



nurses for newborns

Nurses for Newborns of Tennessee

50 Vantage Way, Suite 101, Nashville, TN 37228

P (615) 313-9989 • F (615) 313-9979 • W nursesfornewborns.org/tennessee

Metro Government of Nashville and Davidson County FY20 Direct Appropriation Funding Request

1. What services does your organization provide to the residents of Davidson County?

The mission of Nurses for Newborns of Tennessee (NFN) is to provide a safety net for families most at-risk in order to prevent infant mortality, child abuse, and neglect by providing in-home nursing visits, which promote healthcare, education, and positive parenting skills.

Nurses for Newborns' program (NFN) is specific to those most vulnerable in our community, such as medically fragile babies (e.g., infants born premature, drug exposed or experiencing failure to thrive, congenital anomalies or birth complications), mothers with medical, mental health, or substance abuse concerns and teenage parents in peril. Clients are referred to NFN by neonatal intensive care units (NICU), pediatricians, caseworkers, and other providers and agencies. NFN is a free home visitation program, meeting the client where they are — whether in the home, transitional housing or a residential recovery center. Registered nurses provide assessments to identify health and safety risks and then assist the family to ensure the baby is growing and thriving and the family, as a whole, is stronger.

2. How many residents are you currently serving and how do they benefit?

In 1991, Nurses for Newborns (NFN) was founded by Sharon Rohrbach, RN in response to the high infant mortality rate in Greater St. Louis. In October 2001, Nurses for Newborns recognized a similar need in Tennessee and opened a second office in Nashville to provide prevention-based support to families in Middle Tennessee. Since then, Nurses for Newborns has completed over 68,500 in-home visits for the benefit of over 8,750 families in Tennessee. Nurses for Newborns currently serves families in Cheatham, Davidson, Maury, Montgomery, Robertson, Rutherford, Sumner, and Williamson Counties.

NFN serves approximately 350 – 400 babies a year. In FY18, some of NFN's accomplishments included:

- 97% of clients did NOT have a safety-related injury
- 93% of caregivers practiced safe spacing between pregnancies
- 98% of clients avoided unnecessary visits to the ER
- 98% of clients avoided preventable hospitalizations
- 98% of clients had an established medical home

More specifically, we provided services to 201 clients through 927 in-home nurse visits in Davidson County during 2018.

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3. How much funding are you requesting from Metro?

NFN respectfully requests \$50,000 in support for our services provided to at-risk families in Metro Nashville and Davidson County, TN.

4. If funding is awarded, how many additional residents will be served and how will they benefit?

If funding is awarded, NFN will be able to provide services to approximately 30 additional clients through 140 in-home nurse visits in Davidson County, TN.

Our free home visitation program includes a head-to-toe assessment of the baby and screenings for the caregivers. Babies are weighed and screened for growth and development. Caregivers are also screened and assessed for various risk factors. These assessments identify needed health education such as breast feeding, child safety, domestic violence, dental care, mental health care and positive parenting. Since our services are provided in the family's home, we are able to assess environmental safety issues (e.g., safe sleep, exposure to smoking/drugs, fall & injury hazards). In addition, home visits remove the potential transportation barriers that limit poverty or low-income clients' access to quality care. NFN's nurses provide resource connections to ensure families are able to have the best care possible for the baby and themselves. We provide in-person, medically certified interpretation and have a nurse on call 24/7 to answer any questions or concerns our clients may have.

5. In addition to serving more residents, are there other community benefits Metro funding would help you achieve?

Nurses for Newborns (NFN) has a history of collaborating with other organizations around the shared goal to support the health and well-being of babies and their families in Davidson County. NFN is unique in that we are a prevention-based program with a proven track record for reducing infant mortality, child abuse and neglect. NFN is the only home visitation program for medically fragile infants in Tennessee that exclusively utilizes registered nurses. NFN uses 28 substantiated Clinical Guidelines and our model of care (currently being researched and reviewed to be an Evidence-Based Model for home visitation). Together, NFN, along with agencies we receive referrals from, agencies who connect our clients to their resources, and agencies we collaborate with on education and advocacy — bring our strengths together to support wellness in our community, not duplicate services. Funding from Metro Government of Nashville and Davidson County would open more doors for further collaboration opportunities.

6. How would you use this funding to help create a more equitable Nashville, where all residents have an opportunity to participate in the city's success?

NFN serves clients regardless of income, race, ethnicity, or language spoken. Our target population consists of infants (prenatal up to age 24 months) and their birth mothers and/or caregivers in Davidson County. Clients are referred before their first birthday and meet one of our risk factors — medically fragile infants (e.g., infants born premature, drug exposed or experiencing failure to thrive,

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congenital anomalies or birth complications), mothers with medical, mental health, or substance abuse concerns, and teenage parents in peril.

