

Project Title: Taking the Next Step to Support the Early Childhood Workforce and Community and Family Engagement in Michigan

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Project Summary

Michigan's Planning proposal represents intentional alignment between Renewal grant projects, the state's Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant, and priorities of Michigan's philanthropically funded Prenatal to 3 Initiative (Think Babies Michigan). The projects proposed represent foundational work for next steps and priorities across these partnerships. (Note: Planning projects will be executed concurrent with the Renewal grant's no-cost extension.) Michigan proposes to continue its "deep dive" **needs assessment** to focus on the workforce and family and community engagement. Activity 1 will benefit the Early Childhood (EC) workforce and all children and families. The workforce study will gather data and information to develop long-term, sustainable, cross-system solutions to the workforce shortage; the family/community engagement study will review current structures and gaps and provide a framework to improve that portion of the EC system.

The findings will flow to **strategic planning** to engage a revised state coordination and governance structure in quick cycles of planning and continuous quality improvement of the structure itself. This project will help improve the overall EC system for the benefit of programs, services, children, and families.

Activity 3 will explore intersections, alignments, and necessary connections between other community-level initiatives to create a family-facing interface to help families easily determine program/service eligibility and increase awareness of opportunities available in their communities. This project again applies to all families and their children birth to five but has the potential to fill gaps in access and knowledge for families who are often made vulnerable by the current EC system.

Activity 4 has four projects to address the workforce and, ultimately, providers, children, and families. A coordinated task force will receive information from Activity 2 to develop sustainable solutions from the workforce and family engagement strategic plans. The grant will also expand on Detroit's work to create a statewide competitive wage scale to determine wages matched with competencies and endorsements/credentials; the scale will be piloted in two communities participating in the state's Tri-Share Project. A collaborative group will work to crosswalk available professional development to support inclusion and create a package of supports to decrease expulsion, suspension, and discipline and increase provider quality; additional provider cafes to address ACEs and trauma-informed care will be created.

Projects in **Activity 5** will increase quality by building on the synergy with the business community with CEO Roundtables. Additional quality supports will be built into existing partnerships and projects and First 10 school/community partnerships will be expanded.

Evaluation projects will focus on expanding the Renewal grant metrics and equity evaluations and expanding the First 10 evaluation to document access, quality, inequity, and improvement.

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Project Descriptions

Description of the EC System

For purposes of this proposal, the Early Childhood (EC) system is defined as (a) Child Development and Care (CDC) program in the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Office of Great Start (OGS), which includes child care subsidy and quality initiatives funded by the Child Care and Development Fund Program (CCDF); (b) home- and center-based child care programs; (c) the Great Start Collaboratives (GSCs) and Great Start Parent Coalitions (GSPCs); (d) Head Start and Early Head Start; (e) IDEA Part C (Early On®) and Part B, Section 619 (Early Childhood Special Education [ECSE]); (f) home visiting; (g) publicly funded preschool (Great Start Readiness Program [GSRP]); (h) Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC); and (i) public health programs within the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). Projects will work to create closer connections with public health, especially maternal and child health programs, and wider family and child-serving programs (Women, Infants, and Children [WIC]), Child Protective Services [CPS], Children’s Special Health Care, Children’s Trust Michigan) as well as broader family support programs in other state departments, including employment, housing, etc. In addition, this proposal should be read through the lens of Michigan continuing its Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Renewal grant projects via a no-cost extension concurrent with a PDG B-5 Planning grant. All projects proposed will **expand or build upon** what is already underway with the Renewal grant and will target areas that need strengthening or are ready for “next steps” from Renewal grant activities.

A Note About Collaborations

The projects within this grant proposal represent some exciting system-building work for the state of Michigan. The framework for this proposal was created jointly between Michigan's philanthropically funded Prenatal to 3 Initiative (Think Babies Michigan), the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant, and the PDG B-5. Additionally, partners from MDHHS, foundations, nonprofit organizations, and technical assistance providers have not only helped shape projects but have pledged to provide in-kind or funding support for the work proposed in this grant; what follows is truly a system-building effort that unites many interested partners to improve the EC system.

Activity 1: Comprehensive Statewide B-5 Needs Assessment

Background: PDG B-5 Needs Assessments 2019-22

The following sections will provide the background to establish the rationale for the needs assessment projects proposed later in this section, which will **focus attention on assessing areas not sufficiently explored** in previous PDG B-5 needs assessments. First, the Initial grant needs assessment will be reviewed; next, Renewal grant projects will be highlighted and, finally, the results of a previous workforce study will be described.

PDG B-5 Initial Grant

As part of the PDG B-5 Initial grant needs assessment, Michigan reviewed existing needs assessments, conducted interviews, held focus groups, hosted a town hall, completed an equity assessment, conducted innovative program interviews, and gathered and analyzed extant data to accomplish the required comprehensive needs assessment of the early childhood mixed delivery system. In total, the needs assessment contractor reviewed 51 existing needs assessments that had been conducted within a five-year window; held 10 focus groups with 118 participants that included families, child care providers and administrators, home visiting staff, foundation

representatives, and social and emotional health consultants; conducted six key informant interviews with state-level staff, agency leaders, and subject matter experts and another five interviews with innovative programs around the state; hosted a town hall with the GSCs and GSPCs, and reviewed over 50 extant data files to capture enrollment patterns and quality measures.

As required by the Initial grant, the needs assessment defined key terms, enumerated background characteristics of the state's children birth to five, assessed the number of children being served and awaiting service, and updated progress on achieving an unduplicated count. The study also documented key gaps in availability of care for families with infants and toddlers, families living in rural communities, low-income families, families working nontraditional hours, and children needing additional accommodations. Across the state, the study found that child care providers had slots available to serve less than 50% of the children across the state. In addition, just over half the eligible four-year-old children were able to be served in GSRP classrooms. Approximately 15% of eligible families were able to access home visiting services.

From the providers' perspective, cost was the biggest barrier to providing high-quality early childhood supports. Child care subsidy reimbursement rates have lagged, especially for infant and toddler care. Staffing was also a challenge; providers reported that developing and sustaining a pipeline of high-quality educators, home visitors, and early interventionists was difficult and costly, with a high turnover rate, low wages, and lack of diversity.

Support for transitions into kindergarten was uneven across the state. Information and practices vary by school district and families are often left searching for kindergarten enrollment information on their own. Likewise, the connections between child care providers and elementary schools were tenuous. Families with children receiving early intervention services

also reported feeling a gap or “cliff” once their children turned three. If the children did not qualify for Part B, Section 619 services or were not able to access special education services, families did not know where to turn for additional supports.

Finally, EC professionals, as well as state leaders and families, all expressed a need for better system integration and collaboration, especially between local programs and services, child care providers and preschools, home visiting and other providers across the system, and state agencies.

PDG B-5 Renewal Grant

The needs assessment was approved by the federal program office in early 2020, during Michigan’s no-cost extension of the Initial grant. Because the state had already been awarded a Renewal grant, needs assessment work continued, focusing on reaching families that are traditionally harder to engage to do “deep dives” into their unique needs. Additional needs assessment projects focused on exploring the needs of rural families, refugee families, and migrant families; assessing the needs between child welfare partners and the early childhood system; assessing the utilization of universal behavioral and developmental screening tools by pediatric health care providers; feedback on the original needs assessment document after additional community feedback loops; a facilities study to identify barriers and needs for new or expanding child care businesses; an assessment of needs identified through newly accessed extant data; a brief highlighting innovative workforce solutions from other market segments that could be utilized to expand and better support the EC workforce; and work to help explore and establish an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS).

During the second year of the PDG Renewal grant, needs assessment work continued by exploring barriers to family enrollment in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program,

levels of coordination between community-based child care providers and elementary schools to support kindergarten transitions, and the effects of COVID-19 on families and providers in the EC system. In the final year of the grant, the needs assessment work is building on the findings of the completed child welfare study to explore connections and needs between high infant and maternal mortality rates and child welfare partners, transitions from early intervention to preschool special education, perinatal transitions, and innovative efforts to improve disproportionate infant and maternal mortality among Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) Michiganders. Two projects are focusing on the workforce, one exploring needs and preferences of current and future EC providers and another exploring effects of the pandemic; PDG B-5 also supported creating infographics to highlight use of the state's Child Care Stabilization Grants.

RTT—ELC Workforce Study

The study outlined here serves as the foundation from which the proposed needs assessment workforce study will launch (described in the next section). A baseline workforce study was completed during Michigan's Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge (RTT—ELC) grant (2018). The quantitative portion of the study yielded a sample of 685 early care and education providers, which included home-based child care providers (n=260); teachers and assistant teachers (n=236); and directors, assistant directors, principals, and coordinators (n=189). Data collection utilized a comprehensive survey that drew from existing measures and national data to explore demographic and employment characteristics; education and professional preparation; professional development preferences and barriers; compensation; center characteristics, turnover, and wages; classroom and family child care home characteristics; job frustrations, motivations, and intentions; work environment; and burnout.

From this survey, OGS learned information relevant to the projects proposed in this activity. In 2018, the median hourly wages for the sample ranged from \$9.25 to \$20.00 per hour and the range of all reported salaries spanned from \$9.25 to \$33.00 per hour. At that time, none of the job classifications fully met the threshold for a living wage for a one-adult household (i.e., results showed that only 23% of family child care providers earned a living wage while that numbers rose to 91% for administrators). For a one adult, one child household, only 3-5% of family childcare providers and teachers earned a living wage and 35% of administrators met that wage.

Overall, about half of the EC providers received health and dental insurance, the number buoyed by providers in publicly funded programs. Half received at least five paid holidays and just over one quarter had a retirement plan. Overall, 18% received no benefits. When defining the level of economic fragility in the EC providers, over 93% reported receiving at least one program reserved for low-income individuals (Medicaid, food, or cash assistance, rent subsidy, etc.). Between 15% and 26% held second jobs, and 18% of the sample overall reported having difficulty paying their bills. Half had used savings to meet basic expenses and 42% had used credit to make ends meet. Half to two-thirds cut costs by reducing social or entertainment expenses and by changing grocery and meal habits.

