



Preschool Development Grant B-5
Application
2019

Abstract

Project Title: Arizona Department Of Education PDG B-5 Renewal Grant

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Arizona will use the PBG B-5 grant renewal to improve local, regional and state partnerships to ensure that every child receives a quality education by accelerating its work in the following areas:

- Increase in the number of children age birth to five accessing quality early care and education resulting in children each year demonstrating growth of meeting age level expectations as measured by the State Board approved assessment tool.
- Increase in the number of children with disabilities served in quality inclusionary settings by providing technical assistance, coaching, and professional development as measured by state and district level least restrictive environment (LRE) and child outcomes data.
- Increase in the number of caregivers accessing the current professional development system for continued professional learning opportunities
- Increase the number of educators earning credits leading to degree completion.
- Increase the number of practitioners implementing training strategies related to language acquisition and early literacy skills.
- Creation a data dashboard that monitors and informs the progress and strategies within the statewide strategic plan.

Arizona anticipates growth around the state to be reflected within the Arizona Education Progress Meter (AEPM): (1) increasing the percentage of Arizona three and four year old children enrolled in high-quality early learning settings and (2) the percentage of Arizona 3rd grade students who score proficient or Highly Proficient on the AzMerit 3rd grade English Language Arts Assessment.

Arizona's proposal addresses five priority areas: Child Care Deserts, Workforce Development- Professional Development, Degree Attainment, Early Language and Literacy, and Inclusion. These areas will collectively ensure Effective Transitions for All as measured by a planned central data system. One, we plan to increase the percentage of young children birth to age five in quality early learning settings and improving reading proficiency by third grade. Two, focus on investments to strengthen our early childhood workforce through the provision of coaching, mentoring, enhancements to our professional development system, and providing pathways toward degree completion. Three, focus on building our providers, stakeholders, and family's knowledge about the literacy skills acquired from birth through third grade. Four, focus on the implementation of strategies that demonstrate "how" to make inclusion happen. Five, creation and implementation of a centralized data system that synthesizes the strategic plan data points of all systems partners into a dashboard that allows the state to monitor and assess progress on the state plan. Finally, Arizona proposes the use of the implementation science framework and proceed through the stages to ensure the state continues to "promote the authentic adoption of evidence-based interventions" to maximize successful outcomes.

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Introduction

Arizona's goal is to help and support communities in the State as they continue to plan for, develop, and implement high-quality early care and education services that enable all children, including those from vulnerable populations, to enter kindergarten prepared and ready to succeed. Arizona's plan outlines how the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), in partnership with and with input from other early childhood education (ECE) system partners, will further enhance the services made available by the sophisticated ECE system Arizona has built and increase access for more children to opportunities the system has designed to support the health and development of Arizona's youngest citizens. This plan details how ADE's partnerships with First Things First (FTF), Read On Arizona (ROA), the Arizona Head Start Association (AZHSA), and the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) will be leveraged to significantly improve the State's ECE infrastructure and keep its commitment to the mixed-delivery service model. ADE has the full support of the Office of Governor Doug Ducey, as indicated by his letter of support in Appendix A

The goals are to develop a highly-skilled workforce; increase access to high-quality early care and education; and to create pathways for ECE programs to improve the quality of their services. By working to ensure a reinforced ECE system infrastructure, ADE is increasing the likelihood that all young children in Arizona, including those children with disabilities, are provided opportunities for equitable access to high-quality learning experiences that prepare them to enter kindergarten. Arizona's proposal is to use funding from the Preschool Development Grant B-5 (PDG B-5) to continue working on aligning and coordinating the ECE system so resources are not misused on duplicative activities nor do monies spent supplant other state and federal initiatives.

Arizona's Approach (Activity 1)

In 2018, approximately 435,789 children under the age of five—seven percent of the state's population—call Arizona home. Many of the State's youngest citizens face multiple barriers to entering into kindergarten prepared and ready for their K-12 academic journey. The barriers include poverty; difficulty speaking and understanding English; lack of exposure to books and literacy resources; and lack of access to high-quality early care and educational experiences. According to Kids Count, in 2019:

- In 12 of 15 Arizona Counties, more than one-half of children live in low-income families;
- 41% of children are participating in SNAP (Nutrition Assistance);
- 3.3% of children's families receive Child Care Assistance;
- Arizona has the 12th highest foster care entry rate in the nation;
- 44% of 3rd graders passed the State-administered English Language Arts Test; and
- 37% of 3-4 year old's have a preschool experience

As this data demonstrates, many of Arizona's families with young children are unable to access the supports necessary to be successful in school. Despite the insistent work of Arizona's ECE system stakeholders, who share a unified mission and vision that all children enter school ready and leave third grade reading at or below grade level, Arizona currently does not have a stable and secure funding source through which to offer targeted high-quality early care and education.

The PDG B-5 offers Arizona an opportunity to continue chipping away at the significant problem of unstable funding for all children. In this grant proposal, ADE details its plan to

continue its collaborative relationships with ECE system partners, as well as to develop innovative ways to improve the ECE system's infrastructure. ADE proposes building on work done in the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) and Preschool Developmental Grant - Supplemental (PDG-S), and Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five-Year 1 (PDG B5-Y1) opportunities so as to accelerate progress towards meeting the ECE system's identified goals.

In the administration of the PDG B5-Y1, ADE worked diligently to ensure the local community voice was heard throughout the activities of conducting a needs assessment and developing a strategic plan. ADE used the Leading By Convening model of community engagement to convene meetings with community stakeholders, with the goal of coalescing efforts within each locale around the State's priorities for improving the ECE system. At the local and state level, this group of stakeholders included state agency partners such as AZDHS, DES, and FTF. In addition, support also came from the statewide collaborative ROA, the AZAEYC, and the AZHSA. The local stakeholder groups worked on planning to address five key priority areas: childcare deserts; inclusion; early language and literacy; workforce development; and effective transitions for all children.

One benefit of coordinating our efforts at the State and local levels was the ability to leverage some of the work our partners previously did to conduct their own local needs assessments and create strategic plans to inform a statewide approach. The needs assessments and strategic plans identified for contributing to the PDG B-5 needs assessment and strategic plan were those with comprehensive processes for conducting needs assessments and creating strategic plans and included the largest representation of Arizona's ECE system partners and constituents. These partners with a large footprint in the ECE system include:

- The Arizona Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO)
- First Things First (FTF)
- The Department of Economic Security – Child Care Administration (DES-CCA)
- Read On Arizona (ROA)

After a review of the most-recent strategic plans for these partners, ADE was able to identify current ECE system-level initiatives happening in Arizona and determined there exists a gap for all partners in two critical areas: increasing access to or improving the quality of the ECE system. As a result, despite best efforts, there still exists gaps for children.

The work of the local stakeholder groups—labeled local planning committees (LPCs) for the sake of clearly identifying the work of the groups—was to identify strategies and initiatives already occurring in their regions that may need to be supplemented or enhanced to bolster the ECE system. In the PDG B5-Y1, ADE conducted two intentional activities, designed to increase the capacity of LPC members to plan for and implement systems-level work successfully, with the LPCs. This was followed by a meta-analysis of all the local work to inform ADE’s creation of a strategic plan to work on additional strategies. This application serves as an overview of those strategies and includes a proposal of the costs necessary to implement them. An illustration of Arizona’s multi-faceted approach can be seen in Appendix A.

In this current grant application, Arizona’s ambitious goals for children and families remain the same as they were in the PDG B5-Y1: to prepare more children from vulnerable populations to enter school prepared to succeed; to create a family-centered, comprehensive, collaborative, and high-quality early childhood system that supports the development, health, and early education of all Arizona’s children birth through age 5; to use collaboration and coordination of the ECE system to maximize parent knowledge and choice; engage all partners

with a vested interest in Arizona's children ages 0-5; and leverage our resources (time, funding, and effort) to ensure work is aligned and coordinated so as not to duplicate or supplant other federal or state initiatives. Additionally, Arizona remains committed to using the mixed-delivery model of services to children and families, making a wide-range of choices available for early learning experiences. This may occur in public preschool classrooms; Early Head Start/Head Start classrooms; private childcare, including in-home childcare; and faith-based programs. FTF is a key partner in Arizona to offer families a mixed delivery system of high-quality services to children birth through five.

FTF was established by a 2006 voter initiative using declining tobacco revenue to address the critical needs of children birth to age 5, including access to high-quality childcare and preschool, family support, preventative health strategies, early childhood workforce development, parent and community engagement, statewide early childhood evaluation, and systems coordination. The governance of FTF is addressed at both state and regional levels. The state governing board is made up of 9 members chosen to represent the state's diversity. The AZDES, AZDHS and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, or their chosen designees, serve as non-voting ex officio members. The appointees include men and women, Democrats, Republicans, and an Independent from six counties. Each member brings experience in early education, K-12 education, health care, juvenile justice, higher education, philanthropy, business and Tribal government. All members have been confirmed by the Senate. Regional Councils are overseen by administrative staff in conjunction with a board of volunteers from a wide spectrum of stakeholders representing the business, health, early childhood education, faith-based, and tribal sectors as well as parents. FTF also the Early Childhood Development and Health (ECDH) Board and serves as Arizona's State Advisory Committee.

A signature FTF program is Arizona's Quality Improvement and Rating System, Quality First (QF). QF provides quality evaluation and accountability to early childhood programs, ongoing technical assistance and professional development to programs through individualized coaching, financial incentives, childcare scholarships for low-income families, and access to early childhood developmental, hearing, vision, and oral screenings. QF-participating programs also have access to Child Care Health Consultation, Mental Health Consultation, and Inclusion Coaching. Program evaluation and accountability uses a tiered QF Star Rating ranging from 1 to 5 stars. QF Star Ratings are calculated on three assessments consisting of an Environmental Rating Scale, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), and the QF Points Scale. The QF Points Scale considers the program administrative practices related to staff qualifications, child ratios and group sizes, staff retention, and curriculum and child assessment. Curriculum and child assessment are gauged as they align to ADE's continuum of early learning documents: the Arizona Department of Education's Early Learning Standards, Infant and Toddler Developmental Guidelines, and Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education. Previous PDG funding supported the expansion QF ratings to Head Start and other ADE programs.

An additional statewide FTF program is the provision of the Arizona Parent Kit to families of newborns leaving the hospital. The Arizona Parent Kit is free to families and contains tools for children's healthy development, early literacy, supporting oral health, and resources for future family support. FTF also provides scholarships to the early childhood workforce to receive degrees from institutes of higher education.

FTF is divided into 28 regions, each with their own 11-member volunteer governing partnership council to make decisions based on biennial needs assessments of their specific

regional demographics and utilizing resources and supports from those communities. Each regional partnership council allocates funds concerning QF Scholarships, and approves the grantees providing the services to meet the needs of their unique strategic plans. In addition to QF services, some of the high-quality initiatives that many of the regional partnership councils have funded include, but are not limited to, researched based home visitation services and parent education models, early literacy programs, oral hygiene education and referrals, and Friends, Family, and Neighbors programs that provide early childhood resources and education to those caring for children in smaller unregulated child care setting. FTF also ensures the representation of the 22 Federally Recognized Tribes located in Arizona at the level in which they elect to participate. Each Tribe can choose to form their own regional partnership council or participate in the region in which their Tribal land is located. In addition to having designated Tribal seats on all the State and Regional Councils, FTF engages in annual Tribal Consultations to guarantee a voice in both programming and policy making. The collaboration and coordination between the PDG B-5 LPCs and FTF Regional Councils will be critical to ensuring the work proposed in this grant application are accomplished during the PDG B-5 grant period and are embedded in the local ECE system. Thus, leading to sustainability.

Vision Statement and Logic Model

Arizona's vision for its ECE system is to: prepare more children from vulnerable populations to enter school prepared to succeed; create a family-centered, comprehensive, collaborative, and high-quality early childhood system that supports the development, health, and early education of all Arizona's children birth through age 5; use collaboration and coordination of the early childhood education system to maximize parent knowledge and choice; engage all partners with a vested interest in Arizona's children ages birth through age five; leverage our resources (time,

money, and energy) to ensure work is aligned and coordinated so as not to duplicate or supplant other federal or state initiatives. The logic model for Arizona’s coordinated approach can be seen in Figure 1.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes	Evaluation Plan
<p><i>To accomplish our goals, we will need the following resources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Funds from this grant for activities, projects, and salaries -FTF matching funds 	<p><i>Accomplishing the following activities will result in achieving our measurable deliverables:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increasing the capacity of LPC members to use planning, implementation, and evaluation processes more effectively -Making awards to sub-grantees to provide direct services to children 	<p><i>Our measurable deliverables will be:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Changes in methods to plan, implement, and evaluate -Increased capacity to support high-quality early learning, including early language and literacy -Changes in methods to partner with families at the local and state levels 	<p><i>We expect the following measurable changes within the life of the grant:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -More shared accountability for progress on the identified measures of the advancement of the ECE system -More opportunities to collaborate and strategize with ECE partners on activities to advance the ECE system 	<p><i>We expect the following impacts:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -More children will have access to high-quality ECE programs -More children from vulnerable populations enter school prepared to succeed -More children have smooth transitions to K -More children will meet 3rd grade reading proficiency levels 	<p><i>We will know we are making progress if the following happens:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The percentage of children in quality early learning settings will increase -Kindergarten readiness will be measured using the KDI -More children will be identified as on track to meet 3rd grade reading proficiency level <p>*Data for all metrics will be collected in an integrated, centralized data system</p>

Figure 1. Logic Model.

