

## **PART III. INFORMATION REQUIRED FROM APPLICANTS**

### **CLOSING DATE AND ONLINE SUBMISSION**

Completed applications must be submitted via email to [MDE-PDG-B-5@michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-PDG-B-5@michigan.gov) no later than March 1, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. Failure to complete submission will result in a disqualified application. Only those applicants meeting all conditions outlined will be eligible for consideration.

**No fax or print versions will be accepted.** A late application or an application submitted not in accordance with the application preparation instructions (described below) **may be disqualified.**

Questions or technical assistance for the submission process should be directed to [MDE-PDG-B-5@michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-PDG-B-5@michigan.gov). Technical assistance regarding application submission will be addressed through 4:00 pm on March 1, 2023; no additional assistance will be provided after the 4:00 pm deadline.

### **APPLICATION PREPARATION, PAGE LIMIT, AND FORMATTING**

Applications should be prepared simply and economically, not more than 25 pages in length, presenting data succinctly, with an easily readable font (like Arial, Verdana, or Times New Roman) no smaller than 11-point. Page margins should be maintained at 1" on all sides. All pages must be numbered. Responses should be a straightforward, concise description of the applicant's ability to meet the requirements of the grant. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content. Relevant examples should be seminal research or derived from the last ten (10) years. Relevant support documents may be attached to the application and will not count against the page limit but must be kept to a maximum of five pages each. Incomplete applications may not be reviewed or considered for funding. Screenshots, figures, tables, etc. may be included but must be easily readable. Any pages past the 25-page limit will be detached from the application and not considered in scoring. Any unreadable content will be detached from the application and not considered in scoring.

## **NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM GRANT APPLICATION**

### **GRANT OVERVIEW**

This grant will fund a needs assessment of the early childhood (EC) system, with specific focus on the EC workforce and family engagement structures in the state of Michigan. Funding for this grant is provided by the Preschool Development Grant Birth-Five (PDG B-5) Planning grant awarded to Michigan in December 2022.

The purpose of the PDG B-5 Planning grant is to strengthen the state's integrated EC system to prepare low-income and disadvantaged children to enter kindergarten by investing in the early childhood workforce; identifying opportunities to expand access to high-quality early care and education programs; and supporting a comprehensive and mixed delivery system. States are required to conduct or update a needs assessment of their early childhood systems with the funds to develop, update, and begin to implement a strategic plan that recommends strategies to address those identified needs.

Based on the work completed during the PDG B-5 Initial and Renewal grants, Michigan will 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 results of the Renewal grant family engagement study will be available in 2023 to inform a needs assessment of these structures.

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE STUDY**

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 study should start with the previous workforce study completed in 2018, 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 study should also be designed to engage key leaders within MDHHS to ensure programs that serve children prenatal to age five and their families are included. 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.

Other statewide, regional, and local partners and interested partners will be included in the **collaborative process** via engagement of Trusted Community Partners to 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 are included in the grant to work with the Trusted Community Partners, which engages trusted organizations to better connect with the vulnerable populations within those communities. The grantee will work with these Trusted Community Partners to gather data, review 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 2018 Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge grant 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-19 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 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 EC workforce to continue in the system.
- Effects of COVID-19 on the EC workplace and on workforce participation.
- Solutions to the EC workforce shortage and for increasing diversity of and support for workforce.
- Improvements to EC workplace and professional development offerings.

### **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STUDY**

The family and community engagement study will draw from the PDG B-5 Renewal collaboration evaluation that features a network analysis (particularly of the Great Start Collaboratives and Parent Coalitions [GSCs and PCs]) 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 output 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](#).

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

- A description and 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.

### **COVER PAGE**

On the cover page, the agency/organization submitting the application must be fully identified, as well as the contact person for this program and the region of the state for which the agency/organization is applying. Complete all boxes appropriately, including contact name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address.

### **ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS**

Assurances and certifications for federally funded grants appear in Section II. A signed cover page also serves as acknowledgement of the Assurances and Certifications included with the application.

### **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

Applicants should respond to the following requirements to describe their proposed project.

#### **CRITERION 1: Research plan to accurately describe the landscape of the early childhood workforce and Michigan's family engagement structures.**

1. Describe the plan and approach to both needs assessment studies, including:
  - a. proposed research questions,
  - b. methodological frameworks (including citations),
  - c. methods, and
  - d. work products or deliverablesto support the goals and outcomes as expressed in Michigan's PDG B-5 Planning proposal.
2. Provide a detailed timeline that will fit the required time frame of the PDG B-5 Planning grant.

#### **CRITERION 2: Data collection and interested partner engagement plans to describe the strengths, gaps or weaknesses, and opportunities to strengthen the workforce and family engagement structures and practices.**

1. Describe the intended approach to data collection.
2. Describe the plan to engage interested partners in the research process.
  - a. What voices need to be included in the studies and how will you engage them.

- b. The grantee will be expected to work with trusted community partners to recruit and engage harder to reach voices in the state; describe how this has been accomplished in the past or how you envision creating and supporting a collaborative partnership with these partners.
- 3. Describe data analysis approach to assess the needs, gaps, strengths, opportunities, and effects of COVID-19 in a way that can be incorporated into the Michigan Collective Early Childhood Action Plan.
  - a. The grantee will be expected to provide data on a rolling basis to inform strategic planning; provide a plan for how this requirement will be accomplished.

