

***B-5 for ME: Increasing Accessibility to High Quality Programming  
Led by a Skilled and Vital Workforce***  
Office of Child and Family Services  
Maine Department of Health and Human Services

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*B-5 for ME: Increasing accessibility to high quality programming led by a skilled and vital workforce*

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### **Project Summary**

Vision: All Maine's children and their families will receive the services they need through an efficient, data-driven, and evidenced-based system to ensure that children enter kindergarten prepared to succeed.

The Maine Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), in collaboration with the Maine Department of Education (MDOE), have put forth an ambitious plan to build needed infrastructure and capacity to create a more coordinated, efficient, and high-quality mixed delivery system for children ages birth to five and their families, targeting key needs surfaced in the initial PDG needs assessment. This plan builds upon the successful cross agency work to ensure that all children enter Kindergarten prepared to succeed.

Through the Help Me Grow program, the state will provide targeted outreach and support to ensure that all families, including New Mainer parents, with young children are able to access care coordination services, developmental screenings, and early intervention services. The evidence-based Parents as Ambassador program will expand to provide parent leadership training to New Mainer parents. The First 10 Community Pilots will link parents of young children to comprehensive services, coordinate local public school and ECE systems and support smooth transitions for young children entering school. A public education campaign will help parents and caregivers to better understand the developmental milestones of their children and simple activities and actions they can employ to encourage and support healthy development.

To strengthen the quality and availability of Maine's ECE workforce, the state will offer child care scholarships to new staff working at licensed child care programs, provide incentives to help child care programs move up Maine's quality rating scale, pay for quality bumps to licensed programs serving children through Maine's TANF work program, pilot the addition of a Workforce Navigator, and develop articulated ECE education pathways. Current evidenced-based professional development for B-5 providers and early elementary educators will be expanded to include inclusion practices, transitions, early elementary principal training, and trauma-informed practices. Grant and state funds will support a significant expansion of community-based pre-K partnerships.

The new Early Childhood Integrated Data System will provide state leaders across agencies with information to make informed decisions about programs and policies that promote access, quality, and a strong workforce to support all Maine children ages 0-5. The project will have both a process and outcome evaluation which will include a cost-analysis to ensure proposed goals are being met. MDHHS and MDOE will continue to engage stakeholders to solicit ongoing feedback to inform policy decisions and changes related to the PDG B-5 Renewal.

## OUTCOMES

<p><b>Vision:</b> All Maine’s children and their families will receive the services they need through an efficient, data-driven, and evidenced-based system to ensure that children enter Kindergarten prepared to succeed in the early elementary years.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 1:</b> A diverse group of stakeholders is engaged and advising the development of policy and programming for Maine’s early care and education system, as indicated by an</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the number of stakeholder engagement structures and opportunities.</li> <li>• Increase in participation rates of diverse populations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 2:</b> More infants and toddlers are screened for concerns about development and receive early intervention services, as indicated by an</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in developmental screenings for children by age 1, 2, and 3, conducted through ASQ on-line.</li> <li>• Increase in number of referrals to CDS and children eligible for services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 3:</b> More families and young children are accessing needed services, as indicated by an</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the number referrals and service provision rates through Help Me Grow, First 10 Schools and Community Pilots, and First 4 ME.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 4:</b> Parents inform policy decisions for and improvements to Maine’s ECE system, as indicated by an</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in parents of young children participating in parent leadership programs.</li> <li>• Increase in the number of opportunities for parents to provide feedback to policymakers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 5:</b> Maine has a robust, well-trained diverse ECE workforce supported through increased compensation and targeted professional development opportunities, as indicated by an</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the number and diversity of people (race and region) entering ECE field.</li> <li>• Reduction in staff turnover.</li> <li>• Increase in the number of people attaining ECE credentials or post-secondary degrees.</li> <li>• Increase in number of participants in Maine’s ECE Professional Development Network.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 6:</b> More vulnerable children are enrolled in quality ECE settings, as indicated by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the number of high-quality child care providers on the QRIS.</li> <li>• Increase in number of public pre-K slots available for 4 year olds.</li> <li>• Increase in number of people trained in building inclusive classrooms.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 7:</b> Transitions for children between early childhood settings and early elementary grades are streamlined, strengthened and supported, as indicated by an</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the number of elementary schools and child care centers using the aligned curriculum of PreK for ME, K for ME, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade for ME and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade for ME.</li> <li>• Increase in the number of school administrators engaging in ECE professional learning.</li> <li>• Increase in the number of early childhood educators attending joint professional learning.</li> <li>• Increase in use of the Kindergarten inventory by elementary schools.</li> <li>• Increase in First 10 schools and communities and First 4 ME communities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 8:</b> Maine has an integrated early childhood data system which connects data across agencies and informs better policy and programmatic decisions, as indicated by an</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in data sources connected through a new integrated early childhood data system.</li> </ul>

## **APPROACH**

### **Activity One: Update Comprehensive Statewide B-5 Needs Assessment**

#### ***Status of Maine's Current, Comprehensive, Statewide B-5 Needs Assessment***

Maine's Statewide B-5 Needs Assessment was completed in the fall of 2019 and informed the development of Maine's final Statewide B-5 Strategic Plan as well as the final Children's Cabinet Plan for Young Children. The B-5 Needs Assessment documented several challenges and concerns among families and the ECE workforce including: frustration among parents and caregivers with difficulties in accessing services for their children and their families; limitations on distribution, capacity, and availability of ECE services, especially for infants and toddlers; issues related to the quality of providers; challenges with recruiting and retaining qualified staff; gaps in services for children with special needs; and absence of data needed for decision making.

Since completion of the B-5 Needs Assessment, Maine's Early Childhood System has a renewed focus and is a priority for state leadership with significant investments made in early childhood system leadership capacity at the state level. Through its work, the Maine Children's Cabinet is committed to ensuring that all Maine children enter Kindergarten prepared to succeed. The work of the Children's Cabinet has fostered the development and capacity building of early childhood system champions and leaders across state agencies.

The Children's Cabinet formed a subgroup with state agencies on early preventive and intervention services – the Early Intervention Workgroup (EIWG). The EIWG began meeting in the spring of 2020 and provides an opportunity for staff managing early intervention policies and programs for young children to coordinate and collaborate efforts to better serve families and ensure that young children receive necessary screenings, evaluations, and services to support their healthy development.

The Children’s Cabinet Early Childhood Advisory Council (CCECAC), which includes representation from MDHHS, MDOE, public health, child care providers, family serving organization, and parents, continues to meet monthly to learn about current state efforts and discuss and provide recommendations to improve and strengthen Maine’s early childhood system. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the CCECAC provided a forum for service providers working directly with families and young children to share their day-to-day challenges with leadership within state agencies.

In response, the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) and the Children’s Cabinet hosted a series of five listening sessions with representatives from the ECE workforce and key stakeholders. Directors of center-based and home-based programs reported that the pandemic had exacerbated their challenges with recruiting and retaining early childhood educators. Directors and early childhood educators spoke about the increased wages in the service industry leading to more educators leaving the field. There was agreement that wages and benefits both needed to increase and that any type of support from the state should come at least monthly and should increase based upon experience and/or education.

In 2021 Maine received an Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Grant to strengthen Maine’s perinatal-to-age 3 (P-3) comprehensive system. The first phase of the ECCS Grant was to conduct a Systems Asset and Gap Analysis (SAGA) to understand the landscapes and existing efforts of Maine’s early childhood and health systems caring for P-3 and identify gaps in promoting early developmental health and family well-being. Informed in part by the 2019 PDG B-5 Needs Assessment, several common themes emerged through the SAGA process:

1. The need for better awareness of and access to perinatal and early childhood services.
2. Strengthening family and provider engagement and shared decision making.

3. Improving care coordination across providers, programs, and services.
4. Helping families navigate the developmental screening and referral process.
5. Workforce challenges that make it difficult for families to access care.
6. Ensuring equitable systems that meet the needs of Maine's vulnerable populations.
7. The impact of COVID-19.

The findings included in the ECCS SAGA will be used to inform the Maine's updated B-5 Statewide Needs Assessment.

### ***Maine's Plan to Update the Statewide B-5 Needs Assessment***

Maine will update the Statewide B-5 Needs Assessment in Year 1 of the grant. The updated B-5 Needs Assessment will build on on-going efforts to engage ECE stakeholders to identify existing and emerging needs across Maine's ECE system including but not limited to:

- The current quality and availability of ECE, including availability and access for infants and toddlers and for all children in underserved communities.
- Barriers to the funding and provision of high-quality ECE services through a mixed delivery system, including, as available, existing and emerging needs associated with the sustainability of ECE programs, considering the impact of COVID-19 on the capacity and financial sustainability of ECE programs.
- The number of children B-5 being served in existing programs and the capacity of existing programs.
- How to better engage families to maximize parent choice and increase meaningful family engagement across the mixed delivery system.
- Needs related to trauma experienced by young children and the ECE workforce, including investments in social emotional and mental health supports.

MDHHS will hire a PDG Project Manager who will lead the Needs Assessment process, with ongoing support from the Children’s Cabinet Coordinator. The Project Manager will review existing ECE needs assessments, policy reports, and evaluations to identify common themes. Findings from these efforts will be shared with ECE stakeholders statewide through focus groups, listening sessions, and regional meetings to illicit feedback and identify additional needs. A draft of the B-5 Needs Assessment will be shared with MDHHS and MDOE leadership, the CCECAC, the EIWG, and the ECCS Collaborating Partner’s Advisory Group for feedback. The final report will be approved by the Children’s Cabinet and OCFS staff at the end of Year 1.

***Assessing Existing and Emerging Needs of the ECE Workforce***

Challenges with recruiting, hiring, and training a skilled ECE workforce were identified throughout the B-5 Needs Assessment. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges. As part of the updated B-5 Needs Assessment, Maine will work with the Maine Department of Labor’s (MDOL) Center for Workplace Research and Information (CWRI) to develop an ECE workforce report that identifies the impacts on the workforce as a result of the pandemic and the status of the current workforce, specifically highlighting needs related to compensation. Working with Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network (MRTQ PDN) and institutions of higher education (IHEs), staff at OCFS will use the information collected through regional meetings, focus groups with the field, Maine’s child care registry and Maine’s child care licensing team to identify gaps in pathways for providers and staff to move toward licensure and for ECE workers to attain a credential or degree, including apprenticeships, scholarships, articulation agreements, or other supports and partnerships with IHEs. These reports will inform the B-5 Needs Assessment and updated Strategic Plan.

In addition to the ECE workforce study, OCFS will contract with a national consultant to complete an in-depth cost estimation model for the state's ECE system that will provide a better understanding of the true cost of providing high quality child care in Maine. The consultant will analyze how key policy decisions affect these gaps. The comprehensive cost estimation and model will help inform the B-5 Needs Assessment and the Strategic Plan.

### ***Engage B-5 Early Childhood State System Partners***

Maine will continue to engage B-5 system partners in the Needs Assessment process through existing statewide advisory councils, regional meeting with the ECE educators and providers, and focus groups and interviews with ECE professionals, families, and members of traditionally underserved populations. Funding is included in the B-5 Renewal budget to contract with a consultant to help the Project Manager facilitate these meetings.

In addition to the CCECAC and the EIWG described above, the Project Manager will engage the ECCS Collaborating Partners Advisory Group (CPAG) to provide guidance and input from key ECE system stakeholders in the Needs Assessment process. Of the 40 participants on the CPAG, half are parent representatives or represent parent serving organizations. The CPAG will provide valuable information in areas such as equitable access to programs and services, quality, family engagement, and the impact of COVID-19.

As part of the Needs Assessment process, Maine will host three regional meetings of child care providers and educators from the pre-K to grade 3 span as well as organizations that serve young children and their families to identify their concerns, opportunities, and challenges of supporting children and families, navigating Maine's mixed delivery system, and making transitions across the EC system into the early elementary years. Regional meetings will be held in different locations throughout Maine to encourage in-person participation from providers in



rural and urban communities. These meetings will be targeted to direct service providers including child care providers, pre-K teachers, social service providers, Head Start, representatives from Child Development Services (CDS), and organizations serving New Mainers, children with disabilities, and tribal families. Representatives from state agencies will be invited to hear directly from providers in the field.

To gather more detailed information from the ECE workforce, Maine will host another round of focus groups with child care directors and early childhood educators. To obtain feedback from families and traditionally underserved groups including New Mainers, tribal families, families in rural areas, low-income families, and families of children with disabilities, the Project Manager will conduct interview and focus groups with the family leadership groups included in this proposal and detailed in *Activity Three*.

The information collected from stakeholders will be used by the state to inform the effective implementation of ECE programs, understand the impact of new programming and policies, and support efforts to update the B-5 Strategic Plan by highlighting changes or growth in specific needs as a result of COVID-19 and other economic shifts in the state.

**Activity Two: Update Comprehensive Statewide B-5 Strategic Plan**

Maine’s initial Statewide B-5 Strategic Plan charts a five-year course of action to strengthen the state’s mixed delivery system for ECE, maximizing the availability of opportunities for vulnerable children and families, while improving quality and taking advantage of coordinated work to reduce inefficiencies.

<b>Statewide B-5 Strategic Plan Goals</b>
<i>State and Regional Coordination:</i> Increase and strengthen connections and communication among state agencies and with community partners to expand access to services, create efficiencies, and reduce overlap and redundancies.
<i>Workforce Development:</i> Recruit, prepare, and retain a strong and diverse early childhood workforce.

<i>Access to Child Care:</i> Increase availability of affordable childcare and access to family services for vulnerable children.
<i>Quality Improvements:</i> Increase the availability of high-quality early care and education.
<i>Integrated Data Systems</i> Create an efficient, cross-agency early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS) to inform policy, programming, and evaluation.

Since finalizing the Strategic Plan in 2020, Maine has implemented activities to improve workforce conditions, support meaningful family engagement, integrate data systems, provide comprehensive support services, and provide equitable access to high quality ECE programs. The reinstatement of the Children’s Cabinet has led to greater collaboration and coordination between high-level staff from state agencies, allowing for directors and managers to identify ways that they can work together and strengthen ECE policy and programming at the state and regional levels. Maine’s updated B-5 Strategic Plan will build on these activities and address emerging and ongoing issues identified through the updated B-5 Needs Assessment.

**Workforce:** Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Maine used increased funding through the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) to address some of the concerns raised in the B-5 Needs Assessment regarding ECE workforce compensation. This included offering providers weekly stipends of \$100 per infant on the Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP) in recognition of the high cost of providing infant care, providing small grants to help child care providers improve quality, and providing scholarships to help child care professionals earn higher education degrees.

