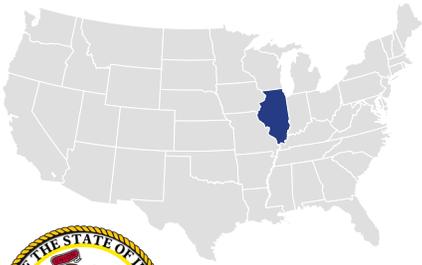


PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS 2016 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Illinois





U.S. Department of Education PDG Grant Performance Report Cover Sheet

Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 06/30/2017

Check only one box per Program Office instructions. Annual Performance Report Final Performance Report

General Information

1. PR/Award #: s419b150004 2. Grantee Federal Information Processing Code: 17

3. Project Title: Preschool Development Grants - Expansion

4. Grantee Name: Office of the Governor - Illinois

5. Grantee Address: Office of Early Childhood Dev.; 100 W. Randolph, Suite 16-100

City: Chicago State: Illinois Zip: 60601

6. Project Director Name: Cynthia Tate

Title: Executive Director

Phone #: (312) 814-6348 Ext.: _____ Fax #: (312) 814-0906

Email Address: Cynthia.L.Tate@illinois.gov

Reporting Period Information

7. Reporting Period: From: 01/01/2016 To: 12/31/2016

8. Budget Expenditures (To be completed by your Business Office. See instructions.)

Budget Period	Federal Grant Funds	Non-Federal Funds (Match/Cost Share)
a. Previous Budget Period	\$19,220,666.00	\$332,922.00
b. Current Budget Period	\$18,229,714.00	\$17,616,121.00
c. Entire Project Period (For Final Performance Reports only)		

9. Indirect Cost Information (To be completed by your Business Office. See instructions.)

a. Are you claiming indirect costs under this grant? Yes No

b. If yes, do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal Government? Yes No

c. If yes, provide the following information:

Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: From: 07/01/2016 To: 06/30/2017

Approving Federal agency: ED Other Specify other: _____

Type of Rate: (Final Performance Reports only) Provisional Final Other Specify other: _____

d. For Restricted Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a restricted indirect cost rate that:

Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)?

10. Performance Measures Status

a. Are complete data on performance measures for the current budget period included in the Project Status Chart? Yes No

b. If no, when will the data be available and submitted to the Department? _____



U.S. Department of Education PDG Annual Performance Report Executive Summary

Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 06/30/2017

Grantee State: IL

PR/Award #: s419b150004

You are required to submit an Executive Summary of up to 3000 words with your Annual Performance Report. This summary should relate to your approved application and summarize the goals and objectives that have been achieved under your grant, what you learned, and any evaluation results. Describe any unanticipated outcomes or benefits from your project and any barriers that you may have encountered. If there have been any changes to the project from the approved application, those should be explained as well.

Building on the strong foundation of our state-funded Preschool for All program, Illinois successfully launched the first Preschool Development Grant-funded classrooms in the nation in spring 2015. Four classrooms in Aurora West School District 129 (Aurora) and Lighthouse Learning Center (Metro East area) prepared a total of 68 children for kindergarten success through a pilot of our comprehensive, full-day model. Since the launch of those classrooms, Illinois has rapidly established our Preschool Expansion program model in communities across the state, connecting our most at-risk young learners to early education opportunities that meet and exceed the nationally-recognized elements of a High-Quality Preschool Program.

Key Accomplishments

In our second year of implementation, Illinois successfully served 3,934 children across 19 high-need communities. Of these, 5% were children experiencing homelessness, 3.3 % were children involved in the child welfare system, 6% were from families below 50% of the federal poverty limits and 10.2 % were children with IEPs. This data demonstrates that our Sub-grantees have successfully developed systems and strategies to recruit and enroll the most at-risk children in Illinois, placing us on a clear trajectory towards our state goal of preparing 80% of Illinois children for kindergarten success by 2021.

The programs serving the 3,934 children are implementing all twelve elements of a high-quality preschool program and have built new and sustainable capacity to meet the needs of the most at-risk children and families. Each Sub-grantee has hired a staff member as an instructional leader, with specific and dedicated responsibility for planning and implementing embedded professional development and advancing instructional quality. In addition, programs have hired staff dedicated to parent education, family engagement and support, and implementing linkages to comprehensive services.

Illinois has supported the enhancement of this infrastructure in our Sub-grantees by continuing an innovative program support initiative. Inspired by the framework of the State's highly-successful model of teacher coaching, connecting instructional coaches to teachers for a two-year period to develop their instructional capacity and skill-set, this program support initiative engages specialists to work individually with programs in building sustainable systems and administrative capacity. Our team of five specialists has worked closely with programs since the late fall of 2015 and have recorded some notable accomplishments. These have included: strengthening relationships between school districts, early childhood centers and other organizations providing early childhood services in communities; helping grant-funded programs in a community to coordinate recruitment and enrollment; and working with programs to increase enrollment of children in priority populations.

Another notable success is that our Sub-grantees continued to partner with their communities to strengthen existing and develop new and innovative collaborative partnerships that increased access to high-quality programs, supported sustainable delivery of services and empowered families with the tools and resources needed to reach their goals. The Preschool Development Grant has served as a catalyst to bring together stakeholders who share a mission and commitment to serve young children and their families. Several programs

reported exciting examples of these successful partnerships in year two:

- In the South Suburbs, grant funded school districts and child care centers participated in a collaboration meeting hosted by a local early childhood organization. The purpose was to build collaboration with all programs serving children birth to age five, use community based strategies to identify most at risk families to collaborate on community outreach and to coordinate resources for families. Follow up meetings were held with each administrator at their individual site to discuss future collaboration, and specifically addressing additional support for those families experiencing homelessness.
- In the Addison community, the school district underwent a process to review which services families identified as being accessible and what the families identified as unmet needs. The administration and team set out to connect with the existing social services network, developed a relationship with a local organization to support families accessing insurance, and developed relationships with local medical and dental providers to help families create medical homes. There has been a significant growth in delivery of comprehensive services to enrolled families.
- In Rockford, the school district's early childhood screening and placement team has increased collaboration with Catholic Social Services in an effort to increase enrollment of immigrant families. On-site screening and enrollment occurs at the organization's facility when they are meeting with families new to the area. Rockford Head Start collaborated with a local mental health provider to conduct in-take appointments with families and sessions in the early childhood center during program hours.
- In Wheaton, the sub-grantee identified a need for appropriate car seats for their families. The program partnered with the Wheaton Warrenville Early Childhood Collaboration to connect with a car seat program through Northwestern Medicine in DuPage County. The program provided families with training on car seat safety and access to booster and convertible car seats.
- Multiple programs had success building partnerships with organizations which support specific needs of children and families, including domestic violence shelters, alcohol and drug rehab programs, housing programs, and family counseling.

Barriers and Lessons Learned

Illinois' second year of implementation has been a productive opportunity to explore and learn from the challenges and barriers facing programs in implementing a High-Quality Preschool Program serving our State's most at-risk children and families. Through our program support project, described above, and regular webinars and phone calls with programs, the State-level team has received consistent and candid feedback about issues as they have arisen, informing guidance and technical assistance offered to programs and plan for continuous improvement in future years.

