Before Governor Little took office in January 2019, Idaho’s early childhood education initiatives focused primarily on supporting the literacy development of kindergarten through third grade students. This priority was a response to findings from the state’s 2015 third grade reading assessment where 41 percent of the state’s children scored below grade level. Governor Little came into office with the belief that supporting literacy starting at kindergarten is too late, and that language and literacy development begins at birth and is best supported by a comprehensive statewide approach to high-quality early care and education.

As Idaho’s first federal grant to support building an early childhood system, the state will use the opportunity to examine and initially implement initiatives that more efficiently use existing resources to coordinate program delivery and funding, align and strengthen the delivery of existing early childhood programs, and work toward improving school readiness outcomes with a focus on early literacy. The fact that Idaho is in the early stages of building a system means it will rely heavily on information gathered from the needs assessment to develop a strategic plan with next steps for improving the design and capacity of the state system. The foundational understanding of stakeholder needs, access to services, and the current quality of early care and education settings will help administrators in the state be more responsive to policy makers who want foundational questions about the state’s early childhood system answered, and a clear direction established, before committing to systems change.

As outlined in the logic model, this grant application proposes activities that will build on the state’s current early childhood infrastructure to maximize parental choice, share best practices, and improve program quality across all early childhood care and education settings with ultimate goal of improving literacy outcomes. The grant will have a specific focus on children who are at risk of poor literacy outcomes including children in poverty, children with disabilities/developmental delays, children who speak a language other than English at home, children in foster care, children experiencing trauma, children from military families, and children who live in rural areas. The grant will produce system improvements that promote stronger child development and early learning outcomes that prepare children to read and succeed in school.
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Idaho’s B-5 Mixed-Delivery Description and Vision Statement

When Governor Brad Little became Idaho’s 33rd governor in January 2019, he brought with him a vision that included supporting the school readiness of the state’s youngest learners. Since 2016, Idaho has been focused on supporting the literacy development of kindergarten through third grade students, with the aim of expanding third grade proficiency. Literacy is the foundation for all learning and student achievement. Students who are reading at grade level by the end of the third grade are more likely to succeed in other subjects and are more likely to graduate high school on time.

Governor Little has worked with the Idaho Legislature to double resources and focus state and local efforts on this literacy effort. School readiness continues to be a challenge to this goal, however.

Governor Little knows that achieving our literacy goals is also supported by early childhood opportunities for families across Idaho, and that language and literacy development begins early and is best supported by comprehensive approach to child development and learning in the early years. Governor Little is strongly committed to supporting communities and families in building opportunities that prepare children for school. In this way, Idaho’s Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Initial Grant application is historic as a first step in the state’s efforts to build a coordinated and collaborative B-5 Early Childhood State System (ECSS) that strengthens the delivery of existing programs for young children, promotes language and literacy development, and better prepares low-income and disadvantaged children to enter kindergarten. Idaho’s vision for the continued development of its mixed-delivery system is
a well-supported set of locally-controlled, high-quality and family-focused programs and providers that support children in reaching their full potential.

Current landscape of Idaho’s B-5 ECSS

Idaho is home to approximately 113,000 children birth through age five, 20.2% (22,750) of whom are living below the poverty level. These children are cared for through a mixed-delivery early childhood system that includes private and public school-based programs, Head Start and Early Head Start grantees, licensed family child care (FCC) homes, center-based providers, informal relative-care providers, as well as other faith-based and community-based programs. There are 3,923 children birth to age five enrolled in seven Head Start programs and six Early Head Start programs across the state.

Despite that fact that a large majority of children in Idaho are in early childhood care and education (ECCE) settings other than Head Start, the state does not have a clear picture of where these children are, the quality of care that they are experiencing, the types of services being provided to them while they are in care, or the impact that these early care and education settings is having on their school readiness. Child Care Aware of America estimates that there are over 45,000 spaces/slots for children birth to five in Idaho, with a large majority of these slots in center-based programs (85 percent), with significantly fewer slots in FCC homes (8 percent) or school-age programs (6 percent). Only 9 percent of the state’s slots are used for infant care, with 17 percent serving toddlers, and larger percentages of slots being utilized for preschool and school-aged children (37 percent and 36 percent, respectively). However, it is unclear how accurate these

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1 Retrieved from American FactFinder database using keywords “Poverty Status in the Past 12 months”/”Idaho” https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t
estimates are of the supply of care. Providers serving less than seven children do not have to be licensed by the state and a number of communities have their own licensing systems that can be used instead of state licensing if they exceed state licensing standards. As a result, it is difficult to get a clear picture of the availability, quality, and impact of ECCE in the state. Clearly, one important goal of the needs assessment (in addition to the others discussed in the needs assessment section) will be to better understand where the state’s most vulnerable children are placed in care and the quality of those care arrangements.

With regard to services for children birth through five, Idaho provides child care subsidies to a monthly average of 8,624 children as part of its Idaho Child Care Program. In addition, the state serves 2,004 infants and toddlers through the Infants and Toddlers Program of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C, Early Intervention and 3,441 children through IDEA Part B, Section 619 (Preschool Special Education). The state also serves 1,419 children and their families through the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program. It is unclear how much Title I funding is currently used to serve children birth through five in Idaho, and this will be answered during the needs assessment process. The state currently does not have an unduplicated count of children who access the different programs, and the process for obtaining an undocumented count is discussed in the needs assessment section.

**Key policies and programs (enacted and implemented) that support the mixed delivery system**

**Funding:** Idaho is receiving nearly $70 million in federal ECCE funding. This includes $30.1 million in Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funding that supports the state’s quality improvement initiatives and provides child care subsidies through the Idaho Child Care

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Program. Head Start grantees have received $31.76 million in federal funding, and the state has received $2.57 million in federal IDEA Part C funding and $2.25 million in IDEA Part B, Section 619 funding. Since 2010, the state has received over $3.25 million in formula and competitive grants for MIECHV. In addition to this federal funding, Idaho has received $1.8 million in funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to fund critical initiatives such as the Preschool the Idaho Way project, which is implemented by the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children (Idaho AEYC), and the Idaho Early Literacy Project implemented by the Lee Pesky Learning Center. Idaho’s early childhood partner organizations also utilize philanthropic dollars from the Albertson Family Foundation, United Ways of Idaho, Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation, St. Luke’s Foundation, Dove Foundation, Laura Moore Cunningham Foundation, Limelight Hotel Fund, Wood River Women’s Foundation, CapEd Credit Union, and PacificSource Foundation to support the key components of the ECSS. For example, the Albertson Family Foundation funds locally-based Mission43, an organization that provides educational guidance, employment opportunities, and community service projects for Idaho's post-9/11 veterans and their families through a 2,500 member community.

**Policies and Programs:** In addition to these policies and funding, the state also has programs that are working to support child health and safety, professional development, assessment, and ECCE quality. To support the basic health and safety of children in the state’s ECCE programs, state daycare licensing is administered by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) in conjunction with local fire departments and health districts. Local city governments can also establish and enforce their own licensing regulations, as long as the requirements are equal to, or
more stringent, than state licensing provisions. Currently, eight cities in Idaho have separate child
care licensing regulations.  

**IdahoSTARS:** IdahoSTARS is the state’s overall quality improvement initiative that is based on a
vision that every child in Idaho must have access to the highest quality child care and early
education. Funded with CCDBG funding, it is a joint project between the University of Idaho (UI)
Center on Disabilities and Human Development (CDHD) and Idaho AEYC. UI directly oversees
the state Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, training development and program, and child
care Health Consultant Program. Idaho AEYC directly oversees the Idaho Child Care Program,
state licensing, the Professional Development System Registry, *Steps to Quality* program (the
state’s quality rating and improvement system), academic and training scholarships for providers,
assessment services, and the multicultural programs. A number of these initiatives are discussed
in detail below:

1. A regional child care resource and referral network: Seven Child Care Resource Centers
   (CCRCs), staffed by Quality Child Care Consultants, Child Care Resource Specialists, and
   Child Care Health Consultants, offer direct services to child care providers to increase quality
   practices, recruit providers to participate in child care subsidy programs and the state’s QRIS,
   and provide parental education about child care quality. The CCRCs also provide coaching
   and technical assistance (TA) around starting a child care business, planning for a sustainable
   business, and support efforts to educate and engage parents around ECCE program quality.
   The IdahoSTARS Child Care Health Consultant team, which includes a licensed counselor and
   Registered Dietitian, provides on-site coaching and TA to child care providers on the

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http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Children/ChildCare/DaycareLicensing/DCCityCountyRequirements.pdf?ver=2016-07-26-163416-233
implementation of mental health and nutrition practices, respectively.

2. Professional Development System (PDS) Registry: IdahoSTARS provides opportunities for early childhood professionals to increase their knowledge and skills and to recognize their professional development achievements. The PDS offers a professional development pathway, allows early childhood professionals to record their progress, and offers them opportunities to apply for recognition that include monetary bonuses.

3. Steps to Quality: IdahoSTARS also includes Steps to Quality (STQ), the state’s QRIS, a voluntary system designed to measure quality in child care centers and home-based programs across the state. Using a six-step structure, the system helps to move a child care provider from a basic focus on health and safety requirements in Step 1 to national accreditation standards in Step 6. **Figure 1** outlines the steps to achieving higher levels of quality. CCRC staff help to recruit providers into the program and support them as they move up the steps. Notably, Idaho includes the Strengthening Families protective factors framework as one of its QRIS standards and is the only state that has a distinct standard that measures the trainings and implementation of the Strengthening Families framework in practice.5 Programs participating in Steps to Quality work with regional Quality Consultants to develop a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), a tool to help programs identify goals and activities to promote quality and improved outcomes for children and families. IdahoSTARS staff also assist non-QRIS programs toward achieving accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Association for Family Child Care.

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5 Idaho AEYC. [https://idahoaeyc.org/strengthening-families-project](https://idahoaeyc.org/strengthening-families-project) Strengthening Families is a framework developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy to prevent child abuse and neglect.
4. Other quality initiatives: *IdahoSTARS* also provides resources and supports to develop a training curriculum, academic scholarships, Environment Rating Scale assessments, a Child Care Health Consultant program, and a multicultural support program that works with dual language learner and non-English speaking providers.

