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| ACF Administration for Children and Families | U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES | |
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| | 4. Key Word: Early Childhood Workforce | |

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

TO: Preschool Development Grant B-5 Renewal Grantees

SUBJECT: Instructions for Requesting Changes in the Existing Scopes of Work to increase support for the Early Childhood Workforce

INFORMATION:

Increasing compensation for the ECE workforce and building the pool of skilled and diverse early childhood educators continue to be top priorities for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). We strongly encourage Preschool Development Grant (PDG B5) recipients to take immediate action in addressing the ongoing shortage in the ECE workforce.

Grant recipients may now consider redistributing grant funds to more intentionally target grant activities that address the major areas contributing to the workforce shortage (recruitment, retention, and staff compensation). The Office of Child Care and the Office of Early Childhood Development recognizes that many grantees are currently investing in strategies to recruit and retain a strong ECE workforce.

Toward this goal, investments in wage or compensation initiatives and other innovative supports for the ECE workforce are allowable and encouraged activities. PDG B5 grantees whose 3rd year budget period ends December 30, 2022, and who are interested in pursuing workforce recruitment, retention and compensation activities that are not part of an approved scope of work, may submit a request for change in scope **by September 30, 2022**. States eligible for this opportunity include **AL, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, IL, LA, MD, MI, MN, MO, NC, NH, NJ, NY, OR, RI, VA, WA**. All other states are encouraged to consider the same changes to their scope of work, and may submit a request now, if they choose to do so, but have more time, since their 3rd year of funding does not end this calendar year.

Grantees in the 3rd year of funding, as listed above, that **DO NOT** plan on submitting a change in Scope of Work are asked to notify your Federal Project Officer and Judy.Willgren@acf.hhs.gov as soon as the state makes a decision.

Changing Scope of Work

1. Review current workforce activities (these may be listed under Activity 4 or embedded within other grant activities) and see materials for additional ideas.

2. Determine if the state would like to pursue a change in Scope of Work. We suggest coordination, leveraging and proper prioritization of PDG B5 funds in collaboration with Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and Head Start funds.
3. Determine if there is a need for a Change in Scope/Budget Revision Amendment to request any change that was not previously approved (this is required for new activities or shifts between budget categories over \$250,000). **All budget amendments and changes in scope must be submitted and approved prior to the submission of a request for No Cost Extension (NCE).** If you have recently submitted a request for a NCE and wish to pull it back in order to request a Change in Scope/Budget Revision, please notify your Federal Project Officer (FPO) and Sheri Harmon as soon as possible. If the Change in Scope/Budget Revision is approved, you may then resubmit your request for a No Cost Extension, which must also be approved.
4. If needed, please submit a Change in Scope/Budget Revision Amendment in GrantSolutions.
5. ACF has developed a sample change in scope of work template that you may find useful if you pursue this option. You do not have to use the sample template when submitting a request. The sample template is being shared as an example to help guide those planning to request a change in scope.
6. Whether or not you choose to use the accompanying template, your request should be submitted to your FPO and to Sheri Harmon, Grant Specialist, at Sheri.Harmon@acf.hhs.gov.
7. **Your FPO will review the request within 5 business days. Upon review, your FPO either will email a notification of approval or, if needed, a request for greater clarity.**

PDG B5 Workforce Examples

PDG B-5 grantees may wish to review resources that provide additional information on activities to support the early childhood workforce. Last fall, the Office of Early Childhood Development, Office of Child Care, and Office of Head Start released guidance that encourages states, communities, and local programs to take bold action to address early care and education (ECE) workforce shortages exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.¹ On July 13th the Office of Early Childhood Development held a webinar and released a Dear Colleague letter. Given the recent release of the Dear Colleague letter, we are strongly encouraging Preschool Development Grantees (PDG B5) to take immediate action in addressing the ongoing shortage in the ECE workforce. The following examples illustrate ways in which some states are using PDG B-5 grants to support workforce initiatives.

