

# Request for Proposals

## Early Childhood Workforce Innovation Grants

*Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce in Colorado*

**Initiative Partners**

Early Milestones Colorado  
Buell Foundation  
Gary Community Investments  
Colorado Department of Education  
Colorado Department of Human Services

**Lead Agency:**

Early Milestones Colorado  
[www.coloradoecworkforce.org](http://www.coloradoecworkforce.org)

**Fiscal Sponsor**

Rose Community Foundation

**Submit proposals:** [info@coloradoecworkforce.org](mailto:info@coloradoecworkforce.org)

**Application Deadline: Wednesday, February 13, 2019**

**Submit Questions to:**

Kacee Miller, Project Director  
*Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce in Colorado*  
Early Milestones Colorado  
[kmiller@earlymilestones.org](mailto:kmiller@earlymilestones.org)

**Informational Webinar:**

Early Milestones Colorado will host an optional webinar on January 16<sup>th</sup>, from 10 am- 11:30 am  
Registration is required.

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5710429483185676291>

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## Introduction

The *Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce in Colorado Initiative* (Initiative) announces a Request for Proposals for 2019 funding of the Early Childhood Workforce Innovation Grants for local **partnerships** dedicated to advancing the ECE workforce. Those with innovative ideas for systemic improvement in recruitment, retention, and compensation of an effective, qualified early childhood workforce are invited to apply.

We are looking for committed partners with a strong vision, a serious commitment to drive change, and a flexible mindset to adapt to the challenges of implementing truly innovative work. This highly competitive grant has an emphasis on data-informed, sustainable, systems-improvement efforts that address community challenges. These grants are part of a larger Initiative to advance the workforce throughout Colorado; as such, ongoing learning from grantees is critical and is being used to inform broader statewide change.

The Initiative is an innovative public-private partnership including Gary Community Investments, Buell Foundation, Early Milestones Colorado, the Colorado Department of Education, and the Colorado Department of Human Services. For this grant opportunity, the Initiative is collaborating with Rose Community Foundation, who will serve as the fiscal sponsor for grantmaking.

**Role of Early Milestones Colorado:** Early Milestones Colorado (Milestones) is the lead agency for the Initiative and the primary point of contact for information about this funding opportunity. Milestones will oversee project management, operations, Initiative evaluation, and communications. Importantly, Milestones will support grantees to advance the workforce through technical and other assistance on project implementation, including the collection and use of data for needed adjustments and improvements throughout the grant cycle. More generally, Milestones will champion the work and engage in learning with grantees and Initiative partners.

**Role of the Initiative Partners:** The Initiative partners comprise an advisory team, which oversees grant selection and implementation and uses data and information from local projects to address barriers and opportunities at the state and local level and to promote best practices and needed systemic improvements to advance the workforce in Colorado.

**Role of Rose Community Foundation:** Rose Community Foundation will serve as the fiscal sponsor for the Early Childhood Workforce Innovation Grants and, as such, will work collaboratively with Milestones to administer the grants and manage other grant-related fiscal matters.

**Role of the Evaluator:** Mathematica Policy Research (Mathematica) will serve as the evaluator and technical assistance provider for the Early Childhood Workforce Innovation Grants, implementing their Li2 model (Learn, Innovate, Improve) to support grantees with rapid cycle evaluation. Mathematica provides a collaborative, flexible approach that follows a clearly defined analytic process to support quick, data informed development of local innovations.

**Questions and Communications:** All communications about this opportunity should be directed to Kacee Miller, Project Director – [kmiller@earlymilestones.org](mailto:kmiller@earlymilestones.org)

2019 RFP Release Date	1/7/19
Informational Webinar (Optional)	1/16/19 10 am- 11:30 am; Registration is required. (Will be recorded) <a href="https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5710429483185676291">https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5710429483185676291</a>
Due Date: Email Intention to Apply (Required for all applicants)	2/1/19 By 5:00 pm
Due Date: Proposals	2/13/19 By 5:00 pm
How to Submit	Please submit via email to: <a href="mailto:info@coloradoecworkforce.org">info@coloradoecworkforce.org</a>
Contact Information	Kacee Miller: <a href="mailto:kmiller@earlymilestones.org">kmiller@earlymilestones.org</a>
Grant Awards	Various sized grants, individual grants not to exceed \$250,000 In this initial round, the maximum funding available for all grants is \$630,000
Grant Timeframe	May 1, 2019 – April 30, 2020

## How to Apply

**Intention to Apply:** You **must** submit an intention to apply by February 1, 2019 in order for your proposal to be considered eligible for 2019 funding. If you are planning to apply, send an email noting your intention to [info@coloradoecworkforce.org](mailto:info@coloradoecworkforce.org) by 5:00 pm MST on February 1, 2019. In the email, please identify the anticipated lead agency/applicant, partners, and project title or approach. We recognize these may change somewhat prior to proposal submission. Please include in the subject line: *Intention to Apply – Partnership/Project Name*.

