

MAINE CHILDREN'S GROWTH COUNCIL
MAINE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

**STATE APPLICATION FOR THE EARLY CHILDHOOD
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

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PROJECT ABSTRACT

The State of Maine is applying for funds (\$500,000) to support the critical work of the Maine Children's Growth Council (Council). The Council was created by state statute to look at and act upon the critical economic issue of early childhood. Charged to achieve sustainable social and financial investments in the healthy development of Maine's young children and their families, the Children's Growth Council is working with a diverse group of legislators, business leaders, providers, parents, researchers, community leaders, and government officials to implement the plan for a unified, statewide early childhood services system.

Maine has chosen to focus its state advisory council grant application on ensuring that parents have the right information to support their efforts on behalf of their children. This will include not only knowledge about child development, but also details about local services available to children and families. In Phase I, the Council will analyze available resources and unmet needs by working with parents and providers; the Council's work will include defining what is most necessary to give parents what they need. In Phase II, the Council will work to meet the needs of parents, with a project designed to address the issues identified in Phase I.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

I. The Need for Assistance and Objectives

A. The Need

The percentage of Maine's population under the age of five is one of the lowest in the nation. According to 2008 U.S. Census Bureau estimates, Maine has only about 71,000 children under the age of 5 – representing 5.43% of Maine's overall population. Only Vermont has a lower percentage of young children.

Thirty-nine percent of Maine's young children live in families with an income at 200% of the federal poverty or less. While this is lower than the percentage for the nation as a whole (44%), low income children in Maine are less likely to have a parent employed (37%) than the national average (47%).¹ While historically Maine has not had significant ethnic diversity, that is changing, and a 2006 *New York Times* study found that in 2006 the chance that two randomly-selected Maine students would be of a different ethnicity was more than twice the chance that two students would be of a different ethnicity in 1993.² From 2005-2009 the state welcomed 8,404 immigrants who became legal permanent residents, compared to 5,887 from 2000-2004.³

The Council has produced a report on school readiness that discusses the state's progress on key indicators. In 2010, the Council noted some of the challenges facing Maine: the highest poverty rate in New England, a declining rate of immunizations for two-year-olds, an inadequate number of behavioral and developmental screenings, too few providers enrolled in its new early

¹ All data in this paragraph comes from the National Center on Children in Poverty's state data profile on low-income young children, available on-line at <http://www.nccp.org/profiles/>.

² "Remade in America," *New York Times*, available on-line at <http://projects.nytimes.com/immigration/enrollment/maine>.

³ Persons Obtaining Legal Permanent Resident Status by State or Territory of Residence: Fiscal Years 2000 to 2009, Department of Homeland Security, available on-line at <http://www.dhs.gov/files/statistics/publications/LPR09.shtm>.

education and care quality rating system, and an uncoordinated flow of information to parents from among the medical, Early Head Start, IDEA Part C and B (Child Development Services) and other professional communities. But while Maine has challenges, it has also made real progress in some key areas. For example, the state is a national leader in the percentage of parents who read to their children, and expectant mothers in Maine obtain prenatal care in the first trimester at a much higher rate than in other states. Moreover, the percentage of children with health insurance is higher than for the nation as a whole, and 64% of children have a "medical home" as defined by the American Academy of Pediatrics.⁴

B. The Council's Objective for the Use of the Grant

The Council's application is focused on a single important problem: Parent Engagement and Support. The Council believes that Maine parents should have access to information they need to best raise their children, including both (a) information about child development and parenting strategies, and (b) information about available programs and resources that parents might choose to use. The Council proposes to focus the use of its grant on ensuring that Maine parents have the right information to help them make the best decisions for their children.

Parents may in many cases receive different information from numerous sources in various forms. For example, parents may have conversations and receive materials from multiple medical providers, from child care referral sources and providers, from home visiting providers, from preschool and early elementary teachers, and others. All of the information received in these interactions is potentially valuable. However, if it is not consistent, parents may find themselves confused. And in some instances parents may not be receiving information they need or want at all.

⁴ *Maine Children's Growth Council Report, School Readiness*, developed by the Maine Children's Alliance, available on-line at <http://www.maine-eccs.org/reports.html>, at p. 1.

The Council is uniquely situated to help bring greater coherence to interactions between providers and parents. The Council's goal is to ensure that the information parents have is truly driven by what parents really need. The Council will start by engaging with parents, to gain a better understanding of what it is they really need, and will then develop a plan for making sure that they have it. The Council will also work closely with providers to determine what information they are supplying to parents, and help them to place their work in a larger context.

The Council believes that if it can ensure that parents receive the information they need to best provide for their young children in a useful form, there will be an incredible ripple effect across programs and services. Parents are a child's first teacher and should be a child's best advocate. Providing parents with better information and tools is one of the Council's primary goals, and through its work on this grant the Council hopes to address in a significant way the problem of parents not having the right information in raising their children.

II. The Availability of Early Childhood Education in Maine

A. Available Programming

The three primary education and care programs serving Maine's children are state pre-k, child care, and Head Start; a description of each is provided below. Another important funding stream for young children is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; better service to children identified for special education is an important element of the Council's work.

Each of these programs plays a major role in school readiness, and needs to be a partner in the Council's work. The Council recognizes that these programs need to work with each other and with many other health and human services provided through federal and state funding. The

Council is also committed to appropriately supporting those parents who choose not to enroll their children in government-funded programming or programming outside the home.

1. State Preschool

Maine's state preschool program is provided primarily through public schools, but can also be provided in community settings, and collaboration is highly encouraged. Public preschool for 4-year-olds is built into the state's school funding formula; it is voluntary on the part of school administrative units, and currently serves about 25% of eligible 4-year-olds. There is no public preschool available for 3-year-olds.

According to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), Maine's program serves 2,731 4-year-olds, ranking the state 22nd in the percentage of 4-year-olds enrolled in state preschool.⁵ The state requires preschool programs to meet five of the ten NIEER quality benchmarks.⁶ Of the 38 states that support some form of state preschool, Maine ranks last in its level of state spending.⁷ Maine has developed quality benchmarks of program practice, but the statutory implementation of the benchmarks has been delayed. Maine offers Public Pre-K Community Collaboration Coaches to assist pre-k programs in collaborating with potential partners in their communities.

2. Child Care

Maine has one of the nation's highest eligibility limits for subsidized child care, with only California, Virginia, and Minnesota having higher limits among the 48 contiguous states.⁸

However, 87% of Maine families have a co-payment, compared to a national percentage of 64%.

⁵ All information in this paragraph comes from *The State of Preschool 2009*, National Institute for Early Education Research (hereinafter "NIEER Yearbook 2009"), Barnett et. al., available on-line at <http://nieer.org/yearbook/>, at pp. 74-75 (Maine profile).

⁶ NIEER Yearbook 2009 at 74-75.

⁷ NIEER Yearbook 2009 at 6.

⁸ NIEER Yearbook 2009 at 250.

Maine offers a higher percentage of licensed and regulated care than the nation as a whole in its programs supported by the Child Care and Development Block Grant, with 92% of child care provided in licensed/regulated care, compared to a national figure of 76%. The percentage of children served in centers is slightly above the national average – 63% vs. 61%%. The children served are on average older than those elsewhere, with 43% of the children served age 3-5, and only 24% aged 0-2 (compared to national percentages of 35% and 30% respectively).⁹

Maine has designed a quality rating system called *Quality for ME*, administered by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. It is "a four-step program designed to increase awareness of the basic standards of early education and care, to recognize and support providers who are providing care above and beyond those standards, and to educate the community of the benefits of higher quality care."¹⁰ Its goals are to recognize quality programs, encourage programs to increase quality, and provide parents with identifiable standards of quality. Efforts to develop the system began in 2004, and the tiered system is based on both national research and focus groups conducted in Maine. Maine DHHS has provided training to help implement *Quality for ME*, and since the system's implementation the number and percentage of accredited centers and homes has grown.