**Preschool the Idaho Way:** Launched in 2018 with a mission to help more families access high-quality, affordable early learning opportunities, Preschool the Idaho Way is an initiative that works to create local preschool collaboratives that bring together city and school leaders, parents, teachers and local businesses who want to see high-quality preschool opportunities for families in their community. The goal is to build partnerships among existing local experts in early childhood education, including programs such as Head Start, in-home and center-based child care providers, faith-based organizations and school districts. By pooling resources such as space, transportation and personnel, collaboratives can offer affordable, comprehensive early learning opportunities that otherwise would not be available to many families. Currently, there are 14 Preschool the Idaho Way Collaboratives across the state.
**Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI):** Every student in Idaho is given a literacy screener at kindergarten entry to determine if the child requires additional reading interventions to improve their literacy skills. The IRI is mandated to be administered twice a year—once in the Fall and once in the Spring—through the iStation platform. It measures five domains of literacy: phonemic awareness, alphabetic knowledge, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension with appropriate subtests at each grade level. As the state’s only statewide measure of early literacy, results from the IRI are important to state leadership, and as such, improvements on the IRI will be an important long-term outcome indicator for changes made through this PDG B-5 grant.

**READY! for Kindergarten:** READY! for Kindergarten are free workshops designed to encourage parents and child care providers to engage with their child through talking, singing, reading and playing to foster pre-literacy, pre-math and social-emotional skills. The curriculum was created by the Children’s Reading Foundation and is supported by the Dove Foundation, CapEd Credit Union, and a number of other philanthropic sources.

**Idaho Commission for Libraries:** Idaho’s public library system is a critical partner in preparing young children for kindergarten through its state-funded early literacy initiatives and accessibility across local communities. In 2018, Idaho ranked #1 in the U.S. in per capita library attendance, and #2 in the nation per capita for circulation of children’s materials. For over 20 years, the state legislature has funded the Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) Read to Me program, which supports early literacy and increases access to books for low-income and rural families. As such, PDG B-5 grant activities will include collaboration with the ICfL, which currently works with

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7 Idaho Commission for Libraries.
library staff to incorporate early literacy and child development as part of storytimes and early learning programming.

Gaps and challenges as well as opportunities for improvement, progress, and successes

While Governor Little brings a clear early childhood vision to Idaho, historically, the state has made few investments in services to support young children. As discussed above, the biggest gap in Idaho’s B-5 system involves a fundamental lack of understanding of the availability of care, where children are placed in care, and the quality of those arrangements. In addition, there is a significant funding gap. While the state is currently considering expanding Idaho’s kindergarten program from half-day to full-day, Idaho is one of only four states in the country that does not invest in public preschool. As a result, a key hurdle for the system is the lack of state investment to support young children.

At the same time, the state has made progress. It has the beginnings of a quality improvement and professional development infrastructure, and Preschool the Idaho Way represents a major foundational step forward in building local early childhood systems. How the state will build on this foundation is discussed in the following sections of the application.

Populations of Children Targeted with PDG B-5 Initiatives

Idaho will use PDG B-5 funds to target those children who are at risk of not reading on grade level by third grade. These children include children in poverty, children in foster care, homeless children, children with disabilities, children who speak a language other than English at home, children experiencing trauma, children from military families, and children from rural areas. All of these children are at significant risk of poor third-grade reading outcomes and will be the target of the coordination, collaboration, and quality improvement activities funded under this
PDG B-5 grant. The long- and short-term outcomes for these populations are discussed in the Logic Model section.

**Activity 1: B-5 Statewide Needs Assessment Plan**

The fact that Idaho is in the very early stages of building a B-5 ECSS means that the state will rely heavily on information gathered from the needs assessment process to determine the next steps for improving the design and capacity of its system. Currently, the state lacks a foundational understanding of system capacity, quality, and stakeholder needs. This fact has made it difficult to capitalize on the interest of state policy makers who want foundational questions about the state’s system answered, and a clear direction established, before committing to systems change. Accordingly, the needs assessment is vital in building a knowledge base on which a strategic plan for the next steps for a B-5 ECSS can be created.

The goal of the needs assessment is to help policy makers, administrators, and stakeholders gain a collective and objective understanding of where Idaho’s early childhood system is in supporting child well-being and outcomes, and where the state needs to go next. The scope of the needs assessment will be defined by a number of critical questions that are of interest to the state. These are:

1. Where are children when they are placed in ECCE settings across Idaho, what is the quality of those settings, and what is the impact on their school readiness (and literacy outcomes, in particular)? Are there differences for vulnerable/underserved children or children living in rural areas? How are different ECCE settings impacting school readiness?
2. How well is *Steps to Quality* measuring quality and incentivizing providers to improve quality?
3. What are the gaps in the availability of ECCE programs that support parents’ ability to work and that promote school readiness? What are the major barriers to improving program
availability and quality? Are there differences for vulnerable/underserved children or children living in rural areas?

4. What are the most critical needs of families with young children and what are the barriers to accessing services to meet those needs? Are there differences for families living in rural areas? How can services and supports for families be administered more efficiently?

5. How are parents made aware of programs and services and the importance of high-quality ECCE settings to support parent choice?

6. What strategies are being employed that support how children transition from ECCE programs into schools?

Idaho’s plan for conducting an effective needs assessment will include, at minimum, the elements below. (Costs are found under Project 1.1 in the budget justification section).

**Document review:** The needs assessment process will begin with a review of documents that provide information about the needs of Idaho’s children, the services that are provided for vulnerable children and families, barriers to access, and initiatives that may improve the delivery of services. These documents will include any required needs assessments from federally-funded programs (e.g., MIECHV), other state and local needs assessment and strategic plans, annual reports (e.g., IdahoSTARS Annual Report), and any national studies or reports that include Idaho-specific information or data (e.g., Child Care Aware of America).

**Analysis of administrative data:** To the extent possible, de-identified administrative data from the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and Department of Education will be used to better understand program enrollment, demographics, and program capacity. This analysis will focus on who is receiving what types of services in the state.
Town Hall meetings: Town Hall meetings with ECCE stakeholders and parents will be hosted around the state. These Town Hall meetings will be used to obtain a first-hand perspective on the needs of Idaho’s children and families; issues that impact access to services and high-quality ECCE programs; and challenges with the coordination, collaboration, alignment, and transition between the ECCE and public school systems.

Stakeholder survey: To ensure that the state is getting a statewide perspective on stakeholder needs, barriers to coordination and collaboration, and ways to improve the system, a statewide survey will be fielded to gain a broader perspective on stakeholders needs. The survey will be distributed to parents/caregivers, ECCE providers, and community partners in order to hear broadly and directly from the different groups of constituents using, working in, and working with the system.

Focus groups: Stakeholders will also be given the opportunity to provide deeper descriptions of their experiences with and perceptions of ECCE programs and services in Idaho. The focus groups will allow the state to authentically understand the experience of stakeholders with the system.

Idaho AEYC will contract with the University of Idaho James A. and Louise McClure Center for Public Policy Research to conduct the B-5 statewide needs assessment. The McClure Center is well-suited to engage in this work given its role as a nonpartisan research organization with experience convening diverse stakeholders and addressing a range of policy issues, including education.

In addition to this core needs assessment, three other projects will be conducted as part of the needs assessment process to ensure that the state has a full picture of the availability and quality of ECCE programs, gaps in data and research, barriers to funding and providing high-quality services, and addressing facilities-related concerns.
Facilities Study (Project 1.2): To assess facilities and address facilities-related concerns, the state will analyze child care licensing data to better understand licensing violations related to facilities and conduct a facilities survey. The state will consult with a national non-profit organization (Local Initiatives Support Corporation or IFF) that have done facilities assessments in other states to ensure that the state is obtaining the appropriate information to assess and address facilities-related concerns. In addition, data from Environment Rating Scales collected through IdahoSTARS will be used to inform this project.

Steps to Quality validation study (Project 1.3): One important aspect of a QRIS system is to provide parents with information about quality that helps inform their choice of care. Accordingly, a key aspect of promoting parent choice in Idaho will be to understand whether Idaho’s Steps to Quality QRIS accurately measures quality. A validation study of Steps to Quality will be conducted to determine whether the system measures the most important aspects of quality and whether the different steps meaningfully differentiate different levels of quality.

Higher education study (Project 1.4): As part of the state’s assessment of its early childhood workforce, Idaho will contract to assess the state’s Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) using the Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory, created by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at the University of California at Berkeley. The tool provides critical data to support a coordinated and comprehensive professional preparation and development system for the early care and education workforce. The Inventory captures variations in IHE programming and capacity, and will allow the state to identify the gaps and opportunities in the available offerings and support strategic planning to improve the state’s early childhood workforce. Idaho will incorporate the work of its higher education partners, including Boise State University, as part of this project.
All of these needs assessment components will be combined into a comprehensive needs assessment report that will be presented to the state’s Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC).

*Idaho’s plan to measure the unduplicated number of children being served in existing programs*

Idaho does not have an integrated early childhood data system that would allow for an unduplicated count of children across all of the state’s ECCE programs. To obtain this count, the state will utilize data integration software to match records across data systems. The state has the enrollment lists of the ECCE programs in the state, including the child care subsidy program, IDEA Part C and Part B, Section 619, and MIECHV. The state will work with local Head Start grantees to obtain their enrollment lists. An unduplicated count will be obtained by merging these lists and comparing the records across five common fields: (1) Legal First Name; (2) Legal Last Name; (3) Date of Birth; (4) Gender; and (5) Racial/Ethnic Group. Data integration software can create a number of reports, including an unduplicated count of children across the programs, the percentage of children in more than one program, and the percentage of children in different combinations of programs (e.g., Head Start, IDEA, child care subsidy, etc.). Idaho’s unduplicated count of children and plan for the B-5 statewide needs assessment will set a strong foundation for the strategic planning process.

*How the needs assessment will help define key terms and populations of children who are vulnerable/underserved, and children in rural areas.*

With the exception of “children in rural areas,” Idaho does not have agreed-upon definitions of quality, availability, or vulnerable/underserved children. The needs assessment, through the Town Halls, focus groups, stakeholder survey, QRIS validation study, and other studies will help the state reach common definitions of these terms. For example, the QRIS
validation study will evaluate the state’s current quality indicators and inform a conversation about the essential elements of quality to determine what should be measured, incentivized, and reported to parents related to child care quality. A similar process of analysis and reflection using the needs assessment data will be used for the other definitions. Conversely, “children in rural areas” is defined in Idaho statute as “fewer than twenty (20) enrolled students per square mile within the area encompassed by the school district’s boundaries” or a “county in which a plurality of the school district’s market value for assessment purposes is located contains less than twenty-five thousand (25,000) residents, based on the most recent decennial United States census.”

