

Solutions-Based Greater Minnesota Childcare Work



The Minnesota Initiative Foundations are six regional foundations that work to strengthen the communities and economies of Greater Minnesota. In the childcare space, the Minnesota Initiative Foundations are focused on creating and bolstering long term, community-centered childcare solutions that meet the high demand for childcare while supporting parents and childcare providers alike. Minnesota Initiative Foundations have had tangible success in Greater Minnesota by working with local communities, non-profits, businesses, schools and leaders in the child-care field to address gaps in the system, recognizing that a sustainable child-care ecosystem requires investments on multiple fronts.

➔ Highlights

Initiative Foundation (East Central Area) -- Community Oriented Approaches

- Renovation of underutilized spaces in The City of **Little Falls, Hackensack and Brainerd** in collaboration with local institutions and non-profits for the creation of more childcare facilities.
 - The Initiative Foundation's investments in renovation and contracting with First Children Finance helped to **open up childcare slots for 184 young children.**
- Supporting in-training and future care providers by increasing accessibility and affordability of training and certification programs through partnerships with Technical and Community colleges in the region.
 - Through this partnership, **scholarships and flexible learning options were made available for 185 students to pursue early childhood education.**

Highlights Continued ➔



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Northwest Minnesota Foundation -- Culturally Responsive Childcare and Empowering Small Business Owners

- **Empowering proactive community leaders** like Fadumo Ahmed to open Gold Childcare Center in East Grand Forks to help address the childcare needs of the Somali community by connecting her with resources and support systems for startup small businesses.
 - NMF helped Fadumo **secure about \$30,000 in loans and grants** for Gold Childcare Center, which will have the **capacity to serve 75 infants through school aged young children.**
- Creating consistent **grant programs** to help leaders like Karen DeVos open a second branch of Little Learners center in Halstad where there was a need for centers, after seeing great success with the center in Ada.

Northland Foundation -- Connecting Role

- Connecting community leaders working to start **Polar Cubs Childcare Center** in Floodwood with NF resource partners and assistance in applying for organization wide and external grant and loan opportunities.
 - Polar Cubs Childcare Center **created 69 childcare slots and 15 professional positions.** NF was able to help Polar Cubs Childcare Center and the community **receive around 290,000 in childcare funding grants from various sources.**
- Coordinating Child Care Resource Meetings for childcare business owners looking for guidance and advice from experts as they navigate center start-up, expansion, and retention projects. At present, Northland Foundation coordinates **3-4** center projects a month.

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation -- Community Planning

- Leading a **community collaboration process** called Communities Addressing the Child Care Shortage in the region to help towns like Alberta Lea **develop a plan** to tackle their long-term childcare needs with the input and collaboration of existing childcare providers, businesses, state resources, and community members.
- Organizing **free high quality training sessions** for providers and teachers and further partnering with A Chance to Grow to pioneer the Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training (SMART), aiming to train family childcare providers and early educators in brain-based programs and services that help children reach their highest potential.

Southwest Minnesota Initiative Foundation -- Professional Development

- Hosting opportunities like The Kids First Conference for childcare providers in partnership with other organizations, focusing on **high quality professional development** and relationship building within the field, bringing together staff and representatives from various areas of the **childcare ecosystem.**


West Central Initiative -- Future of Childcare

- WCI has helped to pilot **credited early childhood education programs** in high schools for students potentially interested in pursuing a career in the fields of childcare and early childhood education, offering them the opportunity to receive college credit and a Child Development Associate with support of their high schools.



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