their families. Some regularly use unsecured debt to make ends meet or survive hardships; over-extended debt cripples their financial present and future, making regular savings virtually impossible.

Family Assets Count reports, “Financially vulnerable households are without assets or adequate savings to cover basic expenses for three months in the event of an emergency. With little recourse but to borrow, these “liquid asset poor” working families can get caught in a vicious cycle of debt.”

SECURE can help childcare workers avoid these money patterns that jeopardize their financial stability.

Project*

Explain the project and how it will work. Include the overall purpose and any models or evidence-based practices that will be included. What specific activities and milestones are included in the project plan?

The SECURE Program, open to Buncombe County childcare workers, offers unique opportunities to gain financial knowledge, take action toward money/housing goals, and build the savings habit. In enrollment workshops, participants learn more and setup savings accounts (Self-Help Credit Union). During the program, participants will take the money management education series, have two counseling sessions, take action steps towards goals and save \$35 per month. After completing requirements, participants will receive a \$4 match for every \$1 they saved (maximum match \$840) for a total of \$1,050 in their emergency fund!

Project Plan:

1. Outreach & Recruitment (July-Sept. 2020): OnTrack will work with Buncombe County Partnership for Children and other County Depts. to cultivate relationships with large childcare providers and to organize email program announcement/invitation to all childcare workers.
2. Enrollment (start Oct. 2020): Orientation sessions will be offered on a rolling basis until the program is at capacity. At the sessions, participants enroll and open SECURE savings accounts.
3. Starting November 2020:
 - a. Programming: Participants work on program requirements including money management classes, counseling appointments, balanced budgets, and action steps towards goals.
 - b. Savings: Participants save monthly until they’ve saved for six consecutive months. If they skip a month or make a withdrawal before graduation, they can start the six months of savings requirement again.
4. Graduation: As participants complete all program requirements, match funds will be paid into their savings accounts. The matching funds from this grant will be fully disbursed by 6/30/2022.
5. Evaluation: Participants will complete an Exit Survey upon program graduation. Results and feedback from childcare facility liaisons and our staff will be used for program enhancements.
6. Future Funding: We hope the program’s success will inspire additional grant support from Buncombe County.

People Served*

Who will be served by this project? Include demographics for children and families served, workforce, and/or any other relevant groups.

SECURE focuses on a subset of the population: Childcare Workers. This workforce development strategy is designed to lessen financial stress on childcare workers by helping them build money management skills, create a savings habit, and earn a cash match for emergency savings.

Through SECURE, OnTrack will enroll 100 childcare workers in Buncombe County who will attend financial education, 82 will participate in financial counseling, and 71 will successfully complete all program requirements and save for six consecutive months to reach a total of \$210 to receive a \$840 match. 36 SECURE graduates will use the free tri-merged credit report/scores to pursue credit-related goals. Program graduates will have gain knowledge, developed skills and will have a total of \$1,050 in their emergency fund!

Results*

What results do you hope to achieve with this project? Be specific about how much impact the project will have in line with the goals of the fund, and how many people will be served.

For projects requesting funding for slots, also please include:

- Total new slots created
- Total slots maintained
- # of Subsidy slots created
- # of Subsidy slots maintained
- # of teachers/staff positions created
- # of teachers/staff positions maintained

RESULTS: SECURE program will enhance the lives of participants from Buncombe County's childcare workforce. Participants will increase their financial capabilities, stability and confidence.

OUTPUTS: We will use the following measures to quantify the extent of SECURE program services. The following are our participation targets:

1. 100 Enroll in the SECURE program
2. 100 Attend money management series (7.5 hours)
3. 82 Receive individual financial counseling (two 1.5 hour sessions)
4. 71 Save \$210 and meet program requirements to graduate and receive a \$840 match for a total of \$1,050 in their emergency fund.
5. 36 Elect to receive a free tri-merge credit report with scores at their second financial counseling appointment to pursue credit-related goals. We find that after the stabilization of having a balanced budget and emergency fund, participants are energized to work on other goals such as getting a car loan, buying a home, and having access to credit products with better interest rates. The credit reports give us the ability to provide counseling on these financial goals as well as working with participants to develop personalized credit improvement action plans.