**Activity 2: B-5 Statewide Strategic Plan**

Idaho has an administrative structure that consists of a small number of dedicated state administrators (see Organizational Capacity Section) who work to promote child and family well-being through the programs they administer. These administrators know each other and work closely together and with their stakeholders, yet have never engaged in a statewide strategic planning process to better coordinate the programs and services that are under their purview. The PDG B-5 grant provides the state with a unique opportunity to engage in much-needed strategic planning, and the prospect of addressing some of the persistent challenges in coordinating service delivery has generated excitement among state administrators and early childhood stakeholders.

The state will use the strategic planning process to chart a path toward a well-coordinated, aligned, and integrated system of high-quality programs, supports, and services for all children and families that work to support Governor Little’s goal of improved early literacy. Through the needs assessment described in *Activity 1*, the state will assess the most pressing needs of early childhood stakeholders and identify and fill large gaps in the state’s understanding of the current landscape. Next, the strategic planning process will analyze the findings of the needs assessment,
research best practices across the country to address those needs, and create a plan for better coordination and stronger outcomes. The result of the strategic planning process, which is described in detail below, will be a plan with recommended activities, a plan for implementation, timeline, and an examination of the barriers and supports available to successfully implement the plan.

The strategic planning process will draw on principles of design thinking (e.g., “empathy for the client”) and implementation science (e.g., capacity “drivers,” stakeholder buy-in, etc.) to ensure that the recommendations are impactful, can be implemented with fidelity, and are developed with the needs, resources, and preferences of vulnerable children and families in mind. In addition to providing recommendations for the state’s B-5 ECSS, including new partnerships to support coordination, quality, and effective transitions, the plan will also include: (1) An assessment of the barriers to achieving the recommendations and ways to overcome those barriers; (2) An assessment of the capacity of the state system and current partnerships—including those between Head Start, other ECCE programs, local education agencies (LEAs), and other entities within the state that support quality and the transitions between the early childhood system and K-12; (3) An implementation plan for the recommendations developed in light of the state’s current partnerships, barriers, and capacity; (4) A communication plan to promote stakeholder buy-in and to explain why and how the recommendations will be implemented, and how they will better serve children and families; and, (5) A monitoring plan with indicators that track the implementation of activities and progress toward goals.

The strategic plan will be created using the steps below (costs are found under Project 2 in the budget justification section):

1. **Review existing program- and organization-specific strategic plans.** Some of Idaho’s state
agencies and stakeholder groups have engaged in visioning processes and targeted strategic planning. While these plans focus only on specific programs and do not take a comprehensive look at the system, it will be important to review them to ensure that the activities in the statewide strategic plan are developed with the mission and vision of the different agencies and organizations in mind. Accordingly, the first step in the strategic planning process will be to leverage the strategic plans that have already been created in the state (to the extent they exist).

2. **Review needs assessment findings with the state’s early childhood stakeholders.** The goal of Activity 1 is to identify stakeholder needs, barriers to access, and opportunities to improve coordination in the state’s current system. These needs, barriers, and opportunities will be discussed with early childhood stakeholders to drive the process for making recommendations for activities in the strategic plan. The state will leverage stakeholder meetings and conferences where they will present the needs assessment findings and seek input on activities for the strategic plan.

3. **Conduct a literature review and national best practice search to meet the needs.** After the full range of needs have been identified, a literature review and best practice search will be conducted to ensure that the recommendations in the strategic plan reflect the latest research and best practices in the field. Research and best practices from a number of national technical assistance centers, including the BUILD Initiative, the National Center for Quality Teaching and Learning, the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement, the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, the National Center on Child Health and Wellness, and other centers will be reviewed.

4. **Engage the state’s early childhood stakeholders to discuss the proposed activities for the**
strategic plan. Once initial recommendations have been developed as a result of the literature review and best practice search, seven regional listening sessions will be convened across the state to obtain stakeholder input. The sessions will focus on ensuring that the initial strategic plan recommendations meet the needs from various stakeholder perspectives, explaining how the recommendations would be implemented in practice, and discussing the resources that would be necessary to support successful implementation. These meetings will bring together a wide range of early childhood stakeholders, including Head Start and other early childhood programs, LEAs, libraries, the ECCE provider community, organizations serving children with disabilities, advocates, parents, military families, and other stakeholders.

5. **Create a draft strategic plan informed by stakeholder input.** After the listening sessions, a draft of the strategic plan will be created that contains the components described above. As noted, in addition to outlining the recommendations, an important role of the strategic planning process will be to promote stakeholder buy-in. As such, the draft document will clearly reflect the stakeholder perspective and include an implementation plan and communications plan based on stakeholder input.

6. **Present a draft statewide strategic plan to the state ECAC.** The state ECAC will be reinstated and actively involved throughout the strategic planning process, including the regional meetings. After being developed, the draft statewide strategic plan will be presented to the ECAC for its review and input.

7. **Finalize plan based on ECAC input and receive final approval.** Based on the input from the ECAC, the strategic plan will be finalized and submitted formally for approval. After approval by the ECAC, work groups will be formed to support implementation and monitor progress of the activities. The strategic planning process described above will incorporate the
work of the state in meeting the requirements of the CCDBG Act.

**Activity 3: Maximizing Parent Knowledge and Choice**

Idaho AEYC considers key issues affecting parent choice—ECCE capacity, quality, and cost—as major impediments to school readiness and state economic growth. The low percentage of children meeting early literacy expectations on the Fall 2019 Idaho Reading Indicator underscores the need for parents to be able to access affordable, high-quality ECCE options that support early literacy and overall school readiness. Equally important, the Idaho business community has become increasingly concerned with the capacity of the state’s B-5 ECSS to support state economic growth. A recent survey conducted by the Idaho Association of Commerce & Industry (IACI) reveals that an astounding 61 percent of Idahoans report their job performance and/or career prospects have been affected due to child care considerations.8 A majority of working parents in the state expressed challenges with arranging child care (58.8%) with only 28% of businesses offering support for employee child care needs.9 Idaho’s working mothers have been hit particularly hard by these access issues with 58.6 percent reporting being late to work or missing a day of work as a result of having a child; 20.1 percent report having to reduce their regular work hours; 23.3 percent report having to turn down further education or training; 17.1 percent report having to turn down a new job offer, promotion, or reassignment; and 11.7 percent report having to change from full-time to part-time employment.10

Through the PDG B-5 grant, Idaho AEYC and its partners will use a two-generation approach to maximizing parental choice and knowledge to support both school readiness and workforce

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9 Idaho AEYC Workforce Survey (August 2019).
participation and productivity. Idaho’s PDG B-5 grant initiatives will focus on: (1) Increasing ECCE capacity in high-need communities by encouraging the creation of child care businesses; (2) Evaluating, improving, and increasing participation in the state’s quality measurement and improvement system; (3) Improving the way the state communicates with families about child development, the importance of choosing high-quality ECCE, and information about the quality of ECCE programs; and, (4) Empowering parents with information to support their children’s transition to kindergarten and implementing initiatives that support better parenting. A fifth critical area—finding creative ways to offset the cost of care so parents can afford the high-quality option they prefer—will be explored as part of the needs assessment and strategic planning process.

**Collaboration and coordination with CCDF administering agency, CCR&Rs, ECCE programs, and services**

As the organization responsible for processing all state licensing applications, including ECCE programs funded by the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), Idaho AEYC works closely with DHW child care staff and collaborates and coordinates with a wide range of ECCE programs. As a regular collaborator with ECCE program and agency leaders across the state, Idaho AEYC will leverage its strong relationships with state agencies and partner organizations to support the planning and implementation of all PDG B-5 activities, including the strategic coordination across ECCE programs and services. Idaho AEYC has already formed a stakeholder group—with representation from 26 individuals from a range of programs and organizations, including Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Title V Maternal and Child Health Programs, Healthy Start, the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Part C and Section 619 of Part B of IDEA, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the Head Start Collaboration Office—to support the creation of the grant
application. The group will be used as a coordination and advisory body over the course of the PDG B-5 implementation year. The Governor is also reinstating the state’s Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) to serve as the primary vehicle to solicit input on and approval of the B-5 needs assessment and strategic plan, promote collaboration and coordination across Idaho’s ECCE programs, and monitor progress on the grant activities. The Executive Director of Idaho AEYC will serve as chair of the state’s reinstated ECAC.

Idaho AEYC is well positioned to build on and enhance existing strategies to improve the quality of child care programs and ensure parents have access to information that will inform their child care options. With CCDF funding, Idaho AEYC implements a number of quality improvement programs as part of IdahoSTARS, including the Professional Development System (PDS) Registry, support to programs going through licensing, academic scholarships to ECCE providers, and quality improvement initiatives related to Steps to Quality, the state’s QRIS. Idaho AEYC also works closely with its partners at the UI Center on Disabilities and Human Development (CDHD), who manages the seven Child Care Resource Centers (CCRCs) that offer direct services to child care providers to increase quality practices, recruit providers to participate in the child care subsidy program and the state’s QRIS, and provide parental education about child care quality. Key projects designed to build off CCDF quality initiatives to maximize parental choice are listed below.

**Steps to Quality Outreach (Project 3.1):** To support participation in STQ, Idaho AEYC will use PDG B-5 funds to hire four regional “Outreach Coordinators” to work in partnership with four of the state’s regional Child Care Resource Centers to increase provider awareness. Greater numbers of providers participating in STQ will mean more providers that offer quality information that support parents’ choice of care. In addition, the state will offer a *Quality Participation Incentive*
grant of up to $1,000 for existing ECCE programs who agree to participate in STQ. The Outreach Coordinators will also work to make connections between local school districts and child care programs to encourage communication on the needs of incoming kindergarten students to improve ECCE to school transitions. Ultimately, Idaho AEYC will use the result from the QRIS validation study conducted as part of the needs assessment to modify the STQ to better align with indicators that are correlated with positive child outcomes, which will make the system a more accurate measure of quality to help inform parent choice. (Costs are found under **Project 3.1** in the budget justification section).

**Business Startup Grants (Project 3.2):** In addition, Idaho AEYC will offer *Business Startup Grants* to incentivize the creation of new child care businesses. Startup grants will offer $500 to programs in targeted at high-need areas that are selected based on a number of factors, including areas of economic development and “child care deserts” with a focus on the state’s rural areas. The grant will offset the cost meeting health and safety standards to become licensed child care providers, as well as provide technical assistance on proven business strategies provide through the CCR&R. Providers receiving a Successful Startup Grant will be required to join the STQ program. In addition to these grants, PDG B-5 funding will support the creation of a toolkit for starting new ECCE businesses as an initial step toward the Successful Startup Grant. (Costs are found under **Project 3.2** in the budget justification section).

