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**100 WOMEN STRONG AT CENTRAL FLORIDA FOUNDATION AWARDS \$80,000 TO HELP SOLVE
FLORIDA'S CHILDCARE WORKFORCE CRISIS**

Local women-led initiative works to create a childcare workforce pipeline with local nonprofit.

Orlando, Fla. – April 18, 2023 – [100 Women Strong](#) [100WS], a strategic women-led giving circle at [Central Florida Foundation](#) awarded [Early Learning Shared Services Alliance](#) [ELSSA] a two-year \$80,000 grant that will support a childcare workforce pipeline to address the needs of the childcare industry's workforce crisis.

"As a response to the impact the pandemic had on women in the Central Florida community, 100 Women Strong members agreed to dedicate a three-year grant focus to economic empowerment in 2021," says Jessa Rohloff, current 100WS Chair. "As we entered this second year, I heard repeatedly in my conversations with others that women in Central Florida were challenged by access to childcare. Women wishing to return to the workforce, grow in their careers or scale their own businesses were all limited by their ability to access affordable, quality childcare."

After the 100WS Grants Team conducted thorough research and gained insights from local experts and stakeholders, the statistics revealed that the lack of childcare resources would have long-term economic impact for Central Florida women and their children. "What we learned is that there is a growing shortage in childcare seats in Orange County and across the country. On top of rising costs and lower revenue, early education centers are facing massive teacher shortages and growing wait lists. Without enough teachers and childcare spots, parents can't work, and children fall further behind," says Leslie Hartog, 100WS Grants Team Chair. "Additionally, most of the childcare providers are minority, women-owned businesses and employ mostly women, so this grant will also be an investment in these women and their economic stability."

"The partnership with ELSSA, with a matching grant from the [Early Learning Coalition of Orange County](#) [ELCOC], is a timely investment that can create excellent opportunities for childcare providers, women and families in our community," says Rohloff.

"We at the ELCOC are excited to work with 100 Women Strong and ELSSA and provide this matching grant to help women access quality childcare," adds Dr. Scott Fritz, CEO of the Early Learning Coalition.

The childcare workforce pipeline plan includes nurturing relationships with local high schools and colleges that have childcare curricula, creating 6-month paid childcare internships, structuring and filling a substitute pool, connecting continuing education and career advancement opportunities with childcare staff, and workforce infrastructure development for future talent.

"We are thrilled to partner with 100 Women Strong and the Early Learning Coalition of Orange County to launch our Childcare Workforce Development Initiative. We provide business administration services and coaching to over 50 childcare programs, and by far the greatest challenge they currently face is hiring and retaining quality teachers," says Kate Byrne, Executive Director of ELSSA. "With this workforce initiative, we hope to expand the pipeline of talent entering our local childcare industry to support not only our childcare businesses, but all Central Florida employers whose staff needs access to high quality childcare to go to work every day."

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As a continuation of 100WS' women's economic empowerment commitment, the strategic giving circle will be hosting its annual ELEVATE Summit on May 1st with a focus on "unleashing the economic potential of women." Learn more [here](#).

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About 100 Women Strong

100 Women Strong is a strategic giving circle dedicated to improving the lives of women and children. As the area's only philanthropic organization built on women-only leadership, collective giving and collaborative grant-making, 100 Women Strong harnesses its unique perspective and collective power to tackle the biggest challenges affecting women and children, identify their root causes and create innovative solutions in collaboration with community partners. Learn more at <https://cffound.org/100-women-strong/>.

About Central Florida Foundation

Central Florida Foundation stewards philanthropic dollars on behalf of individuals, families, and nonprofits. We partner with people who are determined to make a difference in their community. Knowing that true change demands more than dollars and cents, we foster collaboration, fuel ideas, and spearhead the innovation that will transform our region for good. Learn more at cffound.org.