

In May, 2011, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius announced the creation of a [Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge](#) competition. The grants will provide up to \$500 million - \$50-\$100 million per awarded state - to help states improve their early learning systems.

Michigan's application through the Department of Education is being coordinated by the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC). Joan Blough, ECIC's vice president of Great Start System planning and evaluation and transition leader for the Michigan Office of Great Start, is leading the Michigan Application Preparation Team.

To view a roster of team members, click [here](#).

The Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge seeks to “encourage states to develop bold and comprehensive plans for raising the quality of early learning programs across America.” Final guidance for the competition was recently issued; applications are due from states by October 19th. You may view a copy of the application [here](#).

Grants will be awarded by **December 31, 2011**.

The nationally-renowned First Five Years Fund - a Chicago-based organization that helps America achieve better results in education, health, and economic productivity through investments in quality early childhood education for disadvantaged children from birth to age five - is supporting states, including Michigan, in the application process.

Please visit www.elccollaborative.org for an abundance of resources, webinar slides and recordings, tools, templates, etc. that have been created to support states with their application planning and preparation.

The purpose of the Michigan Application Preparation Team is to:

- Complete a current status assessment of the state's early learning system, building from the assessment completed by Michigan's Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)
- Provide content expertise to inform the development of the ELC application
- Assist in the identification and engagement of constituency groups and other key stakeholders in the process of the application development
- Contribute to the development of application materials.

While the timeline to complete the Early Learning Challenge grant is quite short, the Michigan Application Preparation Team is committed to providing you with regular updates on our progress as well as offering sections of the application for your

review and comment. These communications will be posted on the Michigan Department of Education's [Office of Great Start webpage](#) as well as the Early Childhood Investment Corporation's website. Please plan to visit either site at least weekly to check for these updates. You may also submit general questions or comments on the Michigan Department of Education's [Office of Great Start webpage](#).

The RTT-ELC grant competition will focus on improving early learning and development programs for young children by supporting States' efforts to: (1) increase the number and percentage of low-income and disadvantaged children in each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are enrolled in high-quality early learning programs; (2) design and implement an integrated system of high-quality early learning programs and services; and (3) ensure that any use of assessments conforms with the recommendations of the National Research Council's reports on early childhood. (§1832(b)(1), title VIII, Division B of P.L. 112-10, the Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011).

Awards in Race to the Top will go to States that are leading the way with ambitious yet achievable plans for implementing coherent, compelling, and comprehensive early learning education reform.

RESOURCES

[Application](#)

[Application Overview & Webinar Slides](#)

[Executive Summary](#)

[Transcript of RTT-ELC Webinar](#)

[Press release announcing requirements](#)

[First Five Years Fund Early Learning Challenge Collaborative](#)