



# 2018-2019 Annual Report



# Message from the Executive Director

As we close out this decade, it is fitting to acknowledge the evolution of Children First/ Communities in Schools over the past 10 years. I am proud that although we have adapted in many ways with new leadership, new staff, new spaces, new metrics, service delivery refinement and more, we have not compromised our commitment to carrying out the organization's mission.

Staying true to our belief that every child deserves to reach their full potential and that their families are engaged and supported is of the utmost importance to us. We continue to make sure students have the resources they need to succeed in school, while empowering the community to advocate for families.

Our keen focus on issue-based advocacy, direct services through implementation of the National Communities in Schools evidence-based model, and the reach of our Project POWER AmeriCorps National Service Programs ensures we are truly All In for students, their families, and our community. By collectively engaging the community and stakeholders, using data that informs our efforts, we have made positive progress towards addressing disparities, social determinants of health, and improving outcomes in education, economic stability, health, and well-being.

This annual report highlights our approach, key accomplishments and successes.

I am thankful for the community we have the pleasure of working in partnership with as well as our staff, board of directors, partners, and supporters. All of these people make our work possible and we are most appreciative of their contributions. We are excited about what the future holds!



Natasha Adwaters

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# Student Support Specialists

Children First/Communities in Schools is currently in five Title I schools where they serve over 2,000 students and families.

We support four Buncombe County schools (Emma, Estes, and Johnston Elementary, and Eblen Intermediate) and one Asheville City school (Claxton Elementary) by providing Student Support Specialists who connect with students throughout the week.

In addition to CIS model implementation, Student Support Specialists facilitate family resource centers and after-school/summer enrichment.



## Student Support Specialists provide:

- Individual Tutoring & Mentoring
- School Supplies
- Small Groups for Social Skills & Bullying Prevention
- Emergency Financial Assistance & Holiday Assistance
- Food, Hygiene Products, & Clothing



Student Support Specialists served 2,142 students at 5 schools. 166 students received targeted case management.



During the 2018-2019 school year, among our case-managed students:

- **92%** improved attendance
- **92%** improved behavior
- **95%** improved academics

To whom this may concern my name is  
Kuzeria Williams. And my experience with Working Warriors  
and Mrs Dani was great. I can remember a job I got  
over the summer working with Mrs Dani. That was the  
very first real job I had. In my opinion every student who  
thinks Mrs Dani should take that job because it  
will teach you so much. It taught me how to respect,  
Patience and how to pay more attention to my responsibilities.

I remember during Working Warriors Mrs Dani would bring in  
people from different jobs, they were all great. But  
there was this one lady who came in I think she was  
a veterinarian she was very cool. Anyway that inspired me  
to try something new. I always wanted to become famous  
for doing cross country or doing track and Mrs Dani  
showed me that if I really wanted to become famous I  
would have to work for it. And until this day I work  
super hard to get there. Every day on the weekends  
I go out and run. I also am on the cross country  
and track teams. I work really hard on my grades.  
Right now I'm making A B Honors in all classes.  
So thank you for this opportunity to write this letter.

Sincerely, Kuzeria

# Advocacy/Success Equation

The future looks brighter when children start their lives healthy and ready to learn, have their basic needs met, and live in supported and connected families.

Through our Success Equation initiative, we unite our community to reduce poverty and ensure all children can thrive by advocating for local, state, and federal policies in three areas: Early Childhood Development, Family Economic Stability, and Family Supports.



Thanks to strong partnerships and broad community support, the Family Friendly Affordable Buncombe (FFAB) effort won \$4.5 million in funding from the City of Asheville and Buncombe County.



