

## Early Learning Council (ELC) Early Childhood Construction Grant (ECCG) ad hoc workgroup

### Data meeting

### Meeting minutes

May 20, 2019

Attendees: Jose Cerda, Dawn Thomas, Jonathan Doster, Carmen Garcia, and Elliot Regenstein

Phone: Dan Harris and Jamilah R. Jor'dan

### Welcome and Introductions

Dawn Thomas began by referencing the green shaded table with no name. She noted a few items:

1. In 2010, most of the lower ranked communities were those with populations between 25,000 and 80,000 people.
2. In 2017, the lower ranked communities were all with populations under 8,000 people.

Jonathan Doster asked if the formula didn't change but the inputs did, what is the significance of the change we see on the table? Why is it that bigger cities aren't seeing more need?

- Dawn suspects it's a shift in population.
- Elliot Regenstein thinks it is likely the population shift but wonders if communities have gained slots. If the formula looks at the percentage of kids served, it might favor smaller communities with no services versus larger communities with at least one program. Both the percentage of kids served and the raw number of kids served are important to consider.
- Dawn said the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) team is working to pull data around surrounding communities, townships and counties to see what that produces. Dawn asked if we need to use municipalities versus region/county area.
- Elliot said we should think about population trend rates. Municipalities that are growing readily could be prioritized because their gaps are likely getting larger.
- Jose Cerda said capturing the absolute slots and the relative need is important. With this methodology, the pattern it finds is deep pockets of needs folks knew about but areas that are underserved and growing with population we didn't expect could surface.
- Elliot said the ranking methodology should reflect our values. We can keep the formula simple but outline our values in the recommendations.
- Jose asked what if there is no critical mass of operators in those smaller towns. Will they pass the business model test?
- Elliot asked if the application includes language about facilities and children they will serve.
  - Carmen Garcia said the application did include a table on the number of children served, total capacity, number of children in full-day care, total number of children receiving CCAP, number of children in Head Start/Early Head Start and number of children in Prek/Preschool for All (PFA). All of which are broken down by the age ranges: infants, 1-2 year olds, 3-5 year olds, and school aged.
- Jose is concerned because that Capital Development Board (CDB) did not fully understand the piece about the children served or possibly ignored that piece. To succeed, someone needs to look at the program component side of things, too.
- Dawn recalls CDB relying strictly on the rankings of need and less on the programmatic side.

- Jose proposed prioritization through a tiered system. He asked if those tiers should be sequenced. The numbers can be arbitrary when trying to strictly define a more needy area than another, but perhaps using a definition of need by quartile could help this process. Another idea is to give points an additional point in an application that falls within that quartile.
- Jamilah R. Jor'dan said we should not make assumptions about communities only because they are small, the real questions is about accessible services. Is there a way to crosswalk the communities with programs that have closed? At an advisory council meeting recently, there were questions about programs closing and why they closed. That is not tracked anywhere per her understanding but that information could help us if we have a general sense. There is also a question of critical mass and prioritizing the need. She suggested partnering with state agencies to look at applications, it is a role the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD) could support as a convener of the Interagency Team (IAT).

Jonathan said the IFF report flagged that in smaller communities, home based services could address the need. He wanted to raise that recommendation as part of this conversation.

- Dawn said home based providers were not included in the formula before but neither was PFA-Expansion.

Elliot said in ranking communities, the current service is one of many factors, quality of application is another, as well as "shovel ready sites". In evaluation, should we consider the proposal over the ranking? For example, maybe a smaller project only serves a small group of kids, but that community could justify their own needs and that of surrounding communities. Or does that complicate things to not consider the ranking?

- Jose said there were templates for programmatic inputs. CDB was able to turn to other agencies for feedback, but it's unclear if that's was done or if CDB simply went with "shovel ready" projects. There is a concern of only using the numbers because that doesn't necessarily reflect that a program/site needs to be added there.
- Elliot said need is part of the equation, not the entire equation.

Jose asked if we should rethink the process with a new administration. Do we suggest that based on the need, as defined by the data and combination of the methodologies from IECAM, IFF, and Risk and Reach Report, the new administration should prioritize X number of communities to apply?

- Elliot understands that instinct, but the state can't push for specific applicants in communities to apply. But perhaps this process could mirror the PFA structure. PFA says the top priority is serving at-risk children and the qualifying applicants are funded first. If there are other programs and dollars still available, those will then be funded. We could outline priorities one, two, and so forth, in our recommendations.
- Jonathan noted if we use the PFA approach, we should consider the tiers the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) uses for the K-12 evidence-based funding formula.
- Jamilah agrees with the idea of tiers. OECD worked with ISBE on language of applications to make sure it was more accessible for community based organizations while thinking about tiers

and priority populations. With the new administration, there is a commitment to equity and serving neediest kids is in line with that approach. PFA is familiar and could be easily built on.