In general, barriers experienced by programs have clustered in the following key areas:

- *Workforce* - Illinois proudly exceeds the minimum teacher qualification requirements for a federally-defined High-Quality Preschool Program, requiring a professional educator license with an early childhood endorsement, above and beyond a Bachelor's degree. Many of our Sub-grantees additionally require teachers with bilingual or special education endorsements. Although Illinois has made great strides in improving our early childhood workforce in recent years, particularly through strategic investments made as a part of Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC), our expansion has increased the demand for a limited supply of highly-qualified teachers.
- *Social-Emotional Needs* - Illinois' Sub-grantees were successful, as described above, in reaching and enrolling significant numbers of the most at-risk children in the state. This success has brought challenges in preparing staff to meet the increased number and more complex needs of these children and families. We are working to address this by identifying opportunities to support social-emotional learning at the State level through capacity-building and supports using the Pyramid Model. Training is being planned for technical assistance providers to begin offering topic-specific workshops and

individualized support to programs. Role-specific training is also being developed for grant-funded Instructional Leaders and Parent Educators to incorporate pyramid model strategies into their work with teachers and families.

- *Absenteeism* - Chronic absenteeism of enrolled children has been a challenge reported from some of our programs. Programs have increased the involvement of family support staff in working with families where attendance is a challenge. As a State, Illinois has taken on the challenge of addressing chronic absenteeism through the creation of the Illinois Attendance Commission. This entity was legislatively created within the Illinois State Board of Education to study absenteeism, beginning in preschool, and making recommendations for data systems, best practices, and potential new initiatives. This systematic approach will empower the State to create a consistent and cohesive plan to directly address irregular attendance of children, including those in the High-Quality Preschool Program. In addition, programs have increased the involvement of family support staff in working with families that struggle with child attendance issues.

Program Adjustments

In general, Illinois' approach to implementation of our Preschool Development Grant - Expansion Grant reflects the plan outlined in our initial application. Where there have been some minor adjustments to our plan, we have indicated these in our monthly Scope of Work. None of these changes will impact Illinois' attainment of performance targets and program goals for the duration of this project.

The most significant change in our project is reflected in our plan for Community Systems Development, described below as Competitive Preference Priority 2. While we began our approach with a structure based around regional boundaries, it was critical in our implementation process to obtain feedback from key stakeholders in communities across the State. This feedback has informed and refined our plan, leading us to approach this work as a comprehensive system of responsive and flexible State supports to communities, centered around five strategies: aligning community outcomes, the community systems development subcommittee, development of policies and practices, promoting clear communication, and training and technical assistance to local communities.



**U.S. Department of Education
PDG Annual Performance Report
Grant Status Form
Explanation of Progress (524B Section A)**
Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 06/30/2017

Grantee State: IL PR/Award #: s419b150004

Section A: Performance Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (narrative)

1. Project Objective

1(a) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of Eligible Children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant. Describe the State's progress in meeting this Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) measure based on enrollment of Eligible Children in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant as of December 1, 2016.

During our second year of implementation, Illinois successfully served 3,934 eligible children in our high-quality preschool program. This enrollment level represents an increase of 26.4% of the total eligible children who are now being served by early education programs in our target communities.

Please describe, as required in Program Requirement (k)(2) in the Notice Inviting Applicants (NIA), how the State established policies and procedures that ensure that the percentage of Eligible Children with disabilities served by the High-Quality Preschool Programs is not less than either the percentage of four-year-old children served statewide through part B, section 619 of IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), or the current national average, whichever is greater.

Note: The current national percentage of four year-old-children receiving services through part B, section 619 of IDEA is 6.4%. Source: 2012 IDEA Part B Child Count (www.ideadata.org). States should include detailed information on ALL structural elements.

Of the 3,934 children served by the High-Quality Preschool Programs in Illinois, 10.2% were children with special needs who received Part B services. This exceeds the current national percentage of four-year-old children receiving Part B services. Programs were offered technical assistance in serving students in a least restrictive environment through regional roundtables. Programs in attendance were provided support in data accuracy, inclusion models, and had the opportunity to hear programs with strong inclusion programs speak to how their programs are organized. Programs had the opportunity to work with technical assistance providers in developing ideas for inclusion in their own programs. For ongoing professional development, a community of practice based on the “Preschool Inclusion Toolbox” is available for programs to participate.

Illinois is still finalizing statewide data for children receiving Part B services and will use this information to inform future planning of supports offered to communities to ensure continuous

improvement in the number of children with special needs participating in the Preschool Development Grant-funded program. The State will continue to examine best practices from programs with high levels of success in serving a significant and robust population of children with special needs.

Describe the State's progress in increasing the number and percentage of Eligible Children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant.

Illinois' approach to the Preschool Development (PDG) Grant has been to build upon the State's Preschool for All (PFA) programs with some noteworthy enhancements. Through PFA, the State allows each grantee to determine eligibility within certain parameters. In designing eligibility criteria for the Preschool Development Grant-funded program, the State took up the challenge of developing a more uniform policy. Above and beyond the overarching goal of expanding access for children from families at or below 200% of FPL, the State sought to ensure that these new slots were earmarked for children who are at the greatest risk of school failure, as these children are disproportionately underrepresented in our early childhood system, yet represent the greatest opportunity to close the achievement gap.

Illinois drew upon the expertise of public and private leaders in the state to identify key risk factors demonstrated through research as having the greatest impact on future school success. The result of this effort was creation of a weighted eligibility form, which assigned point values to risk factors and required for PDG-funded slots. Four factors - families in deep poverty (less than 50% of FPL), children with IEPs, children experiencing homelessness and children involved in the child welfare system - were assigned the highest values and prioritized for immediate enrollment. Additional factors were assigned half as many points. Programs were permitted to serve any children from families with incomes at or below 200% of FPL, as long as enrollment was prioritized according to the weighted eligibility system.

In the second year of implementation, programs evaluated outreach and enrollment strategies and made changes to their plans when needed. Lessons learned from the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Innovation Zone project around outreach and collaboration were utilized to assist programs in developing effective strategies in their community. For example, in Carpentersville, a map was created and targeted areas based on need, household income, and distance were prioritized. Volunteers, including teaching staff and community members, delivered flyers to individual houses in assigned territories within high need areas. Local businesses also displayed brochures and business cards, and utilized social media outlets to spread the word about the program. This targeted outreach had a key impact on increasing enrollment of children with high need.

At the State level, direct connections have been made between program administrators and other systems serving at-risk children and families. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the State's child welfare agency, operates a School Readiness Office which is charged with ensuring that children in the child welfare system are placed in high-quality early learning programs. Program administrators have connected with the DCFS school readiness liaison in their regions to facilitate increased enrollment of children involved in this system on an ongoing basis. One success from this partnership was between the grant-funded program in Mount Vernon and their DCFS liaison, who worked together to assist a grandmother who had just gained custody of her grandchildren. The grandchildren had been living homeless in another state prior to placement with their grandmother. Through this partnership, their grandmother was able to immediately enroll her preschool-age grandchild into the program. The Mount Vernon program staff worked closely with this family to facilitate a smoother transition, provide the child with a stable environment, and support the grandmother in her new role.