*Collaboration with state IDEA Programs to expand early intervention services*

Currently, Idaho families with children in school-based settings can access information on developmental monitoring and screening through the IDEA Part B program’s use of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* initiative. This national best practice offers an education campaign targeted to parents that promotes awareness of
developmental milestones during early childhood, the importance of tracking each child’s
development, and the importance of acting early if there are concerns.\textsuperscript{11} Idaho’s \textit{Act Early}
Ambassador, who promotes the statewide integration of the \textit{Learn the Signs. Act Early.} program,
also serves as director of \textit{IdahoSTARS}, which provides training and technical assistance to all
providers enrolled in \textit{Steps to Quality}. However, due to access, outreach, and capacity issues, all
families do not currently have equitable access to monitoring, screening or referrals for the early
intervention services that may be required to address their child’s developmental delays or
disabilities. Idaho plans to address this issue through the following approaches:

\textbf{Early Intervention Screening and Referral Expansion (Project 3.3):} As part of the effort to increase
families’ access to IDEA Part C services for children 0-3, \textit{IdahoSTARS} will work to ensure
programs enrolled in \textit{Steps to Quality} will conduct developmental monitoring and screening of
children birth to five years of age to support early identification of autism spectrum disorder and
other developmental disabilities. Developmental monitoring activities will be supported through
printing and dissemination of the CDC’s \textit{Learn the Signs. Act Early.} materials along with
coordination of training and technical assistance supports that will be provided by the CDC’s \textit{Act
Early} Ambassador in collaboration with regional CCRCs. Developmental screenings will be
conducted in star-rated \textit{Steps to Quality} programs (Step 3 and higher) for all children birth to five
years of age using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, 3\textsuperscript{rd} Edition (ASQ-3). A statewide train-the-
trainer event will be provided to child care coaches and trainers on the use of the ASQ-3 with
online subscriptions for ASQ-3 Kits funded for individual program use following the required
training. The expansion will be supported through a close collaboration with the state’s Part C

\textsuperscript{11} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. \textit{Learn the Signs. Act Early.}
\url{https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html}
Infant Toddler Program at DHW, whose staff will also be expanding their Child Find screening
efforts to include children enrolled in STQ programs, which would result in automatic referrals for
evaluation as necessary. (Costs are found under **Project 3.3** in the budget justification section.)

**Exploration of Telehealth Models (Project 3.4):** As part of the state’s effort to reach more families
who may not be able to access early intervention services due to a geographical or other barrier,
PDG B-5 funding will be used for a feasibility study of innovative telehealth policies and
procedures to increase service provision in remote areas and during inclement weather conditions,
as well as improve the state’s ability to stretch federal resources. Telehealth practices can offer
more flexibility through the use of video teleconferencing technology between service providers
(e.g., speech pathologists) and children in need of support. Telehealth models also support the use
of family coaching strategies and have been shown to increase family engagement and
empowerment as families learn to apply what they have learned to their daily routines. According
to several research studies conducted with young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder,
telehealth results in more active family engagement, resulting in high levels of parent
empowerment and self-efficacy, as well as positive child outcomes\(^1\) (Costs are found under
**Project 3.4** in the budget justification section).

Moving forward, the *Act Early* Ambassador will continue to serve as a vehicle to get other
state agencies committed to partnering with IDEA programs to expand the reach of early
intervention screenings. For example, the Idaho Commission of Libraries will work with the SDE
Early Childhood Special Education department and DHW to train interested library staff to

administer developmental screenings that identify physical, social, and/or emotional concerns, and assist parents/caregivers in accessing subsequent support for those needs. In addition, connections are being explored with the WIC and MIECHV programs to get more health professionals across the state trained to monitor child development and facilitate additional referrals for Part C. Additional activities for this expansion will be investigated in more detail as part of the needs assessment.

*Empowering parents to support smooth transitions*

A key factor impacting school readiness outcomes is the need for smooth transitions for children as they move from early childhood programs and into elementary school. PDG B-5 funds will be used to explore various strategies to improve school transitions for families of young children, including military families, using a two-generation approach.

*Parent education initiatives that target vulnerable populations*

Idaho will engage in a multi-modal public information campaign using television, texting, and print media strategies to reach vulnerable families of young children, including those who speak a language other than English at home, across the state. Content and delivery mechanisms for parent engagement strategies will continue to be modified based on findings from the B-5 needs assessment. Key strategies will include the following agencies/programs:

**Idaho Public Television (IdahoPTV) Media Campaign (Project 3.5):** A critical partner in engaging vulnerable families with young children is IdahoPTV. The agency’s Parent Engagement Initiative focuses on the critical role parents play in promoting early learning by equipping Idaho parents with simple strategies to build their child’s reading, social emotional, and STEM skills. Many of IdahoPTV’s programs focus on teaching parenting skills to vulnerable families, including incarcerated parents at the Women’s Correction Center in Kuna and families at the Idaho Women’s
and Children’s Alliance that have suffered from domestic abuse. As part of Idaho AEYC’s Preschool the Idaho Way initiative, IdahoPTV also works to help early learning providers and school districts in rural areas to better engage with parents to promote school readiness for children ages 3-5. IdahoPTV also offers an array of online resources for ECCE educators and families, including a partnership with public libraries that promotes play-based early literacy and STEM activities.

Idaho Commission for Libraries Outreach (Project 3.6): As part of its Read to Me program, ICfL receives state funding for early literacy library outreach programs and sub-grants to support public and school library early literacy programs and increase access to books for low-income and rural families. In collaboration with PDG partners, ICfL will extend the reach of the B-5 statewide messaging campaign by pushing talking points, branding, and other materials developed during the planning year out to libraries to share with parents and caregivers. In addition, the ICfL will develop additional collateral materials as in-kind resources to support a statewide messaging campaign that supports the literacy goals of the PDG B-5 grant and will make those resources available for libraries to disseminate to parents/caregivers.

Countdown to Kindergarten Pilot (Project 3.7): To empower parents and facilitate smoother transitions during these critical times, Idaho will collaborate with the Idaho School Board of Education and State Department of Education to pilot the implementation of Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) in four high-need school districts as indicated by IRI scores. CTK is an innovative school transition strategy developed by South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness and recognized as a promising state practice by the National Governors’ Association. The model pairs the families of at-risk rising kindergartners with their children’s future kindergarten teachers for a series of curriculum-based home visits during the weeks immediately prior to kindergarten
entry. Each visit is centered around a short standards-based lesson, which is delivered by the teacher in the presence of the parents for purpose of modeling open-ended questioning and other age-appropriate learning strategies. During the first visit, participating teachers present each child with the CTK Toolkit, a backpack containing books, and other educational materials designed to support the weekly lesson. Additional materials are provided at each visit, slowly filling the backpack with learning materials for use in the child’s home. The final CTK visit is held in the kindergarten classroom, acquainting children and parents with their future school environments.

In collaboration with The Hunt Institute, South Carolina First Steps will adapt an Idaho-specific version of the CTK curriculum and will provide model training and technical assistance to pilot districts. (Costs are found under Project 3.7 in the budget justification section.)

**READY! For Kindergarten Expansion (Project 3.8):** Through READY! For Kindergarten, Idaho AEYC currently offers a range of free workshops aimed at empowering parents and caregivers of children B-5 with resources and training to help prepare their child for kindergarten. The program, available in English and Spanish, encourages parents to talk, sing, read, and play with their child in ways that foster essential pre-literacy, pre-math and social-emotional skills. It is currently used by many cultural and linguistically diverse families, including the state’s growing refugee population. PDG B-5 funds will be used to expand the READY! for Kindergarten program to support more parents in high-need communities, including Coeur d’Alene, Treasure Valley, and South Central Idaho. Idaho AEYC will also partner with the Twiga Foundation with support from the STEM Action Center to offer an additional workshop focused on STEM activities called BLOCK Fest®️. BLOCK Fest offers interactive parent/child block play experiences to families with young children to help raise awareness of early math and science learning and its impacts on school readiness. The program reaches Idaho families through schools, libraries, early learning
programs and home visiting programs, and emphasizes early learning in STEM, social/emotional development, and motor skills. (Costs can be found under Project 3.8 in the budget justification section.)

**Activity 4: Sharing Best Practices among State ECCE Providers**

Idaho has a strong collaborative process of sharing best practices with the state’s ECCE providers. Several state agencies have partnerships with national technical assistance centers and early childhood organizations to access materials and technical assistance on a number of key ECCE priorities. For example, the State Department of Education’s Department of Special Education (IDEA Part B and C) is working closely with the National Center on Improving Literacy to build staff capacity through coaching, training, and ongoing technical assistance around the use of evidence-based practices that meet the needs of students with or at risk for literacy-related disabilities. The state’s IDEA program is utilizing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* initiative, a health education campaign and coordination effort focused on improving early identification of children with autism and other developmental disabilities so they can access the services and supports they need. Idaho also incorporates the Center for the Study of Social Policy’s *Strengthening Families* protective factors framework in its training and quality improvement initiatives for ECCE providers.

Idaho also has an established early childhood technical assistance system through which Idaho AEYC, along with its state agency partners at SDE and DHW and the Idaho Center on Disabilities and Human Development (CDHD), provides systematic TA to local communities and community-based organizations. This TA infrastructure is Idaho’s vehicle for disseminating best practices related to quality enhancements, collaboration, and transitions that are generated and/or identified by national TA centers and organizations. The state TA system consists of the following components, each of which will be engaged in the dissemination of PDG related products:
IdahoSTARS Training: As part of IdahoSTARS, the University of Idaho CDHD offers approved training opportunities to support the professional development of Idaho’s child care providers so they can stay current on best practices in the field of ECCE. The RISE online training portal, managed by Idaho AEYC, allows providers to register for and access live, online, or facilitated training events on a range of topics, including basic health and safety, food and nutrition, inclusion practices, and social and emotional health. In addition to four Essential Training modules developed and delivered by IdahoSTARS, programs can also receive training hours for trainings available through national early childhood companies and organizations, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, Child Care Aware of America, National Association for the Education of Young Children, and The Pyramid Model Consortium.

As part of its quality improvement efforts, the IdahoSTARS project uses the nationally recognized Strengthening Families protective factors framework as one of the eight quality standards in the state’s QRIS, offering 17 hours of training on these strategies to increase family strength and healthy child development while reducing child abuse and neglect. Notably, Idaho is the only state that has a distinct standard that measures the trainings and implementation of the Strengthening Families framework in practice.