Evaluation*

How will you know you have succeeded? Explain the project evaluation process, including specific measures that will be tracked.

Performance Goals and Evaluation:

- Outreach/Recruitment: By October 2020, OnTrack will reach at least 50% of Buncombe County childcare workers with SECURE marketing/promotional materials.

- **Enrollment/Programming:** By November 2020, at least 15 childcare workers will be active SECURE participants. Enrollment will continue on a rolling basis with all 100 participation spots filled by December 2021. Our staff will meet regularly to discuss program delivery, address challenges, and make enhancements/adjustments.
- **Graduation/Future:** We project that graduates will report that their ability to save increased by at least 75% and feeling of financial security by at least 50%. Participant exit survey feedback will inform SECURE design and modifications. We will analyze program performance compared to goals (outputs and outcomes) for lessons learned, planning, and funding opportunities.
- **Achieving Success:** We will know that we have successfully achieved our program intent when we have met or exceeded our program outputs (listed above) and outcomes.

OUTCOMES: We gauge success by measuring the number of participants who reach each program milestone. Our outcome goals are:

- 82 participants will create a balanced budget spending plan (82% of enrolled).
- 71 will take at least two specific/measurable action steps with their plan (71% of enrolled).
- 71 will receive the match and have an emergency fund of \$1050 to support periodic expenses and emergencies (71% of enrolled).

Equity*

Describe your approach to racial and socio-economic equity, both inside and outside the organization. What are some specific examples of practices that are in place or to be put in place with this project?

ONGOING: ALL staff will attend Racial Equity Institute (REI) and report out at a staff meeting (currently 73% have attended)

2020: Comprehensive Spanish translation project of all education/counseling materials; New Budget & Debt Class offered in Spanish (monthly); Implicit Bias training for all staff (January) and tax volunteers (February) facilitated by Marsha Davis, Racial Equity Consultant; Board Retreat (March) "Board Diversity: Why Does It Matter?" facilitator Marsha Davis.

2019: Two fluent/native Spanish speakers joined our staff; Homebuyer Program focus groups to gather input from participants to strengthen the program; Board president-elect attended REI and WNC Nonprofit Pathways "Thriving Nonprofit Board" training; Deputy Director participated in a two-year statewide leadership program "Friday Fellows" which focused on learning to lead/communicate across differences (completed in June 2019).

2018: Board/Staff Retreat facilitated by Lucia Daugherty focused on racial equity and inclusion. As a result, our monthly Dashboard includes a Client Racial Demographic Comparison. In 2013, only 12% of our clients were people of color; now it is 27% overall and for Buncombe County 32% with 21% being African American.

2018: Hood Tours for all staff, including a group debrief, paired conversations on equity, and more group discussion; Began the initiative to send all staff and key board members to Racial Equity Institute within two years.

2017: Revised job postings to 1) state our interest in hiring to improve our services to communities of color and the marginalized; 2) remove potentially exclusive language ("white"); and 3) remove educational requirements which can be offset with life experience.

2012: Revised procedures to require external interpreters if a staff member lacks proficiency in a clients' language. We provide bilingual employees additional compensation for the value they add to OnTrack.

Collaboration*

List any formal and/or supportive partners. Describe their roles in the project. How will they make it stronger?

We have several critical partners that ensure success with this collaboration:

- (Current) Self Help Credit Union is a formal partner in SECURE as the financial institution providing affordable, no fee savings accounts to participants and the reporting needed for OnTrack to track participant savings.
- (Future) Buncombe County Partnership for Children and other County Departments: Once the grant award is announced and prior to launching the program, we plan to work with Buncombe County Partnership for Children and other County Departments to ensure we have a comprehensive list of providers (including contact information) and solicit advice on how to market the program to encourage workers to enroll.
- (Future) Large Childcare Providers: Working with local childcare providers will be key to the program's success. To help garner participation at centers with large workforces, we will cultivate internal ambassadors for the program, and provide information and orientation sessions on-site to make enrolling convenient.