3. *Head Start and Early Head Start*

Head Start is a federal-to-local program with a long history of serving children in the greatest need, and providing comprehensive services beyond the classroom. The percentage of Maine children enrolled in Head Start is above the national average. Head Start serves 9% of

⁹ All information in this paragraph after the first sentence comes from the Center for the Study of Law and Social Policy, Maine Child Care Participation State Profile 2008 (hereinafter "CLASP child care profile") (http://www.clasp.org/in_the_states?id=0019).

¹⁰ Information about *Quality for ME* comes from the Maine Department of Health and Human Services website, at <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm>.

Maine 3-year-olds (compared to 7% nationally), and 12% of Maine 4-year-olds (compared to 11% nationally).¹¹ In 2008-09 Maine had 3,138 children served in Head Start, and 610 in Early Head Start.¹² From 2000 to 2008 the percentage of eligible children served by Head Start in Maine has ranged from a high of 72.6% in 2000 to a low of 65.1% in 2003, with a percentage of 67.5% in 2008.¹³

Recent national data shows that Head Start in Maine serves a population that is disproportionately white compared to other states. In Maine 85% of Head Start enrollees are white, compared to a national percentage of 39%. The percentage of black children in Head Start is far lower than the national percentage (4% to 29%), as is the percentage of Hispanic children of any race (3% to 36%).¹⁴ This is largely consistent with Maine's overall population trend. According to 2008 U.S. Census estimates, the percentage of blacks in Maine (1.03%) ranks 47th in the nation, and the percentage of Hispanics in Maine (1.28%) ranks 49th.

Finally, the percentage of Head Start enrollees in Maine from a single-parent family (49%) is lower than the national percentage (57%).¹⁵

4. *Other Critical Efforts in Maine*

Maine has established the *Maine Families Home Visiting Program* to help new parents and parents-to-be get their children off to a healthy start. Highly trained home visitors come to the homes of mothers, fathers and other caregivers to share new and helpful ways to parent.

¹¹ NIEER Yearbook 2009 at 5, 75

¹² *2010 Maine Children's Growth Council Report: School Readiness* (hereinafter "Maine School Readiness Report") (<http://www.maine-eccs.org/reports.html>), at 12.

¹³ Maine School Readiness Report at 12.

¹⁴ Center for the Study of Law and Social Policy, Maine Head Start Participation State Profile 2008 (hereinafter "CLASP Head Start profile") (http://www.clasp.org/in_the_states?id=0019), at 2.

¹⁵ CLASP Head Start profile, at 2.

Home visitors also connect parents to health and social supports. The Programs' website provides parenting tips, facts and figures, and links to parent resources.¹⁶

The Strengthening Maine Families initiative is a member of the national Strengthening Families project to reduce child maltreatment through work with early education and care providers. In its first few years, it has piloted this work at six sites statewide, implementing a nationally and internationally recognized parenting and family strengthening program for families in need. Building on existing infrastructure of professional development and quality rating efforts, Strengthening Maine Families seeks to supplement the resources for early care providers with concrete tools to engage families. Work is currently focused on developing a website with parenting tools and tips for parent engagement and advocacy.

In Maine the judiciary has expressed a significant commitment to family outcomes. Since 1998 Maine's district courts have had a Family Division, which handles family proceedings involving children. The division also provides educational services to parents.¹⁷

Maine is also proud to be the home to the first Educare site in New England, Educare of Central Maine in Waterville. Educare of Central Maine is a demonstration site that will provide comprehensive, high-quality early education services to 185-200 mostly low-income children.¹⁸

In addition to its ongoing activities, Maine currently has applications pending for competitive federal grants. For example, the Maine Department of Education has filed an application in Round Two of the U.S. Department of Education's "Race to the Top" grant

¹⁶ <http://www.maineamilies.org/>.

¹⁷ More information about the Family Division is available at http://www.courts.state.me.us/maine_courts/specialized/family/index.shtml.

¹⁸ Information about Educare of Central Maine is available at <http://www.educarecentralmaine.org/index.html>.

program.¹⁹ The Maine DHHS has applied for grant funds from the Health Resources and Services Administration to support its Autism Spectrum Disorders Systems Development Project. If the state is awarded these competitive grants (or other related competitive grants), then the Council will coordinate its work with the results of those efforts.

As the Council's work proceeds, it will also seek to draw on the experiences of other Maine initiatives. For example, it will consider the experience of the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council²⁰ and learn from its approach to policy development. The Council will seek opportunities to collaborate where it will lead to improved outcomes for children, and improved processes for policy change.

This list is not an exclusive summary of initiatives for young children and their families in Maine, but is meant to provide context for the Council's grant application and how the convergence of multiple funding and collaboration streams have primed the state for action.

B. Status of Current Collaboration and Governance

The Maine Children's Growth Council was created by statute in 2008, and is the successor to the Maine Task Force on Early Childhood as the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) planning and implementation body. The Council is the Maine entity charged with coordinating state, local, and community efforts to serve young children and their families. The Council's duties include reviewing and addressing recommendations of legislative studies, and implementing the state's *Invest Early in Maine* plan.²¹ The Council understands the importance of the broad range of programs and supports available to parents, and how different

¹⁹ Information about Maine's Race to the Top application is available at <http://www.state.me.us/education/racetothetop/index.html>.

²⁰ <http://www.maineddc.org/>.

²¹ *Invest Early in Maine: A Working Plan for Humane Early Childhood Systems, 2008 Edition*, Maine Children's Growth Council (hereinafter "Invest Early in Maine 2008") (<http://www.maine-eccs.org/index.html>).

pieces of the system contribute to the greater whole. The Council has organized itself into eight committees, with ad hoc groups added as needed or by legislative mandate:

- Communications/Public Outreach
- Legislative/Policy
- Data/Fiscal Mapping Report
- Finance
- Community
- Early Care and Education
- Family
- Health
- Working Group to Study the Connections Between Higher Education and Early Childhood Education (legislative ad hoc group)

Each member of the Council is expected to participate in at least one committee. Each committee has co-chairs, at least one of whom is a Council member. The committees each report regularly to the Council, and their meetings (like Council meetings) are open to the public. The Council is supported and staffed through the ECCS initiative funded by HHS Maternal & Child Health Bureau.

Maine's tradition of collaborative work on children's issues long predates the establishment of the Council. In 1998 Maine established by statute a Governor's Children's Cabinet, which includes the Commissioners of Education, Health and Human Services, Public Safety, Corrections, and Labor. The Cabinet is currently chaired by First Lady Karen M. Baldacci, who also serves as co-chair of the Council. The Cabinet has identified early childhood education as one of its established priorities. One of its ongoing projects is the Adverse Childhood Experiences project, which links adverse experiences in childhood - such as abuse, alcoholism in the family, mental illness, etc. - to adverse health outcomes as the child becomes an adult. The Children's Cabinet seeks to foster conditions that: 1) prevent, to the extent

possible, such trauma in childhood; 2) minimize the impact of traumatic experiences and events; and 3) strengthen the resiliency of children, families, and communities in dealing with trauma

The Council has also benefited from the active leadership of Maine's business community. In 2007, Governor John E. Baldacci hosted a Governor's Economic Summit on Early Childhood, in partnership with the United Ways of Maine and Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. From that Summit emerged a group of business leaders, Maine's Business Roundtable on Early Childhood Education, which issued a 2008 *Report of Priority Recommendations for Early Childhood Investments in Maine*.²² One of the Roundtable's three identified priorities is improving education about child development for both parents and the public at large.²³

C. Status of Key Elements of Maine's Early Learning System and Goals for Increasing the Number of Children Entering Kindergarten Ready to Learn

1. *Status of Key Elements of Maine's Early Learning System*

The Head Start Act requires the Council, in its application, to describe "the State early learning standards and the State's goals for increasing the number of children entering kindergarten ready to learn." The U.S. DHHS requires state applicants report on the status of their early learning standards, professional development, and data systems.

a. Early Learning Standards

Maine adopted comprehensive early learning standards (known as the Maine Early Childhood Learning Guidelines) in 2005, as a cross-systems document between the Maine DHHS and the Maine Department of Education. In addition, Maine has public learning guidelines for infants and toddlers. According to the Maine Department of Education:

²² More information about the Roundtable – including its report – can be found at <http://www.maine-eccs.org/roundtable.html>.