**Submission:** Proposals, including all Application Components, must be submitted to Early Milestones Colorado via email by 5:00 pm MST on **February 13, 2019**. Please submit proposals to: [info@coloradoecworkforce.org](mailto:info@coloradoecworkforce.org). Please include in the subject line: *Proposal: Partner/Project Name*. Please note the file size limits of your email provider. If attachments cannot be included in one email, indicate the number of emails you are sending, and the attachments included in each. Additionally, please reflect this in the subject line (i.e., Proposal: Partner/Project Name\_1of3).

Alternatively, you may submit your materials by emailing us a link to a Dropbox folder that houses your proposal documents. In your Dropbox portal online, navigate to the folder that contains your proposal, click “Share”, and then click “Create a link”. Copy the link and include it in your email to [info@coloradoecworkforce.org](mailto:info@coloradoecworkforce.org). If you have questions about using Dropbox, please feel free to email Cynthia Apfelbaum at [capfelbaum@earlymilestones.org](mailto:capfelbaum@earlymilestones.org).

**Labeling Documents:** Please label documents as follows.

- a. Project/Partnership Name\_Grant Narrative
- b. Project/Partnership Name\_Project Strategy and Outcomes Worksheet
- c. Project/Partnership Name\_Budget Template
- d. Project/Partnership Name\_Financial Documents
- e. Project/Partnership Name\_Letters of Support

**Questions About Submission:** If you have questions about the proposal submission, email your questions to Kacee Miller, Transforming the EC Workforce in Colorado Project Director, [kmiller@earlymilestones.org](mailto:kmiller@earlymilestones.org).

**Informational Webinar:** Early Milestones Colorado will host one informational webinar on **January 16, 2019 from 10:00 am- 11:30 am MST**. [Registration](https://www.coloradoecworkforce.org) for the webinar is required to participate. A recording will be posted to [www.coloradoecworkforce.org](https://www.coloradoecworkforce.org) by January 23, 2019.

**Completing Your Application:** We prefer to receive Word or Excel submissions, rather than a PDF. The grant narrative should be no more than 6-8 pages in 11-point font; attachments, including the *Budget Template, Project Strategy and Outcomes Worksheet*, financial documents, Letters of Support, or other materials, may accompany the narrative. Documents should be formatted to print on 8.5x11" paper. Applicants bear the sole responsibility for ensuring that submitted proposals, including all attachments, are complete, accurate, and received on time. Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed. A checklist has been provided to ensure you include all necessary information with your proposal.

**After Submitting Your Application:** Once you have submitted your grant application, you will receive an email confirmation that your email has been received.

**Grant Decisions:** We anticipate decisions to be made in early April. If we need additional information about your proposal, we may request a phone interview in March. Please be sure to provide the best email and phone contact so that we might schedule these in a timely fashion.

## Background and Resources

"As the need for early childhood care and education programs increases, so do the accompanying demands for qualified staff. Yet there is a critical shortage of trained early childhood teachers and administrators. While the number of people entering the field is at an all-time low, more than four out of 10 early childhood educators in Colorado leave the field each year. Professional dissatisfaction is attributed to low pay, lack of benefits, and absence of professional respect and recognition."

These words ring true today but, in fact, they were authored *more than 25 years ago* as part of the Governor's First Impressions Commission Report of 1991-1992 Activities. The early childhood (EC) workforce is stuck in an intolerable period of stasis, and generations of Colorado children and families have suffered as a result. By comparison, the wildly ambitious goal to send an astronaut to the moon was accomplished in a mere eight years. The barriers to achieve our own "moonshot goal" of transforming the early childhood workforce are significant. While Colorado has put important pieces in place in the last few years, Colorado's lack of general progress in the last quarter of a century is no different than the vast majority of states. Communities throughout the state have voiced strong concerns about these increasing struggles. Many stakeholders indicate they are in crisis mode, continuously searching for qualified staff and often needing to compromise on education and experience due to the dearth of available candidates.

Responding to these barriers, the *Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce in Colorado Initiative* (Initiative) was launched. We believe we have the capacity in Colorado to create significant changes in recruitment, retention, and compensation. Momentum for the issue is apparent in both the executive and legislative branches, and multiple state agencies are actively working to pursue opportunities, address barriers, and implement elements of the EC Workforce 2020 Plan. And, perhaps most significantly, many community partners are already seeding innovation with concrete goals and plans to advance those teaching and caring for our youngest Coloradans.