In addition, the State's regional McKinney-Vento liaisons continue to engage with administrators to provide support in conducting innovative outreach to families experiencing homelessness and to support programs in meeting their needs once enrolled.

Illinois' demographic data from the current program year indicates significant progress in serving

higher numbers of eligible children, as well as opportunities for continued improvement in year two. By serving 3,934 children in our High-Quality Preschool Program in year one, the State has increased the percentage of eligible four-year-old children served by 26.4%. In addition, significant numbers of the children served by the program are from the State's identified priority areas, designed to ensure recruitment of the most at-risk children and families. Of the children served in the first year, 5% were children experiencing homelessness, 3.3% were children involved in the child welfare system, 6% were from families below 50% of the federal poverty limits and 10.2% were children with IEPs.

1(b) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of children served overall in the State Preschool Program. Please describe any increases or decreases in this GPRA measure based on fall enrollment in the State Preschool Program for the 2016-17 school year.

As of December 2016, the number of four year-olds served by the state preschool program was 45,341, which is 27.2% percent of eligible children. Sub-grantees in the targeted communities have served 3,934 four-year-old children, an increase of 824 children over year one enrollment. This significant increase was supported by Illinois' investment of an additional \$75 million in the Early Childhood Block Grant for State fiscal year 2017, in support of our matching funds commitment for the Preschool Development Grant. Chicago Public Schools received 37% or \$27,750,000 of the additional funding.

1(c) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of children in the High-Need Communities served by the grant that are ready for kindergarten as determined by the State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment or, if the State does not yet have a Kindergarten Entry Assessment, other valid and reliable means of determining school readiness.

In the Year 2 APR, grantees will provide disaggregated data on the school readiness of the children served by the grant. This may include information collected about the children served by the grant at the end of their 2015-16 preschool year or in their 2016-17 kindergarten year. States may provide data from a sample of children (e.g., a sample being used for any evaluation).

In the Year 2 APR, grantees must describe their progress towards identifying the measures, methods, and data on the school readiness of children served by the Preschool Development Grant. In the narrative below provide the following information:

- The name of the assessment tool(s) and the Essential Domains of School Readiness measured;
- When the assessment tool(s) is/are given (e.g., in preschool and/or kindergarten);
- Whether the assessment is mandated by the State, and for which children;
- How long the State has been using the assessment tool(s);
- Whether the assessment tool(s) is/are implemented throughout the High-Need Community and/or Statewide;
- Whether the State provides or will provide training for local staff administering the assessment. If so, describe the requirements including processes to ensure continued reliability in the administration of the measure;
- If school readiness data is reported to the State, describe when and how data are reported.

Also, please describe, if applicable:

- The State's definition of "school readiness;"
- Disaggregated information about children's school readiness on individual domains or subsets of the measure;
- School readiness data for children disaggregated by subgroup (e.g., students who are American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian, not Pacific Islander; Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; Black or African American; Hispanic/Latino; White, not Hispanic; two or more races; with disabilities; English learners; and from any other subgroups the state determines appropriate; and
- How the State will continue to make progress in meeting this GPRA measure.

Illinois' tool for measuring school readiness is the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS). KIDS examines children's development across the five Essential Domains of School Readiness and is comprised of eleven domains: Self-Regulation; Social and Emotional Development; Language and Literacy Development; Cognition: Math; Cognition: Science; Physical Development; Health; History - Social Science; Visual and Performing Arts; English Language Development (ELD); and Language and Literacy Development in Spanish (SLD). The focus of each domain is on the acquisition of knowledge, skills, or behaviors that reflect each domain's developmental constructs. KIDS is aligned with the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS), which establishes Illinois' expectations for what children should know and be able to do upon kindergarten entry.

KIDS is an observation-based assessment tool that is completed by each child's teacher during the first 40 days of school enrollment in kindergarten. KIDS is based on developmental research and theory, includes developmental sequences of behaviors along a continuum, and spans the development trajectories of children in kindergarten. Illinois has mandated that every kindergarten student in a public

school setting must be assessed for school readiness, beginning in school year 2017-2018. Illinois implemented the initial pilot phase of KIDS during the 2012-13 school year and has continued with phased implementation. Teacher and administrator feedback from the pilot and phased implementation has been utilized to customize, restructure and simplify the KIDS instrument, training and implementation process. School district feedback has been collected through surveys, focus groups, and from program coaches. This feedback has been utilized to form the assessment process that will be used by the state going forward. The 2016-17 school year will provide an additional year of training and preparation with statewide implementation scheduled for the 2017-18 school year. Although the whole KIDS instrument is available for districts to use at their discretion, the state mandate for 2017-18 is that districts report on fourteen measures taken from four out of five of the readiness domains during the first 40 days of kindergarten enrollment.

The state provides districts with the KIDS instrument, as well as all KIDS trainings, coaches and resources, at no cost. Teachers implementing KIDS attend a two-day training to learn how to gather evidence for and complete the assessment, use the results to inform planning curriculum, and share results with parents. Administrators are also invited to attend the two-day training, or attend a half-day training specifically for administrators. Once teachers have attended the training, further support is offered through regional coaches, resources provided on the illinoiskids.org website, and separate trainings for additional staff members.

As of December 2016, 4,880 kindergarten teachers and 1,467 School Administrators participated in the two-day training on KIDS implementation. An additional 1,660 School Administrators participated in the KIDS half-day Administrator training and 207 individuals have completed KIDS coach training. Approximately 760 districts across the state provide kindergarten classes, and of those districts, 87.13% have attended a KIDS Implementation training. There were 207 school districts that used the KIDS Instrument in 2016 and completed the KIDS assessment on 25,024 kindergarten students. Of the 207 districts, seventy-two (72) used the full instruments, thirty-three (33) used the 5 readiness domains and one-hundred-thirty-four (134) districts used the 14 measures that are required by the state. The participating districts are geographically diverse and together represent the ethnic and economic diversity of the state.

There will also be a process implemented for determining KIDS 'criterion-zone boundaries' for readiness. The purpose of this process is to define regions along the scales of measurement of the various KIDS domains that are associated with children meeting Illinois standards of readiness, both at the beginning and end of kindergarten. This is to address the question of how KIDS' results relate to standards-based expectations for children's readiness, at the beginning of kindergarten and at the end of kindergarten. The finalized data and materials should be available in the spring of 2017.

For Preschool Development Grants - Development Grants States ONLY:

1(d) GPRA Performance Measure: The number of States that collect and analyze data on State Preschool Program quality, including the structural elements of quality specified in the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs.

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Section A: Part B - Selection Criteria

In this section of the APR, States will report on their progress addressing the Preschool Development Grant's selection criteria. The State should read the questions carefully and report in the narrative fields directly below the questions. Please include any data, data notes or formulas to help the readers understand the State's narrative responses.