The study also explored job motivations and frustrations. Across the board, the relationship with children was the primary motivation for EC providers. Half reported that owning their own business was a motivation; between 41 and 53% were motivated by relationships with families, and 36-37% rated feeling like they make a difference as a motivator. On the other hand, the survey also delved into frustrations and other areas that could improve working conditions for EC providers. Less than half the sample reported receiving the following

in their current positions: written hiring contracts, formal grievance processes, yearly cost-of-living wage adjustments, paid lunch breaks, and periodic 15-minute breaks. In addition, only half to two-thirds of the sample reported access to paid attendance at staff meetings outside of work hours, paid release time for required training or professional development, at least one hour of paid planning time per week, and orientation for new staff.

Questions exploring burnout were also included in the survey. Feeling personally accomplished was the largest area of concern that surfaced, meaning that providers felt a lack of efficacy and achievement at work every week. At that time, 14% of assistant teachers indicated they intended to leave the field in the next two years and 26% were uncertain about the future. Similarly, 27% of teachers were uncertain about their future, while 18% of administrators felt uncertain. Family child care providers were the most certain, with only 10% not sure about their next two years. To describe the turnover and retention landscape in 2018, administrators were asked about their turnover rates. They reported that nearly half of all assistant teachers left their roles during the school year, while 30% of teachers and 31% of infant/toddler teachers also left during the year. When the EC providers were asked about what would be most likely to keep them in their roles, the top response was higher pay, followed by better benefits, more professional respect, and improving other working conditions.

It is interesting to reflect on these results; remembering that this survey was completed in 2018, the EC providers' two-year projections would have been realized in 2020, when the country was plunged into a pandemic that upended many job sectors, especially EC.

PDG B-5 Planning Grant Proposed Projects

Based on the work completed during the PDG B-5 Initial and Renewal grants, Michigan proposes to **focus attention on assessing areas not sufficiently addressed in its existing needs**

assessment: (a) a full landscape to describe EC workforce and identify their needs, including pre- and post-pandemic effects and (b) assessment of its existing system structures for family and community engagement. The workforce is the most critical need within the EC system and requires a broader focus and deeper cross-departmental and cross-system analysis. Additionally, the Renewal grant is evaluating that state’s family and community engagement structures. The results will be available in 2023 to inform a needs assessment of these structures. Because the EC system is a decentralized, community-based system, workforce and family/community engagement are inextricably linked. An investigation into these critical system structures will benefit both the workforce and the EC system.

The Workforce Study Process and Plan

The workforce needs assessment will focus on all professionals who make up the EC workforce, drawing on the metaphor of a “lattice,” which is more equitable and appropriate than a “pathway” to trace the avenues available to the EC workforce as they enter and move through the system. The **plan to identify the needs of the EC workforce** will start with the previous workforce study completed during the RTT—ELC grant, which focused exclusively on early care and education providers. The Planning grant study will go farther and include broader representation across the entire EC system, including at a minimum early intervention, special education, home visiting, and social emotional consultants.

The **first point of the collaborative process** will be engaging key leaders within MDHHS to ensure programs that serve children prenatal to age five and their families are included. The study will need to explore the breadth of these programs and services to determine what fields and positions should be included and the providers at the community level who should be encompassed in data collection. In addition to representation from MDE and MDHHS,

the **collaborative process** will also include leaders within the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, and workforce preparation programs to bring an interdisciplinary lens to the research questions and study goals. This partner group will inform the purpose, scope, and participants of the workforce study. This portion of the study responds to an expressed need of Michigan’s Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant, awarded to MDHHS, that will focus some of its work on “centralizing” the field in a very decentralized and community-based EC system.

Other statewide, regional, and local partners and interested partners will be included in the **collaborative process** via engagement of Institutions of Trust ensure that all voices have input into the study design, information gathering, and assessment of the strengths, gaps, and needs across the breadth of the early childhood system. To ensure the essential data gathering occurs, funds will be included in the vendor’s contract to work with the Institutions of Trust model, which engages trusted organizations to better connect with the vulnerable populations within those communities. This model was used successfully to support the implementation of the Child Care Stabilization Grant program in Michigan and ensured that the funding was distributed equitably and broadly across the state’s most vulnerable communities. The vendor will work with these Institutions of Trust to partner in the interested partner engagement and data collection processes. In addition, these Institutions of Trust will be key partners at the table to review the findings and help strategically engage their communities to address the gaps and needs that are uncovered.

The goals of the study are to (a) update and expand the information gleaned from the RTT—ELC workforce study to tell the story of Michigan’s EC workforce: who they are, why

they chose EC, why they stay in positions and in EC, why they've left positions or EC, what pathways or lattices have they followed throughout the system, what is the flow of knowledge into and through the workforce within EC, what has changed due to the COVID pandemic, their stressors, their professional development needs and preferences (culturally affirming practices, types of offerings, etc.); (b) discern the strengths that can be built upon to improve the working conditions within EC programs and services; (c) document specific changes participants have experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and (d) provide recommendations that draw upon national, state, and community-driven solutions to achieve the vision of ensuring the state has a highly skilled, well-compensated, and sustainable EC workforce. The state needs to hear the experiences and voices of the workforce and work to co-create the next stages of support for EC across state departments, business leaders, workforce preparation programs and institutions, and other collaborative partners.

To ensure a robust study, the work will need to commence as soon as practicable in the late winter/early spring. The data gathering plan will include reviews of extant labor market, wage, and employment data from state departments and direct-service programs and services. In addition, the collaborative group engagement will include key informant interviews, focus groups, town halls, and/or listening sessions as well as a survey to gather broad input and to engage all the collaborative bodies at the state, regional and community level to understand the realities of the workforce within the system.¹ These methods will provide opportunities to gather both quantitative data and qualitative data so the result will be as broad and detailed as possible. Gathering input from interested partners administering and working within the EC system will

¹ Including GSCs, Local Leadership Groups, Child Abuse and Neglect Councils, Head Start Policy Councils, Local Interagency Coordinating Councils, Regional Perinatal Quality Collaboratives, etc.

add context to the issues uncovered and allow those who are closest to the programs and services to offer ideas to inform the next stage of system development and improvement. Data gathering will need to be concluded by the summer of 2023 so work can shift to applying the data to formulate recommendations (**see Activity 2**). Findings will need to be communicated on a rolling basis to ensure that progress can be made within the one-year period of the grant. Final recommendations will need to be presented in the fall of 2023 so there can be adequate support provided within the grant year to begin to implement what are likely to be several complex solutions to the needs revealed.

The expected **outcomes** of the workforce study include:

- A description of the current and former EC workforce, including demographics, professional preparation, longevity, intentions, values, beliefs, preferences, pathways, or lattices into and through the EC system.
- Assessment of factors that inhibit or assist the workforce to continue in the system.
- Effects of COVID-19 on the workplace and on workforce participation.
- Solutions to the workforce shortage and for increasing diversity of and support for workforce.
- Improvements to workplace and professional development offerings.

The Family and Community Engagement Study Process and Plan

The family and community engagement study will draw from the PDG B-5 Renewal collaboration evaluation that features a network analysis (particularly of the GSCs and GSPCs) and family engagement case studies. The goal of the study will be to assess the existing local, regional, and state-level community and family engagement structures to identify strengths and gaps; how to connect with other school, health, social service (especially those in maternal and

child health), community, and family structures; how to meaningfully connect between the community, regional, and state levels to improve the EC system; and how to ensure these community-based entities feel less decentralized. The intended outcome is recommendations for evolving Michigan's community- and family-system structures and the level of funding that would be necessary to achieve the goals set out under Michigan's Collective Early Childhood Action Plan and Michigan's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan.

This study's timeline will need to be the same as the workforce study to ensure adequate data can be gathered and recommendations delivered prior to the end of the grant year. Work will need to commence as soon as possible in the late winter/early spring, with data gathering concluding during the summer to ensure time for analysis to deliver recommendations in the fall. The data gathering plan will need to shift to a more qualitative focus because much of the data will need to be in narrative form. However, the work that has been done by the PDG B-5 Renewal grant and the ECCS grant in particular will provide a pathway for additional data gathering needs. For example, the PDG B-5 Renewal grant funded a Parent Network headed by MDHHS to bring together those who work to support family leadership and engagement in the EC system, which can serve as a strong foundational group for data gathering. In addition, both the PDG B-5 Renewal grant and the ECCS grant have reviewed a vast array of existing needs assessments that will provide extant data to review and confirm the additional data collection needs. Some extant quantitative data will be available to try to assess reach and service delivery but the experience of those at the community level will provide necessary deep descriptive data to inform system, program, and policy recommendations. To that end, data collection will take the form of document review, key informant interviews, and focus groups, town halls, and/or listening sessions to ensure the lived experience of those serving communities and families can

be gathered to inform next steps. As with the workforce study, these interested partners will be asked to join a workgroup to monitor, study, and guide next steps with the recommendations, which should also include a plan for how these findings can be stored in an easily accessible format and location to ensure sustainability of the work.

The expected **outcomes** of the community and family engagement study include:

- An assessment of the existing regional, community, and family engagement structures in the EC system.
- Identification of the strengths within the system that should be built upon.
- Enumeration of the gaps in the system that contribute to inequitable engagement.
- Recommendations for how Michigan can improve its current structure and the level of funding necessary to achieve this revision.

Activity 2: Strategic Plan

The following section will provide an overview of the strategic planning activities through 2022 to lay the context for Planning grant projects that will **update the statewide B-5 strategic plan to address issues identified in the needs assessment studies on the workforce and the community and family engagement system.**

Michigan Collective Early Childhood Action Plan

Renewal grant strategic planning activities culminated with final MDE approval of Michigan's Collective Early Childhood Action Plan in August 2022. During the Initial grant, findings from the needs assessment were filtered to the strategic planning team but, due to the short nature of the grant, the focus was narrowed to only two of the four early childhood outcomes: children are developmentally on track and ready to succeed in school at the time of school entry, and children are prepared to succeed in fourth grade and beyond by reading

proficiently by the end of third grade. With the Renewal grant, the strategic plan was reviewed, revised, and expanded to include the remaining outcomes (children are born healthy and children are healthy, thriving, and developmentally on track from birth through third grade).

