Project Summary/Abstract

Project Title: Illinois Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5)
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The PDG B-5 will allow Illinois to develop an overarching statewide strategic plan, informed by a needs assessment, which will guide systemic efforts to meet our project's goal to coordinate Illinois' mixed delivery system so that all children and families have access to the services they need to thrive. Illinois will engage with its leadership, partners, and stakeholders, including families, throughout this process.

In conducting the needs assessment, we will coordinate outreach to stakeholders, inventory and analyze existing statewide needs assessments, document data and research gaps, develop a set of research plans, complete statewide cost modeling, and expand the scope of our existing unduplicated count of children B-5 in early childhood care and education (ECCE) programs.

In developing the strategic plan, we will update the existing strategic framework of our Early Learning Council (ELC), inventory existing strategic plans, and mine those plans for aligned goals and objectives. We will also conduct focused planning to align our governance, expand coordinated intake, and increase access at the community level for children with special needs and children in the child welfare system. These plans will be assembled into one comprehensive and integrated statewide strategic plan.

Illinois will also conduct activities designed to maximize parental choice and knowledge. In order to increase parents' ability to make informed decisions about their children's care and education, we will formalize the establishment of family representation on the ELC, develop and conduct Community Cafés to engage and support parents in their children's development, increase supports for families of children with disabilities, and update public-facing websites to better respond to the needs of families.

Illinois will share best practices with the field by engaging community voice in policy and program design through a Community Systems Portal, enhancing trainings for Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers who predominantly serve children B-3, training home visitors on the evidence-based Parents Interacting With Infants framework, and creating a database to facilitate cross-system use of early childhood mental health consultation.

Illinois will improve the overall quality of ECCE by supporting site-based Continuous Quality Improvement of infant/toddler programs, work through barriers to pathways for ECCE career advancement, and work toward a budgeting and monitoring system for layered funding.

Expected outcomes for year one: a) an increase in the number of communities participating in coordinated outreach, enrollment, and intake; b) creation of a cross-systems plan for increased equitable access for target populations; and c) an increase in the number of providers engaged in evidence-based quality improvement. *Outcomes for years 2-4:* a) increased involvement by and engagement of parents/family members in the development and education of their children; b) children and families in targeted populations are represented equitably in ECCE programs across the mixed delivery system; and c) increased proportion of children and families in identified target populations will be served by high-quality programs.

Table of Contents

Key Acronyms

CCAP – Child Care Assistance Program
CCDF – Child Care and Development Fund
CFDA - Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number
CoP – Community of Practice
CQI – Continuous Quality Improvement
DCFS – Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
EHS – Early Head Start
ECBG – Early Childhood Block Grant
ECCE – Early Childhood Care and Education
EI – Early Intervention
ELC – Illinois Early Learning Council
FFN – Family, Friend, and Neighbor service providers
GOECD – Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development
HS – Head Start
HS/EHS – Head Start and Early Head Start
IDHS – Illinois Department of Human Services
IDPH – Illinois Department of Public Health
I/ECMHC – Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
IHSA – Illinois Head Start Association
ILDS – Illinois Longitudinal Data System
ISBE – Illinois State Board of Education
MIECHV – Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting Program
QRIS – Quality Rating and Improvement System
RTT-ELC – Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge
T&TA – Training and Technical Assistance

State B-5 Mixed Delivery System Description and Vision Statement

Description: Illinois' B-5 vision is that *access to a continuous, equitable, and high-quality early childhood system enables children, with the support of their families and communities, to grow up safe, healthy, happy, and ready to succeed*. Illinois' ECCE mixed delivery system is spread across several state agencies, is governed by various state and federal policies and regulations arising over decades of development, and uses federal, state, and local funding sources to support service delivery. Historically, Illinois has been committed to developing a robust mixed delivery system that uses these components to target improvements in early childhood outcomes. This grant will help to strengthen cohesion within and across this system to support achievement of the vision via objectives of increased coordination and collaboration, increased and equitable access, and improved quality, as seen in the logic model on page 50.

System Overview: Illinois' State Advisory Council, the *Early Learning Council (ELC),* is a public-private partnership that was created under Public Act 93-380 to coordinate existing programs and services for children from B-5. The ELC is the leading advisory body for Illinois' early childhood system. Its membership includes public agency representatives, service providers, private funders, advocates, and family organizations. The ELC's Executive Committee guides the work of its other four committees: Access, Quality, Integration and Alignment, and the Home Visiting Task Force.

The *Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)* oversees Early Intervention (EI, with funding from IDEA Part C), Home Visiting (state funded), Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP, with funding from CCDBG), and the Illinois Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO), among others.

EI is a statewide program for infants and toddlers under three years of age and children with a disability, a 30% delay in development in any area, or risk of developmental delays. Services are provided through non-profit and for-profit agencies. EI receives federal IDEA Part C funding but is largely supported by General Revenue, Medicaid reimbursement through the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, and insurance billing and family payments. EI has 25 Child and Family Connections offices throughout the state that act as systems points of entry for families to access services statewide.

Home visiting in Illinois promotes health and well-being for pregnant women, children B-5, and their families. Some home visiting is funded through General Revenue, administered by IDHS, and operated by community-based service providers.

CCAP assists parents with lower incomes in paying for child care while working or in training or school. Employed parents make up about 90% of those served, and teen parents pursuing high school diplomas or equivalent can also receive assistance. Child care programs care for children ages six weeks to12 years and children with special needs ages 13-19. CCAP's goals are to support qualifying lower-income families by providing child care subsidies, allowing parents to maintain employment or further their education, and allowing families access to multiple options for affordable, quality ECCE services.

The purpose of the HSSCO is to facilitate HS/EHS collaboration, coordination, and planning at the state and local levels to develop a comprehensive system of ECCE services for lower income families with young children. To do so, HSSCO coordinates with diverse stakeholders in the eight federal priority areas of child care, education, health, welfare, community services, disabilities, homeless services, and family literacy. Migrant and Seasonal HS is provided as well. Other initiatives of HSSCO include the Child Care Collaboration

Program, which facilitates collaboration between child care and other ECCE programs, and the Child Welfare Head Start Statewide Joint Agreement, which fosters collaboration at the state and local levels to ensure DCFS children are served in HS/EHS.

The *Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)* administers several programs for young children. The ECBG—funded through General Revenue and supplemented by federal Preschool Expansion Grant (PDG-E) support—provides Prevention Initiative (PI) programs for children birth through age three and Preschool For All (PFA) programs for children ages 3-5. ECBG emphasizes coordination with other programs in the same service area and mandates collaboration with HS. PI works with children from birth to age three and their families through community-based and home visiting programs to build a strong foundation for later success using the EHS model and others. PFA provides high-quality programs for children who are determined to be at risk of academic failure and for children in low-to-moderate income families. PFA Expansion (PFA-E) programs, funded in part by PDG-E funds, are full-day and serve children identified as having multiple risk factors. Such programs encourage construction of a streamlined birth to third grade transition pipeline for children most at risk of school failure. ISBE's Early Childhood Special Education programs, funded through IDEA Part B Section 619, provides special education services for children ages 3-5 through local school districts and special education cooperatives.

The *Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)* is responsible for licensing non-school-based child care centers and homes, granting license-exempt status to qualifying settings, and providing periodic monitoring and licensure violations tracking.

The state also provides other family support services, including: the All Kids program, for children who need health insurance regardless of immigration status or health; Supplemental

Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which helps lower-income families buy food; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which provides temporary financial and health care coverage for pregnant women and families; and Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which provide no-cost or low-cost health coverage for eligible Illinois children.

Shaping the Development of Illinois' Mixed Delivery System: Illinois' mixed delivery system continues to progress toward equitable access to high-quality ECCE for the state's most vulnerable and underserved children. Illinois' PFA-E provides a model for full-day programming for at-risk four-year-olds, and ECBG will provide services to 67,000 children in FY19. However, PFA school days are still a minimum of 2.5 hours long, and the 2018 grant re-competition surfaced methodological, timeline, and data challenges associated with determining how to provide insufficient funds to large numbers of applicants demonstrating need. Further, while ECBG funding can be used in both school- and community-based settings—including child care and HS settings—there are currently few community-based settings outside Chicago that have received contracts to do so.

With regards to child care, Illinois' CCAP recently returned eligibility to families with incomes below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level, extended the eligibility renewal period from six to 12 months, and expanded eligibility guidelines for parents participating in training programs. However, after the significant caseload decline experienced when eligibility thresholds were cut to 50% of the Federal Poverty Level during the state's 2-year budget impasse, caseloads have been slow to return to previous levels.

At the intersection of these programs—as well as HS/EHS and others—there lies significant constraints to improving quality. Preliminary findings from a study of the cost of quality ECCE services in Chicago indicate that it may be cost prohibitive for such providers to

move to higher circles of quality within the ExceleRate QRIS. While layering funds may support these efforts, capacity constraints faced by directors interested in blending/braiding funding may place this solution out of reach. At the staffing level, a multiplicity of siloed professional development systems creates barriers for educators to achieve greater qualifications that satisfy varying program requirements. In addition, compensation issues across the ECCE system that do not have ready solutions in a constrained funding environment lead to high turnover that inhibits program functioning.

In 2013, the ELC's Braiding, Blending, and Sustainable Funding Subcommittee facilitated round table discussions with early childhood providers and other stakeholders to obtain input on the administrative, structural, and systemic barriers faced within Illinois' mixed delivery system. Identified barriers included: burdensome and sometimes contradictory funding requirements and structures; uncertainty regarding allowable methods of braiding and blending; inability to hire and retain highly qualified staff due to low salaries and benefits; inability to provide ongoing professional development under current funding structures; and competitive relationships across programs in a community due to lack of coordination. In September 2018, the ELC convened a Mixed Delivery System Ad Hoc Committee to address these issues. Committee members include representatives from community-based organizations, state agency partners, school districts, advocacy organizations, funders, and researchers. The Committee's charge is to document the extent to which PFA, PI center-based, and HS partnerships are being delivered in community-based organizations across the state, identify policy barriers that impede the development of PFA and PI center-based programs in community-based organizations, and identify supports that are needed to increase participation. Recommendations from the Mixed Delivery System Ad Hoc Committee will be forthcoming in January 2019 with the goal of

increasing the quality, coordination, alignment, and efficiency of programs and services in Illinois.

As stated earlier in Illinois' vision statement, there is commitment to a mixed delivery system of universal supports and targeted interventions every child with high needs must receive to support optimal child outcomes. This vision depends on a well-coordinated, easy-to-navigate mixed delivery system through which all families with children have access to culturally and linguistically appropriate services that support their needs. There must also be alignment of instruction that helps children as they transition to kindergarten and beyond.

Approach – Activity One: B-5 Needs Assessment

Description: In the first 5 months of the grant year, the State will partner with external entities to conduct a periodic, statewide B-5 needs assessment of the availability and quality of existing programs in Illinois. This will include: cataloguing and comparing existing federal and state needs assessments for Illinois, including two forthcoming analyses of the current quality and availability of ECCE; analyzing gaps in data and research across existing needs assessments and developing a plan to remediate those gaps; cost modeling and performance measurement to better understand the barriers to funding and providing high-quality ECCE; and refreshing efforts to track indicators aligned with Illinois' vision and desired outcomes. This complete needs assessment will provide comprehensive clarity on Illinois' ability to provide quality ECCE services to all children, including those who are vulnerable or underserved.

Needs Assessment Process - **Scope and Work Plan:** To develop an effective statewide B-5 needs assessment, Illinois will consider the following populations, ECCE types, and geographic breakdowns in the scope of analysis:

Needs Assessment Scope		
Population	*ECCE Type*	*Geography*
• Children B-5 and caregivers • All income levels, with disaggregation by income • Children and families experiencing risk factors, including: homelessness, opioid use, child welfare involvement, or a combination of these • Children in rural areas • All races and ethnicities, disaggregated • Children who are vulnerable or underserved, as described on page 13	• Developmental screening • Home-, center-, and school-based: ECBG, CCAP, HS/EHS • Early Childhood Special Education (IDEA Part B, Section 619), EI (IDEA Part C) • Home visiting • Infant and early childhood mental health consultants	• County • Legislative district • Early childhood community collaboration • School district

Illinois will successfully implement the work plan below over the first 5 months of the grant period, using a phased approach to leverage and incorporate existing efforts and ensure a comprehensive assessment. Details on the timeline of the work plan and the milestones of successful completion of each phase are available on page 37. Details on budget spending by work plan activity and phase are available on page 59.