Dawn said IECAM could add PFA-E into the formula, but should IECAM include license exempt child care homes?

Elliot asked if types of applications should be prioritized versus need. There have been arguments for home based versus community based because of the types of comprehensive services CBOs typically offer.

- Dawn said IECAM could run the formula again with the home based.
- Jamilah said the Mixed Delivery Systems Ad Hoc Committee did include home based in their discussions. Right now, this group is making assumptions about applicants but could be excluding an applicant pool. There is an opportunity to make suggestions to the governor's office on their role and how the relationship with CDB unfolds.

Elliot said the CDB does very specific work and certain tasks aren't in their wheelhouse. We should consider how the CDB administers the program and then what supports do they need, as have been raised today.

Jose said if we update the formula, will it look more like the IFF report with maps? Instead of slots, do we think about comparable areas, based off counties and census data? To create ratio access: weighted slots by full day/part day; rural/urban; etc. a cross check for the data use? Or is that too complicated? And will it translate directly into something that can be used on the application?

Jonathan said in the IFF recommendations there was a discussion of more infant toddler care. Were the previous applications weighed based on the children to be served? There is no information on weight in the application materials, but perhaps this could be noted on a scoring rubric?

There is also the question of quality. Elliot said in some ways, the physical space improvements could improve program quality. Elliot noted in Louisiana, quality rated programs were making better returns on investment if they stayed at a level 2 compared to moving to a level 5 rating. Programs received more money meeting the basic requirements than making improvements. That also brings up issues with the quality standards and reimbursement rates, but this could help programs that have wanted to make improvements but could not.

Jonathan noted in writing the recommendations, this group doesn't necessarily need to answer all questions, but lay out a set of questions the governor's office should consider when crafting the rubric.

Elliot said we could include home based in the rankings with our rationale. Does this group have a stance on larger projects serving a certain number of children? Or are we okay building one classroom with a community of only 60 children? Maybe we could outline the outcomes we are hoping a capital grant would achieve.

Jamilah said we need to include considerations for children that are often excluded, noting children with special needs and infant and toddler care.

Jonathan said in framing the recommendations it sounds like we'd like the following:

1. Processes of state agencies, including the activities of agencies to support CDB.
2. The components for both the Request for Proposal (RFP) (such as the types of children served) and rubric (what should be factored when scoring).
3. An updated formula for CDB when considering rank.

Jose agrees and notes the process supports should come from the governor's office. In the 1990's, the capital grant was used to build 7 big new centers. In 2000s, there was a rough sense of need and projects that were buildable advanced. Given the lessons we have learned, he suggested both a program that is open, with tiered and sequenced options to offer flexibility, and also done in a way where CDB feels supported to look at the new data and consider the governor's priorities.

Elliot said translating the values into tangible items is good. The recommendations should also outline limitations or things we'd like to do, but perhaps cannot in this iteration.

Dawn asked if we address the capacity of the workforce in some way. We can build a center but the teacher shortage is real—how do programs plan to address that?

- Elliot said an application or materials could ask for a plan to ensure there are qualified staff once the slots are filled. Not that CDB can grade that area but those should be considerations within a community. Perhaps this group could propose ISBE score certain parts of the application.
- Jamilah said OECD can help convene a group and ISBE.
- Jose said part of the recommendations will be the pre-process items, like bringing ISBE to the table. Once program decisions are made, the CDB can assess the technical pieces like architecture plans.
- Dan Harris suggested having someone outside of CDB and ISBE involved in the process, such as a local partner. Data is great, but there is a lot of nuance and community partners would have better knowledge of the operating environment.
  - Dawn suggested a regional partner like the Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&Rs) Agency could as they have experience with child care.
  - Elliot agreed this group could look at applications before selections are made to bring up any red flags.

### **Next steps**

Jonathan will draft an outline and share for reactions before he begins drafting the recommendations with Jose. The outline will include things like the decisions that need to be made and a structure of the decision making process.

Dawn will run same analysis with licensed child care homes and PFA and Prevention Initiative (PI) since Early Head Start is already included. Dawn believes PI was excluded previously because there was not

confidence in that data. Right now, there is no ability to distinguish between home based PI and center based PI.

Jose said the previous process was rough for folks that had little experience in building and construction but the expertise of various agencies could be helpful. Jose suggested considering the technical assistance (TA) piece as well.

- Elliot suggested local philanthropies becoming involved to support more robust TA than a state agency could offer.

The next meeting will be June 18, likely in the afternoon from 1-3pm but a calendar invitation will be shared separately.