The Initiative has supported the development of a state plan to advance the workforce (Colorado's Early Childhood Workforce 2020 Plan) and the completion of two research studies - a workforce survey including both state and regional findings, and an economic sector analysis - to better understand the experience and impact of the workforce in Colorado. In the second year, the Initiative will build off the success of the 2018 innovation grants and fund promising local partnerships with strong ideas and a

commitment to change in their communities and statewide. Innovations awarded during the first year of funding are tackling recruitment, retention, and compensation through a variety of strategies to support the EC Workforce in their community. Although just partially through the Year One grant period, current communities are already exhibiting great progress. **Please review these [resources, which include research studies and a brief summary of the work of 2018 EC Workforce Innovation Grantees](#), for more information.** ([www.coloradoecworkforce.org](http://www.coloradoecworkforce.org))

Said one community member about Colorado’s EC workforce challenges, “The crisis isn’t coming. It is here.” As such, the Initiative partners are looking for teams willing and ready to tackle this crisis today by testing innovative ideas that hold the promise for long-term, systemic, sustainable change.

The Early Childhood Workforce Innovations Grants are creating both additional urgency and opportunity for progress toward our “moonshot” goal. These grants are intended to spur the culture of innovation, as it is clear more of the same will result in continued stasis. This opportunity is designed to quickly capitalize on all learnings, so that promising approaches have the best chance to spread and provide the impetus for sustainable and systemic improvement and change. The Initiative partners will continue to push to expand the boundaries of what is possible on the ground, through a commitment to translate and champion local learnings and progress into opportunities for larger change that will benefit the workforce throughout the state.

## Grant Awards and Timeline

Partnerships may apply for up to \$250,000 for one year of funding. We encourage proposals for grants of **all sizes** to meet individual project needs, with a reasonable plan to expend funds during the grant term. Grants will be awarded for one year, from May 1, 2019 through April 30, 2020. There may be an opportunity for additional funding past the grant award cycle, based on progress, engagement, and the availability of funding. In this initial round, the maximum funding available for all grants is \$630,000.

### Timeline

Date	Activity
1/7/19	RFP for Early Childhood Workforce Innovation Grants released
1/16/19	Webinar (optional): 10:00 am- 11:30 am; Registration is required. <a href="https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5710429483185676291">https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5710429483185676291</a> A recording will be posted to <a href="http://www.coloradoecworkforce.org">www.coloradoecworkforce.org</a> by 1/23/19
2/1/19	<b>Required:</b> Email <i>Intent to Apply</i> to Milestones by 5:00 pm <a href="mailto:info@coloradoecworkforce.org">info@coloradoecworkforce.org</a>
2/13/19	Proposals due to Early Milestones Colorado by 5:00 pm Please submit via email to: <a href="mailto:info@coloradoecworkforce.org">info@coloradoecworkforce.org</a>
3/18/19-3/22/19	Phone interviews may be conducted (estimated dates)
4/8/19-4/12/19	Grants awarded (estimated dates)
5/1/19	Grants begin
4/30/20	Grants activities completed

## Eligibility and Partnerships

**Eligible Applicants:** Eligible applicants for this grant opportunity may include but are not limited to:

- 501(c)3 organizations/non-profits focused on early childhood and/or workforce development
- Early Childhood Councils
- Workforce development boards
- Local school districts or boards
- Colleges and universities
- Local government, including departments of health and/or human services, public health, education, community development, town councils, etc.
- Other non-profit entities such as Family Resource Centers

**Partnerships:** We are looking for active partnerships to address ECE workforce challenges. Though a single entity will be the primary applicant/lead agency for the grant and the recipient of grant funds, additional partners are required. While we understand that participants have limited time, we believe that part of what makes innovative projects successful is the shared commitment to change and the connections and ideas continuously exchanged among experts, people with varied skills, resources, and experiences. Projects should identify partners that will ensure successful implementation. We suggest both traditional (e.g., early childhood organizations) and nontraditional (e.g., workforce development boards, town councils, local businesses) partners to broaden the base of support and ensure sustainability. Additionally, partners should identify a “local champion” who will help ensure sustainability and will serve as an ambassador for the project in the community. This individual should be well respected and have strong connections within the community. It is expected that they will be willing to advocate for the continuation of the work. (See *Application Components* for more information.)

**Ineligible Entities:** For-profit businesses are not eligible to apply as the primary applicant; however, they may partner with one of the entities listed above.

