COLORADO
Department of Early Childhood

Preschool Development Grant (PDG): Collaboration and Coordination (C2) Planning Mini-Grant Application Package

Grant Amount: Up to $10,000 per award for about 6-10 awards
Expected Grant Funding Period:10/15/2022 - 6/30/2023
Follow Up Interview/Focus Group Period: 7/1/2023 - 8/31/2023
Application Due: 11:59pm on Friday, September 9, 2022 to Marika Padilla, PDG Program Access Coordinator, marika.padilla@state.co.us
Awards Announced: As soon as possible after submissions are received, but no later than Friday, September 23, 2022.

Grant Purpose and Background:

Purpose

Local communities do important work together to improve coordination of their early childhood systems. The purpose of the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG): Collaboration and Coordination (C2) Planning Mini-Grant is to support this work. The grant will support local entities as they work together on a plan for a coordination strategy or strategies (categories of coordination strategies listed below in "eligibility section") that improves access to their community's early childhood system for families of children birth through five. As local partners build their plan together, they will pilot two tools intended to make this work easier - the *Collaboration Guide: Family Resource Centers and Early Childhood Councils* and the *Local Early Childhood Systems Coordination Toolkit*. Grantees' feedback on the utility of the tools will inform the revision process before the tools are finalized in 2023. Any of the following local entities that are part of their community's early childhood system may apply as the lead grantee:

- County human/social services
- County health department
- Early Childhood Council (ECC)
- Family Resource Center (FRCs)
- Local Coordinating Organizations (LCOs)
- School district/local education provider (LEP)
- Other local non-profit.

Background

In 2019, Colorado was awarded a three-year Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG). The state's PDG initiative is called Colorado Shines Brighter. A key focus of Colorado Shines Brighter is improving the alignment and coordination of services so families of young children can access the support they need. The administrative fragmentation of Colorado's early childhood

system can create roadblocks to accessing the particular early care and education experience families desire for their children. This is especially true for underserved and historically marginalized families. For example, families must go to different offices, complete different applications, and repeatedly submit the same documentation for most programs. Additionally, programs are often unaware of one another, inhibiting cross-referral of programs to meet more of a family's needs. While the state's new Department of Early Childhood holds the hope that this fragmentation will be less; local collaboration and coordination is, and will continue to be, critical to achieving a seamless experience for families.

Under PDG, two new tools were developed to help local entities enhance their collaboration and coordination with each other. First, a facilitated workgroup including the Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance (ECCLA), Family Resource Center Association (FRCA), ECCs, FRCs and the then-Office of Early Childhood (OEC), developed the *Collaboration Guide: Family Resource Centers and Early Childhood Councils* (*Collaboration Guide*). This guide includes an overview of the benefits and modes of collaboration between ECCs and FRCs; strategies to begin collaborating; and a variety of other resources to sustain and deepen collaborative relationships that benefit children and families. While written for ECCs and FRCs, it has applicability to other local organizations that partner with them. Second, the then-OEC, developed the *Local Early Childhood Systems Coordination Toolkit* (*Coordination Toolkit*). This toolkit was created for local entities - including county human/social services or health departments, school districts, ECCs, FRCs, LCOs, and other non-profits - to spur their thinking and action around better coordinating their local early childhood system to improve service delivery to families.

These resources were created to help local entities work together to make meaningful change for families in their communities now and in the future. To understand whether the tools achieve this goal, they must be tested in the real world and improved upon. The first round of PDG: C2 Planning Mini-Grants provided valuable feedback on the initial versions of the resources. These changes are being incorporated into the resources now. This second round of the PDG: C2 Planning Mini-Grant provides the opportunity to further strengthen these resources.

For more information on the strategies that led to the creation of the Collaboration Guide and Coordination Toolkit, see strategies 1.2.1 and 1.2.4 in the Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan.

Grant Requirements:

Eligible Organizations:

One local entity will serve as the lead grantee for the mini-grant; but, the application will clearly identify one or more other local organizations with which the lead grantee will collaborate. **It is strongly encouraged that the partnership includes the local Early Childhood Council (ECC), Family Resource Center (FRC), or both, depending on the coordination activity involved.** A partnership agreement from each of the involved organizations will also be included in the application submission, verifying that the organization intends to work together with the lead grantee and other partners on the plan. A form letter is available HERE. Please have each partner download and complete this form for the application submission.

Any of the following local entities that are part of their community's early childhood system may apply as the lead grantee:

- County human/social services
- County health department
- Early Childhood Council (ECC)
- Family Resource Center (FRCs)
- Local Coordinating Organizations (LCOs)
- School district/local education provider (LEP)
- Other local non-profit

NOTE: Local for-profit organizations are not eligible as the primary grantee, but can participate in the planning process.