In response to the significant challenges faced by ECE programs during the pandemic, MDHHS has provided over \$100 million in direct grants to licensed center-based and home-based child care providers with funding from the CARES Act, the Coronavirus Act, and the American Rescue Plan (ARPA). Over 95% of licensed child care programs received ARPA-funded Child Care Stabilization Grants, which included \$200 monthly stipends for early childhood educators. After receiving considerable feedback from ECE providers regarding their

continued struggles due to the pandemic, MDHHS will extend smaller stabilization transition grants for eight more months with the help of the increased discretionary ARPA funds.

The 2019 B-5 Needs Assessment also identified the increased stress of working with children with high needs as a factor in retention of EC educators. In 2021, OCFS implemented and expanded the Maine Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP<sup>®</sup>) program, an infant and early childhood mental health consultation program that addresses the social-emotional needs of children birth to age 8 by offering support, education, and consultation to providers, educators and parents. The initial pilot rolled out programming in eight counties and the program will be implemented statewide in January 2023. Workforce will continue to be a focus of Maine's updated Statewide B-5 Strategic Plan and strategies are detailed in *Activity 4*.

***Equitable Access to High Quality Early Childhood Programs:*** To increase access to child care, Maine's Governor set aside \$15 million of her Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan for grants to center based or home-based programs to expand or build new child care facilities. Staff are in the process of reviewing these grant applications which give priority to applicants proposing to expand care for infants and toddlers as well as programs in rural counties with significant gaps in child care. The Governor also included \$10 million in her recovery plan to provide start up grants to public schools to expand the number of public pre-K slots. Priority is given to School Administrative Units which are in economically disadvantaged regions, partnering with community partners and offering full day, full week programming. CCDF funding was also provided to increase the reimbursement rates for child care programs serving infants and toddlers. To further support equitable access, the B-5 Renewal will allow the state to pay quality bumps to licensed child care programs serving children through Maine's TANF work program. Details are provided in *Activity 5*.

***Meaningful Family Engagement in Policy Decisions:*** MDHHS has taken steps to invest in programming to strengthen meaningful family engagement and expand the inclusion of parent voice in decision-making. For example, using ARPA CCDF discretionary funding, the state has contracted with Educare Central to offer its Parent Ambassador Program (PAP) trainings to parents outside of Head Start who are engaged in other EC system programs. PAP is a year-long leadership program to develop parent leaders. The program works to build parents' confidence and the skills needed to advocate for their children and themselves.

Language and cultural barriers have made it challenging for Educare Central Maine to successfully engage immigrant and refugee parents in PAP. The B-5 Renewal will allow the state to contract with an immigrant and refugee serving organization to expand parent leadership training to New Mainer parents with young children. Details are provided in *Activity 3*.

***Comprehensive Support Services:*** The 2019 B-5 Needs Assessment highlighted parents' struggles to navigate and access early childhood programs and services and identified Help Me Grow (HMG) as a best practice care coordination model in the B-5 Strategic Plan. HMG provides a comprehensive, statewide, coordinated system of early identification, referral, and follow-up for ALL children from prenatal care up to 8 years and their families. In 2021, legislation passed to allocate CCDF funding to implement HMG. In the next month, Maine will be the 29<sup>th</sup> state to officially launch HMG.

As Maine implements HMG, the state will provide targeted outreach and support to ensure that all families with young children are able to access care coordination services, developmental screenings, and early intervention services. Funding is included in this proposal to build greater capacity at HMG to support New Mainer parents and provide resources to ethnic

community-based organizations (ECBO) to connect families to care coordination and screening services. Details are provided in *Activity 3* and *Activity 6*.

*Measurable Indicators to Assess Progress:* The B-5 Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan also centered on the importance of building an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) to provide state leaders and policymakers with information to inform programs, policies, and practices that can improve outcomes for children and their families.

Maine has made significant progress in advancing the development of an ECIDS since the initial PDG grant. With technical support from the national PDG team, an ECIDS Road Map for Maine was published and distributed in October 2021. OCFS hired an ECIDS project lead in December 2021 with ARPA CCDF funding. With support from the B-5 Renewal, Maine is poised to establish a more formal data governance structure and begin to develop an ECIDS system informed by a couple of use cases to be implemented in early 2023.

### ***Maine's Plan to Update the Statewide B-5 Strategic Plan***

Maine will update the Statewide B-5 Strategic Plan in the first quarter of Year 2 of the grant. The updated Strategic Plan will reflect findings from the updated B-5 Needs Assessment as well as the ECCS SAGA and will build on the current B-5 Strategic Plan and Children's Cabinet Plan for Young Children. The PDG Project Manager will lead the Strategic Plan update process, with ongoing support from the Children's Cabinet Coordinator and other Children's Cabinet staff to ensure alignment with the Children's Cabinet Plan.

ECE partners will be engaged throughout the development and implementation of the Strategic Plan. Draft strategies will be shared with the CCECAC, the EIWG, and the CPAG to ensure feedback from a broad range of stakeholders, specifically ECE providers, educators from the pre-K to grade 3 span, and family-serving organizations. The Project Manager will leverage

family leadership groups to review the draft Strategic Plan and ensure that the strategies proposed support meaningful family engagement and provide equitable access to high-quality, inclusive early childhood programs.

As the state looks to update the B-5 Strategic Plan, it will be important to assess the programs and policies that have been implemented to date and better understand how this programming has strengthened and improved the ECE system. The implementation of the ECIDS and the feedback that is gathered through the needs assessment will help to inform the ways in which Maine can continue to build and strengthen existing efforts and identify gaps that need attention and investment. This information will support the update of the Strategic Plan and set priorities for Maine's efforts moving forward.

### **Activity Three: Maximize Parent and Family Engagement in the B-5 System**

The 2019 PDG Needs Assessment highlighted parents' struggles to navigate and access early childhood programs and services. To strengthen Maine's coordination services, in 2021 the legislature passed, and the Governor signed LD 1712 *An Act to Support Children's Healthy Development and School Success*, which establishes and provides funding for HMG and the First 4 ME Early Care and Education Program.

*Help Me Grow*: Led by OCFS in partnership with the Children Cabinet's EIWG, HMG is expected to: 1.) increase the percentage of children screened for developmental, social or emotional issues at all appropriate locations, including, but not limited to, early childhood education facilities, child care facilities, Head Start facilities, Early Head Start facilities, regional sites of the CDS System, and health care providers to ensure access to early periodic screening, diagnosis and treatment and other related services to promote children's healthy development; 2.) develop a coordinated system of early identification, referral and follow-up services across early

childhood education, child care facilities, home visiting, Head Start, Early Head Start, CDS, health care providers, and family supports; 3.) improve the delivery of services covered by EPSDT required by Medicaid and other related services to promote children's healthy development; 4.) develop a centralized access point for families, caregivers and professionals to obtain information about EPSDT. The centralized access point is available by telephone, the Internet and other communication platforms; 5.) compile and maintain an electronic directory of resources with respect to service providers and use appropriate methods of communication to assist families and caregivers and connect them with early intervention services, primary care and appropriate EPSDT to children at risk; and, 6.) collect data necessary to align the system with evaluation requirements from the national Help Me Grow Center as well as identify gaps in services by type and region and barriers to obtaining appropriate services.

As Maine prepares to launch HMG in November 2022, OCFS recognizes that it will need to devote additional resources to provide targeted outreach to support New Mainer parents with young children, which includes refugees, migrants, and asylees from 30 different countries, and ensure that they are able to connect with HMG. OCSF will hire a Family Navigator and contract with the DHHS COVID 19 Community Care Team (CCT) to provide expertise to HMG and early intervention service providers on better ways to connect with diverse communities. B-5 Renewal funding will allow HMG to build on lessons learned by the CCT during the pandemic which developed strong connections to ECBOs and Community Action Programs (CAPs). The CCT worked with its partners to design and launch a referral system to support requests for resources such as cultural brokers and interpretation, safe shelter, culturally appropriate food, information about COVID-19 in multiple languages, psychosocial support, support for persons using substances, access to medical and preventive care, outreach testing, access to vaccination,

and transportation. In addition, the CCT connected people with partner organizations that could best meet their needs, based on their geography, language, and cultural affiliation.

The CCT has proposed continuing the referral system and expanding it to address broader activities, including social determinants of health and assuring access to services for those eligible but marginalized. This referral system will be affiliated with the newly reorganized Maine CDC Office of Population Health Equity at MDHHS. To connect this work with early intervention services and the ECE system, a steering committee from the CCT, HMG and the DHHS Commissioner's office will work with representatives from ECBOs to develop an effective and robust plan for outreach, care coordination, and referrals to meet the unique needs of New Mainer parents under the B-5 Renewal. The CCT will provide mentoring and training to DHHS, HMG, and early intervention teams on how to address the needs of diverse communities. *First 4 ME*: First 4 ME is a community-based approach to improving access to quality early care and education and is modeled after the successful Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership. First 4 ME will deliver two generation, community driven whole-family programming and support services to vulnerable families; provide support and coaching to childcare providers to ensure high quality ECE in center and family childcare settings; and, ensure access to increase social, emotional, physical and education outcomes for children birth to Kindergarten entry.

First 4 ME will be administered by OCFS. Competitive grants will be awarded to up to five pilot projects around the state submitted by community coalitions that include representatives from child care providers, home visiting, mental health, public school, the health care sector, and other early childhood system stakeholders. OCFS will prioritize funding to projects that serve communities with high numbers or a high percentage of children who are



economically disadvantaged or that effectively involve a wide variety of providers or other entities in the community, including school districts.

*Public Education Campaign:* Using existing tools like the Maine CDC’s developmental milestone app and TheBasic.org’s community toolkits and other resources, the MDHHS and MDOE Project Managers will outline a public education campaign to help a diverse group of parents and caregivers to better understand the developmental milestones of their children and simple activities and actions they can employ to encourage and support healthy development. In Years 2 and 3, a media firm will be engaged to help with disseminating messaging and materials to parents and caregivers across the state through a public education campaign that is accessible, attainable, and tailored for Maine’s diverse population of families.

*Pilot First 10 Schools and Communities (F10SC):* Maine will pilot First 10 Schools and Communities (F10SC) in six sites throughout the state. A project of Education Development Center (EDC), led by nationally respected researcher, David Jacobson, the F10SC model cultivates strong school/community partnerships across the first 10 years of children’s lives to promote educational equity and close opportunity gaps.

In the fall of 2018, a team from MDOE and MDHHS worked with David Jacobson and Maine’s 13 Preschool Expansion Grant sites to develop Birth-Grade 3 (B3) teams and plans, an early variation of the F10SC model. Additionally, David Jacobson supported the work of a state-level, cross-agency team to build its capacity for supporting local level implementation. Unfortunately, the pandemic interrupted these efforts. Work of the state level team continued, resulting in the development of [web-based resources](#) to support future implementation efforts, tools to strengthen alignment of instructional practices, and professional learning modules to

support stronger transitions into kindergarten, as well as continued outreach to the 13 communities.

The theory of change that underpins F10SC advocates for: 1.) collaboration to improve teaching and learning through stronger alignment of instructional practices and smoother transitions; 2.) coordination of comprehensive services to support whole child development; and 3.) engagement of families in culturally responsive ways. F10SC are strongly encouraged to employ family engagement coordinators who foster relationships between families, particularly families facing economic or other hardships, and schools/community partners while also connecting them to needed resources. Family engagement coordinators also serve an important role in helping F10SC leadership teams implement plans to accomplish short and long-term goals. EDC is currently developing a tool for guiding and assessing implementation progress and outcomes in F10SC and established a national network to connect F10SC efforts.

B-5 Renewal funds will be utilized to restart and more fully implement an F10SC pilot in six sites across Maine through **Subgrants**. Details are provided in *Activity 6*. Maine will contract with EDC for intensive support to establish school hub models over the 3 years of the grant. Grant funding will support the establishment of a F10SC Consultant at the MDOE who will collaborate with EDC to provide technical assistance to Maine's F10SC sites as they build and implement plans, assist with the creation of a state network to connect Maine's F10SC sites to share successes and lessons learned, and connect Maine's F10SC pilot to its First 4 ME pilots. Finally, grant funding will be utilized to evaluate this pilot in conjunction with the First 4 ME pilot so that the two models can be studied to inform future decision making.

## ***Family Leadership***

Maine's ECE system has taken steps to invest in programming to strengthen meaningful family engagement and expand the inclusion of parent voice in decision-making. Formal support and training for family leaders currently occurs through several Maine programs:

*Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHN) Program:* Ensuring that families are partners in decision-making at all levels in the care of their CSHN, including the healthcare team, and supporting parent leaders to be actively involved in policy development results in improved outcomes for children and the system of care. Families are contributing members across many of the programs housed under CSHN. Recognizing that the system is complex, CSHN contracts with the Maine Parent Federation (MPF) to assist families navigate the system of services.

*Maine Parent Federation (MPF):* MPF provides information, referral, one-on-one support, and training to parents of children with special health care needs and the professionals that work with them. MPF designed the Family Support Navigator Program to connect families to a network of supports, services and information at the local, state, and national level. The navigators assist families with locating medical care and understanding results.

*Parent Ambassador Program (PAP):* Educare Central Maine's PAP is a successful model for developing parent leaders. The B-5 Renewal will allow the state to expand parent leadership training to New Mainer parents through a contract with Portland Empowered. Led by one of Maine's prominent immigrant leaders, Portland Empowered offers a six-week leadership training course for parents with children in Portland and Lewiston schools. This program is provided to parents who come from multiple countries and speak multiple languages. The program helps parents to better understand Maine's educational system and ensures that parent voice is authentically incorporated into decision making in Portland and Lewiston's public schools.

With funding from the B-5 Renewal and technical assistance from Educare Central Maine, Portland Empowered will develop a new parent leadership program for parents of young children and expand the catchment area of their programming to include Lewiston, Biddeford, Portland and surrounding towns. Funding from the grant will support the organization to hire a new trainer, pay stipends to their parent leaders and participants, and host trainings in multiple communities. The grant will also fund technical assistance by Educare Central Maine to support Portland Empowered to update their training and incorporate learnings from PAP.

*Promote Parent Engagement on Early Childhood Advisory Councils:* The CCECAC serves as the state's federally mandated early childhood advisory council and as an advisory board for the Children's Cabinet on policies and programs related strengthening Maine's ECE system for children birth through age 5. To ensure family voice in program and policy decisions, the CCECAC includes one parent representative as well as representatives from parent-serving organizations. To strengthen parent voice in the B-5 Renewal, parents participating in both the expanded PAP and the Portland Empowered leadership program will be invited to provide on-going feedback and play an advisory role in the implementation of the PDG.

#### **Activity Four: Support the B-5 Workforce and Disseminate Best Practices**

##### ***Salary Supplement Program***

The 2019 B-5 Needs Assessment identified low wages as a primary barrier to attracting and retaining ECE Staff. Informed by feedback received through listening sessions with representatives from the ECE workforce and key stakeholders, Governor Mills introduced and passed a new state funded salary supplement for early childhood educators as part of her supplemental budget. This initiative, which went into effect in October 2022, extends the \$200 per month stipends that had been part of the ARPA-funded Child Care Stabilization Grants

which ended in September 2022. The statutory language requires the OCFS to develop rules to establish a tiered salary supplement program, which provides higher monthly stipends based upon education and experience, by July 1, 2022. Additional details about the tiered salary supplement program are provided in the *Bonus Section: Improving Workforce Compensation*.