Child Care Resource Centers (CCRCs): The state’s regional child care resource and referral network is comprised of seven Child Care Resource Centers, staffed by a team of experts who work directly with child care providers to increase their quality practices. In this role, the CCRC regional teams provide coaching and technical assistance for providers needing assistance starting and sustaining a child care business or building various aspects of program quality (e.g., planning indoor and outdoor space, curriculum, developmentally appropriate practice, nutrition guidelines, and family engagement practices). Each regional office also offers a lending library with books,
videos, classroom activities, and other resources on topics such as business management, health and safety, classroom curriculum, learning environments, creative expression, family engagement, and child development.

**Idaho AEYC Professional Development Institute:** This annual conference organized by Idaho AEYC offers early childhood providers across Idaho the opportunity to learn the latest research and best practices on child development and providing high-quality learning experiences for children birth to age eight. To offer additional support to ECCE providers around transitions and the expectations of the kindergarten fall assessment, a new component of this conference will be to collaborate with the State Board of Education to provide professional development around the interpretation of Idaho Reading Indicator scores.

**Idaho AEYC Local and Regional Conferences:** Idaho AEYC also offers professional development opportunities for child care, Head Start, and K-3 teachers in different localities, including the south central and northern parts of Idaho. Partnerships for these events might include higher education partners such as the College of Southern Idaho.

**Early Years Conference:** Organized by the Idaho Office of Head Start Collaboration and Access Idaho in collaboration with SDE, DHW, and the Idaho Commission for Libraries, the Early Years Conference is a biennial event that provides members of Idaho's early childhood communities access to current research, evaluation strategies, and best practices that benefit children birth to age eight. The conference also promotes networking and strengthening of early childhood partnerships, programs and systems building initiatives at community, regional and state levels as well as the benefits of early intervention services to best support Idaho's children and families.

**Early Childhood Information Clearinghouse (ECIC):** Hosted by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, this web-based clearinghouse offers parents, caregivers, and early childhood
professionals an array of information on children birth through age eight. Links are available to connect users to current best practices and research, including resources on the impacts of stress, autism, screen time, healthy eating, and healthy child development.

**Idaho Training Clearinghouse (ITC):** The ITC, funded by the Idaho State Department of Education Special Education department, is designed to provide information, resources, and training for parents and professionals working with young children with disabilities, ages three to five. A variety of ECCE resources are available on the site, including links to the Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Data Collection System, Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines, and Early Childhood SPED Parent Brochure. In addition, the clearinghouse includes a section on planning around transitions, specifically how to address issues that emerge when a child moves from one service system to another and may need to adjust to differences in eligibility requirements, demands for child participation, expectations for child behavior and readiness, and types of intervention. The site also offers links to several national technical assistance centers, including the Center for Early Literacy Learning, Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, What Works Clearinghouse, and the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations.

**Aim Early Idaho’s Infant Mental Health Institute:** Aim Early Idaho, the state’s Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, works to support a system of care which helps families ensure the social and emotional well-being of their infants and young children. As part of their professional development events for members, they produce a biennial institute devoted to infant mental health that is sponsored by Idaho AEYC.

**Lee Pesky Learning Center:** The Lee Pesky Learning Center aims to create a pathway for learning for everyone through its focus on advancing research in the field of learning disabilities and training the next generation of practitioners. One of its initiatives, the Idaho Early Literacy Project
(IELP), creates a bridge between research and practice by providing professional development in eight school districts across Idaho to build the capacity of PreK to 2nd grade teachers to implement evidence-based reading instruction.

*Best practice topics to be disseminated through the TA system*

While Idaho uses its TA system to disseminate best practices on a broad range of topics and issues impacting early childhood, the PDG B-5 grant offers a unique opportunity to focus on the state’s key priority areas, including increasing local coordination and reducing duplication of effort across ECCE services, preparing children for kindergarten, expanding early literacy training to ECCE providers, and improving families’ awareness of and access to ECCE services. Idaho AEYC will use this opportunity to support the dissemination of the following five best practices:

**Local Collaborative Grants (Project 4.1):** In an effort to get more decision-making into local communities, part of the PDG grant will be used towards the strategic expansion of a local ECCE collaborative structure currently modeled by the Preschool the Idaho Way project, an Idaho AEYC initiative that launched collaboratives guided by technical assistance in 14 communities across Idaho. These collaboratives work to bring together important local stakeholders – such as city and school leaders, parents, teachers, and local businesses – who want to see high-quality ECCE opportunities for families in their community. With PDG funding, Idaho AEYC plans to issue competitive grants to 14 local communities to (1) establish a local ECCE governance structure; (2) conduct a local B-5 needs assessment; (3) conduct a local early childhood strategic plan, based on the needs assessment findings, and (4) engage in transition best practices between early childhood and schools. For example, each site will agree to pilot transition strategies to better connect school principals with their feeder child care programs in the community to improve ECCE-school transitions. Ultimately, a total of 16 sites will be engaged and asked to provide a 30 percent match.
Each site will receive technical assistance from Idaho AEYC and will be offered the opportunity to learn from experts along with their peers through a facilitated in-person convening. (See costs under **Project 4.1** in the budget justification section.)

**Regional Early Learning Academies (Project 4.2):** Idaho Governor Brad Little has identified the improvement of third grade reading proficiency as the cornerstone of his education reform efforts. Recognizing that reading outcomes in the primary grades are profoundly influenced by the language and literacy experiences the state’s youngest children, the Idaho Early Learning Academies will strengthen the language and literacy knowledge of the state’s early childhood workforce, sharing best practices across the mixed-delivery system.

During the Summer of 2020, grant partners will convene early childhood educators from across the state’s ECCE system for seven regional academies, providing day-long sessions of intensive professional development designed to support their understanding of literacy’s roots in language and vocabulary development, and the critical roles each can play in fostering early literacy within their classrooms. Each regional academy will be heavily focused on practical examples and demonstration lessons from experienced teachers and experts and will include information on best practices in trauma informed care, creating inclusive settings and conducting early screenings for developmental delays and disabilities (IDEA Part C), and how to interpret Idaho Reading Indicator scores. Mileage reimbursement will be available to all participating teachers, and lodging will be provided for teachers traveling more than 50 miles to attend. In addition, each participant of the Academies will be required to commit to providing three pro bono hours towards improving ECCE programs in their communities with an emphasis on early literacy activities. (See costs under **Project 4.2** of the budget justification section.)
Classroom Mini-Grants (Project 4.3): Each educator that participates in the Early Learning Academy will become eligible for a $500 classroom mini-grant with which to purchase classroom materials designed to support early language and literacy development as well as professional development designed around the materials. As the grant’s lead agency, Idaho AEYC will issue a request for proposals for classroom supply vendors (each of whom will be required to provide at least a 30 percent discount on materials orders, which will be counted as non-federal match). Teachers will work in collaboration with site administrators to select literacy materials approved by Idaho AEYC from the program’s choice of approved vendors (selected through this competitive application process). Grant orders will be processed directly by Idaho AEYC and these materials will become the property of the licensed early childhood program in which each participating teacher is employed.

Frontline Social Service Provider Training (Project 4.4): Based on the South Carolina model, Idaho’s social service programs across state agencies will agree to collaborate to create a “no wrong door” approach for the families of Idaho’s young children seeking services. A comprehensive training will be developed across state agencies, introducing pertinent front-line staff at each organization to the full scope of B-5 services available to young children and their families at each partner organization, better equipping them to support parents in need of services beyond their purview. To ensure broad participation by service providers in the training, Idaho AEYC will partner with the state’s Head Start Collaboration Office to produce a program track at the annual Early Years Conference as well as explore opportunities to leverage existing training delivered by the State Department of Education. (Costs are found under Project 4.4 in the budget justification section.)
Online and Video Modules (Project 4.5): Building off the Early Learning Academies, Idaho AEYC will work in partnership with Idaho Public Television and Lee Pesky Learning Center for the development and production of four one-hour online training modules highlighting best practices in early literacy. Video content to be produced by Idaho Public Television will include an introductory message from Governor Little, with two modules designed for teachers of infants and toddlers (ages 0-3) and two modules aimed at teachers of 3 to 5 year olds within Idaho’s mixed delivery system. The videos, along with training content to be developed by Lee Pesky Learning Center with guidance from Idaho AEYC, will be made available to all of Idaho’s ECCE providers through IdahoSTARS’ existing training portal, RISE. Through RISE, providers can access trainings at their own pace and convenience and receive a certificate showing they have met their licensing requirements immediately upon completion. (Costs are found under Project 4.5 in the budget justification section.)

Activity 5: Improving Overall Quality of ECCE Programs, Providers, and Services

The needs assessment and strategic planning conducted under Activities 1 and 2 of the PDG grant will inform the quality activities discussed below. As indicated in the timeline, it is anticipated that the B-5 needs assessment and strategic plan will be completed during the first ten months of the 12-month project period, leaving the last two months available to focus on quality improvement projects in Activity 5.

Due to the overwhelming need to collect statewide data and improve coordination and collaboration across the early childhood system in Idaho, much of the focus of the PDG grant will be centered on developing a B-5 needs assessment and strategic plan, leaving less time available for the implementation of overall quality improvement strategies for ECCE programs and providers within the state. At the same time, several of Idaho’s ECCE programs are already benefitting from the use of two evidence-based practices that measure program quality—the
Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) in the state’s Head Start programs and the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) in Steps to Quality, the state’s QRIS. Idaho AEYC will leverage these existing efforts to build additional capacity and develop a continuous quality improvement strategy that can reach more early childhood programs across the state. The quality improvement activity proposed below will: (1) utilize key components of the state’s coordination and collaboration infrastructure; (2) be responsive to the findings of the needs assessment and aligned with the strategic plan; and (3) be completed within the remaining grant period.