❖ Career Pathways and Professional Development

- The *California* Department of Social Services invested \$1 million into the California Early Childhood Mentor Program (CECMP). The CECMP's mentoring program matches experienced providers with community college students from over 100 California schools. Mentors build relationships and guide mentees as they prepare for interviews, learn, and implement relevant

¹ The HHS Administration for Children and Families (ACF) also published guidance for Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) administrators and Head Start programs along with ARP funding awards, that strongly encourages these entities to use ARP funds to increase payments to child care providers and compensation and benefits for the ECE workforce.

Health and Safety standards, develop their child observation and assessment skills and support children in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way. Funding source: CCDF

- The **California** Center for Professional Development and Innovation (CPDI) continues to produce 200 hours of online professional development in English and Spanish for the early learning and care workforce, and now will be offering two of these courses in Mandarin and Cantonese. As Chinese is the third most common language spoken among providers in California, this will enable even more providers to access online learning. The courses will be made accessible through the California Early Childhood Online (CECO) platform using a Smartphone, tablet, or computer. Funding source: PDG B5
- To help address the significant shortage of early childhood educators needed to provide high quality services to **Illinois'** young children and families, a consortium of faculty at Illinois Higher Education Institutions worked collaboratively to redesign early childhood teacher preparation courses into smaller “modules” of learning based upon the Gateways to Opportunity ECE Credential competencies. Providing online, modularized courses that lead to increasing levels of Gateways Credentials, degrees, and/or licensure will provide educational access and increased opportunities for the existing, diverse workforce and will also increase the future pipeline of educators. Funding source: PDG B5
- **Illinois** has partnered with institutes of higher education that expressed interest in the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) but had concerns about how PLA might articulate for students who transfer. The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) convened and coordinated, along with consultants and national experts, a group of faculty from two- and four- year institutions to oversee development of a PLA process using the existing Gateways ECE Credential Level 2 competencies and corresponding assessment structure. Development included the use of *AI/Virtual Mursion Software*, a relatively new technology designed to provide “virtual classrooms” which can host a range of set-ups, allowing students to evidence competencies they have attained through carefully constructed scenarios. In the coming year, a virtual assessment center will be established to ensure consistency in establishing and implementing PLA for the Gateways ECE Level 2, with training provided to faculty at institutions in the analysis and awarding of college credit. Contracting with IHEs to hold the license for the Mursion Software will need to be completed so the PLA assessment can be implemented. Funding source: PDG B5
- **Nebraska** Department of Education (NDE) is exploring a means to conduct Prior Learning Assessments and working with institutes of higher education to endorse this approach. NDE is also working on a “competency” assessment for Teacher certification and NAEYC is working on apprenticeship efforts. As part of a pilot in some communities, navigators will assist providers who are challenged in taking the required steps towards attaining higher credentials or degrees such the PRAXIS. They will explore options for obtaining credit for PRAXIS, such as utilizing ACT scores. Funding source: PDG B5
- In **New Jersey**, the Department of Human Services, Department of Labor, Department of Education, and Head Start Collaboration Office are launching a working group to explore and make recommendations for early care and education apprenticeship programs to strengthen ECE career pathways and increase compensation. Funding source: PDG B5
- **Georgia** is developing alternate pathways that focus on supporting bilingual individuals to attaining a credential or degree in early childhood education. A partnership has been developed

with the Council for Professional Recognition, the governing body that issues the Child Development Associate (CDA), in the design and implementation of a Bilingual CDA pilot program with the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG). Two cohorts have completed the program and plans are in place to start a third. Funding source: PDG B5

- **Colorado** now requires all licensed child care facilities' staff to register in the Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System (PDIS), the state's recently rebuilt workforce registry and learning management system. This will result in more robust workforce data collection, including key information on recruitment, retention, and credentials. A dashboard is currently being refreshed to help communities access interagency data to help target workforce funding needs. Supplemental CCDF funds will be used to automate the dashboard to provide more regular updates. Funding source: PDG B5, CCDF