### ***Child Care Scholarships***

To recruit new early childhood staff to the ECE field, OCFS will use grant funding to offer 30 to 40 12-month child care scholarships to new staff working at licensed child care program in Maine who have never worked in child care before. Scholarships will be provided to parents who are not eligible for the CCSP and will cover 75% of the cost of child care expenses. Over the first several months of the B-5 Renewal, staff from MDHHS will develop eligibility standards and market the program to licensed child care programs as an opportunity to recruit new staff.

### ***Career pathways and professional development***

#### ***Professional Development***

The PDG Needs Assessment noted professional development needs in several key areas: behavior management, transitions into kindergarten, leadership in early learning settings, culturally responsive and inclusive practices, and strategies for strengthening attendance. B-5 Renewal funds will be utilized to enhance designs and/or expand reach in the following areas:

*Inclusionary practices:* Addressing the needs of culturally diverse and vulnerable children requires strong knowledge and application of inclusionary practices throughout ECE settings.

Funding from the B-5 Renewal will be used to expand Maine's Inclusion Practices Program into a suite of tiered professional development opportunities. This is described more fully in the *Bonus Area: Increasing Access to Inclusive Settings*. Specialists from MDOE, MRTQ, and MDHHS will also develop several one hour on-demand training videos to provide educators with

a basic understanding of the foundations of inclusionary practices and implementing them in a classroom that will serve as an entry point into the more in-depth Inclusionary Practice Program.

*Transitions:* Under its initial PDG, Maine launched a website with transitions resources. In 2021, Maine received a technical assistance grant from Education Commission of the States that enabled enhancement of the website and the development of professional learning modules for local schools and communities. B-5 Renewal funds will help support further enhancement of the modules, including facilitator training, development of additional content, and provision of more intensive technical assistance support for their use in local communities.

*Early Elementary Principal Training:* Over the past 15 years, the number of Maine elementary schools operating public pre-K programs has grown steadily as has the recognition that elementary principals play a critical role in determining the quality of care and education that young children, particularly those who are vulnerable, receive. Maine's B-5 Needs Assessment pointed to the need for more training for elementary administrators. Between 2020-2022, Maine researched, designed, and piloted the Leading Early Learning series which is grounded in the National Association for Elementary School Principals (2014, 2021) six research-based competencies for effective instructional leadership among pre-K-3 principals.

PDG Renewal funds will be utilized to provide the series for 30-40 administrators during each year of the grant. Additionally, administrators who have completed the series will be invited to participate in an ongoing community of practice. Learnings from these efforts will be shared with institutions of higher education and Maine's State Board of Education to inform requirements for administrators working in early elementary settings.

*Trauma Informed Practices:* As part of its initial PDG award, Maine contracted with the Maine Resilience Building Network (MRBN) to provide professional learning for EC educators related

to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), trauma informed practices, and resilience. Maine will offer additional professional learning through MRBN over the next three years. MRBN will provide two programs: 1.) building foundational knowledge in ACEs and trauma informed/resilience building practices and 2.) implementing the Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences (HOPE) model from Tufts University as part of ongoing practice. MRBN will offer these sessions in-person and virtually for groups of educators up to 500 at a time.

*Additional Professional Learning:* In the time since conducting the B-5 Needs Assessment, MDHHS and MDOE have identified additional areas in which professional learning could be advantageous for Maine's ECE workforce. Maine intends to take the first 3-6 months of the grant period to research evidence-based resources and map out a professional learning plan for the ECE workforce which will lead to a sustainable bank of resources and provide opportunities for joint professional learning between B-5 and early elementary educators.

Specialists from MRTQ, MDHHS, and MDOE will work collaboratively to identify and disseminate the professional learning resources and opportunities as appropriate across the birth to grade 3 span. Topics may include: 1) early literacy, language development and early numeracy 2) early elementary literacy instruction grounded in the science of reading ; 3) early numeracy and mathematical practices ; 4) developmentally appropriate practices including play as a learning strategy ; 5) dual language development in the early years ; 6) dual language instruction in the early elementary years ; 7) culturally responsive family engagement ; and 8) social-emotional learning/executive functioning/behavioral management .

### ***Career Pathways***

The 2019 B-5 Needs Assessment determined that a lack of clearly articulated pathways into and through ECE professions, including the availability of specific training and certification

opportunities, is barrier to recruiting and retaining ECE workforce. Through the PDG Renewal, Maine will work towards implementing an articulated ECE pathway from Career and Technical Education (CTE) to the statewide training system to 2 year and 4-year degree programs.

*Articulation Agreements:* MRTQ PDN, the state funded training and technical assistance system, will strengthen and build articulation agreements across the ECE professional development and educational system, creating pathways for students from Maine's CTEs and MRTQ PDN programs into Maine's IHEs. B-5 Renewal funding will support MRTQ PDN to add a staff focused on expanding their efforts to align programming and agreements across the system.

MRTQ PDN is developing models for articulation agreements with Maine's community colleges and universities. MRTQ PDN is currently working with Eastern Maine Community College (EMCC) to establish reciprocal articulation between the following MRTQ PDN's *Infant Toddler Credential, Youth Development Credential, and Inclusion Credential* and EMCC's Learning Facilitator badges. MRTQ PDN is also working with the University of Maine at Presque Isle (UMPI) to establish reciprocal articulation between the MRTQ PDN State *Infant Toddler Credential* and UMPI's YourPace online competency-based program.

*Promote and expand early childhood education (ECE) programming at career and technical schools:* Currently, 23 of Maine's 27 CTE centers offer ECE programming. Maine has recently dedicated an annual investment \$100,000 in state funding to support establishing ECE programs in CTE centers that do not have programming. Maine's B-5 Renewal provides an opportunity to supplement this state investment to address additional identified needs.

Surveys from Maine's CTE ECE programs show that very few CTE students are attaining Child Development Associate's Credentials. In Year 1 of the grant, MRTQ PDN will support up to 20 CTE students to obtain either 1.) a State of Maine Credential that is articulated



as equivalent to a Child Development Associate (CDA) or 2.) a CDA free of charge, helping students to cover the cost of prohibitive fees and supporting students to complete the necessary coursework and paperwork to obtain their CDA or a State of Maine Credential.

MDOE and MDHHS will use B-5 Renewal funds to work with CTE stakeholders to prioritize strategies to strengthen ECE programming by: 1). Implementing multiple strategies to support CTE ECE students in attaining CDA credentials, 2). developing and/or updating articulation agreements with community colleges, and 3). identifying opportunities to expand the ECE curriculum to include special education and business management content.

### *Maine Apprenticeship Program*

Over the last year, MRTQ-PDN worked with MDOL to build the Maine ECE Registered Apprenticeship Program. Educare Central Maine will serve as one of the sponsoring employers, along with 3 family child care programs that participate in Educare's HomeStart program. The apprentices will pursue a *Maine Infant Toddler* credential, *Maine Youth Development* credential or a *Child Development Associate* credential and will receive their National Journey Worker Certificate upon completion as well. After six months of successful participation, the apprentices will receive a \$500 stipend from MDOL to cover expenses. In addition, sponsoring employers will receive \$10,000 wage supplements during years 1 and 2 of the program and \$5,000 retention supplement in the third year. These stipends will be funded by OCFS with CCDF funding for 10 additional apprentices each year. MRTQ-PDN is also partnering with Maine Association for the Education of Young Children's T.E.A.C.H./Early Childhood ® along with Maine's Community Colleges to develop an apprenticeship programming that will lead to five additional apprentices receiving an Associate's Degree in ECE by covering 95% of the cost of tuition.

### *Accelerated Child Care Provider Training*

During Year 1 of the grant, MDOE, MRTQ-PDN and OCFS will examine opportunities to develop a training program to accelerate the process for trained professionals to enter the ECE field, particularly child care programs. This program would be modeled after an accelerated training program offered by EMCC that trained and credentialed new Education Technicians to work in public schools across the state during the pandemic. Maine expects to develop a program that can be implemented in Years 2 and 3.

### *Early Childhood Summit*

Maine will organize and host an Early Childhood Summit each summer as a vehicle to connect practitioners across the birth-grade 3 span, including IHEs and policymakers, to strengthen relationships, engage in visioning, and support informed decision making for Maine's ECE system. The Summit will provide an opportunity to bring best practices for ECE training and professional development to scale across Maine.

The Workforce strategies included in Maine's PDG Renewal provide both systemic support for the state's B-5 workforce and support for ECE providers at the community level. For example, Maine's Salary Supplement Support Program recognized and addressed the need to increase wages for Maine's ECE workforce. Child Care Scholarships recognize a systemic need to increase the pipeline of workers into child care settings while helping cover child care expenses for working parents not eligible for the CCSP. Developing an articulated ECE education and training pathway will increase the pipeline of trained workers into ECE professions while making access to programs easier to navigate for participants. Providing opportunities for accelerated child care provider training addresses a systemic need for trained ECE workers while getting those workers employed quickly with providers in the community.

Maine’s approach to professional learning will leverage regional structures that support both the ECE and early elementary age spans.

### **Activity Five: Support Program Quality Improvement**

#### ***Improve the Overall Quality of ECE Programs***

*Expand incentives to move up the quality rating scale:* The PDG Needs Assessment identified concerns related to the quality of Maine’s ECE system. MDHHS is in the process of updating Maine’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to bring all licensed child care programs into a new Rising Stars for ME program, replacing the current four-step system with five stars. Star 1 will be for all licensed-exempt programs receiving CCSP. Ratings for all licensed child care programs will start at a Star 2. All early childhood educators will be required to participate in MRTQ’s Registry. These new requirements of licensed child care programs and ECE professionals ensure alignment across program rules related to CCDF funded programs.

Programs that currently participate in QRIS are not moving up the QRIS rating steps as desired – over half of the programs in Maine’s QRIS (59%) are currently rated at the lowest level of quality (Step 1) with only 8% of programs rated at the highest (Step 4). Maine defines a “high quality” child care provider as Step 3 or 4. ECE providers report that moving up the rating system can be costly and the current incentives for improving quality are not adequate. MRTQ currently provides mini grants (\$400-\$500) to programs moving from steps 1 to 2 or steps 2 to 3. Increasing these grants will provide a greater incentive for programs to move up the QRIS.

Larger incentive payments, starting at \$2500 per payment, will be available to child care providers to increase their quality with the goal of moving up the QRIS. In Year 1, the OCFS will develop a process and scoring criteria for payments to support programs to move from a current step 1 to step 2 on the QRIS (star 2 to star 3 in the new Rising for ME system). In Year 2,

funds will be available to support programs to move from a current step 2 to step 3 (star 3 to 4) and in Year 3 from current step 3 to step 4 (star 4 to star 5). Payments will grow over the three-year period to reflect the greater investments needed to move to higher steps. Moving to become an accredited program takes significant investment. Incentive payments up to \$10,000 will be available in that last year to help meet these costs. The goal is for 10% of providers in each category to move up one step on the QRIS.

The nine MRTQ District Coordinators will offer technical assistance to child care programs interested in taking advantage of these grants to improve their quality. The District Coordinators will support programs to develop plans for improving their overall quality and target grant funds to increase their quality and quality ratings. District Coordinators will identify other opportunities for programs to increase quality, such as helping existing staff access TEACH scholarships to attain a post-secondary degree.

*Update Maine's Early Learning and Development Standards (MELDS):* To improve the overall quality of early learning programs and ensure alignment across various sets of standards, Maine will update its MELDS for children ages three-five in 2023. Building from the Infant Toddler MELDS (IT MELDS) and bridging developmental expectations to the Maine Learning Results (MLRs), the MELDS provide typically expected progressions across developmental domains and inform curriculum and assessment practices. Funding for updating the MELDS and associated professional learning tools has been secured, but a currently unfunded need is the cost of translating the updated MELDS into Maine's most spoken languages to ensure equitable access and use by ECE practitioners and parents/caregivers.

*Develop a Kindergarten Entry Inventory:* The update to the MELDS will also provide an opportunity for Maine to initiate development of a Kindergarten Entry Inventory. Although there

are no federal requirements for assessing children until grade 3, EC assessments serve an important role in helping educators determine children's status along developmental progressions. Currently, design and implementation of early learning assessments (Pre-k to grade 3) is determined by local school systems with guidance offered by the MDOE. Data from these local assessments is not collected by the state and variety exists across school systems, in terms of measures, frequency of use, purposes, and domains of development assessed.

Between 2014 and 2018, Maine participated in North Carolina's Enhanced Assessment Grant (EAG), helping to enhance and field test a K-3 formative assessment tool. Participation in this project revealed the utility of documenting whole child development in the beginning of Kindergarten but Maine did not have resources to expand this work. Lack of consistent indicators of children's readiness at time of kindergarten entry has made it difficult to determine if Maine is on track with its goal that all Maine children enter Kindergarten ready to succeed.

Using the planned update to MELDS as a springboard, B-5 Renewal funds will be utilized to develop, pilot, and conduct a field test of a Kindergarten Entry Inventory that is valid and reliable, can be administered during the initial months of the kindergarten year, and which documents students' development along progressions of the five essential domains of school readiness. The inventory will align to the MELDS and inform instruction in the kindergarten year as well as programming improvements in the ECE and early elementary systems.

MDOE will hire an EC assessment specialist to form and facilitate a stakeholder group to advise development of a Kindergarten Entry Inventory. The stakeholder group, under the leadership of MDOE with support from MDHHS and consultation with a national expert and/or technical assistance center, will review the research base, examine successful implementation practices, determine key purposes of the Inventory, and identify constructs to assess within each

of the 5 developmental domains. The stakeholder group will also examine and advise the MDOE on possible assessment tools to employ and will inform the design of a pilot to test the inventory with approximately 36 kindergarten classrooms from across Maine during Year 2. In Year 3, results of the pilot will inform tool refinement and a larger field test with approximately 100 kindergarten classrooms.

*Promote adoption and implementation of vertically-aligned Pre-K to Grade 2 Instructional Programs:* The pandemic has revealed the importance of attending to children’s social and emotional development, including executive functioning, at the same time academic skills are being cultivated. Prior to the pandemic, implementation of MDOE’s PEG illuminated the need to better align pre-K curriculum and pedagogical approaches with approaches in Kindergarten. Maine drew upon Boston Public Schools’ Focus curriculum—an open-source, whole child, culturally-responsive, interdisciplinary, and vertically aligned approach. Supplemental PEG funding enabled MDOE to begin adapting, enhancing, and piloting the *Focus on K1/K2* curricula. Pilot projects conducted with support from a Boston Public School consultant in partnership with the MDOE’s Early Learning Team and approximately 50 Maine pre-K and Kindergarten teachers over the period from 2018 to 2022 have resulted in two vertically aligned, open-source instructional programs, Pre-K for ME and K for ME. An outside evaluation of Pre-K for ME led to its approval for use by Head Start programs nationwide.