Building capacity for quality assessment and improvement through CLASS (Project 5.1): Through Idaho AEYC’s role as co-director of IdahoSTARS and its quality initiatives (funded through CCDF quality set-aside dollars), along with their strong relationship with the Head Start Collaboration Office, the state is well positioned to build off existing quality measurement strategies to build capacity for the use of CLASS assessments in more B-5 programs. All federally funded Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Idaho already use the CLASS observational measure to help teachers measure and improve their teacher-child interactions, a key driver of early learning and development. Use of the CLASS Assessment tool with corresponding coaching and technical assistance will support continuous quality improvement efforts focused on high quality teacher-child interactions and overall positive social and academic outcomes for young children birth to five years of age enrolled in Steps to Quality Programs. PDG B-5 funds will be used to train additional Quality Child Care Consultants and IdahoSTARS assessors on CLASS assessments with the goal of reaching more ECCE providers, including those not participating in IdahoSTARS and Head Start. (Costs are found under Project 5.1 of the budget justification section.)
Organizational Capacity and Management

Idaho Association for Education of Young Children (Idaho AEYC) will be the entity that administers the funding and manages the required grant activities (See Governor Little’s letter in File 2-Appendices). Idaho AEYC will coordinate the work of the state agencies, including Idaho State Board of Education, State Department of Education (SDE), Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW), and Idaho Public Television (IdahoPTV) and the Head Start State Collaboration Office. (See the organizational chart in File 2-Appendices). The State Board of Education oversees the state’s educational institutions and public school system in Idaho, including the SDE, IdahoPTV, and UI. DHW is responsible for most of the state’s early childhood programs and services, with the exception of IDEA Part B, Title I of ESSA, and CACFP, which are administered by SDE. Within SDE, the Department of Special Education oversees Part B of IDEA, the Department of Federal Programs administers Title I of ESSA, and the Department of Child Nutrition Programs administers CACFP. Within DHW, the Division of Public Health oversees Idaho’s MIECHV, WIC, and Title V Maternal and Child Health Programs; Division of Medicaid administers Medicaid and CHIP; Division of Welfare administers Idaho’s Child Care Program (CCDF); and the Division of Family & Community Services administers Part C of IDEA and houses the state’s Head Start Collaboration Office.

Idaho AEYC staff are currently responsible for the state’s professional development registry and online training system (RISE), Strengthening Families Project, Academic Scholarships to ECCE professionals, Steps to Quality (QRIS), Preschool the Idaho Way, READY! For Kindergarten, Idaho Child Care Program, and the administrative functions of the organization. Idaho AEYC has a track record of strong grant implementation, having successfully managed Preschool the Idaho Way implementation grants, NAEYC accreditation grants, and W.K. Kellogg Foundation grants. Since 2003, Idaho AEYC has also been instrumental in quality improvement
across Idaho’s ECCE programs as co-manager of *IdahoSTARS*, a $5 million CCDF-funded joint project with the UI Center on Disabilities and Human Development that provides training in child development, education, health, and safety and assessment of child care facilities based on national quality standards.

Idaho AEYC also oversees several projects that work directly with families from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, including *READY! For Kindergarten*, an early learning program that supports parents in their roles as their child’s first and most influential teacher and is offered in both English and Spanish. Other early childhood projects under the purview of Idaho AEYC include *Strengthening Families*, aimed at increasing family strengths, enhancing child development, and reducing child neglect and abuse and *Emerging Leaders*, a project designed to give children served in early childhood programs and new teachers the opportunity to regularly meet with experts in the field.

Nearly all of the activities proposed under the grant will be the ultimate responsibility of Idaho AEYC, with SDE, DHW, CDHD, the McClure Center, Lee Pesky Learning Center, and IdahoPTV participating in a strong collaborative partnership. Idaho AEYC has exceptional organizational capacity and a seasoned management team and will be well positioned to administer the funding and manage the development and sustainability of the grant activities. Idaho AEYC staff has experience doing similar work, particularly through *IdahoSTARS*, and will be successful in implementing the grant activities. Key staff on the project include:

**Beth Oppenheimer, Executive Director, Idaho AEYC.** Beth Oppenheimer has served as the Executive Director of Idaho AEYC since 2010. She has spent many years advocating for the needs of our children and families and is committed to advancing opportunities for all Idaho families. Previously, Ms. Oppenheimer served as the Associate Director for the Student Union Building at
Boise State University, where she provided leadership, development and coordination of programs and services in the Student Union Building to ensure students had access to quality educational, cultural, social, recreational, leadership programs and services to accompany their academic experience. Ms. Oppenheimer has also worked at the University of Idaho, and has worked on education, policy, and development issues for the Junior Achievement of the National Capital Area and the Institute for Women’s Policy Research in Washington, DC. Ms. Oppenheimer will directly oversee the entire grant with the support of the following staff.

Jane Zink, IdahoSTARS Co-Leadership Director, Idaho AEYC has worked to improve quality in early childhood settings since 2013. She led the design and delivery of Idaho’s first QRIS and is a nationally recognized expert in the Strengthening Families Protective Factor framework. Jane leads teams from UI and Idaho AEYC to deliver the IdahoSTARS project. Her area of focus is building an equitable professional development system that increases the qualifications of Idaho’s workforce in order to increase quality practices in programs. She will have primary responsibility for all activities associated with the Idaho AEYC’s IdahoSTARS programs.

Martin Balben, Preschool the Idaho Way Project Director at Idaho AEYC, will be responsible for managing the local collaborative grants under Activity 4. Previously, Martin lead the campaigns and elections work at Conservation Voters for Idaho and has filled various roles in his career including directing grass roots field efforts, campaign management and political strategist. He takes pride in being the recipient of the 2015 Rotary Club’s Distinguished Educator award for his community organizing efforts with students.

Idaho AEYC also has the fiscal, administrative, and performance management capacity to effectively administer the grant funds. Katrice Walters, Idaho AEYC’s Fiscal Manager will manage the fiscal oversight of the PDG B-5 grant. Ms. Walters has over 17 years of experience
administering grants and awards in compliance with federal and state requirements with an additional six years of public accounting experience. She is currently responsible for establishing appropriate internal financial controls, policies and procedures to ensure required conformance for multiple projects and funding sources. In addition, she is responsible for management and oversight of budgeting, reporting, analysis, implementation and monitoring the organization’s financial functions.

**Brandi Nyhof, Idaho AEYC’s Outreach Coordinator**, builds support for early education and the various projects and programs administered by Idaho AEYC. She garners support and creates awareness through outreach and marketing campaigns, fundraising events, conferences, and community education and engagement activities. Ms. Nyhof has almost 15 years of marketing experience and received national recognition for her graphic designs. She graduated in 2004 from Idaho State University with a bachelor’s degree in mass communication. Ms. Nyhof will support outreach as part of the Early Learning Academies (Project 4.2).

**Hailey Michalk, READY! for Kindergarten Program Coordinator, Idaho AEYC.** Ms. Michalk received her B.S. from the University of Idaho in 2006 in Early Childhood Education and Development. She taught as a public-school teacher for five years in Washington State, before moving back to Idaho, where she was born and raised. Hailey began working for Idaho AEYC as a private contractor in 2015, and in 2016, she took on the position of READY! for Kindergarten Program Coordinator. She will support the expansion of this program and BLOCK Fest as part of Project 3.8.

Idaho AEYC also will hire a new **PDG B-5 Project Manager** to oversee the PDG B-5 grant. This individual will be responsible for the administration and implementation of Idaho’s PDG B-5 Grant, which includes design and implementation of program, organizational and
financial plans; development of new policies and processes to successfully implement the grant and meet objectives for each grant activity and strategy; evaluation of grant performance and recommendation of changes to Idaho AEYC; and more.

In addition to these key staff members, Idaho AEYC will collaborate closely with the following partner organizations to implement the activities in the PDG B-5 grant:

Leading the needs assessment and strategic planning process for Idaho’s PDG B-5 grant is Katherine Himes, Ph.D., is Director of the James A. And Louise McClure Center for Public Policy Research at the University of Idaho. Dr. Himes practices muddy boots science policy, with expertise in natural resources, research capacity, international development and science diplomacy. She has developed programs and policies in the areas of water, energy, forest management, rangelands, fire, disaster risk reduction, higher education, women in science, technology transfer and economic growth. Her work spans local, state, federal and international levels. She also serves on grant review panels for the U.S. National Science Foundation, National Academy of Sciences and Department of State and is associate editor of the journal Science & Diplomacy, on the Boise Committee on Foreign Relations board of directors and on the City Club of Boise forum committee.

Melissa Crist, IdahoSTARS Director of Programs at the UI Center on Disabilities and Human Development, serves as Core Director of the Idaho Center on Disabilities and Human Development at the state University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities as well as Co-Director of IdahoSTARS Programs. She has over 15 years of experience in a variety of early childhood focused roles, including inclusive early care and education and early intervention, and currently serves as the CDC’s Act Early Ambassador to Idaho, supporting implementation of developmental monitoring and screening statewide. Ms. Crist will oversee the engagement of
IdahoSTARS with PDG and will support Project 3.3 the expansion of the Learn the Signs. Act Early. checklists.

Christy Cronheim, Program Manager/Coordinator, Part C of IDEA at the Department of Health and Welfare, manages the Idaho Infant Toddler Program. Prior to her current position, she was a Program Specialist, Developmental Specialist and Service Coordinator for the Infant Toddler Program. She also worked for the Idaho Medicaid Program as a project team member and Care Manager, and as a Program System Specialist, Automated for Child and Family Services. She has over 21 years of experience working for the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and successfully completed the Idaho Certified Public Managers Program in December of 2010. Christy has a bachelor’s degree in Speech Pathology and Audiology and a master’s degree in Early Childhood Special Education from Idaho State University. As the state expands early intervention screening, Ms. Cronheim will play a key role in helping the state to meet the needs of families through expanded screening (Project 3.3) and will offer input for the telehealth feasibility study (Project 3.4).

Omair Shamim, M.D., MHS. MK. is the Director of Idaho’s Head Start Collaboration Office in the Department of Health & Welfare. His prior experience includes serving as a National Head Start Fellow at the Office of Head Start in Washington, DC as well as Health & Nutrition Services Manager at a local Head Start program for ten years. Dr. Shamim has a Master’s in Public and Health and a Master’s in Exercise Science and Sports Studies from Boise State University. He has also completed the Certified Public Manager’s course offered by Idaho State’s Department of Health & Welfare. In his previous life, he worked as a Vascular Surgeon and ER doctor at the busiest hospital in Pakistan and successfully treated hundreds of gunshot and motor vehicle accident cases.
**Evelyn Johnson, Ed.D.,** holds a dual appointment as the CEO of Lee Pesky Learning Center, a non-profit organization that creates pathways to learning for the 1 in 5 students who struggle with learning and attention challenges, and Professor of Special Education at Boise State University. Her research focuses on early detection and intervention, validating intensive interventions for students with significant learning challenges, and building teachers’ capacity to meet the needs of young children in their classrooms. Her research has been funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, the National Institutes for Health, the Institute for Education Sciences, and the Kellogg Foundation. Dr. Johnson oversees the Idaho Early Literacy Project, funded by the Kellogg Foundation and several Idaho foundations, to train preschool teachers across Idaho in evidence-based practices in early literacy, self-regulation and early numeracy. Dr. Johnson will support development of module content for **Project 4.5** and content for the Early Learning Academies (Project 4.2).

