

Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five Report to Congress

PDG B-5 Grant Activities For 2023

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Background

This report is a response to section 9213 of the Every Student Succeeds Act, which requires that the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), in consultation with the heads of federal agencies that administer federal early childhood education programs, prepare and submit a report on Preschool Development Grants to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions of the U.S. Senate, and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the U.S. House of Representatives.

This report builds on the previous Preschool Development Grants Report to Congress submitted in March 2024. The previous report highlighted strategies that Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Initial and Renewal Grant recipients (“recipients”) leveraged to strengthen ECE systems between January 2019 and December 2021. This report highlights efforts undertaken by grant recipients from January-December 2023 to strengthen early care and education systems in their respective states.

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at HHS, jointly with the U.S. Department of Education (ED), administers the PDG B-5 program, established under section 9212 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 (Pub. Law 114-95). PDG B-5 aims to improve child health and development, maximize parent engagement and knowledge, prepare children to enter kindergarten ready to succeed, and improve transitions from the early childhood system into the local educational agency or elementary school.

To achieve these goals, PDG B-5 recipients are charged with strengthening early childhood systems to prepare all children to enter kindergarten by investing in the ECE workforce, identifying opportunities to expand access to high-quality ECE programs, supporting a comprehensive and mixed-delivery system of ECE, and expanding parent and family supports, and promoting children’s healthy development, as well as promoting the mental health and well-being of children, families, and the workforce.

PDG B-5 administers two types of grants: Planning Grants (formerly Initial Grants) and Renewal Grants. In December 2022, ACF awarded Planning Grants and Renewal Grants to 42 states and territories—21 Planning Grant recipients, and 21 Renewal Grant recipients. The list of 2022 PDG B-5 recipients is reflected in **Appendix A**, and this report highlights their efforts supported through the PDG B-5 grants in 2023.

To achieve the goals of building, enhancing, and expanding their ECE systems through their PDG B-5 grants, both Planning and Renewal grant recipients are expected to:

- conduct/update statewide needs assessments and strategic plans;
- leverage existing federal, state, local, and non-governmental resources to strengthen coordination and delivery of services across programs;
- develop recommendations to improve the equitable participation of children, particularly children experiencing vulnerabilities and/or who have historically been underserved or unserved by programs or systems;

- improve program quality across participating programs by aligning program standards and coordinating professional development activities;
- maximize family and parental choice and knowledge of, and engagement with, existing programs in the state's mixed-delivery system and health and mental health service;
- invest in and support the early childhood workforce, including compensation initiatives, mental health supports, and career development; and
- improve school readiness for groups of children who experience the largest achievement gaps.

PDG B-5 is often used by states to leverage other funding streams to maximize the reach and impact of available early childhood system and program funding. For example, PDG B- recipients noted how they braided PDG B-5 funding with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and from Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) to both advance time-limited program efforts, as well as to promote sustainability of key investments.

Planning Grants

PDG B-5 Planning Grant recipients use one-year grant awards to conduct comprehensive, statewide B-5 needs assessments to inform the development of their statewide B-5 strategic plan. This strategic plan serves as a roadmap for states to improve collaboration, coordination, and quality improvement activities and optimize existing ECE resources to increase the quality of and access to services for young children and their families, with a focus on preparing low-income and disadvantaged children for kindergarten and beyond. Upon the completion of their statewide B-5 needs assessment and strategic plan, states can use any remaining PDG B-5 funding to begin the implementation of their B-5 strategic plan. Following the completion of their PDG B-5 Planning Grant, and pending availability of funding, states/territories are then eligible to apply for a PDG B-5 Renewal Grant, to continue to implement the strategies identified in their B-5 strategic plan.

Renewal Grants

PDG B-5 Renewal Grants are 3-year grants that support states and territories to implement activities based on needs and goals identified in their strategic plan. Activities include periodic updating of their needs assessment and strategic plan; more effectively coordinating with existing programs; improving efficiency and better use of existing resources; more meaningfully engaging parents and providers in programs and policy; improving overall quality; building and supporting the workforce; maximizing family choice and knowledge; expanding access to mixed delivery programs and services; and improving transition practices and the actual transitions from ECE programs to the local educational agency or elementary school.

Additionally, Renewal grant recipients are encouraged to award subgrants to support state/territory goals to:

- improve access to ECE programs/services for priority populations;
- invest in strategies to recruit and retain a qualified ECE workforce;
- increase the supply of high-quality programs in underserved communities;

- build or enhance coordinated intake, screening, eligibility, enrollment, and referral systems;
- improve and expand the use of their state’s integrated data system;
- enhance program standards, monitoring, and/or continuous quality improvement activities; and
- implement other essential investments that would lead to more effective, efficient, and coordinated ECE services.

Introduction

The first five years of a child’s life are characterized by rapid growth and development. During this critical period, children’s brains take shape as they learn foundational skills that can impact them throughout the lifecycle. Children acquire language and learn early literacy and mathematical concepts. They also learn important socio-emotional skills such as engaging with peers through cooperative play, showing concern for others, and expressing and regulating emotions. High-quality early childhood programs support healthy child development and provide families with supports that they need during this significant time.

Most children will spend time in non-parental care during the first few years of their life. Among children in the U.S. who are not yet school age, nearly 7 in 10—almost 15 million—have all available parents in the workforce¹. Families use a range of settings to meet their child care needs, including child care centers, family child care homes, Head Start, preschools, relative care, and other arrangements depending on their needs. Child care is often expensive for families, with the annual cost exceeding other household expenses like rent or mortgage. Families often have to patch together multiple arrangements to meet their needs, especially when they are constrained by costs.