Educators and administrators in schools using Pre-K for ME and K for ME strongly advocated for MDOE to continue development of a vertically aligned set of instructional programs for Grades 1 and Grade 2. In 2021-2022, MDOE began work to adapt and enhance Boston’s Focus on First curriculum. 1<sup>st</sup> Grade for ME is currently being piloted in 14 first grade

classrooms throughout the state with the goal of launching it as an open-source instructional program for the 2023-24 school year.

Funding from the B-5 Renewal will enable the MDOE to continue adaptation and enhancement of Boston's Focus curriculum across the K-2 span over the next few years. In Year 1, funding will support enhancements to incorporate sequential math strands for both K for ME and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade for ME as well as nature-based and science and technology strands for 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade for ME. Grant funding will also support professional learning for Maine educators who want to adopt Pre-K, K or 1<sup>st</sup> Grade for ME as well as an introductory PLC for educators interested in 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade for ME. In Year 2, funding will support an evaluated pilot of 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade for ME with up to 20 Maine educators. Math, technology, and nature-based learning strands will also be developed and added to 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade for ME. Professional learning will continue for educators interested in Pre-K, K, and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade for ME. In Year 3, video clips and recorded trainings for all of four of the instructional programs will be developed to support its ongoing use. Throughout years 1-3, Maine will continue to contract with the Boston Public Schools for technical assistance.

### ***Enhance Statewide Quality Improvement Activities***

*Aligning Quality Bumps for Child Care Assistance for TANF and CCSP:* B-5 Renewal funds will allow the state to pay quality bumps to licensed child care programs serving children through Maine's TANF work program, known as ASPIRE and the Hope program. Currently licensed providers serving families participating in ASPIRE and/or the Hope program receive reimbursement at 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of the market rate. The purpose of this initiative is to improve the quality of child care providers providing care and education to some of Maine's most economically disadvantaged children and families. To encourage participating programs to improve their quality, encourage more higher quality providers to participate in these programs

and encourage current non-licensed providers to become licensed, OCFS will use B-5 Renewal funds to pay the quality bumps for the licensed child care programs providing care and education for more than 300 children. OCFS will hire a data coordinator to support the effort to align these programs and ensure that the correct payments are delivered to these providers each month.

OCFS staff will work to encourage programs to increase their quality and provide information to non-licensed friend, family, and neighbor caregivers about the benefits of becoming a licensed provider as well as offering these caregivers the opportunity to join Maine's PDN registry.

### **Activity Six: Subgrants to Enhance Quality and Expand Access**

In Year 1 of the B-5 Renewal, Maine will subgrant \$950,000, approximately 12% of the total award. In Year 2, subgrants are projected to be \$1,200,000, approximately 15% of the total award and in Year 3, subgrants will total \$1,450,000, approximately 18% of the total award.

#### **Subgrant Option A**

***Pilot First 10 Schools and Communities (F10SC):*** B-5 Renewal funds will be utilized to restart and more fully implement a F10SC pilot in **six** sites across Maine through **Subgrants**. Pilot hubs will be selected to represent both geographic and demographic variation within the state, with priority given to school's located in rural communities with limited access to comprehensive services as well as communities with high percentages of vulnerable children and families, especially economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse populations. Throughout the pilot, barriers unique to various contexts and strategies for overcoming them will be identified to support future expansion of the model. Subgrants will support establishment of F10SC leadership teams, plan development, and plan implementation efforts. F10SC Leadership Teams will be composed of school administrators and early elementary educators as well as providers



from the birth to five EC mixed delivery system. Parents representing the birth-age 10 span must also be included on Leadership Teams.

Subgrant funding will support a Family Engagement Coordinator at each hub to provide outreach to families within the school system's catchment area and provide day to day coordination of the F10SC plan. Coordinators will link children and families to comprehensive support services; foster positive relationships with the school through culturally responsive family engagement opportunities; support children's transitions into the school; and ensure that coordinated systems of support remain through the early elementary grades. Coordinators will also work with school administrators and educators to align curricula between Pre-k and the early elementary grades, foster shared professional learning opportunities between community ECE professionals and early elementary educators, engage families with young children in early educational experiences, and identify data-supported positive outcomes and service gaps. Subgrant funding will initially support the salary of the Coordinator during Year 1. Over the course of the grant, funding for the Coordinator will be reduced to foster sustainability at the local level.

The F10SC Consultant at the MDOE will develop the RFP in consultation with EDC. School Administrative Units in Maine will be the recipients of the grants and will need to demonstrate coordination with community partners in their applications. The RFP is expected to be posted in late spring of 2023 and awards made to allow implementation to begin during the summer of 2023. A team composed of specialists from MDOE, MDHHS, and the Children's Cabinet will score the RFPs. Contracts will be written for one year at a time with the option for renewal for up to two years based on satisfactory implementation of subgrant deliverables.

***Subgrants to Ethnic Community-Based Organizations to Enhance Help Me Grow:*** The B-5 Renewal will build greater capacity in Maine's HMG system to support New Mainer parents

through **Subgrants** to ECBOs. Staff from ECBOs will serve as critical cultural brokers for the New Mainer communities and will conduct outreach in immigrant communities to help educate families in their own cultural context about the importance of developmental screenings and will connect families to preventative health and early intervention services, including HMG, to ensure better care coordination services and access to primary care providers. In addition, the HMG team is piloting the online developmental screening system, Ages and Stages Questionnaire, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (ASQ-3 online) in order to increase access to developmental screening. The online system has screening available in multiple languages. The HMG team will work with the CCT and ECBOs to determine the best ways to utilize the online system for developmental screening in diverse communities. B-5 Renewal funding will also support the DHHS team to incorporate this early intervention work into their referral processes, facilitate relationships and contracts with the ECBOs, and offer their on-going expertise to ensure a strong, effective process that reaches a broad cross section of vulnerable families with young children in Maine.

In the first quarter of the B-5 Renewal, a small working group, including staff from HMG and CCT, will develop a plan for establishing contracts with three to four ECBOs who can demonstrate interest, experience, and expertise in the needs of new Mainer families with young children in their communities. Contracts with these agencies will be established in Year 1 and continue through Years 2 and 3.

### **Subgrant Option B**

*Provide Subgrants to Expand Pre-K - Community Partnerships:* Maine has steadily increased access for four-year olds to public preschool experiences. During the 2019-20 school year, approximately 47% of Maine's 4-year olds were being served through public pre-K. While the number of 4-year olds dipped during the pandemic, Maine's Governor did not waiver from her

goal to reach universal access to preschool for any 4-year old in Maine. \$10,000,000 in ARPA funds have been dedicated to expansion of public pre-K in Maine during the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years which is anticipated to support approximately 25 LEAs. Additional LEAs have also chosen to start or expand pre-K programming using COVID relief funds. Maine anticipates this investment will help not only return to, but exceed, pre-pandemic enrollment, with the goal of reaching 60% of 4-year-olds having access to public pre-K.

Despite these investments, Maine LEAs do not all have the capacity to reach universal enrollment for their catchment areas on their own. The pandemic revealed not only families' need for access to affordable ECE opportunities that minimize transitions throughout the day for young children, but also the fragility of Maine's ECE system. The more LEAs expand public pre-K, the greater the strain is on other segments of the ECE system.

Maine needs to increase the number of partnerships with child care (center based and family child care) if it is going to realize its goal of reaching universal access to public pre-K—a goal designed to ensure equitable access to high-quality early care and education, especially for our most vulnerable children. To achieve the goal of universal access, Maine needs to better understand the impacts to the ECE system as it expands public pre-K, including how funding streams could be adjusted to support expansion. Ultimately, Maine wants to test different strategies to determine the best course of action for long-term public pre-K implementation.

Utilizing B-5 Renewal funding, Maine will establish a stakeholder group, representative of its ECE mixed-delivery system, to study the current funding model for public pre-K, explore opportunities for partnerships across the available systems (including funding considerations and mechanisms), consider the ramifications of various partnership and funding designs, and recommend pilot projects to test new designs that will increase access to public pre-K through

partnership models. In Years 1-3, B-5 Renewal funds will support addition of a consultant position within the MDOE's Early Learning Team to assist with coordination of the stakeholder group and provide ongoing oversight and technical assistance for public pre-K partnership pilots. In Year 1, funds will also support a consultant with expertise in pre-K partnerships and funding strategies to facilitate the stakeholder group, enabling all stakeholders in Maine's mixed delivery system to actively participate in discussions and decision making. Funding to support convening of the stakeholder group and opportunities for focus groups is included in Year 1.

In Years 2 and 3, **Subgrants** will be provided through pilot projects to explore alternate funding and delivery models for high-quality public pre-K experiences that incorporate local child care centers, family child cares, and private preschools. It is anticipated that at least a couple of pilot designs will be implemented to test models that meet the needs of vulnerable children, enhance rather than undermine the existing child care infrastructure, and ensure the needs of working parents are met. The pilots will require that each pre-K pilot site meets the program standards for high-quality outlined for public pre-K in Maine. Each pilot site will receive a monitoring visit in the fall and spring which will include a CLASS observation to inform technical assistance and coaching needs. Classrooms will be required to utilize Teaching Strategies Gold at 3 check points to track children's progress across all learning domains.

As a result of expanding public pre-K, Maine expects to 1.) gather information to guide decision making about alternative program designs and funding structures for the provision of public pre-K 2.) increase ECE options for parents; and 3.) enhance the quality of early learning environments for children.

## **BONUS AREAS**

### **Improving Workforce Compensation**

Maine's new Tiered Salary Supplement Program (TSSP) provides a tremendous opportunity to support the ECE workforce through greater compensation. To receive the monthly \$200 stipend, educators must be registered on Maine's Early Care and Education Professional Development Registry. While participation in the registry has skyrocketed, most registrants failed to provide information about their education and experience. As the state moves to a tiered salary supplement program, this information will be needed to determine stipend levels. It is expected that many educators will need assistance understanding the steps they need to take to be eligible for increased stipends.

Through the B-5 Renewal, OCFS will add a Workforce Navigator who will serve as a resource for EC educators, supporting them to qualify for the new tiered salary supplement and walking through options for training and education to further their careers and make them eligible for higher salary supplements. Maine has implemented several programs to support access to higher education, including the TEACH scholarship program and free community college over the next several years. The Workforce Navigator will support EC educators to strengthen their professional development plans (PDPs) and take advantage of training and education programs that will advance their careers. The Workforce Navigator will also connect educators to other resources such as the ECCP. The Workforce Navigator will determine eligibility for the Child Care Scholarship Program and will support CCSP-eligible parents to fill out the application and secure care for their children. In addition, the Workforce Navigator will help educators to connect to other initiatives funded through this grant including the joint professional learning series and the inclusionary practices program.

B-5 Renewal grant funds will also support a thorough evaluation of the TSSP and the role of the Workforce Navigator to determine its effectiveness. The goal of the TSSP is to recruit and retain a qualified early childhood care and education workforce. An evaluation will help policymakers to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program and determine if the addition of a Workforce Navigator helps increase access to salary supports and other resources.

### **Increasing Access to Inclusive Settings**

Initiated under Maine’s PEG grant, and continued under the initial PDG, MRTQ PDN provided “inclusion in the classroom” training to four Maine school districts. Teams composed of general and special education administrators and staff who were trained in pre-K environments and pre-K inclusion.

In recent years the Maine State Legislature has reviewed bill proposals that support moving the oversight of Part B 619 special education services into the public school system and out of the current Intermediate Education Unit of Child Development Services. This shift will not only affect schools, but also programs serving children aged 3 to 5. In an effort to address this potential shift in oversight as well as the increase in requests for classroom inclusion support from educators in our mixed delivery system we aim to expand the reach of the IPP beyond public school classrooms. MRTQ PDN will support MDOE and MDHHS in surveying the needs of early elementary educators and child care providers and use the collected data to inform potential revisions of training content and appropriate delivery options. These activities will inform the transition of the IPP to the *Expanding Inclusion Practices Professional Development Toolkit (EIPPD)*, a suite of tiered professional development opportunities. These opportunities will provide three different ways to engage professionals, including general and special education administrators, Pre-K and early elementary teachers, and early childhood educators in

licensed child care programs. Tier one will consist of a range of facilitated on-demand trainings, tier two will be a facilitated stand-alone Professional Learning Community and tier three will be an intensive 56-hour professional development initiative that is a combination of training, technical assistance, and consultation. The table that follows indicates the offerings of tiered cohorts over the three years of the grant, with each cohort serving 20 educators:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Tier 1 Cohort 1	Tier 1 Cohort 2	Tier 2 Cohort 2
Tier 2 Cohort 1	Tier 3 Cohort 1	Tier 3 Cohort 2

All classrooms participating in the intensive program (cohort 3) will receive a \$1500 mini-grant upon completion of the program to support inclusionary practices. Trainings offered as part of the intensive 56-hour professional development initiative count towards the Inclusion Credential offered through MRTQ PDN to help practitioners build the skills, knowledge, resources, and attitudes to offer care in an inclusive environment. EIPPD participants will have the option to continue training through MRTQ PDN to earn this State credential.

Each cohort will include an intentional sample of Child Care, Public Preschool, Special Education practitioners and Administrators based on the EIPPD offerings. MRTQ PDN will evaluate participants based on their amount and type of engagement and provide a comparison dataset to inform the efficacy and impact of models at varying depths of engagement. As a result, early childhood care and education professionals will retain a better understanding of how to support the growing diversity in Maine’s population, gain positive strategies for classroom management of challenging behaviors, as well as improved classroom inclusiveness practices which will lead to improved attendance.