Needs Assessment Work Plan	
Phase 1: Initial outreach and information gathering	
Needs Assessment Task	*Existing Efforts*
Contract with an external entity to conduct the portions of the needs assessment not yet completed or underway.	Not applicable
Engage external stakeholders throughout the development of the needs assessment, including: program directors and staff across child-serving programs from birth to third grade; families and caregivers, including custodial and non-custodial parents; community partners and advocates, including local early childhood collaborations; ELC and P-20 Council; researchers; and policymakers.	Stakeholder engagement is underway in current needs assessments conducted by Erikson Institute and IFF, a community development non-profit.
Identify best practices for needs assessment components, methodologies, analyses, and stakeholder engagement.	Not applicable
Phase 2: Inventory and analyze existing statewide needs assessments	
Needs Assessment Task	*Existing Efforts*
Gather and compare Illinois' state and federally required needs assessments.	**Definitions:** All Families Served Subcommittee of the ELC is updating and aligning priority populations; existing definitions have been compared along state agencies and funding streams.

• Compare existing definitions of terms, including: quality ECCE, availability, vulnerable, underserved, children in rural areas • Gather or develop descriptive statistics for populations in the scope • Identify populations with more than one risk factor	**Descriptions:** The Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM), the ILDS, and state agency reports contain descriptive statistics for some of the populations listed in the scope, including the number of slots available at each ExceleRate QRIS Circle of Quality. **Transitions:** The Kindergarten Transition Advisory Committee September 2018 report addresses transition supports and gaps. **Quality and Availability:** Partners are completing analyses of the current quality and availability of ECCE, including for vulnerable or underserved children and children in rural areas, and analysis of facilities and facility-related concerns. See page 13 for additional information.
Based on analysis above, document gaps in the data or research and incorporate into the ELC Research Agenda.	**Research Agenda:** The ELC's Research Agenda addresses gaps in data and research that could help to improve the quality and availability of ECCE in Illinois.

Phase 3: Needs Assessment as Planning Tool	
Needs Assessment Task	*Existing Efforts*
Develop a set of plans to fill gaps in data and research, support strategic planning and collaboration between programs and services, and maximize parental choice, including: • Expand the scope of Illinois' unduplicated number of children receiving and awaiting services • Identify the unduplicated number of early childhood educators • Inventory and analyze methods of data collection, collation, and analysis to create recommendations for data streamlining and alignment • Assess the availability, accessibility, portability, and alignment of high-quality professional development and training • Analyze impact of ECCE quality and availability of programming on parent employment	**Unduplicated Count:** With RTT-ELC funding, Illinois conducted a statewide effort to identify, to the extent practicable, an unduplicated number of children being served by existing programs. This unduplicated count includes children served by state preschool funding and CCDF subsidy (CCAP). Barriers to acquiring HS/EHS data from individual grantees have impacted the practicability of expanding the unduplicated count, but data acquisition efforts are underway. See page 14 for more information.
Develop a restructured performance measurement plan based on ELC Metrics Dashboard published in IECAM and in tandem with the strategic planning process.	**Performance Measurement:** The state currently uses the IECAM ELC Dashboard and other feeder systems, such as those of state agencies and the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth, to track measurable indicators of progress that align with the state's vision and desired outcomes. These systems could be improved through alignment and capacity to solve data issues.

Phase 4: Needs Assessment as Analysis	
Needs Assessment Task	*Existing Efforts*
Analyze the cost of providing high-quality ECCE services to all families, including an analysis of barriers to funding and providing high-quality ECCE services and opportunities for more efficient use of resources: • Develop a cost model for providing high-quality ECCE services to all families through licensed or school-based settings. Include wage parity, evidence-based support staff included in PFA-E and HS, and evidence-based dosage • Align and compare findings from the model with a) analysis of access to high-quality ECCE by demographics, geography, and vulnerable or underserved children and b) focus groups of ECCE stakeholders on the same topic completed in IFF's assessment and ELC Metrics Dashboard	**Cost Model:** The City of Chicago recently modeled the cost of providing high-quality ECCE services to families. This analysis can guide an expanded statewide analysis. **Mixed Delivery:** The Mixed Delivery Systems Ad Hoc Committee of the ELC is identifying barriers that impede expansion of a mixed delivery system. **Investment Analysis:** ISBE's Professional Review Panel, together with the ELC, formed a committee to study ECCE investments, including an analysis of what level of ECBG funding would best serve all children B-5, and to make recommendations for modification of statute. **Workforce Analysis:** The November 2018 Innovation to Incubation report is a state follow-up to the Institute of Medicine's report *Transforming the Workforce*. It analyzes barriers to the funding and provision of a high-quality ECCE workforce and opportunities for more efficient resource use.
Phase 5: Needs Assessment as Tool Supporting Execution	
Needs Assessment Task	*Existing Efforts*
Assemble, design, and disseminate final report to ELC, Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth, and other cross-system bodies.	Not applicable

Leverage and Alignment - Federal and State Needs Assessments: As proposed in phase two of the above work plan, the needs assessment will include the incorporation of data, identification of service gaps present across needs assessments, identification of duplication of services, identification of barriers to receipt of services, and identification of opportunities to strengthen and improve service delivery coordination. The table below includes a sample of federal and state needs assessments that will be considered in this process.

Summary of Relevant Needs Assessments and Reports		
Title	*Affiliate*	*Year*
MIECHV HRSA Needs Assessment	GOECD	2020
Risk & Reach Report	Erikson Institute	2019
Head Start State Assessment	HSSCO and IHSA	2019

ECCE Analysis	IFF	2019
Early Development Instrument	Erikson Institute	2018
Illinois Annual Child Care Report	Illinois Department of Human Services	2018
Head Start Community Assessments	Illinois Head Start grantees	2018
Early Childhood Matching Project (2 phase)	University of Northern Illinois	2018
ILDS Annual Report	University of Northern Illinois	2018
Illinois Early Childhood Asset Maps	University of Illinois	2018
SSA Title V MCH Block Grant Assessment	Illinois Department of Public Health	2015
State Advisory Council Needs Assessment	University of Illinois	2012

Further, as proposed in phase one of the work plan, stakeholders will be convened throughout this effort to review and contextualize results to better assess risk, unmet need, and gaps in care. A communications process will be established to ensure that findings and data from needs assessments are shared on an ongoing basis.

Leverage and Alignment - Alignment with the Logic Model and Vision Statement: The proposed needs assessment will provide a clearer understanding of Illinois' success in achieving its vision: *to provide access to a continuous, equitable, and high-quality early childhood system that can enable children, with the support of their families and communities, to grow up safe, healthy, happy, and ready to succeed.* As planned, the needs assessment will: 1) collate all existing and immediately forthcoming needs assessments that may help in painting this picture; 2) contribute to the picture of the system via an analysis of the cost of high-quality ECCE service provision; and 3) identify gaps that may help to more comprehensively paint this picture and develop plans to fill the gaps to support collaboration and maximize parental choice.

Finally, the needs assessment plan aligns with the logic model in its recognition of the critical importance of stakeholder engagement to guide strategic direction. Completion of needs assessment work plan phases will inform strategic planning efforts described in Activity Two on page 15-19. Further, needs assessment findings will inform projects described in Activities Three, Four, and Five, especially with regards to site determination, and will help achieve the

short-term outcome for objective (B) in the logic model on page 50: completion of a cross-system plan to increase equitable access.

Description of Populations: In 2013, the All Families Served Subcommittee of the ELC developed a list of priority populations which have since been aligned via eligibility criteria across Illinois ECCE services. Updates to these population descriptions, including statistics, are underway. These definitions will be considered within the scope of the needs assessment.

Summary of Population Definitions and Descriptions	
Term	*Definition*
At risk	Children and families who receive or are eligible for services through Medicaid, SNAP, CHIP, or TANF, or students who face economic disadvantage and lack a support system.
Under-served	Children and families who do not receive equitable resources compared to other students in the academic pipeline due to the unavailability of ECCE programs as a result of eligibility requirements, accessibility, or capacity.
Challenging to find, reach, serve	Children and families who do not have adequate access to ECCE programs due to programs' location, cost, enrollment requirements, or capacity to serve the comprehensive needs of families.
Priority populations	Children: of teen parents; experiencing homelessness; with disabilities; of migrant or seasonal workers; whose primary caregiver did not complete high school or has no GED; of a parent with a disability. Children and families: in poverty or deep poverty; involved with child welfare; facing barriers based on culture and language; with refugee, asylee, or mixed immigration status.
Community risk factors	High unemployment or poverty rates; high substance use rates; high community violence rates; high incarceration rates.
Rural Isolation	Geographically isolated, particularly those rural families who need ECCE programs. Rural isolated populations who do not have access to ECCE programs or services due to location of the program.
Other risk factors	Children in the care of a relative or close family friend; children with parents who are on active military duty; single parents; communities that experience rapid changes in population; children and families impacted by trauma.

Quality, Availability, and Receipt of Services: *Analysis of the quality and availability of programming and supports serving children B-5* is currently underway. Erikson Institute, in partnership with the University of Illinois' IECAM and Voices for Illinois Children's Fiscal Policy Center, is completing an inaugural Risk & Reach Report, which will compile analyses of health, education, and economic indicators in relation to state ECCE investments. The report will

consist of two parts: 1) measuring indicators representing early childhood well-being; and 2) analyzing the availability and distribution of publicly funded early childhood programs and services by geography. The report will also provide a budget analysis, by geography, of B-5 publicly funded programs and services. The overall goal is to provide accessible, comprehensive analysis to inform strategies to facilitate more effective and efficient use of resources.

Additionally, IFF is completing an analysis of ECCE programs in Illinois, across funding streams, to inform strategic investment in program expansion, facility modernization, site selection, and targeted communication to communities, providers, and policymakers. The study will compare the geographic distribution of ECCE providers (supply) and children likely to need those services (demand). The study will include spatial analysis, quantitative analysis of demographics and community profiles, and qualitative analysis of local stakeholder input.

Bonus Points: *An unduplicated number of children being served* has, to the extent practicable, been identified via the Early Childhood Matching Project, a multi-phase research endeavor completed by the University of Northern Illinois with support from RTT-ELC resources and ILDS data matching and unique identifiers. The project matched child and family data across state agency systems to provide descriptive statistics based on unduplicated counts of children receiving publicly funded ECCE services in programs administered by ISBE (ECBG) and by IDHS (CCAP). The third phase of this project will expand the unduplicated count to include children and families participating in HS/EHS, EI, Early Childhood Special Education, and home visiting (MIECHV) as well as wait lists for respective programs.

Approach – Activity Two: B-5 Strategic Plan

Description: Illinois' strategic plan will be developed on the foundation of the ELC's Strategic Framework, combined with aligned goals from additional strategic plans, with the addition of focused plans designed to address barriers to coordination and access.

Strategic Plan Development and Implementation Process: Participation of the ELC is central to the strategic planning process. The ELC has created a Strategic Framework to guide its work, and each committee, including the Executive Committee, has developed objectives and indicators by which their respective work is guided and measured. PDG B-5 offers the opportunity to build upon the ELC's foundational framework, objectives, and metrics to expand strategic alignment with the vision statement, logic model, other strategic plans, and needs assessment included and proposed herein.