Conducting the Needs Assessment (Activity 1)

As previously mentioned, ADE took a unique approach to creating its federally-reviewed and approved comprehensive statewide needs assessment, leveraging current needs assessments of Arizona’s ECE system partners. These comprehensive needs assessments were identified for being representative of the early childhood system as a whole. Our system’s partners recognized key concerns and issues related to the quality and availability of early childhood care and education. In addition to the aforementioned systems partners (see page 7) the statewide needs assessment and five-year strategic plan for the Arizona Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) was included.

ADE utilized the needs assessments to make informed decisions about Arizona’s ECE system. Through an inventory initiative process, ADE worked with LPCs to determine the

CHILD CARE DESERTS		<i>Arizona has a significant child care supply and demand gap</i>	
HSSCO Strategic Plan			
Long Range Goal 2: Families in Head Start - who need fully day services - have increased access to high quality, early care and education services.	Short Term Objective B	Increase Head Start and Early Head Start children served in full-day option through partnerships and/or braided funding. (p. 13)	
	Short Term Objective C	Collaboratively investigate the availability of quality early education for 3-year-olds. (p. 14)	
Long Range Goal 3: Increase the number of children in vulnerable populations served by Head Start. Vulnerable populations include children experiencing: homelessness, refugee status, foster care, and children from military families and with an IEP / IFSP.	Short Term Objective A	Annually, identify obstacles for vulnerable populations (including children living in poverty) to enroll in Head Start and Early Head Start and implement initiatives to increase enrollment. (p. 17)	
	Short Term Objective B	Annually, identify obstacles for children in foster care enrolling and continuing in Head Start and Early Head Start and implement initiatives to increase enrollment and retention. (p. 18)	
	Short Term Objective C	Annually, identify obstacles for children who are homeless enrolling and continuing in Head Start and Early Head Start and implement initiatives to increase enrollment and retention. (p. 19)	

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Workforce Development
PD & Coaching

Workforce Development
Degree Completion

Early Language &
Literacy

Inclusion

Child Care Deserts

Figure 2. Example of crosswalk of needs assessments.

strengths, challenges, gaps, and possible solutions to the gaps. The construct of the LPCs leveraged the structures already in place for collaborative reflection, learning, and planning in Arizona communities, including ROA’s “Read On Communities” and FTF’s Regional Partnership Councils. The membership of the LPCs was reflective of the State partners’ plans that were leveraged. The review of system partners’ needs assessment allowed each region to determine the status of Arizona’s system to help inform planning for the need to conduct further

needs assessments. This process had core team members from each of the LPCs examining statewide and regional EC system partners needs assessments relative to Arizona's five priority areas outlined in the PDG B5-Y1 grant application: Child Care Deserts; Inclusion; Early Language and Literacy; Workforce Development-PD and Coaching; Workforce Development-Degree Completion. As LPCs examined each partner's plan, they captured any pertinent information relative to each priority area and used it to create a "needs assessment crosswalk." This activity allowed the LPCs to develop a deeper understanding of the needs for each of their communities relative to each system partner. The crosswalk activity allowed LPCs to create a map of the needs of their region, helping them have a better understanding of their regional landscape. An example of the crosswalk can be seen in Figure 2.

In a state-level review of the needs assessments of our partners, ADE identified that although each partner knew about their place in the ECE system, they were collecting and reporting about their data independent of one another. Thus, the results or findings from one partner's needs assessment were not being shared and/or cross-referenced with another partner's findings, potentially slowing any progress that could be had through integrated data sharing. This grant opportunity will give ADE funding to support a statewide integrated, centralized data system where data related to the goals of each system partner is collected. ECE system partners have agreed to have ADE serve as the administrative home for the system. Arizona's intent is to update the needs assessments as the assessments of each of the system partners are reviewed and updated. The timeline is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Timeline for updating needs assessments.

Partners	2020	2021	2022
HSSCO	Needs Assessment Strategic Plan Creation	Strategic Plan Implementation Priority Review	Priority Review Progress Indicator Updates
FTF	Publication of Regional Needs and Assets Report	Publication of FTF Annual Report	Publication of Regional Needs and Assets Report
DES	Review/Analysis of Needs Assessment Data	Review/Analysis of Needs Assessment Data	Review/Analysis of Needs Assessment Data
ROA	Review/Analysis of Needs Assessment Data	Review/Analysis of Needs Assessment Data	Review/Analysis of Needs Assessment Data
Statewide ADE	Review/Analysis of Needs Assessment Data	Review/Analysis of Needs Assessment Data	Review/Analysis of Needs Assessment Data

System Planning with Families (Activity 3)

ADE recognizes the critical importance of input from families during the development phase of any statewide initiative. This is different from just giving families access to information about the decisions regarding the health and development of their children; it is about using their knowledge and skills as the experts on their children and their families to give voice to their needs. ADE proposes enhancing existing constructs within the state to connect families to services and programs and engage them in statewide and regional decision making. The following partnerships and initiatives have been established for engaging families:

- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R).
- Local Head Start Policy Council and Parent Committees.
- Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV).
- FTF Regional Partnership Councils.
- FTF Family Resource Network.
- Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC).
- Raising Special Kids (RSK).

- The Arizona Statewide Family Engagement Center (SFEC).
- Arizona PBS.
- Read On Communities (ROCs).
- The Early Childhood Quality Improvement Process (ECQUIP).

Through this extensive cross-sector of partnerships and initiatives, families can have access to the knowledge they need of the State's mixed delivery system of ECE services and are afforded a wide variety of opportunities to participate in their children's care and education. The CCR&R is directly linked to the new national CCDBG website and provides search capabilities to parents by Arizona zip code when looking for childcare options in their area. Search results provide location, contact information, facility hours and services, as well as their Quality Star rating from the State's QRIS (QF) or national accreditation, if applicable. CCR&R provides guidance in both English and Spanish for childcare financial assistance as it pertains to DES Child Care Assistance and help finding providers that participate in the QF Child Care Scholarship Program. CCR&R also links families to information to understand what quality childcare looks like, to understand the rules and regulation of childcare facilities, and information on child development. The CCR&R is an important partner in maximizing parent and family knowledge, choice, and engagement in their child's early learning and development.

In addition to CCR&R, many of the state partners provide ECE knowledge to families in Spanish and other home languages, such as AzPBS, Head Start programs, and MIECHV. RSK and FTF Family Resource Network have developed parent to parent communication programming that support children with disabilities, and ECE knowledge and resources respectively. The regional framework of the various partners, such as local education agencies (LEAs), FTF regional partnership councils, ROCs, Head Start, and the online format of PBS,

CCR&R, and SFEC allow access to families across the state in urban, rural, and Tribal communities.

In addition to providing ECE knowledge, engagement, and choice for early childhood education and care, the partnerships in the ECE system allow for coordinated efforts to inform and support families through the processes of receiving other needed services. The CCR&R gives families assistance in understanding childcare costs, state offered childcare financial assistance, and state offered health and social services, such as WIC, SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and more. DES has created policy to provide Tribal Government Consultation to ensure these services are available to the Native American population in Arizona. Head Start Family Support Specialists (FSS) work with families in the program to set individual goals, encourage healthy living practices, and finding other affordable resources. FSS staff as well as Head Start teacher support children and families to the greatest degree possible in their home languages. MIECHV helps to ensure that parents have the support to care for their children by screening caregivers for postpartum depression, substance abuse, family violence, and connecting them to the resources that they need.

Arizona's ICC and ADE provide guidance, technical assistance, and play an advisory role to ensure high-quality early childhood disability services. Subgroups of the ICC target the efficient and effective use of state and federal funds to ensure maximum access and participation in early intervention and preschool services for children with special needs and disabilities. ADE membership as part of the ICC has enabled us to collaborate with families, current practitioners, and agency personnel to address the inclusion of children with disabilities in programs with typically developing children, target locations where children are not transitioning from early

intervention into preschool, as well as ensure all transitions are completed within required timelines.

Parent participation and leadership has been key throughout all the aforementioned partnerships and initiatives. Other opportunities have also been specifically created to improve family engagement and leadership in improving the state's mixed delivery system. Membership positions on each of the 28 FTF Regional Councils are held for both a Tribal and a parent representative. Additionally, RSK serves as a Comprehensive Family Resource Center operating at a statewide level with offices set up regionally in Phoenix, Flagstaff, Tucson, and Yuma. As Arizona's Comprehensive Family Resource Center, RSK offers Parent-To-Parent programs, serves as Arizona's Parent Training and Information Center, houses Arizona's Family-To-Family Health Information and Education Center, is part of the Arizona chapter of Family Voices, and is a key partner in Arizona's Early Intervention Center Referral Project.

NCFL's framework builds the capacity of stakeholders involved in increasing student achievement and school improvement through family engagement. It creates a collaboration of parents, students, schools, educators, and communities who learn together and share knowledge, resulting in a powerful collective of families engaged in education. The Arizona Family Engagement and Language/Literacy workgroup (FE workgroup), facilitated by ROA and ADE, will guide development of the SFEC's special advisory committee, a parent-majority group that will provide consistent input and feedback referred to as the Parent Leadership Council (PLCs). Coordinated facilitation of these groups will break down silos, creating a unified, parent-led effort to school improvement by bringing stakeholders together to determine the best way to deliver family engagement tools and resources to disadvantaged families. Sustained parental engagement and leadership in these groups will yield greater representation of disadvantaged

families and their educational needs on a district and state level and transfer critical knowledge about education institutions and policymaking to parent leaders.

FTF funds voluntary, evidence-based home visitation programs, which have been shown to be an effective way to improve outcomes for families and children experiencing various risk factors. Three of the most widely implemented FTF funded evidence-based home visitation program models are Healthy Families, Nurse Family Partnership and Parents as Teachers. These three program models have been widely implemented and evaluated nationally, and evidence demonstrates each of these models significantly improve child and family outcomes.

The Parents as Teachers program is designed to support families who are pregnant and/or have children ages birth to five years who are low-income, part of under-served populations, living in isolated geographic areas, or have special needs. The focus is on making sure that parents and caregivers have the information and skills they need to get their young child ready for success in school and beyond. Through the program, families receive biweekly visits from a Parent Educator, who offers parenting education; connects families to resources they may need; and provides periodic developmental screenings to individualize support for all the child's development, including physical, social-emotional, language, and cognitive skills. Parents also have a monthly opportunity to get together with other families in the program to build their system of support and participate in an educational activity with their children.

The IALT team meets quarterly and has worked collaboratively to identify priorities for our work at the annual IALT Retreat on July 15, 2019. These are listed below:

- Priority #1: Improve Developmental Screenings and Follow Up
- Priority #2: Reduce Infant and Maternal Mortality

- Priority #3: Expand Behavioral Health Support (Expand Mental Health Consultation and other approaches)
- Priority #4: Collaborative Outreach and Referral

Strategic Planning (Activity 2)

The planning year of the PDG B-5 grant has been foundational to developing regional growth and statewide collaboration. Between March and September of 2019, as part of the PDG B5-Y1, LPCs in every region of the state were gathered to address ADE’s goal to further develop statewide capacity, address regional needs, and to develop a strategic plan. Our agency sought to ensure that each of the identified regions could direct their own efforts and regularly reflect on their own progress to develop an effective, responsive, and sustainable early childhood education system. ADE proposed to build planning, analysis, decision-making, and collaboration skills—essential for long term sustainability. The ADE team planned a program of training that would engage each region to simultaneously learn about, and implement the following methodologies known to enhance and improve long term implementation—to ultimately devise their own strategic regional plans. Three primary models were systematically offered: Implementation Science, Leading by Convening, and Lectio. Our theory was that if we were able to convene groups to engage in complex problem solving (Leading by Convening), teach groups about the components necessary to have socially significant outcomes (Implementation Science) and support groups to evaluate the impact of their current initiatives (Lectio), then they would have the capacity to create responsive regional plans based on their identified needs. These resulting plans would enhance and complement partner agency initiatives for each of the identified five priority needs areas. The goal was for us all to focus our efforts on our common, overlapping

needs, of which there were many. The activities were carried out through partnerships with national, state and local support.

Entertaining an idea and implementing it are two very different activities; creativity, flexibility and perseverance were necessary to complete contracts, identify participants, locations, agendas, and develop learning activities month after month across seven distant regions. It tested our technological and scheduling skills, caused us to lean heavily on existing relationships and partnerships, and in spite of experiencing attrition at key moments in the plan, we redoubled efforts to meet our goals. We simultaneously engaged experts to teach our staff and the LPCs to become proficient in the identified methods and produce the necessary deliverable: their region's strategic plan. We experienced first-hand what it was to desire socially significant outcomes and the efforts necessary to achieve them while learning about Implementation Science from the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN).