**TIMELINE: January 1-December 31, 2023 (including years 2&3)**

Activity	Tasks	Lead/Partners	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Y2	Y3
<b>Activity 1: Update Comprehensive Statewide B-5 Needs Assessment</b>								
Hire PDG staff	Advertise, interview, offer positions	DOE, DHHS	x					
Implement a statewide ECIDS	Establish data governance; implement use cases; build staff capacity; develop reporting features	GOPIF; OIT; DHHS; DOE	x	x	x	x	x	x
Compile findings from prior needs assessments	Review existing ECE needs assessments, policy reports, and evaluations to identify common themes	Project Manager	x	x				
Engage stakeholder in needs conversations	Hire external facilitator; host focus groups, listening sessions, and regional meetings to illicit feedback and identify additional needs	DOE, DHHS, MCC	x	x				x
Assess the existing and emerging needs of the ECE workforce	Contract with MDOL to develop a workforce report; identify gaps in career and education pathways; and complete an in-depth cost estimation model	MDOL, DHHS, DOE	x	x				
<b>Activity 2: Update Comprehensive Statewide Strategic Plan</b>								
Develop and finalize draft strategies	Engage ECE stakeholders for review and feedback	DOE, DHHS, MCC					x	
Implement strategic plan	Disseminate plan and align programming	DOE, DHHS, MCC					x	x
<b>Activity 3: Maximize Parent and Family Engagement in the B-5 System</b>								
Enhance Help Me Grow	Hire a Family Navigator; contract with the DHHS CCT; provide subgrants to ECBOs	DHHS, CCT	x	x	x	x	x	x
Pilot F10 School and Communities	Create RFP process and offer consultation	DOE	x	x	x	x	x	x
Expand Educare Parent Ambassador Program (PAP)	Contract with Portland Empowered to provide parent leadership training to New Mainer parents	DHHS, DOE, Educare CentralME		x	x	x	x	x
<b>Activity 4: Support the B-5 Workforce and Disseminate Best Practices</b>								
Offer child care scholarships to new child care staff	Develop eligibility standards; market to licensed child care programs; recruit new staff	DHHS		x	x	x	x	x
Provide ECE professional development	Create, plan, contract with trainers, and offer a variety of options	DOE, DHHS, MRTQ, MRBN		x	x	x	x	x
Strengthen and build articulation agreements across the ECE educational system	Add staff capacity at MRTQ; align ECE programming and agreements across the system; host an ECE higher education summit;	MRTQ, DOE, Community Colleges		x	x	x	x	x



Promote and expand ECE programming at CTEs	Support CTE students to obtain a CDA credential; expand articulation agreements with Community Colleges; expand ECE curriculum at CTEs.	MRTQ		x	x	x	x	x
Accelerate the process for trained professionals to enter the ECE field	Develop and deliver Accelerated Child Care Provider Training	DOE, DHHS, MRTQ, EMCC					x	x
Host an Early Childhood Summit	Connect ECE practitioners; bring best practices for training and professional development to scale	DOE, DHHS, MRTQ		x	x		x	x
<b>Activity 5: Support Program Quality Improvement</b>								
Expand incentives to move up the quality rating scale	Develop a process and scoring criteria for payments to support programs to move up a step on the QRIS; provide technical assistance to child care programs interested in improving their quality.	DHHS, MRTQ		x	x	x	x	x
Update Maine's Early Learning and Development Standards (MELDS)	Translate the updated MELDS into Maine's most spoken languages to ensure equitable access	DHHS, DOE			x	x		
Develop a Kindergarten Entry Inventory	Hire a consultant; form a stakeholder group of educators and administrators; design, test and select inventory tool; train teachers; evaluate inventory	DOE		x	x	x	x	x
Implement vertically-aligned Pre-K to Grade 2 Instructional Programs	Continue adaptation and enhancement of Boston's Focus curriculum across the K-2 span; evaluation	DOE		x	x	x	x	x
Align Quality Bumps for Child Care Assistance	Pay quality bumps to licensed child care programs serving children TANF; encouraged care givers to join Maine's PDN registry and participate in trainings.	DHHS, MRTQ		x	x	x	x	x
<b>Activity 6: Subgrants to Enhance Quality and Expand Access to Existing and New Programs and/or Systems Enhancement</b>								
Pilot F10 Schools and Communities	Develop RFP; Select 6 pilot sites through subgrants	DOE		x	x	x	x	x
Enhance Help ME Grow	Contract with 3-4 ECBOs to serve as cultural brokers	DHHS	x	x	x	x	x	x
Expand public pre-K partnerships	Provide subgrants to LEA pilot projects	DOE, DHHS					x	x
<b>Bonus Points</b>								
Improve Workforce Compensation	Implement Maine's tiered Salary Supplement Program; hire a Workforce Navigator; evaluate the Program	DHHS		x	x	x	x	x
Increase Access to Inclusive Settings	Develop the Expanding Inclusion Practices Development Toolkit; train ECE professionals	DOE, DHHS, MRTQ		x	x	x	x	x

## **PLAN FOR OVERSIGHT OF FEDERAL FUNDS AND ACTIVITIES**

The Governance Structure for the PDG has changed since the initial grant application. Responsibility for the administration and execution of the grant will be shifted from MDOE to MDHHS, with OCFS managing implementation of the grant. MDHHS and its affiliate agencies entrusts the accounting component of grant administration to its Financial Service Center (FSC) positioned under the Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS). The FSC is staffed by accounting and finance professionals. As a division of DAFS, the FSC functions as an independent, financial intermediary for all Federal grants. Each Federal grant is set-up with unique coding, budgetary structures, and internal controls in Maine's comprehensive accounting system (Advantage). This allows individual grant funding to be encumbered, tracked, monitored and reconciled in detail. Disbursements go through escalating levels of sign-off, which include management approvals, as well as approval from the Office of the State Controller (OSC). The OSC and the FSC are subject to annual audits from multiple entities, inclusive of internal audit groups, as well as the Office of the State Auditor, who performs the annual Single State Audit. Audits test and evaluate internal controls, from grant award and set-up to administration and sub-recipient monitoring, including compliance with TSA and CMIA.

Upon notification of funding, MDHHS will hire a PDG Grant Manager to be accountable for all reporting and grant requirements. Additionally, a PDG Project Manager will be hired to ensure subawards and contracts are closely monitored and promptly executed following state procurement procedures. An administrative position will also be hired to coordinate stakeholder and family involvement, communications and material dissemination. MDHHS currently administers the Child Care Development Fund Block Grant (CCDBG) which funds QRIS, Children's Licensing and Investigation Services, MRTQ PDN, and CCSP. The State Child Care

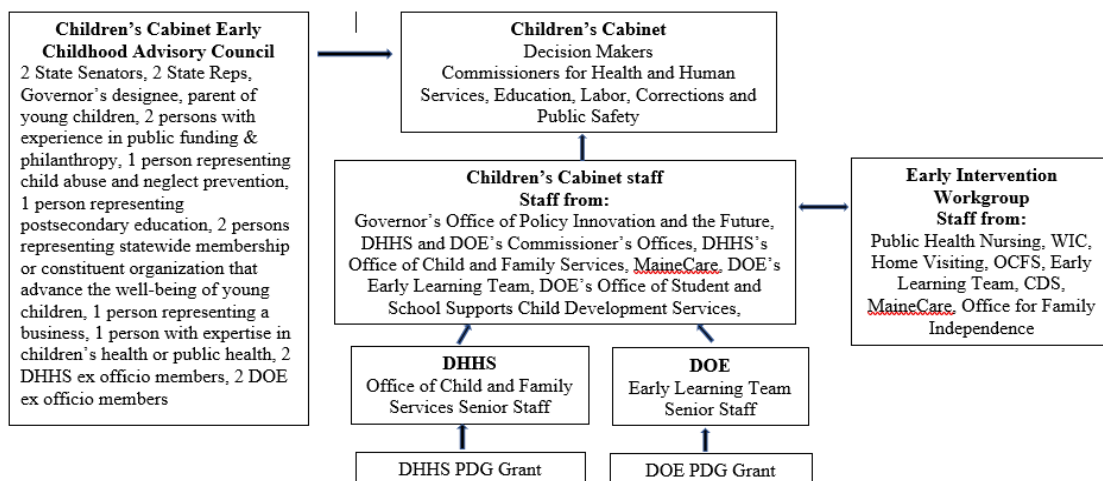
Administrator, who oversees CCDBG activities, is also responsible for the state funds that support Head Start. The PDG Grant Manager and the State Child Care Administrator will be overseen by Associate Director of Early Care and Education which will allow for seamless implementation of the PDG activities. The PDG Team will establish a standing weekly meeting for coordination of project components and a standing monthly meeting with the DOE Early Learning Team and PDG Grant Co-Manager. DHHS' Chief Health Officer will offer guidance on key PDG initiatives with a special focus on HMG.

MDOE's Early Learning Team (EL) led the implementation of Maine's initial PDG and will continue to work closely with MDHHS to ensure cross-agency collaboration on Maine's B-5 Renewal. MDOE will also hire a PDG Grant Manager who will provide oversight for the activities assigned to MDOE, oversee and help develop, execute and manage the contracts associated the activities, manage the reporting on activities, coordinate with the PDG Grant Manager at OCFS, and assist with coordination with the grant evaluator. Other key positions include the Director of EL, who supervises the work of the EL Team and has had extensive experience with grant management, including Maine's \$20 million Reading First grant, Literacy for ME initiative, and current Pre-K Expansion grant and the EL Team's Early Childhood Specialist, who oversees approval of both public pre-K programs throughout the state and supports the interdisciplinary instructional program development. Additional support for public pre-k expansion will be provided by the EL Team's Head Start Collaboration Director and Public Pre-K Consultant, the MDOE's Data Team, the early literacy and numeracy specialists from the Division of Special Services, the Multilingual Learner Specialist from the Office of Federal Programs, and several specialists from the Office of School and Student Supports.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY, GOVERNANCE, STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

While MDHHS will be responsible for the overall grant administration, each department will hire a grants manager to oversee the relevant work. The MDOE grant manager will report directly to senior staff in the EL Team and the MDHHS grant manager will report to senior staff in OCFS. Senior staff from each of the agencies will be responsible for overseeing and making decisions about the day-to-day operations related to the activities they are managing. The two grant managers will coordinate areas of overlap and to ensure that the timeline is being met.

Senior staff in OCFS and the EL Team will work directly with the designated Children’s Cabinet staff to support the implementation of programming, coordination across state agencies through the EIWG and keep the Children’s Cabinet abreast of the implementation of the PDG including progress of each activity, challenges to implementation, and any changes to the direction of the grant. The Children’s Cabinet will be the final decision-makers for any changes in the direction of the grant. The CCECAC will advise the Children’s Cabinet in the assessment, planning, and implementation of grant activities. The following map illustrates Maine’s decision-making path:



The following chart identifies the stakeholders who have been involved in efforts to strengthen Maine’s early childhood system, and who will continue to be involved in the **assessment, planning and implementation** of the B-5 Renewal:

2019-22	Stakeholder Engagement	2023-25		
		A	P	I
x	<b>MDHHS:</b> Commissioner’s Office, Office of Child and Family Services, Maine Center for Disease Control, Office for Family Independence, Office of Population Health Equity, Office of MaineCare Services	x	x	x
x	<b>MDOE:</b> Commissioner’s Office, Early Learning Team Director, Head Start Collaborator, Early Childhood Specialist, School Nursing, Student Supports, McKinney Vento, CDS (Part C and B)	x	x	x
x	<b>Governor’s Office of Innovatio:</b> Children’s Cabinet Staff	x	x	x
x	<b>MDOL:</b> Bureau of Employment Services	x	x	x
x	<b>Children’s Cabinet Early Childhood Advisory Council</b>	x	x	x
x	<b>State Contracted Services:</b> Maine’s Children's Trust, MRTQ PDN, Maine Families Home Visiting Program, MRB	x	x	x
x	<b>Childcare, Preschool, Public School Staff:</b> Educare Central Maine, Center and Family based educators and administrators, Head Start./Early Head Start, Superintendent, Principal, Curriculum Coordinator, Special Education Director, Public pre-K Educators and Community Partners	x	x	x
x	<b>Early Childhood and Parent Advocacy groups:</b> The Children’s Alliance, Portland Empowered, Family Child Care Association of Maine, Maine Association for the Education of Young Children, Educare PAP	x	x	x
x	<b>Services for Children with Special Needs:</b> Center for Community Inclusion & Disabilities Study, The Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Maine Parent Federation, Developmental Disabilities Council, National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI)-Maine	x	x	x
x	<b>Early Childhood Higher Education Committee:</b> University of Maine at Farmington, University of Maine, Thomas College, Kennebec Valley Community College, Career and Technical Education providers	x	x	x
x	<b>Community Organizations and Programs:</b> New Mainers Public Health Initiative, Maine Quality Counts, Pediatricians, United Way, Maine Children's Growth Council, Migrant Education, Community Care Collaborative	x	x	x
	<b>Other:</b> Tribals, Immigrant/New Mainers organizations, Department of Corrections, Grandparent/Kinship Provider, Foster Parents, business leaders	x	x	x
<b>2019-22 Planning Grant, 2023-25 Renewal, A-Assessment, P-Planning, I-Implementation</b>				

*State Early Childhood Advisory Council:* The CCECAC was created by the legislature as an advisory for the Children’s Cabinet and state policymakers “to develop, maintain and

evaluate...a plan for sustainable social and financial investment in healthy development of the State's young children and their families.” The CCECAC meets monthly. Staff from MDHHS and MDOE are represented on the advisory council and engage in discussions about on-going policy changes, providing opportunities for feedback and perspectives from child care, social service and others working directly with children or ECE professionals. The CCECAC is charged with providing direct input on the state’s CCDF plan and the child care market rate survey report. In addition, the CCECAC provides recommendations directly to the Children’s Cabinet, either through letters or at Cabinet meetings, around pertinent issues faced by young children, their families and professionals working directly with young children.

*Efforts to incorporate family or provider voice in policy decisions:* By statute, the CCECAC has one parent representative. To strengthen family and provider voice in the Maine’s B-5 Renewal, the state will engage the CPAG to inform ECE policy decisions. Parents participating in both the expanded PAP and the new leadership program through Portland Empowered will be invited to provide on-going feedback and play an advisory role in the implementation of the B-5 Renewal and the work of the Children’s Cabinet.

## **MONITORING, DATA USE, EVALUATION, and QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

**Accountability:** Maine’s PDG Program Performance Evaluation (PPEP) Plan details how the evaluation team including MDHHS/MDOE Leadership, Early Childhood Associates (ECA), additional external evaluators for specific programs, and PDG partners will examine the implementation, outputs, and outcomes of the B-5 Renewal activities, monitor progress, and use the results to inform continuous improvement across the ECE system. The PPEP features: 1.) a process evaluation to capture the extent to which needs are addressed in the proposed PDG activities; how resources and partnerships are leveraged; the degree of fidelity and efficiency

with which project activities are implemented to maximize parental knowledge and choice; how evidence-based practices are shared, how program quality improves, and how cross sector collaboration is fostered; 2.) an outcome evaluation to measure the extent to which the project activities maximize parent knowledge and address the needs of Maine families to ensure children are prepared to succeed in Kindergarten; and, a 3.) cost analysis to track return on investment.

Four elements of the evaluation design frame the process, outcome, and costs evaluation components. These elements include: 1) Needs Assessment/ Strategic Action; 2) Existing Data Systems and New Data Sources; 3) Indicators and Metrics; and 4) Methodology. The evaluation team will examine performance and outcomes at multiple levels: the policy and state level, the program/provider level, and child and family levels.

**Fragmentation:** The B-5 Renewal activities are designed to address fragmentation in the current mixed-delivery system. Three examples of how Maine is addressing fragmentation follow.