Families incur high child care prices alongside other costs associated with raising young children, such as higher housing costs, food, medical bills, diapers, and equipment (cribs, car seats, etc.). Moreover, these expenses often occur when parents are early in their careers and have lower salaries. Not surprisingly, 40 percent of young children birth to five live in households with low incomes (defined as less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level) despite the fact that most parents are working².

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is the primary source of federal child care funding, yet limited resources mean that the program can only serve about 1 in 7 eligible families³. Similarly, the Head Start program provides early childhood education and additional

¹ Children under age 6 with all available parents in the labor force in United States, <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/5057-children-under-age-6-with-all-available-parents-in-the-labor-force#detailed/1/any/false/2545,1095,2048,1729,37,871,870,573,869,36/any/11472,11473>

² National Center for Children in Poverty – United States Early Childhood Policy Profile, <https://www.nccp.org/early-childhood-us/?state=US#1>

³ Factsheet: Estimates of Child Care Subsidy Eligibility & Receipt for Fiscal Year 2021, <https://aspe.hhs.gov/reports/child-care-eligibility-fy2021>

services to support child development, such as nutrition and referrals to health care providers. Yet, funding levels limit the number of children who can be served to less than half of eligible preschoolers and a fraction of eligible infants and toddlers. Current funding levels have not allowed for competitive wages, leaving many programs struggling to find staff and closed classrooms. In addition to early childhood programs, children also benefit from a range of public assistance programs that support nutrition, housing, and other basic expenses that help meet their needs.

A growing number of children have a disability or developmental delay and benefit from early intervention and access to inclusive early childhood settings. Inclusion is beneficial to children with and without disabilities. Cultivating inclusive settings requires close coordination between early childhood education and early intervention systems, professional development and training, and individualized supports are all foundational components of inclusive early childhood settings. PDG B-5 can play an important role in funding these efforts, as many states and communities report a lack of dedicated funding to support coordination across early childhood and services for children with disabilities. Programs also report that current funding levels are insufficient to cover the additional costs needed to support children with disabilities.

Using PDG B-5 funds, states have embraced finding solutions to address the complexity of choices in early childhood programs and related services. By embracing innovative ideas and focusing on localized solutions, states have made considerable progress in testing and implementing opportunities to build toward a well-coordinated early childhood system that offers families a range of choices and minimizes red tape for those navigating multiple state and local agencies and programs.

Highlights of State Strategies and Accomplishments

This report highlights strategies, initiatives, and programs that PDG B-5 recipients have funded to strengthen early childhood programs and supports to children and families from January through December 2023.⁴ Appendix A provides a listing of state and territories with either a PDG B-5 Planning or Renewal Grant. Appendix B provides more in-depth examples of how specific states have used their PDG B-5 funds to improve services to children and families.

Reducing Child Care Costs

Child care is one of the highest family budget items, yet families rely on it to work. As mentioned above, the current CCDF program is funded at levels that are insufficient to serve most eligible families. PDG B-5 augments CCDF by addressing child care costs and helping more families benefit from the child care subsidy system. State examples of how PDG B-5 is helping to reduce child care costs include:

- **New Mexico** allocated funds through subgrants to Head Start recipients open to converting Head Start slots to Early Head Start slots, creating new slots to serve infants and toddlers at no cost to eligible families.

⁴ Data for this report comes from 43 PDG B-5 Planning and Renewal Grant Annual Performance Progress Reports submitted to ACF in 2024.

- **South Carolina** coordinated and leveraged funds from the state-funded preschool program and child care scholarships to support working families that needed to enroll younger siblings of preschool participants.
- **Wisconsin** expanded its child care subsidy program to serve more families and build public-private partnerships for child care by which businesses can contract with the state to secure child care slots for their employees, with the state paying for 75% and businesses paying 25% of the child care costs.

Promoting Parent Choice and Consumer Education

Parents are their children’s first and most important teachers. A central goal of the PDG B-5 program is to support parent choice in selecting an early childhood program that meets their needs and helping parents navigate services, such as early intervention and programs that support children’s basic needs. Parents must take into account a number of factors in finding and enrolling in early childhood programs, including: hours of operation, price, location, and preferences for the type of program and activities. Twenty-two states used PDG B-5 funds to support families in making informed child care choices that match their families’ needs and preferences as well as supporting families in sharing their feedback on services offered in their state and communities. Common strategies included outreach and engagement to communities with fewer child care options, increasing family awareness of program options, and engaging parents in advisory committees to develop end-user friendly policies and programs. Examples of states that have used PDG B-5 funds to promote parent choice include:

- **Maine** hired family outreach coordinators to facilitate the referrals of early care and education resources to families. They also developed “play and learn” groups to provide families the opportunity to connect with one another.
- **Michigan** adopted a “no wrong door” policy, which ensures that families seeking early childhood services are directed to the right programs and is supported by a user-friendly information platform.
- **Texas** used funds to contribute to the research and development of an eligibility screener to be used across child care scholarships, public preschool, and Head Start/Early Head Start.
- **Virginia** created the Early Childhood Navigator role to improve coordination of resources to both early childhood providers and families, which is targeted to geographic areas that are child care deserts.

Supporting Rural Communities

Families in rural communities often have greater difficulty finding child care as compared to more urban areas. Rural communities often face shortages of child care supply, including fewer staff who are available to work in early childhood programs. Early childhood providers in rural communities also indicate challenges such as lower wages for child care workers, higher transportation costs, and fewer resources available to support families. Most early childhood programs need a concentration of children in order to operate their businesses, which can be difficult when families and children are geographically dispersed. The Administration for Children and Families partners with USDA to support investments in rural facilities that support child care. However, funding is insufficient to fully meet the supply needs for child care in rural

communities and help families afford child care. Several states have used PDG B-5 funds to support early childhood needs in rural communities, including 12 states that used PDG B-5 funds to support the early childhood workforce in rural areas and child care deserts. For example:

- **Alaska** provided community grants to support plans to increase the availability of high-quality and affordable licensed child care, including in rural and remote areas.
- **Idaho** provided business development training to family child care providers from a rural community.
- **Nevada** funded leadership and professional development opportunities in 12 rural counties.