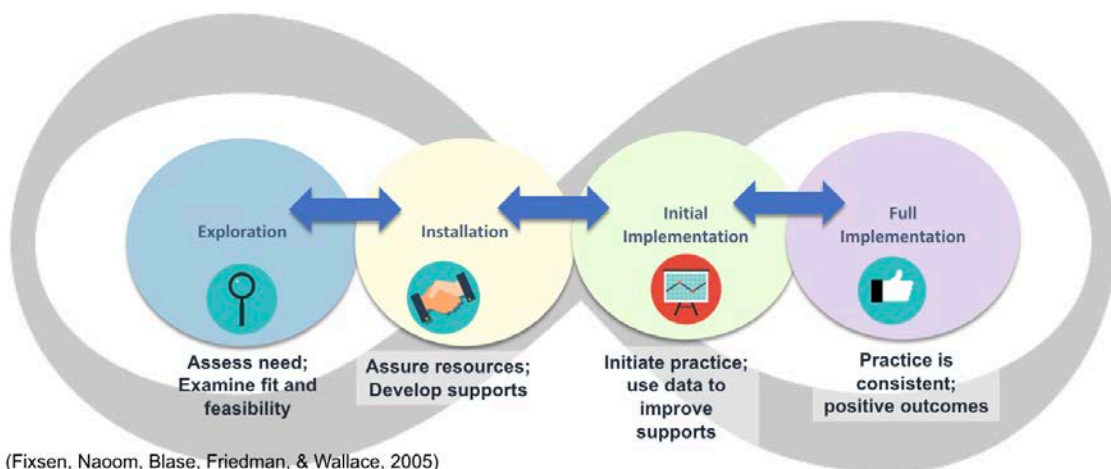


Figure 3. Stages of Implementation framework.

NIRN technical assistance providers described the stage-based implementation framework to provide an overview of the factors relevant in achieving success within any given initiative. Experts in presenting and analyzing statewide data from university researchers helped each region to access their own data, to prove or disprove what were believed to be issues of

great significance. They worked to answer questions about how such things as mental health, nutrition, disability, single-family households, poverty, lack of educational opportunity, and lack of childcare contributed to the challenges they experienced. A representation of this process can be seen in Figure 3.

The Leading by Convening model helped us ensure that LPC membership reflected the makeup of their region, and that members had a way to reach out to others regarding what they learned and gather feedback from their constituents along the way. By answering key questions about their data, the LPCs now had evidence of their needs. Still to be accomplished was an analysis of the programs being offered, including the efforts and resources necessary to achieve desired results.

To accomplish this, *Lectio*, developed by researchers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, was presented to the LPC's. This may have been one of the most enlightening and simultaneously frustrating activities for participants as they evaluated their own programs against the components needed to be effective. What was learned was a program's impact could be variable and dependent on such mechanisms as how often it was delivered—valuable information, given the finite human and financial resources in the education community. Programs might be at one end of a continuum—that of “affecting awareness around an issue” or at the other “changing practitioner behavior”. Both are necessary—but in many cases there was a disconnect between what was assumed to be happening and what was actually happening. Participants in each region were encouraged to identify programs to be continued and/or supplemented to address the targeted needs of the five priority areas, assess the impact of these programs on the delivering organization and the community, ultimately including these in their strategic plan. During the training exercises the *Lectio* Program Design Evaluation Tool (PDET)

framework was applied to ADE initiatives such as inclusion and literacy, in some cases reflecting some of our own gaps, and opportunities for improved impact. Upon reflection, this may have contributed to LPCs proposing few of their own inclusion or literacy methods in their strategic plans sensing this was already being addressed.

By the end of the six months, each region produced strategic plans reflecting their needs within the five priority areas and developed relationships with key practitioners as well as our staff in each region. The LPCs will continue to be supported through the next phase of implementation to install, implement (including evaluate) and sustain programs identified by the regions to address statewide needs through the use of the Implementation Science Framework and the Leading by Convening Model. Activities are being developed to share data and assess progress through regular meetings in support of the ongoing activities of the regions.

Membership for LPC participation was captured via our ADE online application portal and each member was given regional access to their region's SharePoint hub to continue planning and coalescing when not meeting face-to-face. Membership in the groups included, but was not limited to, FTF Regional Council Members, Head Start Directors and staff, district personnel, community/private/faith-based personnel, and families.

Arizona's goal was for LPCs to be able to use the tools, guidance, professional development, and technical assistance provided to determine what's being done (mapping programs and services on the continuum from awareness building to change of behavior and gaining a deeper understanding of core content, mechanism, dosage, target population, staff development and evaluation) and using implementation science as a planning tool for identified new programs or initiatives that meet a gap identified in their needs assessments.

Training, Technical Assistance, and Quality Improvement (Activity 4, Activity 5)

Training and Technical Assistance

Arizona has long-recognized the need for a comprehensive system that would ensure a path toward higher quality early childhood education that involves an integrative approach to workforce development. PDG funding played a major role in developing this system that started in 2012 and involved early childhood education professionals from the ADE, for profit and non-profit childcare, community-based programs, DES, Head Start, and other early childhood organizations. ADE collaborated with FTF, and this collaboration resulted in creating the *Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development Network* (the PDN). The focus of the PDN was and is to advocate for all Arizona early childhood professionals, creating pathways to become a highly knowledgeable workforce. This comprehensive approach aims at establishing collaborative relationships and data-driven and evidence-based practices. One of the identifying factors was to create statewide appropriate and consistent professional development opportunities, providing early childhood educators and administrators with information of best teaching practices, data collection, data analysis, assessment knowledge, ECE high-quality standards, and improved technological literacy.

The PDN is intended to serve all of Arizona's early learning professionals working in direct and indirect service roles on behalf of young children. The statewide professional development opportunities are offered on the website which is interactive and filled with information for all community ECE stakeholders, including families. The website provides access to the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry, the Arizona Workforce Knowledge and Competencies (a set of expectations that define the content and skills that adults who work with young children need), the Arizona Career Lattice (tool) that provides the pathway of

education, professional development, and work experience for early childhood professionals), and the Professional Development Instructor and Technical Assistance Standards (defines the credentials, knowledge and experience necessary to ensure high quality professional development experiences for our workforce entry through advance levels). Through this system, early learning professionals are able to: register their education credentials, track their assigned annual professional development hours, customize their own professional development plans, and have access to the uniform set of professional expectations and skills they need to possess to provide young children with high-quality early childhood education services.

In addition, beginning in 2014, PDG funds were utilized for the provision of scholarships to increase the credentials/degrees among the ECE workforce. This funding stream complemented the *College Scholarships for Early Childhood Professionals* program that may be used for coursework toward a Child Development Credential (CDA) or Associate degree, including many who serve in rural communities or on indigenous nations. PDG funds were used for ECE professionals to pursue a bachelor's or master's degree in Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Special Education, or a closely related degree program. This allowed for more early childhood professionals to access higher education credits and move closer to degree and teacher certification attainment. Additionally, in full recognition that not all ECE professionals choose to pursue degrees, ADE offers robust professional development and technical assistance opportunities based on the ECE continuum of early learning documents, supporting continued deepening of knowledge on child development, developmentally appropriate practice, and effective teaching practices. The elements of Arizona's training and technical assistance system are detailed below.

Professional Development Work Group (PDWG).

The PDWG is an FTF collaborative made up of ECE professionals and advocates to promote the professional development of Arizona's ECE workforce. The PDWG consists of three subgroups focused on: data, access, finance and outreach; institutes of higher education articulation; and, professional standards for practitioners. The work of the PDWG supports the goals of aligned professional development across the state, as detailed in the strategic plans of Arizona's ECE system partners.

The Inclusion Task Force, ICP, and Itinerant Service model.

Evidence of coaching provided to ensure that programs are implementing the concepts learned in professional development are seen in the following initiatives intended to increase children's access to programs aligned to the AzELS and high-quality program guidelines. The Inclusion Task Force was started in 2015 as part of the PDG strategic plan, and work began to identify a team of educators and parents of children with disabilities representative of the regions around the state to address the lack of inclusive opportunities. The 20-25 members of the group that participate are from multiple state agencies, large and small urban and rural school districts, Head Start programs, and the members represent a variety of practitioner roles and disability expertise. Their collaborative work continues today.

The group spent the first year working to understand the scope of the inclusion issue and develop a theory of change. Over the course of the year, the team navigated the many perspectives of its members that reflected their years of experience. They used reviews of state annual performance report data, national technical center assistance, federal guidance and existing research on benefits of inclusion. Data submitted by schools showed that almost 70% of children with disabilities were in programs apart from their typically developing peers. For all of Arizona's almost 10,000 children with disabilities, only 30% were included in and participated in

early childhood programs with their typically developing peers. The Task Force identified the primary barriers to participation in high quality preschool programs that included all children. The group then worked over the following year to turn barriers into key practices that would result in changing this experience for families and children.

Additionally, ADE has supported the implementation of several additional strategies and tactics to address the capacity to develop inclusive programming for its children with disabilities. Strategies such as technical assistance, professional development, program and data analysis, and monitoring activities are all being implemented by ADE staff and leadership. First, ADE staff are continuing to offer technical assistance to programs they oversee as well as any others that request assistance. Technical assistance is the delivery of information in support of compliance and best practices so that programs make available quality early childhood programs, the foundation for inclusion. The technical assistance activities include tactics such as training on standards, curriculum, behavior, and child development. These are offered on a regular basis to educators across the state in a mixed delivery system of practitioners from faith based, private, head start and public early childhood programs. The delivery of professional development as a strategy has at its core the intention to go one step further than technical assistance, in support of practice change. Tactics such as offering training paired with ongoing coaching, while labor intensive, are designed to support programs to implement inclusive practices. One such example is the offering of the Itinerant Model of Early Childhood Special Education (the Itinerant Model).

The Itinerant Model was offered to LEAs and those whom have participated have made great advances in transitioning to inclusive programming, and their inclusion data reflects this. The reduction in children attending separate settings, from 68% to 62% statewide over the course

of two years, reflects the success of these and the following professional development initiatives. In addition to offering professional development on the Itinerant Model, SW has sought out a partnership with Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (ADDPC) to implement a program to assess the provision of key practices in inclusive settings.

The Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) is a standardized assessment whose qualified users can rate the experiences of children in inclusion settings. This initiative is in its early stages—training practitioners to use the tool, analyzing the resulting data and subsequently applying techniques to address any identified challenges. Observers are supported to implement aligned evidence based practices and re-measure results. Ultimately the goal is to train more users and share the results, to increase the further use of the ICP.

Itinerant service teachers help to address the IEP goals of children who receive their special education services in their homes or in a community-based program. The use of an itinerant service teacher relies on a consultative model approach between the itinerant teacher and the general education teacher in which principles of distributed practice and embedded learning opportunities are shared. The goal of this strategy is to provide high-quality interventions to children in inclusive setting thus resulting in more children receiving their services in their LRE.

ADE proposes using the PDG B-5 grant opportunity to continue to educate early childhood practitioners and administrators within the general early childhood settings such as: Head Starts, Community Based Early Childhood Programs, Family Child Care, Public school early childhood programs, etc. to increase their awareness and understanding of the importance of educating young children in inclusive settings and on the value of the itinerant service model as a means of accomplishing this. Selection of participating teams for the cohorts will be done

through an application submittal process. ADE is proposing that each year of the grant include 1-2 cohorts with 5-6 program/district teams participating each cohort. This strategy would involve support from ADE personnel as well as that of L. Dinnebell & B. McInerney the authors of *A Guide to Itinerant Early Childhood Special Education*.

Social Emotional and Early Learning (SEEL).

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) as “the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” A growing body of research demonstrates that these skills are critical to a child’s growth and development, academic success, and long-term wellbeing. In the age of high-stakes academic testing, however, the education field is still trying to integrate meaningful SEL into their curriculum. Research further shows that promoting SEL can be most impactful when introduced within the first five years of life.

ADE has partnered with several community stakeholders, including the Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith, and Family, FTF, ROA, the Arizona Early Intervention Project, the Alesi Group, and the AHSA to establish the Social-Emotional and Early Learning (SEEL) Committee. The committee’s overarching goal is to raise awareness around the importance of social emotional learning and its connection to language and literacy development. Further, the committee seeks to advance professional development that actively supports practitioners in moving from theory to practice, specifically within the intersection of social-emotional learning and early literacy.

The first task of the committee was to work with a respected national partner, the Pyramid Model Consortium, to expand new professional development opportunities that align with Arizona's ECE continuum of early learning supports. The Pyramid Model Consortium created professional development specific to Arizona's needs to support early literacy development that makes a direct link between social-emotional development and achievement. As a result, three training modules on social-emotional learning and language and literacy are now available.

Arizona proposes to use funding from the PDG B-5 grant opportunity to enhance and carry forward this initiative through a partnership with the Pyramid Model Consortium. The next phase will be focused on forming a statewide team to determine the State's ability to pilot programs as Pyramid Model sites and to train individuals within the field and at the statewide level to become Pyramid Model trainers/coaches to support the program's initiatives.

Child Safety and Well-Being Initiative.

Co-chaired by Casey Family Programs and the Arizona Governor's Office of Youth, Faith, and Family, the Arizona Collective Impact Initiative for Child Safety and Well-Being was formed with the intention to bring cross-sector partners together to improve the lives of children and families in Arizona. The core mission of the Child Safety and Well-being Initiative is: "All children and families throughout Arizona are safe, stable, and flourishing." Data showed that in 2015, Arizona was placing proportionately more children into foster care than other states, and that Arizona ranked 46th out of the 50 states in several key indicators of child well-being. Faced with a child welfare system stretched beyond its capacity, and a wholly inadequate safety net for families living in poverty, feasibility assessments and interviews with stakeholders were conducted. Community leaders agreed that a collective impact approach was the most effective

way to address the integration of child safety, family stability, and well-being for vulnerable children at risk of entering the system.