²³ *Report of Priority Recommendations for Early Childhood Investments in Maine*, Governor Baldacci's Business Roundtable on Early Childhood Investment, December 2008, available on-line at <http://www.maine-eccs.org/roundtable.html>, pp. 13-19.

The *State of Maine Early Childhood Learning Guidelines* serves as a guide for state and local early care and education practitioners' efforts to improve early childhood professional practice and programs for young children ages three through their entrance into kindergarten. This document considers the core elements contained in the *State of Maine Learning Results* (K-12). The Guidelines reflect current research on early learning and best practice in early education. The document can be used within and across a wide range of early learning settings—public preschool, Head Start, subsidized child care programs, private child care programs, nursery schools, family child care homes, and informal care settings. The Early Childhood Learning Guidelines are intended to effect greater collaboration and consistency across systems by aligning practice across all early childhood settings and the early grades.

All of the guidelines are available on the Maine Department of Education website.²⁴

As Maine's K-12 standards face the possibility of substantive change, the impact of that work on early learning must be addressed – and whatever impact the changes have will then require further discussion about aligned curricula and assessments. The end goal for Maine should be to have the following progression of research-based standards:

- Age-appropriate learning standards for the youngest children, ages birth through five, which ensure their optimal development as a foundation for kindergarten readiness and success.
- Early elementary standards that build on the early learning standards while preparing children for the rigorous work ahead in middle and high school.
- High school standards anchored to college/career readiness, with an aligned progression of standards in middle school that prepare students for a rigorous high school experience.

²⁴ <http://maine.gov/education/fouryearold/guidelines.html>.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative has produced a set of Common Core State Standards, which are college- and career-ready standards designed for adoption by states around the country.²⁵ Maine has signed onto the Common Core initiative, and has committed in its "Race to the Top" application to the Department of Education that it will adopt the Common Core during the summer of 2010.

Maine's commitment to articulated standards will require it to consider what impact, if any, the Common Core has on its early learning standards. The Council has a responsibility for recommending improvements to early learning standards and the work that flows naturally from those standards. Maine will remain aware of the evolving national landscape, be involved with efforts to create a common core of early learning standards, and be prepared to revise existing early learning standards to meet any new national efforts and align with new K-12 standards.

In fulfilling its responsibility, the Council must ensure that the standards are developmentally appropriate, lead to kindergarten readiness, and are well-articulated from birth through preschool. In addition, the Council will work with K-12 leaders to ensure that the junction point between early learning and K-12 standards is at the appropriate place, and that the progression of standards that begins with early learners continues on an appropriate trajectory through the early elementary grades. The Council also recognizes that while it is essential that the standards as written be of the highest quality, the true impact on children comes from the dissemination and implementation of the standards. Key to seeing this work happen is the developing partnership with the Maine Council on Excellence in Education, which is working with the Council's Communication committee to message the importance of a solid continuum of early education and care through postsecondary education offerings.

²⁵ More information about the initiative is available at <http://www.corestandards.org/>.

b. Professional Development

Maine's efforts in the past decade have focused on improving the credentials of early education and care providers. Maine has had in place a career registry, Maine Roads to Quality, and uses scholarships to help individuals move up or across the registry lattice. Trainings now must be linked to pathways that improve an individual's standing in the registry or move toward a credential (such as a CDA or AA).

Maine's professional development system infrastructure includes:

- a Core Knowledge Training Program (180 hours of training that articulates into Maine's Community College System for 9-12 credits); Practitioner and Trainer Registries;
- scholarships for practitioners accessing post secondary course work; and
- accreditation supports and technical assistance for working through the Quality for ME system.

Recent professional development efforts have included:

- a three-tiered Infant Toddler Credential (Level 1 is a State Approved alternate to the Infant Toddler CDA, Level II is a post-associates degree credential, and level III is a post-bachelors degree credential);
- an early childhood mental health consultant credential;
- a home visiting certificate for family support professionals;
- extensive training on the use of the Infant-Toddler and Early Learning Guidelines;
- a technical assistance network and data tracking system to track four defined levels of technical assistance and its impact on program progression through the Quality for ME system; and,

- online training, course work, and communities of practice.

c. Data Systems

In 2010, Maine was awarded a \$7.3 million grant by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) for work on its longitudinal data system. One element of Maine's grant is to develop a link between the Department of Education and the DHHS to monitor the effectiveness of early childhood programs in ensuring school readiness. The grant will allow Maine to link data from multiple early childhood programs, and to undertake a pilot program. The Maine Education Policy Research Institute will use data from the new linkage to perform research that will inform policymakers and educators of ways to improve policy and practice in the early childhood field. In the past legislative session, the Council secured a modification to the Department of Education's *Conditions of Education Report* that will provide a venue to disseminate more information about early childhood and its connection to lifelong learning success.

2. *Goals for Increasing the Number of Children Entering Kindergarten Ready to Learn*

In 2010, the Council released the *2010 Maine Children's Growth Council Report: School Readiness*, which details numerous indicators of school readiness. The purpose of the report is to provide data about the key aspects of school readiness, presented on a statewide and county-by-county basis. In keeping with the Council's view that school readiness requires a multifaceted approach – with ready schools, ready communities, ready early education and care, and ready families – the report includes data on a range of indicators across multiple domains. These indicators are currently the best gauge Maine has of its performance in preparing children for kindergarten.

One of the Council's goals is to develop a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment.²⁶ Until that assessment has been developed, Maine may not be able to track specifically the number of children who are "kindergarten ready." However, until then, the Council intends to continue tracking key indicators of school readiness through the School Readiness Report.

III. The Council's Action Agenda: Strategies for Increasing the Number of Children Ready for Kindergarten

The Council has identified numerous strategies for improving kindergarten readiness in Maine. In its most recent *Invest Early in Maine* report, the Council described key strategies in a variety of domains, including Family, Health, Early Care and Education, Community, and the State.²⁷ More recently, in February 2010, the Council's 2010 Report to the legislature identified priority activities for 2010-11, including recommendations from the Family Committee.²⁸ All of the work identified in the 2010 Report is proceeding under the Council's leadership.

While the Council is undertaking a great deal of work to improve kindergarten readiness, the Council has chosen to focus this grant application on a single cross-cutting strategy: improving the flow of information to Maine parents. We know that a wide range of providers and programs give parents all kinds of information in various ways – in person, over the phone, on the internet, and in writing, in settings formal and informal. The messages coming from these medical professionals, child care providers, home visitors, and others are generally accurate – and in many instances are extremely helpful. However, we do not know if it is not enough, if it is too much, if it is consistent, or if there are information gaps that are not filled because of lack of coordination among programs.

²⁶ Invest Early in Maine 2008, Strategy 5.B.1.

²⁷ Invest Early in Maine 2008.

²⁸ The Council's 2010 Report is available on its website at <http://www.maine-eccs.org/reports.html>.

To date there has been no expectation of providers that they provide information as part of a coordinated strategy, so they have appropriately provided the best information they can based on their program's articulated mission. This means the Council's job is to change the expectation of providers, so that all providers understand that the information they provide to parents is part of a larger coordinated effort grounded in evidence. For that new expectation to be reasonable, it must be supported by resources and tools that the Council will use this grant to help develop. The Council would like to approach this problem from a parent's viewpoint, and attempt to solve the problem in a thoughtful, two-phased approach.

Before describing the Council's approach, it is important to note that while we refer to the perspective of Maine parents, we know that many children in Maine are not being raised in a household with both parents. In Maine 31% of households are headed by a single parent, just slightly below the national average.²⁹ In addition, 5% of Maine children are being raised in households without either parent, consistent with the national average.³⁰ The Council is deeply respectful of the important roles of mothers, fathers, grandparents, and other caregivers, and recognizes that many different adults may play a critical part in raising a child. For simplicity, however, this application will refer to the role of parents.