Supporting Home-Based Child Care

Home-based providers play an important role in the mixed delivery early childhood system that serves families across the country. Home-based child care may be referred to by different terms such as family child care homes; kith and kin providers; family, friend, and neighbor care; or relative care. Families may select home-based child care for a number of reasons, including hours of operation, location, and preferences such as a provider that shares their values or culture. Home-based child care providers are among the lowest paid within the early childhood sector and often struggle to cover their operating costs with revenue that they earn from family payments. Many states have used PDG B-5 funds to support home-based providers, especially as pilots that could be expanded to other parts of the state with additional resources. Examples of how states have used PDG B-5 to support home-based care include:

- **Idaho** provided subgrants to existing child care programs and to those who start licensed, home-based family child care programs.
- **Nebraska** provided a business training program to teach providers small business fundamentals necessary to achieve profitable, sustainable, high-quality family child care—while also providing support to attain licensure, use business and marketing tools, and procure liability insurance.
- **New Mexico** provided a statewide family child care accelerator to help home-based providers obtain licensure and higher reimbursement in the child care system and created staffed Family Child Care Networks to support family child care businesses.
- **North Carolina** offered scholarships to family child care providers pursuing a mental health credential, conferences, and professional memberships and coursework. North Carolina also piloted a sustainable subsidy model for family child care providers where providers were paid increased subsidy rates to serve more children.
- **Oklahoma** launched a telehealth program for home-based child care providers and their dependents.

Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities

Early care and education programs, such as Head Start, often play an important role in identifying children with disabilities. Early intervention services help children with disabilities or

developmental delays reach important milestones, access early learning content, and provide support needed for healthy development. Children who receive special education services earlier in life have more positive outcomes as compared to those who receive intervention later. Navigating the screening, assessment, and early intervention services process can be cumbersome for families. PDG B-5 supports better integration and collaboration between early intervention and early education programs to support better outcomes for children and easier access for families. Examples of state activities include:

- **Arizona** funded subgrants for child care programs to start up and/or expand to serve more children with disabilities.
- **Montana** implemented a training called “Development as a Journey” to support a variety of early childhood and health care providers (i.e. home visitors, pediatricians) in reviewing developmental screening results and providing referrals.
- **Pennsylvania** expanded its short-term support to build capacity in early intervention with early childhood programs, with a goal of reducing expulsion and suspension which disproportionately impacts young children with disabilities.
- **Wyoming** made early childhood behavioral consultants available to early educators and families on site at early learning programs to support early educators in managing behavior and providing needed supports to children.

Supporting the Early Care and Education Workforce

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of early care and education workers plummeted as other sectors, such as public schools, retail, and food service, offered more competitive compensation. As a result, many child care programs had to close or reduce classrooms or raise prices to offer more competitive wages and other rising costs. The COVID-19 relief funds provided by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) offered considerable relief by allowing child care providers to increase compensation, bonuses, and recruitment or retention incentives without passing along costs to parents. However, with ARPA funds now sunset, states are using other sources of funds to support workforce initiatives. When early childhood providers are able to recruit and retain staff, families benefit from an improved child care supply and more choices. Efforts to improve compensation benefit families because providers can strengthen their ability to maintain staff without passing costs along to families. Twenty-three states used up to 80 percent of their PDG B-5 funds on workforce initiatives. Most states focused on increasing compensation and professional development opportunities through PDG B-5. Examples of state activities include:

- **Louisiana** launched an initiative focused to increase access to affordable healthcare in with Healthy Navigators, share affordable health insurance options with the early childhood workforce.
- **New Jersey** piloted an early childhood apprenticeship program.
- **Rhode Island** funded wage supplements to 271 early educators.
- **South Carolina** launched an initiative to provide additional compensation to early educators who are in the SC Endeavors Workforce Registry and are on the career

ladder. This initiative, called SC BOO\$T, was initially supported by CCDF funds and PDG B-5 funds have expanded upon the initiative.

- **Vermont** increased wages and benefits for staff that have attained degrees, including paid vacation days, sick days, and holidays.

Improving the Supply of Child Care

Across the country, the supply of child care is insufficient to meet the needs of families. When families look for child care, too often they find themselves on a waiting list or unable to find a child care provider that is affordable, available during their work hours, and near their work or home. PDG B-5 supports improvements in child care supply by funding additional slots and supporting start up grants for providers. Examples of states that are using PDG B-5 grants to improve child care supply include:

- **Delaware** created nearly 600 new slots for infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children. This includes slots in newly created programs.
- **Maine** developed plans to expand child care availability through partnerships between school administrative units and child care centers and family child care programs to create new programs or expand existing programs.
- **Nevada** created over 1,200 new preschool slots.
- **Oklahoma** will increase access to child care through desert grants that increase slots in areas with few child care options and increase public awareness of available options.

Summary and Conclusion

PDG B-5 provides critical funds to states to address a range of initiatives to improve early childhood systems for children and their families. Early childhood services and programs include a mix of different state and local agencies, public and private options, early childhood settings, and services targeted to meet specific needs during the first five years of a child's life. PDG B-5 provides critical infrastructure to support parents and early educators in navigating these systems and fill in gaps that are not funded by other sources. Current funding for early childhood is insufficient to meet the needs of all families. States and communities continue to report gaps and ongoing needs such as funds to support increased compensation for early educators, professional development and training, early intervention and supports for children with disabilities, facilities upgrades, transportation to help families access programs, mental health services and supports for challenging behaviors, infant and toddler care, supply building efforts, and resources for underserved areas.