Utilizing the Results-Based Accountability framework developed by Mark Friedman, the Initiative collected, and reviewed data related to child and family well-being. Child abuse and neglect was the identified as the overarching data framework to be used, while also including the contributing factors of domestic violence, substance use, and housing insecurity/ homelessness. With these data points as a foundation, five potential action areas were identified: family navigation, home visitation, community-based development, permanent supportive housing (with aligned services), and quality early childhood education. Of those five areas, two were selected with which to launch action teams, based on the opportunities to leverage existing services, funding, and professional service networks for the most immediate and effective impact: family navigation and home visiting. A wide variety of community stakeholders have come together to develop the Family Navigation strategy, including state agencies, the Crisis Response Network, FTF, Arizona State University, local and statewide family service agencies, school districts, and behavioral health systems partners.

ADE's participation in the Family Navigation action team is driven in part by two key strategic factors: first, the vantage point of schools in preventing, identifying, and responding to potential child abuse, neglect, and risk factors such as domestic violence and housing insecurity. second, the role of schools/ Local Education Agencies as natural and logical access points for reaching families in need of support and/or intervention. Through the Initiative's examination of current child and family service systems, there has been strong consensus that the current service model lacks provider coordination or cohesion. There may be duplication of services in some instances, and large service gaps in others. Families are often unaware of available resources, or

unable to access resources due to barriers including location, availability, and/or lack of trust. Many families who have had previous interactions with behavioral health or child protection and safety, for example, fear getting labeled or placed into a “system”.

Health and Nutrition. Currently, ADE has a partnership with the unit responsible for oversight of the Child and Care Adult Food Program (CACFP) that enables both groups to leverage their efforts to encourage ECE programs to make health and nutrition an integral part of their programming. In this grant proposal, ADE is proposing expanding this partnership and broadening the scope of reach of ECE providers in two key priorities for the CACFP program:

- Infant Feeding Workshops for CACFP facilities, Fall 2019: A 4-hour in person workshop based on USDA’s Infant Feeding Guide that will cover everything from how to store and handle breastmilk and formula, best practices for bottle feeding infants, hunger and satiety cues, and developmental readiness and safe introduction of solids
- Farm Fresh Challenge/Farm 2, Spring 2020: During National CACFP Week we will partner with the Health and Nutrition Unit to promote ECE providers’ participation in the Farm Fresh Challenge during National CACFP week in March. Our shared vision is that children in CACFP centers will have additional experiences with local food, nutrition education, and gardening, and that centers will use this time to promote their actions while also promoting their participation in CACFP.

Overall Quality Improvement (Activity 5)

As outlined and referenced in the Description of the State System, ADE used a two-tier approach to identify both statewide and local strategies designed to improve the overall quality of the ECE System. Tier 1 focused on a statewide approach and Tier 2 focused on local level approaches. Arizona’s proposed activities align to the five key priority focus areas already

detailed in this proposal. Additionally, the effective transitions for all children was identified as a statewide strategy. Arizona is proposing to use the PDG B-5 grant funds to coordinate, scale up, and enhance the implementation of strategies identified in its system partners' strategic plans to meet the needs of state and local communities relative to the five priority areas as detailed below.

Child Care Deserts

According to the March 2019 *Arizona Kids Count Databook*, as of 2016, Arizona was home to approximately 435,789 children under 5 years of age. This accounts for roughly 6% of Arizona's population. Based on the numbers, 37% of 3 and 4-year-olds are reported as being in school. This is indicative of a childcare gap that exists within the state. Furthermore, based on Arizona's 2019 Child Care Aware State Fact Sheet, there is a total of 299,756 children under age six potentially needing child care when looking at data relative to working families. Recently, Child Care Aware selected Arizona for their Mapping the Gap Brief. Within this brief, it was noted that there currently exists a deficit of 22,228 licensed childcare slots statewide for children under the age of six. For infants and toddlers, this deficit is exponentially disproportionate. For the approximately 146,000 infants and toddlers in the state, licensed childcare is virtually non-existent in some regions of the state. For example, in Mohave County, located in the northwest portion of the state, only 7% of infants and toddlers have access to licensed childcare.

Additional factors compounding the supply and demand issues are the number of those licensed and/or regulated childcare settings that are quality. According to Arizona's State Fact Sheet, the capacity of center-based programs participating in the voluntary state-wide QRIS is 90,765 and the capacity of FCC home programs is 840 for a total capacity of 91,605. Thus, of the 299,099 children potentially needing childcare, approximately 31% of them at most will have access to a quality setting. When looking at the total number of children under age five

(435,789), approximately 21% of them will have access to a quality setting. Using this data, along with the strategic plans of our ECE system partners, the LPCs, along with system's partner agency leads, will be monitoring and evaluating Arizona's supply and demand issue.

At the local level, regional communities choose to honor and acknowledge those considered invisible childcare providers. These providers serve as informal caregivers, and are known as Families, Friends, and Neighbor (FFN). The FFN is often the informal childcare of choice for families that are low-income, families of color, or families of infants and toddlers. In 1999, to provide ongoing training and support to FFN caregivers, the Arizona Kith and Kin project was established. This project had three main priorities: (1) improve the quality of childcare through training; (2) increase caregiver's knowledge and understanding of early child development; and (3) increase caregiver's knowledge and understanding of health and safety issues to provide a safer childcare environment. In looking at the data on Arizona's childcare supply and demand gap, stakeholders, constituents, and early childhood supporters agree that providing support and training for FFN providers is a means of helping to ensure that ALL children have access to high quality, culturally responsive early care and education that promotes their development.

Arizona Kith and Kin Project (Infant/Toddler Emphasis)

Currently, the Arizona Association of Supportive Child Care (AASCC) with grant funding provided by FTF and other grant funders, provide 14-week training sessions in English and Spanish, and for refugee caregivers. These trainings take place at various locations that provide adjoining space for childcare. The following subjects are covered during the 14-week support group training series such as: child development, parent/caregiver relationships, health safety, among others.

Currently, this grant funded program is being offered in three of Arizona's 13 counties (Maricopa, Yuma, and Coconino). Arizona is proposing the scale up of the Kith and Kin project to other counties within the state to include indigenous nations. ADE is proposing including ECE providers who serve families with infants and toddlers. This scale up allows the state to honor parental choice relative to kinship care for those communities that either lack traditional brick and mortar childcare centers or for those families who trust and desire the family, friend, and neighbor alternative as the best fit for their family. Included in the services offered will be a focus on identification and mitigation of developmental risk including infant and early childhood mental health consultation and on the infant toddler workforce.

In addition to the scale up of the Kith and Kin project, Arizona is proposing to work with the Association on marketing of the program and on the design/delivery of the program to engage more informal caregivers. Each year of the grant will focus on the addition of two to three county cohorts.

Increase access to High-Quality Early Learning Settings

Arizona is committed to helping communities/regions within our state build and develop high-quality early care and education programs that enable children from vulnerable populations. Arizona's plan, as detailed below, outlines how the state will further develop its current system to improve access to early care and education.

The PDG B-5 would allow Arizona to make high-quality early care and education available in identified regions and support preschool program infrastructure building and quality enhancements. Arizona's plan is to increase access to high-quality early learning opportunities throughout the state. Access to high-quality early care and education slots will be open to providers in the State's mixed delivery system. Programs will be selected using the following data points: (1) total population of children aged birth to five; (2) percentage of children within

the county being serviced in an early care and education setting; (3) percentage of families within the county that are at 200% or below the federal poverty level; (4) local school district’s percentage of children scoring proficient or higher on both the ELA and Math portions of the 3rd grade AzMerit; (5) percent of English learners (ELs); and (6) programs’ capacity to serve infants and toddlers.

Arizona proposes making subgrantees awards for up to 65% of the grant funding each year for quality childcare slots. This approach will allow Arizona to serve an additional 1,000 to 1,900 children each year of the grant. The per child allocation can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Per child allocation.

	Ages 0-2	@10 months operation	Ages 3-5	@10 months operation
Center	\$900	\$9,000	\$600	\$6,000
Family Home Provider	\$600	\$6,000	\$500	\$5,000

Subgrantees will be required to submit a proposal of services to ADE via an application process for consideration. This will allow ADE to determine where new and improved slots can be placed. Once the subgrantees is selected, they will be granted permission to submit a formal, legally-binding agreement through Arizona’s Grant Management System (GME). This process requires that a unique program identifier be created which will allow subgrantees to upload data and information into Arizona’s Student Accountability Information System (SAIS). All subgrantee assurances, budgets, and narrative questions will be uploaded through GME and reviewed at the ECPS and Early Childhood Director (ECD) level.

Local subgrantees will be required to participate in the state level assessment system for ECE. This requires programs to work with ADE to obtain unique identifiers (SAIS numbers) for participating children. Subgrantees must agree to implement or coordinate to offer sensory and

developmental screenings that include the referral process for evaluation and identification of children with disabilities. Subgrantees must also utilize the on-going progress monitoring cycle and collect data based on the AZ State Board approved tool. The ADE ECE Unit will work with the ADE Assessment and Accountability department on leveraging the ADECONNECT platform and the Student Information System (SIS) to build a data sharing platform that allows Kindergarten and above teachers to see the outcomes and OPM data of children birth to age five. This will prove to be an integral part of effective transitions into kindergarten. Furthermore, using the school report card platform, for which the ADE ECE unit partially funds, subgrantee data will be available in aggregated form at the state level and district level for the purposes of monitoring and decision-making.

Subgrantees must participate in a pathway that will lead to quality. The subgrantees must either choose to become nationally accredited or they must participate in Quality First QRIS. Expectations and guidelines for each subgrantee will be provided by the ECPS and/or the QF coach. ADE staff will work with FTF/QF to determine appropriate funding per program for those choosing QF participation as their pathway to quality. All programs must be licensed (prior to serving children) by AZDHS, DES, Tribal Licensing, or Military Licensing. Each program/site must satisfy the following: (1) currently have a star rating of 3 or above in QF or being willing to participate in QF and earn a minimum of a 3-star rating; or (2) hold a National Early Childhood Accreditation or become accredited during the grant award period; and (3) currently be a DES authorized provider or become a DES authorized provider during the grant award period.

Subgrants will be awarded through a competitive process.

Applicants will need to provide evidence of their ability to braid or layer funds to sustain and support a high-quality program. Programs must identify what current ECE funding sources

they are leveraging outside of PDG, such as: Title I dollars, private pay, philanthropic, CACFP/NSLP, Quality First Scholarships, Head Start partnership agreements, etc.

Inclusion

Arizona provided early childhood special education services to over 10,000 preschool age children in FY2018 and early intervention services to over 5,600 infants and toddlers. ADE proposes focusing on strategies and initiatives around improving outcomes for children with disabilities, promoting meaningful participation, and offering a continuum of comprehensive services. To ensure that children with disabilities will have access to quality early childhood education, Arizona will require programs to annually ensure that no less than ten percent of the children being served by early learning providers are children who are on an IFSP or an IEP.

As described in the Strategic Planning section, Arizona has been involved in three key initiatives and strategies intended to help early childhood practitioners provide quality care to children with disabilities in inclusive settings. A fourth strategy is the Strategies for Teaching based on Autism Research (STAR) professional development and coaching project.

Early Language and Literacy

In 2017, 39% of Arizona fourth graders fell below basic reading levels on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Although there have been gains in NAEP scores over the last several years it is important to note that there continues to be significant gaps for certain student groups in Arizona. Black and Hispanic students continue to score lower than their white counterparts with reading scores 26 and 27 points lower. Furthermore, students who were eligible for free and reduced lunch had an average score that was 34 points lower than non-eligible students. Knowing that an estimated 33% of incoming kindergartners nationwide enter

school without the basic language and skills they need to learn to read, it is essential to embed professional development opportunities to tackle our early literacy crisis.

ADE is proposing two coaching models with specific attention to early language and literacy. In collaboration with ROA and the ADE K-12 Unit, the ADE ECE unit will scale up the delivery of the Teaching Reading Effectively training and the Smart Talk Campaign.

- **Teaching Reading Effectively (TRE)**

Arizona’s Move on When Reading (MOWR) policy is designed to provide students with evidence-based, effective reading instruction in kindergarten through third grade to position them for success as they progress through school, college, and career. The legislation in A.R.S §15-701, A.R.S §15-704, and A.R.S §15-211 explains the requirements for pupil promotion, early literacy instruction, and accountability for student achievement in reading.

To help build capacity for evidence-based literacy instruction, ADE offers the Teaching Reading Effectively (TRE) and Teaching Reading Effectively Trainer of Trainers (TRE-TOT) trainings. TRE focuses on the five pillars of early literacy: phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In addition, TRE guides educators and practitioners through the assessments used for identifying a student’s specific area of struggle when learning to read.

Under MOWR the TRE training targeted K-3 teachers, K-5 administrators, and K-8 reading specialists. This initiative will also include teachers in the birth to age 5 classrooms. Taking this approach aligns to Arizona’s guide, *Continuum of Effective Literacy Practices*. This guide, created by ROA, is intended for use by practitioners to raise awareness that “literacy is a progression of skills s that begins with the ability to understand spoken words and decode written words, and culminates in the deep understanding of text and written communication.”

- **Smart Talk**

The optimal window of time to promote learning and subsequent later reading success is children between the ages of birth to 3. This stage is when children experience the fastest rate of brain development in their lifetime. Inspired by Georgia's *Talk With Me Baby* initiative, the Smart Talk campaign is designed for any adult (family or caregiver) interacting with young children so that they may gain a deeper understanding about the importance of quality, back-and-forth conversations. The campaign and accompanying training modules are designed to help strengthen the skills of those engaging with young children need to support learning and development at home and in early care and education settings. The Smart Talk campaign includes the following modules: *Module 1: An Introduction; Module 2: Brain Development and Research; Module 3: Language Nutrition; Module 4: Language Transactions.*

ADE will work in collaboration with ROA staff to deliver the modules statewide with an emphasis in aligning the delivery of the modules with the AZSFEC model demonstration sites. In addition, ADE staff will work to create a professional development statewide plan detailing the delivery of the Smart Talk modules in tandem with the *ADE Infant Toddler Developmental Guideline Modules.*

Workforce Development

In addition to improvements within the shared professional development system, Arizona identified work with Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) as a priority. This work includes supporting ECE IHE programs and students. To address these needs Arizona will continue to implement the Arizona Higher Education Accreditation (AzHEA) Project and the Early Childhood Higher Education System Navigator.