A. Phase I: Information Gathering

Because parents receive information from so many sources and so many forms, the first phase of work for the Council will be to develop a more precise sense of exactly what information parents are receiving. Grant funds will be used to hire a consultant or consultants with the appropriate expertise. The scope of work for Phase I will include:

²⁹ Annie E. Casey Kids Count Data Center, at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/acrossstates/Rankings.aspx?loct=2&by=v&order=a&ind=106&dtm=430&tf=35>.

³⁰ Annie E. Casey Kids Count Data Center, at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/acrossstates/Rankings.aspx?loct=2&by=v&order=a&ind=106&dtm=430&tf=35>.

- Interviewing a diverse group of parents from around the state about the information they receive from multiple sources, including health and early care and education ("ECE") providers.
- Interviewing health and ECE providers about the information and materials they provide to parents.
- Reviewing the results of a survey of parent education programs conducted by the University of Maine, which is expected to provide a report to the Council this fall. The report will inventory existing programs and provide a gap analysis.

Through this work, the Council plans to learn with substantially more precision what parents learn – and, perhaps more importantly, what they do not learn. The final deliverable for Phase I will identify the resources available to Maine parents, the most significant information needs of Maine parents, and strategies for meeting the needs of parents that build on existing resources.

The Phase I report will also identify what metrics the Council should use to measure the success of its parental engagement outreach, and discuss how the state's existing and planned data systems can support the rigorous evaluation of parent engagement efforts. If appropriate metrics cannot be identified in the Phase I process, they will be developed as part of the Phase II design. As part of this reporting, the Phase I report will identify what key data elements are already captured by Maine's longitudinal data system (or will be when the work of the state's new IES grant has been completed).

B. Phase II: Closing the Gap

Having identified what parents are and are not learning about child development and available services, the Council will then focus in Phase II on addressing whatever deficiencies are identified in Phase I. This could include the design or redesign of existing websites with

parent information; the creation of new materials or mass printing existing materials for parents; training for providers in how best to communicate with parents (such as Strengthening Maine Families); or some other strategy identified through Phase I as likely to be effective. In planning Phase II, the Council will focus both on method and message: what methods of reaching parents are most effective, and what messages have the greatest impact? The work will be conducted by consultants with the appropriate expertise, who will be hired after the Council has reviewed the results of Phase I and approved an appropriate strategy for Phase II.

The Phase II design cannot be completed before the Council has done an analysis of the Phase I results to identify the true nature of the problem to be solved. However, there are some key principles that the Council has already identified that will guide its work in Phase II. In designing Phase II, the Council will adhere to the following principles:

- Building on work already accomplished. A great deal of parent engagement takes place in Maine, and a great deal of outreach already occurs. The Council knows that duplicating that work would be a mistake. Instead, the Council will consider whether existing efforts can be improved, or whether new complementary efforts are needed. Ideally any new efforts designed by the Council will either make more effective use of existing resources, or will leverage existing resources to improve child outcomes.
- Being visible to the general public. The Council has been focused on ways to create a bully pulpit for child development. That focus will animate its work on this grant.
- Utilizing different methods of outreach. In addition to traditional print brochures and websites, the Council will consider other methods of reaching out to parents, including television, radio, and social media.

- Part of building on work already accomplished and utilizing different methods of outreach is incorporating existing efforts to develop parent information websites. While not all parents use the internet, many do, and they have several existing portals from which to find information – and others are in development. Indeed, this application has noted several websites that parents already access or that are under development. Ensuring that these portals are consistent and appropriately cross-referencing will make it much easier for parents to find what they need.
- Recognizing that materials only go so far. While excellent outreach through multiple technological channels should be part of the strategy, much of what parents learn comes from personal interaction. The project's success will depend primarily on how it helps the many hard-working people in Maine's early care and education field to interact with parents successfully.
- Being sensitive to the Maine environment. The science of child development has been the focus of national study, and many excellent materials have been produced nationally about key principles of child development. The Council's job is not to replicate national research in Maine, but instead to design plans for utilizing that research in the Maine context. The Council's understanding of Maine's communities – including its regional and local jurisdictions – will allow it to design implementation plans that are likely to be effective with Maine parents. This will require the Council to consider how to reach parents in diverse regions of the state, including taking into account how limited technology access may affect some parents (particularly in the state's most rural regions).
- Changing behavior through incentives. In the years ahead there will be several opportunities to design incentives affecting how providers interact with young children --

- Considering how the longitudinal data system can be a resource. With Maine already committed to improving the quality of its early childhood data, the Council's project should consider both how to use the data that will become available to serve parents, and how to influence the future development of the longitudinal data system.
 - Building on the Phase I work to identify data elements that are already collected, the Phase II work will include an analysis of what data needs to be collected but currently is not.
- Thinking birth-to-third grade. While the Council's focus is on early childhood, the Council also knows that connecting children to K-12 education is critical for their long-term outcomes. The Council will be alert to opportunities for improved parent engagement connected to early elementary education.

At the end of the grant period, the Council will have taken tangible, thoughtful, and sustainable actions designed to improve the quality of information available to Maine parents.

C. Impact on Other Areas of the Council's Work

The Council believes that the project it proposes will fulfill the purposes of the federal grant, because it will "promot[e] school readiness of children from birth to school entry" by "encourag[ing] families and caregivers to engage in highly interactive, developmentally and age-appropriate activities to improve children's early social, emotional, and cognitive development,

support the transition of young children to school, and foster parental and family involvement in the early education of young children." 42 U.S.C. §9837b(b)(2)(A)(i). The proposed project also builds on the Council's longstanding focus on the importance of families. In 2008, the Council identified two goals relating to families: "All Maine families will have access to programs that deliver comprehensive, family-centered, culturally sensitive, linguistically competent, and collaborative prevention services" (Goal 1.A), and "Maine supports family-friendly practices that enable families of young children to secure their basic needs"(Goal 1.B).³¹ The proposed project is consistent with the strategies identified in that report, particularly under Goal 1.A.

The Council also believes that the proposed project will help the Council fulfill its other statutory responsibilities. In addition to addressing the need that parents have for better information, the proposed project will assist the Council with its other duties under the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. § 9837b(b)(1)(D)(I)-(VII)):

- *Conducting a statewide needs assessment.* In the Council's work to update its existing reports on the state's needs, it will pay special attention to the needs of parents identified through the Phase I analysis -- as well as coordinating its work with that of the federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting needs assessment results.
- *Identifying opportunities for collaboration and coordination.* While much of the collaboration among federal and state programs occurs out of the direct view of parents, the end result should be service to parents that is coherent and

³¹ Invest Early in Maine 2008.

coordinated. The lessons learned through the proposed project will help identify where collaboration needs to be strengthened.

- *Developing recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in programs.* The proposed project will increase parental awareness of the benefits of different available programs for their children – and increase their ability to find a program that meets their child's needs.
- *Developing recommendations regarding the establishment of a unified data collection system.* Information gleaned from the project will help inform what kinds of public reports a unified data system might provide that would be most helpful to parents, and also whether there are ways the state and providers can use data to give individual parents more information that they need.
- *Developing recommendations regarding statewide professional development.* The results of the project will help inform how providers are trained to engage and interact with parents. For instance, the materials available from Strengthening Maine Families are intended to supplement with concrete tools the training made available through the Resource Development Centers (Maine's Child Care R&R network).
- *Assessing the capacity and effectiveness of higher education institutions to support the development of early childhood educators.* One aspect of early childhood educator development is preparation for interacting with parents, and that element of preparation should be informed by the the Council's work.
- *Making recommendations for improvements in early learning standards.* One element of informing parents is providing them with background on the standards

and curriculum used in early childhood education programs. Any improvements in early learning standards will be accompanied by recommendations for how best to convey information about the standards to parents – and those recommendations would be shaped by the results of the proposed project.