Budget*

Download a copy of the budget form [HERE](#). Complete the form, and upload it using the button below.

Explain how grant funds will be used, specifically what type of expenses will be covered by County funds. Describe other sources of revenue, including type of funding, source, restrictions and status.

FY21_ECE_Grant_OnTrack WNC Budget_Form - Buncombe County Childcare.xlsx

OnTrack's request of \$99,975 is for a two-year period with 61% (\$60,914) of the grant request designated as match money for participants' personal savings/emergency fund and credit reports. Thirty-nine percent (\$39,061) of the grant supports the program operating costs, primarily the positions that deliver the financial education and counseling, coordination, and supervision.

As described in the Optional Information below, the two-year grant commitment is important for participant success. Grant disbursements can be made in two annual installments of \$49,988 (year 1) and \$49,987 (year 2)

This SECURE program is designed as a stand-alone program specifically for Buncombe County childcare workers, so Buncombe County is the sole funder for the program.

Sustainability*

How will the project continue to succeed after the funding of the grant? Explain your plan for making this an ongoing effort.

Our goal is for the success and impact of SECURE Matched Savings for Buncombe County Childcare Workers to justify additional funding from the Buncombe County Early Childhood Education & Development Fund, funding from another entity, and/or SECURE could evolve from a grant funded program to system-wide program to build stability in the childcare workforce.

OPTIONAL INFORMATION

OPTIONAL INFORMATION – This information will not impact grant scoring but will be helpful to the committee.

Partial Funding

If the project were to be offered a grant for partial funding, what factors would need to be considered?

We hope that this project will receive full funding. In 2019 we applied for a three-year grant, but our proposal was not approved. To increase our chances for approval and funding this year, we reduced our request a two-year program to lower the overall cost.

If, instead of full funding, partial funding is awarded, the following are two ways the total grant amount could be reduced:

1) Match amount: Because childcare workers face low wages coupled with high housing costs, we recommend the 4:1 match as presented in the grant. This match amount means that program graduates will have an emergency fund of \$1,050. If partial funding is offered, the savings match could be reduced to 3:1.

2) Number of participants: If the County provides partial funding but still wants to provide the 4:1 match, we will rework the budget to serve fewer people with the amount awarded.

As described in the “multi-year funding” section below, the two-year grant commitment is important for participant success; we do not recommend reducing the program to a one-year timeframe to reduce total cost.

Multi-Year Funding

If you would like this project to be considered for multi-year funding (up to 3 years), what amounts would you request for years 2 and 3? What milestones would this funding allow you to accomplish? Explain why more years are needed to accomplish goals.

Yes, we would like to be considered for multi-year funding. We request the allocation of funding to be Year 1: \$49,988 and Year 2: \$49,987.

Our request for two-year funding allows:

- Start-up Time: Connecting with the organizations listed in “Collaborations” and getting their buy-in/support will be vital to the success of SECURE for Childcare Workers.
- Multiple opportunities to enroll: We anticipate that initial marketing will generate a strong response. When participants enthusiastically tell co-workers about the life-changing opportunity, more will be inspired to enroll.
- Enrollment to be spread out: The SECURE pilot shows that a one-year grant compresses enrollments and demand for education/counseling. Multi-year funding creates more opportunities and better manages the demand.
- Time to succeed: Saving is difficult for participants who are low-middle income earners and may have significant debts and struggle to make ends meet. A multi-year program provides time for participants to use what they learned in classes, create realistic/balanced budgets and successfully save for six consecutive months – even if they need to use their savings for emergencies and restart the six months of consecutive savings.

Resource Support

How can Buncombe County support your organization with this project and in strengthening your work (related to equity, scale, or impact)?