## Grant Overview and Key Components

We seek innovative ideas with the potential to drive systemic improvement in recruitment, retention, and compensation of an effective, qualified early childhood workforce. Beyond ideas, we need pioneers willing to test these novel, groundbreaking ideas and produce proof points for more effective and efficient systems to support the workforce. We want to learn with you as you test new things, so we can better understand what works and what doesn't. For this grant opportunity, “early childhood workforce” is defined as those who work with children birth through five in licensed schools, centers, and homes (e.g., teachers, directors, family child care providers); at times the workforce is referred to as “early educators”. “Community” is defined by the grant applicant/partnership and might include multiple partners from different geographies, a neighborhood, city, county, school district, region, or the state.

The emphasis of this grant is on systems improvement and testing breakthrough solutions. We are looking for innovative ideas that, through a dedicated “can do” team, can be turned into proof points with the potential to spread throughout the state. For example, it's not enough for an application to propose using grant funds to provide additional sessions of a current professional development offering in their community. Competitive applications might propose system improvements that support

recruitment of teachers, by helping promising candidates earn lead teacher qualifications and gain needed competencies in a new, innovative, or fast-track way.

The RFP asks for a number of components to try to understand your “moonshot” goal and how you plan to get there. Partners will be expected to identify the specific need to be addressed, the targeted population and community, the goal to transform recruitment, retention, and compensation, and a Theory of Change for how the strategy and activities in the proposal might lead to this ambitious goal. Additionally, proposals should include a rationale for why the project activities will lead to the proposed outcomes, impact their transformative goal, and ultimately impact recruitment, retention, and/or compensation of an effective, qualified workforce.

## Theory of Change

We would like to understand *your* Theory of Change —how your proposed strategy will impact your long-term, transformative goal. The Theory of Change should include the following: transformative goal, lever(s) for change, project strategy, activities, outputs, and outcomes.



**Appendix A** contains guidance for completing your Theory of Change and our expectations for what should be included. **Appendix B** contains the Initiative’s *Theory of Change for Increasing Recruitment, Retention, and Compensation of an Effective, Qualified Workforce*, which may be helpful as well. Your Theory of Change should be described in the grant narrative; specific details can be addressed in the required ***Project Strategy and Outcomes Worksheet***.

## TRANSFORMATIVE GOAL

Proposals should identify the big picture goal the partners hope to achieve. These groundbreaking, transformative (moonshot) goals should be the target toward which all project activities are aimed. The goal may not be achieved during the grant term, and other strategies may be required, but we want to see how your strategy will impact your ambitious goal and the Initiative’s goal of increasing recruitment, retention, and compensation of an effective, qualified workforce.

## LEVERS FOR CHANGE

We have outlined four “levers for change” (defined below) for this Initiative: compensation, targeted recruitment, working conditions, and education and career pathways. Successful proposals will identify one or more strategies to *systemically* address one or more of the levers for change, with a plan for sustainability. **Special consideration will be given to projects that address compensation and improve the financial well-being of the workforce by providing sustainable solutions.** Addressing more than one lever does not necessarily make a proposal more competitive. **We are looking for the most ready projects and partners with innovative ideas and the potential for making an impact.**

Appendix A contains some *example* activities or strategies to better illustrate our definition of each lever for change; these are only examples, and **other innovative strategies that meet community needs are strongly encouraged.** Also, please refer to the [Initiative resources](#) for more information about potential strategies to address workforce needs and the work of the 2018 innovation grantees.

**Lever 1: Compensation** - Improve the financial well-being of the workforce through increased wages, benefits, affordable housing, loan forgiveness, or other factors.

**Lever 2: Targeted Recruitment** - Build a pipeline of effective, qualified candidates entering the field or into licensed early childhood centers, schools, or homes to meet demand.

**Lever 3: Working Environments** - Ensure working environments/conditions are conducive to job satisfaction/retention and instructional effectiveness.

**Lever 4: Education and Career Pathways** - Create education and career pathways to attract and induct new educators, ensure a competent workforce, and support retention in the field.

### PROJECT ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, AND OUTCOMES

Proposals should identify the activities, outputs, and outcomes anticipated during the project period (or grant term) and a rationale for why these activities will lead to the proposed outcomes.

**ACTIVITIES:** Activities are specified work during the grant duration, including actions used to bring about program change, results, or outcomes. A timeline with milestones for activities should be included. Please note, grant funds may be used for activities such as strategy development, education, communications, marketing, and advocacy but must not be used for direct lobbying<sup>1</sup>. Direct compensation of the workforce must not be entirely funded by this grant. Both a minimum 25% financial match as well as a feasible plan for sustainability beyond the term of the grant are required.