The strategic planning work was informed by a wide range of interested partners through a variety of efforts. The primary guidance group was the Great Start Operations Team (GSOT) (program-level leaders at state departments, the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children (MiAEYC), the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC), and Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI)), who provided input and helped organize information provided from other interested partners. Interviews and focus groups from state level leaders, including many from MDE and MDHHS, helped guide topics at the state level, while community groups were gathered by the GSCs and GSPCs to gain perspective from families and community programs and services. Other state-level guidance groups, like the Great Start Steering Team (GSST) (executive leadership within MDE, MDHHS, and child care licensing), the OGS Advisory Council (providing family, workforce, philanthropic, and advocate voice), the Michigan Interagency Coordinating Council and its Parent Council, among others participated in feedback sessions to ensure their unique perspectives were captured. Draft plans were also made available for public review and feedback via a survey that received over 100 comments. The planning work started with OGS' guiding document, *Great Start, Great Investment, Great Future*, and an existing *Plan for Early Learning in Michigan* and was further aligned with Michigan's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan and the Mother Infant Health & Equity Improvement Plan.

Four priority areas emerged in the final collective action plan that will address key priorities to strengthen the state EC system and expand access to and increase participation in

programs and services: **(a) the early childhood system is aligned, adequately funded, and data-driven; (b) families can access the services they need to help their children thrive; (c) early childhood services meet high standards of quality; (d) the workforce is diverse, prepared, and well-compensated.** Within those priorities are strategies to help guide action planning across the early childhood system. Implementation has begun and an implementation guide and planning template are being produced, which will be utilized in Activities 2 and 4. In addition, a dissemination plan is being implemented during already scheduled meetings.

The studies proposed in Activity 1 address areas that the previous studies have not fully explored, but attention to priority areas of the collective action plan will not wane during a Planning grant period. Efforts are already under way to ensure that access to early intervention, preschool for three-year-old children, and community-based healthcare is expanded. Through Caring for MI Future, there is unprecedented attention on expanding access to quality, affordable child care. As part of its no-cost extension, the Renewal grant will continue to provide information to families and trusted advisors to help support family knowledge and choice within the EC system. Projects are also underway to support the third priority area of the collective action plan. Strategy 3.1 focuses on family engagement, which will be further informed by Planning grant needs assessment activities. Meanwhile, efforts will continue to address family advocacy and leadership, family engagement, transitions, early literacy, and equity.

With that in mind, the **focus for strategic planning is two-fold and aligns with implementation science – strategic plans to address the needs uncovered in Activity 1 while forming, evaluating, and refining the state-level collaboration and system-building groups, the GSST, GSOT, and OGS Advisory.** For the last year, Michigan has been working to improve its state-level governance and collaboration bodies to respond to strategy 1.1 of the plan

(improve state and local coordination to achieve strategic goals); recommendations for a new state-level governance and collaboration structure will be made by the end of 2022. The timing will be ideal to implement the recommendations while engaging in strategic planning activities with a PDG B-5 Planning grant.

PDG B-5 Planning Grant Strategic Plan Projects

Michigan will be continuing its implementation of its Collective Early Childhood Action Plan, meaning strategic planning will be in three different stages: full implementation of the four priorities and strategies already identified; initial implementation of the next level priorities; and exploration and installation of a new structure to address the needs identified in Activity 1.

Implementation of the governance and collaboration recommendations can begin early in 2023; therefore, establishing and testing out the revised structures with the two needs assessment projects will be the focus of the PDG Planning grant strategic plan projects. Activity 2 projects will utilize the support of the BUILD Initiative, as TA provider to OGS and long-time partner with the governance structures of the EC system, as a facilitator.

Plan to Update the Michigan Collective Early Childhood Action Plan

The first step will commence at the beginning of 2023 with exploration and installation of the new governance and coordination structures (GSST, GSOT, OGS Advisory, see **Appendix**). As part of the revised format, direct conduits will be established to **meaningfully engage system partners – families, community group, and EC providers** – to ensure their leadership in co-creation of the strategic plan strategies, especially with communities who are often marginalized. The new structure must actively and intentionally provide a strong, consistent method for ensuring that the voices and lived experience of families and providers are placed at the center of EC system work. As such, the first steps to strategic planning projects will be to work with

Institutions of Trust to help ensure the design of the governance groups will meet these requirements – this will ensure that these early childhood system partners are meaningfully engaged in the development of new priorities and strategies and implementation of the current strategies within the collective early childhood action plan.

Michigan also recognizes that representation across departments, funding streams and system leadership must be intentionally included in this governance structure. The three systems grants underway in the state have heard the same concerns across advisory bodies, sectors, and leaders – that the early childhood system could benefit from stronger infrastructure that incentivizes coordination and effective collaboration to drive system building. To harness this opportunity to fund system building within the state, the Planning grant will continue to utilize the collaboration tools that have been developed and relationships that have been nurtured to strengthen connections between state departments that most touch the early childhood system. This includes MDHHS, one of the largest and most diversified departments in the state that hosts a significant number of programs that are available to families and children birth to five (including behavioral health, child welfare, Medicaid, maternal and child health, and community infrastructure supports and programs). While the current structure includes some MDHHS partners, gaps still remain in collaboration and information flows, resulting in continued silos for supporting local programs and feedback loops. The PDG and the ECCS lead, who is situated in the public health agency of MDHHS, plan to weave together and identify a more efficient communication and collaboration strategy that engages a breadth of leaders who support young families in Michigan. This intentionally braided approach to systems building will foster more opportunity for integrated programming for families.

How the strategic plan will address the needs of the workforce. As the needs assessment research progresses, the groups should have structures and membership established to receive the data from the needs assessment and immediately implement strategic plan activities to address the findings. In this way, strategic plan activities will allow Michigan to test the revised structure of the governance groups while adding to and implementing strategies determined by the GSST, GSOT, and OGS Advisory. Assisted by a facilitator, the governance groups will create rapid response teams to act upon emerging workforce and family/community engagement data to be incorporated into the Michigan Collective Early Childhood Action Plan, utilizing continuous quality improvement (CQI) cycles for the strategic planning work done within the governance system (see figure 1). This pilot will both test the groups' ability to engage in early childhood strategic planning and system building work and address the urgent need to expand and support the workforce and improve the state's family and community engagement at the state, regional, and local levels to better support Michigan's children, families, and providers.

The first task at the beginning of 2023 will be establishing a point person to lead the work of these groups, which will be part of the recommendations expected in 2022. The Planning grant will designate funds for facilitation either as a single entity, or one facilitator per partner department. Then, the facilitator(s) will execute establishing the structure, determining membership, and leading creation of the mission, vision, and bylaws of the governance groups during the first quarter of 2023 – this will be the first outcome of the strategic planning projects.

The groups will begin meeting in the second quarter to share knowledge and context, co-create the group norms, and establish a plan for engaging in the necessary system-building work. A contractor will also work alongside the point person to establish an appropriate CQI process

that utilizes an organizational and system improvement framework that focuses on process improvements. Establishing these key pieces will be the second outcome of Activity 2 projects.

Laying this groundwork will allow the governance groups to receive needs assessment data once it starts to emerge and immediately begin to act upon it. This will also allow the CQI process to kick off, evaluating how the groups function together when presented with data that should help guide decision making. It will also establish smaller tasks for the group to engage in while they are creating their working agreements and settling into a new structure. Quick adjustments that are indicated by the CQI can be enacted while still acting quickly to utilize the data coming from Activity 1. The membership will participate in a process evaluation to provide feedback on their experiences as part of the group and the entire process will need to be documented to document the changes and allow for self-assessment and learning. The year will culminate with a final self-assessment by the group of its processes, changes, and system-building work.

As the needs assessment information is delivered to the governance groups, the groups will engage in early implementation of strategic planning (see figure 2). The priorities and strategies that emerge from the governance group related to the workforce will be enacted by the workgroup established in Activity 4. Because the community and family engagement information will inform system changes, an internal workgroup composed of personnel overseeing and working within the existing system will engage in the strategic planning and implementation of recommendations.

The expected outcomes are multi-faceted: (a) a governance structure that is a learning structure – agile, framed by a desire to continuously improve, and self-evaluative; (b) a continuously evolving strategic plan that will quickly and proactively address some of the

biggest needs in the early childhood system while laying the groundwork for partnerships and long-term planning that will live beyond the grant period; and (c) a successful coordination and collaboration process that can engage with the final needs assessment recommendations and enact them in a powerful way to address short-, mid-, and long-term plans for Michigan's EC system improvement. Michigan's Collective Early Childhood Action Plan is a living document that will be updated continuously as the system-building efforts progress; the long-term outcome is a coordinated and aligned governance structure that can keep the action plan moving forward to continuously seek out and address necessary improvements to the EC system to sustainably expand access to and increase participation of children in high-quality EC programs and services across the mixed delivery system after the end of the PDG B-5 Planning grant.

Activity 4 is focused on building, supporting, and sustaining the workforce, with one project that creates a specific task force to engage in the strategies determined in Activity 2. Activity 4 also has a project aimed at addressing compensation, which is already recognized as a need for the workforce, as well as two projects that will disseminate best practices to help EC providers feel **more empowered to serve infants and toddlers, children with special needs, and their families. This strategy will help support existing EC providers, keeping them in the workforce, while helping to expand access to high-quality care as providers increase their efficacy for serving all children, especially those who often find it hardest to access programs and services.**

Keeping in mind that (a) there are ongoing Renewal projects focused on transitions, increased access, and increased awareness (detailed earlier) and (b) implementation of the collective action plan is underway with existing priorities and strategies, Planning grant funds will go to addressing the additional needs that arise for the workforce and community/family

engagement. **Activity 2 will create the strategic plan strategies that will go to the workgroup funded in Activity 4 to address and implement. The reformulated GSST, GSOT, and OGS Advisory will bring comprehensive representation to the table to address the workforce and family/community needs that arise.**

Outcomes

Outcomes for the strategic plan work include:

- Establishing governance and collaboration groups for the Michigan EC system.
- Establishing a strategic plan and CQI process to address needs assessment findings.
- Evaluating and improving the governance structure, ensuring agile, self-evaluative, and continuously evolving tables to better serve the children and families of Michigan.
- Establishing a sustainable process for engaging in data-driven system change and improvements.
- Actionable strategies and tactics to address immediate and long-term workforce needs and improve family and community collaboration (connecting Activities 1, 2, 4, and 5).