As we focus on engaging childcare workers to enroll in SECURE, Buncombe County can support us with information and insights in response to these questions:

- What is the best, most efficient way to reach childcare workers who can benefit from this program?
- In addition to funding, Buncombe County can provide a list of childcare providers, contact information, and marketing/communications suggestions.
- If Buncombe County distributes routine communications to childcare providers, may we include information to promote SECURE and build awareness?
- Can Buncombe County provide us with an internal County liaison/contact to be a resource for us?

Over the course of the grant, OnTrack will be evaluating participation and success rates for the SECURE program with the long-term goal of becoming a permanent program for Buncombe County childcare workers.

Scale-up

What is your vision for how the strategies from this project could contribute to a significant scale-up the overall system to collectively address the child care crisis?

Our vision (short-term): Strategies from SECURE can contribute to the overall wellness of childcare workers in the system by reducing their financial stress, increasing their confidence in managing money and credit, providing an emergency fund to keep unexpected expenses from becoming crises, increasing financial stability, and reducing worker absenteeism caused by unexpected emergencies (like car repairs).

Our vision (long-term): Participants in SECURE could become so proficient at managing their money, savings and credit that they open their own childcare facility which means more childcare slots for families in Buncombe County! Matched savings could evolve into a system-wide benefit that helps with recruitment and retention. The success of this SECURE program could inspire additional funding and partnership, with OnTrack and childcare centers working together to offer the SECURE program to the families the centers serve.

Other

Is there anything else that you want the committee to know?

Examples of SECURE client success 2017-2019.pdf

Please take a moment to review the attached Examples of SECURE Client Success from 2017 – 2019. You'll see a broad range of life experiences illustrated in these clients' stories and the ways that building savings and money skills through SECURE gave them financial stability and helped them move towards their goals.

We appreciate this opportunity to apply for funding to expand SECURE to childcare workers in Buncombe County and welcome your questions or requests for additional information. Thank you.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- FY21_ECE_Grant_OnTrack WNC Budget_Form - Buncombe County Childcare.xlsx
- Examples of SECURE client success 2017-2019.pdf

Early Childhood Education and Development Fund Proposed FY2021 Project Budget (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021)

Organization Name:	OnTrack Financial Education & Counseling
Project Name:	SECURE Matched Savings for Buncombe County Childcare Workers
Grant Amount Requested:	\$99,975

FY2021 Proposed Project Revenue	Amount	Notes
Proposed Buncombe County Early Childhood Grant	\$ 99,975.00	
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
Total	\$ 99,975.00	

FY2021 Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Grant	Other Funds	Total	Notes
Personnel	\$ 31,984.00	\$ -	\$ 31,984.00	
Travel/Training	\$ 202.00	\$ -	\$ 202.00	Mileage reimbursements
Technology	\$ 3,983.00	\$ -	\$ 3,983.00	Software (\$2,160), equipment leasing and maintenance (\$1,823)
Curriculum/Assessments		\$ -	\$ -	
Licensing/Dues		\$ -	\$ -	
Nutrition		\$ -	\$ -	
Transportation		\$ -	\$ -	
Supplies/Materials	\$ 323.00	\$ -	\$ 323.00	
Building Maintenance/Repair		\$ -	\$ -	
Rent/Occupancy/Utilities	\$ 2,569.00	\$ -	\$ 2,569.00	
Furniture		\$ -	\$ -	
Playground/Outdoor space		\$ -	\$ -	
Printing/Marketing/Website/Postage		\$ -	\$ -	
Admin Expenses (Legal, Accounting, Insurance, etc.)		\$ -	\$ -	
Other (please list in comments section)	\$ 60,914.00	\$ -	\$ 60,914.00	Client Savings Matches and Incentives (\$60,140), Credit Reports (\$774)
Total			\$ 99,975.00	

Overall Organization Budget	Amount	Notes
FY2019 Actual Year-End Revenue	\$ 1,169,421.00	
FY2019 Actual Year-End Expenses	\$ 1,275,486.00	
FY2020 Adopted Budget Amount	\$ 1,111,845.00	
FY2021 Proposed Budget Amount	\$ 1,211,268.00	



CLIENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

Cynthia Clark



"Before I came to OnTrack WNC I'd lost everything. At every class, I knew I was going to learn something different and see a different perspective on finances. After using what I learned in classes, my finances are in order and credit is being rebuilt."