**CRITERION 3: Demonstrable expertise in needs assessment, workforce, and family engagement research and with Michigan’s early childhood system.**

- 1. Briefly provide details of past work performing needs assessments, workforce studies, family engagement studies, especially in an early childhood context. (Examples should be within the last 10 years.)
- 2. Describe your knowledge of Michigan’s early childhood system.

**BUDGET**

The applicant must complete the included line-item budget, providing as much detail as possible regarding the line items and totals presented in the budget. An optional narrative to describe and justify costs can be included but is not required. If in-kind costs are included and/or other resources (not required), these must be included in a narrative appended to the application, which will not be counted against the page requirement.

Each application is reviewed for information that shows the project has an appropriate budget for the scope of the work and is cost-effective. Budgetary detail for estimated expenditures must be provided. In making this determination, the Department looks at:

- how the budget relates to the proposed activities and various project components; and
- whether the estimated costs are reasonable and justified.

There are a total of 60 points available in this application. Applicants must score at least 48 points to be considered for funding.

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

| Criterion                     | 3-5 Points  | 0-2 Points   | Total Score |
|-------------------------------|---|--|-------------|
| 1.1. Data Collection Approach | The proposal provides a clear and complete description of how the | There are gaps or questions about the applicant’s ability to |             |

|                                      |  |   |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|
|                                      | applicant envisions carrying out the needs assessment studies; both family engagement and workforce are described; proposal shows evidence of knowledge of research methods to successfully carry out both projects; proposal shows evidence that the applicant has done their research and understands the context of the state early childhood workforce and family engagement. The plan as described will lead to a successful and actionable needs assessment. | perform a needs assessment research study in general, or specifically in Michigan; some, most, or all of the elements (see scoring for 3-5 points) have questions which do not allow for a score above a 2. |  |
| 1.1.a. Research Questions            | Strong, feasible and/or interesting research questions are proposed for both workforce and family engagement; questions proposed fulfill the goals and outcomes contained in Michigan's approved PDG Planning grant proposal.  | The research questions are not complete or comprehensive enough to fulfill the stated goals and outcomes for the needs assessment studies.  |  |
| 1.1.b. Methodology/ies               | The proposed methodology/ies are fitting and differentiated to the requirements of the studies and type of studies   | The proposed methodologies are questionable or not suitable to the requirements of the studies.   |  |
| 1.1.c. Methods                       | The proposed methods are fitting to the requirements of the studies and to the proposed methodologies  | The proposed methods are questionable or not suitable to the requirements of the studies or methodologies.  |  |
| 1.1.d. Work Products or Deliverables | The proposed work products will provide data and information that can be incorporated easily into  | The proposed work products will not be complete or robust enough to allow for   |  |

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|---|--|---|--|
|   | strategic planning and acted upon.   | strategic planning or actionable data usage.  |  |
| 1.2. Timeline   | The studies can be carried out in a high-quality manner while on a timeline that fits the requirements of the grant.   | The studies will likely suffer from a lack of quality or will not be within the prescribed timeline.  |  |
| 2.1. Data Collection and Analysis Approach                  | The data collection and analysis approaches are appropriate for the methodologies and methods cited in Criterion 1; the approach will gather the breadth and variety of data that is necessary for a high-quality study; the applicant’s approach demonstrates a strong understand of human subject research, confidentiality, and data security guidelines; analysis will allow for gaps, strengths, opportunities, etc. to be assessed and addressed in an actionable way. | Collection and analysis approaches are lacking, not rigorous, do not match the requirements of the studies, or do not match the data that is being collected; analysis will not allow for actional assessment of needs, gaps, strengths, etc.; there is a lack of scholarly and/or high-quality research standards displayed in the response. |  |
| 2.2.a, b. Voices and Collaboration                          | The applicant displays a strong equity and inclusion framework for considering partner engagement, shows an understanding of Michigan’s communities, and provides a substantial response that exhibits a passionate and convincing commitment to collaborating with partners to empower their participation and leadership in these studies.   | The response is lacking in elements that display a commitment to equity, inclusion, partnership, collaboration, and shared leadership and/or a concern for understanding Michigan’s context.  |  |
| 2.3.a, b. Needs, gaps, strengths, opportunities, effects of | After reading the applicant’s response, it is clear there is a logical   | The applicant’s response creates doubts that there is a clear throughline   |  |

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| COVID-19, assessment and reporting                      | analysis and connection between the data collected, how it will be used to assess the needs of the workforce and family engagement system, and how those working on addressing the findings of the study will be able to receive and act upon the data and information shared. | between the data, the assessment of needs, and the reporting of findings that will lead to action.  |  |
| 3.1. Previous research experience                       | Applicant provides evidence of similar and applicable types of research that provides assurance this type of project is within their knowledge and expertise.  | Applicant's experience is limited, not robust, not recent, or not applicable so that there are doubts about their capability of completing the project. |  |
| 3.2 Previous Michigan early childhood system experience | Applicant provides evidence that they understand Michigan's context and the early childhood system.  | Applicant's evidence of Michigan's context and/or the early childhood system is lacking or dubious.   |  |
| Budget  | Budget is present, aligns with the proposed scope of work and is reasonable.   | Budget is not included is not aligned with scope of work or is not reasonable.  |  |