Activity 3: Maximize Parent and Family Engagement in B-5 System

It is important to note that **Michigan will be continuing many of the PDG B-5 Renewal projects in 2023 that are working to support transitions, ensure language and culture are not barriers to knowledge and choice of programs and services, and provide trusted advisors with information to help families access the EC system; more information about these projects appears in the next section.**

PDG B-5 Renewal Family Engagement Projects

Projects undertaken during the Initial and Renewal grants include funding trusted advisors to connect families to programs and services, a variety of communications projects to address language and cultural barriers and provide resources to improve family knowledge and choice, child care provider cafes to increase knowledge and use of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors, early literacy supports, family leadership development, expanding and improving home visiting, supporting family and child transitions, and coordinating eligibility, recruitment, and enrollment. To help frame the proposed projects for the PDG B-5 Planning grant, the next section will share findings from the research and an overview of the coordinated eligibility and enrollment project.

Renewal Projects

Beginning with the Initial grant in 2019, two family-focused research projects gathered information from Michigan families. An online family survey garnered 617 responses (demographics: 20% male, 80% female; 78% white, 13% Black or African American, 4% Hispanic, 5% other; 47% from Southeast Michigan, 23% Western Michigan, 22% Central Michigan, 8% Northern Michigan). The same research project also completed interviews and listening sessions with state leaders, staff, and partners; focus groups with EC providers; and an inventory and analysis of local communications efforts.

The key themes that emerged from this project include:

- Not all parents and caregivers are getting information about available EC programs and services, their importance, their quality, and how to gain access.
- Messages about the overall system and individual programs are often inconsistent and confusing, and many materials don't follow communication best practices.

- Trusted messengers are critical to deliver information because word of mouth is the most used dissemination method about EC for both parents and providers. Families ranked health care professionals, educators, and family as their most trusted sources of information.
- Families and providers wish for more two-way communication, such as speaking to someone on the phone or messaging back and forth digitally.
- Beyond word-of-mouth promotion, messages and materials need to be where families spend the most time. Out-of-home advertising (e.g., bus station ads, billboards) and digital advertising (YouTube, Pandora) are valuable communication channels.

In addition to the online family survey, a family knowledge and choice qualitative research project focused on what families want to know about programs and services and how to present the information for maximum impact. Six focus groups were held around the state to gather feedback from African American, Arab American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Tribal, and rural families using trusted messengers to host the meetings with researchers. The universal insight gained was the importance of trust and transparency. The focus groups affirmed that mothers are primarily searching out information about programs, costs, benefits, and enrollment. They also emphasized that extended families and communities are raising the children. The families stressed that they need to understand and believe that there is benefit to any program or service and that their child will excel because of participation. These focus groups also supported trusted messengers as their primary method of learning about their EC options, including family and extended family, pediatricians, community leaders, etc.

Both research projects exposed barriers to participation in programs and services. Awareness was the key gap; many families reported limited awareness of early intervention

services (*Early On*®) and confusion between *Early On* and Early Head Start. Families were only aware of the state-funded preschool program – Great Start Readiness Program – by its acronym (GSRP) and were confused between GSRP and Head Start. The focus group participants who knew about both GSRP and Head Start reported that Head Start was more for “socialization” and GSRP was for “preparing for school in a more structured environment.” In all research, awareness of the state’s quality rating improvement system, Great Start to Quality (GSQ), was very low; using the word “Great” in the name of so many programs also caused a lot of confusion for families. Other barriers included being just over the income eligibility thresholds for assistance but still being unable to afford the program/service, and transportation issues (older vehicles, no driver’s license, long distances, weather conditions, etc.).

The families supplied important guidance about what they look for and need to receive information about programs and services. The key information they look for includes the benefits of the program, eligibility factors, cost, how to apply, and contact information for questions/assistance. The format needs to be colorful to attract attention; easy to read with simple, clear, concise verbiage and a logical flow; contain simple but impactful headlines; and have correct translations. If there are images, they should show diversity, both ethnically and generationally, and be of “real” people, not stock images. Families want to see images that show them what their child will experience when participating. Though the families were very positive about seeing their ethnic group or background depicted in the images, they were also supportive of seeing diverse participants. However, the families were also very attuned to negative implications including colorism in selected images, cropping, or perspective that cut off images.

Michigan also addressed gaps in coordinated eligibility and enrollment during the Renewal grant. The project emerged from a 2019 report entitled *Early Care and Learning*

Program Recruitment and Enrollment that affirmed family frustration with MiBridges, the state’s eligibility and application site. Families who are eligible for child care subsidy apply on MiBridges; but, according to the report, the families needed assistance that was primarily offered by child care providers, who have no formal training to help families navigate the system. In addition, the report highlighted the need to better support enrollment and collaboration between GSRP and Head Start programs at the community level.

To help support community-driven eligibility, recruitment, and enrollment, the PDG B-5 Renewal grant supported: a landscape scan of current coordinated eligibility and enrollment efforts; promising practices both nationally and in Michigan; and development of a toolkit that shares guidance, tips, and tools to help communities build or enhance their own coordination efforts. Finally, a community of practice has been underway for most of 2022, providing consultation and learning opportunities to 11 community teams from across the state.

PDG B-5 Planning Grant Projects

Because of the previously described Renewal projects, including a collaboration with the ECCS grant to establish a network of family leadership groups, Michigan will put resources toward **staffing a workgroup to addressing family and community engagement needs addressed in Activity 2 as well as partnering to align and build on efforts to create a family-facing access and eligibility tool**, described in this section. The workgroup portion of Activity 3 will work and align with the workgroup in Activity 4 and will follow the same timeline. The family and community engagement study proposed in Activity 1 should reveal where there are strengths in Michigan’s current system structure and where there are gaps. This workgroup will help inform changes in the system recommended in Activity 2 with the ultimate goal of providing a strong infrastructure for connecting the state and local levels to ensure family

leadership is formative to future program and system change to provide better connection and access to EC programs and services.

Plan to Ensure that Parents and Families are Informed

Based on the expressed needs of families, the gaps revealed by Renewal grant projects, and projects that have been addressed or will be continuing through a no-cost extension of the PDG B-5 Renewal grant, **Michigan proposes an aligned strategy between PDG B-5, the state’s ECCS grant, and the state’s philanthropically funded Prenatal-to-Three Initiative, led by ECIC, a component unit of state government, which has already begun initial steps to create a family-facing tool to enable family knowledge, choice, eligibility, and enrollment.**

First, PDG will fund personnel (either limited-term hire, supplementing FTE for current personnel, or through a contractor) to represent MDE in an inclusive workgroup that includes family representation and unites partners working on several exploratory projects that demonstrate potential system development and readiness to implement a new statewide tool, including:

- A project between Bay-Arenac Intermediate School District (ISD), Muskegon Area ISD, and Michigan’s 211 to create a common application. Work on the project began late summer 2022 with hopes of taking the project statewide.
- A database and care coordination platform currently housed within the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) called Michigan Early Childhood Connect (MiECC). The platform originated at Ottawa Area ISD to help coordinate data and recruitment and enrollment. It has grown and now is connecting

with nearly one-quarter of the Michigan's ISDs. The Michigan Data Hubs, also housed within MAISA, will be a necessary partner to connect data systems.

- A family eligibility tool created by ECIC to help families determine child care subsidy eligibility prior to engaging with the state's eligibility application in MiBridges.
- A coordinated enrollment project in Flint that will be coming online in 2023 that also connects with MiECC that is working to use the technology to unite GSRP and HS program enrollment with hopes of expanding to all child care providers and, eventually, statewide.
- A pilot between MI211 and the child protective services (CPS) system to connect families who are reported to need CPS intervention but do not meet those criteria yet have other family needs that could be addressed by the EC system.

ECIC has already engaged families in feedback about the need for such a tool and has engaged with its counterpart in South Carolina, which created an exemplar tool using PDG B-5 funds called First 5. ECIC gathered information from South Carolina to inform replication of the tool in Michigan and engaged families to learn their interest. Planning grant funds would be used to partner in the exploration of intersections, alignments, and necessary connections to create a Michigan version so families could easily learn about the availability of programs and services and determine eligibility. The tool will need to integrate information into the MiBridges eligibility site while connecting families with available programs, services, and resources. The outcome will provide a tool that all state and community partners and families can readily access, in their own languages and with trusted family partners, to support family knowledge, choice, and access to the EC offerings available to them in their own communities.

Families will be involved throughout the project, utilizing the Institutions of Trust referenced in Activity 1, to ensure all families' voices are present in the design and final product. The Institutions of Trust will also have a distinct role in the workgroup as part of the guidance, design, testing, and approval processes. Efforts will need to include awareness of the tool, a toolkit for outreach to trusted advisors who work with families to help support access, support for ensuring the tool is mobile friendly, and an engaging and user-friendly interface. A long-term sustainability plan will be part of the final product.

Outcomes

The primary outcomes of this project include:

- A collaborative and coordinated process that breaks down silos, unites similar and aligned efforts, and ensures families are at the center of the final product.
- A tool that families, providers, and trusted advisors can utilize to assist families in making informed decisions about and easily apply for programs and services for their children.

Activity 4: Support B-5 Workforce and Disseminate Best Practices

PDG B-5 Renewal Grant Projects

In 2020, a PDG B-5 needs assessment study compiled innovative workforce supports from other business sectors that could inform attracting and retaining EC providers. The strategies that emerged include: (a) apprenticeships, (b) sector strategies, (c) career pathways, (d) bridge programs, (e) realistic job previews, and (f) innovative benefits access. Some of these strategies have been utilized already, including apprenticeships, career pathways, and a form of bridge programs in using early/middle college and career and technical education programs to allow high school students to attain training and child development associate credentials more

easily to immediately enter the workforce. However, it would be useful to put all these supports on the table across the state government departments, the communities, and the providers to gather input and help shape a comprehensive and unique solution for Michigan.