Cynthia was on the verge of launching her small business when the doctor gave her devastating news: She needed a double knee replacement and she needed it now. By the time she was discharged from the **hospital**, she'd lost everything and moved into the Steadfast House for homeless women.

OnTrack WNC flyers caught Cynthia's attention and as soon as she was able to walk to the bus stop, she began attending our community financial education classes and those offered through the Women's Financial Empowerment Center. Cynthia says that the knowledge she gained and the skills she developed because of OnTrack WNC helped her to "stay focused, disciplined, and confront ALL financial obligations with a positive attitude." Her determination and hard work paid off! She got a job and, with the help of **Homeward Bound**, Cynthia found housing. She didn't stop there; she enthusiastically participated in OnTrack WNC's **SECURE** matched savings pilot program, more classes, and financial counseling sessions. Months later, when faced with a layoff because her employer closed the business, Cynthia's money savvy and savings allowed her to not lose her home and meet basic needs until she found another job!

Congratulations Cynthia Clark ~ 2017 Client of the Year



CLIENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

Shanae Johnson



"Prior to working with OnTrack WNC, I felt really discouraged about credit and I didn't know where to start. The tools and confidence they gave me have given me hope to have a better financial future."

When Shanae started Life Works in 2015 she was a single mom with bad credit and no bank account; plus her wages were being garnished for defaulted student loans. A shared bedroom at her mother's house was home for Shanae and her children. Shanae was determined to tackle her challenges. With **OnTrack WNC's Women's Financial Empowerment Center** counselor, Hillary Holmes, Shanae worked on her budget, got on a payment plan for her student loans, and opened a credit builder loan. With the support of **Life Works** Coach Kate Singogo, Shanae moved into her own place with her two children.

Fast forward to today: Shanae has a **Self-Help Credit Union** bank account, has paid off her federal student loans, participated in matched savings (**SECURE**), paid off her credit builder loan and her credit score has improved 100 points!

There's no stopping Shanae when she has a plan! As she continues to improve her finances working with OnTrack WNC counselor, Amanda Orders, Shanae says, *"I want to have a house one day. I've learned about the credit things I didn't know. I didn't think I could ever have a nice car or home. Now, I feel like these are achievable."*

Congratulations Shanae Johnson ~ 2017 Client of the Year



CLIENT OF THE YEAR AWARD



William Raynor



*"Thank you so much for the **SECURE** savings program and all it has offered! I have come a long way in achieving my financial goals and in other areas of my life, and am still working a little at a time to get there. It is so important to me to have a long term plan and stick with it!"*

A few years ago, when William was referred to OnTrack WNC by his housing specialist at **Western NC Community Health Services** he came ready to learn and take action to gain control over his finances. As a result, his work with OnTrack WNC staff members Anthony Jimenez and Anna Smith is propelling him toward his goals. After reviewing and prioritizing his budget, William realized he couldn't afford the payments on furniture he bought at Big Lots so he returned it! Then he was able to pay off pawn shop debt, get his jewelry back and increase his cash flow since he was no longer paying the monthly 'storage fee.'

William is actively taking steps to improve his credit, like disputing inaccuracies. The **Pisgah Legal Debt Clinic** helped him understand his rights and responsibilities for the debts and how to prioritize repayment based on legal consequences. William's trick for impulse spending? He literally froze his credit card – in the freezer! Working with the **Career Center**, he obtained a part-time job to supplement his disability income and with more income he was able to enroll in **SECURE** to build his savings. William has been saving consistently ever since; in fact he even set up an automatic transfer to not miss any deposits.

Congratulations William Raynor ~ 2017 Client of the Year

CLIENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

Susan Mosley



“Sue” Mosley cares for a lot of people: extended-family members who live with her and children at the YWCA Child Care Center where she volunteers as a **Foster Grandparent**.

