



First Children's Finance

Press Release

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FERGUS FALLS HOSTS TOWN HALL TO RESPOND TO THE CHILDCARE SHORTAGE

FIRST CHILDREN'S FINANCE ANNOUNCES RURAL CHILD CARE INNOVATION PROGRAM

FERGUS FALLS, MN: Child care is critical component to a growing economy, generating an economic impact of \$99.3 billion in the United States. For regional centers and rural communities, the lack of high-quality child care is directly impacting worker shortages, hindering company growth and shrinking future generations.

Annually, First Children's Finance selects communities through a competitive application process to participate in its Rural Child Care Innovation Program (RCCIP). Fergus Falls is one of ten communities in the state with a Core Team leading the community engagement process designed to address the challenges of child care in Greater Minnesota.

"The scarcity continuum for child care is a real concern for Fergus Falls," states Klara Beck, City of Fergus Falls Community Development Manager. "The cause and effects of which, not unlike the paradox of the chicken and the egg, are interdependent. The Rural Child Care Innovation Program will be an innovative approach giving Fergus Falls time to explore and receive data-driven support. We are honored to be selected and are looking forward to productively disrupting the scarcity continuum and identifying systemic changes that equally support efforts in workforce development and housing."

The Rural Child Care Innovation Program (RCCIP) is based on the fundamental idea that rural communities are greater than their size in numbers and greater than their current challenges. By mobilizing and empowering rural communities, the landscape of early care and education is changing.

Fergus Falls' Core Team began the process in September and is hosting a Town Hall on Monday, January 30, at 6 p.m. at M State Legacy Hall. January 31 is reserved for inclement weather. A free meal will be served. The event will share findings on child care gaps and needs. The entire community is invited to provide feedback and assist with developing solutions. First Children's Finance will be facilitating the Town Hall. Funding for this program is provided by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fergus-falls-town-hall-tickets-465772085847>.

"Through our experience, the Town Hall amplifies the Rural Child Care Innovation Program process with identifying right-sized solutions by getting the entire community engaged to create their desired future," says Linda Mathiasen, Business Development Specialist at First Children's Finance.

To learn more about how you or your business can get involved in the RCCIP process or the expansion of high quality, affordable child care, contact RCCIP Core Team Lead and Community Development Manager, Klara Beck, Klara.Beck@ci.fergus-falls.mn.us or (218) 332-5428.

Founded in 1991, First Children's Finance (FCF) is a national nonprofit organization based in Minneapolis, Minnesota with regional offices in Iowa and Michigan. First Children's Finance works to grow supply and business sustainability of excellent child care. First Children's Finance provides financing, child care business training and consulting, and builds partnerships that connect child care businesses with the resources and expertise of the public and private sectors.

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