Another needs assessment project used focus groups to gather rich information from EC providers to establish the effects of COVID-19 on the state's EC workforce. Results affirmed that the pre-pandemic issues were exacerbated by the pandemic. Administrators shared that they cannot find enough qualified applicants – when openings are advertised few people apply and those that do are not high-quality applicants. Some programs are hiring staff that do not meet the qualifications for the position and paying for them to achieve the required certifications. In addition, the low wages and lack of benefits drive high turnover rates. Some staff, such as aides, are part-time and even if benefits are available, they aren't eligible. Infant-toddler teachers are especially in short supply; because the amount of income generated by infant-toddler classrooms is not enough to cover benefits when they are available, the teachers are kept to part-time positions.

Prospective EC teachers were also surveyed to understand the most important considerations in job opportunities. Not surprisingly, salary and total compensation were the most important aspects to 67% of the respondents. More than half of the participants ranked paid time off and medical benefits in the top three considerations. The survey also showed post-COVID shifts in some considerations. Three out of four respondents reported that paid time off became more important after the pandemic, while most responded that salary was equally or more important post-pandemic. Other measures to promote a positive work environment emerged from focus groups with administrators or business owners as tactics that would be valued to recruit and retain employees. Being flexible, offering tuition support for child care, and

creating close relationships between staff all contributed to work environments that reported lower turnover. Focus group participants said they need increased and sustained funding to offer competitive wages. They also recommended increased efforts toward more teacher preparation opportunities, alternative certification routes, and offering incentives to people to pursue EC preparation. Not all efforts have been through PDG B-5, though, as detailed next.

Child Care Stabilization Grants and Bonuses

Michigan has distributed over \$700 million in stabilization grants to providers through two rounds of funding in 2022. In addition, funds have been invested in increasing income eligibility for child care subsidy, waiving parent copays, increasing provider subsidy rates, and allowing providers to be paid on enrollment rather than on attendance. According to analysis of the grants, the majority of recipients reported that salaries, benefits, and other workforce costs are EC providers' largest monthly expenses, amounting to up to 68% of all expenditures. Nearly half of the recipients had at least one staff vacancy, with part-time positions more likely to be vacant. Focus group participants reported that they used stabilization grant funds to increase staff salaries, pay bonuses, offer signing bonuses, and bring in additional support personnel for teachers.

Mi Tri-Share Program

Michigan Governor, Gretchen Whitmer, announced a new program to increase access to high quality, affordable child care and retain the EC workforce, Mi Tri-Share. The program funds regional coordination hubs to facilitate the sharing of child care costs equally between the state (via legislative appropriation), employers, and their eligible employees. Four additional coordination hubs were awarded in November 2021, and another seven this spring with additional appropriations and philanthropic investments.

Michigan’s \$1.4 Billion Investment into Child Care

Governor Whitmer has also focused an historic investment into early childhood; Caring for MI Future is a \$100 million effort to help child care entrepreneurs open 1,000 new or expanded child care programs by the end of 2024, expanding access to quality, affordable child care for all families across the state. Efforts include expanded slots in GSRP, a child care facility improvement fund to support minor indoor and outdoor renovations, pre-licensure, and startup funds, strengthened career pathway and tuition assistance, business sustainability planning, expanded apprenticeship programs, and regional and rural innovation grants, among other efforts.

During the PDG B-5 Renewal grant period, Michigan has undertaken a wide variety of projects to support program and provider quality and access, with an eye toward sustainability and raising supply and capacity of providers. Project areas that help inform this PDG B-5 Planning grant proposal include those that focused on infant and toddler care, inclusive practices, and transitions.

To support increasing capacity to serve infants, toddlers, and their families, the Renewal grant funded several capacity-building projects. Working with Central Michigan University’s Brazelton Touchpoints Center, six different individual-level Touchpoints trainings were offered free of charge to EC professionals over the last year. This evidence-based approach helps equip professionals with knowledge of child development, how to work with child behaviors that could be thought of as “challenging,” how to work with families, support and promote their strengths, how to address developmental concerns, and how to build strengths-based partnerships with families.

Another capacity building project funded 240 EC professionals to receive an Infant Family Associate (IFA) Endorsement® from the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health (MI-AIMH). The IFA Endorsement® is intended for professionals who work with or on behalf of infants, toddlers, and parents/caregivers to display competency in culturally sensitive, relationship-focused practice that promotes infant mental health. For example, according to MI-AIMH, child care providers who are endorsed understand the important role they serve with families, the importance of environments and experiences that enhance social and emotional development, and the central role of the culture and community of the child and family.

PDG B-5 also supported license exempt providers by offering a five-part training series that introduces the Strengthening Families Protective Factors™ and incorporates a parent café component that provides ample time for reflection and connection. The “Caregiving Conversations” series was created and piloted during RTT—ELC as an in-person series. However, with the pandemic, the PDG project recreated the model in a virtual format, piloted it with license exempt providers, and then revised the model to create a version for licensed providers. These trainings provide participants with an opportunity to connect with other child care providers throughout the state where they can share their experiences, reflect on others’ perspectives, learn about community programs and services and brainstorm concrete ideas about how to build the Protective Factors™ for themselves and for the families they serve.

PDG B-5 Renewal also partnered with the OGS Child Development and Care unit to support the state’s Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation. Social emotional consultants provide programmatic and targeted consultation services to child care providers in 18 counties in Michigan. PDG and Child Care and Development Block Grant funds were layered to ensure the consultation and evaluation continued while a more sustainable funding solution was

explored. Together, these projects focused on helping to increase provider capacity for infant and toddler care, family engagement, and working with children who might otherwise be expelled from child care programs.

To further support inclusionary practices and expand provider capacity for children with delays or disabilities, PDG B-5 Renewal funded the Integrating Birth to Five and Inclusion Builders projects. Integrating Birth to Five created a coaching cohort and modules to provide professional development to build provider skills and knowledge. Inclusion Builders focused on preschool inclusion, funding Preschool Inclusion and Equity Specialists to learn coaching practices, address policies and procedures, and work with general education preschool teachers to build inclusive preschool classrooms.

PDG B-5 Planning Grant Projects

Building on these efforts, Activity 4 contains four large projects aimed at supporting the workforce. The first, **a coordinated task force**, will address projects that emerge from Activity 2, including professional development, coaching, best practices, preparation activities, etc. The second is determining a **statewide competitive wage scale and piloting** with two Tri-Share communities. The third project supports **professional development using best practices for supporting inclusion, decreasing suspension and expulsion, and utilizing child-based practices**. The final project creates **a new version of our Caregiving Conversations to increase trauma-informed practices for license exempt child care provides utilizing positive experiences to offset Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**.

Coordinated Task Force

Flowing from the needs assessment workforce study (**Activity 1**) and resulting strategic planning project (**Activity 2**), the PDG B-5 Planning grant would fund personnel with the

specific focus of bringing together partners to implement changes for the benefit of the EC workforce. a task force focused on bringing interested partners together to work toward sustainable solutions. The prior sections of Activity 4 have detailed previous data and current efforts. With a Planning grant, additional data collection and coordination work will be undertaken in Activities 1 and 2; Activity 4 would bring it all together and build on existing and potential synergy across state departments and partners, regional entities, community groups, and key interested partners, especially child care providers and preparation programs. The Planning grant would pay to staff the project to ensure facilitation; internal and external communications; partner engagement, knowledge sharing, and solution generating; and reporting. Funds would also be earmarked for subgrants to Institutions of Trust to ensure all EC providers in the state are able to provide input as part of the task force. The biggest need when working toward systems change, especially in state government, is time and effort. **The Planning grant would dedicate time and effort to executing the strategies that emerge from Activity 2 and disseminating changes in workforce support, training, professional development, etc. This task force will also represent Michigan on federal workforce technical assistance opportunities.**

The first step will be to determine the process to ensure staffing of the task force, whether existing FTE can be assigned to the project or if a contractor will need to be sought via a grant or procurement process. The scope of work will include all aspects of a planning process, including planning meetings, building group cohesiveness, and establishing membership expectations, mission, vision, and the mechanics of meeting facilitation. This will require elements of strategic planning and organizational development and will work closely with Activity 2. This position will also be responsible for ensuring communications both internally and with external interested partners to ensure sharing, coordination, and broad dissemination of progress.

Once the project is staffed, the process for forming the workgroup can begin. Determining the structure will be very important to ensure inclusion of broad representation from all entities related to economic development, job training, rural development, educational preparation, professional development, credentialing, and early childhood programs and systems without creating an unwieldy group. Staff will need to formulate dedicated teams dependent upon how many priorities and strategies emerge from Activity 2.

The previously described Institutions of Trust will further ensure that all providers within the state are able to co-create any solutions proposed to build sustainable and trusting relationships throughout the system. The goal will be an open and inclusive process that honors the lived experience and creativity of those within the early childhood workforce throughout the state and seeks interdisciplinary synergies between partners to carry out the strategic planning activities determined in Activity 2.

Competitive Wage Scale

As described earlier in this activity, wages and compensation are the largest drivers for attracting and retaining the EC workforce. The **competitive wage scale** project would align with and expand upon work underway in Detroit to determine a competitive wage scale along a workforce lattice. With a PDG B-5 Planning grant, MDE will expand the work in Detroit to provide a model wage scale, utilizing a lattice pathway, applicable statewide and across the EC workforce. This wage scale will then be piloted in a rural and an urban community that are currently engaged in the Tri-Share Project.

There are many potential positive outcomes to this project. First, Michigan will complete cost studies across the EC system during the PDG B-5 Renewal grant. Creating and piloting a competitive wage scale would help add data to Michigan's child care cost study tool. Second,

this approach could provide an innovative avenue to addressing the workforce shortage that can be immediately assessed and expanded upon. Planning grant projects will bring the interested partners to the table that would be necessary to build upon this pilot. Finally, continued low pay is an issue being experienced in the current Tri-Share locations. The level of funding does not allow for wages to attract new providers to the EC system or to ensure existing providers do not leave. The innovative, cross-sector partnerships built through the current collaborations across state agencies, with the business community, and throughout the state, can spur additional creative or innovative solutions to the biggest barrier to expanding the workforce – wages and compensation.