When Ms. Mosley needed ways to balance her budget and improve cash flow, Amanda Read, YWCA’s Director of Women’s Empowerment connected her with OnTrack WNC. Inspired by a Budgeting & Debt Class and Financial

Counseling, Ms. Mosley got busy with the **Action Plan** that she and her financial counselor, Pete Wrublewski, created. The budget work revealed that a high percentage of her income went toward monthly premiums on numerous life insurance policies, so she reviewed the policies, canceled those she no longer needed, and used over \$11,000 in accumulated cash value to pay off burdensome debt and set-up an emergency fund. To further reduce expenses, she cut cable and laundry expenses.

Ms. Mosley faced yet another challenge! The loss of her husband and the income he provided meant Ms. Mosley’s home was at **risk of foreclosure**. Our NC Foreclosure Prevention Loan Fund Coordinator, Kathryn Beach, worked with her to receive Principal Reduction/Recast assistance of \$53,951, lowering her mortgage payment by almost \$200/month!

Ms. Mosley’s hard work and determination paid off. Even with income of less than 30% of Area Median Income, she now has a balanced budget, more realistic expenses, and a savings account! Speaking of savings, Ms. Mosley enrolled in the **SECURE Matched-Savings Program** and will soon add \$720 to her emergency fund.

Congratulations Miss Mosley!

CLIENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

Latoya Gardner



"OnTrack WNC helped me to realize the importance of financial stability; a concept that I had not previously spent much time thinking about until I slipped out of middle class status."

Latoya said, "A series of unfortunate financial emergencies sent me back to the drawing board and it afforded me the time needed to reflect upon my needs." After losing a chance to purchase the home that she had spent months trying to secure, she attended the **Homebuyer Education** series followed by a budgeting session with OnTrack WNC counselor, *Kathryn Beach*. As Latoya put it "the numbers were grim" and she decided that it was not the right time to buy a home.

Latoya believes in her power to get things done, including financially. She put her determination and energy to work to decrease every possible expense, balance her budget and free up money to invest in herself. Latoya participated in the **SECURE** matched savings program. While she built her savings account for emergencies, she also learned the importance of talking about money and understanding it as a tool for accomplishing her financial goals.

Her passion for working to close the racial wealth gap, both on a systemic level and on a personal/family level, is inspiring. Now that she has the foundations of budgeting down, she has moved to her next goal of **building wealth** by contributing to her Health Savings Account and 401K plans as well as working with her family to start a pooled family savings fund.

As Latoya told women gathered for Real Women. Real Money Stories. *"This tracking thing is annoying, but now I know exactly how much I put in the pockets of Starbucks and I absolutely understand that is a debit from my dreams."* **Congratulations Latoya!**

CLIENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

Marie Collins



"When I started working with OnTrack Financial in 2016, I was in a very bad financial situation. But, I was determined to improve it."

Marie's first experience with OnTrack WNC was a **Budgeting and Debt** workshop, and her progress since then has been amazing. During the class there was lots of information to capture and Marie says she was taking notes as fast as she could.

After the class, Marie met with financial counselor *Amanda Hunsucker*; they worked together to create an initial budget and determined that a **Debt Management Program (DMP)** would be a good tool for managing Marie's unsecured debt on three credit cards. Marie took advantage of services from our **Women's Financial Empowerment Center** including financial coaching with Amanda and follow-up appointments with *Pete Wrublewski*. With tools in place, Marie committed to tracking, planning and having "money dates" to keep her financial focus. It worked! Marie says, "Consistently paying down my debt is one of my major successes during my time working with OnTrack." Her debt is now half what it was when she started. When needed, she uses one secured credit card in a way that helps build her credit score and doesn't increase her debt.

In addition, Marie participated in the **SECURE Savings Match** program. She consistently put aside money monthly for six consecutive months and attended education and counseling, to earn the \$3 to \$1 savings match money. That money helped with start-up expenses for the small business she has been building.