- **Arizona Higher Education Accreditation (AzHEA) Project**

The goal for this project mirrors the priority at the national level – to advance the quality of the early childhood profession by strengthening the preparation of early childhood educators. NAEYC’s higher education accreditation system sets a high expectation for program quality, and programs that achieve accreditation see tangible improvements in the caliber of their curriculum, the cohesiveness of their program, and stronger student performance on NAEYC’s Professional Preparation Standards.

We propose recruiting five institutions to participate in the project as this would support up to 15 early childhood degree programs in achieving accreditation. We also propose moving the programs through the accreditation process at an accelerated pace, requiring programs to complete the self-study phase within one and a half to two years. This will help maintain momentum within the programs to move through self-study, and it will be supported by technical assistance from AzAEYC and NAEYC.

For AzHEA, the contract funds would cover the accreditation fees (application fee, self-study review fee, site visit fee, and first year annual fee) for programs in the cohort, faculty release time, costs for holding 2-3 faculty institutes, fees for TA coordinators, and administrative costs for AzAEYC to manage the grant. AzAEYC would hold the funds allocated for accreditation fees “in escrow” and would disburse them as programs reached the steps in the accreditation process.

- **Early Childhood Higher Education System Navigator**

The Navigator focuses on supporting ECE students to degree completion through promoting the benefits of higher education pathways, offering engagement in the higher education early childhood community, facilitating retention in chosen degree pathway, and celebrating degree completion. The focus is on strengthening student capacity to navigate, excel,

and complete programs of study from their chosen IHE. The Navigator role is situated within the following strategic directions:

1. Focus on the needs of the early childhood higher education student
2. Collaborate in building a high-quality ECE professional development system

This project coordinator will work with ADE ECE staff to support a collaborative approach to develop, implement and assess proactive programming responsive to the unique needs of ECE students while also maintain data on recruitment, retention, persistence, and graduation rates of ECE students.

Effective Transitions For All (Collaborative Transition and Alignment from Birth to the Early Grades)

In collaboration with FTF, five years ago, ADE focused efforts on kindergarten transitions for all students. This initiative included having full time employees at ADE that supported state funded programs to have Kindergarten Transition Plans. These transition specialists in collaboration with Head Start Region 9, Technical Assistance providers, created a Kindergarten Transition Plan statewide initiative inclusive of district and head start programs. In addition, the initiative included professional development which is still under ADE's ownership as the "Successful Kinder Transitions for All" two-hour professional development session and statewide the "Kindergarten Transition Conference". Subsequent professional development was provided to the field as the Kindergarten Transition initiative funds ended and ADE was granted the initial PDG. These funds allowed for additional statewide conferences, professional development and technical assistant to support effective transitions for all students.

The process of gathering kindergarten readiness data started with having a common assessment tool across programs. Most of the Head Start grantees from Arizona's Head Start

Association (AHSA) chose to use the same assessment tool that ADE had chosen as the assessment tool for federal reporting for preschool students with disabilities. At the same time, in 2015, when these two large funding streams were all utilizing the same assessment tool, ADE was awarded the PDG. ADE made using the common assessment tool a requirement to be a subgrantees, so ADE was able to assess approximately 30,000 of Arizona's youngest children. While the data was collected at the end of the preschool year for children, it was used as a proxy for Kindergarten readiness data since Arizona did not yet have a common tool for measuring kindergarten readiness.

In 2013, ADE joined a multi-state consortium led by North Carolina in developing and implementing the Kindergarten Developmental Inventory (KDI), which was made available in Arizona for all kindergarten classrooms beginning in the 2017-18 school year. The KDI is an assessment that kindergarten teachers will use to obtain an in-depth understanding of the developmental strengths and needs of every child. It is intended to be used as a formative assessment tool used throughout the entire school year to help teachers identify the depths of each child's knowledge and abilities in all areas of development.

The KDI will begin at kindergarten entry generating a Child Profile of learning and development, and will continue through third grade, making information available to both teachers and families to inform teaching and learning. The comprehensive nature of the KDI allows for its use with both typical children and children with special needs, which leads to Arizona's efforts in expanding inclusive classroom settings. Tribal education programs are also included in the execution of the KDI, as it focuses on developmentally appropriate development which supports the cultural components of each of the 22 Indigenous Nations in Arizona.

The KDI is aligned with the AzELS and the Arizona K-12 Academic Standards which allows for continuity of learning and provides the framework for the planning of quality learning experiences leading to the use of the KDI in kindergarten. These alignments support Arizona's third grade reading legislation (MOWR).

With this PDG B-5 opportunity, ADE seeks to refine and create a more robust Kindergarten transition process for all students that involves kindergarten transition teams working with families, schools, communities, and early child providers to design and implement transitions inclusive of all children. In addition, Arizona proposes the selection of sites to receive training on the tool directly from the current KDI vendor. ADE's goal is to work with the ADE Research and Accountability Unit and the ADE Information Technology Unit on the creation of a platform that will connect birth-age 5 child outcomes data with a school's Student Information System (SIS) or display on the ADECONNECT platform. This feature would potentially enable K-12 teachers and administrators, via a secure login portal, the ability to access child-level data. This will allow Kindergarten teachers, for the first time in Arizona, to access birth to five child outcomes data within the same system as their k-12 counterparts, allowing them to effectively have a greater understanding of the abilities, strengths, and skill sets of incoming children.

Arizona School Readiness Framework (ASRF)

As this process of Kindergarten transition evolves, it is important to educate and support families and practitioners around what it means for a child to be "ready for school". The ASRF provides a framework that reflects and establishes a clear definition and common language around what school readiness is. The ASRF builds upon the growing body of research demonstrating the need for high quality early learning experiences and identifies the context for implementation. Using a broadly defined understood working definition regarding what

constitutes a child's readiness for school allows stakeholders from different parts of the system to work collaboratively to ensure all children arrive at school ready to meet the challenges and rigorous academic curriculum in kindergarten. Arizona defines school readiness as:

Arizona's young children will demonstrate school readiness through the Essential Domains of Language and Literacy development, Cognition and General Knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development), Approaches to Learning (curiosity, initiative, persistence, creativity, problem-solving and confidence), Physical Well-Being and Motor Development and Self-Regulation of Attention and Emotion (including Social and Emotional Development). Intentional development of skills and knowledge in these domains establishes a critical foundation for children to engage in and benefit from opportunities to learn.

Data Integration

In the PDG grant proposal, ADE's plan included the use of \$2.2 million from the grant to support infrastructure-building in information technology (IT) to align preschool data with the ADE's State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). Participation in the SLDS has enabled ADE and early learning providers in HNCs to identify achievement gaps, pinpoint initiatives that best promote positive outcomes, and access data for longitudinal analysis. Recognizing the successful integration of preschool data to the SLDS, it has become a priority for AD to evaluate additional opportunities to support vertical articulation of outcomes data along the early childhood continuum (birth through third grade).

Additionally, in year one of PDG implementation, ADE partnered with Read On Arizona (ROA) and the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) to launch a data-mapping tool called "MapLIT." ROA is a statewide, public/private partnership of agencies, philanthropic

organizations, and community stakeholders committed to creating an effective continuum of services to improve language and literacy outcomes for Arizona's children from birth through age eight. The Deputy Associate Superintendent for ADE, who oversees the implementation of PDG, is an active member of the ROA data integration taskforce that helped to construct MapLIT.

ROA partners created MapLIT as a “one stop” resource to identify key data sets (census, school, health, family engagement) that impact early literacy outcomes in communities. MapLIT provides communities with graphic views of select data for all Arizona public/charter elementary school and preschool site locations. The benefit to PDG communities is the easy accessibility of data that could be useful in the community decision-making

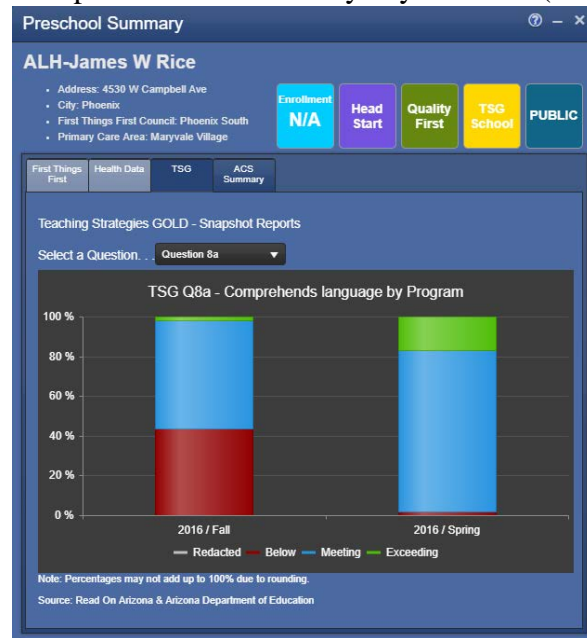


Figure 4. Sample view on MapLIT.

process for supporting the high-quality preschool programs in their communities move from just having access to data to the in-depth analysis and use of data to inform comprehensive action plans that support high-quality preschool programming across Arizona. A sample view of MapLIT can be seen in Figure 4.

ROA developed a population-level integrated data system (IDS) that combines data from a range of programs that serve children and young adults. An associated interactive mapping tool,

MapLIT, serves as a clearinghouse for census, school, health, and family engagement data that are associated with early literacy. Intended uses of the MapLIT tool include:

- identifying neighborhoods with high need and low service
- exploring or tracking improvement over time using tools from the data center
- sharing information with Read On Arizona community partners and decision-makers to inform strategic planning centered around improving early language and literacy outcomes
- presenting on the challenges and opportunities in the community with would-be partners
- demonstrating need for additional resources

Localities used the tool to identify gaps in preschool participation among children in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. At the state level, MapLIT findings resulted in chronic absenteeism's inclusion as one of the student success indicators for elementary and middle schools in Arizona's plan for the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA).

ROA has chosen to focus on a public-facing tool that integrates population-level data to show a holistic picture of child outcomes. In the summer of 2018, the Arizona Department of Education convened partners to help identify and set a research agenda in support of a competitive application for a Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems grant. Rather than revisit or revive a child-level IDS, Read On Arizona and its partners intend to expand the capabilities and use of the MapLIT mapping tool, and other existing agency data tools. By steering clear of child-level records, the effort avoids a range of thorny privacy, legal, and regulatory issues. The lack of child-level detail, however, comes at a cost. The granularity of child-level data allows deeper, more sophisticated analyses of service gaps and program effectiveness than are possible in neighborhood- or school-level analyses.

Stakeholders expressed that they would focus on improving the early childhood data in MapLIT and on increasing the usability of the tool over the next two years. Stakeholders emphasized that they want to create a tool that is accessible to all users and that shows relevant, current data that tell a cogent story. Specifically, stakeholders mentioned that they would be interested in adding data that would help parents make decisions about their child's education, such as student-teacher ratio data, data on special programs offered, and data on other school-level metrics.

Some Arizona partners in the initiative have used the data underlying the MapLIT tool for more rigorous analysis. Stakeholders mentioned that a few of their partners have worked with child-level data and that their higher education partner, Arizona State University, is considering how robust predictive analysis might be used to predict child outcomes based on participation in certain programs. However, interviewed stakeholders anticipated that, due to their focus on public accessibility, the reality of agency data system limitations, and the current data sharing agreements with partners, no child-level data would be incorporated into their tool.

Two specific goals were developed by Arizona's Governor's office this year for Arizona schools. By 2030, 45% of 3 and 4-year old's will be in higher quality childcare center based off the quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) and by 2030, 72% of Arizona 3rd grade reading scores are proficient. In support of these goals to include the Early Childhood Education (ECE) unit addressing childcare deserts and language and literacy priorities, MapLIT provides ongoing data to monitor the progress of these goals.

A shared integrated data system focused on early literacy birth to third grade, MapLIT, was created by several state agency partners and contains data including: early learning sites and language/literacy Teaching Strategies Gold data, as well as all K-3 schools in Arizona with data

on proficiency, enrollment, chronic absenteeism, family engagement, health factors and census data. Powered by Maricopa Association of Governments, partnered with Read On Arizona and funded by ADE, MapLIT needs were determined based on Arizona's 3rd grade reading scores and Arizona's Move On When Reading law.

In addition to MapLIT providing data to the field on the progress of the above mentioned goals, ADE provides TA to LPCs on evaluating data already available to them, to identify new data sources and to confirm regional needs assessments. MapLIT allows communities to process data from a big picture to focalizing on specifics of childcare deserts to early intervention of language and literacy skills, two of the five ECE unit's priority areas.

An additional data tool, Explore AZ Schools, was created to intentionally engage families. Explore AZ Schools is powered by Maricopa Associations of Governments, partnered with ADE and Read On Arizona, and a project of the Arizona Family Engagement Center. This online data tool allows families to learn more about education options from pre-k to high school to make an informed education choice for their children. Customized search factors include English language arts scores, math scores, student demographics, full or half-day kindergarten, A-F school letter grades and more.

