



Director Delores Hunt  
Rutherford County Department of Social Services  
389 Fairground Road  
Spindale  
NC 28160

November 11, 2024

**RE: Research partnership to address issues related to foster and kinship parent recruitment and retention in North Carolina**

Director Hunt,

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for your willingness to serve as a County Partner for our Phase I research initiative focused on foster and kinship parent recruitment and retention. Your support and collaboration are critical to the success of this program, and we are excited to work with you to address this pressing issue.

The Collaboratory was established by the North Carolina General Assembly in 2016 for the purpose of supporting research that helps advance the work of State and local governments and the communities they serve. During this initial phase of the research initiative, the Collaboratory will issue awards to researchers who will work with you and other County Partners to co-design and implement a research or evaluation study to examine a problem of practice in depth and identify potential interventions for you and other County Partners to test in a future Phase II initiative. Ultimately, this initiative aims to gather valuable insights that will inform strategies to strengthen and expand foster and kinship care systems, and your expertise and leadership at the county level will be instrumental in guiding the research and shaping its outcomes.

We are enormously grateful for all the guidance you have already provided during the design and preparation for this program, and we look forward to supporting your longstanding commitment to improving child welfare in North Carolina.

Sincerely,

**Greer Arthur**  
*Research Director*