❖ **Retaining a Highly Qualified ECE Workforce**

Recognizing career advancement

- **Maryland** is providing \$10 million for \$1,000 retention bonuses, and \$4 million for \$1,000 hiring bonuses pursuant to a bill passed by the state legislature. The state is expanding the retention bonuses using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to conduct a random-controlled study on teacher retention. In addition, the state will leverage ARPA funds to increase financial bonuses to the Maryland Child Care Credential program that recognizes individual child care providers who increase their qualifications beyond the requirements of state licensing and registration regulations. There are six staff credential levels and four administrator levels offering various recognition of achievement based on a child care provider's professional development/education, years of experience, and professional activities. The Maryland Child Care Credential Program is voluntary. Registered family child care providers and child care center staff are encouraged to participate. Funding source: State funds and ARPA
- The **Louisiana** Department of Education provided Teacher Support Grants, which issued financial support to child care teachers and staff, in the form of stipends, bonuses, or wage supplements. Child care centers across the state report that they have been able to employ more assistant teachers and saw fewer teachers quit between grant rounds. The Teacher Support Grant had a meaningful and positive impact on teacher turnover. Funding source: PDG B5

Supporting the mental health and well-being of the ECE workforce

- In **California**, one of the Child Care Resource Centers' (CCRC) ongoing targeted efforts has been in the development of *Early Childhood Provider Cafés*. Based on the success of the Parent Café model, CCRC also convenes groups of home visitors, family child care, and Family Friend and Neighbor (FFN) providers to build their capacity to support protective factors for families and utilize the curricula while providing care or during home visits. Funding source: PDG B5
- One of the ways **Washington** provides supports is through Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultations. This work partners mental health professionals with early childhood professionals to strengthen and support the efforts of families, child care providers and early childhood systems to promote the optimal social and emotional development of children, reduce suspension and expulsions, and build resiliency in the system. Providers report an increase in the ability to support the children and families in their care, which reduces compassion fatigue and turnover. PDG B-5 funding coupled with recent state investments have doubled the number of

consultants in the field and allowed for building additional coordination supports for this work.
Funding source: PDG B5 and State

Conducting wage studies and developing salary scales to improve ECE workforce compensation.

- *Illinois' Early Childhood Transformation Team (ECCT)* has been charged with directing the design and implementation of changes to Illinois' funding mechanisms and governance structure of early childhood education and care. A workgroup comprised of stakeholders has been convened who are in the process of building out a proposed statewide salary scale, beginning with analyzing costs in the Chicago metro area and the remainder of the State. The team has hosted focus groups comprised of directors and early childhood educators to review and provide input into the proposed scale. When finalized, the scale will account for years of experience and have parity with the K – 12 school system and address benefits (i.e., health coverage, paid time off and retirement). Funding source: PDG B5
- Initiated by legislation in 2019, *Connecticut* has drafted an ECE Compensation Schedule and is currently engaging stakeholders in its review in connection with its narrow cost analysis. The final ECE Compensation Schedule Report is scheduled to be completed within the coming few months. Next steps are for the final draft to be submitted to the legislature, which could result in legislative action. Funding source: PDG B5
- *Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF)* is initiating *Project Growth*, a set of public-private partnership-focused programs supporting current child care providers. *Partner Up!* is a public-private partnership where businesses contribute a minimum of 25% of the true cost of care and DCF pays the remaining percentage to fully cover employees' child care expenses. The state received 666 applications for the contractual agreements with employers. Employers that applied include health care facilities, grocery stores, and public utility companies. The second program, *Dream Up!*, is designed to support communities in the planning and implementation of a strategic plan to address gaps in early care and education by bringing together community stakeholders. Once the Strategic Plan is developed, communities will receive \$75,000 to implement their plan. Project Growth also funds Business-Child Care Advocate positions, who are housed at the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. The Advocates provide technical assistance to Partner Up! Businesses, market Project Growth, and engage in community outreach to grow public-private partnerships in their communities. Funding sources for both programs include: PDG B5, CSSRA and ARPA

Richard Gonzales
Director, Division of Interagency & Special Initiatives
Federal Project Manager, Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five (PDG B-5)