Organizational Capacity and Management

As the proposed designated agency for the administrative home of the PDG B-5 grant, ADE is well staffed to successfully complete the proposed project. The relevant knowledge, experience, and capabilities to implement and manage this project effectively of each staff, as well as key partners, is detailed below.

Lori Masseur, M.Ed., Deputy Associate Superintendent of Early Childhood Education, Head Start State Collaboration Office Director. Ms. Masseur has spent over five years with ADE

serving three years as the Education Program Specialist overseeing Northern Arizona, and two years serving in the capacity of Director prior to becoming the DAS for the unit. Ms. Masseur's professional background includes twenty years in the early childhood education and elementary education fields with over ten years as an educator with the Department of Defense. With her extensive knowledge of the statewide ECE system in Arizona and understanding of the key partners and stakeholders, Ms. Masseur will be vital in coordinating linkages between appropriate ECE partners within the early care and education field. This extensive knowledge will uniquely enable her to speak to a larger statewide early care and education systems-building effort. As part of the ADE leadership team, Ms. Masseur collects, manages, analyzes, and summarizes data to help inform and determine plans, not only for ADE, but also for the early care and education field. This has been instrumental in the development of guidance and support to the field. For the initial PDG grant, Ms. Masseur was responsible for an array of supports related to infrastructure-building and quality enhancements.

Suzanne Perry, M.Ed. Director of Early Childhood Special Education/619 Coordinator. As the 619 Coordinator for the state of Arizona, Ms. Perry has been responsible for administering the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* preschool grant and supervising the programs engaged in offering services to preschool aged children with disabilities. This is Ms. Perry's third year as the 619 Coordinator. The role includes important technical activities related to such things as gathering and evaluating data. The data analysis of federal indicators includes reviews of children's outcomes, their access to inclusive environments, and whether they obtained timely support and services. ADE, in turn, supports programs to examine their own data and adjust their practices so that children have access to quality programming. Ms. Perry works

on ensuring that data is submitted by each entity, that the data includes all required elements, and that the practices used to gather it reflects what is occurring in the early childhood environment.

Jason Clark, M.S.Ed., Director of Early Childhood Education. Mr. Clark is new to the ADE, bringing with him almost 30 years of experience in early childhood education and care, including profit, non-profit, government, faith-based, and Tribal settings. He holds a bachelor's degree in Child Development and a Master of Science of Education in Early Childhood Studies. He has worked as a teacher, supervisor, advocate, and trainer in supporting in supporting high-quality early childhood programs. For the 4.5 years prior to joining ADE, Mr. Clark managed the early childhood programming for one of Arizona's many Indigenous communities. The preceding 7 years was as a supervisor within the Head Start program. In addition to program management, Mr. Clark has participated on early childhood advisory boards for institutes of higher education, First Things First, and faith-based programs. Mr. Clark's role supports the service of high-quality early childhood education and care across Arizona. This includes the continued leveraging and alignment of key ECE systems partners, support of ECE technical assistance and professional development, and the use and management of ADE documents such as the *Arizona Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines*, *Arizona Early Learning Standards*, and *Arizona's School Readiness Framework*. Mr. Clark's extensive experience with Arizona's Ongoing Progress Monitoring tool will assist in use within multiple statewide initiatives.

Will Buckley, Director of Fiscal Operations. With over five years of public service with the State of Arizona and Maricopa County, Mr. Buckley is an experienced budgeting and project management professional responsible for the monitoring of all expenditures associated with ADE. He is trained in a number of research methodologies and statistics with a degree in economics.

Terri Clark, Arizona Literacy Director. Ms. Clark was appointed the Arizona Literacy Director for the State of Arizona in June 2012. As Arizona's Literacy Director, Ms. Clark is responsible for working in partnership with the Arizona Department of Education, Arizona Head Start Collaboration Office, First Things First, and other local philanthropic partners to lead statewide efforts in early literacy. As the State Literacy Director, Ms. Clark leads Read On Arizona, a public/private partnership of agencies, philanthropic organizations, and community stakeholders committed to creating an effective continuum of supports to improve language and literacy outcomes for Arizona's children from birth through age eight. Prior to assuming her position as state literacy director, Ms. Clark ran a statewide early literacy organization called Bring Me A Book that was headquartered in Northern California. Her previous tenure as Executive Director of the Literacy Network of Greater Los Angeles, a coalition of over 250 literacy providers, was an excellent training ground for developing intentional effective literacy interventions and building a seamless delivery system serving over 500,000 literacy learners. Ms. Clark graduated with honors from Brown University.

Moe Gallegos, Director, Arizona Head Start Association. Mr. Gallegos has spoken at conferences and seminars across the country on change and leadership in the public sector. His use of laughter and stories from his own personal life help audiences bring perspective to their own ever-changing world. He is a native Arizonan with a bachelor's degree from Northern Arizona University, Certified Public Manager graduate from Arizona State University, Head Start Management Fellows Program graduate from UCLA and certified trainer in the *True Colors* communications tool. Mr. Gallegos has over 45 years of experience in the Human Services field. He spent nearly 30 years in state service holding a variety of positions including

Assistant Director in the State Department of Economic Security. For 17 years he was with the City of Phoenix Human Services Department responsible for the city's community action programs, senior programs, homeless initiatives, human trafficking, the largest Arizona Head Start Birth to Five program and the city's Domestic Violence Family Advocacy Center in collaboration with the Phoenix Police Department.

An Organization Chart can be seen in Appendix B.

Data Integration, Management, and Use (Activity 6)

Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Arizona recognizes program evaluation is a critical component of any initiative, especially one of the magnitude ADE is proposing in this application. To gain direction for improving our strategies as they are developing and to measure the effectiveness of our efforts after we have had time to produce results, ADE is proposing a mixed-methods program evaluation approach. We have determined a mixed-methods approach is appropriate since we would like to provide feedback to our stakeholders on outcomes as measured by quantitative evaluation and on our processes and impact as measured by qualitative evaluation.

To address the quantitative portion of the evaluation, ADE is proposing establishing an integrated, centralized data system that will allow for state partners to house their data related to the goals we have identified as shared and common to us all. The data system is described on page 13. A visual representation can be seen in Appendix B. The system will continue the efforts proposed in ADE's initial PDG application to integrate ECE data with K-12 data. The initial plan included the use of \$2.2 million from the grant to support infrastructure-building in information technology (IT) to align preschool data with the ADE's State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). This included building applications in ADE's systems to create unique identifiers for all

preschool students, not just preschool students with disabilities. Once this application was created, it was able to be utilized by any entity in Arizona that provided early childhood education to any of Arizona's children. At the same time, a few Head Start entities received an Early Head Start Child Care Partnership grant and began generating these unique identifiers for infant and toddlers, in addition to the already existing general education Head Start students. Because of this application and the ability for all entities to generate the unique identifier, ADE ECE was able to have a successful mixed delivery system for PDG subgrantee, which maximized parent choice for where they wanted their preschool student to attend. This also enabled Arizona to move towards the foundation for establishing a system that could provide a count toward an unduplicated number of children.

To meet the qualitative component of the evaluation, ADE is proposing the development of a PDG B-5 website that will include website creation and implementation; code implementation for live stream broadcasts; monthly content updates to include all text, photographic images, and video content; and monthly maintenance to include code updates, firmware updates, and security updates. This project will also include on-site documentation of LPC activities through photos and video content. The goal of the qualitative evaluation will be to demonstrate the impact and difference made in communities.

Governance and Stakeholder Engagement

Dissemination Plan

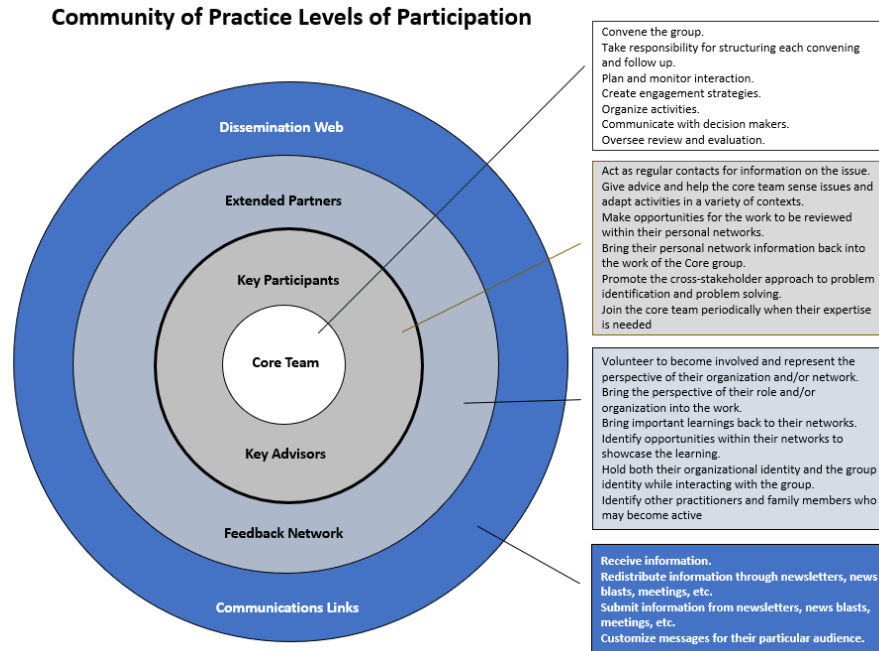
During the activities of conducting a needs assessment and developing a strategic plan, the LPCs used the Levels of Relevant Participation (Engagement) Circles of the Leading by Convening model as a framework for potential partners to determine what role they will play in

the process. ADE will use that same process at the state level to keep stakeholders engaged in the assessment, planning, and implementation of all activities of this grant. A chart of the stakeholders can be seen in Appendix C.

The Leading by Convening model illustrates how communication and dissemination of information would look based on each designated level of participation in the following way:

- The Core Team, which consist of leaders from diverse groups, is responsible for the undertaking of inviting and defining participation among the group.
- Key participants and advisors are those individuals within the group that have a key interest and are vested in the issues at hand. This group is responsible for distributing information to other networks as needed.
- Extended Participants and Feedback Networks are those individuals who are reached through organizations that they are key advisors for. This group can be the bridge between ideas conceived and ideas implemented.
- The Dissemination Network includes participation from all the groups and all groups with a vested interest. This group is responsible for receiving information and then redistributing the information. This group will determine how the information is shared, such as, webinar, blogs, newsletters, social media, newsletters, websites, community meetings, etc.

A visual of the levels of participation can be seen in Figure 5.



7

Figure 5. Leading by Convening levels of participation.

Timeline, Budget, and Sustainability Plan

Timeline

The timeline for the first year of this grant period (2020-21) can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Timeline for the first year.

PDG B-5 Timeline for 2020-21			
Quarter of the Year	Activities 1 and 2	Activities 3 and 4	Activity 5 and 6
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Establish core teams who are committed to meeting quarterly to review data relative to their needs assessment and strategic plans -Core teams will determine what progress indicators for their regions strategic plans will be housed in the state centralized data system to inform progress on the state's five priority areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Renewal of AZPBS BBT contract -System partner updates regarding the role out and initial implementation of the PDB B-5 grant -TA & PD on the ECQUIP Process -Marketing on ADE ECE website for family engagement resources as a one stop shop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Partner with FTF on design of scaling up of Kin and Kith Project -Applications for consideration for slot funding goes out to the field statewide -Selection of child are slots -Contract with FTF regarding QF pathways to quality completed

	<p>and effective transitions for all children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Parent Leadership Council meeting -Continued enhancement and maintenance of the PDN -Contract with AZPBS on the role out of the BA and MA scholarships -ADE participation on PD workgroups and work on shared priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -RFP for solicitation for the qualitative portion of the PDG evaluation project -Work with vendor on the build of the Centralized data system dashboard -Partner with DES and CACFP on leveraging of primary and supplemental funding sources -PDG information meeting -Work with contactors on the establishment of statewide PD and coaching relative to STAR Autism, Inclusive Classroom Profile, Itinerant Service Model, Teaching Reading Effectively, and the Pyramid Model -Renewal of AzHEA contract -Renewal of ECE Systems navigator contract -Renew contract for KDI portfolios and identification of pilot sites in the first year
<p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Regional LPC Quarterly review of data. -Regional LPCs will analyze data and make decisions for their region and determine impact on strategic planning -Updates regarding systems partners updated needs assessments and strategic plans -Report on progress of goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -System partner updates regarding shared priorities -ECQUIP Assessment and Action Plan creation -Parent Leadership Council meeting -Continued enhancement and maintenance of the PDN -Marketing of AZ PBS Scholarships and intake of potential scholarship recipients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Roll out of Kith and Kin project with identified sites -Grant applications open up for selected childcare slot subgrantees -Contract with FTF regarding QF pathways begins implementation -Contract awarded for the qualitative portion of the PDG evaluation project. -Centralized data system dashboard begins housing of and cleaning of data