**OUTPUTS:** These are direct products of the project activities. Proposals should describe the project outputs, a proposed timeline for completion, and information about how they will measure whether the outputs were achieved.

**OUTCOMES:** Outcomes are the result of the activities or services provided – such as changes in behaviors, knowledge, skills, or conditions. Proposals should identify outcomes at three times: during implementation, at the grant’s conclusion, and in the future. Additionally, proposals should discuss how the project outcomes will be assessed during the project.

### INTERMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Proposals should describe intended intermediate and long-term outcomes resulting from the project. Please note, it may not be feasible to attain these outcomes during the grant term; for some projects this will be feasible, and for others it will not. Rather, we would like to better understand how you think your proposed strategy will impact your transformative, “moonshot” goal and the Initiative’s goal of increasing recruitment, retention, and compensation of an effective, qualified workforce.

### Using Data for Decision Making and Rapid, Iterative Improvement

Innovation isn’t easy; it’s as much about the process as the outcome. We recognize that implementation of innovative projects requires a flexible mindset ready to address the unanticipated. We are looking for grantees eager to learn from and act on challenges. Our expectation is that grantees will try things, likely face obstacles or barriers, and, as a result, will use what they learn to pivot and try a new approach. With the guidance of Mathematica Policy Research, we expect partners to engage in rapid iteration to

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<sup>1</sup> “Direct lobbying” is defined as any attempt to influence specific legislation through communications with any member or staff of a legislative body or any government official who may participate in formulating legislation. Direct lobbying also includes attempts to influence the general public concerning a specific view on a ballot initiative, referendum, or similar process.

use data and information to test, learn, pivot, and test and learn again, realizing that every effort – successful or not – provides valuable information. Therefore, a key component of this project is the use of data to track progress toward identified targets and adjust course as needed. Proposals should demonstrate capacity to strategically capture and track data and a plan that builds in decision points to allow for rapid iteration as quickly as needed. Mathematica will work closely with grantees to support this learning process using the Learn, Innovate, Improve (LI2) framework. Proposals should identify designated personnel to ensure this iterative process is prioritized. Project funding may support refinement of data collection processes and staffing to support the use of data in every day practice, including engagement in technical assistance.

We want to learn with you and provide support to ensure the best chance of project success. As such, Milestones and Mathematica will partner with awarded grantees and provide technical support to 1) refine project outputs and outcomes, 2) identify data and information sources, and 3) utilize data to engage in iterative cycles of learning and implementation. Grantees will be expected to share learnings, challenges, and opportunities with other grantees and the Initiative partners, so that we might learn from one another and spread effective practices.)

## Grant Requirements

Projects will be chosen based upon a clearly identified need, a transformative goal and Theory of Change to impact the goal, the viability of the project design, the approach to systemic improvement and change, the potential for sustainability, the strength and composition of the partnership, identification of a committed local champion to advocate for the work, readiness and willingness to engage in using data in rapid, iterative cycles of learning, and willingness to be part of a learning community. Special consideration will be given to projects that address compensation and improve the financial well-being of the workforce. Communities should submit original innovations that tackle their unique workforce issues. Proposals submitted in 2018 that were not selected should not be resubmitted verbatim. Please see the *Application Components* for specific requirements of the proposal.

## Application Components

### Section 1: Lead Agency/Primary Applicant Organizational Information

- ORGANIZATION NAME
- ORGANIZATION ADDRESS – Provide mailing address, city, state, and zip code.
- ORGANIZATION PHONE, EMAIL, AND WEBSITE
- NAME OF CEO OR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
- PRIMARY CONTACT FOR THIS GRANT REQUEST – Provide the name of the person we should contact to discuss this grant request. If it is the same as the CEO or Executive Director, please indicate.
- PRIMARY CONTACT'S EMAIL ADDRESS
- PRIMARY CONTACT'S PHONE NUMBER
- FISCAL SPONSOR – Does your organization use a fiscal sponsor? If so, provide the organization name, address website, name of a contact person, phone number, and email address.
- YEAR FOUNDED

## Section 2: Grant Narrative and Supporting Documentation

The grant narrative should address the following questions and topics. Please submit your narrative as a Word Document. The narrative should be no smaller than 11-point font and should not exceed 6-8 pages.