**Fragmentation area:** Difficulty accessing needed services for families with young children.

**How Maine is addressing this:** 1) Expanding and enhancing outreach efforts to New Mainer families with young children to ensure that HMG is successful in providing care coordination services to all families with young children, expanding development screenings, identifying the need for early intervention services, and coordinating with pediatric primary care practices to simplify connections to available community services for all children. **Fragmentation area:**

Inconsistency in program quality. **How Maine is addressing this:** 1) Expanding incentives to move up the QRIS; 2) Revised Maine's childcare licensing requirements to require all licensed providers to participate in the QRIS and 3) Aligning Quality Bumps for Child Care Assistance for TANF, and CCSP. **Fragmentation area:** Inconsistency in educational programming and family engagement strategies across Maine's ECE system and the early elementary years in

Maine's public schools. How Maine is address this: 1) Promote adoption and implementation of vertically-aligned Pre-K to Grade 2 Instructional Programs linked to the MELDS; 2) Pilot F10SC to strengthen connections, family engagement strategies and professional learning across the ECE and public school systems; and 3) Expand joint professional learning offerings to early childhood and public school educators.

**Early Integrated Childhood Data Systems (ECIDS):** Maine has made significant progress in advancing the development of an ECIDS since the prior PDG application. Maine worked with the PDG B-5 technical assistance team to draft and publish an *ECIDS Road Map for Maine* in October 2021. This road map has guided the work over the last year to plan for the implementation of an ECIDS, starting with the hire of a Project Lead in December 2021 with ARPA CCDF discretionary funds. Since joining the team, the Project Lead has:

- Conducted a readiness assessment to map the data landscape for young children in Maine
- Engaged state leaders to draft purpose and vision statements for Maine's future ECIDS
- Identified and prioritized initial use cases to inform development of such a system
- Participated in ongoing meetings about the development of the Statewide Longitudinal Data System at the MDOE to inform development of and connection to the ECIDS
- Engaged a wide variety of stakeholders on the importance of developing an ECIDS

In Year 1 of the B-5 Renewal, Maine will begin implementing a statewide ECIDS. Over the three years of the grant, the ECIDS work will provide funding for an ECIDS project team, including a Project Lead and a Business and Data Analyst and staff at Maine's Office of Informational Technology (OIT) to launch the ECIDS work in Maine. The Business and Data Analyst will serve as the primary liaison to the OIT team that will lead infrastructure development. The Analyst work with the OIT team to assist with preparing agencies to



contribute data to the project, building internal analytic capacity across offices and planning the reporting features of the ECIDS.

The Project Lead will establish a three-tiered data governance structure to engage data managers, program managers, and department leadership. Maine will model other states with more established systems and launch formal data governance for the ECIDS, to include a project charter and the necessary data use agreements. Governance activities will also include legal and technical staff from participating agencies to articulate the data use agreements. In addition, the Project Lead and the Analyst will continue to receive on-going technical assistance from Missy Coffey of Heuristic Strategies to guide the successful implementation of an ECIDS.

Over the three years of the B-5 Renewal, state leaders will implement a series of use cases to inform the development of the ECIDS and bring datasets into the ECIDS. Leaders have identified a priority use case: access to early care and education. State leaders are eager to understand the unduplicated count of children participating in ECE programs to better understand how the system is meeting the needs of children, families, and communities and identify program overlaps and regional gaps. Work in Year 1 will involve engaging the relevant programs in providing data and merging these datasets in the appropriate technical environment. Data governance activities will initially focus very specifically on these particular programs and this specific use of data. The B-5 Renewal Grant will also provide funds to pay for the time data analysts across state agencies will spend on extracting data, standardizing elements, creating data dictionaries and other activities needed for use cases and developing an integrated system.

The state level-IT team will have two full time staff and a project lead to plan and build the system. The IT team will serve as the development team for the ECIDS and will design, engineer and implement the processes that will build the ECIDS system, following best practices

and standardized methods of development. The IT Team will also use funds to bill for CLOUD infrastructure costs associated with building a system and pay for technology costs at the state level needed facilitate on premises assets with communication to the cloud assets.

Maine's ECIDS will provide state leaders across agencies with information to make informed decisions about programs and policies that promote access, quality, and a strong workforce to support all Maine children ages 0-5. The ECIDS will serve as a tool to promote alignment and coordination of the early childhood system through better information sharing and a clearer picture of needs, gaps, strengths of the system and a resource that provides data-driven insights that can improve short- and long-term outcomes for children and families in Maine.

In addition to using the funds to build an ECIDS, B-5 Renewal funds will be used to improve the data collection and analysis for HMG to ensure program model fidelity for program implementation and provide leaders and policymakers a better understanding of the types of services families are seeking and their ability to access these programs. Using this data to inform continuous quality improvement and evaluation of the program will inform policymakers about families' experiences in order to guide decisions about service delivery as well as gaps in services. A Data Coordinator working on this initiative will assist with ensuring the data collected aligns with data collection integrity standards, and the systems used to capture the data work congruently to ensure comprehensive data results and move toward strong data integration.

**Child Care Subsidy System Alignment:** Maine's CCSP used to align financial eligibility with OFI but the process faced significant challenges creating a two-step process for applicants and leading to a high rate of incorrect eligibility decisions. OCFS continues to coordinate eligibility for CCSP with other child care assistance programs such as TANF/ASPIRE. OCFS communicates with WIC about enrolling eligible families into CCSP and Head Start programs

ensuring that young children in their programs have the wrap around child care that families need. The staff involved in the B-5 Renewal will continue to examine ways to align eligibility, recognizing the challenges that the state has faced in the past with this type of effort.

Implementation of an ECIDS will support efforts to better understand gaps in enrollment in specific programs and opportunities for coordination. The ECIDS will help the state to identify populations that are eligible for services but not participating to determine if a population group may be more at risk and determine if additional outreach is needed. For example, WIC currently matches their enrollment data with enrollment data for families with children under 6 on programs operated by OFI, including TANF and SNAP. Outreach is conducted to families who are enrolled in these programs but not receiving WIC. Through the development of the ECIDS and implementation of HMG, Maine will continue to identify ways that eligibility and accessibility to programs can be better coordinated and aligned.

## **PROGRAM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PLAN**

The PPEP supports Maine's efforts to coordinate and build the capacity of its B-5 mixed service delivery system by providing real-time data to support performance management and CQI (process evaluation) and leading to a comprehensive understanding of the outcomes of Maine's collective investments (outcome evaluation). Intended audiences are the agencies participating in the B-5 Renewal activities, state and local leaders, policymakers and advocates, federal grant administrators, providers, and families. The PPEP is informed by the needs assessment, the B-5 Renewal logic model and proposed activities, and Maine's current PDG strategic plan while remaining nimble to reflect refinements to the needs assessment and strategic plan as the project develops. The **process** evaluation will track progress and alert program planners to needed changes in activities through the use of feedback loops. The **outcome** evaluation will assess the

extent to which the project activities have engaged stakeholders; maximized parent access to resources; ensured that children are ready for kindergarten and school success; and developed an integrated EC data system. The PPEP includes a cost analysis to track returns on investment.

**Descriptions of PPEP inputs:** ECA and its partner, RMC Research, are well-positioned to support Maine PDG efforts. ECA has conducted evaluations of Maine’s Early Reading First, Preschool Expansion, and the PDG B-5 Planning grants. RMC and ECA have a history of working together, including during Maine's initial Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning process (led by RMC) and in systems' quality assurance efforts (led by ECA) in CT. The DOE/DHHS PDG leadership will oversee the evaluation. ECA/RMC will work with B-5 Renewal activity developers and implementers to ensure that the proposed data collection methodology aligns with B-5 Renewal activities, goals, and outcomes, and then monthly to discuss implementation practices. The evaluation team will meet with external stakeholders two to three times yearly for progress updates and capacity-building discussions. Key inputs include the 2019 PDG Needs Assessment, the 2020 PDG Strategic Plan, and the ECCS Systems Asset and Gap Analysis. Additional stakeholders include members of governance structures (e.g., Children’s Cabinet and CCECAC); organizations (MRTQ PDN, institutions of higher education/educator preparation programs, school administrators, care providers, and staff, social service providers); and working groups (Parent Ambassadors and the EIWG). B-5 Renewal high level outcomes include engagement of diverse stakeholder including parents, in all planning and CQI; increase in number of families accessing needed services, resulting enrollment of vulnerable children in high quality ECE settings; streamlined and strengthened transitions into kindergarten; a robust and well trained and fairly compensated EC workforce, and an integrated EC data system to inform decision making.

**Measurement and Data Quality:** During the first quarter and working with the DOE/DHHS leadership team, ECA/RMC will develop a detailed evaluation plan to augment the initial evaluation questions illustrated in the table below.

<b>PDG Goals</b>	<b>Evaluation Questions</b>	<b>Examples of Indicators/Tools</b>
Update PDG Needs Assessment (NA)	How is the EC landscape changing? Do stakeholders agree that the NA presents an accurate picture of needs? Have a diverse set of stakeholders been engaged in updating the NA?	Increase in #/role of stakeholders participating NA.  Interviews w/B-5 leadership and partnering agencies; NA Documents Review
Update PDG Strategic Plan to strengthen Maine’s EC mixed delivery system	Is a change of course needed in any of the goals, objectives, or activities? What has been the level of agency/stakeholder involvement in SP revisions?	Documents review; interviews; survey and crosswalk SP w/ B5-R logic model and NA
Connect more families with resources and services, leadership, and policy review.	Are parents more engaged, accessing more resources, and developing leadership skills? Is there an increase in parents (especially those from historically marginalized groups) attending & sharing feedback at EC meetings?	Increase in # of referrals and service provision rates; # of parents participating in leadership programs and providing feedback to policy makers. Focus groups, interviews Attendance/participation record/rates
Coordinate/align Maine’s Birth-3 <sup>rd</sup> grade system	Does Maine have the cross-sector partners needed to coordinate and align the B-5 system? How are partners collaborating? How is the parent voice being used to inform B-5 policy? To what extent is the curriculum developed for grades 1 & 2 aligned with pre-k and Kindergarten?	Wilder Collaboration Survey  Interviews, survey Meeting agendas/attendance records  Document Review (curriculum)
Improve transitions into kindergarten for children/families	Are school districts/ communities creating comprehensive local transition teams? Do parents/teachers agree that children are successfully transitioning from preschool into kindergarten and beyond? What is their level of satisfaction?	Document review-transition plans and outcomes including participation rates Interviews w/consultants supporting transitions & with families involved. Parent surveys

<b>PDG Goals</b>	<b>Evaluation Questions</b>	<b>Examples of Indicators/Tools</b>
Recruit/retain a robust, well-trained ECE workforce	<p>Do individuals interested in and entering into the ECE field understand the pathways for training and education? How have the workforce recruitment and retention rates improved? What are the working conditions/ characteristics of those providers with the highest rates of retention?</p> <p>What resources and incentives, are available to the ECE workforce? What is level of satisfaction with these efforts? How can they be improved?</p>	<p>Increase in # of people entering the ECE field and completing an ECE credential/degree program and in Maines EC PD Network. Reduction in staff turnover</p> <p>Program records Interviews w/ IHE and members of the workforce</p> <p>Survey (workforce, IHE)-resources accessed, perceptions of the new workforce initiatives, improvement ideas</p>
Establish an Early Childhood Integrated Data system to inform decision-making	<p>Is there a comprehensive CQI management system actively tracking indicator data? How have agencies collaborated to include all desired types of data in the ECIDS? To what extent is data in the ECIDS accurate and complete? Are programs/staff confident in their abilities to use the ECIDS? What support is needed? What are the implementation challenges and how have they been addressed? How are agencies using the ECIDS in decision making?</p>	<p>Increases in data sources connected to ECIDS Measure and define # of Ks ready for school?</p> <p>Document review (ECIDS capabilities)</p> <p>Interviews w/ECIDS developers and users</p> <p>Surveys to agency leads and staff on challenges and ways to improve the system.</p> <p>Audit of ECIDS</p>
Expand the number of inclusive classrooms in child care and public pre-K programs	<p>Are more private/public pre-K programs moving to inclusive services? Are staff trained to implement an inclusive model? What are the barriers and challenges in program implementation?</p>	<p>% New inclusive programs % Staff trained</p> <p>Document review (PD) Interviews; focus groups w/Maine Roads to Quality and participating programs</p>
Expand access to quality ECE programming.	<p>Are more children participating in quality programming? Are programs increasing QRIS ratings? To what extent are vulnerable children served in quality</p>	<p>Document reviews (Number of new programs entering QRIS and number advancing in ratings)</p>

PDG Goals	Evaluation Questions	Examples of Indicators/Tools
	programs, and how does that vary by the characteristics of children, including geographic location?	Types of Quality support, usefulness, and impact (Interviews/surveys)

**Data Collection and Management:** As presented in the table above, Maine's PPEP will rely on a full complement of data sources and data collection methods: 1. Interviews with stakeholders (e.g., cross-sector teams, facilitating organizations); 2. Document reviews (e.g., reports, meeting agendas, HMG, F10SC, First for ME metrics and analytical reports, PD/training materials); 3. Administrative and program level data (e.g., family demographics, enrollment, and attendance); 4. Child level data (developmental assessments, activity participation rates); 5. Family surveys (e.g., to capture changes in experiences, school readiness, transitions, leadership opportunities), program staff (to capture changes in program quality, supports, services), and the workforce (to capture impact of new recruitment and retention strategies); and 7. Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory to understand how inter-agency and state-local collaboration is evolving.

**Data management.** ECA staff are highly skilled in data collection and data management and will follow standard evaluation practices. ECA will pilot new data tools prior to full scale distribution. They will utilize technology to mitigate time and costs, sample strategically using the lens of inclusion and diversity, and tailor data collection tools so they are contextually and culturally responsive. ECA will use basic descriptive and inferential statistics to test the relationship among variables. As necessary to supplement the ECIDS, they will create data dashboards to assist agencies in identifying trends and continuous quality improvement. Time, resources, and technological challenges may hinder agency and program engagement with

**Obstacles.** ECA’s experience working with **vulnerable populations** suggest that Maine needs to continuously review and refine outreach strategies, identify navigators who can support family access to and participation in evaluation activities, and offer a tiered system of incentives based on family needs.

sharing data and using the new ECIDS system. ECA will work with the B-5 Renewal partners to access/analyze existing data (program/staff data literacy, level of confidence in using shared data system) and tailor plans for ECIDS training.