Of course, the Council's role is not defined solely by its federal obligations. The proposed project will support other efforts that the Council has underway. For example, the Council's Communications/Public Outreach Committee is responsible for planning outreach to the general public, and the lessons learned through the proposed project about providing information to Maine parents would undoubtedly influence the Council's work to communicate to the Maine public as a whole. The Maine Department of Health and Human Services is working to develop a website for parents with information about brain development as well as the state's quality rating system; the new website would be one important outreach tool, especially in conjunction with the Strengthening Maine Families work. In addition, the Community Committee's outreach to municipalities and other local governments would be informed by the identified needs of parents.

The Council will also consider the results of the project in the next update to the *Invest Early in Maine* plan. To be truly responsive to parents requires not only understanding what information they need, but what services they hope to access. The Council will use the results of this project as it works to plan the future of early childhood in Maine.

Activities Funded	
<i>Phase I: Identify the information needs of parents in Maine</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a scope of work based on the principles articulated in the grant application • Identify a consultant to manage the process of the “Parent Needs Assessment” • Consultant will conduct a process involving interviews with parents and providers, and a review of materials • Consultant will prepare a final deliverable identifying the resources available to Maine parents, the most significant information needs of Maine parents, and strategies for meeting the needs of parents that build on existing resources. • Council will consider the consultant's report and work with consultant to define a the scope of a Phase II project • In addition, grant will fund staffing of the Communications Committee, the Data/Resource Mapping Committee, and the Family Committee as integral to this work
<i>Phase II: Address the information needs of parents in Maine</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve a strategy/consultant to implement the Council's recommendations • Consultant will then implement the Council's recommendations • Continue to fund staffing of the Communications Committee, the Data/Resource Mapping Committee, and the Family Committee as integral to this work

IV. Personnel, Budget, and Work Plan

A. Name/Agency Affiliation of Council Members

Name	TitleAffiliation	Agency Council Seat (*ex officio)
Alan Cobo-Lewis	University of Maine	Parent of Young Child
Angela Faherty	Maine DOE	Acting Commissioner*
Becky Brown	Parent	Parent
Brenda Harvey	Maine DHHS	DHHS Commissioner *
Dana Connors	State Chamber of Commerce	Statewide Association of Business and Industry
Debra Hannigan	Maine DOE	Part C Coordinator
Eloise Vitelli	Women, Work, & Community	Economic Growth Council
Heidi Hart	Richardson , Whitman, Large & Badger	Parent
Jan Clarkin	Maine Children's Trust	Child Abuse Prevention
Jim Clair	Goold Health Systems	Business Roundtable on Early Childhood Investment
Jonathan Leach	The Children's Center	Public
Judy Reidt Parker	Maine Children's Alliance	Early Care and Education
Sen. Justin Alfond	Legislature	Senate Member
Karen Heck	Bingham Program	Public Funding and Philanthropy
Karen M. Baldacci	First Lady, Governor's Office	Governor/Designee
Kathy Colfer	KVCAP	Head Start
Laurie LaChance	Maine Development Foundation	Public
Lori Fried Moses	USM Every Child Matters	Child Care Advisory Council
Rep. Meredith Strang Burgess	Legislature	House Member
Nancy Brain	Maine Philanthropy	Public Funding and Philanthropy
Patti Woolley	Maine DHHS	Head Start Collaboration
Penni Theriault	SEIU Kids First	Labor Union
Peter Lindsay	United Way of Midcoast Maine	United Ways of Maine
Sen. Peter Mills	Legislature	Senate Member
Rosa Redonnet	University System	Postsecondary Education
Sandy Peters	United Way of Midcoast Maine Board	Public
Sarah Forster	Attorney General's Office	Attorney General/Designee

Name	TitleAffiliation	Agency Council Seat (*ex officio)
Rep. Seth Berry, House Majority Whip	Legislature	House Member
Stephen Meister	Maine DHHS	Title V (Maternal & Child Health)
Susan Mackey Andrews	Maine Association for Infant Mental Health Maine	Public Health
Todd Brackett	Lincoln County Sheriff	Law Enforcement
William P. Braun	RSU 19 Superintendent	Public
<i>Sheryl Peavey</i>	<i>ECCS Director</i>	<i>Staff to Council*</i>

B. Goals, Objective, Activities, and Timelines for Each Year of Grant (Three Years; Projections of Accomplishments)

The following chart explains the timeline (beginning July 2010), activities, and accomplishments for the work described in this application.

Quarter	Activities	Accomplishments
Q1 (July-Sep 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a scope of work based on the principles articulated in the grant application • Coordinate with the Needs Assessment results from the Home Visiting work (Family Committee) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize scope of work
Q2 (Oct-Dec 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a consultant to manage the “Parent Information Needs Assessment” process • Identify a consultant to manage the Invest Early update process (Communications Committee) • Finalize links between Maine DHHS Quality for ME and Strengthening Maine Families • Data/Resource Mapping (DRM) Committee prepare 2011 School Readiness Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award contracts to manage the processes • Consultants will provide status reports at each Council meeting • Strengthening Maine Families Website launch

Quarter	Activities	Accomplishments
Q3 (Jan-Mar 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants will conduct a process involving interviews with parents and providers, and a review of materials • Communications Consultants will target policymakers, business leaders, philanthropy and parents with the Council's early childhood investment message and parent support information. • Consultants provide Invest Early Update Draft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants will provide status reports at each Council meeting • Release of 2011 School Readiness Report • Invest Early Update with Executive Summary Draft
Q4 (Apr-June 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants will continue conducting a process involving interviews with parents and providers, and a review of materials all of which will be supported by a public education campaign on early childhood. • Consultants will begin preparing final deliverable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants will provide status reports at each Council meeting
Q5 (July-Sep 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants will provide a draft deliverable identifying the most significant information needs of Maine parents, and identifying strategies for meeting those needs including communications strategies • Council will consider the consultants' report and work with consultants to define the scope of a Phase II project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants will provide status reports at each Council meeting • Consultants will provide a draft deliverable identifying the most significant information needs of Maine parents, and identifying strategies for meeting those needs • Council and consultants define the scope of a Phase II project
Q6 (Oct-Dec 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council and consultants will work to finalize Phase I deliverable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants will provide status reports at each Council meeting • Preliminary Resource Mapping Report • Completion of final Phase I deliverable
Q7 (Jan-Mar 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants will be identified to implement the Council's recommendations in the revised Invest Early and recommendations on parent engagement and support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants will provide status reports at each Council meeting • Release of 2012 School Readiness Report • Award of Phase II contract

Quarter	Activities	Accomplishments
Q8 (Apr-June 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined based on Phase II work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants will provide status reports at each Council meeting • Other work to be determined based on Phase II work plan
Q9 (July-Sep 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined based on Phase II work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants will provide status reports at each Council meeting • Other work to be determined based on Phase II work plan
Q10 (Oct-Dec 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined based on Phase II work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants will provide status reports at each Council meeting • Other work to be determined based on Phase II work plan
Q11 (Jan-Mar 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined based on Phase II work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants will provide status reports at each Council meeting • Release of 2013 School Readiness/Resource Mapping Report • Other work to be determined based on Phase II work plan
Q12 (Apr-June 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined based on Phase II work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants will provide status reports at each Council meeting • Other work to be determined based on Phase II work plan

The Council recognizes that it is not providing full detail for the work plan in Phase II.

However, given that the scope of Phase II will be largely defined by the results of Phase I, the Council is concerned about providing information at this time that would turn out to be too limiting or inaccurate. The Council is committed to working with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to ensure that the grant is implemented appropriately.

C. Plans for Needs Assessment, Public Hearings, and Council Meetings

I. *Needs Assessment*

The Council will be working to update its *Invest Early in Maine* plan, which was last updated in 2008. The Council will discuss the needs assessment at public hearings (which may be combined with full Council meetings) during the updating of the *Invest Early in Maine* plan

over the course of FY 2011, and will then hold at least one hearing a year thereafter to obtain public comment on the plan's implementation. The update will be based on the work of the Council's committees since the release of the last report. In addition, the Council's overall needs assessment will be coordinated with other needs assessments currently underway or planned in Maine.