In 2017, the Tennessee Department of Health's Child Fatality Report stated, "The first year of life continues to be the most perilous for Tennessee's children, accounting for 64% of all deaths through the age of 17." Approximately 25% of all infant deaths in TN are due to sleep-related causes, and the infant mortality rate in the state of Tennessee is higher than that of the nation. (TN Dept. of Health 2016 Child Fatality Annual Report; <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/fhw/child-fatality-review.html>). Furthermore, the Department of Health has also reported that prevention, such as home visits and improved health care have helped to decrease the risk of premature births and have increased healthy babies, therefore reducing the number of infant deaths. On average, 99% of NFN's clients do not have an injury from a household safety hazard, including injuries related to sleeping.

The 2017 U.S. Census Bureau and National Home Visiting Resource Center tell us that in 2016, 476,478 children in Tennessee could have benefited from home visiting organizations like Nurses for Newborns. Of those, 234,400 were under the age of two with an estimated 24,126 living in Davidson County. According to Kids Count Data Center, 137 of these were born to teen mothers and 1,172 were pre-term births. Despite this need, only 2,578 children received home visiting services across the entire state, and NFN only served 332 babies in Davidson County.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, having a medical home is associated with decreased visits to the ER, a reduction in healthcare costs, and improved health outcomes. To address determinants related to healthcare access, NFN provides free, in-home care with interpretation services as needed, regardless of income or medical insurance. We refer to and partner with numerous community agencies to fully address clients' needs, often acting as case managers to make sure clients are connecting to the services they need. Additionally, a nurse is available "on call" 24/7 for support. Through our work, we are ensuring clients have a medical home (on average, 99% of our clients have a medical home), are helping to prevent unnecessary ER visits (on average 97% of our clients do not have an unnecessary ER visit), and are helping to prevent unnecessary rehospitalizations (on average, 99% of NFN clients avoid preventable hospitalizations).

As noted in the 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) of Saint Thomas Health, the TN Department of Health reports "Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic experiences that disrupt the safe, nurturing environments that children need to thrive," and often negatively impact life-long physical and mental health. According to the CHNA, 52% of Tennesseans have experienced at least 1 ACE, with 14% experiencing 4 or more. A caregiver with a mental illness is one of the identified ACEs, and approximately 1 in 7 women experience postpartum depression which can disrupt a baby's physical, intellectual, and social/emotional developmental (American Psychological Association; <http://www.apa.org/pi/women/resources/reports/postpartum-depression.aspx>). While a significant number of NFN clients need mental health support, many of them are unable to access

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counseling outside of the home due to socioeconomic factors, lack of availability of resources in their community, or inability to leave home due to the medical vulnerability of their infant. NFN can provide in-home counseling services when needed. On average, 100% of NFN's clients are screened for depression and ACEs and 95% of those who show need receive mental health services.

According to the Kids Count Data Book, 1,068 babies were born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) in 2016. This is the diagnosis given to babies experiencing withdrawal from substances they were exposed to in the womb. As the opioid crisis continues to rise in TN, so does the number of innocent babies facing NAS. In FY18, 32% of caregivers receiving services from NFN had a dependence on or had abused illicit drugs or alcohol. On average, 100% of NFN's clients are screened for drug use and those who screen positive are either supported in their existing rehabilitation program or are referred to one. If an infant has been born dependent on drugs or alcohol, NFN nurses provide additional support and education to the caregiver on the child's specific needs and development.

Our families face many challenges, like infant developmental delays, mental health issues, substance use, pregnancy problems, domestic abuse, poverty, lack of access to healthcare, and other social constraints that affect the welfare of the child and family. Specifically, the following socio-economic factors describe last year's clients:

- 64% were considered low income (based on social services eligibility)
- 35% were single parents
- 22% required interpretation services
- 15% had less than 12 years education
- 32% had reported drug or alcohol use
- 59% had a baby with medical concerns
- 54% of moms had medical concerns
- 30% had social health determinants (examples may include: pregnancy as a result of rape; other children removed by social services; no permanent residence; residence is extremely dangerous to the infant due to ill repair, no utilities, or pests; caregiver is in an abusive situation; parent is in jail)
- 36% of caregivers had a diagnosed mental illness or a mental or physical limitation

As evident by the numbers, most of last year's clients aren't struggling with only one of these challenges. In fact, 77% of our clients had three or more risk factors. Our clients vary significantly in socioeconomic status, ethnicity, age, and language spoken. NFN is saving lives. Through our services, we are eliminating barriers to healthcare, connecting families to needed resources, and breaking generational cycles of abuse and neglect — all of which create a more equitable Nashville. On average, it costs NFN \$1,500 – \$2,000 to serve one family but the benefits last a lifetime.

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