1. Ensuring Quality in Preschool Programs (Selection Criteria "C" of the application)

Describe the State's use of funds received over the grant period for State Preschool Program infrastructure and quality improvements, including the State's efforts to implement a system of monitoring and support at the State level toward activities such as those described in Section (C)(1)(a-k) of the NIA.

Note: States will report amounts and percentage of funds for State Preschool Program infrastructure and High-Quality Preschool Programs in the Competitive Preference Priority 3 Chart.

During year two of implementation, Illinois made strategic funding investments in several infrastructure areas to support quality. These initiatives align closely with the State's plan as indicated in the application for initial funding.

Program Support

In partnership with the Early Childhood Center for Professional Development at The Center: Resources for Teaching and Learning (ECCPD), the state continued the program support project that provides program-level technical assistance and administrative staff training. This approach addresses our plans to provide comprehensive professional development and supports to implement comprehensive services and to strengthen implementation.

Incorporated within this project are two primary components: 1) a Program Support Specialist assigned to each program to assist administrators in building strong systems to support quality and; 2) resource materials specifically addressing the needs of our Preschool Expansion programs and the development of training opportunities.

Compliance Monitoring

The State's existing monitoring contract with National Louis University's McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership (MCECL) was expanded to provide compliance monitoring of programs using an expanded Compliance Checklist (detailed in the next section) and classroom environment quality monitoring using the ECERS-R tool.

The assessors conduct visits along with either the state anchor, who is 90% or above reliable with the authors, or a lead assessor, who has been 90 % reliable with the anchor. These reliability visits take place on every sixth or eighth assessment visit, depending on the experience of the assessor (every six for newer assessors and eight for senior assessors). NLU maintains a reliability spreadsheet on everyone monitored by their supervisor.

Supports for Excellence in Inclusive Practice

In addition, the State expanded a partnership with Early Choices, an initiative of the School Association for Special Education in DuPage County, which provides professional development and technical assistance to early childhood programs on Preschool Least Restrictive Environments. This

collaboration supports technical assistance, including the use of the Inclusion Classroom Profile (ICP), a new tool used to assess quality indicators applicable to all children, helping to increase the standards of early childhood programs and assist all children in achieving success. Early Choices works directly with programs to increase their capacity for serving all children, as well as the program's continued quality improvement. Through training and coaching, programs engage with staff to increase knowledge of best practices and work toward implementation of those practices. This process includes systems integration, including recruitment, to ensure that programs are equipped to reach and serve children with special needs.

Technical assistance also supports programs working towards an Award of Excellence (Tier 5 of the State's TQRIS, ExceleRate Illinois), which acknowledges exceptional programming for children with special needs. Technical assistance for these programs focuses on the quality of instruction and collaborative systems at the program level and classroom level for children with special needs.

In 2016, twenty-one Illinois programs successfully attained an Award of Excellence for the Inclusion of Children with Special Needs. Two of those awards were given to sites within Rockford School District 205, that house classrooms funded by the Preschool Development Grant.

Birth to Third Grade Continuum

The State partnered with Illinois State University (ISU) to establish a comprehensive system of supports for the birth to third grade alignment component of the project. This project launched in spring 2015 with an open invitation for PDG communities to apply as participants in our inaugural B-3 cohort. Seven communities - Rockford, Dolton, Metro East, McLean County, Elgin, North Chicago and Chicago - were selected and participated in an initial summer institute to begin developing a work plan for the next two years to move towards ambitious and achievable B-3 alignment goals. In 2016 a summer conference was offered to all PDG communities. Along with the seven previous communities, six new communities - West Chicago, Wheaton/Warrens ville, Aurora, Carpentersville, Chicago, and Riverdale - attended and collaborated together to develop a work plan to establish additional B-3 alignment goals.

ISU hired a B-3 Continuity Director in the last quarter of 2015 to lead these efforts moving forward. The director's prior experience in guiding local alignment efforts between an early learning system and a charter elementary school system will support the needs of Illinois communities as they continue working toward further successful alignment. In 2016 this work took more of a team approach to support the thirteen communities. The team consists of four members with a variety of skill sets and various levels of expertise in areas including, community systems development, K-3 classrooms, professional development, Early Childhood experience and research, and state policy experience. The members work closely together to assess individual community alignment progress and determine what additional supports can be provided to move the alignment work forward.

As a part of Illinois' system of State supports to communities, the birth to third grade alignment project is designed to provide individualized support to communities in meeting their specific needs and goals. Beyond the conferences described above, communities have received individual site visits from the team. These visits have three primary goals:

- Assisting communities in identifying stakeholders to be a part of their B-3 team.
- Learning more about the existing collaborations in the community and determining whether one of these collaborations is an appropriate "home" for the B-3 community work.
- Supporting communities in assessing current alignment efforts and progress, identifying primary areas of need, and establishing a plan to move forward.

With these site visits completed, communities will receive support from the State in the form of

technical assistance, access to relevant resources, regional meetings, support facilitating community meetings, connection to national experts, webinars on B-3 alignment components and peer exchanges. Other forms of support will be provided as needed to the extent that resources will permit. ISBE (Illinois State Board of Education), ISU and OECD (Office of Early Childhood Development) are committed to ensuring that communities are successful in implementing significant and sustainable alignment activities in one of Illinois' eight core elements for B-3 alignment:

1. Family engagement: schools and engaged families partner in children's formal education, including activities such as school-parent communication regarding programs, services and supports available at the school, students' progress, and parent involvement in school decision-making and school-community collaborations;
2. Transitions: increased access to early childhood programs and smooth transitions between programs and grades that focus on the continuum provided to each child and sustain gains into the early grades;
3. Data-driven improvement: using meaningful child-based assessments and program data to drive instruction, identify achievement gaps, allocate resources, and determine areas for professional development;
4. Professional development: to ensure that teaching staff are highly-effective and that professional development opportunities are aligned from birth through third grade, as well as grounded in child development theory and effective instructional practices;
5. Curriculum and instruction: to represent a coherent system with shared expectations for student growth and a focus on both academic and social-emotional skills, support a wide range of development, and are reflective of children's families and cultures;
6. Assessments: sharing assessment practices and data across the full early childhood continuum (Birth to Third grade) with particular focus on the implementation of the KIDS 7. Comprehensive services: including assistance in obtaining health, mental health and dental services, nutrition and parent education, and linkages to other community services
8. Community partnerships: to strengthen education, supports and services for children and families, from early childhood programs through early elementary settings.

While some of the B-3 alignment communities are still developing their plans and assembling stakeholder teams, several communities have made initial progress in identifying key issues to address and existing structures and systems from which they can continue to build. North Chicago and Elgin have actively entered into a mentoring relationship to assist North Chicago in developing full day, play-based Kindergarten. Rockford has identified a focus on data-driven improvement, with a goal of tracking outcomes for children from early learning programs across the community to better target shared professional development. In Elgin, the school district drew from early childhood best practices to develop and implement a play-based curriculum for kindergarten. Carpentersville hired a Birth to Third Grade Facilitator and is looking at establishing a Early Childhood Collaboration in their community. McLean Unit 5 is actively involved in the ABL Change training and developing new goals for their community. West Chicago is researching Community school plans.