To accomplish this project, a separate request for proposals or grant criteria will need to be established. This is a research project that requires different staffing than for the previous Activity 4 projects. The winning vendor will need to propose stakeholder engagement and research methods to determine data, such as average wages by region and across similarly credentialed positions while taking into account other living wage calculations. They would also need to trace not only the EC “pathways” but those “diagonal” or connected positions and attach salary and credentials to them.

As with the earlier projects, the scope of work or criteria will be released as soon as possible to ensure the project can launch early in 2023. The goal is to have an approved stakeholder engagement and research plan by the end of the first quarter so data collection can start by no later than April to ensure findings can be disseminated by the fall for use in planning potential budget requests for the state’s 2025 fiscal year.

As data collection begins, pilot locations can be selected by a competitive process. Piloting the wage scales would not need to wait on a final deliverable but could be informed as

data begins to emerge. The vendor would need to work with the leads in the selected communities to determine and implement the wage scales. MDE-OGS will determine the criteria by which the pilot communities will be selected based on input from interested partners, Institutions of Trust, and the vendor to ensure readiness to implement. The vendor would monitor each community's implementation and evaluate the strengths and barriers to implementation, which will be included in a final evaluation report to inform expansion.

Best Practices for Supporting Inclusion

Building on the inclusion projects highlighted earlier in this activity, this project will use the state's Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) as a framework. To support the alignment of these projects with MTSS, Michigan's Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MiMTSS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center will be a key partner. MiMTSS TA Center, working on behalf of MDE's Office of Special Education, was recently awarded a State Personnel Development Grant that focuses on an integrated model of MTSS from preschool through elementary grades. Through this grant, the TA Center intends to work with multiple partners including OGS, MDHHS and the *Early On Training & Technical Assistance Center (EOTTA)*. (Clinton County Regional Educational Services Agency (CCRESA) houses both EOTTA and the inclusion projects funded by PDG B-5 Renewal highlighted earlier.)

The PDG B-5 Planning grant would provide facilitative support to bring the partners together with the assistance of MiMTSS TA Center. The first goal is to create a crosswalk to map out the supports already available and where there might be gaps in workforce support. It would also arrange them according to the career lattice formulation. This would also include ties to career competencies and available endorsements. In addition to supporting the gathering and facilitation of the workgroup, PDG B-5 Planning will also support creating a platform to

disseminate the map so that it can be used to guide system development and as a decision map. This will also inform creating aligned, systemic approaches to parent/child-centered interactions and family-based care. Once gaps (cultural, linguistic, competency area, etc.) are identified, the workgroup can identify strategies to close those gaps. This will require bringing together professional preparation institutions, coaches, quality improvement staff, other professional development providers, and EC professionals to ensure a system approach.

In addition, providers have continued to request additional professional development (this will also be informed by the needs assessment). To support provider, quality improvement staff, and coaching staff knowledge of available professional development, **guides to available professional development that will increase provider efficacy to serve children with social emotional, developmental, and special educational needs will be created and disseminated** to increase program access and quality while creating more inclusive environments. The goal is to ensure that providers can easily access the supports that are already available and take advantage of building their professional skills.

The guides will need to be competitively bid out to select a vendor to create them. The scope of work should include doing a scan of available professional development, aligned according to standards of quality, topic area, knowledge/skill built, and where the offering exists. Partners with MiAEYC, which also administers TEACH grants, will be engaged to ensure Institutions of Higher Education are at the table. The vendor would also need to provide a plan to engage all interested partners in interviews to ensure that work products are culturally honoring, linguistically diverse, and able to be integrated into the career lattices and crosswalks being created across Planning grant projects. The final element will be a dissemination plan to make the final product available to the field.

Drawing from the Activity 1 workforce needs assessment findings as well as the findings from previous research, one of the biggest stressors for EC professionals is not feeling a sense of accomplishment at work. In addition, 25% of recent college graduates entering the EC field reported not feeling confident when working with children with special educational needs. The Planning grant will tap into synergy between IECMHC, the National Early Relational Health (ERH) Network run by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, and the Michigan Health Endowment fund to align and extend their work to create a **crosswalk of professional development and provide a curriculum that addresses the ERH competencies utilizing the Erikson Institute’s Facilitating Attuned Interactions (FAN) approach**. An additional deliverable will be **toolkits to provide resources to both administrators and teachers/providers to support workforce wellbeing, family supports and linkages, and child-based strategies**. The toolkits would not only link with training guides, but would also offer coaching pieces, guidance, and tips for working with differing populations. Funding will also be allocated toward supporting increased professional development on trauma-informed care, including a six-month recorded practicum and guide that can be utilized across the system to build capacity in current and future professionals.

The final project will add to the current Caregiving Conversations café training series by **creating a new series for license-exempt providers that incorporates Tufts Medical Center’s research on positive childhood experiences and the Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences (HOPE) Framework**. HOPE elevates the importance of communities creating the “Building Blocks of HOPE” (relationships, environment, engagement, and emotional growth) for children and how these factors have been shown to lead to healthier outcomes in adults, even when individuals experience Adverse Childhood Experiences in their

childhood. Because the training will need to be created by an individual who is certified in both the Strengthening Families Protective Factors™ and the HOPE Framework and has experience creating trainings and facilitating parent cafes, the PDG B-5 Planning grant designates Wingard Consulting to create this new training series. The principle created the first version of Caregiving Conversations and has the required certification and experience. Once the trainings are created, they will be piloted with license exempt providers and evaluated for any revisions necessary before the end of the grant.

Outcomes

Outcomes for the projects are listed below.

The Workforce task force will (a) be open and inclusive; (b) honor the lived experience of EC professionals; (c) build on interdisciplinary synergies; and (d) enact solutions that emerge from Activity 2.

The Competitive Wage Scale will (a) pilot a solution to address the most important factor of EC employment, measured by progress metrics to be determined jointly by the pilot locations and the workgroup; (b) add important data to Michigan's child care cost study tool; (c) assess the approach to building and sustaining the EC workforce; and (d) create an expansion plan.

The inclusion-focused projects outcomes will be:

- a. A crosswalk of professional development opportunities to connect career lattices, competencies, and professional development offerings for providers and system leaders to use.
- b. Professional development and guides to tailor professional development selections to the providers quality improvement needs.

- c. Toolkits for administrators and teachers/ with training guides, coaching, guidance, and tips with a focus on culture-informed and trauma-informed care.
2. A new Caregiving Conversations café model that provides additional knowledge and information about the effects of positive experiences during childhood.

Activity 5: Support Program Quality Improvement

PDG B-5 Renewal Grant Projects

The philosophy Michigan has pursued throughout its PDG B-5 grants has been improving overall quality by addressing key needs within the workforce as well as building up and on EC system components. Projects in Activity 5 include: funding a pilot of a preschool program for three-year old children that aligns with GSRP; engaging interested partners to inform the development of an RFP to establish Family Child Care Networks; a cross-sector homelessness task force to address families who are housing insecure (including trusted advisor pilots and shelter and EC provider assessment pilots); a Rural Child Care Innovation Program that provides facilitation to rural communities to create community solutions action plans to address child care deserts; research into the use of developmental screening tools by pediatricians; and piloting the First 10 initiative.

Several projects across Activities 4 and 5 of the Renewal grant also link together to improve quality buy supporting providers. As detailed earlier, projects to support serving children with special educational needs, to support infant and early childhood mental health, to decrease suspension and expulsion, and to support multilingual children and families – all drawing upon evidence-based practices to address areas that lead to improved EC experiences. A final area of increased quality addressed is transitions, both throughout the EC years and into kindergarten.

After executing a research project with families, preschool teachers, and kindergarten teachers, one project created kindergarten transition videos to show families what a day in kindergarten looks like and provided examples of skills to work on with their children as they prepare to start school. The second project focused on transitions from the perspective of the elementary school administration and teaching staff. A community of practice brought together preschool and elementary school administrators to learn about the importance of the transition between preschool and kindergarten and best practices. Then, the administrators invited in transitions implementors to ensure that the learning and conversation would lead to implementation. The project also made a toolkit available for anyone to be able to access to support their own transitions practices. Finally, transition guides are being produced to provide information to families and providers to work with each other across transitional periods.

A final project builds on all areas of quality. The Renewal grant is funding six school districts to implement First 10 school-community partnerships. First 10 is a project of Education Development Center that builds a hub within each community's elementary school that brings together elementary schools, early childhood programs, and community agencies. The goal is to help all children learn and thrive by facilitating access to comprehensive supports and transitions between preschool and elementary school as well as shared professional development.

PDG B-5 Planning Grant Projects

Planning grant quality projects draw from the initiatives detailed above and the Three projects are proposed in Activity 5 to help support overall quality as well as the synergies being established by the partnerships highlighted in Activity 4.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Regional Roundtables

As evidence by the Mi Tri-Share Program, the business community has become increasingly engaged in early childhood since early 2020. Caring for MI Future has also brought together many areas in state departments and at the community level that had not worked together before, like Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity and MDE. Building on this strong momentum, the Planning grant will convene CEO Roundtables to continue to engage the business community in supporting **improved overall quality and access, especially for the communities most in need** within the EC system. The plethora of child care supply-building projects already underway includes businesses as key partners. Awareness is building that without affordable, high-quality child care, employers will face workforce shortages. Hosting a series of CEO Roundtables will enable broadening the partners working within the EC system to allow another venue of connection and innovation. The meetings would also align with and build off Caring for MI Future's Regional Planning Grants and Rural Child Care Innovation Program (RCCIP). Michigan's PDG B-5 Renewal grant has already funded six rural communities to engage in the RCCIP to develop locally driven solutions to their child care needs; additional communities will be recruited by the end of 2022 with Caring for MI Future. The solutions that are already emerging are exciting. These roundtables will **build on work already underway** and ensure good ideas are shared widely. This is also a powerful community to tap to ensure child care workforce solutions are sustainable. The business community is a powerful ally and advocate for ensuring solutions can be maintained.