Maine is currently seeking federal funding through the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Project (MIEC-HV) for a needs assessment and the enhancement and implementation of the state home visiting plan. This needs assessment will involve coordination with personnel –and build on the needs assessments--from numerous programs, including Maternal and Child Health, substance abuse, Head Start, and child abuse prevention). The project director for the home visiting project will be Sheryl Peavey, who is the state home visiting program administrator and also serves as the ECCS coordinator/Council Staff. Accordingly, the Council's efforts to update *Invest Early in Maine* will draw substantially from the work done on the home visiting needs assessment.

The Maine Children's Alliance will provide support for the needs assessment process. The School Readiness Report (described above in II.C.2) will continue to be released annually, and the Council's resource mapping efforts will culminate with a report release in January 2013.

2. Public Hearings

The Council held a public hearing on Tuesday, June 15, 2010, to give interested parties an opportunity to respond to its Strategic Report (which is included in the appendices). Notice of the public hearing was provided on the Maine Children's Growth Council's website. The hearing was held at the Hill Mansion in Augusta at 8:30 a.m. Nine members of the public, 17

Council members, and two support staff were present. Minutes of the public hearing are included in the appendix.

3. *Council Meetings*

The chart below provides a general timeline for the needs assessment, public hearings, and meetings of the Council for the three years of the grant. (The Council is defining "year" as the state fiscal year, July 1 through June 30.) The Council is required by its state authorizing statute to meet at least six times a year. While the Council is committed to the level of public engagement described in this application, the exact scheduling of public hearings and Council meetings may be modified slightly during the course of the project to ensure optimal use of human and financial resources.

Activity	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
	July- Sept. 2010	Oct.- Dec. 2010	Jan.- Mar. 2011	Apr.- June 2011	July- Sept. 2011	Oct.- Dec. 2011	Jan.- Mar. 2012	Apr.- June 2012	July Sept. 2012	Oct.- Dec. 2012	Jan.- Mar. 2013	Apr.- June 2013
Needs Assessment(s) Discussed by Council	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public Hearings on Needs Assessment(s)		X	X	X		X				X		
SAC Meetings	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

D. Partner Organizations, Entities, Consultants

The work described in this application, which will be informed and overseen by the Council, will be accomplished primarily by:

- The Maine Department of Health and Human Services;
- The Maine Development Foundation (MDF), which will act as the fiscal agent for the Council consultants (whose roles are described in Part III);
- The Maine Children's Alliance; and

- The Maine Children’s Trust Fund, which serves as fiscal agent for the public private partnership, Strengthening Maine Families.

The Maine Department of Health and Human Services, designated by statute as the lead agency for the Council, will be responsible for coordinating the work of the Council. The work that consultants will be used for includes:

- Coordinating the parent information project described in the application; and
- Undertaking other activities that support the Council's parent information project, including:
 - Supporting the Council's work to prepare the School Readiness Report, conduct resource mapping, and the longitudinal data pilot;
 - Staffing the Council's Communications Committee;
 - Coordinating Strengthening Maine Families and its website;
 - Managing the rewrite of the Invest Early in Maine plan with an emphasis on parent engagement and support (in conjunction with the development of the state MEIC-HV plan); and
 - Providing support for the Council's overall activities and committee coordination.

E. Sustainability Plan

Phase I of our work is to conduct an initial analysis of the current situation in Maine, which is work that does not need to be sustained. Phase II, however, will potentially involve the creation or printing of materials that will need to be distributed on an ongoing basis, or training that will need to be conducted on an ongoing basis, or other activities that will need to be

continued beyond the grant period to be successful. Accordingly, the design of Phase II will include an explicit discussion of how the work can be sustained beyond the grant period.

As a general matter, however, the Council believes that the work of the grant will naturally be sustained over time. The grant will allow the Council to study a set of interactions that are already taking place, and identify ways that those interactions can be made more effective. There is no question that medical providers, child care referral sources and providers, home visiting providers, preschool teachers, and others will continue to interact with parents of young children. The research, materials, and/or training provided by the Council through this grant will help to improve those ongoing interactions – meaning that the work of the grant will be sustained well beyond its conclusion.

Beyond the scope of the grant, the Council is fully committed to sustaining the work of developing a high-quality, comprehensive early childhood development system. The Council is created by Maine statute and has already produced numerous publications defining its goals for the state and the indicators it seeks to rely upon. While this grant will play a significant role in helping the Council to achieve its goals, most of the Council's work will remain beyond the scope of the grant, and will continue throughout and beyond the next three years.

F. Staff and Position Data

1. *Existing Staff Assigned to the Council*

The Council's current staff person is Sheryl Peavey, Director, Early Childhood Initiative, Maine Children's Growth Council, Maine Department of Health and Human Services. Ms. Peavey has served in that capacity since 2004. Her responsibilities have included leading and coordinating plan for comprehensive services; staffing the Council; advocating for maternal and child health populations; informing stakeholders about the ECCS state plan; contract and

program management; and obtaining grant support for ECCS initiatives. Prior to that, she worked as a policy analyst/evaluator for Hornby Zeller Associates, Inc., which included managing the evaluation project for Maine's Universal Home Visiting programs; and as a national manager for client services at ARAMARK Work/Life Partnerships. She earned a B.A. *cum laude* from Brandeis University, and is a candidate for an M.S. in Education Management at the University of Denver.

2. *Staff and consultants to be hired using grant funds*

The Council will use the Maine Development Foundation as the fiscal agent for the consultants, through a contract with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. The MDF will be responsible for managing the finances for consultant work and ensuring that payments are made in a timely fashion. The following individuals and entities will be used as consultants during the grant period, to execute the activities described in IV.D above:

- *Managing the parent information project described in the application:* This consultant has not yet been hired. The Council will provide to HHS the qualifications and background of consultants who are hired using grant funds.
- *Undertaking other activities that support the Council's parent information project, including:*
 - *Supporting the Council's work to prepare the School Readiness Report, conduct resource mapping, and the, and the longitudinal data pilot:* This work will be executed by the Maine Children's Alliance (MCA).³² The MCA is committed to improving the lives of all Maine's children, youth, and families.

By collecting and analyzing data on children and their health, economic and

³² More information about the Maine Children's Alliance is available at http://www.mainechildrensalliance.org/am/publish/article_1.shtml.

demographic status, it seeks to link research to practice and public policy. It regularly brings diverse groups together in coalitions that support policy initiatives that benefit children, providing oversight in state policy arenas and serving as a resource on children and family policy issues at the local and national levels. MCA's work will be led by its Early Childhood Specialist, Judith Reidt-Parker.

- *Staffing the Council's Communications Committee:* The Council's Communications Committee will be staffed by Donna Overcash. Ms. Overcash is a Child and Family Policy Consultant for the Maine Children's Growth Council. In 2004 Ms. Overcash served on the Maine Children's Cabinet Early Childhood Task Force, the precursor of the Maine Children's Growth Council. In 2007 she developed and co-staffed with Sheryl Peavey the Governor's Economic Summit on Early Childhood followed by the development of the Governor's Business Roundtable in 2008 and the Council in 2009. During 2010 Ms. Overcash is consulting as staff to the Council's Communications Committee funded by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. Previously, Ms. Overcash served as the CEO and Executive Director of Quality Care of Children, Inc., formerly the domestic child care support program of Save the Children Federation; was part of the 1987 Hurricane Hugo recovery effort in the U.S. Virgin Islands supporting children and their families; served as a Special Assistant to the Maine Commissioner of Human Services on child and family policies and programs; staffed the Maine Day Care Directors Association; and served as executive director of a child care

center. She has authored publications on a variety of topics relating to the work of the Growth Council.

- *Coordinating and supporting Strengthening Maine Families:* Coordination and support for Strengthening Maine Families is provided by the Maine Children's Trust. The Trust is a statewide non-profit organization whose mission is to prevent child abuse and neglect. Created by the Maine Legislature in 1985, the Trust evaluates child abuse and neglect prevention needs throughout Maine and takes necessary steps to help meet those needs. In addition to leveraging and managing federal funds, the Trust raises and distributes local money to community-based programs throughout Maine that work to prevent child abuse. The Trust advocates for increased services for Maine families as well as increasing public awareness.³³
- *Managing the rewrite of the Invest Early in Maine plan with parent emphasis and providing support for the Council's overall activities and committee coordination:* This consultant has not yet been hired. The Council will provide to HHS the qualifications and background of additional consultants who are hired using grant funds.