State-Level Staff

The Preschool Development Grant is managed through the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD), which also manages the MIECHV and RTT-ELC grants. In Spring 2015, OECD hired the Preschool Expansion Policy Director to manage implementation and federal grant compliance and to support the State's strategy to use the Preschool Development Grant as a catalyst to strengthen the ability of the state-funded preschool program to support the most at-risk young learners. That individual worked in close collaboration with staff at the Illinois State Board of Education, fiscal

agent for the PDG grant and administrator of the Early Childhood Block Grant, which funds Preschool for All programs. This position is currently vacant and hiring efforts are underway.

2. Expanding High-Quality Preschool Programs in Each High-Need Community (Selection Criteria D of application)

Describe the progress the State has made during the reporting year to implement and sustain voluntary high quality preschool programs for eligible children in two or more High-Need Communities (Selection Criteria D(4) of the application) that include **ALL** structural elements listed below that are included in the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs. States should include detailed information on ALL structural elements.

- High staff qualifications, including a teacher with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree in any field with a State-approved alternative pathway, which may include coursework, clinical practice, and evidence of knowledge of content and pedagogy relating to early childhood, and teaching assistants with appropriate credentials;
- High-quality professional development for all staff;
- A child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1;
- A class size of no more than 20 with, at a minimum, one teacher with high staff qualifications;
- A Full-Day program;
- Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities;
- Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and evidence-based curricula, and learning environments that are aligned with the State Early Learning and Development Standards, for at least the year prior to kindergarten entry;
- Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities;
- Instructional staff salaries that are comparable to the salaries of local K-12 instructional staff;
- Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement;
- On-site or accessible Comprehensive Services for children and community partnerships that promote families access to services that support their children's learning and development; and

Evidence-based health and safety standards.

Please describe the progress the State has made in establishing High-Quality Preschool Programs that include ALL structural elements listed above that are evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality.

Illinois developed a robust program model for our Preschool Expansion that builds upon and leverages the high-quality structure of our existing state-funded Preschool for All (PFA) program. Preschool for All requirements on teacher qualifications, class size, professional development and curricular alignment to the Early Learning Standards, which include health and safety standards, meet or exceed the required elements of a High-Quality Preschool Program.

In order to meet all twelve elements, Illinois established an addendum to its PFA compliance checklist with twenty additional items, which clearly define the requirements for Illinois' Preschool Development Grant-funded programs to comply with the expectations of High-Quality Preschool Programs. Each program's contract requires compliance with all twelve structural elements. For the purpose of program evaluation, evidence of compliance was measured during comprehensive monitoring visits, which took place in the spring of 2016. Programs developed continuous quality improvement plans to address any areas of non-compliance. Our focus in designing this compliance system, as well as the supports offered to programs, is on administrative capacity and the development of sustainable, written policies and procedures within programs. Coaching is provided to programs in need of support through the process of continuous program improvement.

All PDG-funded programs are required to provide a full day program that offers day and year schedules that are at least equal in length to a first grade classroom in the local school district. A research based curriculum must be used by all programs. Instructional staff salaries in all settings must be indexed to the local district salary scale for a first grade teacher. In addition, Illinois required programs to hire and support a dedicated instructional leader at a maximum ratio of one per ten classrooms. Existing requirements for Preschool for All require a maximum ratio of ten children per instructional staff member, a maximum class size of twenty and rigorous requirements for a licensed teacher in each classroom.

Comprehensive services to families are a major emphasis of Illinois' PDG program model. Programs were required to hire a parent educator at a maximum ratio of one per 100 children. These parent educators serve as a dedicated family support and engagement function and support the development of community partnerships for the benefit of families. Successful implementation of comprehensive services for families in this model incorporate each of the following components:

- Ensuring that each family has a medical and dental home.
- Ensuring that each child has a medical, dental and social-emotional screening.
- Conducting a comprehensive assessment of the needs of each family and assist families in setting and achieving ambitious goals.
- Actively referring families to community resources through established relationships and clearly defined referral processes.
- Offering a variety of opportunities for parents to learn from experts in the areas of child health, mental wellness and family strengthening, based on parent needs and interests.
- Engaging parents as active leaders in operation and improvement of the program as members of a parent advisory council.

Programs received sample job descriptions to support their understanding of the parent educator and instructional leader staff roles. These descriptions included key activities that are expected of each role to support program compliance and quality. In addition, professional development activities at a state level have targeted each role. A partnership between the Ounce of Prevention Fund and the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership empowered instructional leaders through a professional development project called Lead, Learn, Excel. This 16-month process supported instructional leaders in building the systems and structures within their programs to transfer knowledge to practice by implementing sustainable, job-embedded professional learning routines with their teachers. Leaders from Preschool Development Grant-funded programs took part in this program and have been implementing strategies learned, including conducting professional learning community meetings, group lesson planning and data dialogues to help strengthen instructional practices. Parent educators received targeted professional development workshops offered by The Center: Resources for Teaching and Learning on topics which included engaging parents in preschools and communities and helping families address challenging behaviors.

Finally, the State has set a high standard for inclusion of children with special needs in programs. Programs are required to develop a recruitment strategy for targeting children with special needs for enrollment. A written process for referral and assessment of children with suspected special needs is required for each program, including the comprehensive services and support offered to families throughout the process. Active collaborations with the Early Intervention (Part C) system are expected. Children are provided with individual accommodations as written in their IEP.

Our partnership with Early Choices, detailed above, is a key part of Illinois' strategy to support high-quality inclusive practices at a program level and at a classroom level.

Selection Criteria (D)(4) from NIA

Describe the number and percent of Eligible Children served and the cost per slot.

Illinois based the estimated cost per slot for children served in our Preschool Development Grant-funded program on a cost model carefully designed to reflect the full costs of implementing a High-Quality Preschool Program. As a result, there has been relatively little change between our projected costs and the actual average costs per slot for new and enhanced slots.

In our initial application, the State projected an average cost of \$8,200 per new slot and \$4,400 per new slot enhanced by Head Start. These costs average to a \$6,300 per slot cost for all new slots, which is slightly higher than our actual average cost per slot of \$6,021. This average was determined by prorating costs based on the number of each type of slot that was created. In addition, the State projected an average cost of \$5,100 per slot for enhancement of state-funded Preschool for All slots. Our actual costs per slot for this enhancement were \$5,224 per slot. These costs are within a reasonable margin of our initial projections.

3. Collaborating with Each Subgrantee and Ensuring Strong Partnerships (Selection Criteria E of the application)

Describe the extent to which the State has collaborated with each Subgrantee to ensure that each Subgrantee is effectively implementing High-Quality Preschool Programs (Selection Criteria E (1-9) of the application) and how the State ensures strong partnerships between each Subgrantee and LEAs or other Early Learning Providers, as appropriate.

Illinois is committed to a collaborative program model that relies upon a strong foundation of relationships between the State and our Sub-grantees and between those Sub-grantees and their communities. During the second year of implementation of the Preschool Development Grant, the State continued to invest key resources to support this model in each Sub-grantee program and community. A publicly-accessible website, housed by the Illinois State Board of Education, provides instant access to resources, policies and guidance for program administrators and staff. <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Preschool-Development-Grant-Expansion-Grant.aspx>.