After reviewing and updating the ELC's Strategic Framework, we will *1) inventory additional strategic plans; 2) mine those plans for aligned goals, objectives, and strategies; and 3) integrate those, along with focused planning (described below), into one overarching updated state plan.* Illinois' strategic planning process will be led by GOECD, the Lead Agency for this grant, through the structure of the ELC. The ELC's Executive Committee will form an ad hoc committee to oversee the needs assessment and strategic plan. That committee will interface with all other ELC committees and subcommittees to update and revise existing priorities and metrics during this process, taking into consideration findings from the needs assessment. Committees will incorporate new or updated federal and state statutory requirements including those of the CCDBG, MIECHV, state pre-school regulations (ECBG), HS regulations, IDEA Part C, and child welfare referral procedures. With funding from this grant, Illinois will contract with

technical assistance consultants to concurrently perform the tasks of the needs assessment and strategic plan.

Vision, Goals, and Objectives for Strategic Plan: Illinois' ECCE vision is that *access to a continuous, equitable, and high-quality early childhood system enables children, with the support of their families and communities, to grow up safe, healthy, happy, and ready to succeed.* Illinois' PDG B-5 goal, as defined in the logic model on page 50, is to coordinate Illinois' mixed delivery system so that all children and families have access to services they need to thrive. Illinois' PDG B-5 objectives, also outlined in the logic model, are A) increased coordination and collaboration, which will lead to B) increased and equitable access and C) improved quality of ECCE services. We anticipate that completion of the needs assessment and strategic planning process will uncover barriers to system coordination and alignment and barriers to increasing access and quality. Then, we will focus on the following activities to achieve the objectives:

A) Increased Coordination and Collaboration: During the strategic planning process, focused planning will occur to achieve greater coordination and collaboration in the areas below:

Focused Planning Area	*Description*
Aligned Governance	We plan to engage a firm with expertise in state agency organization to help us design and implement a new organizational structure to plan and administer our primary ECCE programs and funding streams, with the goal of improving coordination and collaboration among programs, better serving children and families in existing programs, and increasing participation in high-quality ECCE services across our mixed delivery system.
Expansion of Coordinated Intake (CI)	Building upon MIECHV communities, CI provides a single point of entry, creating hubs for home visiting, referral to other services, eligibility and enrollment process alignment, and shared outreach and family engagement. We will also identify communities in which HS programs can serve as CI hubs.

B) Increased and Equitable Access: We will engage in strategies to promote racial equity and increase access to ECCE programs for special populations, as described below:

Focused Planning Area	Description
Racial Equity Initiative	Based on the ELC's definition of racial equity, initial work plans have been developed in four areas: Family Voice, Access, Quality, and Committee Structure. As a part of the strategic planning under this grant, those work plans will be fully developed, along with metrics, and will become a part of the overall strategic plan for Illinois.
Increase access to home visiting and EI services for children with special needs	Based on needs assessment findings, we will identify how children with disabilities are supported within community-based early childhood programs, any barriers present, and how to improve services. Initiative recommendations will be included.
Increase access to home visiting and EI for children in child welfare	Based on cross-training attendee feedback about individual community strengths and needs in relation to cross-system collaboration and lessons learned, we will plan an initiative to increase and measure access for children in care and improved provider collaboration.
Increase access for children at high risk for prematurity to health care through coordination with home visiting programs	Improve the trajectory for children at risk for prematurity by creating a pipeline, through home visiting and early childhood services, from birth to kindergarten. We will develop a plan for identifying families at high risk for prematurity and design a process for referral of these families into primary health care.
Improve children's transition from ECCE to kindergarten	The General Assembly's commissioned Kindergarten Transition Advisory Committee report identifies promising practices to support the transition and defines the capacity and incentives necessary to implement these practices. The strategic planning process will include review of these practices, identification of those that can be piloted in local education agencies (LEAs), and development of a pilot program to support successful transition to kindergarten.

Partnerships, Collaborators, and Stakeholders: The following is a list of partners and

stakeholders corresponding to the objectives for focused planning above:

Objectives	Partners, Collaborators, and Stakeholders
A) Increased Coordination and Collaboration	
Aligned Governance	Governor's Office, ELC leadership, GOECD, IDHS, ISBE, DCFS
Expansion of CI	Stakeholders most impacted include program staff and parents involved in expansion of CI in local communities
B) Increased and Equitable Access	
Racial Equity	ELC Executive Committee member agencies, BUILD Initiative, ELC Family Engagement Committee
Children with special needs	Early Choices and its impacted stakeholders, Ounce of Prevention Fund, EI providers

Children in child welfare	Program staff from DCFS, Erikson Institute, and MIECHV; community stakeholders; EI providers
High Risk for Prematurity	IDPH, MIECHV, HS, local CI hubs
Kindergarten Transition	P-20 Council, ELC, LEAs, and local school district stakeholders
C) Increased Quality	See Activity Five on pages 28-32

Including Partners and Stakeholders Associated with Other Strategic Plans:

Because our early childhood system is complex and includes many stakeholders, partners,

organizations, and areas of focus, there are multiple strategic plans in Illinois related to parts of

the system. During the strategic planning process, we will: 1) review each strategic plan; 2)

involve corresponding partners and stakeholders in identifying aligned elements of those

strategic plans; and 3) integrate relevant goals, objectives, and activities into the overall strategic

plan for Illinois. Stakeholders, including families, will be engaged through the ELC Family

Engagement Committee, the Community Systems Development Committee, and councils and

committees associated with the additional strategic plans referenced below:

Strategic Plan	Focus and Content	Partners and Stakeholders
Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC)	ECCE workforce and professional development	Institutions of higher education, ECCE providers
ELC Strategic Framework	ECCE system: Access, Quality, Integration and Alignment, Home Visiting	ELC Executive Committee ELC members, Family Engagement Committee community stakeholders
IDPH Strategic Plan	Public health priorities and goals for the state	IDPH, advisory councils, stakeholders
Early Choices Strategic Plan	ECCE collaboration for inclusion	Early Choices and its partner agencies and stakeholders, including providers and parents of children with special needs
DCFS Strategic Plan	Plan for achieving stated outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system	DCFS, advisory councils, stakeholders
Illinois Community Systems Development Strategic Plan	Community systems development workplan	Community Systems Development Subcommittee of the ELC Integration and Alignment Committee,

		including partners and stakeholders
Illinois Action Plan to Integrate Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation into Child and Family Serving Systems Prenatal through Age 5	Plan for ECCE mental health consultation cross-systems implementation	Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership, Voices for Illinois Children, Ounce of Prevention Fund, BUILD Initiative, GOECD
GOECD Strategic Plan	Plan for accomplishing goals and priorities for GOECD: focusing on families and communities, educators and the workforce, providers and settings, and vision and systems	GOECD and the ELC

Approach – Activity Three: Maximizing Parental Choice and Knowledge

Description: The first goal for this activity is to ensure that Illinois' parents/families are provided timely, accurate information about program choices, quality, location, and cost in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner. This goal is addressed below in part A) on website development, part B) on community collaborations, and part D) on targeted supports for priority populations. The second goal for this activity is increased involvement by and engagement of parents/family members in the development and education of their children. This goal is addressed primarily in part C) in the description of Parent and Community Cafés. Overall, Activity Three contains four areas: A) consumer education and consumer engagement; B) governance and family collaboration; C) family engagement; and D) priority populations.

A) Consumer Education and Consumer Engagement: Consumer education is designed to help parents access information in order to make informed child care choices and to engage them in protecting the health and safety of children in care. The websites described below provide families with information on child care options and quality ratings in various settings.

ExceleRate Illinois website: ExceleRate Illinois is the state's QRIS. The website helps families make informed choices about child care options within a mixed delivery system. Feedback from families and providers indicates that certain parts of the site are difficult to navigate or are unclear. *Grant Strategies:* 1) review ExceleRate Illinois website by workgroup; 2) retain IT consulting firm; 3) restructure website for easier navigation, use of plain language, enhanced program search functions to ensure the site is parent, family, and provider friendly and accessible, including translation to Spanish; and 4) migrate information on license-exempt Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) providers from initial Quality Counts website to the ExceleRate Illinois website to coordinate and integrate additional child care options.

Illinois Day Care Licensing Sunshine website: DCFS hosts the Sunshine website to inform families about licensing requirements, program compliance and violations, and resources across the mixed delivery system. The site will be updated to provide content in alternative languages, to add accommodations for users with special needs, and to ensure plain language is used. Existing violation reporting screens and information will be enhanced to inform families' child care choices. *Grant Strategies:* 1) assess alternative language availability; 2) assess availability for users with various special needs; 3) conduct plain language content assessment and develop protocol; 4) enhance monitoring and violation information; and 5) amend violation reporting screens and search function.

B) Governance and Family Collaboration: In January 2016, the ELC created a Family Implementation and Engagement Subcommittee to increase parent voice related to Illinois' early learning policies. The Subcommittee proposed the formation of a Family Advisory Committee that was approved by the ELC in June 2017 to promote inclusion of parents/families in their child's education, ECCE policy development, and engagement in decision making processes**.**

Grant Strategies: 1) present recommendations from the Family Implementation and Engagement Subcommittee to the ELC Access Committee for review; 2) ELC Executive Committee will review and approve recommendations and present them to the full ELC for approval; 3) map statewide parent/family organizations and advisory councils and boards; 4) retain a consultant and facilitator; 5) convene a planning retreat; 6) establish membership to ensure diverse parent/family representation; and 7) develop an onboarding and orientation protocol for Family Advisory Committee members.

Early childhood collaborations in Illinois are working to build statewide community level cross-system partnerships. This project will integrate members of these collaborations into Parent and Community Cafés. *Grant Strategies:* 1) coordinate development of Community Cafés with supports for community collaborations; and 2) conduct focus groups with families to understand parental choice, families' own understanding of child development, and use of related support programs.

C) Family Engagement: Family engagement is the process used to build positive goal-oriented relationships with families. The activities in this section will build community capacity to engage families, providers, and other stakeholders to learn from each other.

Parent and Community Cafés: The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) Strengthening Families approach and Protective Factors Framework seeks to increase family strengths, enhance child development, and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. There are five protective factors, and this strategy will address three: social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, and social emotional competence of children. Illinois will expand its Parent and Community Cafés approach for these purposes. Designed for implementation of Strengthening Families, cafés engage small groups in rounds of dialogue on

specified topics, facilitated by trained parents. Cafés explore the perspectives of families, providers, and community stakeholders. Community partners that sponsor or support the cafés typically include: ECCE programs, representatives from child health programs, mental and public health providers, WIC program representatives, neighborhood centers, community-based family resource centers, schools, faith-based organizations, immigrant and refugee agencies, health departments, or any system or child or family serving agency. *Grant Strategies:* 1) develop and pilot cafés on three new topics: parental child care decision-making, school transitions and the importance of school attendance (aligned with Illinois' Chronic Absenteeism legislation), and suspension and expulsion; 2) identify and train parent leaders and hosts to facilitate the café pilots; and 3) develop and print café facilitation guides.

D) Priority Populations: In Illinois, children with disabilities still have limited access to high-quality, inclusive early childhood experiences. Our goal is to provide families with strategies for maximizing school services. *Grant Strategies:* 1) provide parent training on transition services, special education rights, and parent leadership training to support peers; and 2) provide support for the Illinois Early Learning Project and Early CHOICES to develop and disseminate inclusion-focused public awareness resources and training materials for families.

Children and families experiencing homelessness: In the most recently published Fifty States Profile of Early Childhood Homelessness, the Administration for Children and Families estimates that Illinois has approximately 49,000 children under age six experiencing homelessness. Based on available data, approximately 5,000 of these children are enrolled in early childhood programs. To ensure children experiencing homelessness can enroll in ECCE programs, barriers need to be addressed to increase enrollment, participation, and school transitions. *Grant Strategies:* 1) develop resource directories that provide location of services

within ISBE's seven regions; and 2) develop resource toolkits to promote co-location and the establishment of partnerships for early childhood programming and homeless services within a mixed delivery system that ensure transitions to elementary school and beyond.

Approach – Activity Four: Sharing Best Practices

Description: Illinois will share best practices with ECCE providers to accomplish the objectives in this activity through two strategies: A) undertake statewide coordination to reduce duplication of effort in the provision of training and technical assistance (T&TA) to communities and providers and engage community voice in policy and program development; and B) fund evidence-based, innovative interventions to help T&TA providers better support communities and community-based organizations in best practice implementation. This dual approach leverages Illinois' existing partnerships with public and private stakeholders to collaborate, coordinate, and share best practices. Outputs and evaluations of both these strategies will inform future improvements to coordination and efficiency of services. Budget proposals for each task in this activity are given on pages 61-62.

