

Project Introduction/Abstract/Summary

Project Title: NC Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Proposal (PDG B-5)

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Introduction: North Carolina has developed a draft *NC Early Childhood Action Plan* based on a statewide vision that all children in NC get a healthy start and develop to their full potential in safe and nurturing families, early learning programs, schools and communities. NC has a proud history of innovation and success in early childhood, but at the same time, faces significant challenges to ensure that all children – particularly its most vulnerable – have the experiences they need to build a strong foundation for healthy development and learning. NC is pleased to submit this application for PDG B-5 funding that will support our efforts to enhance our strengths, and address challenges we currently face.

Summary: NC has developed a strong plan to comprehensively and efficiently conduct a B-5 Needs Assessment (Activity 1) to inform our ongoing planning to strengthen the early childhood system. The plan addresses the nine requirements listed in the FOA and builds on existing needs assessments.

NC will finalize and strengthen its strategic plan (Activity 2) to ensure the state's early childhood system best meets the needs of young children, particularly our most vulnerable children, and their families by building on existing efforts, engaging stakeholders across systems, and leveraging resources by partnering across agencies, organizations and systems. The strategic plan will incorporate conducting a broad analysis of data access across the early childhood system, and planning implementation of strategies in NC's Early Childhood Action Plan.

Family engagement and providing timely and accurate information are key components of NC's PDG Activity 3 to maximize parent knowledge and choice. In NC, many programs continue to struggle to successfully engage families and to provide timely and accurate information in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner. The PDG B-5 grant will support four strategies to address this need.

Three strategies are planned to share best practices (Activity 4), targeting areas of need in NC. NC will work with counties with successful models of universal enrollment processes to mentor others to expand these practices. NC will also provide support for more successful transitions from preschool to kindergarten. A third strategy addresses sharing and aligning data to promote data-informed decision making.

For Activity 5, NC has targeted infant and toddler care for improving overall quality knowing that this area has been challenging. NC Babies First (NCB1), modeled after NC PreK, will increase access to high quality, center-based early learning programs for families with infants, one- and two-year olds.

The overall structure of our activities and plan for managing them is strong. NC has the leadership, organizational, fiscal and infrastructure capacity to successfully implement our PDG B-5 plan and make a meaningful difference in the lives of children, and their families in our state.