A key part of this strategy is professional development and technical assistance to programs towards the goal of supporting development of administrative capacity and strong program systems for compliance and quality. Through a partnership with the Early Childhood Center for Professional Development (ECCPD), housed at The Center: Resources for Teaching and Learning, Illinois established a program support initiative consisting of two components: program support specialists assigned to Sub-grantees and targeted professional development supports for program administrators.

Five program support specialists were recruited and hired by ECCPD to work individually with program Sub-grantees in their efforts to develop strong and sustainable systems. These specialists were selected based on knowledge and experience related to one or more of the following component areas:

- Recruitment of hard-to-reach families
- Comprehensive services, including health, mental health and family support
- Education and instructional leadership
- Parent engagement and involvement
- Program design and management

After intensive training on the State's goals and plan, the twelve elements of High-Quality Preschool Programs and the State's specific requirements for compliance and quality, these specialists were assigned to a caseload of approximately five Sub-grantees each. Specialists meet regularly with the administrative team at each Sub-grantee - generally consisting of a program administrator or principal, the instructional leader and the parent educator.

This past year, there was a focus on the development of sustainable delivery of comprehensive services. All specialists conducted regular visits to each Sub-grantee and assisted programs in identifying their current level of compliance and gaps in their systems. Specialists helped programs to review job descriptions and role expectations for their staff. Specialists additionally provided intentional in-person and virtual follow-up, supporting programs in resolving recruitment challenges, developing systems for assessing and meeting the needs of families, helping programs connect to community resources and meeting other individual programmatic needs. Following monitoring visits, specialists worked with programs to develop continuous quality improvement plans. Specialists regularly communicated with staff from ISBE and OECD to share concerns identified in the field, closing the feedback loop and ensuring that state-level administrators developed guidance and offered resources to address current needs.

In addition, specialist contact with programs has informed the second path of support offered by the State in

conjunction with ECCPD. ECCPD provided targeted professional development offerings and relevant resources, specifically targeted around instructional leadership, family engagement, and supports in the area of comprehensive services, trauma and challenging behavior. Feedback from specialists directly impacted the development of these offerings.

A professional development workshop for programs was initiated, focused on building and sustaining community partners. Attendees were given strategies and tools to use locally to create plans and strengthen their network of community partners. This toolkit was made available to all programs and follow up coaching was offered. A Family Engagement and Communication Tool was also developed for programs in partnership with the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership.

Support for Community Collaboration

The State has developed guidance materials and templates to support our Sub-grantees in developing and maintaining strong partnerships. Sample templates for memoranda of understanding between PDG Sub-grantees and health providers, family strengthening organizations, social service agencies and other key community partners have served as a foundation for active, two-way referral systems and collaborative relationships.

In addition, the State has provided support to Sub-grantees that have elected to subcontract with community-based early learning providers. To ensure consistency of program delivery across settings, we have directed Sub-grantees to develop systems and procedures that function across sites and settings and are unified at the program level, rather than individual to each site. Guidance to programs supports these entities in developing clear, written agreements with community-based subcontractors and establishing intentional plans for monitoring of compliance and quality.

Program Support Specialists worked with programs to strengthen their community collaborations. Some successful examples include:

A partnership between Posen-Robbins SD 143.5 and the Flowers Housing Unit in Robins has increased services for children and families who are in deep poverty, strengthened family understanding of early childhood education, and provided education and groups for families at the housing unit.

In Addison, a partnership was created between the Addison Early Childhood Collaborative and the Addison School District to work together to identify families not receiving special education services, increase screenings, develop family education information and provide professional development opportunities.

In Wheaton, the program partnered with nutrition programs at Northwestern Medicine and University of Illinois at Chicago to provide children and families with education on healthy eating and physical activity ideas.

Other programs have partnered with community service organizations to help families in finding housing and employment, enrolling in higher education, and obtaining winter clothing and food resources.

As needed, OECD and ISBE staff members have directly facilitated connections between programs and key community stakeholders to support a stronger relationship. In several communities, the State has engaged with the Head Start Collaboration Office and Illinois Head Start Association to help resolve barriers to partnership between PDG Sub-grantees and local Head Start grantees. These statewide Head Start groups additionally provided critical input into a sample memorandum of understanding template specifically for PDG and Head Start collaboration, building a strong framework for active, sustainable relationships.

Engagement with State Systems

Finally, Sub-grantees were connected to state systems serving the most vulnerable children and families. Direct connections were facilitated by ISBE and OECD to the School Readiness Office of the State's child welfare agency, DCFS, as well as the regional system of McKinney-Vento liaisons supporting families experiencing homelessness. The goal of these connections is directly related to the State's priority eligibility criteria to increase the percentage of children involved in the child welfare system or experiencing homelessness that are able to access high-quality, full-day preschool programs.

4. Alignment Within a Birth Through Third Grade Continuum (Section F of the application)

Describe progress the State has made for alignment within a birth through third grade continuum in activities for birth through age five programs ((F)(1)(a-b) in the NIA) and kindergarten through third grade ((F)(2)(a-d) in the NIA).

The State has partnered with Illinois State University (ISU) to implement our plan to support community-level coordination and alignment of systems and services for children and families from birth to third grade. This work began with seven communities -- Rockford, Dolton, Metro East, McLean County, Elgin, North Chicago and Chicago - taking part in a summer institute in mid-June of 2015. In June of 2016 all seven of the original communities, as well as six new ones - Aurora, Carpentersville, Decatur, Riverdale, West Chicago and Wheaton/Warrensville - attended a second summer conference. Our work continues to be focused in three key areas:

Establishment of a State-Level Team

A team has been utilized to plan and implement a clear strategy in support of Illinois' goals, as indicated in our proposal. This team convenes on a regular basis to assess progress and plan next steps.

Summer Conferences

During June 2016, the seven selected communities in 2015, along with six additional communities, assembled an initial group of 3-5 stakeholders each and participated in a three-day summer Conference in Bloomington, Illinois. This Institute had three primary goals:

- Support and expand knowledge of developmentally appropriate educational practices across the Birth through Third Grade continuum with a focus on **developmentally appropriate practices**. **Elgin U46 presented on their implementation of a play-based full day Kindergarten for the upcoming school year.**
- Enhance early childhood educators' and community members' understanding of the structure and culture of elementary schools and enhance elementary school educators' understanding of the structure and culture of early childhood education and community support systems by **increasing alignment** within and across communities and school districts to best support children and families. Various presenters and panels provided information about transitioning through the programs and agencies.
- Assist participants with understanding state efforts to define and support the local creation of **coherent local pathways** from prekindergarten programs into the early elementary grades in their communities.

Communities received a comprehensive self-assessment tool as an additional support to begin their community-level planning for this work.