<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Y2-3</b>
<b>Monitoring, Evaluation and Data Use</b>					
Refine evaluation plans	X				
Create data management information system to support CQI, online data submission and tracking B-5R/SP implementation	X	X			
Identify data sources	X	X			
Develop new data collection tools	X	X			X
Submit IRB protocol		X			
Collect baseline for measures		X			
Develop data dashboards as needed	X	X			
Collect process indicators		X	X	X	X
Report process indicators		X	X	X	X
Collect/report outcome indicators		X	X	X	X
Report cost and ROI		X	X	X	X
Provide support collecting and reporting data indicators		X	X	X	X
Monitor implementation regularly		X	X	X	X
Comply w/Federal reporting requirements	X	X	X	X	X

**Alignment with the State's B-5 needs assessment and strategic plan.** Maine has a strong history of respecting data and employing the results. Over the past three years, the Children’s Cabinet, CCECAC, and Maine’s DOE/DHHS agencies have paid attention to the 2019-2020 PDG Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan, demonstrated a strong investment in planning and follow through, and listening to feedback. Over the past two years, Maine has piloted several system building activities that align with the needs assessment findings and strategic plan.

**Data Sources: Existing Data and New Data Collection.** ECA will examine data collected from existing systems to minimize added burden on staff and eliminate redundancy. Currently, Maine's B-5 data systems function primarily to satisfy reporting requirements for different local, State, and federal agencies and programs. There are 18 formal data systems in Maine that collect information on young children. Most are housed in two state departments (DHHS and DOE).



ECA will work closely with Maine's ECIDS coordinator and mine existing systems for relevant data. The B-5 Renewal evaluation team will consult and partner with other evaluators from HMG, Salary Supplement Program, F10 Schools and First 4 ME. These partnerships will foster collaboration across initiatives, shared indicators of success and data collection tools.

### **PROTECTION OF SENSITIVE AND/OR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

During this project, information of a personally identifiable information and other information that is considered sensitive may be collected from participants. Data collected through MDHHS programs and initiatives will be kept secure on MDHHS state secure network drives, within an internal web-based state application (Enterprise Information System -R) and a MDHHS contracted Administrative Service Organization web-based application (Atrezzo). Access is role-base granted. Electronic request forms with required information and supervisory signatures are submitted for leveled access to networks and applications. Administrators, or gatekeepers, of the networks and applications provide secondary approval and permission and may perform creation, granting of increased privileges, and removal. State staff have access to network drives and both applications, and contracted provider agency staff have access to both applications. System generated people identification numbers provide additional privacy for project participants.

MDOE governs the data it stewards in accordance with federal and state laws, such as the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), state regulations (i.e. 34 CFR 300.610 -646), and Maine statute (i.e. Title 20-A: §6005). MDOE maintains policies in the following areas about the processes and procedures used to ensure the confidentiality of personally identifiable information (PII) and how data can be accessed by stakeholders: data breach insurance, data retention, data suppression, data reporting, organization change, system access, and use of surveys.

**LOGIC MODEL**

<b>GOALS</b>	<b>TARGET POP</b>	<b>INPUTS</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>OUTPUTS</b>	<b>SHORT TERM OUTCOMES</b>	<b>LONG TERM OUTCOMES</b>
Update Maine’s PDG Needs Assessment	Expecting families and families with children birth through eight	2019 PDG Needs Assessment	Engage stakeholders in Needs Assessment	Updated Strategic Plan and updated needs assessment	Decisions about programs and policies informed by greater and more diverse stakeholder engagement.	An increase in professionals prepared to enter and remain in the ECE field.
Update Maine’s PDG strategic plan to strengthen Maine’s Early Childhood mixed delivery system.	Immigrant/New Mainer parents, guardians and their children ECE	ECCS System Asset and Gap Analysis	Pilot First Ten Schools and Communities	Increased family engagement, leadership skills and knowledge for staff, and families.	Structures and processes in place to assure more families connect to resources and services	Parent leaders from diverse backgrounds are helping to drive policy decisions for Maine’s EC system
Connect more families with resources and services	Workforce in Child Care and Public Schools	Children’s Cabinet Members and staff	Target HMG outreach, support, & referrals to New Mainers	Families have access to information and resources as needed.	Increased Parent leadership	ECE professionals have the tools they need to provide quality care and education.
Coordinate and align Maine’s health and education systems	Students interested in entering ECE field	DOE Early Learning Team	New Parent Leadership program for New Mainer parents	Key stakeholders know how to engage in providing feedback to the state.	Increased rates of developmental screenings	Children and families are connected to
	Staff in ethnic Community Based Organizations	Child Development Services Staff	Expand Inclusionary Practices Program		Clear and accessible pathways for entering ECE field	
	School Administrators	DHHS Staff	Align curriculum from MELDS to 2nd grade			
		Social Service Providers/Community based Organizations				
		Early Childhood Educators in Child Care and Public Schools				
		Parent Leaders				

<p>perinatal through grade 3.</p> <p>Improve transitions into kindergarten for children and their families</p> <p>Recruit and retain a robust, well-trained diverse ECE workforce</p> <p>Establish an Early Childhood Integrated Data System to inform decision-making</p>	<p>Young Children with Disabilities and Developmental Delays</p> <p>Early Childhood Professionals and Service Providers</p> <p>Health Care Providers</p>	<p>Early Intervention Workgroup Children’s Cabinet Early Childhood Advisory Council</p> <p>MRTQ</p> <p>School Administrators</p> <p>CTE ECE programs</p> <p>Institutes of Higher Education</p> <p>DHHS Community Care Team</p> <p>Ethnic Community Based Organizations and Cultural Brokers</p> <p>Collaborating Partners’ Advisory Group</p>	<p>Develop articulation agreements across systems</p> <p>Offer joint professional learning opportunities</p> <p>Provide quality incentive payments to providers.</p> <p>Provide grants to expand public pre-K</p> <p>Align child care assistance provided by TANF and CCSP</p> <p>Expand capacity to build an ECIDS</p> <p>Evaluate Maine’s salary supplement program</p>	<p>Curriculum alignment across MELDS up to 2nd grade.</p> <p>An integrated data system of key early childhood programs</p> <p>Joint professional learning series for early childhood educators in child care and public schools</p> <p>Six First 10 Schools and Communities</p>	<p>More children are enrolled in quality early childhood education programs.</p> <p>More child care programs and public pre-K programs are serving children, including those with disabilities and multilingual learners, in inclusive classrooms.</p> <p>Early childhood educators across systems are working closely together to ensure smooth and positive transitions into kindergarten</p> <p>Diverse sectors and populations are represented within EC leadership and advisory groups.</p>	<p>needed early intervention, health care, early childhood education and other needed services.</p> <p>State leaders have the information they need to make informed policy decisions for EC programs and policies.</p> <p>Children enter kindergarten prepared to succeed.</p>
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## **PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY PLAN**

MDOE and MDHHS staff involved in the Children’s Cabinet work, in partnership with the MDOE and MDHHS Grant Managers, will communicate a clear vision and goals to stakeholders, the legislature, and the Governor about the B-5 Renewal, gathering and using data to understand progress in achieving goals, assuring active steps for continuous quality improvement, engaging with and providing on-going communications and relevant information through regular updates. The staff will provide biannual updates to relevant stakeholders through the CCECAC, the CPAG, the Right from the Start Coalition, and the EIWG to develop a shared understanding and commitment to the work. External stakeholders in these groups include legislators, business leaders, and representatives from social service organizations, foundations, advocacy organizations, parent organizations, and higher education. Business leaders from the Maine Early Learning Investment Group and members of the ECE Business Collaborative will share the importance of this investment with the business community and how they can build on these investments to support Maine’s ECE system.

The B-5 Renewal extends and expands key initiatives started in the initial PDG B-5 such as the inclusion cohorts, parent leadership programming, trainings in ACES and trauma-informed practices, and the on-going needs assessment. In the F10SC pilots, MDOE will build upon learnings from the successful PEG grant which led to strong partnerships between elementary schools and early childhood educators. These grants will blend local and grant funds, with increasing local funding being provided to support efforts over time.

Subgrants to ECBOs will enhance the roll out and implementation of HMG and ASQ on-line in Maine as well as build off of learnings from MDHHS’ effective work to connect families to needed resources during the pandemic. Pre-K pilots will allow the Governor, the Children’s

Cabinet, and MDOE staff to examine the best strategies for reaching universal pre-K in a way that supports Maine's mixed delivery system. MDHHS and MDOE will equip grantees of these pilots with program evaluation results and help them to disseminate findings to local stakeholders, state leaders, and municipalities to promote commitment to sustainability.

Since the initial PDG grant, the Governor, the Children's Cabinet and high-level staff within MDHHS and MDOE have provided new leadership and focus on strengthening and aligning Maine's ECE system. For this current fiscal year, Maine has appropriated approximately \$2 million in state general funds to expand Maine's ECCP statewide, \$12 million in state general funds to implement a new salary supplement program and \$100,000 to strengthen Maine's early childhood CTE programs. The Governor dedicated \$25 million in her Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan to expand both public pre-K and child care slots, with priority provided to opening new slots in rural and economically disadvantaged parts of the state. As schools have expanded pre-K slots, state funding for pre-K has also increased through the school formula.

MDHHS has allocated CCDF funding for the establishment TEACH scholarships and a new early childhood registered apprenticeship program. B-5 Renewal funds will allow Maine to build on these investments in a number of ways: 1) build capacity for developing career pathways for the ECE field to help with attainment of credentials and degrees, 2) expand opportunities for joint professional learning across the ECE system, 3) evaluate the effectiveness of Maine's new salary supplement program in recruiting and retaining staff and improving access to the CCSP by simplifying the current application process.

The B-5 Renewal will provide the needed funding to build the infrastructure for an ECIDS. Staff will coordinate the implementation of the ECIDS with existing efforts to build a

state longitudinal data system at MDOE and a master person index at MDHHS, in order to identify opportunities for leveraging and aligning these systems.

As Maine learns about the success of the B-5 Renewal based on PPEP, staff involved with the Children’s Cabinet will collaboratively identify current practices and activities to continue, modify, or eliminate. Data showing progress towards the desired results and goals will be useful to make the case for sustainability. During project implementation, Maine will make the best use of existing resources (fiscal and in kind); maximize available revenue sources; generate new resources by engaging public- and private-sector partners, and explore new federal, state and local revenue sources.

## **DISSEMINATION PLAN**

The goal of the dissemination plan is to provide consistent, informative, and meaningful two-way communication between PDG leadership and key PDG stakeholders. The plan will: 1) ensure those eligible to participate in grant projects receive timely notice of opportunities and how to participate; 2) allow for on-going feedback from internal and external stakeholders to identify successes, challenges and remaining gaps; and 3) engage key stakeholders, including business representatives, foundations, legislators and local leaders, to support sustainability.

Through the Children’s Cabinet, MDHHS and MDOE staff with support from the Children’s Cabinet Coordinator, will build a system for communication and inclusion of stakeholders about PDG implementation. The regional meetings hosted for the Needs Assessment will provide an opportunity to update ECE practitioners and stakeholders on plans for PDG implementation and solicit feedback and input. Maine’s continuous improvement reporting process will provide stakeholders with regular updates on PDG implementation. The PDG Grant Managers, Children’s Cabinet Coordinator and the Early Childhood Policy and Data

Analyst will be responsible for supporting this work and ensuring that dissemination of information is timely and consistent. The annual Children’s Cabinet report will include a segment on PDG implementation and PDG updates will be disseminated to stakeholders. The PDG Grant Managers and Children’s Cabinet Coordinator and other key staff will also provide updates to, and solicit feedback from, the CCECAC, the CPAG, the Right from the Start Coalition and the EIWG on at least a biannual basis. On an annual basis, the PDG Grant Managers and Coordinator will solicit input from interested parties via user friendly surveys to gauge if stakeholders are receiving information, determine how they are using it, and solicit feedback on grant implementation.

**BUDGET NARRATIVE**

**Line-Item**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Personnel	\$835,427.90
Fringe	\$558,235.39
Travel	\$30,200.00
Equipment	\$0.00
Supplies	\$6,600.00
Contractual	\$3,147,051.71
Construction	\$0.00
Other	\$3,128,707.00
Indirect	\$293,778.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,000,000.00</b>

**Cost by Activity**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
<b>Activity 1: Statewide Needs Assessment</b>	\$ 230,889.00
<b>Activity 2: Strategic Plan</b>	\$ 1,911,920.05
<b>Activity 3: Parent Engagement</b>	\$ 1,335,038.86
<b>Activity 4: ECCE workforce</b>	\$ 1,160,897.45
<b>Activity 5: Improving Quality</b>	\$ 2,084,832.73
<b>Activity 6: Subgrants</b>	\$ 950,000.00
<b>Bonus: Workforce Compensation</b>	\$ 274,621.91
<b>Bonus: Children with Special Needs</b>	\$ 51,800.00

**Personnel**

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

1 FTE Grant Manager/Principal Investigator will be hired at the Social Services Program Manager I job category to oversee all grant activities and coordination access DHHS and DOE for 12 months at \$135,420.45 including salary and benefits.

1 FTE Help Me Grow Resource Specialist will be hired at the Developmental Disabilities Resource Coordinator to provide care coordination for New Mainer families for the program for 12 months at \$109,987.15 including salary and benefits.

1 FTE Help Me Grow Data and Policy Manager will be hired at the Social Services Program Specialist II job category to support effective data collection and coordination efforts for Help Me Grow for 12 months at \$124,621.91 including salary and benefits.

1 FTE Workforce Development Coordinator will be hired at Social Services Program Specialist II job category to support Maine's ECCE workforce to understand and access the salary supplement program, child care scholarships, professional learning, credentials and/or post-secondary degrees at a Social Services Program Specialist II category at \$124,621.91 including salary and benefits.

1 FTE TANF Alignment Data Coordinator will be hired at the Social Services Program Specialist II job category to implement a process for child care programs serving children of families on TANF/ASPIRE can access the quality bumps on the QRIS at \$124,621.91.

1 FTE Early Childhood Data and Policy Analyst will be hired at the Social Services Manager I to coordinate the implementation of an ECIDS for 12 months at \$131,776.23 including salary and benefits.

1 FTE Early Childhood Data Business Analyst will be hired at the Social Services Program Specialist II job category to work directly with Office of Information and Technology staff and agency data staff to support the building of the ECIDS at \$124,621.91 including salary and benefits.

#### Department of Education (DOE)

1 FTE Grant Manager will be hired at the Regional Education Representative job category to oversee the coordination of the initiatives led by the Early Learning Team at DOE including the First 10 pilots, the pre-K pilots the Kindergarten Inventory and the joint professional learning series for 12 months at \$139,614.20 including salary and benefits.

1 FTE First 10 Schools and Communities Coordinator will be hired at the Education Specialist II job category to oversee the development and implementation of the First 10 Schools and Community pilots for 12 months at \$123,175.79.

1 FTE Pre-K Community Partnership Coordinator will be hired at the Educational Specialist II job category to coordinate all activities related to expanding public pre-K slots for 12 months at \$123,175.79 including salary and benefits.



1 FTE Kindergarten Inventory Coordinator will be hired at the Educational Specialist III job category to work with teachers on the development and implementation of the kindergarten inventory as well as the development of the joint professional learning series for 12 months at \$132,026.03 including salary and benefits.