This project would follow the same process as proposed facilitation in Activity 4 – a facilitator would be engaged (included in a staffing request or RFP). The facilitator would need to determine and carry out a process to engage interested partners in the planning and execution

of the roundtables by deciding on the format, goals, and topics to ensure the roundtables are useful, informative, and engaging. Because there are so many initiatives underway, there are ample avenues to engage participants, disseminate invitations, and leverage existing CEO tables and events. The goals for this project are to build up knowledge within the business community, gather and disseminate data and information, and work together to gather commitments to ensure sustainable change in the early childhood system.

Next, once permission is received to move forward on **improving overall quality**, Michigan would coordinate with the workgroup and partnerships in Activity 4 to implement overall quality-building activities aligned with the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health recommendations to **decrease suspensions and expulsions, better serve infants, toddlers, and children with special educational needs, and increase the quality of EC programs and service**. Two areas have risen to the surface prior to completing additional needs assessment studies – reflective practices and financial support for pursuing endorsements along the **career ladders**. Reflective practices help providers within the EC system both improve the services they provide and reduce stress, supporting retention and improved quality of programs and services. Providing free services, especially in the center or organization, alleviates the concern with using unpaid time or after-work hours to engage in quality improvement activities. Michigan has a model to draw on to fund both activities – the Renewal grant infant-family endorsement cohort project has been very successful in not only increasing the skills of EC professionals but in adding endorsements that open additional options on the career lattice. These partners have also offered reflective opportunities as a pandemic response. Because the partners are already at the table in Activity 4 and there are models already established to implement these projects, the turnaround time to implement would be short. The partners can quickly establish the

facilitators for reflection practices offerings because the facilitators are already engaged in other aspects of Planning projects. Contacts are already in place between the partners to enable funding of the projects.

Finally, the PDG B-5 Planning grant will build upon the efforts begun with the Renewal grant to expand First 10 school community partnerships. As with the Renewal grant, the funds will be granted to school districts who elect to pilot First 10. Current school districts would not be precluded from applying to expand their current efforts to additional schools. The Renewal grant criteria and application process will be utilized to grant the funds necessary for implementation to the school districts. Funds would also be allocated toward system alignment to unite similar efforts across the system, including First 10, Full Service Community Schools, and Family Resource Centers. In addition, the Planning grant would attempt to expand the comprehensive services available at a First 10 school to include broader family supports, such as workforce and rental assistance by bringing additional state and community partners together to explore how to accomplish the supports necessary for healthy family foundations.

Outcomes

The intended outcomes for the three projects proposed in Activity 5 appear below.

CEO roundtable will build knowledge, data, information, and planning while connecting business, state, and community implementers to create partnerships and sustainable change in the early childhood system.

Funding quality improvement activities to provide reflective practices and funded endorsements would immediately improve EC professional's service provision and improve the quality of programs and services and, distally, increase retention of highly trained professionals in the EC system.

Finally, additional First 10 pilot sites and expanded comprehensive services across all locations would increase system quality overall as well as family knowledge, choice, and access.

Evaluation

Because the award of a PDG B-5 Planning grant would coincide with a no-cost extension of the PDG B-5 Renewal grant, Michigan proposes to continue three evaluation studies with a Planning grant to add an additional year of data collection to the current evaluations. The studies in question will be outlined below with next steps that would be undertaken using Planning grant funds.

Metrics Evaluation

During the Renewal grant, the metrics evaluation explored if and how the state's PDG B-5 Renewal activities improved Michigan's EC system. The goal of the study is to document the overall impact of Renewal funds on quality and effectiveness of programs and services, as measured by both overall and equitable access to the systems of support for families and children birth to kindergarten entry, as well as overall alignment, utilization of best practices, and program and service impact. An equity-focused approach was utilized for all PDG B-5 Renewal evaluation studies to identify what is and is not working, where inequities exist, and how they might be reduced, specifically focusing on racial, ethnic, and geographic inequities. The studies also hoped to surface positive effects that could be scaled, negative trends or impacts to be addressed, and possible solutions. The overarching research questions attempted to set a baseline for the level of quality within the EC system, measure the extent of quality improvement during the Renewal grant time period, and to what extent quality improvements could be attributed to the projects.

The metrics selected were built from key indicator data variables identified by the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) working group. The use cases that frame the

Renewal grant ECIDS project themselves provide a metric to be studied while also supporting continuation of the data collection and evaluation already undertaken. The existing metrics of success fall into three broad domains: program enrollment and service receipt; quality of service provision; and child and family outcome indicators. The Planning grant evaluation will springboard off the descriptive patterns of access and quality documented by the Renewal grant data analysis.

PDG B-5 Planning Grant Metrics Evaluation Project

To continue the metrics evaluation, the contractor that wins a competitive bid for the evaluation studies can build off the data described in the previous section. This study should align with where the current study leaves off and just add an additional year of data (accessed via extant data collection, amending the existing data sharing agreement, and any data shared from the ECIDS work). The original intent for this evaluation project was to perform an interrupted time series, but the data and length of time available did not lend itself to that methodology. The more data points that are gathered, the finer-grained the data's story will be. In addition, the study should be extended to measure progress on accessing the data described as the basis for the ECIDS.

In mid-2021, the ECIDS workgroup determined four use cases to guide the development of Michigan's ECIDS:

- What is the unduplicated count of children enrolled in different programs across the state?
- Is access to and participation in the early childhood mixed delivery system equitable?
- What are the differences in outcomes among children and families who enrolled in different programs or different combinations of programs?

- To what extent do children and families enroll and participate in services for which they are eligible?

Key variables are embedded within the use cases to measure progress toward equity and quality in the metrics evaluation. Measuring progress on collecting the data to inform the use cases is, in itself, an important metric of success. Achieving integration of the use case data would help Michigan take a big step forward in being a data-driven early childhood system. Therefore, the vendor will need to design a data collection plan to measure the progress of building an ECIDS and using the data envisioned in the use cases to measure progress achieved by the investment of PDG B-5 funds.

Use case data. The first use case documents the number of unique children served by different programs, as well as linking services to individual children and their families. Specifically, the state needs to be able to determine an unduplicated count of children and of families served by each program, identify with which program or service each child and family is associated, link children to families/households, and access demographic information about each child and family, including race/ethnicity, age, and location (GIS or ZIP code).

Unduplicated counts of children served by state programs would reduce or avoid duplication of effort and redundant data collection. It would provide EC system with more accurate data to inform policy development and decisions about budget allocations. The data would also support collaboration across programs and departments within the state, breaking down silos between programs that traditionally use the same information. Finally, children and families would benefit from increased staff efficiency and data-driven decisions from the state, which applies to the second use case. The PDG needs assessment found that gaps in the early childhood system exacerbate access, quality, and affordability gaps for specific groups, such as

families living in rural communities; Black and Latinx families; and children who experience other risk factors, such as poverty, homelessness, or immigrant/ refugee status.

Through its PDG work, Michigan has defined equity as meaning all children have a fair and just opportunity to reach their full potential and succeed. Equity includes providing services according to the needs of each child in the interest of producing better outcomes for all children and families. Equity requires an acknowledgment of racism, sexism, and classism as the root causes of inequities and promotion of increased access to the social determinants of health and well-being, including but not limited to culturally responsive health care and services, safe and affordable housing, and high-quality early learning opportunities. To answer the second use case, data would need to be accessed to provide a racial, ethnic, sex, and income breakdown of children and families across the state. Currently, these data are housed in many different systems (and some programs do not collect all these variables). Building the ECIDS capacity to address equity will improve access to and participation in services for the state's children and families, as well as decisions about policies and practices within the EC system. Gaps can be revealed so the programs can make decisions about targeted strategies to address those gaps as well.

While programs and services may collect outcome data, the long-term effects of programs and combinations of programs is unknown without integrating early childhood data. The state needs information about program outcomes to understand if and how its services are improving the lives of young children and their families. The intent of the third use case is to answer outcome questions that will vary by program, based on their specific goals for children and/or families. Understanding the association between participation in different services and outcomes will have several benefits, including decisions about funding, expansion, or new

programs. Understanding impact will also allow the EC system to utilize a continuous quality improvement approach.

The fourth use case represents an overarching priority for Michigan’s PDG B-5 projects – increasing access to high-quality programs and services. Eligibility and rates of participation are critical to understand usage rates, benefits, barriers, facilitators, and disparities in access. If available, data on why families do not take up services would be useful in improving enrollment processes (e.g., streamlining burdensome enrollment applications) and improving programming to better meet families’ needs. In addition, data showing regional or geographic patterns in service enrollment and participation will inform state-level planning about investments and service expansion.

These use cases and data collection processes provide a good opportunity to evaluate progress toward creating an ECIDS in Michigan as well as how well the data collected for each use case answers the questions embedded within them. The vendor performing the evaluation will be involved in the ECIDS proof of concept process, starting with the first use case, to follow the conversations, data sharing, and application of data to answer the use cases. Part of the scope of work will be providing some capacity to partner with MDE’s data analysts to test data against use cases, inform additional data refinements and requests, and utilizing the data to perform analyses to provide examples and quality improvement.

Equity Evaluation

The PDG B-5 Renewal grant evaluation plan included an equity evaluation with two separate components – a quantitative portion examining disproportionality in access and a qualitative portion documenting innovative solutions to improve equity. The equity study has five research questions: (a) Are there differences in participation in publicly funded preschools

programs by race, geography, and economically disadvantaged status? (b) Are there intra-county differences in participation in publicly funded preschools by race, geography, and economically disadvantaged status and for children with disabilities? Which counties have the largest differences? Is there evidence that some of the promising practices identified reduce or mitigate these disparities? (c) How did differences in participation in publicly funded preschools by race, geography, and economically disadvantaged status change after Michigan received the PDG funding (2019)? (d) What policies, practices, and other systematic and local factors may have contributed to the identified disproportionalities in participation in public early childhood education services? What changes to policies, practices, and the current system are needed and can be made to address the identified disproportionalities? and (e) What innovative strategies and solutions have been used by various stakeholder groups to support equitable participation in and access to public early childhood education services? How sustainable and scalable are these strategies and solutions?