Supports for Community Planning

For the 2016 year, the state-level team provided supports to communities to assist them in developing local stakeholder groups to lead this work and begin prioritizing goals and tasks. Communities were encouraged to look broadly at their existing collaborations and systems and identify potential stakeholders to ensure a holistic approach to B-3 alignment at the community level, engaging the school district, community-based and private early learning centers, Head Start grantees, social service agencies, philanthropy groups and other key entities. A

suggested group of stakeholders included:

- Superintendent/assistant superintendent or other high-level district administrator with decision-making authority
- School board members
- Head Start directors
- Elementary school principals
- Early childhood center directors
- District early childhood coordinator
- Innovation Zone coordinator / coordinators of other local early childhood collaborations
- Home visiting program coordinators
- Teachers (Birth - 3rd grade)
- Local United Way staff
- Local municipal or community-based partner staff
- Parent leaders

Follow up site visits to each community continued through the 2016 year, with a focus on learning about existing community alignment initiatives, confirming a stakeholder team and moving towards establishing concrete community goals as steps in developing an alignment plans with all of participants. The team continues to build on existing goals and alignment with existing groups and collaborations as districts work to make smooth pathways from birth through the early elementary years. Some examples of the teams work for 2016 include:

- The team has been instrumental in establishing a mentoring relationship between Elgin U46 and North Chicago. North Chicago is working towards play-based full day Kindergarten and is seeking guidance from Elgin U46.
- The team has assisted Carpentersville in developing a job description for hiring a B-3 Facilitator.
- The team has developed, in partnership with Elgin U46, a recorded webinar titled “All Day Play-based Kindergarten Classroom.”

Section A: Part C - Competitive Preference Priorities

Competitive Preference Priority 1: Contributing Matching Funds (if included in the State's approved application).

Describe the progress the State has made on its credible plan for obtaining and using non-Federal matching funds to support the implementation of its ambitious and achievable plan during the grant period. For progress *not* made in this area, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period. Please describe any changes made to the data reported in **Table 7(a)**; explain if your *Year 2 Target* differs from the *Year 2 Actual*.

Despite budgetary challenges during the State's 2016 (July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016) and 2017 (July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2016) fiscal years, Illinois has continued to prioritize early education as a critical investment. The education budget for FY2016 included a \$25 million increase to the Early Childhood Block Grant, which supports Illinois' state-funded Preschool for All and birth to three Prevention Initiative programs. Of this increase, \$332,922 supported the PDG-funded program, meeting the State's commitment for this competitive preference priority. The education budget for FY2017 included a \$75 million increase to the Early Childhood Block Grant. Of this increase, \$17,616,121 supported the non-Federal matching funds used in accordance with the approved State plan to increase the number of PDG-model slots available to Illinois' most at-risk young children. These funds were made available to programs through a competitive RFP process and programs were scheduled to begin serving students in January 2017. All new PDG-implementing Sub-grantees identified through that process received resources and supports for planning and implementation to ensure compliance and quality.

In addition, our sub-grantees have actively enlisted strong support from their local communities to support their programs this year. As a result of these investments, the State is on track with our credible plan for supporting our plan through non-Federal matching funds.

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Supporting the Continuum of Early Learning and Development (if included in the State's approved application).

Describe progress made in creating a more seamless progression of supports and interventions from birth through third grade, such as high-quality infant and toddler care, home visitation, full-day kindergarten, and before and after care services for, at a minimum, a defined cohort of eligible children and their families within each high need community served by each Subgrantee. For progress *not* made in these areas, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period.

Illinois' ambitious Community Systems State Plan was developed in 2014, and feedback was collected through a series of Community Systems Development Listening Sessions in 2015. In 2016, the State convened a group of state-level community systems administrators, including representatives from the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Department of Human Services (DHS), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), to consider effective steps for implementation, given today's context. Facilitated by the BUILD Initiative, this group created recommendations to develop the investments currently underway by the state service delivery system, build on emerging opportunities led by the Governor and state agency heads, address how resources could best support ongoing system development from successes and lessons learned, and foster continued stakeholder buy-in on behalf of the children and families they serve. These recommendations have been reviewed by the ELC's Community Systems Development Subcommittee, were shared with the Inter agency Team (IAT) and the state has made significant progress in several areas. The recommendations fall into five categories listed below along with progress to date:

- A. At the state level, align community outcomes with goals and indicators being developed through Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth and with the Early Learning Council's (ELC) Dashboard to

develop shared understanding.

For the first time, the IAT approved a cross-agency Early Childhood Working Framework for cross-system outcomes, infrastructure, and goals. Accompanying cross-agency shared data indicators have been drafted.

- B. At the ELC, consider ways the Community Systems Development Subcommittee could serve as the consistent channel for communication with the field, the state's early childhood Intergovernmental Agency Team (IAT) and the ELC.

The Innovation Zone staff team at IAFC has been working with OECD to test a feedback loop mechanism that links feedback from communities to state administrators. The feedback loop pilot enabled the IZ team to track obstacles to implementation, share with state or municipal decision-makers, and suggest pilots for innovation. In the pilot, obstacles were submitted quarterly and coded by theme in a web-based spreadsheet; IZ core staff and OECD met quarterly to prioritize and identify channels for resolution. This topic is on the agenda for the March 2017 meeting of the Community Systems Development Subcommittee meeting, and a coordinating role for the Subcommittee is proposed.

- C. At the IAT level, foster the development of policies and practices that support increased enrollment of the shared priority populations in the continuum of early childhood opportunities. This includes but is not limited to prenatal, home visiting, and early care and education up to age eight, all to help them become safe, healthy, eager to succeed, and ready to learn when they begin kindergarten.

We are pleased to report that ISBE is planning to include a number of community systems components and supports in its RFP process for the Early Childhood Block Grant, which is under re-competition for FY18. These changes represent a positive shift in outreach and enrollment protocols and priorities, as well as program models, being embedded in the ECBG. To support communities in preparing for the re-competition opportunity, ad hoc working groups of the ELC's Integration and Alignment Committee (staffed by OECD) were convened to develop pre-application supports to be made available widely to all providers. A page of cross-systems resource links is available online, and webinars were recorded on "ECBG and Community Systems" and "Family Engagement and Supports" (currently pending ISBE approval). In addition, webinars are currently in development on the topics of "Data-Driven Community Planning" and "Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health." In addition, the IZ core team has drafted three online toolkits related to creating enrollment pipelines, which will be turned into webinars in the coming months; these will become resources for ECBG applicants as well.

In addition, leaders and core staff from the Innovation Zone and Consortium for Community Systems Development will be joining the IAT at its April 2017 meeting for a focused discussion on lessons learned and opportunities for cross-systems alignment. This may include some topics raised in the attached Coordinated Intake memo from the IZ team, which presents some opportunities for improved cross-agency collaboration:

- The Innovation Zones' development and use of coordinated intake and referral systems in early childhood collaborations offered many lessons. First, the data discovery and planning at the local level provided deep insight into the assets, needs, obstacles, and strategy design considerations of a particular community system. Anticipating, as well as reducing or removing obstacles helped support implementation of new intake and referral systems, processes, and data technology tools. In doing so, coordinated systems were better aligned and accessible for families. Using a framework and process helped the teams achieve greater impact.
- Relationships are key to coordinated intake and referral systems. Developing relationships within the communities and across partner organizations opened doors to even more relationships, supports, resources, ideas, and strategies. In working together, obstacles could be examined and removed, mini new strategies can be developed to address implementation issues, and resources shared. Staffing to manage this work also contributed to their success.
- Systems and forms can be complicated to access and navigate. In reducing paperwork and forms across different systems, the enrollment process becomes easier for families and partners. If forms are simple, families will complete them more easily. If the language is clear, responses are clearer. If intake is located where families can access intake, then more families will come and more will complete the documentation. In addition, helping a family navigate the form simplifies the steps even more. If that someone is neutral, welcoming and helpful in navigating the process, then more families will complete the process.