We have over 250 “highly engaged” subscribers to our advocacy action email alerts – regularly reading our updates and taking actions

# The FFAB Effect

## New Funding for FFAB Agenda Captures 76% of FY20 New City/County Revenue from Sale of Mission

The Family-Friendly Affordable Buncombe (FFAB) Campaign launched in fall 2018. Leadership from three broad based community coalitions--the **Asheville-Buncombe Preschool Planning Collaborative**, the **Success Equation**, and the **Asheville Regional Transit Coalition**--came together to support this visionary plan for investing new property tax revenue from the sale of Mission Health to HCA by building on past successes and current best-practices to:

- *Expand high-quality, affordable preschool to all children;*
- *Increase the number of apartments and homes affordable for working families; and*
- *Connect families to jobs, schools and amenities with frequent and reliable transit.*

Early (but inaccurate) projections of the sale of Mission Health suggested \$15M in new combined tax revenue for the City of Asheville and Buncombe County in FY20 and were the basis for FFAB's original funding requests of \$12M. Because nonprofits do not pay property taxes in NC, the sale of the nonprofit Mission Health to the for-profit corporation HCA means that the city and county will assess and collect property taxes in FY20. Notably, these new investments (\$4.5M) equal over 76% of the new tax revenue from HCA (\$5.9M).

### **FFAB's first year funding results & goals:**

- **Early Childhood Education:** \$1.9M increase. The County continued its commitment to existing contracts from last fiscal year alongside the new funds under its newly created \$3.6M Early Childhood Education Fund. FFAB's original request: Establish a public-private Early Childhood Trust (County) with a minimum \$3M annual fund.
- **Housing:** \$1.4M increase. Including the new funds, the County budgeted \$3.8M total for affordable housing efforts in FY20 and established an Affordable Housing Committee. This investment will support more affordable rental and home ownership opportunities. FFAB's original request: Increase funding for Buncombe County's Affordable Housing Services Program by at least \$3M.
- **Transit:** \$1.2M increase. The City of Asheville committed \$10.2M to transit services that includes the additional \$1.2M in FY20 to implement the first phase of the Transit Master Plan (TMP) beginning in January 2020. FFAB's original request: \$6M to begin implementing the TMP – \$3.2M for year one with additional funding for rapid implementation and reserves for subsequent year priorities.

### **What's next?**

FFAB is encouraged that our local government shares a commitment to early childhood education, housing affordability, and transit. We plan to build on the significant investments made in FY20.

Thanks to everyone that has supported this effort! We look forward to keeping the momentum going as we protect these initial gains and advocate for additional investments that enrich opportunity for a Family-Friendly place to call home!

**Get involved at [familyfriendlybuncombe.org](http://familyfriendlybuncombe.org).**



# ProjectPOWER AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is a national service program that recruits members to strengthen communities, build leaders, and expand horizons. Children First/Communities In Schools has run the ProjectPOWER (Putting Opportunity Within Everyone's Reach) AmeriCorps program here in Asheville for 22 years.

Each year, we recruit members to work with youth as teacher's assistants, volunteer coordinators, and site leaders at non-profit organizations, early childhood learning centers, schools, and after-school centers.



## Member Sites:

- MANNA Food Bank
- Buncombe Partnership for Children
- Jewish Community Center
- IRL After-school
- Children First/CIS
- Asheville Museum of Science
- FEAST Asheville
- YMCA
- Salvation Army - Boys and Girls Club
- Fairview Elementary
- Buncombe County Schools- Title 1: Bookmobile



ProjectPOWER AmeriCorps members invested 39,847 service hours in local schools and non-profits. ProjectPOWER AmeriCorps members also managed 1,282 community volunteers.

## Team Science: Building Community & Capacity

Katie Reynolds, a Team 21 and Team 22 Project POWER AmeriCorps member, served over 400 Pre-K children on the Bookmobile. The BCS Bookmobile was created to increase the literacy of Buncombe County pre-kindergarten children by mitigating the literacy gap between children of varying household incomes and race entering kindergarten for the first time. Katie and her counterpart teach children phonics and other reading skills to prime them for success before getting into the fast paced learning environment of elementary school.