Eligible Projects:

Amidst the many other funding opportunities available, the PDG: C2 Planning Mini-Grant is focused on helping local entities interested in collaboration take their work to the next level in a way that meaningfully improves family access to services. Applications should describe how local partners will work together over the grant period (October 15, 2022 - June 30, 2023) to create a plan for implementation of a strategy or strategies that will enhance coordination of the community's early childhood programs, serving children birth through five and/or their families, to ease family access to services. The strategy or strategies should fall within one or more types of coordination described in the *Coordination Toolkit*:

- Coordinating Marketing/Awareness
- Coordinating Referrals
- Coordinating Applications
- Coordinating Enrollment
- Coordinating Care
- Coordinating Family Engagement
- Coordinating Transitions to Kindergarten
- Coordinating Other Community-Specific Priorities

Coordination of any programs serving children birth through five and/or their families in the community's early childhood system is appropriate for this planning grant. Such programs include those with a focus on early care and learning; home visiting; parenting instruction; family support; fatherhood support; developmental support (i.e. Early Intervention); family, friend, and neighbor caregivers; or that address the basic needs (housing, medical, food security, etc.) of families with children birth through five. Grantees and local partners will be expected to review the revised *Collaboration Guide* and *Coordination Toolkit* ***prior*** to beginning their collaborative work, so they can draw on the tools throughout the process. The updated resources will be shared with awarded applicants no later than the start of the grant period, October 15, 2022.

It is expected that about 6-10 applicants will be awarded through this opportunity. Priority will be given to the following projects:

- those with a focus on easing access for underserved and historically marginalized families[1] in rural, urban, or tribal communities
- projects that propose new collaborations or a new area of coordination for their communities
- applications that include more than one coordination strategy
- applications with a clear funding strategy to support implementation

While this grant only covers costs associated with creating the plan, the CDEC has identified the following funding streams that may support implementation of those plans:

- Community-based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) funding
- County-level American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding

Additionally, communities that believe the available amounts for the planning mini-grant could be used to begin implementation of the plan may describe this in their application.

Funds:

Awarded lead grantee applicants will receive up to $10,000 to support their planning process over 6-8 months, from October 15, 2022 - June 30, 2023. These funds can be used for the following costs related to the planning process:

- covering the cost of staff time during meetings
- a facilitator to lead the development of the plan
- a contractor to lead the development of the plan
- software necessary to collaborate or create resources
- meeting/event space or materials for in-person meetings/events (at the organizations' discretion and following the state and local COVID-19 protocols, if any)
- gift card incentives for parents or providers to obtain their input on the plan (these must be a set amount for attending a feedback event, like a focus group, and cannot fluctuate based on time spent)
- travel costs

NOTE: PDG: C2 Planning Mini-Grant funds **cannot** be used for food or beverage costs. No incentives other than gift cards may be used for parent or provider incentives.

Deliverables:

At the end of the grant, the awarded lead grantee will submit a **final report** and a copy of the **implementation plan** for the coordination strategy or strategies that the local partners developed. See the hyperlinked documents for more detail on what's included in the final report and how the implementation plan will be structured. Grantees will be expected to participate in 30 minute check-ins with DEC grant staff every two months to ensure the work and budgets are on track.

[1] For Colorado Shines Brighter purposes, this means: infants and toddlers; children in rural, urban and tribal communities; low-income, homeless, immigrant, refugee, and migrant children and families; children from families of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds; children with special needs; children affected by trauma; children of teen parents; and children whose families work, are involved in the child welfare system, or are in the military.

Lead grantees and their local partners will be required to take part in interviews and/or focus groups to share their observations on the *Collaboration Guide* and *Coordination Toolkit* upon the completion of the grant period. **The funding and planning period is October 15, 2022 through June 30, 2023. Interviews will occur in July and August of 2023.**

Preparing to Apply:

1) Think of a program type or various programs for which there is an identified need to improve coordination so families in your community can more easily access early childhood services.
2) Identify the local entities with which you should partner in addressing this need or needs. Secure their commitment to partnering with you on this grant.
3) In collaboration with these local entities, and considering implementation opportunities, select a coordination strategy or strategies for which you will create an implementation plan.

Mini-Grant Application Checklist

☐	Completed Application Form
☐	Completed budget covering the grant cycle: October 15, 2022 - June 30, 2023
☐	Scope of Work during Grant Funding Period (October 15, 2022 -June 30, 2023)
☐	Attached Partnership Agreements

Please direct any questions regarding the application to Marika Padilla at marika.padilla@state.co.us