• Utilizing simple data systems help communities to track, enter, and use data to track, follow-up, and improve processes. Using data in a continuous quality improvement process helps to improve flow of families through systems, allows partners to address and remove barriers more quickly, and support families through the enrollment process. With easier data systems, the data become more useful. Data systems for consideration are Google drive or Pipedrive.

D. Form agreements among the IAT, the ELC and the OECD to develop and promote clear messages from all funders, programs, and sectors.

The past year has been a time of transition and re-organization for the ELC and IAT, and as the RTT-ELC funding period draws to an end, the roles and responsibilities of OECD are also being examined. There is shared agreement and renewed commitment among these stakeholders to develop clear narratives that can be effective in communicating the complexity of early childhood to audiences that are unfamiliar with the entire system.

E. At the IAT level, determine ways to provide training and technical assistance to local communities that choose to move forward toward community systems development to achieve collective impact and continue the current momentum and success. Consider which tasks would best be performed by a subcontractor.

Adopting this core recommendation, ISBE also plans to issue a Request For Sealed Proposals for a statewide system of Early Childhood Community Systems Technical Assistance. This will be an important milestone, as it will mark the state's first efforts to launch publicly-funded statewide community systems TA supports that will be available to all communities regardless of funding stream. The framework for this proposed system of supports was built on lessons learned and recommendations from the Innovation Zones, ABLe Change pilot, and other Illinois community systems initiatives, and was further shaped through discussion with ELC Committees. Innovation Zone observations included:

1. Training alone is not sufficient to impart skills; job-embedded professional development, coaching, networked peer learning and technical assistance (including around data collection and systems) are also needed to strengthen community capacity to achieve the state's vision for young children.
2. Expertise in community systems is reinforced with systems change in institutions, and in organizational practice. Changes in practice - use of data in planning, small experiments, action learning cycles - can lead to increased efficiency of resources as system processes become embedded in the institution.
3. Successful attainment of outcomes takes time; capacity building should consider the time it takes to build relationships, establish community systems, and test and capture results from small experiments, allowing 4-6 months for a community to gain fluency in a new learning model.
4. The skillset required of a community based collaboration leader has evolved. Strong facilitation skills, confidence, and supervision to support periods of reflection are essential elements. Collaboration leaders should have access to high quality, executive level professional development, along with strong support from a supervisor, in alignment with the state's vision. Requirements that explicitly state this organizational support will further successful implementation.

Competitive Preference Priority 3: Creating New High Quality State Preschool Slots (if included in the State's approved application).

Describe progress made in using at least 50% of the State's federal grant award to create new State Preschool Program slots that will increase the overall number of new slots in State Preschool Programs that meet the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs. For progress *not* made in this area, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period.

In year one, Illinois budgeted approximately 94% of the State's federal grant award to support 3,110 new and expanded High Quality State Preschool slots. Of these, 2,559 new slots were created, representing 82% of all supported slots. Based on our cost model for the Preschool Development Grant, new slots are budgeted at an approximately 60% higher cost than expanded slots. In year two, Illinois budgeted approximately 91% of the State's federal grant award to support 3934 new and expanded High Quality State Preschool slots. Of these, 3,497 new slots were created, representing 89% of all supported slots. Illinois has met and substantially exceeded the requirements of this priority item.

<p>Slots were targeted to communities across the State with a significant gap between the number of high-quality preschool slots available and the number of 4-year old children living in poverty. Data from the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map, which comprehensively tracks child population and early learning enrollment, was used to select from applicant communities. The State's goal is to target early learning resources to the most at-risk children and families, providing the biggest lever to increasing school readiness.</p>	
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Section B: Budget Information

Budget and Sustainability (Section G in the application)

1. Please provide a brief explanation of any discrepancies between the State's approved budget and its total expenditures for the reporting year. Explain carry-over funds that have not been expended or obligated from January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016.

A revised State-level budget will be submitted to reflect changes in the state's expenditure of funds to date and the plan for future expenditures. Funds not expended or obligated have been carried over in three areas:

- **Sub-recipients** - Sub-recipients expended at a lower level than expected. Illinois will request to transfer those remaining funds into 2017 and will re-obligate them to sub-recipients to support existing PDG slots.
- **Technical Assistance** - Illinois spent 2016 continuing to build our infrastructure for implementing the Preschool Development Grant and assessing our technical assistance needs to support continuous improvement. We are carrying unexpended funds from this line into 2017 to support identified and anticipated technical assistance needs and goals.
- **State-Level Infrastructure** - Illinois projected hiring dates for state-level personnel for early 2015 in our initial application. These positions have not been funded with these funds, so we will be moving forward unexpended funds into 2017 to support infrastructure, programmatic needs, and sub-recipients.

2. Please describe any substantive changes that you anticipate to the State's Preschool Development Grant budget in the upcoming fiscal year (January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017).

In the revised state-level budget, Illinois will propose adjustments that reflect changes in allocations to Sub-recipients and adjustments in state-level infrastructure costs. Sub-recipient allocations have been adjusted to resolve discrepancies between initially projected costs and actual costs, as well as changes in sub-recipients within communities due to 2 sub-recipients choosing not to continue the program. As noted above, some infrastructure costs have been adjusted to reflect changes in funding for personnel.

3. Describe the State's progress on its plan for sustainability at the end of the grant period to ensure that the number and percentage of Eligible Children with access to High-Quality Preschool Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded, including to additional High-Need Communities.

In our application, Illinois committed to an ambitious plan for increased funding for our state's Early Childhood Block Grant, which supports our state-funded preschool programs. For state fiscal year 2017, the Illinois State Board of Education received an increase of \$75 million for the Early Childhood Block Grant. Although the budgeting process is still underway for state fiscal year 2018, the Illinois State Board of Education has requested an increase of \$50 million for the Early Childhood Block Grant and the Governor advanced this request during his budget address. During fiscal year 2018, the Illinois State Board of Education will re-compete early childhood funding, except for the statutory set-aside of funds to Chicago Public Schools. This re-competition will present an opportunity for high-need communities across the state to increase the number of children enrolled in High-Quality Preschool Programs.

4. Please provide a brief explanation of any discrepancies, if any, between the Subrecipients' approved budgets and their total expenditures for the reporting year. Explain carry-over funds that have not been expended or obligated from January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016.

Unexpended funds from year one were used by Sub-recipients which resulted in less year 2 funds being expended. Those unexpended funds will be rolled over to federal fiscal year 2017 and re-obligated to Sub-recipients to directly support funded slots.