		<p>-ADE participation on PD workgroups and work on shared priorities</p>	<p>-Partner with DES and CACFP on leveraging of primary and supplemental funding sources</p> <p>-Contracts established for statewide PD and coaching relative to STAR Autism, Inclusive Classroom Profile, Itinerant Service Model, Teaching Reading Effectively, and the Pyramid Model</p> <p>AzHEA contract begins implementation</p> <p>ECE Systems navigator contract begins implementation</p> <p>KDI pilot sites go live and receive training and support from ADE and TSG</p>
3	<p>-Regional LPC Quarterly review of data</p> <p>-Regional LPCs will analyze data and make decisions for their region and determine impact on strategic planning</p> <p>-Updates regarding systems partners updated needs assessments and strategic plans</p> <p>-Report on progress of goals</p>	<p>-AZ PBS BBT delivered around the state</p> <p>-System partner updates regarding the role out and initial implementation of the PDB B-5 grant</p> <p>-ECQUIP enhancement plans due to ADE</p> <p>-Update and enhancing of the ADE ECE website for family engagement resources as a one stop shop</p> <p>-Parent Leadership Council meeting</p> <p>-Continued enhancement and maintenance of the PDN</p> <p>-AZ PBS Scholarships in full effect</p> <p>-ADE participation on PD workgroups and work on shared priorities</p>	<p>-Kith and Kin project is being implemented</p> <p>-Grant applications closes out for subgrantees and they can begin draw down of funds</p> <p>-Contract with FTF regarding QF pathways continues being implemented</p> <p>-Qualitative portion of the PDG evaluation project begins</p> <p>-Centralized data system dashboard begins housing of and cleaning of data continues with monitoring of progress</p> <p>-Partner with DES and CACFP on leveraging of primary and supplemental funding sources</p> <p>-Contracts implemented for statewide PD and coaching relative to STAR Autism, Inclusive Classroom Profile,</p>

			<p>Itinerant Service Model, Teaching Reading Effectively, and the Pyramid Model</p> <p>-AzHEA contract is being implemented with program providing updates on progress</p> <p>-ECE Systems navigator contract is being implemented with program providing updates on progress</p> <p>-KDI pilot is live and receive training and support from ADE and TSG</p>
4	<p>-Regional LPC Quarterly review of data.</p> <p>-Regional LPCs will analyze data and make decisions for their region and determine impact on strategic planning</p> <p>-Updates regarding systems partners updated needs assessments and strategic plans</p> <p>-Report on progress of goals</p> <p>-Determine impact moving forward into full implementation using data from the dashboard and qualitative data from evaluation project</p>	<p>-AZ BS BBT delivered around the state</p> <p>-System partner updates regarding the role out and initial implementation of the PDB B-5 grant</p> <p>-ECQUIP enhancement plans due to ADE</p> <p>-Update and enhancing of the ADE ECE website for family engagement resources as a one stop shop</p> <p>-Parent Leadership Council meeting</p> <p>-Continued enhancement and maintenance of the PDN</p> <p>-AZ PBS Scholarships in full effect</p> <p>-ADE participation on PD workgroups and work on shared priorities</p> <p>-Determine impact moving forward into full implementation using the data from the dashboard and qualitative data from the evaluation project</p>	<p>-Kith and Kin project is being implemented</p> <p>-Grant applications closes out for subgrantees and they can begin draw down of funds</p> <p>-Contract with FTF regarding QF pathways continues being implemented</p> <p>-Qualitative portion of the PDG evaluation project begins</p> <p>-Centralized data system dashboard begins housing of and cleaning of data continues with monitoring of progress</p> <p>-Partner with DES and CACFP on leveraging of primary and supplemental funding sources</p> <p>-Contracts implemented for statewide PD and coaching relative to STAR Autism, Inclusive Classroom Profile, Itinerant Service Model, Teaching Reading Effectively, and the Pyramid Model</p> <p>-AzHEA contract is being implemented with program providing updates on progress</p>

			<p>-ECE Systems navigator contract is being implemented with program providing updates on progress</p> <p>-KDI pilot is live and receive training and support from ADE and TSG</p> <p>-Determine impact moving forward into full implementation using the data from the dashboard and qualitative data from the evaluation project</p>
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Sustainability Plan

As described throughout this application, Arizona is committed to the Implementation Science framework. This is true for our approach to sustainability of any and all efforts achieved during this grant period.

According to NIRN, after

initial implementation, any initiative must be maintained with sufficient fidelity to the selected model. Issues like turnover of staff, at the local or state level, must be successfully addressed. Additionally, policies must align to support the sustainability of any initiative, including governance and funding policies. This process requires discipline as it is both linear and cyclical. Arizona has worked hard to be disciplined at the state level and has started to build capacity at

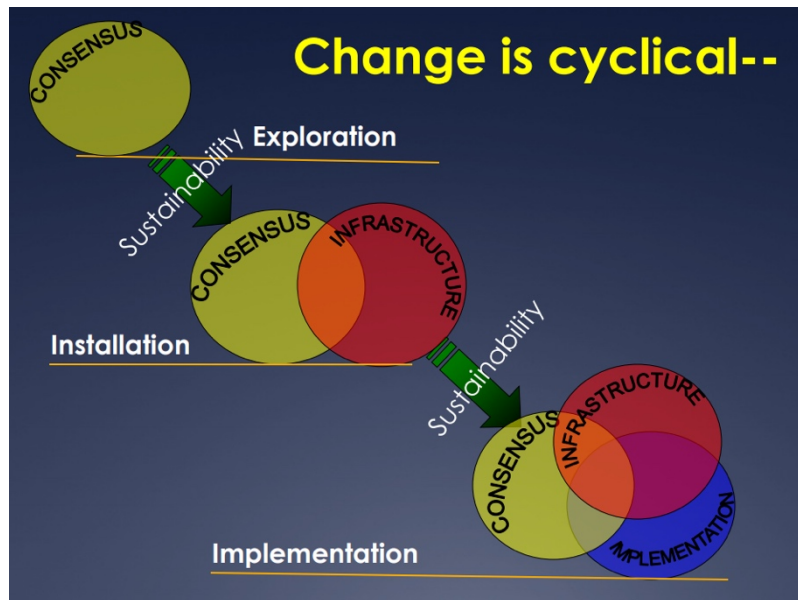


Figure 6. NIRN implementation cycle.

the local level to engage in the same way. An illustration of this continuous improvement process can be seen in Figure 6. Additional sustainability efforts have been embedded in the each of the activities and strategies of this grant application as previous experience has taught us the critical importance of integration sustainability at that granular level. Otherwise, it is considered an add-on or optional feature rather than an expectation.

Budget and Budget Justification

Budget Summary by Budget Category	
01. Personnel	\$432,000
02. Fringe Benefits	\$151,000
03. Travel	\$45,000
04. Equipment	\$2,500
05. Supplies	\$2,000
06. Contractual	\$4,533,000
07. Other	\$75,000
08. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-7)	\$5,240,500
09. Indirect Costs (14.5% of lines 1-7 excluding line 4)	\$759,500
10. Funds to be distributed to sub-grantees	\$9,000,000
11. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 8-10)	\$15,000,000
12. Funds from other sources used to support the State's plan	\$4,500,000
13. Total Statewide Budget (add lines 11-12)	\$19,500,000

Table 4 Budget Summary

1. Personnel. ADE will be the administrative home of the grant. Early Childhood Program Specialists (ECPS) are currently regionally-assigned to support programs. ECPS will be responsible for coordination and facilitation of the regional events, evaluation, planning and monitoring of our current early childhood delivery system. Based on the time and effort to be undertaken by ADE staff, it is anticipated the human resource investment in the administration of the grant will cost \$432,000 per year. Specifically, personnel resources have been allocated for the following 7.0 full time employee (FTE) ADE positions:

- ***Deputy Associate Superintendent for Early Childhood Education*** (0.25 FTE @ \$21,300 per year): Responsible for leading the ADE unit, providing statewide guidance and coordination with partners on ECE systems-building, coordination with the institutes of higher education to increase certification opportunities and improved quality student-teaching and practicum options, and ensuring MOUs/ISAs between ADE and partners are fulfilled.
- ***Early Childhood Director*** (1.5 FTE @ \$75,000 per year): Responsible for providing coordination and oversight of the collaboration with our ECE partners, as well as oversight of the regional activities facilitated by the ECPS in the identified 7 LPCs. Early Childhood Director of Fiscal Operations is also responsible for fiscal oversight of the grant during the grant period, working directly with our procurement office to ensure contracts, MOU's, ISA's are fully executed.
- ***Early Childhood Program Specialist*** (3.75 FTE @ \$61,000 per year): Responsible for grant implementation activities that include facilitation of regional meetings, professional development, technical assistance and support to the LPCs through the ECQUIP process in reviewing the local LEA literacy plan.

- **Early Childhood Project Specialist** (1.5 FTE @ \$46,000 per year): Responsible for coordination of projects that enhance implementation activities outlined in the grant.

2. Fringe Benefits. Funding for the employee-related expenses (ERE) portion of the budget is based on standard ERE required by ADE. The rate for ADE is 35% of the total salary for a staff position and includes actual rates that are consistent with other funds charged, as well as actual costs designated by the State of Arizona for all standard benefits offered to employees and charged to agencies (FICA, Medicare, Retirement, Long Term Disability, Workers Compensation, etc.). The anticipated total benefits cost for personnel during the budget period is \$151,000.

3. Travel. Travel is essential to the successful implementation of the grant. The 7 targeted LPCs are spread over 9 regions around the state. The State of Arizona has a travel policy that is consistent with other mandated travel policies across all State agencies. This policy has a mandatory application of costs for employee-related travel and includes meal per diems, reimbursement of mileage, lodging, and other travel-related expenses. The projected in-state travel expenses for the year will cost \$16,300 for 12 two-days in-state trips for 4.0 FTE. These travel funds are essential to conduct the regional collaborative meetings in each of the 7 LPCs. The factors used to calculate in-state travel costs are detailed in Table 5.

Table 5. Travel costs per region.

Travel Costs per Region			
Region	Per Night	Per Day Motor Pool	Per Diem Meal
Maricopa	\$ -	\$ 52	\$ -
Pima & Santa Cruz	\$ 119	\$ 52	\$ 56
Yavapai	\$ 146	\$ 52	\$ 56
Coconino, Navajo & Apache	\$ 146	\$ 52	\$ 56
Cochise	\$ 94	\$ 52	\$ 45
Yuma	\$ 94	\$ 52	\$ 45
Mohave & La Paz	\$ 94	\$ 52	\$ 45

There is an annual set aside amount of \$10,000 for at least four individuals to attend a 3-day annual grantee meeting in Washington, DC. An additional \$18,700 is set aside for travel to in-state and out-of-state conferences to enhance related technical assistance activities. The anticipated total travel cost for personnel during the budget period is \$45,000.

4. Equipment. The State of Arizona classifies “equipment” as a cost that is more than \$500. Equipment that costs more than \$5,000 is identified as “capital equipment.” Equipment expenditures of \$2,500 are being requested for the costs of replacing any existing computer equipment (e.g., laptops, monitors, cables, etc.) that becomes unusable during the budget period.

5. Supplies. A reasonable, limited amount of office and project materials and supplies are needed for the effective, efficient implementation of the grant and is consistent with other federal grant applications. Office materials and supplies include small, expendable, daily use items such as paper, post-its, binders, staplers, writing utensils, organization file folders, and stationary/envelopes. These are estimated to cost \$2,000.

6. Contractual. All contracting done by ADE is conducted through established state statutes for entering into a financial agreement with another entity. ADE utilizes financial and procurement processes that are consistently used across all funding sources and allowed by State Procurement Laws under the Code of Federal Regulations (34CFR Parts 74.40- 74.48 and Part 80.36) and provide the greatest public benefit. ADE follows State procurement requirements to determine if standard procurement contractual agreements are established or if other procurement processes must be executed to achieve financial agreement with another entity. ADE is proposing contractual commitments that are necessary to build a statewide infrastructure; this investment will target the following areas as previously described in the corresponding activities sections listed below:

- a. Pathways to Quality and Scholarships (Activity 5 on Page X) \$3,000,000

- b. ADE SIS Data Project (Activity 6 on Page X) \$385,000
- c. Partner Data System (Activity 6 on Page 53) \$190,000
- d. AZAEYC (Activity 5 on Page 40) \$180,000
- e. Inclusion Support Services (Activity 6 on Page 27) \$151,000
- f. Qualitative Program Evaluation (Activity 6 on Page 54) \$150,000
- g. TRE Trainings (Activity 5 on Page 39) \$90,000
- h. Somos Enlace (Activity 5 on Page 40) \$90,000
- i. AASCC (Activity 5 on Page 33) \$75,000
- j. ReadOn / MapLit (Activity 6 on Page 44) \$65,000
- k. Pyramid Model Training (Activity 5 on Page 29) \$50,000
- l. PDG B-5 Website (Activity 3 on Page 54) \$40,000
- m. AZPBS Bright by Text (Activity 3 on Page 56) \$37,000
- n. Implementation Science Training (Activity 5 on Page 22) \$15,000
- o. Kindergarten Developmental Inventory (Activity 5 on Page 42) \$15,000

The overall Contract line item total is: \$4,533,000

7. Other Operating Expenses. ADE has projected the budget for “other” to be \$75,000 as detailed in Table 6. The expenses paid under this grant will be minimized by some costs being shared with other ECE funding sources. The estimated “Other Operating Expenses” are based on recent actual costs for similar federal grant project budgets determined by the ADE and the Arizona Department of Administration for all State agencies.

Table 6. Other operating expenses.

Other Operating Expenses	
Telephones/ Communication Services (\$750/FTE)	\$5,250

Internet Access (Mgmt. Info Sys) (\$1,450/ FTE)	\$10,150
Rent/Occupancy (\$7,752/FTE)	\$54,264
Printing	\$ 2,816
Awards (\$15/FTE)	\$105
Insurance/ Risk Management (\$345/ FTE)	\$2,415

8. Total Direct Costs: The total Direct funds amount is: \$5,240,500.

9. Indirect Costs. ADE has an Indirect Cost Rate (#2019-093) for a fixed rate of 14.5% of total Direct Costs. The total Indirect Cost amount is \$759,500.