A) Statewide Coordination Strategies: Reduce duplication of effort in the provision of T&TA to communities and providers by identifying a coordinating body for statewide supports and engaging community voice in policy and program development.

Coordinate supports for community collaborations and providers: Illinois' ongoing commitment to providing systematic support to local communities and community-based organizations has showcased how local partnerships positively impact access to ECCE services and uncovered the challenges inherent in building and sustaining such efforts. As a result, more public and private organizations have begun providing training and technical resources for community collaborations in recent years, including a landmark initiative from ISBE: The

Community Systems Statewide Supports Project (CS3). The CS3 Project offers a system of supports to ECCE community collaborations to better serve children in priority populations. Overseen by GOECD and ISBE, this public-private partnership offers trainings, coaching, technical assistance, and peer learning opportunities on the following topics: collaborative and leadership capacity, quality improvement, needs assessment and service gap identification, data gathering and usage, equitable access to services, practices to meet the needs of priority populations, and alignment with and transitions into the elementary grades. These topics draw upon years of lessons learned from efforts supporting community collaborations; future topics are being developed through continuous learning during implementation and in consultation with the ELC.

While CS3 is the state's most recent systematic approach to providing T&TA to community collaborations, Illinois has many other initiatives in this work. These include public-private partnerships across ISBE, MIECHV, and EHS to support the professional development of home visitors; supports for the staff of preschool programs funded through the ECBG; health and safety trainings for child care programs receiving public subsidies; cross-systems trainings on child welfare, inclusion, and infant/toddler services; and regional partnerships between HS/EHS and state-funded early childhood services. *Grant Strategy:* PDG B-5 funding will support the creation or identification of an organizing body to oversee and implement a cohesive, collaborative approach to providing systematic statewide T&TA to communities and community providers, emphasizing methods that incorporate practice-based coaching and draw upon implementation science. This effort will build upon the CS3 Project, leverage the strategic planning described in Activity Two, and result in the implementation of a unified system for the provision of T&TA.

Incorporate community voice into policy and program design: Best practices are effective only insofar as they are aligned with communities' actual needs and capacities. Indeed, community-level concerns and characteristics—such as the availability of healthcare, public transportation, and employment opportunities—often impact access to ECCE services in ways to which a single agency is not able to respond. PDG B-5 provides an opportunity for Illinois to integrate the various channels communities use to share their concerns into a unified process and, crucially, institute policies to act on this input. *Grant Strategy:* Illinois will create an Early Childhood Community Systems Portal website. This will not only be a clearinghouse for resources and guidance on best practices in comprehensive services, reducing duplication of effort, and community systems development, but it will also capture feedback from communities and providers to inform the development and implementation of high-quality ECCE services. This project will use the governance planning framework in Activity Two to determine how to integrate feedback from the Portal into policy and program decision-making processes.

B) Supports to Improve Best Practice Implementation: Fund evidence-based, innovative interventions to help T&TA providers better support communities and community-based organizations in best practice implementation.

Enhance trainings for Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) service providers: For most FFN service providers, Illinois' commonly used online training platform cannot be effectively adapted to their settings due to disparities in access and familiarity with technology and lack of follow-up supports. Over the years, several of the state's regional child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies have created initiatives delivering cohort-based professional development to FFN providers. Illinois will use PDG B-5 funding to build on this work and make effective, relationship-based training more widely available to this critical sector of the Illinois ECCE field.

Grant Strategy: A contracted entity will seek input from FFN providers on how best to meet their professional development needs, create trainings and curricula based on this feedback, and deliver content through the CCR&Rs. Transitions across early childhood programs and into the elementary grades will be a key focus of the enhanced trainings, and quarterly evaluations on implementation and scalability will be conducted.

   Implement Parents Interacting With Infants (PIWI): The Pyramid Model Consortium's PIWI Model is a national, evidence-based, train-the-trainer model that provides resources on strengthening parent-child interactions and relationships, thereby supporting infant/toddler development. PIWI can be used to enhance professional practices in home visiting, parent-child groups, and socialization in settings such as EI and EHS. *Grant Strategy:* Illinois seeks to use PDG B-5 funding to train home visitor trainers in the PIWI model, with a focus on those serving bilingual families. A contracted entity will provide an intensive initial session and follow-up trainings. This project will both improve supports for bilingual families, a priority population, and further align infant/toddler practices with similar models already implemented in preschool settings. Evaluation of implementation and scalability will be conducted after each training.

   Increase capacity of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (I/ECMHC) Model: The I/ECMHC model is a multi-level practice that focuses on supporting and enhancing children's social and emotional development and overall well-being. I/ECMHC teams comprise multidisciplinary infant and early childhood mental health professionals who support adults serving young children and their families in a variety of settings using a relational, strengths-based approach. A growing body of research indicates that I/ECMHC increases staff's ability to understand and respond to children's challenging behaviors, reduces staff stress, and increases job satisfaction. Currently, every ECCE system in Illinois offers some form of I/ECMHC, and

the Children's Mental Health Partnership is coordinating expansion of these services. *Grant Strategy:* PDG B-5 funding will support the building of a cross-system database to increase system capacity and improve the quality of I/ECMHC model implementation. The data system will consist of three components: a consultant registry, information regarding consultant activities, and measures of the impact of consultation on adults working in ECCE. These measures will allow for future evaluations of the registry's impact on the quality of consultations for service providers, though not necessarily within the grant year.

Create a Community of Practice (CoP) for Practice-Based Coaching (PBC) in home visiting: Illinois recognizes that PBC is instrumental to ECCE professionals' ability to meaningfully draw upon best practices in serving young children and their families. An initial cohort of home visiting professional development providers throughout the state will receive a series of PBC trainings beginning in late 2018 and into 2019. Several systems in the state already offer PBC to support their ECCE providers and have developed CoPs for their participants. *Grant Strategy:* Illinois will use PDG B-5 funding to create a CoP for this cohort of home visiting PBC trainers. This CoP will meet semi-monthly both in-person and virtually, leveraging existing federal resources such as the Office of HS's MyPeers platform and the EarlyEdU Alliance. During the initial implementation period, evaluations will be conducted to better understand how this CoP can align with those of both the IHSA and state preschool-aged PBCs in future years.

Approach – Activity Five: Improving Overall Quality

Description: Starting in month 7 of the grant period, upon approval of the needs assessment and strategic plan, Illinois will improve overall program quality through four initiatives: A) supporting site-based Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI); B) improving infant/toddler program environments and learning experiences; C) developing new pathways for career advancement; and D) preparing policy options for modified program funding to support wage and benefit programs. GOECD and the ELC have done preliminary work in each area.

A) CQI: This initiative responds to feedback from T&TA providers in Illinois' QRIS. They have found that quality improvements are sustained only in programs with a culture of reflection and improvement. In response, the ELC is now identifying implementation science-based CQI support programs or frameworks to be integrated into the QRIS. The State will coordinate pre-k, child care, and HS T&TA based on these frameworks. This work will be completed early in 2019.

The proposed project, for months 7-12 of the grant period, is to begin implementation of the ELC-recommended practices by establishing CQI CoPs in six regions of the state with histories of collaboration in high-needs communities. Illinois has found it useful to coordinate supports on a regional level before moving to full statewide implementation. The desired outcome is for center- and school-based program leaders to take ownership of quality improvement by implementing the evidence-based CQI practices. By the end of the project period, the CoPs will be operating with identified leadership, goals, schedules, and coordinated supports from TA personnel. *Rationale summary*: Quality is sustained only when site-based leaders take ownership of it; evidence-based CQI frameworks can structure that work; and CoPs are cost-effective supports based on implementation science. *Timeframe*: The second 6 months

of the grant period, allowing for completion of framework development and TA planning before activities begin. The 6-month implementation period (months 7-12) is adequate because CoP formation will not start from scratch but will build on early childhood community systems that exist in many regions of the state.

B) Infant/Toddler Program Improvement: This initiative responds to two needs. First, for center-based programs, data collected in the QRIS reveals a significant and unexpected need for improved learning environments for infants and toddlers. Even among programs seeking ratings at the higher levels, scores on the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale were lowest on the "Space and Furnishings" subscale, averaging 3.69 out of 7. Infant/toddler TA providers have commented that programs simply do not have the finances to purchase appropriate furnishings. This initiative will upgrade classrooms serving low-income children though the purchase of materials needed to achieve subscale scores above 4, at a minimum. Centers will apply through the established QRIS processes. *Rationale summary*: Infant/toddler classroom environments do not, on average, meet requirements for quality programs, and a short-term program of furnishing and material upgrades can have lasting impact. *Timeframe*: Months 7-12 of the grant period, allowing time for planning before activities begin. The initiative is achievable because systems and protocols already exist for the work.

The second need is to support home-based providers, both licensed and license-exempt, who serve infants and toddlers. GOECD has developed a policy brief recommending three types of support that are feasible and evidence-based. They are Play & Learn Groups, Roving Readers, and distribution of materials and resources. In the Play & Learn approach, providers and their children meet with facilitators at a central location to learn curricular activities they can use in home-based settings. The Roving Reader approach has the same goal, but the Reader goes into

the homes. The third approach, materials distribution, provides curricular support materials to the home. All three have been piloted in Illinois communities. The proposed project will implement these recommendations in five regions of the state, building on current TA support systems. *Rationale summary*: Large numbers of parents choose home-based infant/toddler care, and the recommended supports infuse evidence-based practices into care routines. *Timeframe*: Activities will be implemented in months 7-12. Staff is already in place to implement the associated Play & Learn or Roving Reader programs at no additional cost.

      C) New Pathways for Career Advancement: Responding to research findings on the importance of well-qualified staff in ECCE programs, Illinois has established ambitious credentialing requirements. However, the state is eager to avoid displacing its programs' diverse and experienced staff members who have not yet attained the new credentials. Three strategies have emerged for addressing this issue. These are: 1) to develop college cohorts that meet the needs of existing staff members; 2) to layer funding within programs to create career ladders; and 3) to remove specific financial barriers that existing staff are experiencing.

      1) College cohorts: A few colleges have developed cohort models that meet the needs of working providers while complying with the complex requirements of the State's higher education system. The proposed project will engage a consultant to inventory these models, verify their replicability, and describe them to colleges and providers to support replication. The consultant's report will guide implementation in the following year. *Rationale summary*: Many providers experience obstacles associated with college attendance; some colleges have developed solutions; and replication of those models will advance the State's goal of a diverse workforce. *Timeline summary*: Engage the consultant in month 7 and complete the guide in 4 months.

2) *Coordinated budgeting and monitoring system for layered funding:* Layered funding (also called blended or braided) is the use of multiple funding streams within a program. This practice enhances program staffing, and the new positions can result in career ladders within a program. However, some layering arrangements simply replace less credentialed staff with more highly credentialed personnel. This project employs a consultant to recommend a unified approach to budgeting and fiscal monitoring in support of career ladders. *Rationale summary*: Layered funding can create career ladders but coordinated budget guidelines are needed to support this goal. *Timeframe*: Engage the consultant in month 7 and complete the report in four months.

3) *Remove financial barriers to credential attainment:* More than 25,000 individuals have attained credentials since recent reinvention of the QRIS, but many are still struggling to meet the new requirements. In August 2018, at least 172 centers did not yet have enough credentialed staff members to maintain their QRIS ratings and the State has suspended the original deadline so it can address the problem. The proposed initiative restores for six months a successful but time-limited initiative used under RTT-ELC, reducing credential fees for a limited time and paying eligible transcript and tuition costs. *Rationale summary*: A short-term program of financial supports can remove barriers to meeting the new credentialing requirements. *Timeframe*: Begin implementation in month 7 and finish in month 12.