PDG B-5 Planning Grant Equity Evaluation Project

As with the previous evaluation project, the equity evaluation should build off the results obtained through the PDG B-5 Renewal grant evaluation. An additional round of data collection should be performed to provide another time point for the data and continue to evaluate whether the inequities are being addressed, are expanding, or whether new inequities are arising. In addition, this offers an additional test point for data being collected to build the ECIDS. The vendor should also consider if there are additional programs or service that could be utilized to expand the measurement of inequities in the EC system. Though a second round of all the data utilized in the Renewal grant evaluation is necessary, the vendor should also propose an additional avenue of data collection so that the evaluation can be broader than the first round of

data collection. While this project anticipates replicating the quantitative data, the vendor could also propose to replicate the qualitative portion of the study with the additional avenue of data collection.

First 10 Evaluations

In the spring of 2022, OGS granted out funds to six elementary schools to implement the First 10 initiatives in their buildings. Working with Education Development Center, the creator of First 10, the schools applied to be part of the pilot as part of the PDG B-5 Renewal grant approach toward the whole child and family (see Activity 5). An implementation evaluation accompanied the pilot to document the experiences of the six schools through interviews and engagement with both EDC and the school district leads. With an expansion of First 10 as part of the PDG B-5 Planning grant proposal, the evaluation should take the next step, documenting the implementation of First 10 with the new grantees, providing a comparison of differing approaches and experiences based on the type, size, and location of the schools, and providing a way to tell the story of these schools engaging in a First 10 community school or hub initiative. In addition, the evaluation should engage the first six schools for an outcomes evaluation to assess changes in the primary areas of focus of First 10: family engagement, kindergarten transitions, and shared professional development. The evaluation should also consider to what extent access to comprehensive services has been increased for children and families, facilitators, and barriers to their provision, and the feedback from interested partners about collaboration, service provision, and innovative ideas for expansion or improvement. The ultimate goal of these evaluations is to document if and how well First 10 has accomplished expanding elementary schools to the community, improving teaching practices, easing transitions, providing strengths-based family supports, and connecting families to comprehensive services.

Outcomes

Outcomes for the projects proposed with a PDG B-5 Planning grant include:

- Metrics evaluation – replicate the current metrics study to add an additional year of data and precision to the analysis; evaluate the progress toward accessing data to apply to the ECIDS use cases.
- Equity evaluation – replicate the current equity study to add an additional year of data while investigating additional data points; evaluate progress toward measuring equity during ECIDS development.
- First 10 evaluation – replicate the current implementation evaluation with new First 10 grantees and assess changes in family engagement, kindergarten transitions, shared professional development, and access to comprehensive family services with the original six pilot locations.

Organizational capacity

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities

OGS has been the designated grantee on three federal early childhood grants: RTT—ELC, PDG B-5 Initial, and PDG B-5 Renewal. During the grant periods, shared leadership has continued to evolve across state departments and partners. When OGS was created in 2011, the executive action consolidated and integrated core EC system programs and services in MDE (see **Summary** for core EC system description). In addition, because OGS is within the state’s education department, and within the P-20 System and Student Transitions division, OGS has connections to special education, elementary school, ISD and associated partners. As the existing PDG B-5 grantee, MDE, its partners at MDHHS and LARA, and external partners drove the

creation of the Collective Action Plan that will guide EC system building moving forward, including the governance, advisory, and coordination bodies.

The Planning grant will be administered within Early Childhood Development & Family Education concurrently with the Renewal grant (see **Appendices for organizational charts**). This structure provides continuity with many other federal programs, including federal title grants under ESSA, IDEA, career and technical education, and school nutrition programs. OGS also administers CCDF.

Leadership for PDG B-5 Planning Grant

The P-20 System and Student Transition division of MDE is led by Dr. Scott Koenigsknecht, who has close to 30 years of experience in educational leadership. Dr. Koenigsknecht plays a key leadership role as the convener of the GSST and the lead voice in early childhood policy for MDE. His special assistant, Amanda Stoel, brings two decades of experience in MDE and in systems building work to the table. The four directors within OGS offer a variety of EC and educational leadership experience and provide policy and program implementation support for the programs in the **Summary** described as the EC system. Dr. Joy Milano serves as the Project Manager for PDG B-5 grants; Joy joined ECD&FE during the RTT–ELC grant and has spent the past six years in federal grant management. Prior to her time in OGS, Dr. Milano was a researcher at Michigan State University, a tenure-track professor, and a college registrar and director of assessment. The current PDG B-5 team includes a financial analyst and two half-time consultants to lead projects in Activities 3 and 4; the budget also details additional capacity to be added via a Planning grant. Together, these strong leaders have the skills and knowledge to use their past years of experience to ensure the PDG B-5 grant is efficiently and effectively administered.

Capacity to Manage the Grant

MDE has extensive experience managing federal grants and regularly administers close to \$2 billion in federal grant funding. As the figure in the **Appendices** shows, there are also governance and coordination bodies to provide guidance and direction. Through Renewal grant Activity 2 projects, the Planning grant will roll out a refreshed governance and coordination structure to implement the Collective Action Plan and guide impact of the Planning grant. The current Great Start Steering Team and Great Start Systems Team operates as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care described in section 642B(b) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837(b)). As Michigan strives to have a stronger advisory council, the refreshed vision will better meet the goals of improving individual agency policies and programs including, but not limited to, public education, outreach (identification and engagement of target population/s), centralized access/hubs (service identification and engagement), linked data systems and IT infrastructure, care coordination (individual), care management (population), workforce development (recruitment, competency standards, training, support), quality assurance and quality improvement, fiscal performance, state and local collaborating early childhood groups, political will and support, and fiscal resources and services. The GSOT also works to improve equity across a continuum of services, monitor and communicate progress toward achievement of the four early childhood outcomes, and collaboratively determine improvement strategies.

MDE has its own grants and procurement office to guide establishing contracts and sub-granting funds according to state policies and procedures. All requirements are clearly stated in requests for proposals and in the resulting grant or contract language. With each grant or contract, the contract manager creates a performance monitoring plan to ensure that vendors and

managers have guidelines for ensuring both programmatic and fiscal compliance with grants and contracts. All contracts also include provisions for corrective action plans, noncompliance, and for ending contracts for cause or convenience. OGS has its own financial unit to ensure ample financial oversight. At the end of every grant period, personnel work with the state records compliance to ensure records are retained and compliance with processes for records retention are followed. Altogether, MDE and OGS have the knowledge, experience, and collaborative partners to provide vision and implementation for a PDG B-5 Planning grant.

Dissemination Plan

To make grant project results publicly available, OGS maintains a PDG webpage where opportunities and reports are available for public access. In addition, these items are disseminated across email lists, listservs, and partners. In addition, the dissemination plan that is guiding the roll out of the Collective Action Plan provides a structure for continuing to publish PDG B-5 efforts. The goals of the dissemination plan are to (a) create support among early childhood providers, families, key partners, and state administrators for the grant's goals and strategies to ensure support for funding requests and changes in policy; (b) cultivate buy-in from early childhood providers, families, partners, and policymakers to ensure their support during implementation; and (c) keep key partners, advocates, and policymakers up-to-date on what is happening to proactively align efforts and garner support for policy changes and funding requests.

EC providers, families, partners, and other interested partners are the primary targets for dissemination efforts. The Planning grant proposal also details an increased focus on using Institutions of Trust to reach all providers and families across the state to ensure their voices are included in the system-building work. Administrators, intermediary organizations, and elements

of the mixed delivery system are also included; these groups reach providers and families and advocate for them, making their voices necessary as well. Finally, elected officials and policymakers are included because they make funding and policy decisions that will ensure the successful implementation and sustainability of projects. It is important for this audience to hear the EC vision, why the EC system is important to communities and families, the goals, outcomes, and any necessary funding or policy changes.

The strategies include using consistent frames, including talking points, one-pagers, FAQs, tracking forms, and core messages. Most often, the messages will be disseminated by attending regularly scheduled meetings to communicate about the grant projects and answer questions. Intermediary organizations and elements of the mixed delivery system, including providers, can be engaged via one-on-one meetings or calls to share the latest information and encourage them to participate in opportunities to provide leadership and input. Providers can also be engaged through other state agencies. To reach key organizations that will impact policy and funding decisions, OGS can leverage MDE's legislative liaison, share the EC vision with the governor's office and foundation liaison, with legislative aides and liaisons, and with Institutions of Trust. The dissemination plan is already successfully being implemented with the collective action plan, meeting the first progress measure related to reach of materials and audience engagement. The timeline for the Renewal plan extends through 2023, allowing for companion messages from the Planning grant and measurable audience reach goals.

Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information

MDE follows guidelines established under Human Research Protection protocols for handling and protecting sensitive and confidential information. Additionally, all contracts and grants contain strong guidelines for control and protection of confidential information. As a state

educational agency, MDE has experience handling Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act-protected data and in working with data held at MDHHS, which is usually protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

As such, data held by MDE, its contractors and any grantees must be stored in password-protected or locked/secured storage locations in secured locations. Data that is reported is aggregated or is de-identified. Sensitive or confidential information is considered any personally identifiable information (PII) collected, used, processed, stored, or generated including, without limitation, any information that identifies an individual, such as an individual's social security number or other government-issued identification number, date of birth, address, telephone number, biometric data, mother's maiden name, email address, credit card information, or an individual's name in combination with any other of these elements or any personal health information. All contractors and grantees are also held responsible for establishing and maintaining a data privacy and information security program, including physical, technical, administrative, and organizational safeguards, designed to: (a) ensure the security and confidentiality of the data; (b) protect against any anticipated threats or hazards to the security or integrity of the data; (c) protect against unauthorized disclosure, access to, or use of the data; (d) ensure the proper disposal of data; and (e) ensure that all employees, agents, and subcontractors comply with program.