**Total personnel costs will be \$1,393,663.29.**

### **Travel**

Costs for out-of-state travel for five state positions (3 DHHS, 2 DOE) will total \$10,000 to attend the grant meeting for 2-3 days in DC. The travel costs include flight, hotel, per diem, mileage reimbursement at \$.46 per mile.

In-state travel for all personnel will be reimbursed at \$.46 per mile totaling \$16,200. \$4,000 will cover the cost of travel, child care and accommodations in order to include parents in the planning, design and implementation of PDG activities.

**Total travel costs will be \$30,200.00.**

### **Supplies**

Office and other consumable supplies for state personnel in the first year are estimated at \$600 per person totaling \$6,600.

**Total cost of supplies will be \$6,600.00.**

### **Contractual**

Eight sole-source contractual agreements will be undertaken in year 1: 1) Educare Central Maine; 2) Portland Empowered; 3) Early Childhood Associates; 4) Maine Roads to Quality; 5) Education Development Center; 6) Boston Public School Consultant; 7) Maine Resilience Building Network; and 8) Missy Coffey at Heuristic Strategies.

Twelve contractual agreements will be procured in the first year: 9) Needs Assessment 10) First 10 Schools and Communities Evaluation 11) the Salary Supplement Evaluation; 12) Career and Technical Education Enhancements; 13) Pre-K Pilot Facilitation and Plan Development 14) National Consultant Kindergarten Inventory; 15) Cost Modeling; 16) Professional Learning Series Development; 17) Curriculum Enhancement Development; 18) MELDS Translation; 19) First 10 Schools and Communities pilots; and 20) Ethnic Community Based Organizations.

\*Contract \*\*Subaward

**\*Contract 1: Educare Central Maine** **Total Cost: \$25,000.00**

Expand contract with Educare Central Maine to provide technical assistance to Portland Empowered as they develop and offer their new parent leadership trainings.

**\*Contract 2: Portland Empowered** **Total Cost \$130,000.00:**

Contract with Portland Empowered to establish and deliver parent leadership trainings to New Mainer parents with young children.

**\*Contract 3: Early Childhood Associates (ECA) Total Cost: \$560,000.00**

Contract with ECA to conduct the program performance evaluation plan.

**\*Contract 4: Maine Roads to Quality (MRTQ) Total Cost: \$201,000.00**

Articulation Agreements: \$145,000.00

Inclusionary Practices program: \$26,000.00

Leading Early Learning Series: \$30,000.00

Contract with MRTQ to support articulation agreement efforts, to lead the Inclusionary Practices Program and the Leading Early Learning Series.

**\*Contract 5: Education Development Center Total Cost: \$185,000.00**

Contract with staff at Education Development Center, a national organization with expertise on the First 10 Schools and Communities (F10SC), to provide consultation and TA to state administrators and six F10SC pilot sites.

**\*Contract 6: Boston Public Schools Consultant Total Cost: \$60,000.00**

Contract with Boston Public Schools Consultant to support adaptation and enhancement of Boston's Focus curriculum across the K-2 span.

**\*Contract 7: Maine Resiliency Building Network Total Cost: \$75,000.00**

Contract with MRBN to provide professional learning for EC educators related to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), trauma informed practices, and resilience.

**\*Contract 8: Missy Coffey at Heuristic Strategies Total Cost: \$20,000.00**

Contract with national expert, Missy Coffey, to continue to receive critical technical assistance for the implementation of Maine's Early Childhood Integrated Data System.

**\*Contract 9: PDG Needs Assessment Total Cost: \$75,000.00**

Contract with an external entity to conduct ongoing needs assessment as the PDG activities are implemented.

**\*Contract 10: First 10 Schools and Communities Evaluation Total Cost: \$151,051.71**

Expand contract for the evaluator for the First4ME program to include an evaluation of First 10 pilots to quantify child and family impact, community participation and increased collaboration and fidelity to the model.

**\*Contract 11: Salary Supplement Evaluation Total Cost: \$100,000.00**

Contract with an evaluator to evaluate the new tiered salary supplement program.

**\*Contract 12: Career and Technical Education Enhancements Total Cost: \$200,000.00**

Contracts with teachers and other experts to develop curriculum for CTE ECE students, strengthen articulation agreements and opportunities for credential attainment.

**\*Contract 13: Pre-K Pilot Facilitation and Plan Development Total Cost: \$40,000.00**

Contract with a consultant with expertise in expanding public pre-k through partnerships and funding strategies to facilitate stakeholder engagement and the development of a pre-K pilot proposal.

**\*Contract 14: National Consultant Kindergarten Inventory Total Cost: \$75,000.00**

Contract with a national expert and consultant to support the development of a kindergarten inventory.

**\*Contract 15: Cost Modeling Total Cost: \$45,000.00**

Contract with a national expert in cost modeling to develop a cost of care estimate for Maine.

**\*Contract 16: Professional Learning Series Development Total Cost: \$125,000.00**

Contracts with experts and Maine teachers to support the development of key components of a joint professional learning series, including early literacy and language, early numeracy, developmentally appropriate practices, dual language development and instruction, culturally responsive family engagement, and social emotional learning and behavior management.

**\*Contract 17: Curriculum Enhancement Development Total Cost: \$90,000.00**

Contracts with Maine teachers to work with Boston Public School Consultants to develop and write the needed curriculum enhancements for K-2.

**\*Contract 18: MELDS Translation Total Cost; \$40,000.00**

Contract with a translation service to translate the Maine Early Learning and Development Standards into six different languages.

**\*\*Contract 19: First 10 Schools and Communities Pilots Total Cost: \$750,000.00**

Fund six First 10 Schools and Communities (F10SC) pilots.

**\*\*Contract 20: Ethnic Community Based Organizations Total cost: \$200,000.00**

Contracts with ethnic CBOs who, in partnership with the Community Care team at DHHS and Help Me Grow, will help immigrants and refugee families navigate Maine's ECE system and connect them to ECE programs as well as other community-based services and supports.

**Total contractual costs for the first year will be \$3,147,051.71.**

**Other**

\$27,588 is included for training of state personnel.

\$31,119 is included for IT costs for state personnel.

\$100,000 is included to cover ancillary personnel and contract costs for MDOE.

\$160,000 is included for the Community Care Team to support the development and implementation of the expanded outreach, supports and referral process for New Mainers through Help Me Grow.

\$650,000 funding to Maine Office of Information Technology (OIT) for CLOUD services, other hardware and systems needs for the Early Childhood Integrated Data System.

\$540,000 funding is included for the Maine OIT to build the ECIDS.

\$700,000 for aligning TANF payments to licensed providers for child care assistance with the Child Care Subsidy Program.

\$50,000 is included for a summer summit for joint professional learning for early childhood educators and public school teachers.

\$300,000 is included for scholarships to pay for child care expenses for new early childhood educators working in licensed child care programs.

\$500,000 is including for incentive payments to support child care programs to improve quality.

\$10,000 is included to provide stipends to early elementary and early childhood educators involved in the development of the Kindergarten Inventory.

\$60,000 is included for funding to support data analysts across state agencies to participate in the implementation of the ECIDS.

**Total other costs for the first year will be \$3,128,707.00.**

### **Financial Operating System and Indirect Costs**

The State of Maine has two indirect cost allocation agreements that affect the accounts within Maine Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). These two allocation agreements are a Statewide Cost Allocation agreement (Sta-Cap) and a Departmental Indirect Cost Allocation Plan (Di-Cap, PACAP). These two plans pay for entirely different services, so the underlying costs that make up the negotiated plans are entirely separate.

Sta-Cap is known as a Central Services Cost Allocation Plan. This plan is rate-based and pays for central services, such as Bureau of Budget, State Controller's Office, utility costs for State-owned office buildings, and other statewide services. The Sta-Cap rate is negotiated yearly with Cost Allocation Services of the federal DHHS. The approved rate for MDHHS for SFY 2023 (July 2022-June 2023) is 2.848%. The calculation is the 2.848% multiplied by expenditures eligible for allocations. Eligible expenditures include all expenditures except for pass-through money, direct services to the affected public, capital expenditures, and bank fees.

Di-Cap is known as a Public Assistance Cost Allocation Plan (PACAP). This plan is not a rate-based plan but based on actual administrative expenditures. Costs are broken up into cost pools, which for DHHS are the accounting units. Each unit has a cost pool that is allocated based on an approved allocation method. All units within DHHS have an assigned allocation method. There are two types of allocation methods: Direct and Indirect methods. Direct methods are costs that can be easily identified to the program they benefit. In this case the Direct Method would be "Direct to Social Services Block Grant." Indirect methods are costs that benefit multiple programs and are not easily identified.

Since the PACAP is based on actual expenditures, the amount of Di-Cap is estimated based on the prior year's expenditures for the indirect cost pools. The two primary drivers of indirect costs for OCFS grants (excluding Title IV-E) include Head Count and Contract Count.

**The total indirect cost for the first year is \$293,778.00.**

**Total Federal Budget: \$8,000,000.00**

**State Match: \$2,400,000.00 (30%)**

The Office of Child and Family Services will contribute \$2,400,000 from the state-funded salary supplemental program which provides monthly stipends for early childhood educators working in licensed child care programs.



1301 Young Street, Suite 106-1140  
Dallas, TX 75202  
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EMAIL: CAS-NY@psc.hhs.gov

August 4, 2021

AMENDMENT NUMBER **ME DHHS 18-3**

Mr. Benjamin Mann  
Deputy Commissioner for Finance  
Maine Department of Health and Human Services  
221 State Street  
11 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011

Dear Mr. Mann:

This letter provides the review result of Maine Department of Health and Human Services Cost Allocation Plan (Plan) amendment, which was transmitted by letter dated March 19, 2017 (page 174 of the Plan). The amendment, which was submitted in accordance with 45 CFR 95, Subpart E, is effective April 1, 2018 except as noted below.

This letter provides approval of the Plan amendment, except for the allocation methodology for Unit Code 6755 – Kinship Homes Foster Care – TANF under Plan Department 6, Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services. This is a repeat issue from amendment dated September 25, 2017. In email dated 4/17/2018, the State agreed to revise the allocation method retroactively and to allocate these expenditures to Title IV-E instead of TANF as recommended by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). The change in the Plan was noted in amendment dated September 10, 2018.

Acceptance of the actual costs in accordance with the approved Plan is subject to the following conditions:

1. The information contained in the Plan and provided by the State in connection with our review of the Plan is complete and accurate in all material respects.
2. The actual costs claimed by the State are allowable under prevailing cost principles, program regulations and law.
3. The claims conform with the administrative and statutory limitations against which they are made.
4. Medicaid costs for waivers should be reported separately from non-waiver administrative costs. When reporting and claiming Medicaid administrative costs for waivers, please use

Mr. B. Mann  
Page 2  
ME DHHS 18-3

forms CMS 64.10 Waiver and CMS 64.10P Waiver.

This approval relates only to the methods of identifying and allocating costs to programs, and nothing contained herein should be construed as approving activities not otherwise authorized by approved program plans or Federal legislation and regulations.

Implementation of the approved cost allocation plan may subsequently be reviewed by authorized Federal staff. The disclosure of inequities during reviews may require changes to the Plan.

If you have any questions concerning the contents of this letter, please contact Katherine Tang of my staff at 214-767-5362. Please submit your next proposed Plan amendment electronically via email to [CAS-NY@psc.hhs.gov](mailto:CAS-NY@psc.hhs.gov).

Sincerely,

Darryl W. Mayes -S

Digitally signed by Darryl W. Mayes -S  
DN: c=US, o=U.S. Government,  
ou=HHS, ou=PSC, ou=People,  
0.9.2342.19200300.100.1.1=2000131  
669, cn=Darryl W. Mayes -S  
Date: 2021.08.05 08:00:10 -04'00'

Darryl W. Mayes  
Deputy Director  
Cost Allocation Services

cc: ACF Office of Grants Management  
Todd McMillion, CMS  
Frank Lebron, USDA/FNS  
Steve DeLosh/SSA

Janet T. Mills  
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.  
Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services  
Child and Family Services  
11 State House Station  
2 Anthony Avenue  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011  
Tel.: (207) 624-7900; Toll Free: (877) 680-5866  
TTY: Dial 711 (Maine Relay); Fax: (207) 287-5282

October 27, 2022

Richard Gonzales  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Child Care  
330 C Street, SW - 4012E  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Mr. Gonzales,

The Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) will support the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG, B-5) Renewal Grant by providing \$2,400,000 in fiscal support as the required 30% matching funds.

The match monies will be comprised of state-funded salary supplements that will be provided directly to early childhood educators working in licensed child care programs. The salary supplement program is currently a \$200 per month payment. On July 1, 2023, the stipend will change to a monthly payment that is tiered based on an individual's education and ranking on the professional development registry.

The goal of the tiered salary supplement program is to help providers recruit and retain a qualified early childhood care and education workforce which was an identified system gap identified in the needs assessment conducted through the PDG B-5 planning grant.

We look forward to leveraging these match dollars to bolster the work being done through the Renewal Grant, including a focus on a strong, stable quality early childhood workforce.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Todd A. Landry".

Todd A. Landry, Ed.D.  
Director  
Office of Child and Family Services  
Maine Department of Health and Human Services





STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
23 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, ME 04333-0023

JANET T. MILLS  
GOVERNOR

PENDER MAKIN  
COMMISSIONER

October 26, 2022

Richard Gonzales  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families, Office of Early Childhood Development  
330 C Street, SW, Suite 4012E  
Washington DC 20201

RE: HHS-2022-ACF-OCC-TP-0180

Dear Mr. Gonzales,

The Maine Department of Education is pleased to submit a letter offering our support and partnership for implementation of the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG, B-5) Renewal Grant. This grant provides a tremendous opportunity to build upon the successful cross agency work to ensure that all children enter Kindergarten prepared to succeed, spurred by the reinstatement of the Governor's Children's Cabinet in 2019.

Our Early Learning Team will take the lead on several initiatives outlined in the grant, including the First 10 Schools and Communities pilots, the Pre-K expansion pilot and the development and piloting of a kindergarten inventory. The team and other staff at the Maine Department of Education will support the development of a strong joint professional learning series for early childhood educators and our early elementary school teachers as well as the initiative to strengthen early childhood care and education programming within our Career and Technical Education schools. The team at Child Development Services, who administer Part B, 619 and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and are based in MDOE, will also play a key role in providing staff time and expertise to these initiatives as well as the proposal to target outreach, supports and referrals for Maine's New Mainer community. Lastly the Early Learning Team and the staff at CDS will participate in the efforts to update both the Needs Assessment and the PDG Strategic Plan.

We are ready to continue to work closely with our colleagues at the Maine Department of Health and Human Services to ensure that we are building a well-coordinated, aligned, and seamless birth through grade 3 system for children and families.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pender Makin".

Pender Makin  
Commissioner of Education