PDG B-5 funds help states identify solutions and catalyze responses to some of these ongoing challenges. However, states generally must combine PDG B-5 funds with other resources and/or limit their efforts to pilots or specific communities within their states as funding levels in PDG B-5 do not allow for state-wide or more comprehensive approaches. States have used PDG B-5 funds to create plans, test approaches, and leverage other funds to create

opportunities for families and providers. With further investment, states and communities across the country could take these successful approaches and plans to scale.

Appendix A: Recent PDG B-5 Grant Recipients

State/Territory	Planning Grant (First Time) (N=2)	2022 Planning Grant After FY19 Renewal Grant (N=19)	2022 Renewal Grant (N=25)
Alaska			X
Alabama		X	
American Samoa			
Arizona			X
Arkansas			X
California		X	
Colorado		X	
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands			
Connecticut		X	
District of Columbia			
Delaware			X
Florida			
Georgia			
Guam			X
Hawaii			X
Idaho			X
Illinois		X	
Indiana			X
Iowa			
Kansas		X	
Kentucky			X
Louisiana		X	
Maine			X
Maryland			

Massachusetts			X
Michigan		X	
Minnesota		X	
Mississippi			X
Missouri		X	
Montana			X
Nebraska		X	
Nevada			X
New Hampshire		X	
New Jersey		X	
New Mexico			X
New York		X	
North Carolina		X	
North Dakota			X
Ohio			X
Oklahoma			X
Oregon			
Pennsylvania			X
Rhode Island		X	
Puerto Rico			X
South Carolina		X	
South Dakota			
Tennessee	X		
Texas			X
Utah			X
Vermont			X
Virgin Islands			
Virginia		X	

Washington		X	
West Virginia	X		
Wisconsin			X
Wyoming			X

Appendix B: Select State Examples

Alabama

In Alabama, the planning grant supported the Alabama Parent Learning Network (APLN). The APLN, led by the Alabama Partnership for Children, provided parent trainings. Parents are invited to participate in a leadership curriculum to learn how to participate in decision-making processes that affect their children, families, and community and improve programs and policies to better reflect parent choice.

PDG B-5 funding allowed APLN to expand across the state so that more parents can provide feedback and ensure that early childhood programs meet family needs and reflect parent choice, including parents with children enrolled in state preschool.

Additionally, Alabama Department of Early Care and Education employed consultants to conduct a needs assessment and update a strategic plan. The needs of parents, children, and families are the driving force behind the work.

Alaska

Alaska utilized PDG B-5 funds to carry out the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force, which was originally funded through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. These recommendations included a workforce study, a cost of care study, a focus group study, and a market rate study.

Additionally, Alaska combined general operating funds, ARPA funds, and PDG B-5 funds to sustain efforts focused on quality improvement and ECE workforce compensation. Funds were combined to promote quality initiatives, with a particular focus on providers serving children impacted by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and those in out-of-home placements.

To support community-based initiatives, Alaska launched community innovation grants. These grants, funded by PDG B-5, allowed communities to create localized plans for strengthening their ECE systems, particularly in rural and remote areas. The grants aimed to expand the availability of high-quality, affordable child care. The state also engaged with families through the Early Childhood Network (ECN), offering stipends for data collection on community needs as part of the PDG B-5 needs assessment.

Arizona

Arizona used PDG B-5 funds to work collaboratively with the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds, state workforce agencies, and institutes of higher education to support degree attainment for the ECE workforce across education departments. This included the attainment of the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and associate's (AA) and bachelor's (BA) degrees.

The state strategically provided PDG B-5 subgrants to agencies that served children and families from areas of the state with fewer child care options. These subgrants focused on improving the coordination and referral processes for ECE programs. Funds were also used to implement

provider-focused supports including technical assistance (TA) and training to improve the coordination and referral of programs across the ECE system.

Additionally, Arizona utilized PDG B-5 subgrants for child care programs to start up and/or expand seats, including increasing child care slots for infants and toddlers and children with disabilities. The state created new seats in both existing and new child care programs. The state also utilized PDG B-5 funds to improve quality, with a focus on improving class sizes and/or adult-child ratios.

Colorado

Colorado used PDG B-5 Planning Grant funds to implement recommendations from the Colorado Early Childhood Compensation and Benefits Task Force. This included developing new early childhood competencies aligned with the state's Early Childhood Professional Credential (ECPC) and Professional Development Information System (PDIS). Additionally, Colorado worked with Red Rocks Community College to create an apprenticeship pathway for home visitors, leading to a nationally-recognized registered apprenticeship certificate.

The Colorado Department of Early Childhood's Tribal Liaison utilized PDG B-5 funds to engage with tribal families and make plans for a Tribal Advisory Council. These efforts aimed to strengthen relationships and promote greater inclusion of tribal communities in early childhood initiatives.

Additionally, Colorado's PDG B-5 initiatives focused on enhancing transitions and literacy alignment from preschool to early elementary school. The state hosted regional discussions on the science of reading, particularly for dual language learners and those at risk of disabilities, which contributed to an Emergent and Early Literacy Recommendations Report.

Connecticut

Connecticut used PDG B-5 funds to collaborate with workforce agencies and institutes of higher education to support degree attainment in ECE. The funds also supported a cost study on potential compensation increases for early educators and developed recommendations for improving compensation in child care centers, home-based child care, and schools.

