Project Summary

**Project Title:** Wyoming Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five Initial Grant  
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Wyoming (WY) proposes to build on existing initiatives and programs to develop statewide capacity to provide Wyoming’s leaders, programs, and parents with the knowledge and tools to provide high-quality ECE experiences for all of WY’s youngest learners that prepare them for kindergarten, especially those from vulnerable and underserved populations. Western States Learning Corporation dba Align (Align) will serve as the lead entity and take primary responsibility for coordinating and implementing grant activities.

WY will conduct a birth through five (B-5) statewide needs assessment (Activity 1) through a five-phase process: 1) clarify and finalize guiding questions and assessment content; 2) inventory and analyze existing needs assessments and related data; 3) collect additional data through research and stakeholder engagement; 4) analyze data and engage in preliminary planning, and 5) develop a needs assessment report. The WY Early Childhood State Advisory Council (EC-SAC) will guide and help coordinate the needs assessment process.

Following the completion of the needs assessment, WY will develop a B-5 statewide strategic plan (Activity 2). The EC-SAC will continue to serve as the primary team guiding and engaging in this work. EC-SAC members will chair strategic planning workgroups for the following focus areas: 1) governance of ECE and other B-5 services at the state level; 2) access to ECE and other B-5 services; 3) quality of ECE, including the ECE workforce; 4) transitions within B-5 programs and services and to elementary school; 5) funding/financing of ECE and other B-5 services; and 6) data and statewide data systems. Stakeholder engagement related to the strategic plan will include in-person summits and a stakeholder survey to gather input.

WY will increase parental knowledge and choice (Activity 3) by first holding a statewide summit with ECE providers and others working with parents/caregivers to identify existing resources and clarify gaps and needs. A communications consultant will be engaged to address identified needs by producing informational materials for parents/caregivers, with a focus on those from vulnerable populations. WY will also re-brand and expand the WY Quality Counts website and mobile app, which provide early childhood information for parents/caregivers.

To share best practices among ECE providers (Activity 4), WY will extend the work of the WY Early Childhood Outreach Network (WyECON) to create an online resource portal of vetted practices, and to share these practices through blog posts, podcasts, and regional trainings for ECE providers. WY will build on the work of WyECON and the WY Early Childhood Professional Learning Collaborative to offer training for ECE providers throughout the state.

Following the completion and approval of the needs assessment and strategic plan, WY will support improvements to ECE program quality (Activity 5) by revising its Early Learning Guidelines and Early Learning Foundations – the state’s guidance documents for parents/caregivers and ECE providers supporting children B-5 – and providing grants to ECE providers to complete the accreditation process for National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) accreditation.
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File Two contains the following Appendices:

- Letter from Governor Mark Gordon designating Align as the lead entity
- Align’s Organizational Chart
1. **Introduction**

Western States Learning Corporation dba Align (Align) is pleased to serve as the lead agency for the state of Wyoming’s Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) Initial Grant. The proposed activities outlined in this application will enable Wyoming to engage in critical needs assessment and planning work to better coordinate and structure birth through age five (B-5) services for vulnerable populations and children in rural areas throughout the state. Concurrent with the needs assessment and strategic plan development, Wyoming will leverage existing efforts and initiatives to increase parental knowledge and choice of early childhood care and education (ECE) and other B-5 programs, and to facilitate the sharing of best and promising practices among ECE providers. Finally, Wyoming will implement quality improvement activities following federal approval of the statewide B-5 needs assessment and statewide B-5 strategic plan. The goal of the proposed project is to **develop statewide capacity to provide Wyoming’s leaders, programs, and parents with the knowledge and tools to provide high-quality ECE experiences for all of Wyoming’s youngest learners that prepare them for kindergarten, especially those from vulnerable and underserved populations.**

Of Wyoming’s 579,315 residents, 37,910 are under age five – 6.5% of the total population, slightly more than the national average of 6.1%.\(^1\) While Wyoming’s poverty rate is lower than the national average and the state is less impacted by issues often associated with population density, such as housing cost burden and overcrowding, families in Wyoming face a specific set of challenges. In 2018, 69.2% of the population lived in rural areas (as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture), making it **one of the most rural states in the nation.**\(^2\)

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\(^1\) American Community Survey 2017 1-Year Estimate. Table DP05.

The extreme distribution of Wyoming’s population creates challenges in accessing and delivering ECE and other services for children B-5 and their families. Additionally, the geographic isolation of many communities in Wyoming limits each area’s supply of a local, qualified workforce.

While some of these challenges have been explored and well-documented in relation to the state’s B-5 mixed delivery system, the PDG B-5 Initial Grant provides a critical opportunity for Wyoming to comprehensively research and define the needs of, and services available to, young children and their families through a needs assessment process.

This application was informed by stakeholder input (through an online survey and an in-person meeting) and key guidance documents such as ACF’s PDG B-5 Needs Assessment Guidance and PDG B-5 Strategic Plan Guidance. The stakeholder survey received 98 responses from ECE teachers and caregivers, ECE administrators, early childhood community liaisons, K-12 teachers and administrators, school district superintendents, parents/guardians or family members of children under age 6, advocates, mental health providers, local public agency employees, state public agency employees, higher education faculty/researchers, elected officials, and funders. Wyoming held an in-person stakeholder meeting on October 3, 2019 to gather feedback on the draft application approach, including the emerging process for completing the needs assessment. Approximately 15 individuals attended the stakeholder meeting, including representatives from state agencies, school districts, and ECE providers.

At the outset of the application development period, an Application Team was formed to help craft Wyoming’s approach and proposed work, as described in this application. The Application Team included representatives from state agencies, advocates, and local providers: the Wyoming Governor’s Office; Wyoming Departments of Education (WDE), Family Services (DFS), Health (WDH), and Workforce Services (DWS) – including the Wyoming Head Start
State Collaboration Office (WYHSSCO) and Wyoming Quality Counts; the Wyoming Children’s Trust Fund; the University of Wyoming (UW); Developmental Preschool and Daycare (a non-profit care provider); the Evanston Child Development Center (an Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership provider); Fremont County School District #1; and Wyoming Kids First. Many Application Team members also serve on the Governor’s Early Childhood State Advisory Council (EC-SAC). The Application Team held an initial videoconference in early September 2019 and convened two in-person meetings, in mid-September and early October 2019. The Application Team also reviewed and provided feedback on Project Narrative drafts.

2. **Expected Outcomes**

Wyoming proposes to achieve the short-term outcomes in the table below through the proposed project. These short-term outcomes are also included in the Logic Model in Section 9 and form the basis for the Program Performance Evaluation in Section 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Short-Term Outcomes</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 1. Needs Assessment             | ● Increased access to data regarding B-5 needs and services at the state, regional, and local levels  
   ● Increased understanding of B-5 community strengths and challenges among statewide, regional, and local leaders |
| 2. Strategic Plan               | ● Increased clarity of and agreement on future directions to strengthen and streamline the B-5 services and programs for vulnerable and underserved populations  
   ● Increased collaboration among and capacity of statewide, regional, and local systems to work together to implement strategic priority areas, objectives, and activities |
| 3. Parental Knowledge / Choice  | ● Increased access to information and resources, including those focused on transitions within B-5 and into elementary school, for parents and caregivers, especially for vulnerable and underserved populations |
| 4. Sharing Best Practices       | ● Increased number of providers accessing and receiving training on high-quality ECE best practices |
| 5. Improving Program Quality    | ● Shared understanding of statewide definition of quality among providers  
   ● Increased access for providers to quality improvement supports |
Wyoming has also identified three long-term outcomes that the proposed work will contribute toward. Given the one-year period of the PDG B-5 grant, Wyoming does not anticipate measurable progress on these long-term outcomes during the grant period: 1) Increased number of children receiving high-quality ECE care; 2) More parents and families experiencing successful transitions among B-5 programs and between B-5 and K-12 programs; and 3) Increased number of children ready for kindergarten.

3. **State B-5 Mixed Delivery System Description and Vision Statement**

3.1. **Current Landscape of B-5 Early Childhood State System**

Wyoming’s B-5 mixed delivery ECE system is comprised of an array of programs and services within three categories: 1) programs that provide direct ECE services; 2) supportive programs offering services such as nutritious meals to family child care homes and centers and health insurance subsidies for children and families; and 3) initiatives and programs that do not provide direct services, such as those focused on communications, advocacy, or quality improvement. The specific programs within each of these categories are described below.

**Direct ECE Services**: Direct ECE programs constitute the bulk of Wyoming’s B-5 mixed delivery ECE system and provide direct care and education for the children of Wyoming. These programs include: the Wyoming Child Care Subsidy Program, Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS), Title I District Preschool, home visiting programs such as Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Program and Healthy Baby Home Visitation Program, Special Education Preschool, and the Early Intervention and Education Program (EIEP). Most of Wyoming’s direct ECE services are subject to state licensing requirements. The state’s [child care licensing](https://dfs.wyo.gov/providers/child-care/) is conducted by DFS for: family child care (FCC) homes (three to 10 children in the provider’s

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home without additional staff), family child care centers (up to 15 children), and child care centers (16+ children). In 2019, Wyoming had a total of 20,761 licensed child care slots across all ages, including school age children. Some providers are exempt from licensing requirements, such as legal parents or relatives.

The Wyoming Child Care Subsidy Program, operated by DFS, provides subsidies to licensed and license-exempt child care providers serving eligible families. Family eligibility is determined by family income and parent/caregiver employment or participation in an employment-related educational program. The subsidy amount is based on family income and the cost of care provided. This program is funded through the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. In FY 2016, 5,494 children were served through this program with CCDF funding.

Early Head Start (EHS) and Head Start (HS) provide comprehensive child development and family support services – including child care and home visiting – to pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children in low-income families. There are 57 different HS, EHS, and American Indian and Alaska Native HS (AIAN-HS) providers throughout the state, which are operated by a variety of nonprofit, faith-based, and for-profit organizations. AIAN HS slots in Wyoming serve the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho
In FY 2019, HS and EHS had 1,885 funded slots, including 295 AIAN HS slots. With few exceptions, to be eligible for EHS (under age 3) or HS (ages 3 and 4) services, families must have incomes below the federal poverty level (FPL). Homeless children, foster children, and those receiving public assistance are also eligible. EHS and HS programs provide center-based, home-based, and family child care to families at no cost.

At the local level, 164 of the 364 schools in Wyoming receive federal Title I funding. Overall Title I funding is allocated to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) based on the number of children eligible for Title I support and the per-pupil cost of education. A Title I School may use all or part of its Title I funds to operate a schoolwide preschool program (to provide services to all children in the school’s attendance area), if at least 40% of the school’s students are from low-income families as determined by the number of students enrolled in the free and reduced cost lunch program. A Title I School may instead operate a targeted assistance preschool program to provide services only to selected children who are failing or most at risk of failing to meet the Wyoming’s student academic achievement standards.

Wyoming’s B-5 mixed delivery ECE system includes several home visiting programs, in which skilled professionals are sent to a family’s home to educate and support parents and families. The Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Program (PAT) is an evidence-based home visiting model based on four primary components: personal visits, group connections, a resource

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10 Performance Indicator Report Data released in Oct 2019 provided by the WY Head Start Collaboration Office.
11 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
network, and child screening. In Wyoming, the Parents as Teachers National Center is the recipient of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Grant Program (MIECHV) grant and implements the PAT model to serve at-risk pregnant women and families with children through kindergarten entry in five of Wyoming’s 23 counties. In FY 2018, the program conducted 2,625 home visits to serve 480 participants, 60.9% of whom were in low-income households.

The Healthy Baby Home Visitation Program provides assessment, information, and referrals to pregnant women and mothers of infants throughout Wyoming. The program offers two evidence-based models - Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) and Best Beginnings (BB) - that include prenatal support, resources for smoking cessation, breastfeeding information, child development education, and general education for parents. Funded by Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant and TANF funds, the Healthy Baby Home Visitation Program operates NFP in four of Wyoming’s 23 counties for first-time mothers whose enrollment occurs before 28 weeks gestation. Mothers who do not live within one of the NFP counties, do not meet the eligibility requirements to receive assistance, or do not want to enroll in an NFP program may choose to enroll in one of the BB programs offered in each county.

Wyoming’s Special Education Preschool program is operated by the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) with federal funding through Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B and state funding provided by the WDE. In 2018, the Special

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19 Ibid.
Education Preschool Program served 3,338 children ages three to five.\textsuperscript{22} Eligibility for services is determined by age (between three and five) and presence of a developmental delay or a disability (determined by the 14 different categories of disability defined under IDEA).\textsuperscript{23}

Through IDEA Part C, the WDH also operates Wyoming’s \textbf{Early Intervention and Education Program (EIEP)}, which provides families with children birth through age two who have developmental delays or disabilities with an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). A team of qualified therapists works with the family to develop the IFSP, which outlines the services and supports the state will provide to achieve the family’s goals. IDEA Part C-eligible children and families are identified by 14 regional Child Developmental Centers (CDCs), which each provide early intervention services and evaluations including formal tests, interviews, and observations.\textsuperscript{24} In FY 2018, 2,097 infants and toddlers were served through EIEP.\textsuperscript{25}

\textbf{Supportive Programs for Children B-5 and Their Families:} The \textbf{Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)} provides reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children, birth through age 12,\textsuperscript{26} and adults who are enrolled at participating child care centers, day care homes, and adult day care centers.\textsuperscript{27} In FY 2017, 247 family child care homes and 132 child care centers (including HS programs) in Wyoming participated in CACFP.\textsuperscript{28} The \textbf{Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)} provides

\textsuperscript{22} Data provided by the Wyoming Department of Health.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Children of migrant workers are eligible through age 15.
subsidies for nutritious foods to be purchased at local grocery stores, offers nutrition education and counseling at WIC clinics, and provides screenings and referrals to other health, welfare, and social services. To be eligible for WIC, an applicant must be a Wyoming resident; pregnant, breastfeeding and/or postpartum; an infant or child up to 5 years of age; and determined by a health professional to be at “nutrition risk.”\textsuperscript{29} Applicants must have an annual gross household income that is less than or equal to state-specific maximums based on household size ($47,638 for a family of 4).\textsuperscript{30} Between October 2018 and June 2019, there was a monthly average of 7,687 WIC participants in Wyoming.\textsuperscript{31} The \textbf{Wyoming Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Unit}, within the WDH, is funded through the federal Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant. This unit manages a number of initiatives for women, families, and young children, including: The Healthy Baby Home Visitation Program (described above), the Women and Infant Health Program: Infant Mortality, the Child Health Program, and the Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Program. Through the Women and Infant Health Program: Infant Mortality the MCH Unit provides resources such as the Wyoming-specific “Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait” video; and is developing a guide for health care providers on preventing preterm birth through progesterone treatment.\textsuperscript{32} Through the Child Health Program, the MCH Unit provides leadership and support for the design, implementation, and evaluation of state and local policies and programs to address the health, safety, and development of children ages 1 to 11. The Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Program offers eligible Wyoming children and families access to specialists and public health nurses who assist in


\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.


providing care coordination by interfacing with providers, Medicaid, Kid Care CHIP, community organizations, and health care facilities. Eligible clients fall under three categories: children and youth aged 0-18 with special health care needs, high-risk pregnant women, and high-risk infants.\(^{33}\) Through this program, the MCH Unit is exploring avenues to increase access to specialty clinics through telehealth, to mitigate the geographic barriers within Wyoming.

**Medicaid** provides no- or low-cost health coverage to low-income families and children, pregnant women, the elderly, and people with disabilities, and is administered by the WDH.

WDH also administers **Wyoming’s Kid Care CHIP Program**, which provides health insurance coverage to children of parents not eligible for Medicaid with incomes below 200% of the FPL.

**Other Initiatives and Programs Including Training, Communications, and Quality Efforts:** The following statewide programs support the state’s B-5 mixed delivery ECE system:

The **Wyoming Head Start State Collaboration Office (WYHSSCO)** is located in the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS) and works with federal, state, and local partners to foster collaboration and help coordinate HS and EHS services. The WYHSSCO collaborates with LEAs to cultivate coordinated transition processes for children entering the K-12 system; collaborates with state departments of higher education and other partners to support professional development activities; works to improve child care and ECE systems statewide; collaborates with other state efforts to increase opportunities and improve services for children with disabilities; and leads efforts to improve supports and services for infants and toddlers in the state.\(^{34}\) WYHSSCO also compiles data on EHS and HS services throughout the state and has conducted mapping analyses to assess access to ECE in Wyoming. **Wyoming Quality Counts**


(WY Quality Counts) is a state-funded initiative operated by the DWS with the mission to raise awareness about why quality child care matters for Wyoming’s children and families. The initiative provides information to parents and child care providers and offers scholarship and grant opportunities to ECE educators pursuing high-quality professional learning and/or early childhood college degrees and Child Development Associate (CDA) certificates. WY Quality Counts also offers a free mobile application, ReadPlayGrow, which engages children and caregivers in developmentally appropriate play. The app offers instructions for a range of activities and provides critical information for parents and caregivers to learn about the domains of development and understand the developmental milestones that should be monitored. The Wyoming Children’s Trust Fund (Children’s Trust) is a Governor-appointed board that funds and supports the prevention of child abuse and neglect. In August 2018, the Board partnered with Wyoming Kids First (see below) to host a train the trainer session to increase the number of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Interface presenters in the state from 30 to 70. The Wyoming Statewide Training and Resource System (STARS Registry), funded by DFS and administered by Align, allows the ECE workforce to find and register for online and in-person training and professional development opportunities, track annual professional development requirements for licensing, identify individual strengths and gaps in professional development, and verify education credentials for employers and licensors. Wyoming Kids First is a statewide nonprofit that works on behalf of children from birth through age eight. Wyoming Kids First works with the statewide organizations and agencies, as well as the EC-SAC, to

37 Ibid.
advocate for Wyoming’s young children and families. Wyoming Kids First also keeps legislators informed of early childhood research and data, and serves as a statewide repository of early childhood information and resources. The Wyoming Early Childhood Outreach Network (WyECON) is located within the University of Wyoming (UW) and partners with school districts, HS providers, family child care home providers, and other centers providing direct services to Wyoming’s children. WyECON facilitates strong relationships among ECE providers, provides quality resources and professional development opportunities for ECE providers, and serves as a network for sharing and collaborating on best practices and new resources for providers to strengthen the overall quality of the state’s B-5 mixed delivery ECE system. The Wyoming Early Childhood Professional Learning Collaborative (The Collaborative) is a recently-launched effort led by UW to provide high-impact professional learning opportunities to educators working with young children and families. The Collaborative is a partnership between DFS, WY Quality Counts, WyECON, WY Kids First, Align, Wyoming STARS, and Project ECHO at UW (a distance training model in the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities). The Collaborative is organized around seven regions within the state, each of which has a Professional Learning (PL) Facilitator who coordinates and leads trainings for providers in their region. Wyoming’s B-5 mixed delivery ECE system is supported by the Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) for children from birth through age three that were developed in 2011 by the Governor's Early Childhood State Advisory Council (EC-SAC). In 2013, EC-SAC developed the Early Learning Foundations (ELFs) for children ages three to

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five to help professionals, parents, and providers track the growth and development of Wyoming's children.\textsuperscript{42} In contrast to the majority of states (42) and districts throughout the nation, Wyoming does not have a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).\textsuperscript{43} However, the ELGs and ELFs serve as a guide for observing young children’s development and learning, an educational tool to help teachers, caregivers, and administrators assess school readiness, and a framework to help communities guide children from early childhood settings to kindergarten.

3.2. Progress and Successes; Hurdles and Challenges; and Strategies to Shape the B-5 System

In recent years, Wyoming has achieved some progress and success in developing its B-5 system, including through the recent launch of early childhood-focused initiatives. These include WY Quality Counts (described in Section 3.1), the ongoing identification of new members of the EC-SAC – which will take a lead role in implementing and overseeing the work proposed in this application, and the Collaborative (described in Section 3.1).

A number of significant challenges must be addressed in order to achieve the level of coordination, alignment, and delivery of services that the state is pursuing. The current system of state-level governance of ECE programs involves five separate state agencies and organizations, making it challenging to effectively coordinate programs. Additionally, the state’s low population density and many geographically isolated communities make it challenging to provide equitable access to quality ECE services.

Currently there are five state-level entities (four state agencies and one nonprofit) administering ECE programs in the state, and multiple others – such as Wyoming Kids First, WyECON, the Collaborative, and the Trust Fund – providing related services, as described

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
above in Section 3.1. Each of these entities has its own set of administrative requirements and processes for program providers, its own databases and data collection tools and approaches, and its own systems for determining the eligibility of children and families seeking services. This raises the concern that there may be significant overlap or redundancy of services across programs in different state agencies, and presents the opportunity to increase coordination across agencies and integration of programs. While there is interest and will among leadership at these entities to improve collaboration and coordination, the state has struggled to make progress in this area. The proposed needs assessment and strategic planning work will provide a structured process with dedicated time to explore different scenarios – informed by research and content experts – for improving program administration and coordination at the state level.

Equitable access to services – particularly for those in extremely remote, rural areas of Wyoming – constitutes a second major challenge in shaping Wyoming’s B-5 system. As noted in the Introduction, Wyoming has the second-lowest population density in the country (after Alaska). However, while 50% of Alaska’s population resides in its three largest cities, the same is true for only 25% of Wyoming’s population, indicating that more of Wyoming residents are living in smaller, geographically isolated communities. The distribution of Wyoming’s population and isolation of many of its communities create a number of challenges to providing equitable access to quality B-5 services. For example, ECE providers must open smaller centers (foregoing efficiencies of scale) and hire any available staff, who may not have sufficient education and experience to deliver high-quality services; and families may need reliable transportation and significant time to access quality programs in remote areas. Equitable access to services will be a key focus of the proposed needs assessment and strategic planning work.

The statewide B-5 needs assessment (see Section 4.1) will enable Wyoming to more
comprehensively identify gaps and challenges to the coordination, alignment, and delivery of quality services. One key known gap is the absence of a shared definition of quality ECE services; this will be addressed through the proposed strategic planning process.

3.3. **State B-5 Mixed Delivery Vision**

Wyoming envisions a future in which *all children are safe, healthy, nurtured, and arrive to school ready to succeed; all families are able to meet their basic needs; and all services to children and families in need are coordinated efficiently among state, regional, and local public and private entities.* Improving transitions from ECE to elementary school will be critical to ensuring that “services to children…are coordinated efficiently”. This vision will serve as the “North Star” for the proposed work. Wyoming has also established the following Core Values that will undergird its ongoing and future work to strengthen B-5 services throughout the state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Definition/Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Families</strong></td>
<td>Wyoming works to strengthen families so they can serve as the primary pillar of support for young children, including during the transition from ECE to elementary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equity</strong></td>
<td>Wyoming works to ensure all children have the services and supports they need to thrive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cross-Sector Collaboration</strong></td>
<td>Wyoming works collaboratively across sectors, settings, and systems to maximize child and family success</td>
</tr>
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To achieve the vision and uphold the values defined above, Wyoming will focus its efforts on certain target populations, including children from low-income families, who are homeless, who are in the foster care system, whose parents/caregivers are incarcerated, and who are located in rural areas of the state, with a focus on rural communities that are particularly geographically isolated. Through the proposed Needs Assessment process (see Section 4.1), the EC-SAC will more formally define the vulnerable and underserved populations for whom state partners will work to increase and improve B-5 services.

3.4. **Leveraging Key Partners and Stakeholders to Achieve the Vision**
Key state level partners include the EC-SAC, DFS, DWS (including WY Quality Counts and WYHSSCO), WDE, WDH, Wyoming Kids First, the Governor’s Office, and UW (including WyECON and the Collaborative). The relevant functions of these entities are described in Section 3.1 above, and their involvement in the proposed project – including how their ongoing work will be leveraged – is described in Section 4. In addition, Wyoming will engage local partners and stakeholders in the Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning process through a range of activities such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups (see Sections 4.1 and 4.2). These groups include parents/caregivers, ECE providers, school districts, CDCs, hospitals and other health care providers, local government agencies, and libraries.

4. **Approach: Activities One Through Five**

Wyoming’s proposed approach to completing the five required PDG B-5 grant activities is described in the subsections that follow. The **EC-SAC** will serve as the primary body to guide, and oversee the proposed work. **Align** will take responsibility for overall project management and will provide staff time to ensure the proposed activities move forward as planned. Align will contract with a range of contractors and experts to help implement the proposed work, with oversight from the EC-SAC. The EC-SAC meets quarterly and includes representatives of state and local agencies (including those specified in Section 3), parent groups and tribes, advocacy groups, Institutions of Higher Education, and child care licensing, among others. The EC-SAC is responsible for evaluation (including conducting a needs assessment every three years), building structures for collaboration, and developing policy recommendations for improving the B-5 system for Wyoming. The EC-SAC will meet more frequently during the grant period in order to coordinate the proposed work (see Sections 4.1 and 4.2 for details).

4.1. **Activity One: B-5 Statewide Needs Assessment Plan**
Wyoming does not currently have a singular, comprehensive B-5 statewide needs assessment. However, the state has completed – and is currently in the process of completing – a range of more targeted needs assessments including those focused on public health and child care capacity. Align will work closely with the EC-SAC and a Needs Assessment Contractor (NA contractor) to leverage existing needs assessments and extend this work to develop a more comprehensive B-5 statewide needs assessment. This work will be undertaken over a five-month timeframe, beginning as soon as possible following notification of a PDG B-5 grant award. Align has solicited and received multiple proposals from potential NA contractors and will engage key project partners to review and select a contractor prior to the beginning of the grant period.

Wyoming’s proposed approach to developing the needs assessment was informed by guidance documents, stakeholder input, and Application Team planning discussions (see Section 1 for details). Specifically, the PDG B-5 Needs Assessment Guidance document made available through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Office of Child Care (OCC) Technical Assistance (TA) Network and the Build Initiative’s PDG B-5 Application Guide from September 2018 served as key guidance documents to inform the structure and content of the needs assessment. In addition, the needs assessment aligns with the logic model: the logic model includes activities, outputs, and short-term outcomes related to the development of the needs assessment, and the needs assessment will help clarify what data is available (and what data gaps exist) for measuring the long-term outcomes in the logic model.

The needs assessment component of determining, to the extent possible, the unduplicated number of children being served in existing programs and the unduplicated number of children awaiting service in such programs is addressed through the inclusion of a corresponding guiding question for the needs assessment (see the table on pages 23-26). Additional detail regarding
how Wyoming will pursue these numbers to the extent possible is included in Section 14.

While the definition of Wyoming’s vulnerable and underserved populations will be refined through the needs assessment process, the Application Team identified a number of vulnerable and/or underserved groups. Descriptive information about these groups is provided in the table below. Additional research is required to better understand these populations, the specific challenges they face, and the ways in which those challenges might be addressed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Descriptive Information</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-income</td>
<td>- Wyoming’s overall poverty rate (below 100% of the FPL) is 11.1%&lt;sup&gt;44&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The poverty rate for children under 5 years old is 17%&lt;sup&gt;45&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The poverty rate for female householders (no husband present) with children under age 5 is 47.3%&lt;sup&gt;46&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Children</td>
<td>- In 2015, Wyoming had 1,082 children in foster care, a rate of 8 per 1,000 children (compared to 4 nationwide).&lt;sup&gt;47&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Of children in foster care in Wyoming in 2015, 4% were less than one year old, and 31% were between the ages of one and five.&lt;sup&gt;48&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- African American, Hispanic or Latino, and Native American/Alaska Native children are overrepresented in foster care.&lt;sup&gt;49&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless Families</td>
<td>- In 2018, there were “639 people homeless on a given night,” a rate of 11 per 10,000 people. This includes 205 people in families.&lt;sup&gt;50&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incarcerated Parents</td>
<td>- In 2016-17, 8% of children in Wyoming had a parent who was ever incarcerated. This is equal to the national average.&lt;sup&gt;51&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>- In 2018, 69% of Wyoming’s population was rural.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Of the state’s 23 counties, 17 have fewer than six people per square mile (the most widely accepted definition of “Frontier” by federal agencies).&lt;sup&gt;52&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Wyoming has 20 Geographic Health Professional Shortage Areas (GHPSAs) and an additional 8 High Needs GHPSAs, across 17 counties.&lt;sup&gt;53&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<sup>44</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 2018 1-Year Estimate. Table S1701.
<sup>45</sup> Ibid.
<sup>46</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 2018 1-Year Estimate. Table S1702.
<sup>48</sup> Ibid.
<sup>49</sup> Ibid.
<sup>52</sup> Wyoming Department of Health, Office of Rural Health.
Work to complete the needs assessment will be structured in five phases, as indicated in the table below. In addition, the NA contractor and Align will work together to provide project coordination and management for the needs assessment development process. See Section 5 for additional details about the project timeline. This planning work will directly inform the strategic planning process described in Section 4.2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs Assessment Phase</th>
<th>Grant Month</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Coordination and Management</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Clarify and finalize guiding questions and assessment content</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Inventory and analyze existing needs assessments and related data</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Collect additional data through research and stakeholder engagement</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Analyze data and engage in preliminary planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Develop needs assessment report</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Project Coordination and Management (Months 1-5):** At the outset of the grant period, Align and the NA contractor will establish regular weekly coordination meetings of the EC-SAC focused on PDG B-5 implementation. The initial focus of these meetings will be on the needs assessment; the content and focus of subsequent meetings will evolve over the course of the implementation period in alignment with the proposed project timeline and milestones. The EC-SAC will review a detailed work plan for the needs assessment, discuss and finalize needs assessment questions (see below), help coordinate needs assessment activities, and review and finalize the needs assessment report. As needed, Align and the NA contractor will form and facilitate workgroups to focus on specific needs assessment activities (e.g., inventoring and cross-walking existing data and data collection efforts) and/or content areas.

**Needs Assessment Phase 1 – Clarify and Finalize Guiding Questions and Assessment Content (Month 1):** During the initial phase of the needs assessment, the EC-SAC will review and finalize the list of questions to be explored and addressed through the assessment. The preliminary list of questions – based on available guidance and in-person Application Team
The State of Wyoming, Preschool Development Grant B-5 Initial Grant – File One

application development meetings – is organized into six categories. The 11 domains in the OCC guidance document and the seven categories of needs assessment questions in the Build Initiative’s guide can be mapped to these six categories. The Application Team has reviewed these assessment questions, presented in the table below, as part of the application development process. The guiding questions define and clarify the scope of the needs assessment. The EC-SAC will review and finalize the questions in month 1 of the grant implementation period.

### Needs Assessment Scope: Categories and Guiding Questions

#### 1. Definitions of Key Terms

| A. | What is Wyoming’s definition of **quality ECE**? |
| B. | What is Wyoming’s definition of **ECE availability**? |
| C. | What is Wyoming’s definition of **vulnerable or underserved children**? |
| D. | What is Wyoming’s definition of **children in rural areas**? |
| E. | Does Wyoming have a definition or description of its **ECE system** as a whole? |
| F. | Do these definitions differ from how Wyoming has defined them in the past? If so, what are the advantages of these definitions? |
| G. | Are there any foreseen challenges to using these definitions? |

#### 2. Available Data and Data Gaps

| A. | What data is currently being collected about **B-5 children and their families in Wyoming** (including data describing the unduplicated number of children being served in existing programs and number of children awaiting services)? |
| ➢ | To what extent are these data and associated data collection efforts aligned across programs and administering agencies? |
| ➢ | What are the strengths and weaknesses of the available data on children being served? Are there initiatives underway to improve these data? |
| ➢ | What are Wyoming’s biggest data gaps or challenges in this area? What existing initiatives are being undertaken in Wyoming to address these gaps? |
| B. | What data is currently being collected about **ECE and other B-5 programs in Wyoming** (including the service use of families with children in Wyoming)? To what extent are these data and associated data collection efforts aligned across programs and administering agencies? |
| ➢ | Do ECE programs in the state collect attendance data in a way that allows them to identify chronically absent children? |
| ➢ | What are the strengths and weaknesses of the available data on ECE and B-5 programs in Wyoming? |
| ✓ | What are the strengths and weaknesses of the data that is available about ECE facilities? Are there any initiatives underway to improve this data? |
| ➢ | What are Wyoming’s biggest data gaps or challenges in this area? What existing initiatives are being undertaken in Wyoming to address these gaps? |
Needs Assessment Scope: Categories and Guiding Questions

C. What are Wyoming’s data gaps in relation to accurately determining the quality and availability of ECE and other B-5 programs?
D. What capacities does the state have in place to analyze and utilize available data from individual agencies or across agencies?
E. How will Wyoming address identified data gaps in order to support collaboration between programs and maximize parental choice?

3. Current Services

A. What is the current availability of ECE services in Wyoming (overall, for vulnerable or underserved children, and for children in rural areas)?
B. How many children in Wyoming are served in existing ECE programs?
   ➢ How many children currently receive services from Wyoming’s intervention and early childhood special education programs?
C. What is the current quality of ECE services in Wyoming (overall, for vulnerable or underserved children, and for children in rural areas)?
D. What is the condition of ECE facilities in Wyoming?
E. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the transition supports for children moving from the ECE system to school entry?
   ➢ Are there targeted supports for vulnerable/underserved and rural children?
   ➢ Are there transition supports across the age spans or are they for specific ages?
   ➢ How do the supports differ based on the type of early care and education provider (e.g., Head Start, home care provider, private or religious-based provider)?
F. How are parents currently provided with information about transitions?
   ➢ What is effective about the information provided? What could be improved?
G. What programs and supports are available:
   ➢ To help connect children to appropriate, high-quality care and education?
     ○ What works well about these programs? What could work better?
     ○ Are there specific populations of parents/families with cultural/linguistic differences that are not being connected to appropriate high-quality ECE?
   ➢ To identify children who are developmentally delayed and connect them to services?
     ○ What works well about these programs? What could work better?
     ○ Are these programs reaching children from vulnerable and underserved populations and rural children?
     ○ Are there specific populations of parents/families with cultural/linguistic differences that are not being connected to appropriate services?
   ➢ To help ensure that early care and education settings are helping vulnerable or underserved children access needed support services such as health care, food assistance, housing support, and economic assistance?
     ○ What works well about these programs? What could work better?
     ○ Are there specific populations of parents/families with cultural/linguistic differences that are not being connected to appropriate services?
H. What initiatives are currently underway to:
   ➢ To ensure that high-quality care is available to vulnerable or underserved children and children in rural areas in Wyoming?
     ○ How well are these initiatives working, and how could they be improved?
Needs Assessment Scope: Categories and Guiding Questions

➢ To inform parents about what constitutes a high-quality child care center and how different centers match up in terms of quality?
  ○ Is this information delivered in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner?
  ○ How effective are the initiatives and information? What could be improved?
➢ To promote and increase involvement and engagement of parents and family members in the development and education of their children?
  ○ What works well about these initiatives? What could be better?

4. Needs of Children, Families, Communities, Providers, and the State

A. What are the population size, demographics, geographic distribution, and needs of vulnerable and underserved children and children in rural areas in Wyoming?
B. What data is available about the demographic and educational characteristics of the ECE workforce?
C. What challenges do parents/families face in seeking high quality ECE services in WY?
  ➢ What are the most pronounced barriers for stakeholders created by the current governance structure?
D. What are the barriers to/gaps in effectively supporting children to move between ECE programs and school entry?
E. What are the barriers to funding and providing high-quality ECE services and supports?
F. How many children in Wyoming are awaiting service in ECE or other B-5 programs?
G. What issues have been identified involving ECE facilities?
H. What current plans are in place to address ECE facility issues?
  ➢ What additional efforts are needed to address ECE facility issues?
I. What is the economic well-being of early educators? How does this vary by age group served, educational attainment, and program type?
J. What are the current caseloads of child care licensing specialists in Wyoming?

5. Governance and Policy

A. Which offices and agencies have responsibility for administering federal B-5 programs (including those listed in Appendix A of the Build Initiative guide)? *(Note: this question is largely answered through work completed to date - see Section 3.1 above)*
  ➢ What formal agreements or memoranda of understanding currently exist between these offices and agencies and for what purposes (including data-sharing agreements)?
  ➢ To what extent do these offices and agencies have shared goals and principles?
B. What cross-agency working groups or advisory councils currently exist and for what purpose? How well are they working?
C. Are characteristics of the current governance or financing of the system present barriers to the funding and provision of high-quality ECE services and supports?
  ➢ Are there policies that operate as barriers?
  ➢ Are there regulatory barriers that could be eliminated without compromising quality?
D. What policies and practices are in place that either support or hinder interagency collaboration?

6. Opportunities

A. How can Wyoming address the barriers to supporting children to move between ECE programs and school entry identified in response to question 4.D?
**Needs Assessment Scope: Categories and Guiding Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. How can Wyoming address the barriers to funding and providing high-quality ECE services and supports identified in response to questions 4.E?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. What measurable indicators currently exist that can be used to track progress in achieving the goals of this grant and that might serve as indicators of success for the strategic plan? (what opportunities exist to use data that is already collected to track Wyoming’s progress towards its statewide B-5 vision?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ What additional measurable indicators of progress should be implemented to track progress towards the state’s vision and desired outcomes?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Needs Assessment Phase 2 – Inventory and Analyze Existing Needs Assessments and Data (Months 1-2):** After finalizing the needs assessment guiding questions and content, the NA contractor will work with the EC-SAC (and individuals identified by the EC-SAC to serve as key informants, as appropriate) to develop an inventory of existing statewide needs assessments, including those in process or planned for the future. This inventory will include key information about each assessment, such as the agency or organization conducting the assessment; data sources used by the assessment; data collected for the assessment; and more. Wyoming will leverage key resources available from the federal government and national TA providers, such as the Build Initiative’s table of federally mandated needs assessments, to develop the inventory.54

In addition to inventorying statewide needs assessments, the NA contractor will work with the EC-SAC and key informants to develop an inventory of relevant data sets, including: data from federal databases, state agencies, and other key entities. A particular focus of the proposed data inventorying work will be data on individuals served through the different B-5 services available in Wyoming, and the extent to which these data are linked across programs and agencies. The data sets inventory will also include the data from the Center for American Progress’s Child Care Deserts analysis, and ongoing work by the Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) to conduct a more detailed mapping of child care needs and services. Wyoming, along with 11

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54 This table was jointly developed by the Build Initiative, the Ounce of Prevention Fund, Education Counsel, the Alliance for Early Success, NIEER, and the Policy Equity Group, and is available on the Build Initiative’s website.
other states, is currently participating in BPC’s project to model child care needs and capacity at the state and local levels using a unique spatial analysis and mapping technique.

As needed, the NA contractor will coordinate the formation and work of a small team of experts to help with the development of the data inventory and the identification of barriers preventing the alignment of similar datasets and the identification of data gaps and needs.

**Needs Assessment Phase 3 – Collect Additional Data Through Research and Stakeholder Engagement (Months 2-4):** The NA contractor will review the needs assessment guiding questions and the information available from existing needs assessments and datasets. Based on this analysis, the NA contractor will develop a detailed plan to gather data through additional research and stakeholder engagement to respond to the guiding questions. Specific data collection activities in this phase may include:

- **A survey of parents and caregivers of young children** to better understand their needs and the challenges they face in meeting those needs. This survey may also include questions to help gauge the economic impact of not having access to quality early childhood care and education services.

- **Focus groups with parents and caregivers of young children** to further explore the results of the parent/caregiver survey.

- **Interviews with leaders and key individuals from state agencies and organizations** involved in the provision and/or administration of B-5 services to better understand the challenges and opportunities related to cross-agency collaboration and coordination.

- **Surveys of leaders and key individuals from local agencies and organizations** including: school districts; program providers, including EHS and HS providers; CDCs; county governments; hospitals and other health care providers; etc.
The NA contractor will work with Align and the EC-SAC to finalize the data collection plan and guide the implementation of the agreed-upon activities. In implementing the data collection plan, the NA contractor will leverage existing networks, including the Collaborative’s regional facilitators, to maximize participation in surveys, focus groups, and interviews.

**Needs Assessment Phase 4 – Analyze Data and Engage in Preliminary Planning (Months 4-5):** The NA contractor will develop a set of results and findings emerging from the needs assessment work in earlier phases, organized by the guiding questions presented in the table above. The EC-SAC will engage in a series of meetings to closely review, discuss, and refine these emerging findings. These discussions will provide a foundation for continued work during the strategic planning process.

**Needs Assessment Phase 5 – Develop Needs Assessment Report (Month 5):** The NA contractor will develop a report documenting the results of the needs assessment and engage the EC-SAC, Align, and other experts (as needed) to review and provide feedback on drafts of the report. The EC-SAC will vote to approve and adopt the needs assessment at the state level, signaling a transition to the strategic planning process described below. The total budget request for Activity One – B-5 Statewide Needs Assessment is $610,250. For additional budget information, see Section 13. The Project Budget and Budget Justification.

4.2. **Activity Two: B-5 Statewide Strategic Plan**

Wyoming does not currently have a statewide strategic plan for ECE. A PDG B-5 grant would provide a critical opportunity to develop such a plan. The proposed strategic planning work will build directly on the results of the needs assessment described in Section 4.1, and will be informed by existing plans and recommendations at the federal and state levels (e.g., recommendations from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s
consensus study reports: *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age Five*, and *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education*). Align will engage a Strategic Plan (SP) contractor to facilitate the strategic planning process and implement key activities described below. Align has received multiple proposals from potential SP contractors and will engage key project partners in a review process to select a contractor prior to the start of the grant period.

The EC-SAC will continue to serve as the primary team guiding and engaging in this work, and the resulting plan will serve as the EC-SAC’s strategic plan. The plan will focus on expanding and improving ECE services throughout Wyoming – particularly for vulnerable and underserved children and children in rural areas – through greater collaboration, coordination, and quality improvement activities among existing programs. Specific areas of focus to be addressed through the planning process were identified based on stakeholder input (via the online survey and October 3, 2019 in-person meeting), Application Team meetings, and the OCC’s *PDG B-5 Strategic Plan Guidance* document, and are outlined later in this section.

The SP contractor will work with the EC-SAC to form workgroups for each of the focus areas described below, with each workgroup comprised of EC-SAC members (who will serve as chairs or co-chairs of each workgroup) and other relevant stakeholders, such as content experts, representatives from local systems or organizations (e.g., school districts, CDCs, hospitals or health clinics, ECE providers, etc.), and other key state-level representatives. The SP contractor will lead the formation of these workgroups and coordinate and facilitate a series of video and in-person meetings for each workgroup to engage in planning discussions. The EC-SAC members of each workgroup will report on the work of their group(s) during regular EC-SAC meetings, and will report back to their workgroups on the progress of other workgroups.

The planning process will include two two-day planning summits. At each summit, the
first day will be a public stakeholder meeting to gather input and feedback on work to date to inform the strategic plan. The second day will convene all work groups for a combination of plenary and workgroup-specific activities. Invitations to the summits will be distributed to a range of stakeholder groups who are likely to be meaningfully impacted by the strategic plan, including parents and families of young children, community members, ECE providers, providers of other B-5 services, school districts, CDCs, local and state elected officials, and more. The first summit will take place early in the planning process and serve as an inflection point between the needs assessment and strategic plan, while the second summit will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to review and provide feedback on emerging plan priorities and questions on the first day, and for workgroup members to work within and across groups to further the plan on the second day. Depending on the need to engage additional stakeholders beyond those participating in the summits, the SP contractor will collect stakeholder input through an online survey and public meetings/forums throughout the state.

The table below provides a summary timeline of the key planning activities described above, as well as activities related to the drafting and finalization of the plan document. See Section 5 for additional details about the project timeline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Planning Activity</th>
<th>Grant Month</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hold EC-SAC Strategic Planning meetings (monthly)</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Form workgroups for each of the six focus areas</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hold Strategic Planning Summit #1</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hold Strategic Planning Summit #2</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Facilitate regular workgroup meetings</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Conduct a stakeholder strategic planning survey to gather input</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Complete an initial draft of the strategic plan, based on strategies and activities identified by workgroups</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Address feedback received through the public comment period</td>
<td>X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Finalize the plan and present for adoption to the EC-SAC</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>
As introduced above, the Wyoming B-5 strategic statewide plan will be structured around a set of key focus areas. These focus areas will be re-examined following the completion of the statewide needs assessment, as the results of the needs assessment may provide a rationale for modifying or adding new focus areas. The initial set of focus areas – identified based on Application Team meetings, and input from the October 3 stakeholder meeting and online survey – includes the following items: (1) Governance of ECE and other B-5 services at the state level; (2) Access to ECE and other B-5 services; (3) Quality of ECE, including the ECE workforce; (4) Transitions within B-5 programs and services and to elementary school; (5) Funding/financing of ECE and other B-5 services; and (6) Data and statewide data systems.

Within each focus area, the plan will identify goals, objectives, and progress indicators for each goal; strategies for each objective; and the resources required, agencies responsible for implementation, and the timeline for implementation for each strategy. More detailed action planning will be conducted by the state agencies and organizations identified as responsible for implementation of each strategy. The strategic plan will also include a description of the planning process, including stakeholder engagement and input activities that were conducted. The final strategic plan submitted for review and approval will include an Executive Summary (a separate document from the full plan, as recommended in OCC’s PDG B-5 Strategic Plan Guidance document), which will contain a table showing the connections between the needs assessment findings and recommendations and the goals and objectives of the strategic plan.

Additional information and considerations related to each focus area of the strategic plan, and the work of corresponding workgroups, are included below. Results from all categories of the needs assessment will inform planning work in each strategic planning focus area.

1. Governance: Wyoming currently has four state agencies and one nonprofit
organization managing federally- and state-funded programs for young children and their families. As described in Section 3.2, there is a need for improved coordination across these agencies to yield greater resource efficiency and cost savings that may be used to expand and improve services. Coordination will be central to the strategic planning process and the strategic plan will include clear goals, objectives, and strategies for increasing the coherence and cost/resource efficiencies of state level program administration. Wyoming will engage Foresight Law + Policy (FLP) to support the governance workgroup and section of the strategic plan. FLP Partner Elliot Regenstein will serve as a content expert and will help structure and support the work of the Governance workgroup. Elliot will help the workgroup determine the state’s governance needs, and will provide information referencing different governance approaches in other states based on the identified needs. The scope of the Governance workgroup and plan section will include the incorporation of new or updated federal, state, and local statutory requirements and identification of barriers to collaboration and coordination.

2. Access: The Access section of the plan will follow directly from the results of the needs assessment, regarding the current population of young children and families in need of services and the availability of services throughout the state. The plan will specify goals, objectives, and strategies for increasing access through better coordination of existing funding and programs at the state level, leveraging existing resources and infrastructure at the local level to expand and scale ECE services, and securing additional funding to scale effective programs. The plan will emphasize ensuring access to needed services (e.g., service modalities such as home-based or center-based care that best meet family needs) for vulnerable children and children in rural areas. This section of the plan will also address issues related to ECE facilities (e.g., facility maintenance and repair needs, benefits and drawbacks of sharing facilities, etc.) as
3. Quality: The plan will include a definition of quality ECE and will specify activities for improving program quality through a variety of strategies (e.g., financial incentives for programs, changes to child care licensing requirements, etc.). Align will contract with Leading for Children to provide process and content expertise and guide the state’s creation of a shared definition of quality. Leading for Children will help structure the Quality workgroup process, provide facilitation support for workgroup meetings, content expertise including relevant research and examples from other states, and draft content for the Quality section of the plan. The Quality section of the plan will also focus on the ECE workforce and ensuring that there are accessible pathways for ECE workforce preparation and career advancement.

4. Transitions: The Transitions section of the plan will examine transitions within the B-5 system and into elementary school; identify specific strategies; and recommend partnership, collaboration, coordination, and quality improvement activities and opportunities for better supporting children and families as they move through these transition periods. This work will be directly informed by the transition challenges and effective supports identified by parents and families during the needs assessment. In addition, the transitions workgroup will look to examples of effective transition support throughout the state (“bright spots”), and existing models for transition support such as HS/EHS that might be replicated or scaled.

5. Funding: The funding workgroup will first engage in financial mapping to clarify the funding sources currently used for ECE and other B-5 services in Wyoming. This work will build on previously completed analyses, including the recent Analysis of ECE Services, Policies, and Opportunities: State of Wyoming, completed in September 2019 by Wyoming Kids First, as well as the results of the Wyoming Statewide B-5 Needs Assessment. The workgroup will then
identify opportunities for financial efficiencies or methods for streamlining current practices to redirect current funding toward increasing access and/or quality of ECE in the state. Further, the workgroup will engage in cost modeling and will explore the feasibility of new revenue sources – such as local taxes through regional Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), dedicated state funding, and funding from philanthropic foundations – to increase ECE access and quality. The results of these efforts will be framed in the plan as specific goals, objectives, and strategies that the state will undertake.

6. Data and Statewide Data Systems: The data and statewide data systems workgroup will begin by reviewing key results of the needs assessment, including the data sets inventory to understand the current B-5 data landscape and needs in Wyoming. The workgroup will reference key guidance materials on ECE data systems – such as the Early Childhood Data Collaborative and resources made available on ACF-OCC’s TA website in relation to PDG B-5 – to identify goals, objectives, and strategies to improve B-5 data systems in Wyoming. This workgroup will additionally leverage the knowledge of EC-SAC members and other state agency representatives regarding data system opportunities and limitations in Wyoming.

While the workgroup approach will help ensure that the plan addresses the six key focus areas, it will be critical to facilitate cross-workgroup communication, as many of the focus areas closely relate to and/or depend on one another. Wyoming’s planning process will accomplish cross-workgroup communication through a multi-pronged strategy. First, workgroup chairs will be EC-SAC members, allowing EC-SAC meetings to serve as a forum for cross-workgroup sharing and coordination. Second, summits will provide opportunities to share information and engage in collaborative planning across workgroups. Finally, workgroups will be encouraged to send “ambassadors” to participate in the meetings of other relevant workgroups. The SP
The contractor will guide all planning activities and facilitate cross-workgroup communication.

The EC-SAC will monitor plan implementation on a quarterly basis, using initiation and completion of strategies, as well as progress indicators specified in the plan for each goal to gauge progress. The EC-SAC will also assess outcomes related to the delivery of services based on targets written into plan goals and objectives. The EC-SAC will modify the plan as needed over time. The total budget request for Activity Two – Statewide Strategic Plan is $517,600. For additional budget information, see Section 13: The Project Budget and Budget Justification.

4.3. Activity Three: Maximizing Parental Choice and Knowledge

Wyoming proposes to maximize parental knowledge and choice by: 1) **Increasing parent and caregiver knowledge of programs and services** through the creation and distribution of informational materials (including those focused on transitions from birth through preschool and into elementary school), building on existing communications and outreach initiatives and infrastructure; 2) **Empowering parents, caregivers, and programs to facilitate smooth transitions** for children from birth through preschool, and into elementary school by coordinating and collaborating with transition support initiatives under development by the WDE; 3) Developing and distributing targeted **communications for vulnerable populations**, including fathers, families that speak a language other than English at home, military families, foster care families, and incarcerated parents; and 4) **Increasing and improving state level collaboration** through continuing and strengthening the work of the EC-SAC, which includes representatives from the state agencies administering CCDF, IDEA Part C and Part B Section 619, the State Head Start Collaboration Office, and more. Each of these strategies is described in greater detail in the subsections below.
Increasing Parental and Caregiver Knowledge of Child Development and B-5 Programs

and Services: An essential component to maximizing parental and caregiver choice is ensuring parents and caregivers have timely and accurate information related to the variety, quality, accessibility, and affordability of ECE programs and support services for their children from birth through elementary school entry provided in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner. Connecting and strengthening existing efforts to engage parents is central to Wyoming’s proposed approach to maximizing parent/caregiver knowledge. While there are a number of existing and ongoing communications initiatives throughout Wyoming targeting parents/caregivers of young children, there is a shortage of informational materials for these initiatives to distribute. Specifically, there is a need for materials to help parents/caregivers understand the range of services available to them (through statewide and local programs), how these programs relate to one another, and how to assess program quality to ensure they are placing their child in a safe and engaging environment that will help foster the child’s physical, social and cognitive development. In addition, more informational and instructional materials are needed to communicate with parents about their child’s transition into elementary school.

Align will work closely with WY Quality Counts, the WDE, and a communications consultant to increase parent/caregiver knowledge of child development and B-5 programs and services. **WY Quality Counts** maintains an online statewide database of ECE providers and offers information related to programs and program quality designed for parents and child care providers. In addition, WY Quality Counts shares information about child development and developmental milestones, and recommended activities for caregivers to do with young children.

The **WDE** has recently launched an effort to work with ECE providers and school districts throughout the state to support children and families with the transition to elementary
school. The proposed project will coordinate with this effort to engage ECE providers and school districts, and to develop and distribute information to support parents and caregivers in relation to their child’s transition to elementary school. Additionally, WDE is working with WY Lit, a nonprofit organization dedicated to evidence-based literacy instruction for all children in Wyoming, to build a third-grade reading campaign. This work stems from Wyoming House Bill 0297, K-3 Reading Assessment and Intervention Program, which the Wyoming Legislature passed in 2019. The bill requires school districts to implement reading assessment and intervention programs for K-3 students, and aims to have 85% of all Wyoming third-grade students reading at grade level. Project partners, particularly WY Kids First and UW’s WyECON, will coordinate with WDE and WY Lit’s efforts to distribute early literacy information for parents and ECE providers that align with these K-3 materials.

As an initial activity, Align will work with WY Quality Counts to engage a communications consultant with experience in early childhood and parent/caregiver messaging to help coordinate and conduct a statewide summit on parent and caregiver knowledge and choice. This summit will convene local, regional, and statewide organizations that produce and/or distribute information to parents/caregivers to help them understand and navigate the landscape of B-5 services in Wyoming. At the summit, participants will share resources, identify shared challenges and gaps, and help develop a common vision for parental choice and knowledge for B-5 services and programs in Wyoming. The identification of information gaps and needs will include a particular focus on vulnerable populations (see below). Results from this summit will inform subsequent work under this Activity, especially the development of new informational materials and the redesign and expansion of WY Quality Counts.

Following the summit, the communications consultant will work with the EC-SAC, WY
Quality Counts, WDE, and other key partners to review summit results, compile existing informational materials, articulate information gaps and needs, and develop informational materials to address identified gaps and needs. The focus of these materials may range from child development, to instructions for how to locate and enroll in child care, to eligibility information for subsidized healthcare and nutrition programs. At minimum, the communications consultant will ensure that informational materials describe the variety, quality, accessibility, and affordability of ECE services in Wyoming. In addition, the communications consultant will ensure that this information is structured in culturally and linguistically sensitive ways (e.g., providing materials translated into languages other than English, as needed) such that all Wyoming residents can comfortably access and understand the information. The information contained in these materials will be research-based and informed by Wyoming-specific needs (as identified through the summit) and messaging analysis (to be completed by the selected communications consultant). The materials development process will engage the EC-SAC and parents and caregivers to provide feedback on draft materials.

In order to broadly and effectively distribute collected and newly developed materials and information, the WY Quality Counts website and mobile application will undergo a redesign and expansion. This redesign will emphasize the website’s appeal and usability for parents and caregivers of young children. In addition to modifying the site’s look and feel and overall structure to make it easier for parents and caregivers to access timely and accurate information, the site’s content will be expanded and supplemented with compiled and newly developed materials, as described above. As a result, WY Quality Counts will serve as a key tool for disseminating information to parents and caregivers, and as a source for local programs and providers to access information to share with local parents and providers in their communities.
A number of other outreach and communications programs will be leveraged to maximize parent/caregiver choice and knowledge by promoting and/or distributing the informational materials described above: **Screen for Success**, which provides free early childhood developmental screenings; **2-1-1**, a statewide helpline and website which provides free, confidential, health and human services information and referrals; **The Wyoming Fatherhood Initiative**, a collaborative of state agencies, statewide nonprofits, and fathers focused on elevating services across Wyoming for fathers; **Parents as Teachers**, the state’s MIECHV home visiting program; **WY EXCELS**, a statewide initiative that aims to be a voice for businesses in K-12 education; and local **Chambers of Commerce**.

Align and WY Quality Counts will share the redesigned WY Quality Counts website and materials with the organizations and initiatives noted above and will encourage them to direct parents and caregivers of young children to WY Quality Counts for additional information. The expanded WY Quality Counts website will serve as a resource to organizations that are providing direct services to parents and caregivers of young children. For example, WY Quality Counts will provide easy access to eligibility information for subsidized care and support services that outreach workers can use to determine which services a particular client should apply to.

*Empowering Parents, Caregivers, and Programs to Facilitate Smooth Transitions*: Align will work with the WDE to develop and distribute information to parents/caregivers focused on the transition to elementary school. The WDE plans to hold regional convenings with K-12 educators and administrators to share informational resources and materials for distribution to parents and caregivers. Align will join these convenings to share the broader set of information available to parents and caregivers through the WY Quality Counts website, and to encourage K-12 educators and administrators to distribute this information to families with young children in
their communities (including those not yet enrolled in the school district).

Wyoming will continue to ensure that families who have concerns about their child’s development and may suspect a developmental delay or disability are connected to the IDEA Part C early intervention program or Part B Section 619 preschool special education program (both operated by the WDH), and will ensure infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities have access to high-quality inclusive programs through the coordination of existing programs.

**Meeting the Needs of Vulnerable Populations:** Special attention and resources will be devoted to ensuring communication and coordination with vulnerable populations including fathers, families that speak a language other than English at home, military families, foster care families, and incarcerated parents. The needs of these families will be prioritized through the planning process, including in the needs assessment and the resulting strategic plan. The work described above to gather existing and develop new informational materials for parents and caregivers will include special consideration for these vulnerable populations and, where appropriate, the communications consultant will be engaged to develop population-specific materials. WY Quality Counts will partner with the programs described above that focus on serving these vulnerable populations to encourage them to share WY Quality Counts resources with their clients and program participants.

**Increasing and Improving State Level Coordination:** The proposed project will increase collaboration and coordination among Wyoming’s wide range of ECE programs and services by engaging relevant state agencies in the implementation of project activities, including regular meetings of the EC-SAC. In particular, the proposed project will foster collaboration and coordination among the Wyoming Departments of Family Services (DFS), Health (WDH), Education (WDE), Workforce Services (DWS), in addition to UW and statewide nonprofits and
initiatives. By working together to guide the development of the needs assessment and strategic plan, representatives from these agencies will gain a better understanding of each other’s programs and policies and identify opportunities for mutual benefit through increased coordination. For example, state agencies will work to coordinate data collection and work to better align data sets gathered by state agencies in relation to B-5 populations and services. The following paragraphs summarize the roles of these agencies in relation to the prompts and scoring criteria in the Funding Opportunity Announcement. Refer to Section 3.1 for a more detailed description of ECE and B-5 services in Wyoming.

These agencies administer key federal programs: WDH administers key health and mental health and wellness support programs including Medicaid, CHIP, Title V MCH Programs, Healthy Start, the CACFP, and WIC. DFS also administers the state’s CCDF program, serves as the lead agency for TANF, and administers subsidies for child care funded through both CCDF and TANF. DFS also houses the state’s resource and referral program. The Behavioral Health Division within WDH administers both IDEA Part C and Part B Section 619 (special education preschool). WDH also leads and organizes the state’s Early Intervention Council, which includes representatives from a variety of state and local agencies and programs. The Maternal and Child Health Unit within the WDH manages programs under the state’s Title V MCH Services Block Grant, including the Healthy Baby Home Visitation Program, and health programs for women and infants, children, adolescents, and children and youth with special health care needs. DWS administers WY Quality Counts and houses the Wyoming Head Start State Collaboration Office. WDE coordinates with WDH on the provision of IDEA Part B Section 619 Special Education Preschool, administers the state’s TANF Preschool Grants programs, and supports school districts throughout the state – some of which offer Title I
preschool programs and/or employ early childhood liaisons.

Given the EC-SAC’s central role for the proposed project, it will meet weekly (by phone or videoconference) and monthly (in person) during the needs assessment (see section 4.1). As the project focus transitions to strategic planning, EC-SAC members will serve as co-leads for strategic planning workgroups and the EC-SAC will continue to meet monthly in addition to workgroup meetings and planning summits (see Section 4.2). The total budget request for Activity Three – Maximizing Parental Knowledge and Choice is $120,300. For additional budget information, see Section 13: The Project Budget and Budget Justification.

4.4. Activity Four: Sharing Best Practices among State ECE Providers

Through the proposed project, Wyoming will facilitate the sharing of best practices among ECE providers through three primary strategies: 1) establishing an online resource portal of best practices vetted by UW, and promoting this resource through WyECON, the Collaborative, the redesigned WY Quality Counts website, and other existing initiatives in the state; 2) working with the WDE’s Kindergarten transition support initiative to hold a statewide Transition Summit and regional trainings on best practices for ECE providers and school districts to support families through this transition; and 3) leveraging the Cowboy State Early Childhood Conference to share best practices and provide targeted training.

As described in Section 3.1, the Wyoming Early Childhood Outreach Network (WyECON), housed at UW, works with school systems, HS centers, home-based child care providers, and early childhood development centers to facilitate and strengthen collaboration. WyECON also delivers professional development to local providers and helps share best and promising ECE practices throughout the state. Through the proposed project, WyECON will develop an online presence including a resource portal of best practices that are vetted and
curated by WyECON and other UW faculty. Align will engage Bryce Tugwell, a digital communications and web design consultant based in Laramie WY, to work with UW to develop the online system. In addition, Align will contract with a mobile app development contractor to create a mobile app version of the resource portal. UW will draft “best practice” criteria and design a review/vetting process (including a process for how new potential best practices should be submitted to UW for review), and share these items with the EC-SAC for review prior to finalizing. In establishing the compendium of best practices that will be available through the resource portal, UW will coordinate with national, state, and local agencies to reduce duplication of efforts, leverage financial and technological resources, and work with WDE to identify and document best practices for supporting children’s transition from ECE to elementary school.

In addition to his role developing the online resource portal, Bryce Tugwell will share the resource portal by writing, coordinating, and posting a series of UW blog posts and developing, and producing a regular podcast that highlights best practices and ECE providers that are implementing them. A number of organizations and initiatives will also inform providers about the new resource portal, including WyECON, the Collaborative’s regional facilitators, WY Quality Counts, and WDE’s Part B/619 Kindergarten transition initiative. WyECON and the Collaborative will also conduct local trainings for ECE providers on best practices. By leveraging the existing capacities of these initiatives, the proposed work will go beyond sharing knowledge of practices in order to best support local providers to incorporate best practices into their programs. WyECON and the Collaborative already provide professional development and share best practices with local providers; the proposed resource portal will equip WyECON with a more formalized, organized set of best practices around which to structure professional development and related technical assistance. The Collaborative’s regional PL facilitators will
engage ECE providers in their home region using a mixed-delivery professional development approach that includes both low- or no-cost in-person and online training components across a range of days, times, and locations, to ensure accessibility to a wide variety of participants. Trainings will draw directly on the proposed resource portal to include information about best practices developed by, or being used in, ECE programs throughout the state. PL facilitators will work closely with WyECON to ensure that PL reflects the unique context of each region.

All relevant EC-SAC members will be encouraged to communicate about the launch of the online resource portal, and WyECON will provide flyers and message templates to facilitate partner communication. In addition, Align and UW will work with DFS to ensure child care licensors are aware of and familiar with the resource portal.

As a second strategy for this Activity, Wyoming will leverage the Cowboy State Early Childhood Conference (Cowboy Conference), an annual two-day statewide conference designed and hosted by UW and supported by Align. The 2020 Cowboy Conference, tentatively scheduled for October, will provide an opportunity to share and orient participants to the online resource portal. The conference will offer learning tracks specific to PDG B-5 priorities, including transitions in ECE and from ECE to elementary school, early intervention and special education, and maximizing parent choice through creating a shared understanding of less common services and modalities (e.g., parent educators and homeschooling). Participating ECE and B-5 service providers will leave the 2020 Cowboy Conference having learned new best practices and having increased their ability to find and learn about additional best practices through the online portal.

Finally, Align and UW will collaborate with WDE to incorporate best practices for ECE providers into the WDE’s planned summit convening ECE providers and school districts around the topic of supporting children’s and families’ transition into elementary school. WDE will
work with Align, UW, and other partners represented on the EC-SAC to schedule, coordinate, and facilitate this conference, and to ensure that it draws on ECE transition best practices. The total budget request for Activity Four – Sharing Best Practices Among State Early Childhood Care and Education Providers is $300,000. For additional budget information, see Section 13.

4.5. Activity Five: Improving Overall Quality of ECE Programs/Providers/Services

Wyoming proposes to improve ECE program quality by updating, revising, and disseminating its Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) and Early Learning Foundations (ELFs) – the state’s guidance documents for parents/caregivers and ECE providers supporting children B-5, and providing funding for local ECE providers to become accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC). Align anticipates that the completion and approval of the statewide B-5 needs assessment (Activity 1) and statewide B-5 strategic plan (Activity 2) will require the first 10 months of the project period (see Sections 4.1, 4.2, and 5 for details on the proposed timeline), leaving two months to complete the proposed work under Activity 5. As an initial step during this period, the EC-SAC and its member organizations will help disseminate the completed strategic plan, which will include a definition of ECE program quality.

In order to impact professional development for ECE educators as a key lever for enhancing child learning outcomes, it will be crucial for Wyoming to update the ELGs and ELFs to align with and reflect new research and the state’s definition of quality ECE – to be developed through the strategic planning process. The Quality Workgroup formed during the strategic planning process will review the ELGs and ELFs to determine the extent to which they accurately reflect both the definition of quality ECE and any activities for improving program quality (e.g., changes to child care licensing requirements, etc.). Based on the results of this
review, Align will engage relevant content experts to revise the ELGs and ELFs. The content experts will work in close coordination with the Quality Workgroup to develop final drafts of the revised ELG and ELF for adoption by the EC-SAC.

In addition to revising the ELGs and ELFs, Wyoming proposes to directly fund ECE providers to complete quality improvement activities. Specifically, these grants will provide funding for providers to pursue and secure accreditation from NAEYC for center-based providers, and NAFCC for family child care providers. These accreditations cost approximately $2,000 and require significant staff time making them cost-prohibitive for many providers. During the accreditation process, NAEYC and NAFCC staff help providers ensure their programs align with established quality parameters and requirements, driving quality improvement. Once accredited, providers have an incentive to maintain these quality standards in order to keep their accreditation status. As a result, children receive care in higher-quality programs and parents can easily identify quality providers based on their accreditation status.

This proposed grant program will function as an extension of an ongoing grant program, funded through an allocation of $200,000 in Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds, to improve the quality of infant-toddler care. The total budget request for Activity Five – Improving Overall Quality of Early Childhood Care and Education Programs/Providers/Services is $95,000. For additional budget information, see Section 13.

5. **Project Timeline and Milestones**

The table on the following page outlines the quantitative monthly projections of the accomplishments to be achieved, by activity, for the duration of the program period.
## Project Timeline: Tasks, Subtasks, and Milestones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Month</th>
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### Project Coordination and Management

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hire Project Coordinator and Project Manager at Align</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hold regular project coordination and management meetings, including (weekly) EC-SAC meetings, meetings with Align staff and contractors, and other meetings as needed.</td>
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<td>Contract with NA contractor, SP contractor, FLP, and Leading for Children</td>
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<td>Identify and contract with communications consultant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage content experts as needed</td>
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*Milestones: Documented weekly EC-SAC phone meetings and monthly in-person meetings, contractors and consultants engaged and contracted to complete the proposed work.*

### Activity 1: Needs Assessment

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<tr>
<td>Finalize guiding questions and needs assessment scope</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inventory and analyze existing needs assessments and existing data sets</td>
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<td>Collect additional data through research and stakeholder engagement (e.g., parent/caregiver surveys and focus groups, interviews with leaders and key individuals from state agencies, etc.)</td>
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<td>Analyze data and engage in preliminary planning to review, discuss, and refine emerging findings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop needs assessment report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submit needs assessment for federal review and approval.</td>
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*Milestones: Finalized guiding questions, completion of data collection activities, finalized needs assessment report*

### Activity 2: Statewide Strategic Plan

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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
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<tr>
<td>Form focus area workgroups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitate biweekly workgroup meetings</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish strategic planning workgroups for six focus areas, and convene regularly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hold Strategic Planning Summit #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct stakeholder strategic planning survey to gather input from a broad range of stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete initial draft of strategic plan</td>
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### Project Timeline: Tasks, Subtasks, and Milestones

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<tr>
<th>Activity 3: Maximizing Parental Choice and Knowledge</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hold Parent Communication Summit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create informational materials and distribute through existing channels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Redesign Wyoming Quality Counts website and mobile app</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct targeted communications efforts for vulnerable populations (i.e., families that speak a language other than English at home, military families, foster care families, incarcerated parents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect parents to information and materials available through WY Quality Counts through existing communications, organizations, and initiatives such as 2-1-1, Parents as Teachers, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in WDE-coordinated convenings with K-12 educators to share information related to transitioning from ECE to elementary school that they can distribute to parents and caregivers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Milestones:** Strategic Planning Summit #1 and #2, stakeholder survey, finalized statewide strategic plan

### Activity 4: Sharing Best Practices

| Design and develop online resource portal for best practices | X X X |
| Develop and implement a process for vetting best practices; populate the online resource portal | X X X X |
| Communicate about the resource portal and best practices through ongoing efforts: WyECON, the Collaborative, WY Quality Counts | X X X X |
| Plan for the 2020 Cowboy State Early Learning Conference to include tracks on transitioning to elementary school, early intervention and special education, and maximizing parent choice | X X X |
| Hold 2020 Cowboy State Early Learning Conference | X |
| Coordinate with WDE to plan the Transition Summit focusing on supporting children transition to elementary school | X X |
### Project Timeline: Tasks, Subtasks, and Milestones

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<tr>
<th>Grant Month</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hold the Transition Summit, in collaboration with WDE</td>
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*Milestone: Online resource portal publicly launched; 2020 Cowboy Conference held; Transition Summit held*

### Activity 5: Improving Overall Quality of ECE

- Distribute statewide Strategic Plan through existing channels including WY Quality Counts
  - Grant Month: X
- Revise ELGs and ELF's and distribute revised versions
  - Grant Month: X X
- Provide grants to local providers to improve program quality through accreditation
  - Grant Month: X X

*Milestone: Strategic Plan distributed statewide, updated ELGs and ELF's, grants awarded for ECE program accreditation*

### Monitoring and Evaluation (Program Performance Evaluation (PPE))

- Gather data from program partners and contractors
  - Grant Month: X X X X X X X X X X X X
- Hold quarterly meetings to review and interpret data
  - Grant Month: X X X X
- Complete required federal reporting
  - Grant Month: X X X X X X X X X X

*Milestone: Quarterly progress review meetings held; federal reports completed; PPE completed as planned (see Section 8)*

Factors that may accelerate work include WY’s ability to quickly engage contractors and consultants, and the use of videoconferencing technology to allow the project teams to meet more frequently without significant travel burdens. The proposed project builds extensively on existing organizations and initiatives, which will allow WY to quickly accomplish key tasks such as communicating parent information and provider best practices statewide via existing outreach and messaging infrastructure. Factors that may decelerate the work include delays engaging contractors and consultants, delays due to scheduling issues for planned meetings, and lack of agreement among those involved in the strategic planning process that requires additional time to resolve.
6. **Organizational Capacity**

The Western States Learning Corporation dba Align (Align) will serve as the lead entity for the PDG B-5 as per the designation letter from Governor Gordon included in the Appendices. Align’s organizational chart is included in the Appendices.

6.1. **Roles and Responsibilities of the Lead Entity’s Staff and its Partners**

Align works to “create strong communities by partnering with nonprofits, government, and businesses for more impactful, successful organizations and programs.” Over the past 15 years, Align has worked in Wyoming to develop, manage, and coordinate many of the early childhood programs described above in the landscape of Wyoming’s B-5 mixed delivery system. Through these efforts, Align has worked closely with relevant state agencies and other state and local organizations that administer, manage, and implement B-5 programs and services. Align’s 17-person staff includes a leadership team with extensive experience in strategic program and grant management, organizational planning, facilitation, training, and community-building. As a nonprofit organization, Align is able to quickly add team members based on project needs.

Align **Vice President Brittany Ashby** will oversee Align’s work on the proposed project, including the hiring of two new positions: A Project Manager and Project Coordinator. Brittany will review key documents (e.g., grant reports), provide strategic guidance to project staff, and meet regularly with the Project Manager to assess performance and provide constructive feedback and suggestions to improve project implementation. The **Project Manager** will have overall responsibility for moving project activities forward in collaboration with project partners, contractors, and other staff at Align including the Project Coordinator. In addition, the Project Manager will lead the implementation of grant activities such as coordinating work on the 2020 Cowboy Conference (Activity 4) and managing the proposed
accreditation grants to providers (Activity 5). The **Project Coordinator** will report directly to the Program Manager and will take primary responsibility for coordinating subcontractors, collecting and managing project data, and developing grant reports. Together, the Project Manager and Project Coordinator will complete the program performance evaluation (see Section 8). Align has already begun to identify potential employees to staff the two new positions in order to begin project activities as soon as possible.

Additional support will be provided by Align’s **Administrative Coordinator, Tina Baker** and **IT Manager, Adam Larsen**. Tina will assist with contracting and will support project events by coordinating venue booking and catering reservation, helping with participant registration, and printing and compiling materials. Adam will manage all IT and web systems for the project, including email lists, shared document systems, etc. Align will provide financial reporting and invoice processing capacity through a contracted CPA, William (Bill) Benskin.

Key project partners include Wyoming Kids First, UW, WDE, DWS - in particular, its Wyoming Quality Counts initiative, and the EC-SAC. **Wyoming Kids First** will work with Align, the Governor’s Office, and project contractors to ensure that the project’s implementation is aligned with Wyoming’s ECE advocacy and policy change efforts, as well as current research and recommendations. As detailed above, **UW**, through WyECON and the Collaborative, will contribute significantly to the sharing of best practices in Activity 4; **WDE** will play a key role in Activities 3 and 4; and **DWS** will redesign and expand the information on its WY Quality Counts website and mobile application, and will connect parents/caregivers and providers with this information (Activity 3). The **EC-SAC** will serve as a central planning body: it will help to guide the work to complete the needs assessment and strategic plan.

Align will engage a number of contractors for the proposed project. Some contractors
have been identified already – based on a competitive process or a determination of unique content expertise. Other contractors will be selected during the grant period through a competitive process, to the extent practicable. The NA consultant will lead the needs assessment process, including all activities indicated under Activity 1 in Section 4.1. The SP consultant will lead the strategic planning process as described in Section 4.1. In addition, FLP will be engaged as a content expert and facilitator in relation to ECE and B-5 state-level governance, and Leading for Children will be engaged as a content expert and facilitator in relation to ECE quality. Additional consultants will be engaged during the grant period to: develop and support the online resource portal; provide communications support such as messaging and informational materials development; and conduct a full program audit.

6.2. Experience of Lead Entity and Partner Staff

Align’s staff and their partners have extensive experience in and knowledge of early childhood systems within Wyoming as well as in administering grants, complying with requirements, and relevant program activities. Brittany Ashby, Vice President, has over 15 years of experience working with organizations to improve outcomes at the employee, organization, and community levels. She brings strong skills in facilitation, program management, human resources, community development, and training. She is especially effective at bringing people together, building consensus, and moving projects and programs forward. Brittany has experience with federal grants and contracts, including associated data collection and financial reporting functions. Brittany holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder and an MS from the University of Wyoming in adult education and learning technologies. The Project Manager will be required to have 5 years of experience in a nonprofit or public management position, experience with early childhood
services, multi-partner collaboratives and projects, and federal grants management. In addition, they will be required to have at least a Bachelor’s degree in a related field. The **Project Coordinator** will be required to have 2 years of experience in a nonprofit or public setting and experience with early childhood services. An Associate’s degree is preferred for this position. **Tina Baker, Administrative Coordinator,** provides administrative support at Align’s office. Her duties include input of workgroup meeting notes, minutes, survey compilation, and follow-up with stakeholders, focus group participants, and survey participants. Tina has been with Align since 2009 and coordinates travel of team members, secures supplies, and assists with accounting functions to ensure efficient operations. **Adam Larsen, IT Manager,** joined Align in October 2019. He previously served as the Global Support Center Engineer for Green House Data where he was responsible for onsite and cloud product support, and the Technology Administrator for the United States Bankruptcy Court where he managed all aspects of the Court’s IT operations. The experience of project partners, including state agencies, is described in Section 3.1. The experience and capacity of proposed contractors are described in Section 13.

### 6.3. Experience and Expertise in FOA Program Areas

Align and its project partners bring significant experience and expertise in ECE and B-5 services in Wyoming (including linguistically and culturally competent service delivery), as well as the administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of projects similar in scope and size to the proposed project. Align has extensive experience implementing programs and services funded through federal grants and contracts as a subcontractor of the State of Wyoming. While the state is ultimately responsible for the reporting associated with these grants, Align completes much of the tracking, reporting, and outcome management for these programs and is familiar with federal grant reporting forms and templates.
Align has collaborated with partner organizations including DFS, DWS, UW, WDE, WDH, and Wyoming Kids First. Through July of 2019, Align was contracted by DWS to run the training portion of the WY Quality Counts. In 2019, Align’s role in this program evolved to help support the launch and work of the Collaborative. Align partnered with UW, Wyoming Kids First, and three state agencies to develop the Collaborative. Align administers all of the Collaborative’s operations and works closely with the facilitators and partners to ensure quality outcomes and increased quality and capacity in the ECE system.

6.4. **Fiscal, Administrative, and Performance Management Capacity**

Align manages dozens of contracts with state entities, private organizations, and other government entities on an ongoing basis. These contracts range from small, short-term contracts, to long-term, multi-million-dollar programs. Align has developed extensive internal project management and financial tracking systems that allow for tracking time and expenses specific to individual contracts, grants, or funding sources. This includes software systems, dedicated financial team members, standardized processes, and regular process auditing. Each Project Coordinator tracks all associated activities along with receipts and expenses. Align holds weekly management team meetings to review outcomes for current projects.

7. **Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities**

Align has the experience and the necessary systems currently in place to ensure proper oversight of federal funds and activities in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart D. Align has established policies and procedures for financial management and recordkeeping, including a system of separation of duties as a primary internal financial control. For the oversight and management of the PDG B-5 activities and funds, Align will utilize its established protocols and systems to ensure proper management and tracking of grant funds as well as matching resources,
including procurement. Align uses the QuickBooks accounting software to track financial transactions and keep accurate records, maintains a secure electronic record-keeping system, and has a secure physical file storage location in its Cheyenne office. Given the organization’s role as a vendor to the state for projects funded through federal grants and contracts, Align is not required to conduct separate audits. However, Align participates in the state’s audits for these projects to help ensure transparency and mitigate risks. Following each audit, findings are shared with the Align management team, which reviews the findings, develops a corrective action plan if needed, and shares the findings and plan (as appropriate) with the Align Board of Directors.

Align uses the Teamwork PM platform to manage its work, including financial activities, risk mitigation activities, and record-keeping activities, as described above. Through Teamwork PM, project staff can quickly and easily monitor the status of these various tasks to ensure timely completion. Staff who will be involved in the oversight of federal awards and activities include the key staff specified in Section 6.1. In addition, the Align Board of Directors will review quarterly financial and project reports prepared by Align’s contracted CPA.

8. Program Performance Evaluation Plan

The proposed program performance evaluation (PPE) creates a structure to ensure the continuous quality improvement of funded activities and to monitor ongoing activities and progress toward project goals and objectives. The PPE, described below, will provide both formative and summative assessments of overarching project goals and objectives by leveraging existing resources, organizational systems and processes, and available data, and by developing new processes and collecting new data where necessary to ensure accurate and timely reporting of performance outcomes. The PPE and the related logic model (see Section 9) will be refined and finalized at the conclusion of the strategic planning process to ensure alignment with the
needs assessment and strategic plan. As the lead agency, Align will coordinate partners and contractors and oversee all processes to support the overall data quality of performance outcomes. Align has developed organizational systems and processes to collect and manage data to ensure accurate and timely reporting of performance outcomes (see Section 6.2).

The PPE builds on and leverages existing inputs to deliver activities designed to achieve the project’s overarching goal to **develop statewide capacity to provide Wyoming’s leaders, programs, and parents with the knowledge and tools to provide high-quality ECE experiences for all of Wyoming’s youngest learners that prepare them for kindergarten, especially those from vulnerable and underserved populations.** Inputs key to the development and implementation of program activities include grant funding, Align expertise and staff capacity, and partner and contractor expertise. Align will dedicate 1.75 FTE through the Project Manager and Project Coordinator positions (see Section 6.1 for description of roles and responsibilities). Contractors, the EC-SAC, and other B-5 program partners described earlier in the narrative will bring important perspectives and insights to the planning and implementation process. The project will also build on a range of ongoing initiatives and efforts such as WyECON, the Collaborative, Wyoming Quality Counts, and the Cowboy Conference.

The proposed PDG B-5 activities have been developed in collaboration with key stakeholders and partners to achieve project objectives (see Logic Model) and include: 1) conducting a statewide needs assessment; 2) developing a data-driven strategic plan including a statewide definition of high-quality ECE programs and services; 3) maximizing parental choice and knowledge through targeted communications and statewide summit; 4) sharing best practices via online and in-person platforms; and 5) improving program quality by supporting providers with revised early learning guidelines and frameworks and with grant funding. Activities are
The progress and success of activity implementation will be measured through a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures. The successful and timely realization of project outputs (e.g. adopted needs assessment and strategic plan, revised and expanded WY Quality Counts website) will demonstrate progress. Progress will also be assessed by examining user data such as website hits, content downloads, and/or email distribution data. Participants at meetings and trainings will provide information regarding the relevance and quality of project activities, via surveys. To inform continuous learning and improvement efforts and provide opportunities for ongoing program refinement, these process indicator data will be reviewed monthly by the Align project staff and quarterly through a standing agenda item at the EC-SAC’s regularly scheduled quarterly meetings. Process and costs will be evaluated for each activity and output. Similarly, short-term outcomes will be measured using a range of quantitative and qualitative indicators, some of which are existing and others that will need to be developed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measuring Short-Term Outcomes</th>
<th>Proposed Measures</th>
<th>Existing Data?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity 1: Conducting Needs Assessment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Increased access to data regarding B-5 needs and services at the state, regional, and local levels | ● Pre-post planning survey of project partners  
   ● Targeted interviews with partners | No  
   No |
| Increased understanding of B-5 community strengths and challenges among statewide, regional, and local leaders | | |
| **Activity 2: Developing Strategic Plan** | | |
| Increased clarity of and agreement on future directions to strengthen and streamline the B-5 services and program for vulnerable and underserved populations | ● Pre-post planning survey of project partners  
   ● Targeted interviews with partners | No  
   No |
| Increased collaboration among and capacity of statewide, regional, and local systems to work together to implement strategic priority areas, objectives, and activities | | |
## Measuring Short-Term Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short-Term Outcome</th>
<th>Proposed Measures</th>
<th>Existing Data?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity 3: Maximizing Parental Choice and Knowledge</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Increased access to information and resources, including those focused on transitions within B-5 and into elementary school, for parents and caregivers, especially for vulnerable and underserved populations | ● WY Quality Counts website hits, content downloads - comparison of baseline data (collected pre- and post-planning)  
● Focus groups with parents                                                      | Yes            |
| **Activity 4: Sharing Best Practices**                                            |                                                                                   | No             |
| Increased number of providers accessing and receiving training on high-quality ECE best practices | ● Online resource portal website hits and content downloads, training registration and participation  
● Focus groups with providers                                                      | No             |
| **Activity 5: Improving Program Quality**                                        |                                                                                   |                |
| Shared understanding of statewide definition of quality among providers           | ● Pre-post planning survey of partners  
● Focus groups with providers                                                      | No             |
| Increased access for providers to quality improvement supports.                   | ● WY Quality Counts ELGs and ELFs web hits and downloads  
● Number of applications from providers for accreditation grants                  | Yes            |

The data described in the table above will be integral to the development of a comprehensive plan to measure the impact of the proposed PDG B-5 project. As previously noted, the PPE will be reviewed and revised by Align and by the EC-SAC during the grant period to ensure alignment with the needs assessment and strategic plan.

### 8.1. Data Approach and Methodology

Data will be collected throughout the project by Align staff to monitor and assess progress. The Project Manager and Project Coordinator will work with partners to establish regular reporting intervals and expectations for regular reporting of relevant data throughout the grant period. Align’s Vice President will oversee data collection efforts. Existing data related to website hits, content downloads, email distribution lists, training registration and participation will be collected at the beginning of the project (baseline) and quarterly throughout the project. Pre/post-surveys (including both quantitative and qualitative assessments) will also be developed.
and implemented among participants (e.g. leaders, parents, providers) at the beginning and end of the funding cycle. Interviews and focus groups will be conducted after activities have been implemented. Surveys, interview, and focus group protocols will be developed in collaboration with the project partners. Obstacles to implementing the PPE may include engaging parents/caregivers and ECE providers in focus groups as these groups will already be engaged through multiple other activities as part of the needs assessment and strategic planning process. To address this, Align will request that project partners help identify and engage parents/caregivers and ECE providers in these activities.

9. Logic Model

The logic model below presents the overall project goals and objectives, and a summary of the proposed approach to achieve them. The logic model provides a conceptual framework for the project, including strong links to the activities described in Section 4, and demonstrates a clear association between goals, objectives, activities, inputs, outputs, intended short-term and long-term outcomes, and the plans and procedures for achieving them.

Logic Model: Project Goal, Long-Term Outcomes, and Inputs.

**Project Goal:** Develop statewide capacity to provide Wyoming’s leaders, programs, and parents with the knowledge and tools to provide high-quality ECE experiences for all of Wyoming’s youngest learners and prepare them for kindergarten, especially those from vulnerable and underserved populations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Long-Term Outcomes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Increased number of children receiving high-quality ECE care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● More parents and families experience successful transitions among B-5 programs and between B-5 and K-12 programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Increased number of children ready for kindergarten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inputs:** Align staff time; Governor’s Early Childhood State Advisory Council (EC-SAC); B-5 program partners including state agencies and statewide organizations overseeing B-5 programs, and regional/local partners including school districts, county government, and local providers; Contractors, including the NA contractor, SP contractor, communications consultant, FLP, Leading for Children, and William Benskin (CPA); Resources including funding from a federal PDG B-5 grant award and in-kind matching resources
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Short-Term Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 1: Develop a data-driven comprehensive plan for ECE programs and services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity 1: Needs Assessment:</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity and finalize guiding questions and assessment content</td>
<td>Inventory of current and recurring needs assessments</td>
<td>Increased access to data regarding B-5 needs and services at the state, regional, and local levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventory and analyze existing needs assessments and related data</td>
<td>Inventory and crosswalk of program and population data</td>
<td>Increased understanding of B-5 community strengths and challenges among statewide, regional, and local leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect additional data through research and stakeholder engagement</td>
<td>Summary of research and stakeholder input</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze data and engage in preliminary planning</td>
<td>EC-SAC approved needs assessment report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop needs assessment report</td>
<td>Publication of needs assessment findings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity 2: Strategic Plan</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form workgroups for each of the five focus/activity areas and hold bi-weekly meetings</td>
<td>Formation and meetings of strategic planning workgroups</td>
<td>Increased clarity of and agreement on future directions to strengthen and streamline the B-5 services and program for vulnerable and underserved populations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold monthly EC-SAC Strategic Planning meetings</td>
<td>Agendas and notes from strategic planning statewide summits, workgroup meetings, and EC-SAC meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold two Strategic Planning Summits including public stakeholder and workgroup meetings</td>
<td>EC-SAC adopted strategic plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a stakeholder strategic planning survey</td>
<td>Shared definition of high-quality ECE programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete an initial draft of the strategic plan, based on strategies and activities identified by workgroups</td>
<td>Publication of strategic plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather and address feedback from partners and key stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize present plan for adoption to the EC-SAC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Objective 2: Improve parental knowledge about ECE programs and services**

**Objective 3: Improve parental engagement in their child’s education to ensure a successful transition into kindergarten**
## Logic Model: Activities, Outputs, and Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Short-Term Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Activity 3: Parental Knowledge/Choice**  
- Coordinate work among Align, Wyoming Quality Counts, the WDE, and a communications consultant to distribute informational materials  
- Redesign and expand WY Quality Counts website as a tool to directly disseminate information to parents/caregivers and local programs/providers  
- Hold statewide summit to convene local, regional, and statewide organizations that produce and/or distribute information to parents and caregivers |  
- Creation and distribution of informational materials through comprehensive and targeted communication campaigns  
- Redesigned WY Quality Counts website with additional information for parents and ECE providers  
- Statewide summit on parent and caregiver knowledge and choice |  
- Increased access to information and resources, including those focused on transitions within B-5 and into elementary school, for parents and caregivers, especially for vulnerable and underserved populations |

**Objective 4: Increase the quality of ECE programs and services throughout Wyoming**

| Activity 4: Sharing Best Practices:  
- Establish and promote an online resource portal of best practices vetted by the University of Wyoming  
- Leverage the Cowboy State Early Childhood Conference to share best practices and provide targeted training  
- Hold statewide summit and regional trainings on best practices for ECE providers and school districts to support families through transitions from B-5 to K-12 |  
- Shared definition and framework for determining best practices  
- Establishment of online resource portal of best practices  
- Cowboy State Early Childhood Conference to share best practices and provide targeted training  
- Statewide summit and regional trainings on best practices for ECE providers and school districts to support families through transition from B-5 to K-12 |  
- Increased number of providers accessing and receiving training on high-quality ECE best practices |

| Activity 5: Improving Program Quality:  
- Disseminate the strategic plan through EC-SAC and its member organizations  
- Convene EC-SAC Quality Workgroup to revise ELGs and ELFs to ensure strategic plan alignment  
- Provide funding for providers to pursue and secure accreditation from NAEYC and NAFCC |  
- Dissemination of strategic plan including shared definition of high-quality ECE programs  
- Revised ELGs and ELFs aligned with the newly developed strategic plan  
- Grants to providers to pursue and secure accreditation from NAEYC and NAFCC |  
- Shared understanding of statewide definition of quality among providers  
- Increased access for providers to quality improvement supports |
10. **Project Sustainability Plan**

Many elements of the proposed project will be sustained by leveraging and building on existing efforts funded through state and private funding sources that are anticipated to continue beyond the grant period (see Sections 3 and 4). Some activities such as the needs assessment and strategic plan will be completed within the grant period and will not need additional resources to sustain. The table below provides a plan for sustaining key elements of the proposed project, organized by the five required activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Sustainability Plan</th>
<th>Sustainability Plan and Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordination and Communication</td>
<td>● The EC-SAC will continue to meet at least quarterly, as specified in the Executive Order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Needs Assessment</td>
<td>● The Needs Assessment will be completed during the grant period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Strategic Plan</td>
<td>● The Strategic Plan will be completed during the grant period. The Strategic Plan will indicate resource requirements and funding sources for the plan’s activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Maximizing Parental Knowledge and Choice</td>
<td>● WY Quality Counts will continue to be operated by DWS ● Materials developed through the proposed project will continue to be available through WY Quality Counts ● Other activities, such as the Parent Communications Summit, will be one-time events that will not require additional funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sharing Best Practices</td>
<td>● The online resource portal will continue as a component of the WyECON initiative of UW, allowing best practices to continue to be available beyond the grant period. ● Align will lead the coordination and implementation of the Cowboy Conference in future years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Improving Program Quality</td>
<td>● Revisions to the ELFs and ELGs will be completed during the grant period and made available through WY Quality Counts. ● Grants to providers for NAEYC and NAFFC accreditation will be completed during the grant period. Additional grants would require new funding to be identified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Performance Evaluation (PPE)</td>
<td>● The PPE will be completed during the grant period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. **Dissemination Plan**

The goal of Wyoming’s PDG B-5 Dissemination Plan is to share reports and outputs with target audiences. Dissemination objectives and strategies are indicated in the table below.
Dissemination Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Disseminate the Needs Assessment | ● Post the Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan online on the DFS, STARS, and WY Kids First websites  
                              ● Distribute the Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan through existing email lists managed by partners  
                              ● Distribute the Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan to local entities including ECE providers, school districts, and CDCs  
                              ● Distribute the Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan to the Governor’s Office, Legislature, and state agency heads |
| 2. Disseminate the Strategic Plan |  |
| 3. Disseminate information/materials | ● Share information and materials with parents/caregivers through WY Quality Counts website and mobile application |
| 4. Disseminate information on best practices to ECE providers | ● Share information through the WyECON online resource portal  
                              ● Share information through WyECON blog posts and podcasts  
                              ● Inform local organizations and individuals of the online resource portal through summits, the Collaborative’s regional facilitators, and DFS child care licensors |

The PPE described in Section 8 includes measures related to dissemination strategies, such as the number of visits to relevant websites and number of downloads of project outputs that will be made available electronically online. These data will be reviewed quarterly to monitor progress and inform any necessary adjustments to increase dissemination effectiveness.

12. Third-Party Agreements

Letters of commitment for matching resources are included from the DWS, the Ellbogen Foundation, and UW. In addition, a letter of from the EC-SAC is included to demonstrate its commitment to function as a key planning and coordinating entity for the proposed project. The letter from Governor Gordon designating Align as the lead agency for Wyoming is included as part of the Appendices file.
October 11, 2019

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

Letter of Commitment: Wyoming Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5)

Dear Mr. Gonzales:

On behalf of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS), I am pleased to submit this letter of support and commitment for Wyoming’s Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) Initial Grant (HHS-2019-ACF-OCC-TP-1599). We believe that the work outlined in the Western States Learning Corporation’s application is critical to achieving increased coordination, coordination, and alignment of existing programs and initiatives in order to ultimately realize higher levels of kindergarten readiness and better-supported transitions into elementary school. DWS houses the Head Start Collaboration Office and the Quality Child Care program, also known as WY Quality Counts which is a state-funded program providing scholarships and grants to those in the early childhood industry.

DWS commits to providing $406,976 as an in-kind donation to Western States Learning Corporation as part of the non-federal resources documented in Wyoming’s grant application to support integrated best practices and further parental knowledge through the WY Quality Counts program.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly if there are any questions or concerns regarding this letter of commitment at Sheila.tenorio@wyo.gov or at 307-777-2892.

Sincerely,

Sheila R. Tenorio
Business Training and Support Supervisor
October 25, 2019

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

Letter of Commitment: Wyoming Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5)

Dear Mr. Gonzales:

On behalf of the John P. Ellbogen Foundation, I am pleased to submit this letter of support and commitment for Wyoming’s Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) Initial Grant (HHS-2019-ACF-OCC-TP-1599). We believe that the work outlined in the application is necessary for Wyoming to improve outcomes for its youngest children and their families.

The Ellbogen Foundation has been funding impactful work since 2004 with a vision to empower the people of Wyoming to lead healthy lives in thriving communities. Early childhood is a priority focus for the Foundation; during the last decade, we have provided nearly $1.5 million to support early childhood efforts in Wyoming.

This letter serves as a firm commitment for the Ellbogen Foundation to provide the following resources to Align part of the non-federal resources documented in Wyoming’s grant application:

- $125,000 in cash as part of the non-federal resources documented in the grant application in support of the Wyoming Early Childhood Professional Learning Collaborative.

The Foundation looks forward to collaborating with Align, the Governor’s Early Childhood State Advisory Council, and other partners to complete the important work outlined in Wyoming’s PDG B-5 grant proposal.

Sincerely,

Mary Garland
President
Letter of Commitment: Wyoming Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5)

Dear Mr. Gonzales:

On behalf of the Wyoming Early Childhood Outreach Network I am pleased to submit this letter of support and commitment for Wyoming’s Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) Initial Grant (HHS-2019-ACF-OCC-TP-1599). We believe that the work outlined in the Wyoming application is critical to achieving increased coordination, coordination, and alignment of existing programs and initiatives in order to ultimately realize higher levels of kindergarten readiness and better-supported transitions into elementary school.

The Wyoming Early Childhood Outreach Network is an initiative of the University Of Wyoming College Of Education’s Trustees Education Initiative. The Early Childhood Outreach Network has the goal of advancing innovative approaches to elevate the early childhood education workforce in the state.

The Wyoming Early Childhood Outreach Network commits to providing $150,000 to Align in-kind resources as part of the non-federal resources documented in Wyoming’s grant application. This letter serves as a firm commitment of these resources.

The Wyoming Early Childhood Outreach Network looks forward to collaborating with Align, the Governor’s Early Childhood State Advisory Council, and other project partners to complete the important work outlined in Wyoming’s PDG B-5 grant proposal.

Sincerely,

Nikki Baldwin, Director
Wyoming Early Childhood Outreach Network
October 31, 2019

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

Letter of Commitment: Wyoming Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5)

Dear Mr. Gonzales:

On behalf of the Wyoming Early Childhood State Advisory Council (EC-SAC), I am pleased to submit this letter of support and commitment for Wyoming’s Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) Initial Grant (HHS-2019-ACF-OCC-TP-1599).

The EC-SAC commits to participating in the meetings and activities described in the narrative, including weekly remote and monthly in-person meetings during the needs assessment development period, and workgroup meetings and in-person summits during the strategic planning period. In addition, the EC-SAC will work closely with Align to monitor project implementation and progress throughout the one-year grant period.

The EC-SAC looks forward to collaborating with Align and project partners to complete the important work outlined in Wyoming’s PDG B-5 grant proposal.

Sincerely,

Becca Steinhoff
Chairperson
Wyoming Early Childhood State Advisory Council
13. **Budget and Budget Justification**

Align requests a total of $2,098,776 in federal funds. $681,976 in non-federal matching resources, equal to 32.5% of the request, have been committed by DWS, UW, and the Ellbogen Foundation (see Section 13.10).

### Federal Request Summary by Category and Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object Class Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Personnel</td>
<td>$167,350</td>
<td>Project Management and Coordination,</td>
<td>$455,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and Project Performance Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Fringe Benefits</td>
<td>$41,838</td>
<td>1. Needs Assessment</td>
<td>$610,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Travel</td>
<td>$15,390</td>
<td>2. Strategic Plan</td>
<td>$517,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Equipment</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>3. Maximizing Parental Choice and Knowledge</td>
<td>$120,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Supplies</td>
<td>$4,250</td>
<td>4. Sharing Best Practices Among ECE Providers</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Contractual</td>
<td>$1,486,000</td>
<td>5. Improving Overall Quality of ECE Programs/Providers/Services</td>
<td>$95,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Construction</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$2,098,776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Other</td>
<td>$193,150</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$2,098,776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Total Direct Charges</td>
<td>$1,907,978</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$2,098,776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Indirect Charges</td>
<td>$190,798</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$2,098,776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. TOTALS</td>
<td>$2,098,776</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$2,098,776</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 13.2. Personnel

Total federal request for Personnel costs: $167,350
13.3. Fringe Benefits
Align requests a total of $41,838 in Fringe Benefits based on a benefits rate of 25% and Personnel cost of $167,350. Fringe Benefits include federal taxes, unemployment, health insurance, vision/dental insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, workers compensation insurance, and 401k. Fringe Benefits vary by position, with an average rate of 25%.

13.4. Travel
Total federal request for Travel costs: $15,390 based on the trips described below.

Align Staff Travel for in-state events is estimated based on 8 trips with 3 people on each trip. $300 per person per trip (see Travel section above) x 8 trips x 3 people per trip = $9,840.

3-Day PDG B-5 Grantee Meeting in Washington, DC: $4,875 Align will send three people to the required 3-day PDG B-5 Grantee Meeting in Washington, DC. Per-person travel expenses include $325 per hotel room per night, for three nights, $600 airfare, $50 per diem, and $125 ground transportation. $1,850 per person x 3 people = $5,550.

13.5. Equipment
None.

13.6. Supplies
Total federal request for Supplies costs: $4,250. Supplies will include computers and monitors ($2,000 each) and phones ($125 each) for the two proposed new staff positions.

13.7. Contractual
Total federal request for Contractual costs: $1,486,000. Information about individual contracts are included in the table and descriptions below. Costs for each contract are based on quotes and proposals from contractors and historical cost information for similar contractual engagements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified Contractors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contractor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William (Bill) Benskin, CPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foresight Law + Policy (FLP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryce Tugwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Wyoming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

William (Bill) Benskin, CPA, will conduct financial reporting and accounting for the project. Bill has worked closely with Align since 2004 to provide CPA services for Align projects and programs.
**Foresight Law + Policy (FLP)** will provide support for governance planning as part of the strategic planning process. FLP Partner Elliot Regenstein will bring content expertise and experience working with other states to plan and implement changes to ECE governance at the state level. Elliot will provide direct support to the Governance workgroup as part of the strategic planning process (see Section 4.2). Elliot has extensive experience in state-level policy and advocacy, with a particular focus on early learning. He has consulted with more than two dozen states on a wide range of education policy topics. In his home state of Illinois, Elliot was a chief architect of Illinois’ Preschool for All program, co-chaired the Early Learning Council, and was appointed Chair of the Illinois Longitudinal Data System Governing Board.

**Leading for Children** will provide support for ECE quality planning as part of the strategic planning process. This will include facilitating the Quality strategic planning workgroup and designing and implementing a process to create a shared definition of quality ECE for Wyoming (see Section 4.2). Leading for Children is a nonprofit organization that works with communities throughout the country to provide high-quality early learning for young children. Leading for Children has worked with a number of states to facilitate the creation of a definition of quality ECE and to provide seminars and workshops on exemplary early learning practices, leading to improved child outcomes.

**Bryce Tugwell** will design and develop the online resource portal (see Section 4.4), working closely with WyECON. In addition, Bryce will create blog posts and podcasts to share the resource portal and the best practices within. Bryce is a communications and media professional specializing in digital storytelling, unique creative content development, and outreach for scientific, educational, and environmental conservation organizations. Bryce has worked with UW, National Geographic, the Jane Goodall Institute, and many others on digital media projects. The cost is based on a proposal from Bryce.

Building on Bryce’s work, the **University of Wyoming** will further promote the online resource portal by coordinating and purchasing radio and social media ads, and leveraging UW’s existing communications channels to share the portal with ECE providers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contractors To Be Selected</th>
<th>Role / Scope</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NA Contractor</td>
<td>Lead and implement the Statewide B-5 Needs Assessment process</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP Contractor</td>
<td>Lead and implement the Statewide B-5 Strategic Planning process</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications Consultant</td>
<td>Assist with the Parent Communication Summit and development of new informational materials for parents and families</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile App Developer</td>
<td>Create a mobile app version of the online resource portal.</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditor</td>
<td>Conduct required federal audit</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The **Needs Assessment (NA) Contractor** will lead the needs assessment process and complete many of the needs assessment activities, as described in Section 4.1. This will include working closely with Align and the EC-SAC to provide project coordination and management for the needs assessment, as well as implementing key tasks within each phase of the needs assessment: 1) Clarify and finalize guiding questions and assessment content; 2) Inventory and analyze existing needs assessments and related data; 3) Collect additional data through research and stakeholder engagement; 4) Analyze data and engage in preliminary planning; and 5) Develop needs assessment report. Align has requested proposals for the needs assessment contractor role,
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has received two proposals to date, and anticipates receiving a third proposal in November. Following the receipt of three proposals from qualified providers, Align will work with core project partners to review the proposals and select a provider. Align anticipates that this selection will occur prior to the start of the project period, enabling the needs assessment contractor to begin work immediately following the announcement of an award.

The **Strategic Plan (SP) Contractor** will lead the strategic plan process and complete many of the strategic plan activities, as described in Section 4.2. The contractor will: work closely with Align and the EC-SAC to provide project coordination and management for the strategic plan; facilitate the creation and launch of strategic planning workgroups; provide facilitation support for workgroups; design, facilitate, and document the strategic planning summits; develop, administer, and analyze the results of a stakeholder survey; and develop iterative drafts of the strategic plan and incorporate partner and stakeholder feedback to finalize the plan. In addition, the contractor will work with Align and project partners to ensure the strategic plan is responsive to the results of the needs assessment, and the contractor will help guide the work of the EC-SAC and strategic planning workgroups to ensure their work leads to a cohesive plan.

The **Communications Consultant** will assist with multiple activities related to maximizing parental knowledge and choice (see Section 4.3): designing, facilitating, and documenting the Parent Information Summit to identify available and needed resources; and developing informational resources for parents/guardians and families to address identified needs.

The **Mobile App Developer** will work with UW, Bryce Tugwell, and other relevant project partners to create a cross-platform mobile app version of the online resource portal.

The **Auditor** will conduct the required federal audit based on Align receiving more than $750,000 in federal funds.

### 13.8. Other

Total federal request for Other costs: $193,150.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cowboy Conference: Venue, Catering, Keynote Speakers</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Information Summit: Venue, Catering, and Travel Reimbursement</td>
<td>$9,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition Summit: Venue, Catering, and Travel Reimbursement</td>
<td>$11,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Planning Summits (2): Venue, Catering, and Travel Reimbursement</td>
<td>$17,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC-SAC Monthly Meetings: Travel Reimbursement</td>
<td>$10,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accreditation Grants to ECE Providers</td>
<td>$70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing Revised ELGs and ELFs</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The **2020 Cowboy Conference** (Activity 4) expenses include the venue ($2,000), catering ($25,000), and a keynote speaker ($23,000). These costs are based on 2019 actual expenses, modified to account for a 40% increase in attendance from ~250 to ~350. Total: $50,000.

Expenses for the **Parent Information Summit** (Activity 3), which will convene state and local agencies working with parents and families of young children to share materials and discuss additional communications needs, include a venue ($1,200), catering for 30 participants ($1,500), supplies such as flip charts and handouts ($300), and travel reimbursements for 15 participants at $410 per person ($6,150). Total: $9,150.
Expenses for the **Transition Summit** (Activity 4), which will be co-hosted with WDE to convene K-12 educators and administrators to share information for how they can best support families to transition into elementary school, include a venue ($1,200), catering for 70 participants ($3,500), supplies such as flip charts and handouts ($300), and travel reimbursement for 15 people at $410 per person ($6,150). Total: $11,150.

Expenses for the two **Strategic Planning Summits** (Activity 2) include venues ($1,500 each), catering for 70 people on the first day of each summit ($3,500 per summit) and 30 people on the second day of each summit ($1,500 per summit), supplies such as flip charts and handouts ($250 per summit), and travel reimbursements for 5 participants per summit at $410 per person ($2,050 per summit). Total: $17,600.

Align estimates that for each of the five monthly **EC-SAC meetings**, 5 people would require travel cost reimbursement. The meetings will be held throughout the state, with an estimated average trip cost of $410 based on $160 for lodging, $200 for ground transportation, and $50 per diem. $410 per trip per person x 5 people x 5 trips = $10,250.

As part of the proposed work to improve ECE program quality (Activity 5), Align will distribute **Accreditation Grants to ECE Providers** to pursue NAEYC or NAFCC accreditation. Align anticipates making 7 awards of $10,000 each. Total: $70,000.

After revising the **ELGs and ELF s**, Align will print copies of the revised materials for distribution statewide. The cost for this is estimated based on previous print runs of the ELGs and ELFs. Total: $25,000.

### 13.9. Indirect Charges

Align has never received an approved negotiated indirect cost rate from HHS or another cognizant federal agency. Align requests the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate.

The total federal request for indirect costs is $190,798, equal to ten percent of the total of $1,907,978 in direct costs. Align’s indirect costs include rent, property tax, insurance, phone and Internet service, office supplies, legal, payroll, human resources, and executive leadership.

### 13.10. Commitment of Non-Federal Resources

$681,976 in non-federal resources, equal to 32.5% of the federal request, will be through in-kind and cash commitments from the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, University of Wyoming, and Ellbogen Foundation. Letters of Commitment from each organization committing non-federal resources to the project are included above in Section 12.

The **Wyoming Department of Workforce Services** will provide $406,976 of in-kind non-federal resources by dedicating its Wyoming Quality Counts initiative to the proposed project for the entirety of the 12-month grant period. As described in earlier sections of the Project Description, WY Quality Counts is a core component of the proposed work under Activity 3 to maximize parental knowledge and choice. The proposed work includes the redesign of the WY Quality Counts website and materials, and leverages WY Quality Count’s existing infrastructure and communications activities to share information with families throughout the state.

The **University of Wyoming** will provide $150,000 of in-kind non-federal resources by dedicating its Wyoming Early Childhood Outreach Network (WyECON) initiative to the proposed project for the entirety of the 12-month grant period. This will include WyECON’s ongoing work to identify and share best practices among ECE providers, which will form the
foundation for the proposed work of developing, populating, and promoting an online resource portal of best practices for ECE providers.

The Ellbogen Foundation will provide $125,000 of cash match to support the work of the Collaborative, including its work to disseminate and provide training on best practices to ECE providers throughout the state (see Section 4.4).

14. **Bonus Points: Plan to Measure the Unduplicated Number of Children Being Served and Unduplicated Number of Children Awaiting Services**

Through the proposed work to complete a comprehensive B-5 statewide needs assessment (see Section 4.1), Wyoming will work to determine the unduplicated number of children being served and unduplicated number of children awaiting services for ECE and other B-5 services, to the extent possible. This effort will build on the proposed inventory of data sets, which will include data such as the capacity and locations of licensed ECE providers, and the subset of those providers which offer subsidized care through the state child care subsidy and/or EHS/HS. This will provide a starting point for further refining an unduplicated count of children served. To identify the number of children awaiting services, the needs assessment will include a comparison of ECE capacity (and specifically subsidized ECE capacity) to the number of eligible children (based on income and/or other eligibility factors). This analysis will include services beyond ECE to the extent possible; however, because Wyoming does not have a statewide early childhood data system or unique identifier for young children receiving services, these results may be limited. At minimum, the Data and Statewide Data Systems strategic planning workgroup (see Section 4.2) will identify goals, objectives, and strategies to achieve more accurate unduplicated counts of children served and children awaiting services.