3. *Practices for entering into contracts third party agreements*

The State of Maine has a system of checks and balances to assure appropriate contracting practices and good stewardship of public funds. For this grant, Maine will contract with three different agencies, all of whom have been integral and instrumental to the work of the Council. Where there are existing contracts for similar services (such as the Maine Children's Trust for family strengthening services and the Maine Children's Alliance for evaluation and data

³³ More information about the trust is available at <http://www.mechildrenstrust.org/index.php>.

reporting), we will submit contract amendments with revised scope of services for approval from Purchased Services. While the state currently does not have an agreement with the Maine Development Foundation for the Council, we will submit the requisite documentation and sole source justification form upon grant award. With approval from the DHHS Purchased Services Director, we will complete the contract process and will forward that document to ACF once it has been signed by both parties. All proposed and finalized agreements will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in accordance with the requirements of the grant.

G. Organizational Profile of Lead Agency

Maine's Early Childhood Initiative is housed at the Maine Department of Health and Human Services.³⁴ The Initiative's mission is to create and sustain a unified, statewide early childhood service system which provides essential resources, shares common standards for quality and respects the diversity and uniqueness of individual children and their families. The initiative strives to:

- Change the way that Maine communities, organizations, and state government support, nurture, and protect the young children in our state.
- Strengthen the social capital and body of action that plans and puts into practice more humane and culturally respectful systems and policies for early childhood.
- Foster humane ways to help families and young children live, grow, and learn in a safe and healthy environment to reach their highest potentials.
- Humanize and dignify the ways in which we all work, talk and relate to each other.

³⁴ Information about the initiative is taken primarily from its website, <http://www.maine-eccs.org/eci.html>.

- Change how we think about the public health of children so that it embraces the physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and environmental context of their lives.

The Initiative's program activities:

- Unite, simplify, and humanize the systems and policies affecting children and families.
- Transform usage of funding streams and reinvest so that we serve the largest number of children and their families possible and have a positive impact upon these children and families.
- Develop clear and simple language that will strengthen the communication that is vital to the system changes that we seek.
- Integrate dental, oral, medical, social and emotional health, early education and care, and educational systems at the community and state levels.
- Influence Maine's culture so that our actions reflect a powerful commitment to prevention in the prenatal, infant and early childhood stages of life and to parenting as among the most important of all occupations.
- Build an understanding that such a commitment is an essential component to the social, cultural, and economic development of Maine's future.
- Strengthen quality, inclusive early education and care and children's services so that they optimize children's curiosity and readiness for school, the ability of families to work productively, and the capacity of the state to achieve economic prosperity.

The Governor's letter designating the Maine Department of Health and Human Services as the department responsible for spearheading the efforts of the Council and naming Sheryl Peavey coordinator of the Council is included in the Appendices.

H. Budget and Budget Narrative

1. *Project Budget*

Category	Year 1 Amount		Year 2 Amount		Year 3 Amount		Total
Personnel	\$ -		\$ -		\$ -		\$ -
Fringe	\$ -		\$ -		\$ -		\$ -
Travel	\$3,580		\$3,580		\$3,580		\$10,740
Equipment	\$ -		\$ -		\$ -		\$ -
Supplies	\$1,420		\$1,420		\$1,420		\$4,260
Contracts	\$140,000		\$180,000		\$150,000		\$470,000
Construction (not applicable)							\$ -
Other	\$5,000		\$5,000		\$5,000		\$15,000
Total Direct	\$150,000		\$190,000		\$160,000		\$500,000
Indirect	\$ -		\$ -		\$ -		\$ -
Grand Total	\$150,000		\$190,000		\$160,000		\$500,000

Narrative:

1. Equipment, Personnel, Fringe

No funds will be spent on equipment, personnel, or fringe.

2. Travel

A total of \$10,740 will be spent on travel, including reimbursements for consultants and parents to attend Council meetings or focus groups, and one out-of-state trip each year as may be required. This total includes airfare (\$2,100), mileage to and from the airport (\$265), airport parking (\$90), ground transportation (\$90), lodging (\$1,740), and per diem (\$750) for the out of state trips; \$4,400 for in-state mileage reimbursement; and \$750 for in-state toll reimbursement.

3. Supplies

A total of \$4,260 will be spent on supplies for the Council, including paper, staples, markers, envelopes, binders, printer cartridges, and postage.

4. Contracts

Funds totaling \$470,000 will be used to contract with consultants/firms to carry out the certain functions of the Council itemized in IV.D above. The contracts will include the following:

- Executing the parent information project described in the application (\$85,000);
and
- Undertake other activities that support the Council's parent information project ,
including:
 - Supporting the Council's work to prepare the School Readiness Report,
conduct resource mapping, and the, and the longitudinal data pilot (\$75,000);
 - Materials Development and staffing the Council's Communications
Committee (\$160,000);
 - Coordinating and supporting the Strengthening Maine Families project and
website (\$60,000);
 - Providing support for the Council's rewrite of Invest Early in Maine as well as
overall activities and committee coordination (\$60,000); and
 - Publishing and printing (\$30,000).

5. Other

A total of \$15,000 will be spent on other expenses, including for parent focus group stipends (\$3,000), and Council and focus group meeting expenses in the three years (\$6,000), and conference calling expenses (\$6,000).

6. Total Direct Costs

\$500,000

7. Indirect Costs

Typically, State indirect costs are determined by 1) cost allocation based on non-contractual expenditures of current grant (personnel, supplies, etc); and 2)“STA CAP” composed of personal services, travel, supplies, equipment, object codes multiplied by 2.488. A copy of the Indirect Rate Agreement is included in the Appendices. However, the State does not charge indirect costs to ARRA grants at this time.

8. TOTAL COST

Total costs including direct and indirect costs is **\$500,000**.

2. *Matching Funds*

The table below provides the level of matching funds expected through state spending on several projects identified as important to the Council's work. These projections all assume flat funding of the state's FY 2011 commitment. The state's total required match is \$1,166,666.67. The non-federal resources listed here are meant to show some of the breadth of support for early childhood in Maine.

Matching Funds	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Home visiting				
Early Head Start/Head Start slots				
Child Care Quality (state)				
Nellie Mae communications grant		--	--	
Birth to Five Policy Alliance				

Maine's home visiting initiative is a state-support effort described above that will be critical to the state's implementation of the grant.