PDG B-5 funds supported local agencies in streamlining intake, screening, and referral processes through an integrated platform. A family engagement mobile app was created to improve coordination among agencies, and PDG B-5 helped connect families using child care to access the app. Connecticut also used PDG B-5 funds to plan for early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS) development moving forward.

Finally, PDG B-5 funds supported the development of steps for Connecticut's Blue Ribbon Panel to improve quality. Blue Ribbon Panel work includes grants for peer mentors and coaches in child care centers and home-based child care, stipends for ECE training participants, and support for substitutes, transportation, and child care to aid professional development.

Delaware

Delaware used PDG B-5 funds to increase ECE slots by expanding an existing state-funded early care and education program modeled after Head Start. The state also utilized PDG B-5 subgrants to

improve the quality of ECE programs without decreasing the number of available child care slots. Efforts to improve quality included piloting quality improvement activities and providing additional professional development training. The state contracted with local partners to meet the Delaware Department of Education standards of quality, a variation of the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

Additionally, PDG B-5 funds were used to support Delaware's work on revamping its child resource and referral website, in collaboration with the Delaware Department of Education, with the goal of creating a more robust process for connecting families to resources related to their children's development. This effort also includes plans to improve communication between families and community organizations and to connect families to resources for young children with disabilities.

Idaho

Idaho utilized PDG B-5 funds in partnership with Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds, workforce agencies, and higher education institutions to enhance degree attainment in ECE, including the completion of Child Development Associate (CDA) and associate's (AA) and bachelor's (BA) degrees. PDG B-5 funds, also supported work with the University of Idaho's Center on Disabilities and Human Development to improve early identification of children with developmental needs by providing technical assistance (TA) and training to ECE programs.

PDG B-5 funds supported several quality improvement initiatives, including improved data sharing and family engagement strategies, revision of early childhood standards, and the development of 1,956 active learning kits. Idaho's School Readiness Project Team offering monthly coaching and TA to local Early Learning Collaboratives (ELCs), while also providing more intensive support to new ELCs. The state also delivered business development training to family child care providers in rural areas and provided coursework to two cohorts.

Idaho further advanced ECE coordination with PDG B-5 funds by utilizing an online platform to streamline application, eligibility, and enrollment systems, helping parents access child care options in their communities. Additionally, the state developed the RISE database, which supports child care workforce development and quality, including professional development tracking and financial incentives for providers.

Indiana

PDG B-5 funds scaled the Employer-Sponsored Child Care Fund, a partnership between the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, the Office of Early Childhood and Out-Of-School Learning, and the Indiana Manufacturers Association. This initiative awarded \$25 million to support the state's child care needs by providing seed funding to employers and non-profits working on behalf of local businesses to establish or expand child care benefits. Employers were required to contribute at least 10% of the funding they received toward their child care programs.

Indiana also used PDG B-5 funds to improve the navigation, access, and delivery of support services for families, particularly related to child care subsidies and other family support programs by establishing user-centered systems that enhance service delivery. Additionally, PDG B-5 funds

provided free and subsidized access to a new statewide Child Care Management System (CCMS), offering ECE providers two years of free access to support business best practices and help them build financial management systems.

Indiana also used PDG B-5 funds to expand the Early Childhood Education Teacher Registered Apprenticeship program, which offers students college credit, work experience within their own districts, and apprenticeships. The program was implemented in six school districts for the 2024-2025 school year, with additional districts being recruited for participation in 2025-2026.

Louisiana

PDG B-5 funds support Louisiana Department of Education's *EC Guides* Initiative. This initiative uses *EC Guides* to support families in finding, applying for, and enrolling in high-quality ECE programs. *EC Guides* are staff members within the *Ready Start Networks* who provide individualized assistance to families. The *EC Guides* Initiative started as a pilot in 2020-2021 with five *Ready Start Networks* (RSNs), where it demonstrated effectiveness in helping families enroll in high-quality ECE programs while also assisting families in applying for the state's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). PDG B-5 planning grant investment expanded this initiative to twelve RSNs. Across the twelve communities with *EC Guides*, *EC Guides* have made over 700 inquiries to the Louisiana Department of Education about CCAP seats, conducted nearly 10,000 phone calls, visited 452 child care sites, and held over 1,500 in-person engagements to assist families in selecting quality child care

The Louisiana Department of Education, using PDG B-5 funds, increased access to affordable healthcare for ECE providers. Since April 2023, they have funded health navigators who have supported over 1,000 early childhood educators to get connected with health benefits. They have hosted 22 events, participated in eight conferences and meetings, and conducted 223 one-on-one sessions with ECCE educators to support their enrollment in health coverage.

Maine

Maine utilized PDG B-5 grants to develop salary scales for the ECE workforce, including home-based child care. The state reported distributing 17,567 bonuses or wage supplements using PDG B-5 funding. These funds also supported the development of a new ECE scholarship program to complement current efforts to grow a qualified ECE workforce through the state's TEACH Early Childhood Scholarship program.

Maine used PDG B-5 funds to form a Pre-K Advisory Team to advise on the development of the Pre-K partnerships pilots, which aim to expand child care availability. The pilots involve partnerships between school administrative units and child care centers and home-based child care programs to create new programs and/or expand existing ones. Additional activities include expanding professional learning in inclusionary practices to support children's social and emotional development, and to support children with disabilities.

With PDG B-5 funds, Maine hired a family navigator as part of its Help Me Grow Maine program, which provides resources to families across the state. The family navigator focuses on engaging

communities to ensure families receive information about local resources and services. Since being hired, the family navigator has connected families to ECE programs, early intervention services, and health care services.

Massachusetts

Massachusetts utilized PDG B-5 funds in partnership with Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds, workforce agencies, and higher education institutions to enhance degree attainment in ECE. The state is offering credit for prior learning or competency assessment. PDG B-5 funds also supported the development of professional training for educators around providing children with care that is responsive to their needs.