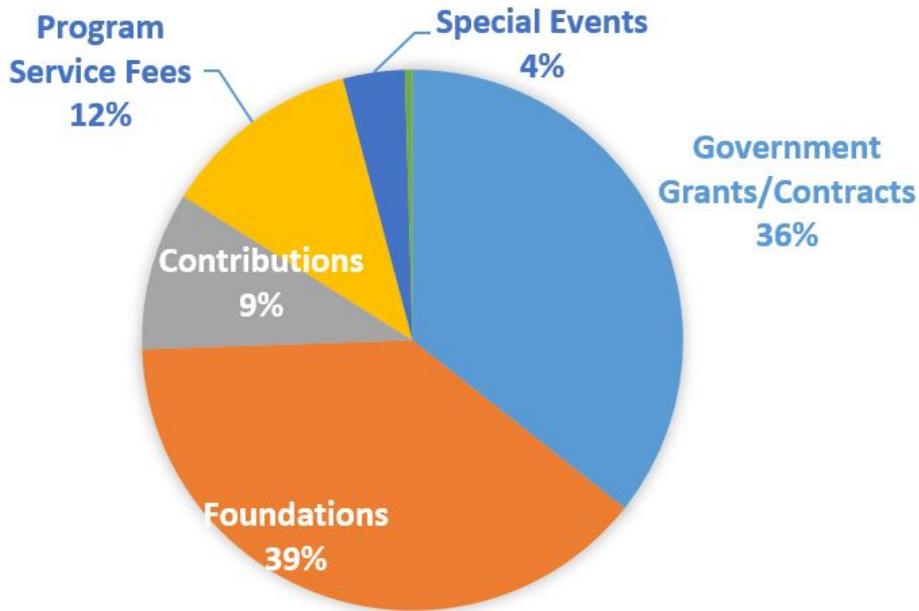
Katie shares, “We work with mainly Head Start children, a program that only accepts children from a specific household income (Household Size-1: Income-\$12,060. Add \$4,180 for each addition to the household). Many of these kids are facing food insecurity and working parents who may not have time to read due to all the other work they do in maintaining their children’s lives, and some are also facing turbulent home lives with their parents being victims of the opioid crisis. Even with all these barriers in the kids’ lives, they’re expected to perform adequately enough to be on par with the more privileged kids in their county by the time they reach kindergarten. If they don’t start off at the average or advanced level at kindergarten, they threaten being left behind.”

Tony Baldwin, Buncombe County Schools Superintendent, states “Project POWER members enable us to better support at-risk youth through academic enrichment (in schools) and additional support through county-wide programs (Bookmobile).”