- 1) **NEED:** Please describe the early childhood workforce need to be addressed. Please include any data and/or information to support this need. Describe any conditions that contribute to early childhood workforce challenges in your community.
- 2) **TARGET POPULATION:** Define the target population or segment of the workforce that will benefit from your efforts, and define the community (neighborhood, city, county, region, collaboration, the state, etc.) or catchment area for this population. (e.g., This project will benefit lead and assistant teachers in licensed child care settings in X and Y counties.) Please provide relevant data or information about the population.
- 3) **PROPOSED APPROACH TO ADDRESS THE NEED:** The proposal should include: your transformative goal, the strategy and activities you propose to implement, and the measurable outcomes or outputs you would expect to see during or after the grant term. Please include information about the following in the grant narrative and/or via the **required** *Project Strategy and Outcomes Worksheet*, as appropriate. We recommend using the grant narrative to provide a brief overview of your conceptual approach and providing specific details about benchmarks and dates using the worksheet.
  - What is your transformative goal for systems change to meet the need in your community?
  - What lever or levers for change do you propose to address?
  - What strategy and activities do you propose to undertake and in what timeframe?
  - What project outputs will result from these activities during the grant term? (Consider quantity, quality, and process outputs.)
  - What outcomes will result? How will you assess outputs and outcomes throughout the grant term?
  - Which intermediate and long-term outcomes do you anticipate during the grant term? Which might be impacted after the grant term?
  - Why do you think the proposed strategy and activities will impact your transformative goal? How does this align to the Initiative's goal to increase recruitment, retention, and compensation of an effective, qualified early childhood workforce?
  - How will you know your project has been successful?
- 4) **SUSTAINABILITY:** Please describe how you will approach sustainability after the grant term is over. Sustaining efforts will likely include both financing and other elements such as leadership, strategic planning, partnership, capacity building, communications, public policy, and evaluation.
- 5) **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY OF LEAD AGENCY:** Why do you think your organization is best suited to do this work? Briefly describe your organization's role regarding the early childhood workforce, including any current or past initiatives to address workforce needs. Please list any other relevant early childhood initiatives currently underway in your community and briefly describe your organization's level of responsibility for these initiatives. How do the goals of the proposed project align with those of your organization? How will your organization leverage any other

relevant early childhood initiatives to accomplish the proposed work? Describe who in your organization will be responsible for managing the project and their relevant skills and/or experience related to successful project implementation.

- 6) **PARTNERSHIPS:** Strong partnerships with authentic commitments, a history of partnership (or readiness to partner), a readiness to implement the project, including a flexible mindset to adjust and change based on project data, are key criteria. Consider both traditional and nontraditional partners to broaden the base of support and facilitate more sustainable outcomes. Please describe your partnership and how you plan to work with your partners throughout the project. Will partners have dedicated time to focus on the project? Have you worked together before? If so, in what capacity? (Please describe). How will this partnership help you to achieve the project goals? How is the partnership valuable in systems improvement and sustaining work beyond the grant period? *Letters of Support are required from each key partner for this project; they do not count towards the page limit requirement.*
- 7) **LOCAL CHAMPION:** Please identify a local champion. The local champion should be someone who is influential in bringing about change, builds public will, is able to garner resources to support the project, and/or is able to support sustainability after the end of the grant term. This person should serve as an advocate and ambassador for your project. Local champions might include public officials, philanthropic leaders, civic leaders, etc. Generally, the local champion is someone outside the lead agency. Please describe your local champion, the role they will play, and how this person will help the project be successful and sustainable. *A Letter of Support is required from your identified local champion, explaining the role they expect to play. The letter does not count towards the page limit requirement.*
- 8) **READINESS AND CAPACITY:** Describe the skills, assets, commitment, readiness, and social capital of your organization, the partnership, and your community to implement this strategy. We are looking for “ready” projects and communities, those best equipped and prepared to implement and achieve impact with one year of project funding. What has been done to prepare you to implement the work (i.e., research, established partnerships, prior workforce initiatives, etc.)? Why is now the best time to implement the project?
- 9) **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:** Throughout the project, Milestones and Mathematica will support your work through technical assistance. Please describe technical assistance you believe would be beneficial in 1) implementing your proposed strategy and 2) using data and project benchmarks to manage project implementation and engage in rapid, iterative learning for project adjustment.
- 10) **DATA-INFORMED DECISION MAKING:** This grant envisions projects will operate with an innovation lens. We expect projects to test approaches, learn, and course correct. The lead agency and partners will be expected to collect and use data to continuously improve implementation efforts. Please describe the experience of your organization and partnership in data-informed decision making, including examples that illustrate a responsiveness to learning and change. Describe how your organization and partnership will use data and information to monitor progress and make iterative adjustments to the proposed activities to ensure the best outcomes. Detail the staffing and time to be dedicated for these activities, which will include regular submission of progress reports, data, and implementation adjustments. Describe the data and information (baseline and throughout the project) you will need to collect to measure whether your project is on-track and successful.