D) Preparing Policy Options for Modified Program Funding to Support Wage and Benefit Programs: Perhaps the most fundamental obstacle to consistent quality is programs' inability to pay wages and benefits commensurate with required qualifications. Illinois believes that the three major funding streams—child care, state pre-k and HS—can work together to coordinate or modify how they fund programs, with the goal of adequate compensation. This

project will build directly on cost modeling completed in the needs assessment. Based on this modeling, a consultant will work with State agencies and other experts to develop a set of options for phase-in of funding modifications. The City of Chicago has already begun cost modeling and cross-system planning, and its findings will be critical in this work. The consultant's report will reflect the priorities of each funding stream as well as regional variations that might be needed. *Rationale summary*: Attracting and retaining qualified staff is key to quality; current program funding methods do not result in adequate compensation; cost modeling will recommend target compensation amounts; and the next step is to outline ways to modify funding methods. *Timeframe*: Begin activities in month 7 and issue the report by month 12.

In summary, the Activity Five initiatives will advance site-level evidence-based practices through CQI CoPs and supports for infant/toddler programs and improve workforce quality through strategies described. These initiatives arise from identified needs, grow out of current planning, and are achievable within the 6-month timeframe.

Organizational Capacity and Management

Lead Entity and Partner Staff Roles, Responsibilities, and Experience: GOECD, the

Lead Agency for this application, is the executive office responsible for promoting quality,

consistency, and alignment within the state's ECCE system. Current staff roles and

responsibilities are detailed in the chart below. Additional hires will be made by the (vacant)

Project Director as outlined in the budget.

Staff Member and Role	Responsibilities, Experience, and Capabilities
Cynthia L. Tate, Ph.D. Executive Director	Dr. Tate is responsible for ensuring that the vision and strategic objectives for Illinois' ECCE system are coordinated across child and family initiatives and for providing oversight to MIECHV and federal Preschool Expansion Grant (PDG-E) program implementation. Dr. Tate will have primary leadership responsibility for this grant, including supervision of managers with direct program responsibility and oversight of reports and deliverables. Previously, Dr. Tate served as Senior Deputy for Programs, Practice, Quality and Research for DCFS.
Jamilah R. Jor'dan, Ph.D. Deputy Director	Dr. Jor'dan serves as the key advisor to the Executive Director. Dr. Jor'dan will oversee implementation of Activity Three: Maximizing Parental Choice and Knowledge. Previously, Dr. Jor'dan co-chaired the development of the Illinois Family Specialist Credential, served as a consultant for Strengthening Families Illinois (DCFS), and developed a tool for states to assess their family strengthening practices within ECCE systems.
Maggie Koller, M.S. Project Manager	Ms. Koller manages logistics and communications for GOECD, the ELC and its Executive Committee, and the ECCE Inter-Agency Team, engaging stakeholders to ensure smooth operations. She will coordinate ELC involvement in needs assessment and strategic planning processes and dissemination planning and execution. She brings client and project management, strategic planning, and copywriting experience to the role.
Tom Layman, M.Ed. QRIS (ExceleRate) Policy Director	Mr. Layman coordinates cross-system policy interpretation, development, and alignment of quality improvement supports at GOECD. He will oversee execution of Activity Five: Improving Overall Quality, working closely with State agencies, the ELC, and TA providers. Previously, he developed ECCE programs for a statewide service provider, served as Executive Director of the Chicago Metro AEYC, and was Executive Director of a child care center for 21 years.
Donna Nylander, M.S.	Ms. Nylander coordinates the 19-agency Pyramid Model State Leadership Team Partnership and its four workgroups. She will

Pyramid Model Implementation Director	support the Pyramid Model work for the PDG B-5. She has over 35 years of experience in ECCE as an administrator, coach, and trainer.
Lori Orr, M.S. Preschool Expansion Policy Implementation Director	Ms. Orr's responsibilities include ensuring Federal compliance on PDG-E and overseeing policy and planning of designated statewide ECCE efforts; her knowledge and expertise aligns with the PDG B-5 projects and she will support work across all activities. Previously, Ms. Orr worked in a leadership role in Illinois' EI System at Child and Family Connections of DuPage. She has experience in child care, child welfare, and community systems development.
Bethany Patten, MPP Workforce Policy Director	Ms. Patten's responsibilities include managing strategy development and implementation for cross-system ECCE workforce development, kindergarten transitions, and ECCE finance. Ms. Patten will oversee workforce development and finance projects within Activities Four and Five. Previously, Ms. Patten has experience with policy research, advocacy, technical assistance, and systems development in ECCE, K-12, and workforce development.
Lesley Schwartz, LCSW Project Director, MIECHV	Ms. Schwartz is responsible for grant implementation and administration of Illinois MIECHV. She will serve as an adviser for the home visiting activities proposed in PDG B-5 and as the liaison between GOECD and Illinois Home Visiting. Ms. Schwartz has over 13 years of experience in development and implementation of evidence-based prevention programs for children B-6.
Julia Zhu, MPP Community Systems Policy Director	Ms. Zhu supports the community-level implementation of statewide ECCE initiatives, focusing on improving supports to build community collaboration capacity and high-quality service provision. Ms. Zhu's work on the PDG-E has adequately prepared her to oversee Activity Four. She has experience teaching B-5, leading performance evaluations for such programs, and serving as a community and parent support coordinator for programs targeting immigrant and other underserved populations.

ISBE is the Fiscal Agent for this application and is the State Education Agency that administers and supervises IDEA Part B Section 619, State funded preschool, home visiting, and other B-3 programs funded through the ECBG, Title I of ESEA, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Staff Member and Role	Responsibilities, Experience, and Capabilities
Carisa Hurley, M.Ed. Director, Early Childhood Division	Ms. Hurley oversees implementation of ECBG, monitoring of interagency contracts, and service delivery. Ms. Hurley will provide supervision guidance and support to principal consultants assigned to PDG B-5 as it relates to fiscal oversight and service alignment and delivery. Ms. Hurley will also assist with the development of the

	strategic plan. She has 22 years of experience working in federal, state, and community-based ECCE programs.
Lynn Burgett, M.S., Division Supervisor	Ms. Burgett provides direct supervision to ISBE's early childhood Principal Consultants and oversees the ECBG award process. She will work with system alignment and the needs assessment areas of the grant. Ms. Burgett has previous experience as an early childhood coordinator within a school district.
Alicia Lynch Deatherage Principal Consultant	Ms. Lynch Deatherage provides fiscal management and budgeting within the Early Childhood Division. She has 15 years of experience in the Division and will provide fiscal oversight and budgeting of the PDG B-5 grant.
Jennifer Metcalf, M.Ed. Principal Consultant	Ms. Metcalf provides oversight for ECBG programs and serves as the agency representative for PDG-E and the state QRIS. For this grant, she will provide oversight and support best practices in areas of quality improvement. Ms. Metcalf has prior experience as a child care director as well as in higher education student services.
Penny Smith Principal Consultant	Ms. Smith supports PI programs within ECBG and oversees professional learning, community systems development, and monitoring contracts. Under this grant, she will provide grant oversight and support best practices in areas of professional learning for home visiting and community systems. Previously, she served as a PI Coordinator serving 14 school districts in all rural areas outside the city of Peoria.

Collaborating Partner Organizations may include: American Institutes for Research;

Be Strong Families; ELC; Erikson Institute; Illinois Action for Children; DCFS; IDHS; IDPH;

IHSA; Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies; Illinois State University;

Northern Illinois University; Ounce of Prevention Fund; and others. The roles and

responsibilities of our State agency partners are articulated in their Letters of Commitment in

"File 2 Appendices ILLINOIS." Memoranda of Understanding will be created for additional

collaborators as needed.

Alignment with Existing Initiatives and Expertise: The activities in this grant align

with Illinois' existing initiatives and will help to further expand and develop the state's B-5

mixed delivery system. GOECD has managed administration of three federal mixed delivery

systems grants: RTT-ELC and PDG-E, both in partnership with ISBE, and MIECHV. GOECD

and ISBE have worked together to implement a framework for social and emotional learning professional development across several sites in fulfillment of a PDG-E supplemental funding opportunity. Additionally, GOECD and ISBE have partnered with DCFS to develop joint rules in support of comprehensive state ECCE suspension and expulsion legislation. Illinois has a history of supporting culturally and linguistically competent service delivery as the first state to pass laws requiring the provision of English language supports; this has been bolstered by efforts led by external partners to create related ESL and Bilingual educator career pathways. Finally, the ELC's cross-sector commitment to improving racial equity began in 2014 and is described in greater detail on page 17. Ultimately, this work has strengthened the ability of the state's ECCE agencies and partners to pool expertise and work collaboratively.

Agency and Partner Capacity to Administer: ISBE serves as the administrator of the ECBG and is the state agency grantee for the federal PDG-E. ISBE awards subgrants to non-federal entities such as Local Education Agencies, institutions of higher education, and nonprofits. All subgrantees are held accountable to procedures in ISBE's State and Federal Grant Administration Policy, Fiscal Requirements, and Procedures Handbook. ISBE's Division of Early Childhood has a principal consultant who is competent in budget development, mixed delivery systems, billing, and processes who will provide fiscal accountability, transparency, and oversight for the PDG B-5.

Timeline

The timeline for completing Illinois' proposed tasks and subtasks for Activities One through Five are given in the chart below, along with associated milestones. Additional details on key metrics of progress are provided in the Program Performance Evaluation Plan on pages 41-48. Illinois will use a project management system to manage and document progress toward each activity's milestones. Illinois will complete Activities One and Two by month 6 of the project; with the indicated 10 business day review period described in the FOA, Illinois will spend 5.5 months completing the tasks described in Activity Five.

TASK and SUBTASK	MILESTONE	MONTH											
Activity One: B-5 Needs Assessment		M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12
Initial outreach and information gathering		▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪						
Set needs assessment contract	3 focus groups and literature review completed	▪											
Begin stakeholder engagement			▪	▪		▪							
Gather needs assessment best practices		▪											
Inventory and analyze existing statewide needs assessments		▪	▪	▪	▪								
Compare existing needs assessments	Needs assessment analysis; research agenda completed	▪											
Document data and research gaps				▪	▪								
Needs assessment as planning tool				▪	▪								
Develop mid-term set of research plans	Research plans; performance measurement plan completed				▪								
Restructure performance measurement plan					▪								
Needs assessment as analysis		▪											
Complete statewide cost modeling	Cost model and unduplicated count report completed	▪	▪										
Expand scope of unduplicated count		▪											
Needs assessment as tool supporting execution						▪							
Publish and disseminate needs assessment	Needs assessment published					▪							
Activity Two: B-5 Strategic Plan (SP)		M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12
Review and update ELC Strategic Framework		▪	▪										
Form ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee		▪											

Task	Deliverable	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12
Review ELC Strategic Framework	Updated ELC Strategic Framework completed	█											
Update ELC Strategic Framework		█	█										
Inventory of additional existing SPs		█	█										
Compile inventory of ECCE strategic plans	Inventory completed	█											
Outreach to associated partners/stakeholders			█										
Mine existing SPs for aligned goals, objectives, and strategies			█	█									
Engage partners and stakeholders in review	Review completed & integration initiated		█	█									
Identify relevant goals and objectives			█	█									
Initiate integration					█								
Develop plans for increased coordination and collaboration		█	█	█	█	█	█						
Develop plan for aligned governance	Plans for aligned governance and CI completed	█	█	█	█	█	█						
Develop plan for expanded CI		█											
Complete plans for increased access								█					
Develop recommendations for inclusion	Recommendations and plans completed; processes designed							█					
Develop plan for increased access for children in child welfare to home visiting/EI								█					
Design processes for identification and referral of families at risk of prematurity								█					
Review of kindergarten transition plan					█	█	█						
Develop pilot for Pre-K - K transitions	Pilot implemented				█	█	█						
Integrate existing strategic plan goals and objectives					█								
Integrate plans for Increased Coordination	Increased coordination; access plans integrated				█								
Integrate plans for Increased Access					█								
SP as tool supporting execution							█						
Publish and disseminate SP	SP published						█						
Activity Three: Maximizing Parental Choice and Knowledge		M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12
Consumer education and consumer engagement		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Restructure ExceleRate website	Websites restructured and enhanced	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Enhance DCFS Sunshine website		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Governance and family collaboration		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Family Engagement recommendations presented to ELC Access Committee	Parent/family representation on ELC established	█	█	█									