In Massachusetts, PDG B-5 funds have been used to make it easier for families to find and pay for child care. PDG B-5 funds have helped to streamline the experience for applicants and make it easier to seek child care financial assistance. The funds have also been used for technological improvements to enhance accessibility to the application process, improve communication about the status of applications, and expedite the provision of slots/vouchers once applicants have completed the process.

Through the PDG B-5 planning grant, Massachusetts developed an early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS) with strict confidentiality agreements written into the data use licensing agreement. Funds also supported identifying potential changes related to using the ECIDS for research and evaluation purposes.

Montana

PDG B-5 funding supported Montana's Apprenticeship Program, where apprentices are eligible to receive \$1,000 per semester for up to three semesters of ECE coursework. Mentors supporting the apprentices receive \$5,000 at the end of each semester that an apprentice completes.

Montana used PDG B-5 funds to support a redesign of STARS to Quality, Montana's quality rating improvement system (QRIS). Additionally the state, provided one-time incentive payments to Pre-Star and STAR 1 child care facilities that are not eligible for incentive payments, to support their continued engagement during the QRIS redesign process.

Montana offered infant and early childhood mental health consultation (IECMHC) in a child care crisis pilot programs that serve children and families with limited supports in under-resourced areas. Funds also supported 14 professionals receiving an IECMHC certification from Georgetown University. Additionally, a contract was established with a local crisis child care center to increase slots.

Nebraska

PDG B-5 funds also supported a business training series program to teach providers small business fundamentals necessary to achieve profitable, sustainable, high-quality home-based child care. Funds also supported the Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative, or NECC's, Child Care Licensing Toolkit, one-on-one mentoring, and access to resources to help child care business owners navigate process of pursuing state licensure. Additionally, the state, piloted Early

Childhood Community Coordinators (ECCCs) to support providers by offering training and assistance with becoming licensed. ECCCs activities also include connecting children and families to resources by referring them to key services such as Head Start/Early Head Start, child care subsidies, and local literacy programs.

PDG B-5 funds were also used to support Child Development Associate (CDA) preparation program and the CDA Coaching to Completion program.

Finally, Nebraska has invested PDG B-5 funds in the development of an infrastructure for early childhood data integration. The state developed an integrated data model and used cloud-based technology to link and de-identify data stored in a data warehouse. These data will be made publicly available through visualizations on a platform called “EC Data Explorer.”

Nevada

With PDG B-5 funds Nevada worked to improve the coordination between programs in its mixed-delivery system. Nevada added over 1,000 pre-K slots to existing ECE programs and used PDG B-5 funds to support tribal families.

Nevada provided subgrants to further quality improvement activities, including expanding the home visiting program and expanding professional development to local programs in rural areas. Home visiting staff were hired and trained to begin providing services to families, and 47 program staff attended professional development trainings.

PDG B-5 funds were leveraged through staff time to contribute to conversations and planning regarding the state’s Coordinated Intake and Referral System (CIRS). The CIRS workgroup discussed considerations necessary to integrate coordinated application process into the new common eligibility portal. Funds also supported the development of Nevada’s Common Eligibility Portal.

New Hampshire

With PDG B-5 funding, New Hampshire expanded its Early Childhood Tuition Assistance Program. In 2023, this program supported 382 individuals to access college courses and earn credentials or degrees to improve their skills. PDG B-5 funds supported 149 child care centers, which had educators who benefited from tuition assistance, improving the qualifications and skills of their existing staff.

PDG B-5 funding allowed early learning coaches from the University of New Hampshire to partner with the Manchester School District to embed practice-based coaching in Manchester schools during the 2023–2024 school year. Additionally, funds were used to provide professional development to ECE staff.

Finally, New Hampshire used PDG B-5 funds to support outside vendors in assisting the New Hampshire Department of Human Services (NH DHS) to develop two early childhood data dashboards. These dashboards display integrated early childhood data, which NH DHS staff can

use to inform effective, evidence-based decision-making aimed at improving services for children and families, including those at risk for substantial developmental delays. Vendors also provided technical assistance (TA) to NH DHS staff on how to use the data dashboards and made updates based on feedback from staff experiences.

New Jersey

New Jersey used PDG B-5 grant funds to support the pilot of a U.S. Department of Labor-registered ECE apprenticeship program. For the New Jersey Early Childhood Apprenticeship Pilot Program, New Jersey committed to supporting up to 20 licensed child care centers, which will employ a total of up to 20 full-time apprentices across the state. PDG B-5 funds will support participating centers with offering on-the-job training, mentorship, and apprentice wages. Additionally, their educational requirements will be supported through the New Jersey Scholarship Program as they pursue their Child Development Associate (CDA).

PDG B-5 grant funds also supported the New Jersey Enterprise Analysis System for Early Learning, a state-integrated data system that will track data trends across four partnering state agencies, identify opportunities for professional development and training, and create systems to measure the collective impact of cross-agency programs. This will also help enhance families' consistent access to programs.

Additionally, PDG B-5 funding supported New Jersey's continued development and enhancement of its ECE system through interdepartmental, interagency, and statewide collaborations—including with parents, families, and communities with limited access to early childhood programs. Notably, the needs assessment process engaged the New Jersey Department of Labor's (NJDOLE's) Office of Research and Information for the first time to provide child care workforce data. This process deepened NJDOLE's understanding of the child care system, occupations, and employers.

New Mexico

New Mexico leveraged PDG B-5 grant funding to expand high-quality ECE to 40 infants and toddlers through support to Head Start grantees seeking to convert Head Start Preschool slots to Early Head Start services for children birth through three years old. Additionally, the state gave incentive and innovation sub-grants in rural communities to improve services for children with disabilities and strengthen partnerships between ECE providers and local school districts.