11) GRANT REQUIREMENTS: Please indicate your commitment and readiness to the following. Grantees must agree to:

- Collect and share project and workforce data (not personally identifiable) to show grant progress and outcomes;
- Submit reports on grant progress, outputs, and outcomes quarterly;
- Participate in technical assistance efforts, which may include biweekly calls with Milestones and Mathematica and quarterly calls with other grantees;
- Participate in a learning community to share and learn from other local projects and to provide information to the Initiative team about opportunities and barriers;
- Participate in activities to evaluate the project and/or larger Initiative, which might include phone calls, periodic reports, data collection and submission, interviews, surveys, etc.;
- Provide reports and updates (in person or by phone) with Initiative partners as needed;
  
- Contribute regular input on successes and challenges to inform policy change and the spread of successful practices.

### Section 3: Budget and Financials

Please provide the following information. If lead agency/applicant is a government entity, please show income and expenses as they relate to the department or the division most closely related to this project. Also, please note where information is not available/not applicable and if substitutions were made.

- 1) TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED FOR YEAR 1 – Grant requests must not exceed \$250,000, and we encourage proposals for grants of all sizes.
- 2) PROJECT BUDGET AND NARRATIVE – Provide a detailed budget for all expenses for which funding is requested. Indicate any other sources of funding (revenue or in-kind) to support implementation. The budget narrative section should explain how costs were determined and how the budget aligns with the proposed strategy. **The budget and narrative must be submitted on the provided budget template. Please submit Excel files only.** The budget template can be found at [www.coloradoecworkforce.org](http://www.coloradoecworkforce.org).
  - **Matching Funds:** Matching funds (minimum of 25%) are required when grant funding is used for direct compensation (bonuses, wages, benefits) of early educators, as well as a plan for sustaining compensation. In other cases, matching funds are not required, but they may increase the potential for award in cases where they demonstrate the probability of sustainability. Matching funds used for direct compensation must be monetary and secured at the time of application. Please indicate any additional funds to support the project via the Budget Template.
  - **Funding Limits:** There are no percentage or dollar figure limits on certain types of activities with the exception of indirect costs (see below); however, applicants must provide adequate justification in the budget narrative. We do not anticipate funding requests for equipment. If funds are requested, please include a justification for why these items are critical to project success.
  - **Indirect Costs:** Indirect costs are expenses necessary for general operation and are shared across programs, projects, and functions within an organization. Indirect costs may include expenses like utilities, technology support, legal expenses, and accounting services. Indirect costs may be calculated as a percentage of direct costs and should not exceed 10%.
  - **Unallowable Costs:** Grant funds **may** be used for strategy development, education, communications, marketing, and advocacy around issues related to public investment.

However, funds **must not** be used for lobbying or for the support of a particular bill or proposed legislation.

- 3) ORGANIZATION'S CURRENT OPERATING BUDGET – Provide the organization's current operating budget.
- 4) AUDITED FINANCIALS – Please attach the most recent audited financials. If audited financials are not available, please provide a current IRS Form 990. If you are a government agency, please feel free to provide a link to your audit.
- 5) YEAR END AND CURRENT FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – Upload your Statement of Activities and Balance Sheets.
- 6) FISCAL AGENT – If using a Fiscal Agent, provide its recent audited financials, current financial statements and **attach your Memorandum of Agreement. This is not required if you are not using a Fiscal Agent.**

#### Section 4: Additional Documentation

- 1) COMPLETED **Project Strategy and Outcomes Worksheet**
- 2) LETTERS OF SUPPORT –
  - One letter of support from each of the primary project partners; specific information about roles and commitments are encouraged.
  - One letter of support from an identified local champion, indicating their support and role in the project.
- 3) ANTI-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT – Provide the anti-discrimination statement and date adopted.
- 4) BOARD OF DIRECTORS – Provide a list of the board of directors including occupations and/or community affiliations. If you do not have a board of directors, please indicate.
- 5) IRS DETERMINATION LETTER – Include the organization's IRS determination letter indicating tax-exempt status. If a Fiscal Agent is being used, provide its IRS determination letter.
- 6) PROPOSAL DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST

## Proposal Documents Checklist

- Completed Grant Narrative (Include all components as addressed in RFP)
- Project Strategy and Outcomes Worksheet
- Financial Documents
  - Project Budget and Narrative
  - Current Operating Budget
  - Audited Financials
  - Year End and Current Financial Statements
    - Current Balance Sheet
    - Current Statement of Activities
  - Fiscal Agent's Financials and MOU (ONLY if using a fiscal agent)
- Letters of Support
  - Partners
  - Champion
- Anti-Discrimination Statement
- List of Board of Directors
- IRS Determination Letter

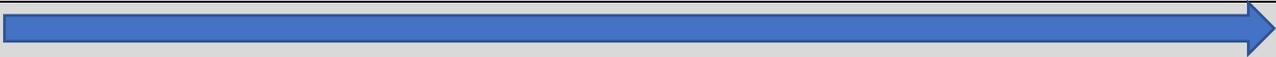
## Appendix A: Guidance for Completing your Theory of Change

This Appendix contains guidance about required elements in the project proposal, including the project Theory of Change; transformational goal; project strategy, activities, and outcome; and intermediate and long-term outcomes. You will be asked to describe your conceptual approach to these in the grant narrative and provide specific detail using the *Project Strategy and Outcomes Worksheet*.