Task	Deliverable	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12
ELC approves establishment of parent/family representation on ELC							X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Strengthen family engagement in ECCE			X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Family engagement		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Café Development and Pilots (3)	Café models defined and hosts trained	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Development of Café Facilitation Guides			X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Parent leaders and hosts trained			X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Priority population		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Increase enrollment/supports for inclusion	Increased enrollment supports in place and public awareness resources disseminated			X	X	X	X	X	X				
Review ExceleRate levels and standards			X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Develop and disseminate family resources		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Increase enrollment/supports for children experiencing homelessness			X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Activity Four: Sharing Best Practices		M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12
Align supports for community collaborations and providers		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Contract consultant and create task force to oversee project	Recommendations submitted to ELC	X	X	X									
Create and submit recommendations to ELC				X	X	X							
Implement recommendations for alignment							X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Engage community voice in state level policy/program design		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Create Community Systems Portal website	Process implemented for feedback incorporation	X	X	X	X								
Design and implement Portal feedback loop			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Enhanced trainings for FFN providers		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Contract provider for enhanced FFN training	Trainings delivered; evaluation report of project received	X											
Provide cohort trainings to FFN providers			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ongoing evaluation			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pyramid Model Consortium's PIWI Model		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Contract provider for PIWI trainings	Trainings delivered: evaluation report of project received	X											
Train home visiting trainers on PIWI			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ongoing evaluation			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
I/ECMHC data system		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Create database of I/ECMH consultants		X	X	X	X	X							

Task	Milestone	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12
Identify and enroll consultants in registry	Database and registry launched and active			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Design measures for impact evaluation				█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
CoP for practice-based coaching in home visiting		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Identify and engage consultant		█											
Conduct in-person and virtual CoP sessions	CoP is active			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Ongoing evaluation				█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Activity Five: Improving Overall Quality		M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12
Supporting site-based CQI													
Identify and engage contractor	CQI Communities of Practice operating with TA provider support							█					
Support compliance and direction								█	█	█	█	█	█
Oversee feedback loop with State agencies								█	█	█	█	█	█
Infant/toddler program improvement								█					
Communicate opportunity to programs	Materials distributed; home-based provider support sessions underway							█					
Provide home-based provider supports								█	█	█	█	█	█
Distribute materials										█	█	█	█
New pathways for career advancement								█					
Identify and engage consultants	Consultant reports completed; funds for credential support disbursed							█					
Consultant work underway									█	█	█	█	█
Fee reductions and tuition reimbursement								█					█
Policy options to fund the cost of quality								█					
Identify and engage consultant								█					
Engage stakeholders and conduct analysis	Consultant report completed								█	█	█	█	
Consultant writes report													█
Other: Project Performance Evaluation		M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12
Utilize data sources to monitor progress		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Establish metrics; analyze metrics projects	Data analysis ongoing	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Communication with the PDG B-5 team		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Hold bi-monthly evaluation meetings	Meetings held; monthly memos generated	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Monthly memo updates		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Write final evaluation report	Evaluation report completed												█

Program Performance Evaluation Plan

      Illinois will monitor the proposed costs, processes, and accomplishment of short-term outcomes using a variety of metrics and data sources. The monitoring will occur within the framework of a continuous improvement process called a plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycle. The sections below describe the metrics, data sources, and methods for collecting and using data to refine the logic model and monitor progress.

      Metrics and Data Sources: Illinois will use a combination of binary indicators (i.e., yes or no) and counts to monitor both the progress towards and completion of activities and processes, outputs, and short-term outcomes.

      Metrics of cost and associated data sources: Federal grant awards are accounted for separately in ISBE's MIDAS accounting system. The federal grant awards are identified in MIDAS by grant year, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number, grant award number, as well as the allocation difference between reimbursement and administrative funds. Applicable expenditures are charged against each grant as they occur, and a monthly reconciliation of available grant funds is performed between this accounting system and the US Department of Education's G5 system. Appropriations are also reconciled with the State Comptroller's office monthly.

      Metrics of processes and associated data sources: To measure progress towards the completion of the processes that appear in the logic model, Illinois will report on key metrics of program processes and outputs at regularly scheduled intervals. The metrics associated with each of the key processes and outputs are shown in the table below on page 43. Most of the metrics are binary measures of whether a product was completed and disseminated. The data source for tracking these binary measures will be artifacts, such as a completed plan or report that has been

disseminated to the target audience. Activity leads (ALs) will upload these artifacts into the project management system.

To monitor other processes, the performance evaluator (PE) will use continuous metrics, such as the number of café-style conversations occurred or the number of infant/toddler classrooms and home-based programs that receive materials. ALs will record the counts associated with each of these metrics in the performance management data system.

Metrics of program implementation and associated data sources: The short-term outcomes of program implementation (or the expected outcomes within one year of funding) are shown in the table on pages 43-45. The first column lists the short-term outcome and the target date. The second column contains the key metrics that the PE will use to evaluate whether Illinois accomplished the outcome. The third column lists the data source. For outcome **(b)**, the data source is an artifact: a plan and the evidence of its dissemination. For outcomes **(a)** and **(c)**, the data sources will need to be developed (see the data sources section below for more detail).

Existing and Needed Data Systems: To monitor progress, GOECD will design and maintain a Performance Management Data System. This data system will track the list of metrics included in the following two tables on pages 43-46 and progress towards completion and will allow the project team to enter data, attach artifacts to the system, and produce summary reports. In addition, GOECD will build a data system to track three data elements: 1) the number of communities participating in coordinated intake; 2) equitable access for target populations within one year; and 3) the number of providers engaged in evidence-based quality improvement. Existing data that contribute to the measurement of these outcomes include the ExceleRate database, MIECHV data reporting system, the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies' Gateways Registry, and the ILDS.

Key Metrics of Program Processes and Outputs Aligned to the Logic Model	
Output 1i. Needs assessment report	
Illinois will oversee and monitor:	Deadline
a) The inventory and analysis of existing statewide needs assessments to produce a revised research agenda for the ELC, documenting gaps in the data and research.	Month 4
b) Writing of a plan to fill the gaps in data and research.	Month 4
c) Sharing of a report with the ELC about the cost of providing high-quality ECCE services to all families.	Month 5
d) Integration of all findings from the needs assessment activities to produce a final report.	Month 5
e) Dissemination of a needs assessment report to the ELC, the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth, and other cross-system bodies.	Month 5
Output 2i. Integrated overall strategic plan	
Illinois will oversee and monitor:	Deadline
a) The inventory of existing strategic plans to produce a report and share it with ELC and partners who authored existing plans.	Month 2
b) The mining of existing strategic plans to produce a report and share it with ELC and partners who authored existing strategic plans.	Month 4
c) The integration of existing strategic plans to produce a final statewide strategic plan as indicated in Dissemination Plan on page 57.	Month 5
Output 3i. Consolidated agency website information	
Illinois will:	Deadline
a) Oversee and monitor the review of ExceleRate and DCFS Sunshine websites and produce a document with recommendations for improvement to the website.	Month 2
b) Retain an IT consulting firm to implement recommendations to ExceleRate and DCFS Sunshine websites.	Month 3
c) Oversee and monitor the consulting firm to ensure the specified improvements to the ExceleRate and DCFS Sunshine websites are completed.	Month 12
d) Assess the accessibility of the ExceleRate and DCFS Sunshine websites and produce a report recommending improvements.	Month 4
Output 3ii. Family representation on ELC	
Illinois will:	Deadline
a) Identify family representatives to be recommended for nomination to the ELC.	Month 3

Key Metrics of Program Processes and Outputs Aligned to the Logic Model	
b) Approve recommendation of family representative participation in the ELC.	Month 5
c) Ensure family representatives will participate in a meeting of the ELC.	Month 6
Output 3iii. Café Pilots	
Illinois will oversee and monitor:	Deadline
a) The pilot of 3 café-style conversations about decision making, chronic absenteeism and school transitions, and suspension and expulsion in 3 communities.	Month 7
b) The training of parent leaders and hosts to facilitate the pilot of café-style conversations on decision making, chronic absenteeism and school transitions, and suspension and expulsion.	Months 2-8
c) The production of café facilitation guides for piloting café-style conversations on decision making, chronic absenteeism and school transitions, and suspension and expulsion.	Month 12
Output 3iv. Inclusion-focused resources and resource directories	
Illinois will oversee and monitor:	Deadline
a) Illinois Early Learning Project and Early CHOICES to ensure the development and dissemination of inclusion-focused public awareness resources and training materials for families.	Month 12
b) The creation of resource toolkits to support establishing partnerships between early childhood programming and homeless services.	Month 12
Output 4i. Implementation of a unified T&TA framework	
Illinois will:	Deadline
a) Identify a task force to oversee and implement the new T&TA framework and create and submit recommendations on the unified framework to the ELC.	Month 5
Output 4ii. Process for incorporating community voice into policy and program design	
Illinois will oversee and monitor:	Deadline
(a) The creation of a Community Systems Portal website.	Month 6
(b) The implementation of feedback process from Portal website into policy and program design.	Month 12
Output 4iii. Funding of quality improvement enhancements and resources to T&TA providers	
Illinois will oversee and monitor:	Deadline
a) The design of relationship-based FFN trainings for two cohorts.	Month 2
b) The implementation of monthly FFN trainings for two cohorts and quarterly evaluations.	Month 5
c) Incorporation of implementation recommendations from FFN training evaluation into T&TA framework.	Month 12

Key Metrics of Program Processes and Outputs Aligned to the Logic Model	
d) Implementation of PIWI trainings for 20 providers; PIWI trainings will comprise: one 2-day initial session, one booster training, and one supervisor training.	Month 2
e) Incorporation of implementation recommendations from PIWI training evaluation into T&TA framework.	Month 12
f) The launch of a database of I/ECMHC.	Month 6
g) The identification and enrollment of at least 75 consultants in the I/ECMHC database.	Month 2
h) The evaluation of the impact of the database and I/ECMH consultations.	Month 2
i) Revisions to T&TA framework based on findings from the evaluation of database and I/ECMH consultations.	Month 2
j) The implementation and evaluation of 10 CoP sessions.	Month 3
Output 5i. CQI communities of practice (CoP)	
Illinois will oversee and monitor:	Deadline
a) The convening of CoPs supporting CQI in 6 regions.	Month 12
Output 5ii. Infant/toddler program upgrades	
Illinois will oversee and monitor:	Deadline
a) The distribution of materials to 200 infant/toddler classrooms and 300 home-based programs.	Month 12
Output 5iii. Career pathways recommendations and supports	
Illinois will monitor and oversee:	Deadline
a) Dissemination to the ELC of a guide for college cohort replication.	Month 12
b) Dissemination to the ELC of report with recommendations for layered funding budgeting and monitoring.	Month 12
c) Issuance of financial support for credential attainment to 300 individuals.	Month 12
Output 5iv. Finance and compensation policy options report	
Illinois will monitor and oversee:	Deadline
a) Dissemination to the ELC of a report on options for phase-in of coordinated program funding across systems.	Month 12

Key Metrics of Program Implementation Aligned to the Logic Model		
Short-Term Outcomes	Key Metrics	Data Source
(**a**) Increase the number of communities participating in coordinated outreach, enrollment, and intake *by the end of year one.*	Count of additional communities that are participating in coordinated outreach, enrollment, and intake *by the end of year one.*	Data system to be developed
(**b**) Produce a cross-systems plan for increased equitable access to target populations *by the end of year one.*	Completed cross-system plan for increasing equitable access to target populations *by the end of year one.*	Artifact: cross-systems plan and evidence of its dissemination
(**c**) Increase in the number of providers engaged in evidence-based quality improvement *by the end of year one.*	Count of additional providers engaged in evidence-based quality improvement *at the end of year one.*	Data system to be developed

Methodology for Monitoring Progress and Refining the Logic Model: The

performance evaluation and refinement of the logic model will take place in the context of a

continuous improvement framework using PDSA cycles. The project team will comprise the

performance evaluator (PE), the project director (PD), and the activity leads (ALs) to be

designated based on staffing decisions.