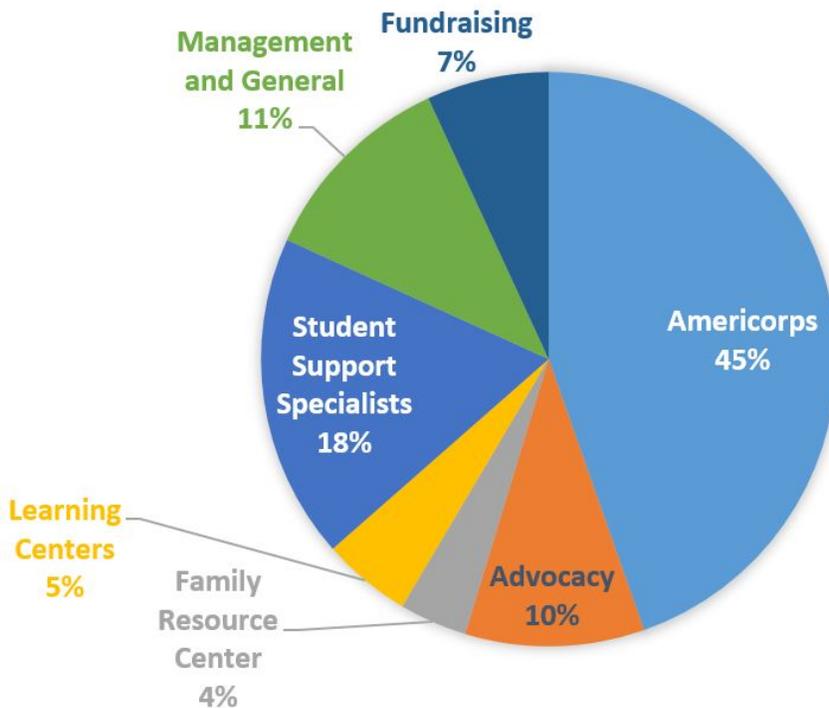


# 2018-2019 Financials

## Income Sources



## How Income Sources Are Invested



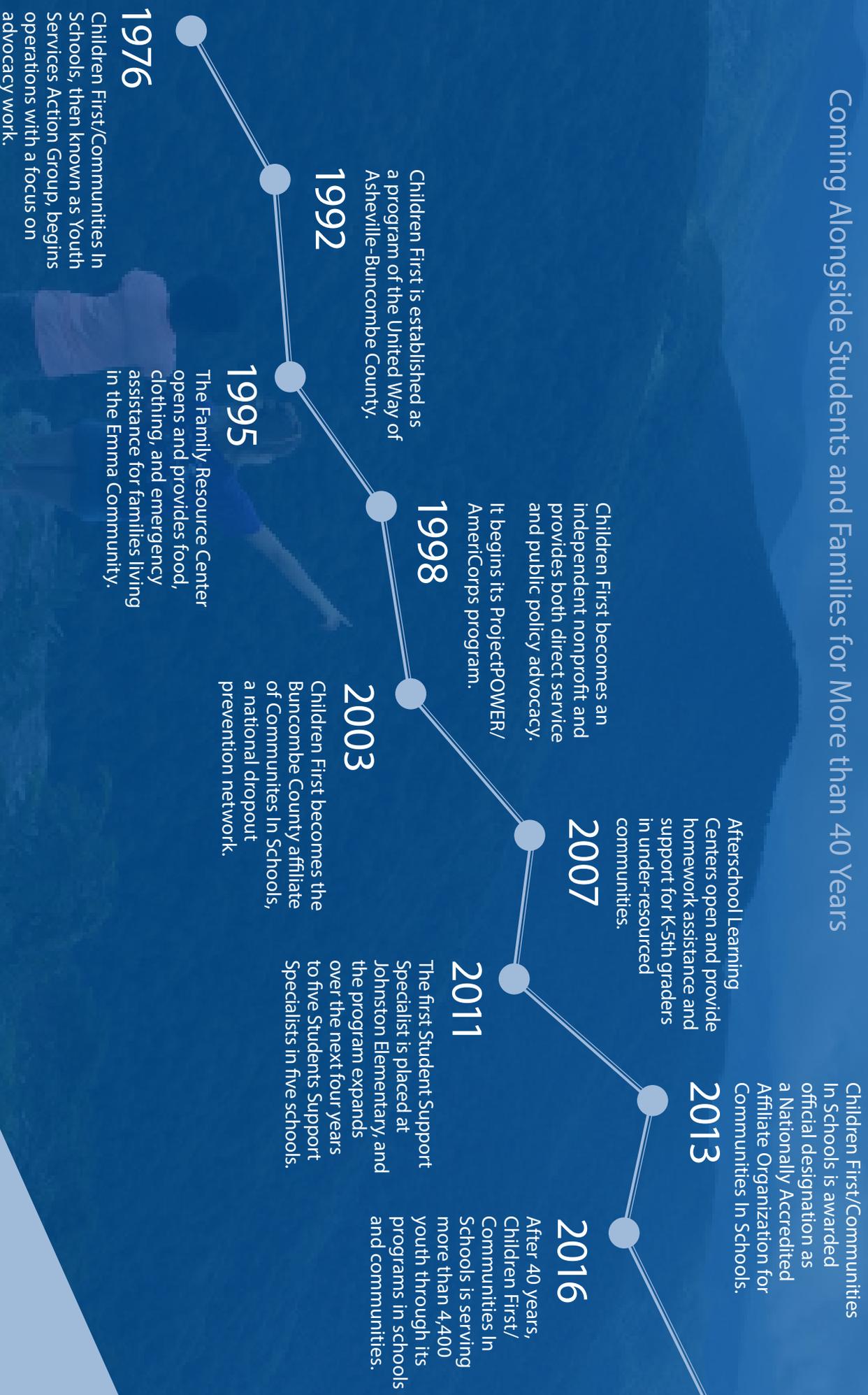
Total Revenue:  
\$1,241,316

Total Expenses:  
\$1,064,248

- AmeriCorps expenses directly correlate with the federal grant.
- Total revenue reflects all grant notifications during FY19, including the full amount of multi-year grant commitments.

# Our History

Coming Alongside Students and Families for More than 40 Years



# Corporate Sponsors



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