**Ron Pisaneschi, General Manager, Idaho Public Television.** During his 35 years at IdahoPTV, Mr. Pisaneschi has served as Director of Public Information, Director of Marketing, Director of Programming, and Director of Content before taking on his current duties as General Manager. He served on the Board of Directors of the Public Television Programmers Association from 2002-2007, serving as President in 2006, the PBS Children's Advisory Committee, CPB Research Advisory Panel, and numerous other national funding and programming advisory panels. He holds a fine arts degree in film and photography from the University of San Francisco, and has also worked in educational filmmaking, radio programming, public relations and marketing. In addition to his work for IdahoPTV, he is a member of the Board of Directors of the Idaho Humanities Council, where he served for two terms as Chairman.
Jeff Tucker, Director of Content, Idaho Public Television. Jeff Tucker is the director of content at IdahoPTV and oversees communication, education, programming and co-manages the production department. He also manages independent and contract work, as well as content initiatives and other production relationships with state and private entities. Mr. Tucker manages Idaho in Session, IdahoPTV’s gavel to gavel coverage of the Idaho Legislature and has played a key role by forming strong relationships with Idaho Legislative Services, individual legislators, leadership and other state agencies. Jeff graduated from the University of Idaho with a major in Broadcast Communications and minor in Business Management.

To effectively implement the activities proposed in this PDG B-5 grant application, Idaho AEYC will work in close collaboration with key partners within the state government to ensure regular coordination and communication across the ECCE B-5 system. State agency staff and leadership will be regularly consulted and updated on the progress of the PDG B-5 grant projects, with many serving on the reinstated Early Childhood Advisory Council tasked with the review and approval of the B-5 needs assessment and strategic plan. In addition, the PDG B-5 grant activities will be supported by several key state and regional philanthropic partners (e.g., United Way, Blue Cross Foundation, Twiga Foundation), business partners (e.g., Idaho Association of Commerce & Industry), health system partners (e.g., St. Luke’s, Parents as Teachers), education membership organizations (e.g., Idaho School Board Association, Idaho Education Association), and advocacy and research partners (e.g., Idaho Center for Fiscal Policy, Idaho KIDS COUNT).

Finally, the PDG B-5 program performance evaluation will be supported by Carl Siebert, Ph.d., Director for Program Evaluation and Research Lab (PEARL) at Boise State University. Dr. Siebert received his Ph.D. in Measurement and Statistics from Florida State University, MBA from Duke University, and MS in Biostatistics from Florida State University,
and has undergraduate degrees in both mathematics and computer science. His current work focuses on utilizing advanced measurement and statistical techniques for the analysis of social sciences data, and consulting with researchers and program evaluators on their data analytic strategies. Carl has many years consulting in the private sector and has particular expertise in program evaluation and research design, and currently receives project funding from National Science Foundation, Department of Justice, Institute for Education Science, and Idaho State. He has been PI on multiple research projects, publishes in education and the social and health sciences, and published a book on nonparametric statistics.

**Project Timeline and Milestones**

Table 1 below provides a monthly breakdown of the different activities that will be completed as part of Idaho’s PDG B-5 grant. As noted in the table, the needs assessment and strategic planning process will begin immediately and carry through the first 10 months of the year. The projects funded as part of the Needs Assessment will run concurrently and the findings from each project will be brought together in a Needs Assessment report in month seven and submitted to the ECAC for final approval at the end of month seven. The strategic planning process will begin in month seven with a review of the needs assessment findings and carry through until month 10 when it will be submitted to the ECAC for final approval. This amount of time is necessary given the nature and number of the research questions, the needs assessment and strategic planning methodology, and the lack of previously conducted needs assessments and strategic planning. This timeline means that the quality initiatives will take place in the last two months of the grant year.

Given the nature and scope of the projects conducted under Activity 3, most will run the entire grant year. Outreach Coordinators will be hired for Steps to Quality expansion in months one and two of the grant and will work throughout the year to bring additional programs into the quality
measurement and improvement system and provide Business Startup Grants. The Early Intervention and Screening expansion will run throughout the year with the Telehealth feasibility study occurring in months five through eight. The work with Idaho Public Television will begin immediately and run throughout the year with the creation of videos and modules taking six months to complete and implementation in the second half of the year. The Read to Me Literacy Campaign will be implemented throughout the year. Given that the Countdown to Kindergarten will run from month four to month nine with visits to the school occurring in months four and five and school preparation activities occurring in months six through nine.

Similarly, most of the projects under Activity 4 will also run the length of the grant period. Local collaboration grants will start right away with the grants being made in months two and three of the grant period and the work of the local collaboratives on local needs assessments and strategic planning, as well building local quality capacity throughout the grant period occurring throughout the rest of the year. The Early Learning Academies, and the accompanying mini-grant program will take place in the months six through eight. Frontline social service and the development of the on-line modules will occur throughout the grant period.

Finally, the state will conduct CLASS training in the last two months of the grant as the quality initiatives. These projects are reasonable and commensurate with the scope of the work of each project. Idaho AEYC has well-established relationships with the partner who will implement the work (Head Start State Collaboration Office) who will be able to successfully implement the projects in the allotted time. The PPEP will run the entire year.
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Program Performance Evaluation Plan

Idaho AEYC will partner with Boise State University who will serve as the Outside Evaluator (OE) for the project. The OE will create and ultimately execute a comprehensive program performance evaluation plan (PPEP) that will monitor grant activities and drive continuous quality improvement (CQI). The lead evaluator will be Dr. Carl Siebert (see Organizational Capacity Section), and adequate resources are being allocated to achieve project goals (see Budget Section).

The primary goals guiding the design of the evaluation plan are:

1. To ensure that Idaho AEYC is a good steward of federal funding by tracking project spending and that there is commensurate value in services received for the spending;
2. To determine whether funded activities are implemented with fidelity and in compliance with stated project goals and objectives;
3. To identify metrics to support a CQI process that will help to refine the project activities to better address stakeholder needs and to provide information about implementation that would support the successful expansion of the activities to more ECCE programs, educators, or families.
4. To assess the impact of the relevant project activities on Idaho’s ECCE system and the experiences of children and families with the system.

To meet these goals, a variety of performance measures and information sources will be utilized:

1. Financial measures: Information/data from Idaho AEYC’s financial and grants management systems will be used to track how funds are spent and to verify that local partners/collaborators are meeting their milestones and deliverables.
2. Process measures: Indicators will be identified and used to measure the fidelity of implementation of various project activities.

3. Outcome measures: Indicators will be identified and used to measure the outputs from the activities and their impact on the target population, provider(s), or agency(s).

Throughout the project and beyond, Idaho AEYC will use these measures to monitor its ability to meet identified performance goals.

For many of the project activities, data systems already exist that will make it relatively easy to assess the impact of the activities. For example, program data for the STQ program is housed in a data system (RISE) that tracks provider progress along the quality steps. This system can be used to measure the impact of activities like the STQ outreach and expansion activity by measuring the number of new providers brought into STQ as a result of the outreach. The process for establishing indicators, identifying existing data systems, and establishing new data collection processes are outlined below.

**Step 1: Create two PPEP advisory groups**

Two advisory groups will be created consisting of individuals with various stakeholder perspectives and areas of expertise, one technical and one stakeholder focused. The technical advisory group will include experts in evaluation design, early childhood data systems, psychometrics, data visualization, as well as individual(s) knowledgeable about Idaho’s ECCE mixed delivery system. The stakeholder advisory group will include early childhood advocates, early care and education providers, and parents. These two groups will provide substantive feedback on the plan and will be convened both jointly and separately depending on need and provided feedback from advisees.

**Step 2: Review and agree upon anticipated outcomes of grant activities**
An important step towards finalizing the performance evaluation plan is to clearly define the anticipated outcomes/engagements associated with each grant activity. Each activity will have a specific scope (e.g., number of provider or families touched) and intensity (e.g., number of trainings) that are expected to have an impact on either a system component, ECCE provider, or family/child. Clearly identifying what is to be accomplished with the funding and what outcomes are expected are foundational to understanding the success of the grant and the CQI process.

**Step 3: Finalize metrics and measures for evaluation**

Idaho will use the three types of measures (i.e., financial, process, and outcome) to evaluate each grant activity. With the support of the federal technical assistance provider, the EO will update and refine measures for each activity. With the expected outcomes (Step 2) and measures defined, performance evaluation is possible. **Table 2** (Performance Indicators by Project) shows how the alignment of measures to each activity will be conducted. This alignment will provide a starting point for finalizing the needed evaluation measures that will be used throughout the project. For example, under the *Steps to Quality* Outreach project, the **financial measure** will track the money to hire the Outreach Specialists; the **process measure** will track the number of providers with whom the specialists have connected and provided *Steps to Quality* technical assistance; and the **outcome measure** will track how many of the providers who were contacted became part of the *Steps to Quality program*. The use of the financial measures will ensure that funding from the grant is used as intended; the process measures will help Idaho AEYC understand the fidelity of implementation; and the outcome measures will help understand what has been achieved through the activities. The process and outcome measures are particularly important for the CQI process because it allows Idaho AEYC to understand whether an activity achieved its desired outcome,
and if not, to understand whether the lack of an outcome was caused by unsuccessful implementation or a different reason that would need to be addressed. As such, both measures will be used to refine the logic model and activities.

**Step 4: Design the data collection processes**

Idaho and its evaluation partners will examine the state’s data systems to determine what data are currently available to capture the intended outcomes and what data will need to be collected. The EO will work with Idaho AEYC and the partner agencies to identify how best to identify measures and key indicators, and the best methods to collect these data (e.g., conduct surveys and/or interviews, collect reports).

**Step 5: Collect and analyze data**

Once the indicators and data collection methods are established, the evaluation team will collect and analyze the data to determine the impact of project activities. All data collected (e.g., reports, surveys) for the evaluation will be digitized (if not collected in digital format) and then stored on a secure server that will restrict all access except for those authorized. Audio data (e.g., interviews) will be transcribed and stored on the same secure server. Any identifiable information will be de-identified prior to storage, and the identification links will be stored in a secure safe for use only when preparing for longitudinal data analyses. Analysis methods may include descriptives, correlations, regression/ANOVA, and more advanced techniques when warranted.