In the *"plan"* phase, the project team will deliberately identify goals, needs, resources,

barriers, and approaches to plan action steps for change. The initial plan comes from this

proposal itself and the logic model on page 50. At the 6-month mark, as the needs assessment

and strategic plan are completed, the team will assemble to incorporate findings from the needs

assessment and strategic plan into the logic model, creating a map of how to accomplish the

short-term outcomes listed in the strategic plan and a plan to measure each of the outputs of these

outcomes. Monthly, the team will update the logic model as it gains new insights about needed

processes to meet its outcomes.

Once the team has established a plan, it will enter the *"do"* phase, where it will

implement the new plan and action steps, including any documentation or data collection about

the key components of the implementation process. The implementation will follow the activities and processes described in the logic model on page 50. As the logic model is refined over time when the needs assessment and strategic plan are completed, the team will implement any updated activities and processes. The ALs will collect and enter data on their progress toward accomplishing their output metrics using project management software and monthly written reports to the PD and PE summarizing their progress to date, major accomplishments during the past month, planned activities for the coming month, challenges and plans to resolve them, and requests for additional resources or assistance. ALs will also upload artifacts documenting the completion of a process or output. During bimonthly meetings with the project team, the ALs will provide verbal status updates.

Next, the team will *"study"* the documentation and data to analyze the changes that have occurred and the progress made toward accomplishing the outputs and outcomes. The PE will lead the analysis of documentation and data and synthesize findings for the team in a written memo to the PD and verbal feedback to each AL in monthly meetings.

Armed with new analyses, each AL and the PD will identify needed adaptations and adjustments so that it can *"act."* Specifically, in response to the verbal and written feedback from the ALs, the PE will write and submit a monthly synthesis to the PD that provides a "big-picture" look at whether each process and activity is on track and suggestions for changes in personnel or resources in the next month.

Data Sources: To monitor progress toward completing each process, output, and short-term outcome, the PEs will rely on the following types of data: 1) verbal updates; 2) monthly written memos from ALs; 3) project management software tracking costs and progress, output,

and outcome; and 4) artifacts of process or output completion. The table below displays the frequency of each data collection activity, the participants, and data sources.

ALs and the PD will provide updates on project activities at semi-monthly meetings. During these meetings, the team will monitor project management software and artifacts of completed processes or outputs. It will also discuss barriers and plan to resolve these challenges. If needed, the PD will reallocate resources or aid. In addition to these meetings, each AL will submit a monthly written memo via the project management system to the PE and the PD that includes the following: 1) progress to date on accomplishing each proposed output in the logic model; 2) accomplishments from the last month; 3) activities for the next month; 4) challenges and plans to address them; and 5) requests for additional resources or help. The PD and PE will meet with each AL via phone to review progress and offer course correction as needed. The PE will write a memo on the status of the project and meet with the PD to discuss it monthly.

Summary of Routines for Providing Formative Feedback								
Task	*Participants*				*Data Sources Used for Feedback*			
	ALs	Act. team	PD	PE	Verbal updates	Memos	Project manage-ment software	Arti-facts
Weekly meetings for activity teams	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
Semi-monthly project team meetings	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Monthly project review meetings with each AL	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monthly performance evaluation meetings			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Logic Model

The logic model for this project can be found on page 50. The vision of the Illinois PDG B-5 is that *access to a continuous, equitable, and high-quality early childhood system enables*
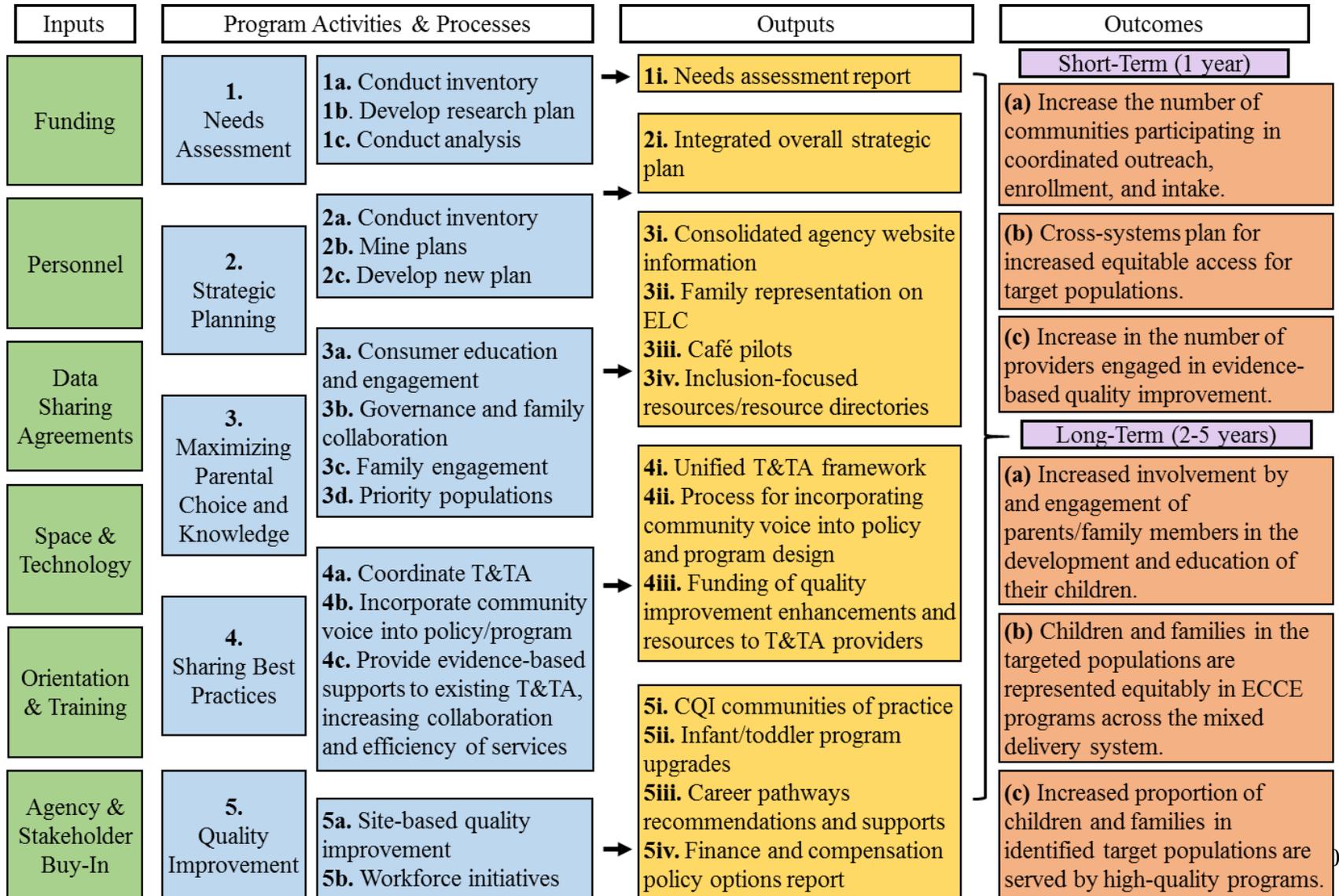
children, with the support of their families and communities, to grow up safe, healthy, happy,

and ready to succeed. The key assumption underlying the project is that through the five PDG B-5 activities listed in the logic model, the project team will achieve the goal to *coordinate Illinois' mixed delivery system so that all children and families have access to the services they need to thrive* by focusing on three key objectives*: 1) increased coordination and collaboration; 2) increased and equitable access; and 3) improved quality.* This project's activities and processes focus on administrators, teachers, providers, and families with children B-5 in Illinois' ECCE mixed delivery system. The logic model of the Illinois PDG B-5 project posits that given a set of resources*,* we will be able to plan and execute several key processes that are aligned to each of the five activities. Each activity will result in specific *outputs* necessary for achieving short- and long-term outcomes that are aligned to the project objectives. The components of the logic model are described in greater detail in the subsequent sections.

Inputs and Resources: Underlying assumptions about the agency structure, current staffing, current funded initiatives, and ECCE political environment shape decisions about the inputs and resources necessary to implement our project approach. The inputs include not only the financial and staffing resources, but also infrastructure supports such as meeting space and materials, technology, the execution of contractual and data sharing agreements, and buy-in by agency administrators and stakeholders. In addition, personnel (i.e., agency administrators and stakeholders) may need an orientation and training about the goals, activities, and tactics of this project.

Vision: Access to a continuous, equitable, and high-quality early childhood system enables children, with the support of their families and communities, to grow up safe, healthy, happy, and ready to succeed.

Goal: Coordinate Illinois' mixed delivery system so that all children and families have access to the services they need to thrive.
Objectives: **(A)** Increased coordination and collaboration **(B)** Increased and equitable access **(C)** Increased quality

Inputs	Program Activities & Processes	Outputs	Outcomes

Inputs
- Funding
- Personnel
- Data Sharing Agreements
- Space & Technology
- Orientation & Training
- Agency & Stakeholder Buy-In

Program Activities & Processes

1. Needs Assessment
- **1a.** Conduct inventory
- **1b.** Develop research plan
- **1c.** Conduct analysis

2. Strategic Planning
- **2a.** Conduct inventory
- **2b.** Mine plans
- **2c.** Develop new plan

3. Maximizing Parental Choice and Knowledge
- **3a.** Consumer education and engagement
- **3b.** Governance and family collaboration
- **3c.** Family engagement
- **3d.** Priority populations

4. Sharing Best Practices
- **4a.** Coordinate T&TA
- **4b.** Incorporate community voice into policy/program
- **4c.** Provide evidence-based supports to existing T&TA, increasing collaboration and efficiency of services

5. Quality Improvement
- **5a.** Site-based quality improvement
- **5b.** Workforce initiatives

Outputs
- **1i.** Needs assessment report
- **2i.** Integrated overall strategic plan
- **3i.** Consolidated agency website information
- **3ii.** Family representation on ELC
- **3iii.** Café pilots
- **3iv.** Inclusion-focused resources/resource directories
- **4i.** Unified T&TA framework
- **4ii.** Process for incorporating community voice into policy and program design
- **4iii.** Funding of quality improvement enhancements and resources to T&TA providers
- **5i.** CQI communities of practice
- **5ii.** Infant/toddler program upgrades
- **5iii.** Career pathways recommendations and supports
- **5iv.** Finance and compensation policy options report

Outcomes

Short-Term (1 year)
- **(a)** Increase the number of communities participating in coordinated outreach, enrollment, and intake.
- **(b)** Cross-systems plan for increased equitable access for target populations.
- **(c)** Increase in the number of providers engaged in evidence-based quality improvement.

Long-Term (2-5 years)
- **(a)** Increased involvement by and engagement of parents/family members in the development and education of their children.
- **(b)** Children and families in the targeted populations are represented equitably in ECCE programs across the mixed delivery system.
- **(c)** Increased proportion of children and families in identified target populations are served by high-quality programs.

Activities and Processes: Each of the five activities is made up of several key processes or steps. Each activity will lead to immediate, measurable outputs, ultimately resulting in our short- and long-terms project outcomes. The below table provides a summary description of each process that is core to our proposed scope of work. These processes are further described previously within each activity section on pages 8-32.