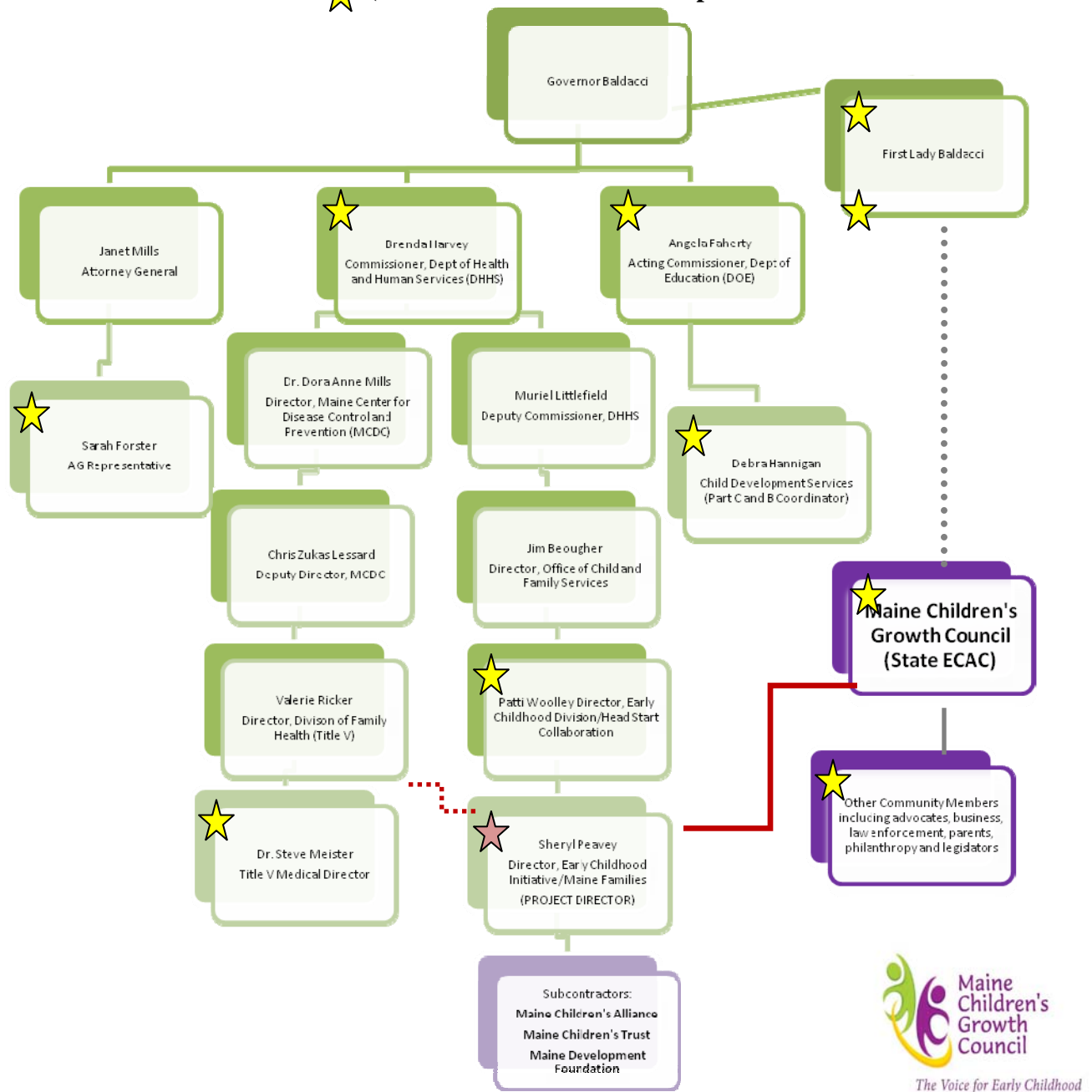
Maine provides state funds to ensure that children who are not served directly by federal Head Start and Early Head Start programs receive the same level of quality programming that enrollees in the federally-funded programs can receive.

Maine uses state funds to ensure quality in its child care system, including a quality rating system (described in II.A.2 above), resource and referral agencies, and other supports.

The Nellie Mae Foundation has provided a \$250,000 grant to support the work of the Council's communication committee. Year two of the Nellie Mae grant falls within the period of the grant applied for here, and accordingly is included as part of the match.

The Birth to Five Policy Alliance provides \$25,000 in support to the Maine Children's Alliance, which helps to support the work of the Council. That funding is matched by \$25,000 provided by local sources. While the Policy Alliance has supported work in Maine for years, the grant is listed as funding only in year one to respect the prerogatives of private funders.

Appendix A: Organizational Structure of the Maine Children's Growth Council (Maine's Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative (ECCS) Body) with relationships within Maine Government ★ (denotes Council Membership)



Maine's financial reports and state audits are available on-line. The state's comprehensive annual financial report is available at: <http://www.maine.gov/osc/finanrept/cafr.htm>

The state's audit is available at: <http://www.maine.gov/audit/reports/2009sareport.pdf>

APPENDIX B: Letter from Governor Baldacci (insert—one page)

APPENDIX C: Authorizing Statute 5 §24001. Maine Children's Growth Council

1. Definitions. As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Council" means the Maine Children's Growth Council established in subsection 2. [2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

B. "Young children" means children from birth through 5 years of age. [2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

[2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

2. Establishment. The Maine Children's Growth Council, as established in section 12004-J, subsection 16, is created to develop, maintain and evaluate a plan for sustainable social and financial investment in healthy development of the State's young children and their families.

[2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

3. Membership. The council consists of the members listed in this subsection who must have a strong interest in early childhood and early care and education and must be influential in their communities:

A. Two members of the Senate, one from each of the 2 political parties having the greatest number of members in the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate; [2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

B. Two members of the House of Representatives, one from each of the 2 political parties having the greatest number of members in the House, appointed by the Speaker of the House; [2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

C. The Governor or the Governor's designee and the Attorney General or the Attorney General's designee; [2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

D. Three parents, at least one of whom has a young child, one each appointed by the Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House; [2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

E. Two persons with experience in public funding and philanthropy, appointed by the President of the Senate; [2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

F. One person representing child abuse and neglect prevention, appointed by the Speaker of the House; [2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

G. One person representing postsecondary education, appointed by the Governor; [2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

H. Eight persons representing statewide, membership or constituent organizations that advance the well-being of young children and their families, nominated by their organizations and appointed by the Governor, of whom:

(1) Three must represent statewide organizations or associations involved in early care and education programs, child care centers, Head Start programs, family child care providers, resource development centers, programs for school-age children, child development services, physicians and child advocacy;

(2) One must represent a law enforcement organization involved with children;

(3) One must represent an organization that works on community organization and mobilization;

(4) One must represent public health;

(5) One must represent the Maine Economic Growth Council; and

(6) One must represent a labor organization; [2009, c. 392, §1 (AMD) .]

I. One person representing a statewide association of business and industry and one person representing a business roundtable on early childhood investment, appointed by the Governor; [2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

J. Up to 8 members of the public, appointed by the Governor; [2009, c. 392, §1 (AMD) .]

K. Three ex-officio nonvoting members: the Commissioner of Education or the commissioner's designee, a

Department of Health and Human Services employee who works with early childhood programs including Head Start and a person representing the office within the Department of Health and Human Services that is the fiscal agent for the federal grant program for comprehensive early childhood initiatives; and [2009, c. 392, §1 (AMD) .]

L. The director of the Head Start collaboration project within the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Care and Head Start. [2009, c. 392, §1 (NEW) .]

[2009, c. 392, §1 (AMD) .]

4. Terms of appointment. Except for ex-officio members, members of the council are appointed for terms of 3 years. Members who are Legislators are appointed for the duration of the legislative terms in which they were appointed. Members who are not Legislators may serve beyond their designated terms until their successors are appointed.

[2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

5. Cochairs. The Governor shall appoint cochairs for the council.

[2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

6. Quorum; meetings. Thirteen members of the council constitute a quorum. The council may meet as often as necessary but shall meet at least 6 times a year. A meeting may be called by a cochair or by any 5 members.

[2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

7. Compensation. Members of the council serve without compensation for their services, except that parents appointed under subsection 3, paragraph D who are not reimbursed by another organization may receive mileage reimbursement and a per diem to cover related costs such as child care, and Legislators are entitled to receive the legislative per diem, as defined in Title 3, section 2, and reimbursement for travel and other necessary expenses for attendance at authorized meetings of the council.

[2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

8. Staffing; funding. The council may hire staff as necessary for its work and as resources permit. The council may accept grant funding and other funding as may be available for the work of the council. The Department of Health and Human Services shall act as fiscal agent for the council.

[2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

9. Logo. The council may develop, adopt and publicize a logo or slogan to identify its work.

[2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

SECTION HISTORY

2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) . 2009, c. 392, §1 (AMD) .

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APPENDIX D: Certification Regarding Lobbying (Insert—one page)

APPENDIX E: Proof of Federally Regulated Indirect Cost Rate (insert—2 pages)

APPENDIX F: Strategic Report (June 2010) (INSERT—19 pages)

Available online under June Meeting Handouts at <http://www.maine-eccs.org/crecords.html>

APPENDIX G: Minutes of the Council’s Public Hearing on the Strategic Report (insert—five pages)

Available online at <http://www.maine-eccs.org/MCGC%206-15-10%20Meeting%20Summary.pdf>