PDG B-5 funds were utilized to support nine institutions of higher education to achieve the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation for their early childhood teacher preparation programs by attending the NAEYC Professional Learning Institute and supporting the self-study process. NAEYC program accreditation will improve 2- and 4-year degree programs and make them more accessible and relevant to the early childhood workforce, as well as enhance alignment and articulation across institutions.

Additionally, PDG B-5 were used for updating the New Mexico Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals, providing a statewide family child care accelerator to obtain licensure for higher reimbursement, enabling the creation of staffed family child care networks, expanding

language immersion programs in tribal communities, and implementing a professional development information system.

New York

New York combined PDG B-5 funds with Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program funds to implement and enhance the Pyramid Model in ECE settings. The Pyramid Model is an evidence-based framework that helps educators build the skills needed to support the social and behavioral development of children from birth to age 5. The combination of these funding streams allowed for the establishment of Regional Coordinators who facilitated this work. By 2023, 80 programs, 164 sites, and 548 classrooms across the state, serving a total of 7,246 children, were implementing the Pyramid Model. Grant funding also supported a statewide implementation of Infant Mental Health Basics training.

New York held a series of “Early Childhood Resources Road Shows,” which were local presentations to community-based organizations regarding B-5 resources, ensuring that providers who work directly with families are equipped with the necessary resources to promote access to ECE programs and services. This initiative resulted in 18 presentations with an estimated 2,600 attendees from various entities, such as public schools, pre-kindergartens, home visiting programs, and child care resource and referral agencies.

The New York Family Guide to New York State Early Childhood Services, covering prenatal through five, was developed in 2020 with PDG B-5 Renewal Funds. The guide aims to increase parents' awareness of the mixed-delivery system and ease of access to services within the system. It will be shared virtually with families when they obtain their newborn's birth certificate.

North Carolina

North Carolina used PDG B-5 to augment American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and establish a research-based framework and professional learning network to promote outdoor play and learning environments, fund curricula and assessment tools, and expand their IECMH work.

PDG B-5 funds supported provider-focused initiatives, including technical assistance (TA) and training to improve the coordination and referral of programs across their ECE systems. Additionally, North Carolina developed a community of practice for family child care providers to share resources for themselves and the families they serve.

PDG B-5 funds were also used to support workforce initiatives, including the implementation of pilot studies, the development and dissemination of professional resources, waiving registration fees for conferences, scholarships, and providing supplemental funds to directly support North Carolina's early care and learning workforce. North Carolina piloted a sustainable subsidy model for family child care providers, where providers were paid increased subsidy rates to serve more children.

Oklahoma

With PDG B-5 funds, the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness launched a free telehealth program for home-based child care providers in the free Thrive Network. This benefit is available to staff and their dependents.

Oklahoma used PDG B-5 funds to provide training to support the social-emotional development of children. Online training is offered in social-emotional learning, trauma-informed care, and in the Pyramid Model, an evidence-based framework that helps educators build the skills needed to support the social and behavioral development of children from birth to age 5.

To increase access to child care, Oklahoma used American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding in Year 1 to increase child care slots in child care deserts and will use PDG B-5 funds in Years 2 and 3 to continue to expand child care slots. PDG B-5 funds also supported the launch of the Before the Bell Campaign, a public campaign providing free early learning resources for parents with children under 5.

Finally, with PDG B-5 funds Oklahoma funded staff positions for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Innovation Pilot Project to enhance care coordination in home visiting programs. These positions coordinate referrals through an online platform and ensure effective communication and collaboration between the project's partner agency and service providers.

Pennsylvania

Using PDG B-5 funds, Pennsylvania hired additional IECMH consultants to support staff within the ECE system. The infant and early childhood mental health consultation (IECMHC) program focuses on building capacity in the ECE workforce by providing individualized mental health consultation for children, professional development, and recommendations for local resources, such as support groups and mental health providers. Additionally, Pennsylvania offers online training on social-emotional learning, responsive care, and the Pyramid Model, an evidence-based framework that helps educators build the skills needed to support the social and behavioral development of children from birth to age 5.

Pennsylvania also funded PDG B-5 subgrants to various organizations, including community agencies, schools, and ECE programs, to improve coordination and referral processes. The subgrants have contributed to a wide range of activities, such as funding Rapid Response Teams to support ECE programs in developing action plans for children who are at risk of expulsion.

Furthermore, with PDG B-5 funds, Pennsylvania has implemented provider-focused supports, which include technical assistance (TA) and training to improve the coordination and referral of programs across its ECE system with an additional focus on quality improvement.

Rhode Island

In Rhode Island, funding from the PDG B-5 planning grant, combined with other funding sources, supported a supplemental compensation pilot, "Step Up to WAGE\$." The state partnered with the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children (which administers the state's T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Program) to license and pilot the Step Up to WAGE\$ model. As of the end of 2023, awards had been made to 271 educators.

With PDG B-5 funds, Rhode Island conducted a mixed-methods Early Childhood Educator Compensation Study and worked to identify an implementation plan for tiered retention bonuses to support the ECE workforce. Additionally, the state focused on workforce compensation by expending funds to conduct a workforce compensation study and investing in retention bonuses.

Under the PDG B-5 grant, Rhode Island also funded two initiatives to support family choice and knowledge. Families had access to family navigators who helped connect them with needed services and provided evidence-based family programming based on community-identified needs. In 2023, more than 1,630 families in the state benefited from PDG B-5-funded programs, and another 1,170 families benefited from family navigator services.