10. Funds to be distributed to Subgrantees through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. Through a competitive process, ADE will contract with subgrantees as outlined in Activity Five. Subgrantees will be monitored through ADE’s GME, which ADE considers a binding agreement. Funds will be used to build and develop high-quality early care and education programs that effectively serve children from vulnerable populations, and subgrantees must participate in a pathway that will lead to quality. Accordingly, subgrantees will be required to be licensed (prior to serving children); provide evidence of their ability to braid or layer funds in order to sustain and support a high-quality program; be a DES authorized provider or become a DES authorized provider during the grant award period; and either be willing to participate in QF and earn or maintain a 3-star rating, or hold a National Early Childhood Accreditation or become accredited during the grant award period. Further details are outlined in Activity Five. The overall line item total is \$9,000,000 (60 percent of funds) in the first year and \$11,250,000 (75 percent of funds) per year in years two and three (note: the increase from

\$9,000,000 to \$11,250,000 will be offset by a corresponding decrease of \$2,250,000 per year in the Contractual line item in each successive year).

11. Total Funds Requested. The Total Funds Requested amount is \$15,000,000 for each year of the grant. Thus, ensuring in year one that the total of 40% of the funds is spent on state level infrastructure and 60% is directly sub-granted to LEAs, subgrantees and/or Head Starts. As previously noted, these percentages will become 25% and 75% respectively in years two and three.

12. Funds from other sources used to support the State's plan. The 30 percent matching requirement will be obtained through First Things First scholarships in the amount of \$4,500,000 per year (See Appendix D for the commitment letter from FTF). Each match will be achieved by the end of each year of the grant.

13. Total Budget. The Total Funds Requested amount is \$19,500,000 for each year of the grant. The Total Funds Requested amount is \$19,500,000 for each year of the grant. Table 5 specifies the amount projected to be spent on each of the identified activities. Over 5% of the total funds during each year are allocated to activity six, including implementation and data system planning activities, and additional personnel costs in activities 1-5 are also allocated to refine and implement the program performance evaluation plan.

Table 7. Budget summary by activity.

Budget Summary By Activity	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4	Activity 5	Activity 6	Total
1. Personnel	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$57,600	\$81,600	\$196,800	\$72,000	\$432,000
2. Fringe Benefits	4,200	4,200	20,100	28,500	68,800	25,200	151,000
3. Travel	1,300	1,300	6,000	8,500	20,400	7,500	45,000
4. Equipment	100	100	300	400	1,200	400	2,500
5. Supplies	100	100	300	400	800	300	2,000
6. Contractual	-	-	77,000	75,500	3,590,500	790,000	4,533,000
7. Other	2,100	2,100	10,000	14,200	34,100	12,500	75,000
8. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-7)	19,800	19,800	171,300	209,100	3,912,600	907,900	5,240,500
9. Indirect Costs (14.5% of line 8)	2,900	2,900	24,800	30,300	567,000	131,600	759,500
10. Funds to be distributed to sub-grantees	-	-	-	-	9,000,000	-	9,000,000
11. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 8-10)	22,700	22,700	196,100	239,400	13,479,600	1,039,500	15,000,000
12. In-Kind Match	-	-	-	-	4,500,000	-	4,500,000
13. Total Statewide Budget (add lines 11-12)	\$22,700	\$22,700	\$196,100	\$239,400	\$17,979,600	\$1,039,500	\$19,500,000

Appendix A

Arizona's Early Childhood Statewide Strategic Plans

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Arizona's federally reviewed and approved comprehensive statewide needs assessment took a unique approach in leveraging current strategic plans of Arizona's Early Childhood System Partners. These comprehensive plans represent the system as a whole and address the concerns and issues related to quality and availability of early childhood care and education throughout the state.

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) collaborated with seven regions throughout the state. These regions served as Local Planning Committees (LPCs) in which they leveraged system partners' strategic plans to determine key goals and outcomes for their communities relative to Arizona's five priority areas.



Read On Arizona (ROA) is the home of Arizona's appointed Literacy Director who is responsible for working in partnership with ADE, HSSCO, FTF, and other local philanthropic partners to lead statewide efforts around early literacy.



Through the Head Start State Collaboration grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services, the AZ Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) serves to establish linkages among Head Start, child care, social welfare, health and state funded preschool programs, and K-12 education.



The Department of Economic Security - Child Care Administration (DES-CCA) has administrative oversight for the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and the administration of child care subsidies within the state.



First Things First (FTF) serves as the Health and Development Board for Arizona as well as the State Advisory Council (SAC) for Early Childhood.



System Partners

PDG B5 2019-2023

Arizona's Early Childhood Statewide Strategic Plans

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HSSCO: Assist with developing state policies and decisions impacting early literacy data.

FTE: Ensure that the early childhood system is comprehensive and child and family centered.

ADE: Implement Teaching Reading Effectively to early childhood educators.

ROA: Increase awareness and understanding of the importance of early literacy and school readiness.

HSSCO: Close the learning gap between typically developing children and children with special needs.

FTE: Provide access to early periodic screening and diagnosis to identify developmental issues.

ADE: Provide training on Itinerant Model and Inclusive Classroom Profile and a task force on inclusion.

ROA: Implement strategies to develop and strengthen literacy and language acquisition along the continuum.



HSSCO: Increase access to high quality early care and education services.

FTE: Increase access to high quality early care and education that promotes optimal development.

DES: Expand accessibility and continuity of care and improve availability of child care services to families.

ROA: Build a community of practice that make early literacy a priority.

HSSCO: Increase availability and quality of early childhood PD.

FTE: Implement, align, and improve PD to support early childhood professionals.

DES: Support training and PD of child care workforce.

ROA: Improve quality of professional learning by increasing capacity of practitioners.

HSSCO: Increase access to high quality, early care and education services.

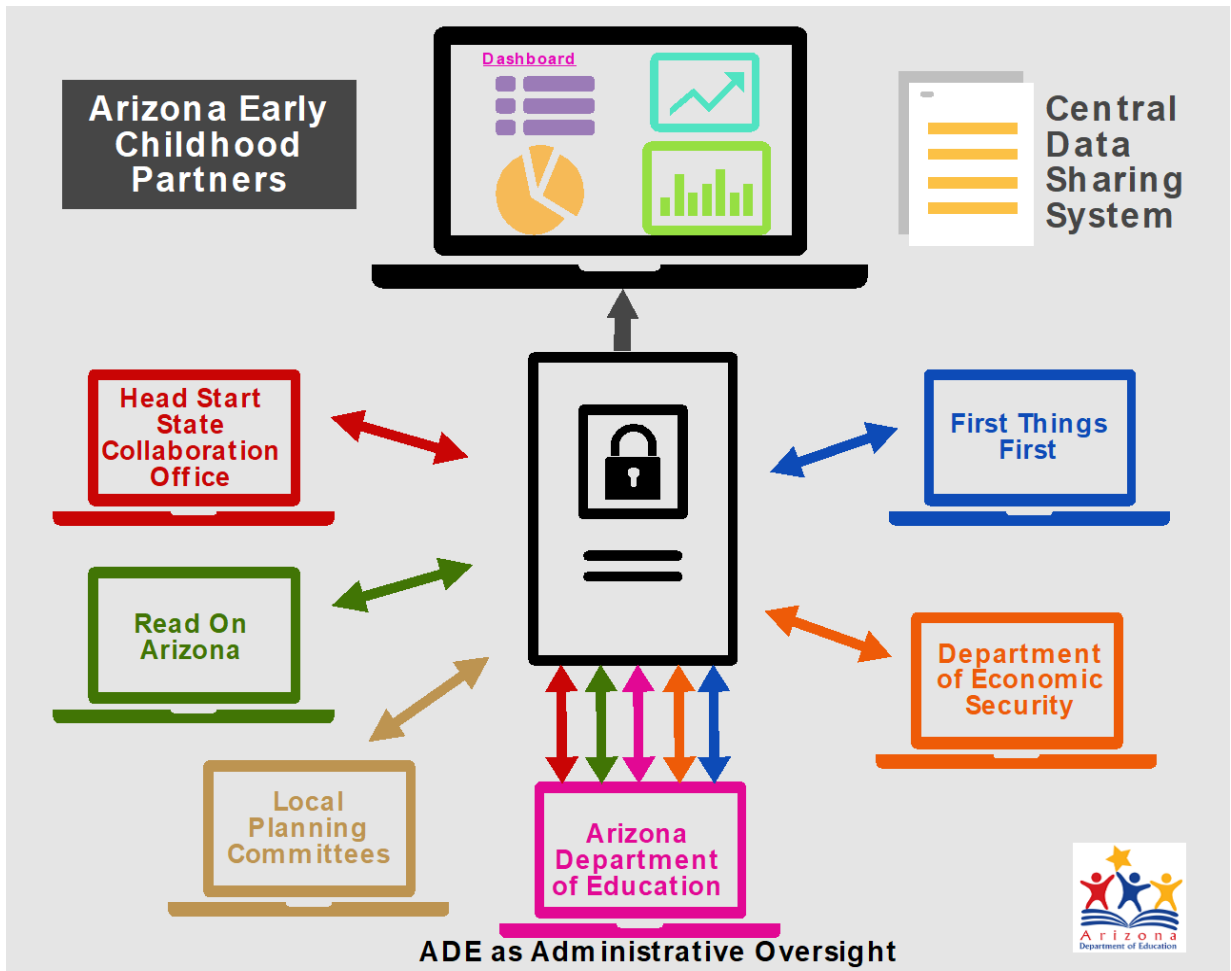
FTE: Improve quality and compensation of early childhood education professionals.

DES: Follow PD framework to support child care workforce.

ROA: Strengthen the practitioners/early childhood teacher training around early literacy and reading instruction.

Quality transitions for all children is a primary focus for Arizona and expands to all priority areas and strategic plans throughout the early childhood system.

Appendix B



Appendix C

Impact	Organization	Contact
Experts (National, state and or local experienced individuals regarded as being “experts”)	First Things First Read On Arizona Arizona Head Start Association Department of Economic Security	Marilee Dal Pra Terri Clark Moe Gallegos Lela Wendell
Researchers (Research and data from national, state and/or local level on EBP, best-practice, and/or emerging practice)	Dynamic Analysis	Amy Kemp
Authority Over the Work (Administrator, Supervisor, Director, Decision Makers, Legal, other)	Arizona Department of Education Early Childhood Unit	Lori Masseur Jason Clark William Buckley Suzanne Perry
Support (Funders, IT, AT, Professional Development/ Technical Assistance, outside agencies, other)	Maricopa Association of Governments	Anubhav Vernon
Practitioners (Implementers of the practice, teacher, paraprofessionals, related services, outside agencies, other)	Regional LPC Membership across seven regions	Core team members established in PDG B5-Y1
Beneficiaries (Parents, Students, Clients, other)	Arizona’s Families and Children	Raising Special Kids Parent Leadership Council

Appendix D

FIRST THINGS FIRST

4000 North Central Avenue, Suite 800, Phoenix, Arizona 85012
602.771.5100 | 877.803.7234 | firstthingsfirst.org

Chair

Gerald Szostak

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Vince Yanez

Ex-Officio Members

Kathy Hoffman

Superintendent, ADE

Michael Trailor

Director, DES

Dr. Cara Christ

Director, DHS

Chief Executive Officer

Marilee Dal Pra

October 24, 2019

Mr. Richard Gonzales

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

Office of Child Care

330 C Street, S.W., Suite 4010-4012

Washington, DC 20201

Dear Mr. Gonzales,

I am delighted to provide a letter in support of the Arizona Department of Education's (ADE) application for the Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) Initiative.

The Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board (also known as First Things First) is one of the critical partners in creating a family-centered, comprehensive, collaborative and high-quality early childhood system that supports the development, health and early education of all Arizona's children birth through age 5. As a key partner in Arizona's early childhood system, First Things First (FTF) invests in proven programs and innovative strategies that strengthen families, promote preventive health, and improve the quality of early learning environments through a mixed delivery system across Arizona.

As a collaborator and key system partner on the previous Preschool Development Grant with ADE, FTF continues to commit to be an active partner in quality improvement activities that will provide a framework for describing how Arizona will increase the overall participation of children in high-quality ECE programs, services and settings within and across a mixed delivery system. This will include the contribution and use of indicator data to assess progress, assess key desired outcomes, inform cost and resource efficiency and to support continuous quality improvement aligned to the implementation of Arizona's strategic plan. FTF is pleased to provide an in-kind match in the amount of \$13,500,000 to support ADE's application for the PDG B-5 Initiative. Per the terms of the grant application, FTF will, at a minimum, provide \$4,500,000 in in-kind match per each 12-month grant budget year. However, FTF reserves the right to accelerate its in-kind match and fulfill the total \$13,500,000 obligation prior to the end of the three-year grant.

FTF appreciates the opportunity to continue improving outcomes for Arizona's young children and partnering with ADE on this important work for our communities and our state. FTF fully supports the goals and objectives set forth by the State's PDG B-5 Initiative and looks forward to serving as a partner in the implementation of this grant opportunity.

Sincerely,



Marilee Dal Pra

Chief Executive Officer

READY FOR SCHOOL. SET FOR LIFE.