Definitions of Activities and Processes	
Program Activities and Processes	Process Description
Activity One	*Needs Assessment*
1a. Conduct inventory	Gather and compare Illinois' state and federally required needs assessments, including comparing definitions of terms used and population descriptive information.
1b. Develop a set of research plans	Based on process 1a, document data and research gaps in the updated ELC Research Agenda and in research work plans for priority projects.
1c. Conduct analysis	Analyze cost of providing high-quality services, including analysis of barriers to and opportunities for more efficient resource use.
Activity Two	*Strategic Planning*
2a. Conduct inventory	Gather and compare the existing Illinois ECCE strategic plans to catalogue and organize the content of each plan.
2b. Mine plans	Conduct a systematic content review of the existing strategic plans to pull out relevant content and evaluate for use in new strategic plan.
2c. Develop new plan	Develop a new plan that draws on and integrates the relevant content from processes 2a and 2b, along with focused planning areas.
Activity Three	*Maximizing Parental Choice and Knowledge*
3a. Consumer education and engagement	Review and restructure agency websites for easier navigation, use of plain language, and enhanced program search functions.
3b. Governance and family collaboration	Secure approval of recommendation to include diverse parent/family representation on the ELC.
3c. Family engagement	Develop and pilot 3 topic-focused Parent and Community Cafés. Train parent leaders to facilitate and host Café pilots.
3d. Priority populations	Develop and disseminate inclusion-focused public awareness resources and training materials for families. Develop and distribute resource directories for families experiencing homelessness.
Activity Four	*Sharing Best Practices*
4a. Coordinate T&TA	Create or identify a coordinating body to oversee the development of a unified data system and implementation framework for T&TA.

Definitions of Activities and Processes	
Program Activities and Processes	Process Description
4b. Incorporate community voice into policy/program design	Create an online Portal to capture input from communities and providers to inform the development and implementation of high-quality ECCE services.
4c. Provide evidence-based supports to existing T&TA, increasing collaboration and efficiency of services.	Fund evidence-based supports to increase the capacity of T&TA for FFN service providers, home visitors serving bilingual families, the Illinois I/ECMHC, and practice-based coaches.
Activity Five	*Quality Improvement*
5a. Site-based quality improvement	Organize program site leaders and TA providers regionally to implement CQI and distribute materials to upgrade infant/toddler classrooms.
5b. Workforce initiatives	Develop reports to support college cohort model replication, career ladders within programs, and policy options for increased funding for compensation. The Gateways funding and scholarship system will reduce credentialing fees and help with tuition.

Outputs: The key products, or outputs, result from the activity's processes. They are key items that are measurable and time-bound that serve as evidence that we accomplished our processes and lead to the project's short- and long-term outcomes. The outputs listed in the logic model focus on those that can be accomplished in the first year of the grant. They include deliverables from the activities, such as a needs assessment from Activity One and a strategic plan for aligning the ECCE systems from Activity Two. Outputs also include concrete results that stem from processes that involve parents, disseminate knowledge, improve information access, and improve CQI. Finally, outputs in our logic model also serve as constructs for developing and tracking metrics that will be used in the Program Performance Evaluation Plan.

Outcomes: Illinois PDG B-5 outcomes focus on what changes are expected to result from our key activities and processes. We anticipate accomplishing three short-term outcomes within 12 months of the grant and three long-term outcomes within 2-5 years. All the outcomes are aligned directly with the three overarching objectives of our project. The table below details

our rationale between the link between the objectives and outcomes detailed in the logic model.

The processes and outputs were further detailed in previous activity sections that provider greater

details for each project activity.

Linkage between Activity Outputs and Outcomes	
Outputs	*How Outputs Are Related to Objectives of Outcomes*
1i. Needs assessment report	The report will include a needs assessment inventory, updated research agenda, research work plans, performance measurement plan, and cost of quality analysis report. The report will support achievement of the short-term outcomes by informing pilot project and expansion site selection and decision-making.
2i. Integrated overall strategic plan	The strategic plan for ECCE will describe how grant activities will lead to short-term outcomes of increased number of communities participating in coordinated intake; a cross-system approach for increased equitable access for target populations by expanding coordinated intake; and identifying barriers and solutions to increased access for children in target populations. This output relates to the long-term outcome **(b)** children and families equitably represented.
3i. Consolidated agency website information	The two consolidated, restructured, and enhanced agency websites will increase parent/family knowledge of child care options within Illinois' mixed delivery system, addressing the three long-term outcomes.
3ii. Family representation on ELC	By completing this output, diverse parent/family voices will be part of a state advising body, which will lead to long-term outcome **(a)** by including parents/families in early childhood policy development and engagement in decision making processes.
3iii. Café Pilots	Completing the pilot of 3 topic-focused Cafés will lead to long-term outcome **(a)**. The Café model, based on the Strengthening Families approach, addresses protective factors that support families in child development and enhances community-level engagement.
3iv. Inclusion-focused resources and resource directories	Development of inclusion-focused public awareness resources and resource directories for families experiencing homelessness will increase access to information and resources that supports their engagement in the ECCE system, addressing short-term outcome **(b)** and the three long-term outcomes.
4i. Unified T&TA framework	The unified framework will streamline provision of T&TA, removing barriers to participation in quality improvement activities, and will lead to short term outcomes **(a)** and **(c)**. This will in turn facilitate the achievement of all three long term outcomes.
4ii. Process for incorporating community voice into policy/program design	Aligning policy/program design to community voice will ensure that the opportunities in short term outcome **(b)** will reflect communities' actual needs and available resources, supporting the successful achievement of the community-level activities in long term outcome **(a).**
4iii. Funding of quality improvement	Funding evidence-based enhancements and resources will allow more providers to effectively improve quality (short term objective **(c)**); an

Linkage between Activity Outputs and Outcomes	
Outputs	*How Outputs Are Related to Objectives of Outcomes*
enhancements and resources to T&TA providers	increased number of high-quality programs will facilitate the achievement of long term objective **(c)**.
5i. CQI communities of practice	CQI communities of practice will be established in 6 regions, supported by cross-system TA plans. Producing these CoPs will lead to short- and long-term outcome **(c)** by engaging providers in an evidence-based practice (CQI) supported by implementation science.
5ii. Infant/toddler program upgrades	Distributing materials to 200 infant/toddler classrooms and 300 home-based programs and providing curricular learning activities for the home-based providers will lead to short- and long-term outcome **(c)** by supporting providers' understanding of optimal learning environments and evidence-based curriculum.
5iii. Career pathways recommendations and supports	Producing a guide to college cohort replication, developing recommendations for layered funding budgeting and monitoring, and providing financial support for credential attainment to 300 individuals will lead to short- and long-term outcome **(c)** by developing a more highly qualified workforce grounded in evidence-based practices.
5iv. Finance and compensation policy options report	A policy options report, issued for program funding modifications to support compensation, is related to short- and long-term outcome **(c)** because state policymakers will improve compensation based on the options outlined, thus attracting and retaining a more highly qualified workforce.

Sustainability Plan

The process of sustainability planning begins with this proposal and will continue through the grant period. Federal guidance on sustainability planning includes three core functions that are built into the activities of this proposal: 1) communication and stakeholder engagement: each activity includes the active participation of partners and stakeholders, including families, to ensure buy-in and ownership of the activities and associated tasks and identifies opportunities to leverage alternate sources of funding for strategies that extend beyond the grant period; 2) effective use of data to determine which strategies are effective and should be continued and which are not and should be discontinued to allow alternate allocation of resources: this data includes program and project level data to evaluate effectiveness of strategies within an activity and overall evaluation through the Program Performance Evaluation Plan

measuring indicators of overall grant implementation; and 3) leveraging existing accountability frameworks: the alignment of the governance structure will ultimately ensure a central point of accountability; however, until that occurs, accountability structures include the ELC's Executive Committee strategic plan and Committee metrics, fiscal accountability according to the rules and procedures of the fiscal agent ISBE, and accountability to CCDF for quality improvement activities. By deepening stakeholder engagement, using data to ensure efficient allocation of resources, and incorporating accountability into the system's governance structure, Illinois will make progress toward the long-term outcomes of increasing engagement of family members as stakeholders in the mixed delivery system, and increasing equitable access to high-quality programs. Sustainability planning will become a key responsibility of the project director for PDG B-5.

The **needs assessment** will be updated periodically to ensure timely, relevant, actionable information is available to policymakers and stakeholders to inform and guide decision making and to ensure fulfillment of Illinois' vision. If programs or policies shift, and as practicability of measuring an unduplicated count of children being served and awaiting services expands, they will be incorporated into an updated methodology for completing the needs assessment. Sustaining the work of the needs assessment will involve the ELC, state agency leadership, applicable research entities such as those involved in the production of the first statewide needs assessment, and a broad array of stakeholders who can provide expertise and input on the needs assessment process over time.

Strategic planning is an ongoing, iterative process, even though a strategic plan will be submitted in the first 6 months of the grant. The ongoing evaluation of strategic priorities falls within the purview of the ELC and will be measured by the ELC Executive Committee, which

will continue to include private partners in supporting the work of the committees. Ongoing planning at the local level will be continued by the partners identified for the strategies developed to increase coordination and collaboration, supported in part by MIECHV funding.

Maximizing parental choice and knowledge can be grouped into four categories: consumer education and engagement; governance and family collaboration; family engagement; and priority populations. Consumer education and engagement occurs through two websites that will be restructured and enhanced and will be sustained through the development of agency protocols to inform future website enhancements. Governance and family collaboration increases parent/family representation on the ELC and will be sustained through the governance structure. Family engagement through the Community Café model of contributions by families, agency staff, and community partners will be sustained with leadership development of parents within the Strengthening Families framework. Ensuring equitable access to quality early childhood programs for priority populations will be sustained in the revision of the ExceleRate QRIS standards in the work of the ELC Inclusion Subcommittee.

Sharing best practices can be grouped into two categories: reducing duplication of effort in the provision of T&TA to communities and increasing the capacity of existing T&TA providers to support communities and community-based organizations to implement best practices. The approach of a unified framework for providing T&TA to communities and providers will be implemented by relevant stakeholders identified through the strategic planning process. The approach to enhance current T&TA infrastructure and implementation during this project year will be evaluated specifically to understand how this work can be absorbed into existing service systems.

Quality improvement initiatives can be grouped in two categories: direct supports for

providers and development of guidance and resources. Direct supports for providers, including

support for site-based CQI and improvement of infant/toddler programs, are being integrated into

the QRIS T&TA system. Development of guidance and resources includes recommending new

pathways for career development and policy options for funding the cost of quality. These

discrete activities will be complete at the end of the grant period. GOECD and the ELC have

established committees of state agency partners and others on these issues.

Improving outcomes for children and families is not a onetime intervention; rather, it is a

continuous process. Illinois is committed to this ongoing work and will take lessons learned in

this planning year to guide implementation strategies in applying for years 2-4 of PDG B-5.

Dissemination Plan

The dissemination goal is to share lessons learned with policymakers and relevant

program implementation entities. Objectives are to reach general audiences with summary

reports and links and targeted audiences with more detailed information. Strategies are to sort

lessons learned by relevant audience and communicate with each using the following tools and

venues. For general audiences, summary reports will be posted on GOECD and state agency

websites and sent to national partners including the BUILD Initiative and other policy and

research organizations. GOECD's staffing of the ELC, a body comprised of 80+ representatives

from public and private organizations, uniquely positions the distribution of the strategic plan

and other materials. The ELC will help GOECD target appropriate audiences to receive more

detailed reports and maximize circulation. GOECD's website and statewide email distribution

lists are managed by GOECD's current Project Manager (PM), who concurrently staffs the ELC.

The dissemination of reports generated from this grant will flow through existing channels under

the PM's existing scope of work. Website analytics, email reports, and feedback loops built into the framework of the ELC will allow for the ongoing evaluation of dissemination efforts.

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds

ISBE successfully manages over $2.2 billion per year in federal funding. Federal grant funds are accounted for separately in ISBE's accounting system, which identifies the grant year, the CFDA number, grant award number, and grant period. To ensure the appropriate oversight of funds, ISBE follows all rules and regulations set forth in the Fiscal Procedure Handbook, developed in accordance with the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act, and Title 2 Code of Federal Regulations Part 200-Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principals, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. ISBE has successfully managed the RTT-ELC and the PDG legacy grants, completing projects on time and with accurate record keeping and through such practices created a well-developed project management system for tracking progress on the scope of work with partners on the grant.

Third Party Agreements

Please see "File 2 Appendices ILLINOIS" for signed Letters of Commitment from ISBE, the ELC, DCFS, IDPH, HS and DHS.