Marie's goals are to build her business using the money skills she learned from OnTrack WNC. She says, *"I am a therapeutic yoga teacher and have started building my business thanks in large part to the help and support of OnTrack WNC."* **Congratulations Marie!**

CLIENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

Brittany Ferguson



"When I first heard about OnTrack WNC I was working a part-time job with limited hours. I had debts in collections and just found out that I wasn't qualified for Medicaid anymore because I was making too much money."

When Brittany Ferguson and her four year old son moved out of public housing in March this year, she couldn't believe how much had changed since she first came to OnTrack WNC in the summer of 2018. Looking for a fresh start,

Brittany relocated from New York and immediately researched available programs and resources. Once she discovered OnTrack WNC she was quick to attend **SECURE Matched Savings Program** Orientation, our Manage Your Money education series, and individual counseling.

Brittany's accomplishments and dedication are inspiring. She completely embraced what she learned from the **Manage Your Money** education series and counseling. In less than a year, she moved from a part-time job to a salaried position with benefits. She keeps a budget on her refrigerator AND another one in her room, to review and update regularly. She saves money by bringing food to work and avoiding the vending machine. When it comes to grocery shopping, Brittany makes her list, gets what she needs, and doesn't let temptation get her off track.

She's also taking proactive steps with her debt. She canceled a contract with a debt settlement company and aggressively paid down active credit accounts. She continues to contribute to her SECURE savings account even after she graduated and received the match.

Brittany's goals include getting her GED and becoming a Habitat for Humanity homeowner. She says, *"I want better for me. I want better for my child. I'm willing to work hard for it."* **Congratulations Brittany!**

Organization Name:	CCCS of WNC, Inc. DBA OnTrack Financial Education & Counseling	Project Name:	SECURE Matched Savings for Buncombe County Childcare Workers
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COVID-19 Response:

Thank you for your email and for the opportunity to provide information to be considered in the Early Childhood Education Grant.

- Specifically, has there been any change to scope, staffing, timelines, etc. detailed in your application?
 - o OnTrack's current service delivery:
 - Since March 17th, OnTrack staff has been working remote in response to COVID-19 and we have canceled all in-person education and tax preparation.
 - We are conducting counseling appointments by phone and communicating with clients to get appropriate authorizations for service via secure emails.
 - We are developing new services to respond to the client and community needs caused by COVID-19. These services include webinars and revisions to our counseling to focus on emergency cash flow planning, dealing with housing (rent/mortgage), wise use of credit during financial crisis, and how to strategically use the stimulus check and/or tax refund.
 - o Considerations for our Early Childhood Education Grant application:
 - Our plan was to begin work in July; that timeline needs to shift to January with all the subsequent activities shifting out 6 months.
 - Below is the Project Plan from the grant with the revised timeline in RED.

Revised Project Plan:

1. Outreach & Recruitment (July-Sept. 2020) (January – March 2021): OnTrack will work with Buncombe County Partnership for Children and other County Depts. to cultivate relationships with large childcare providers and to organize email program announcement/invitation to all childcare workers.
2. Enrollment (start Oct. 2020): (April 2021) Orientation sessions will be offered on a rolling basis until the program is at capacity. At the sessions, participants enroll and open SECURE savings accounts.
3. Starting November 2020: (May 2021)
 - a. Programming: Participants work on program requirements including money management classes, counseling appointments, balanced budgets, and action steps towards goals.
 - b. Savings: Participants save monthly until they've saved for six consecutive months. If they skip a month or make a withdrawal before graduation, they can start the six months of savings requirement again.
4. Graduation: As participants complete all program requirements, match funds will be paid into their savings accounts. The matching funds from this grant will be fully disbursed by 6/30/2022. (12/31/2022)
5. Evaluation: Participants will complete an Exit Survey upon program graduation. Results and feedback from childcare facility liaisons and our staff will be used for program enhancements.
6. Future Funding: We hope the program's success will inspire additional grant support from Buncombe County.

Response to Committee Questions:

The Committee had no questions for the applicant