South Carolina

South Carolina used PDG B-5 and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to develop SC BOO\$, a pilot program that provided wage bonuses directly to ECE professionals to increase retention. Wage bonuses were distributed to 6,671 ECE workers.

South Carolina also utilized PDG B-5 funds to support a prekindergarten and kindergarten transition program. For Countdown to 4K, the prekindergarten transition program, 108 teachers completed the required online training, and the program was implemented in 21 counties. In 2024, the program will leverage PDG Planning Grant Funds as well as state funds. For Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK), 254 teachers completed the required online training, and the program was implemented in 26 counties.

Through the support of PDG B-5 investments, South Carolina built a sustainable data governance structure and coordinated efforts across the early childhood and K-12 education systems. This work expanded the state's educational data infrastructure to include early childhood data, improved the linkages between K-12 and early childhood data, and incorporated the data into data profiles make it more accessible to educators, policymakers, researchers, and the public.

Tennessee

With PDG B-5 funds, Tennessee launched the Tennessee Preschool Commission. This group of stakeholders discussed the biggest areas of opportunity and improvement across the state. To work toward their goal of developing a strategic plan for the future of the pre-K landscape in Tennessee, they implemented four model district programs that served as the main vehicles for gathering insights into the needs of different programs and communities across the state.

Additionally, with PDG B-5 funds, Tennessee awarded subgrants to districts, where subgrantees created new ECE slots. In these districts, two 4-year-old pre-K classrooms and two aftercare programs were established.

Finally, the state plans to use PDG B-5 funds for a scholarship program to help all teaching assistants in Tennessee currently working in public pre-K classrooms work toward, and complete, their Child Development Associate (CDA) certification.

Vermont

With PDG B-5 funds, Vermont streamlined compliance monitoring processes between agencies that oversee the universal prekindergarten education program. This involved identifying gaps in the current processes and creating new protocols to address them. The state also implemented strategies to improve screening processes, including developing a unique screening and referral solution based on results from pilot programs.

Vermont used PDG B-5 funds to support a community orientation program aimed at removing barriers for families in accessing services and increasing family engagement. PDG B-5 funds were also used to increase wages and benefits, including paid vacation days, sick days, and holidays, for ECE staff with college degrees.

Additionally, in Year 1 of the PDG B-5 grant, Vermont's Building Bright Futures (BBF) laid the groundwork for collecting information on family leadership opportunities across the state.

Virginia

Virginia piloted workforce wage increases to retain early childhood education (ECE) teachers without raising costs for families. Using PDG B-5 funds, the state launched the RecognizeB5 teacher incentive program, which provided significant pay bonuses to 1,696 early childhood educators working in ECE settings and measured the impact. The study found that the incentive program increased retention by about 11 percentage points and cut turnover rates in half. The PDG B-5-funded pilot led to increased state investment in the program to reach additional teachers. In FY24, the RecognizeB5 program will distribute over \$40M in federal and state funds to over 14,000 educators. With their current PDG B-5 grant, Virginia is piloting the wage incentive program with home visitors.

Virginia is using PDG B-5 funds to foster family engagement innovations, integrate these efforts into communities of practice, evaluate their impact, and determine which innovations should be scaled and implemented statewide. With support from PDG-B 5 funding, Virginia fielded its 2023 Family Survey to provide insights into the needs of families who are eligible for, but may not currently be using, subsidies to help cover the cost of care.

In 2023, with PDG B-5 funds, Virginia launched a new child care website. The website provides centralized resources to help families find child care and apply for subsidies. ECE sites participating in Virginia's quality improvement program receive an annual quality profile. These profiles are publicly available to families and provide parents and families with information about the quality and availability of ECE providers.

Wisconsin

With PDG B-5 funds, Wisconsin invested \$21 million in its PartnerUp! Initiative, through which businesses can contract with the state to secure child care slots for their employees, with DCF paying for 75% and businesses paying 25% of the child care costs. Wisconsin also expanded its child care subsidy program through changes to eligibility requirements, through additional outreach, and by building public-private partnerships for child care. To serve more families, the family income threshold for child care subsidy eligibility was increased to 200% of the federal

poverty level, and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) targeted outreach to families with less access to early care and education opportunities.

Through a partnership with the University of Wisconsin, Wisconsin's PDG B-5 program engaged health consultants to help child care providers meet American Academy of Pediatrics health and safety standards. By the end of 2023, 25% of regulated providers had received this consultation, with a goal of 75% by 2024. The program also offers free monthly webinars attended by hundreds of providers, keeping them updated on health information.

Wisconsin also provided grants to five tribal nations to support the teaching of tribal languages and culture in early childhood settings, including funding for translation and elders that support language acquisition. Finally, PDG B-5 funds supported free infant and early childhood mental health consultation (IECMHC) services for ECE providers and expanded the capacity to process mental health consultation endorsements, increasing the number of available consultants statewide.

Wyoming

Wyoming, in partnership with the University of Wyoming, utilized PDG B-5 funds to support increased access to professional development for ECE workforce through the development of infant/toddler, early literacy, and inclusion credentials. Activities also included access to training for early educators through Wyoming's Early Childhood Professionals Learning Collaborative (ECPLC), some of which were supported through mini-grants.

PDG B-5 funds were used to disseminate Wyoming's Coherent Path to Quality document, a toolkit to guide early childhood professionals and parents in establishing quality learning relationships with children. This document has been integrated into Wyoming's infant/toddler credential program along with its early learning standards.

With PDG B-5 funds, Wyoming also funded the development of family resource centers in 15 counties to help families with coordinated application, eligibility, and enrollment for ECE programs and other social services. Finally, Wyoming's PDG B-5 funding supported a series of data enhancements related to its early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS).