

## Wyoming Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) Initial Grant Proposal Summary

### Introduction

In September 2019, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care released a Funding Opportunity Announcement for the Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) Initial Grant. Wyoming was included as one of ten states and territories eligible for this grant program. In September and October 2019, Wyoming Kids First and the Wyoming Governor's Office worked with [GPG](#) to form an Application Team to help develop Wyoming's application. The Application Team met for an introductory video conference on 9/10/19 and for two in-person meetings: on 9/16/19 in Cheyenne, and on 10/3/19 and 10/4/19 in Casper. In addition, broader stakeholder input was gathered through an online survey, which received 98 responses, and an in-person stakeholder meeting on 10/3/19 in Casper.

The Funding Opportunity Announcement requires applicants to address five activities: 1) Conducting a statewide B-5 needs assessment; 2) Developing a statewide B-5 strategic plan; 3) Maximizing parental knowledge and choice; 4) Sharing best practices among early childhood care and education (ECE) providers; and 5) Improving overall program quality.

The lead applicant for the grant, on behalf of the state, is [Align](#). The total federal request is \$2,098,776. Should WY receive an award, the anticipated project start date is 12/31/19.

### Proposal Abstract

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 early childhood care and education (ECE) experiences for all of WY's youngest learners that prepare them for kindergarten, especially those from vulnerable and underserved populations.

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. Workgroups will meet regularly to develop goals, objectives,

and strategies for the six focus areas. Stakeholder engagement related to the strategic plan will include two 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. WY will engage a communications consultant to produce informational materials for parents/caregivers that address identified needs, with a focus on the needs of 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 trainings 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 process for National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) accreditation.

**Desired Outcomes**

Through the proposed work, WY aims to achieve the following outcomes:

Activity	Short-Term Outcomes
Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased access to data regarding B-5 needs and services at the state, regional, and local levels</li> <li>● Increased understanding of B-5 community strengths and challenges among state, regional, and local leaders</li> </ul>
Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased clarity of and agreement on future directions to strengthen and streamline the B-5 services and programs for vulnerable and underserved populations</li> <li>● Increased collaboration among and capacity of statewide, regional, and local systems to work together to implement strategic priority areas, objectives, and activities</li> </ul>
Parental Knowledge / Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 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</li> </ul>
Sharing Best Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased number of providers accessing and receiving training on high-quality ECE best practices</li> </ul>
Improving Program Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shared understanding of statewide definition of quality among providers</li> <li>● Increased access for providers to quality improvement supports</li> </ul>