**Step 6: Refine logic model and quality activities**

At the end of the grant period, the data will be analyzed to get an indication of which activities are working, which need to be refined, and which need to be replaced with more effective interventions. While it will be difficult to discern child outcomes in one grant year, the process
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<th>Activity</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity 1</td>
<td>Needs Assessment</td>
<td>Funding allocated, SOW/reporting requirements, procurement procedures/ accounting polices followed, monitoring</td>
<td>Successful implementation of NA core tasks; facilities, validation study, IHE tasks</td>
<td>Completed need assessment projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 2</td>
<td>Strategic Plan</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td>Successful implementation of SP tasks</td>
<td>Published statewide SP with recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STQ Outreach</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td># of provider contacts</td>
<td># of new providers in STQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business Startup</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td># of potential provider contacts</td>
<td># of new provider businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EI Screening and Referral</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td># of new providers receiving Act Early information</td>
<td>Increased referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 3</td>
<td>Telehealth Exploration</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td>Successful implementation of feasibility study</td>
<td>Completed feasibility study with recs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Media Campaign</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td># of public awareness spots aired</td>
<td># of parents exposed to messaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read to Me outreach</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td>Additional # of libraries participating</td>
<td>+ # of parents exposed to literacy messaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CTK pilot</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td>Successful implementation of pilot</td>
<td>Parent ease/ satisfaction with transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ready for Kindergarten</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td># of parents participating in workshops</td>
<td>Parent ease/satisfaction transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 4</td>
<td>Local Grants</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td># of grants, clear SOW for community collaboratives</td>
<td>Local collaborative structure; Completed Local NA/SP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Early Learning Academies</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td>Regional Academies held</td>
<td># of participants, pre/post attitude survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mini-grants</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td># of participants receiving grants</td>
<td># providers using grants to improve classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frontline Training</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td># of staff trained</td>
<td># of staff with attitude/practice change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Online modules</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td>Successful devt. of modules</td>
<td># of providers accessing modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 5</td>
<td>CLASS training</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td>CLASS training completed</td>
<td>+ # of providers exposed to CLASS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and outcome measure should give a good indication of the impact of the activities on different system components during that time, which would lead to stronger child outcomes.

Potential obstacles for implementing the program performance evaluation and how those obstacles will be addressed

Implementation of the activities identified in the program performance evaluation will be challenging given the short amount of time available in the overall grant timeline. After outcomes from each grant activity are clearly articulated, there will be limited time to successfully finalize metrics to measure the activities, establish data collection processes for the metrics, complete data collection and analysis, and refine the logic model and quality activities as part of the research process. To overcome these obstacles, Idaho AEYC will start working with the EO on refining the evaluation plan immediately upon receiving the grant. This will allow for adequate time to begin working on the six steps outlined in the process prior to the award to ensure successful implementation of the program performance evaluation plan.

Logic Model/Expected Outcomes

Figure 2 on page 57 presents a logic model that outlines the conceptual framework for the PDG B-5 grant and connects state inputs, resources, and grant activities to the short-, long-, and ultimate goals of the grant. The grant will build upon the state’s infrastructure to address the needs of the target populations. As discussed previously, the state’s vision and ultimate goal of the grant is to create a stronger ECSS that increases the percentage of children reading on grade level at third grade. The first step toward this goal will be to better understand and address key issues in the state and begin to build a strong ECSS that improves school readiness outcomes among the populations that are at risk of not reading on grade level by third grade. While achieving these outcomes will not be realized in one year, the activities outlined will work to move the state closer to these long-term outcomes by facilitating increased coordination and collaboration; improving
the quality ECCE providers serving vulnerable children; increasing parental knowledge of ECCE and parental choice; and increasing parental resources. A description of the connections between the activities, outputs, and long-term goals is below.

*Inputs: state and local system components*

On the far left of the logic model are the state entities that will participate in the grant activities. Idaho AEYC is the designated state entity and will coordinate and support the work of multiple state agencies described in the *Organizational Capacity* section. In addition to the state agencies, a number of other partners will support this work, including the Center on Disabilities and Human Development at the UI, Boise State University, the Lee Pesky Learning Center, the Idaho Commission for Libraries, the McClure Center for Public Policy Research, Idaho Children’s Trust Fund, and Parents and Teachers.

In addition to these inputs, the PDG B-5 grant will draw on or leverage other state resources, including the state’s committed ECCE providers; philanthropic organizations (e.g. Albertsons Foundation) and advocates; the Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry; Health System Partners; and the Idaho Association of Elementary School Principals and the Idaho Education Association.

The grant activities are discussed in detail throughout the application. The activities will produce specific output/short term outcomes that are discussed in the PPEP table above. These outputs/short term outcomes will put Idaho on a path to longer term outcomes related to school readiness and child well-being that is aligned with Idaho’s early learning standards. These school readiness outcomes support Governor Little’s ultimate goal of more children reading on grade level by third grade.
FIGURE 2. IDAHO’S PDG B-5 LOGIC MODEL

**Target Population:** Children that are at-risk for not reading on grade level by third grade, including children in poverty, children in foster care, homeless children, children with disabilities, children who speak a language other than English at home, children experiencing trauma, children from military families, and children from minority households.

**Project Goal:** Increase the state’s understanding of its B-5 ECSS and take initial steps to system coordination & quality improvement.

**Inputs**
- State Agencies
- Idaho AEYC*
- Collaborating Partners
- ECAC
- *Designated State Entity

**Funding/Resources**
- Engaged and Committed Providers
- PDG B-5 Grant
- Philanthropic Support
- Business Community
- Advocacy and Research Organizations
- Health System Partners
- Education Associations

**Activities**
- Needs Assessment
- Strategic Plan
- Empowering Parents to Support School Transitions
- Local Collaborative Grants
- Public Awareness and Family Engagement
- Early Learning Academies
- Steps to Quality Outreach and Expansion
- Expansion of ECI Screening and Referral Services
- Literacy Focused PD and Materials
- CLASS Assessment

**Outputs/Short-Term Outcomes**
- ECE collaboratives
- Increase in the # of families exposed to messaging about quality ECE
- Successful implementation of 7 regional literacy summits
- Increase in # of providers exposed to early intervention screening training
- Telehealth Report
- Increase in # of providers participating in STQ and Business Startups
- Successful implementation of mini-grants
- Increase in # of families and educators engaged in ECE-kindergarten transitions
- Increase in # of CLASS-reliable Assessors

**Long-Term Outcomes**
- Improved Cognitive Skills
- Improved Motor Development, Physical Well-Being, and Health
- Improved Kindergarten Scores on Idaho Reading Indicator

**Ultimate Goal**
- Children Reading on Grade Level by Third Grade
- Improved Social and Emotional Skills
- Improved General Knowledge
- Improved Communication and Language Skills
The PDG B-5 initial application is designed to be the starting point of Idaho’s efforts to expand, enhance, and sustain its current ECSS. As discussed in the Needs Assessment section, the lack of basic information about the system has made it difficult to capitalize on the interest of state policy makers who want a clear plan before committing state resources. The activities of this PDG B-5 grant—particularly the needs assessment and strategic plan—will provide the foundational information necessary to make the case for funding to sustain and build upon the current activities. In many ways, the PDG B-5 is a “proof of concept” for early childhood systems building in the state. Accordingly, to support the sustainability of the activities, Idaho AEYC, in collaboration with its evaluation partner, will create a sustainability plan for the activities that answer these fundamental questions: (1) What activities were funded under the PDG B-5 grant?; (2) What did the activities achieve?; (3) What are the implications of not continuing the funding for children and families?; (4) What funding would be necessary to sustain the activity?; and (5) What are potential sources of sustainability funding? It is hoped that the strong implementation of the grant activities in addition to this sustainability plan will provide evidence that will lead to more robust participation among state policy leaders in ECCE systems development.

Equally important, a key part of the sustainability of the grant activities involve the collaborative structures that will be put in place as a result of the grant. Governor Little’s decision to reinstate the ECAC will play an important role in maintaining the cooperation and collaboration of the state agencies after the federal funding ends. In addition, building local collaborative infrastructures will also support sustained cooperation and coordination after the grant has ended.

**Dissemination Plan**

Idaho AEYC has a communications infrastructure that disseminates information to key stakeholders and target audiences across the state. The goals of the PDG B-5 dissemination plan
will be to create an awareness of the supports and opportunities for professional development funded by the grant, provide information that promotes collaboration and coordination across the stakeholders, and support the success of the other outcomes in the grant aligned with Idaho’s vision. The state will use pre-existing communication metrics (e.g., website hits, newsletter emails opened, etc.) to assess the effectiveness of its communication strategies.

**Third-Party Agreements**

There are no third-party agreements as part of the grant. Idaho AEYC will collaborate closely with partners to ensure the successful implementation of the grant activities and has secured the commitment of key partners (see the letter of commitment in File 2-Appendices).

**Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds**

Idaho AEYC’s fiscal manager will work to ensure that grant activities comply with applicable grant statutes and requirements. The PDG B-5 director, with the support of the fiscal manager, will engage in concerted oversight practices including reviewing applications, budgets, and proposals; preparing invoice templates based on approved budgets to track categorical expenditures; requiring reporting documentation; and reviewing fiscal activity reports on the grant expenditures on a monthly basis. All expenditure reimbursements will require the review and approval of both fiscal and program staff to ensure that expenditures are in accordance with the grant assurances outlined on grant awards and contractual agreements prior to payment authorization.
Project Budget

Idaho PDG B-5 Budget Narrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object Class Categories</th>
<th>Federal</th>
<th>Non-federal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Personnel</td>
<td>$121,210</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$121,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Fringe Benefits</td>
<td>$48,678</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$48,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Travel</td>
<td>$22,536</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$22,536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Equipment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Supplies</td>
<td>$1,400</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Contractual</td>
<td>$3,114,688</td>
<td>$1,433,000</td>
<td>$4,547,688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Construction</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Other</td>
<td>$15,446</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$15,446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Total Direct Charges</td>
<td>$3,323,958</td>
<td>$1,433,000</td>
<td>$4,756,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Indirect Charges</td>
<td>$19,634</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$19,634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. TOTALS (sum of i and j)</td>
<td>$3,343,592</td>
<td>$1,433,000</td>
<td>$4,776,592</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bonus Points

Idaho has a meaningful plan described in the Needs Assessment section to measure the unduplicated number of children being served across programs using software that will merge enrollment lists and purge duplicate records to obtain an unduplicated count.

Conclusion

This PDG B-5 application brings to life Governor Little’s vision for promoting early literacy through a more coordinated, collaborative, and impactful B-5 ECSS in Idaho. The grant will build new collaborative structures at the state and local level, enhance system capacity, provide additional supports to providers, and increase parent awareness about the importance of high-quality ECCE to help them make more informed choices about the care arrangements for their children. These efforts will promote school readiness for Idaho’s children while also contributing to the state’s economic growth by providing safe, nurturing environments for the children of working parents.