### Project Theory of Change

We would like to understand your Theory of Change - how you see your proposed strategy impacting your transformative goal and ultimately our goal to increase recruitment, retention, and compensation of an effective, qualified workforce. The Initiative's *Theory of Change for Increasing Recruitment, Retention, and Compensation of an Effective, Qualified Early Childhood Workforce* can be found in Appendix B.

In the *Project Strategy and Outcomes Worksheet*, you will be asked to complete a Theory of Change Template like the one below or your own with the following elements.

<b>Need:</b> Brief statement of need you are addressing						
<b>Goal:</b> What is your long-term, transformative goal?			<b>Lever:</b> What lever(s) for change do you propose to address? <input type="checkbox"/> Compensation <input type="checkbox"/> Working Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Recruitment <input type="checkbox"/> Career and Education Pathways			
<b>Strategy:</b> What strategy are you proposing for this grant that could lead impact and, perhaps with other strategies lead to the achievement of your long-term goal?						
						
Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes	Transformative Goal	Initiative's Goal
						Increased recruitment, retention, and compensation of an effective, qualified workforce.

The Theory of Change should include the following: transformative goal, lever(s) for change, project strategy, activities, outputs, project/grant outcomes, and intermediate and long-term outcomes.



## Transformative Goal



Proposals should identify the big picture, transformative goal the partners hope to achieve. These groundbreaking, “moonshot” goals should be the target toward which all project activities are aimed. The goal may not be achieved during the grant term, and other strategies may be required, but we want to see how your strategy will impact your ambitious goal and the Initiative’s goal of increasing recruitment, retention, and compensation of an effective, qualified workforce.

## Lever for Change



Below are some example strategies for each lever for change. **These are only examples of strategies that might fall within each lever for change; other innovative strategies that meet the needs of the community are strongly encouraged.**

**Lever 1: Compensation** - *Improve the financial well-being of the workforce by addressing wages, benefits, or other factors.* Strategies in this area might include activities such as:

- Partnering with city or county government to offer affordable housing options
- Leveraging ballot initiatives, local tax credits, or city/county revenue to support early educator wages, health care, benefits, etc.
- Paying all publicly-funded preschool teachers, regardless of setting, wages on par with public school teachers, while requiring comparable qualifications

**Lever 2: Targeted Recruitment** - *Build a pipeline of effective, qualified candidates entering the field or into licensed early childhood centers, schools, or homes.* Strategies in this area might include activities such as:

- Working with high schools and community colleges to develop and new model for concurrent enrollment and apprenticeship programs that are accessible to students and feed into part-time employment and higher education programs
- Developing a pipeline/strategy to recruiting diverse and Spanish-speaking candidates into the field, into programs, and into leadership positions to better address the needs of diverse learners

**Lever 3: Working Environments** - *Ensure working environments/conditions are conducive to job satisfaction and instructional effectiveness.* Strategies in this area might include:

- Aligning systems to decrease the burden on educators caused by varied programs and initiatives
- Developing human capital or funding approaches to address high staff-child ratios and erratic staffing patterns

**Lever 4: Education and Career Pathways** - *Create education and career pathways to attract and induct new educators, ensure a competent workforce, and support retention in the field.* Strategies in this area might include activities such as:

- Developing a system to support recruitment of educators, by helping promising candidates earn lead teacher qualifications and gain needed competencies in a new, innovative, or fast-track way
- Reducing barriers for new entrants and current professionals and deliver clear, accessible pathways to increase competencies, attain higher levels of education, and seek more advanced job roles

## Project Strategy, Activities, Outputs, and Outcomes

Proposals should identify the proposed strategy, activities, outputs, and outcomes anticipated during the grant term and a rationale for why these activities will lead to the proposed outcomes and impact your transformative goal. We recognize some of these may need to be adjusted as you implement and adjust course; we will work with you to refine these if needed.



**ACTIVITIES:** This section includes specified work during the grant duration, including actions used to bring about program change, results, or outcomes. A timeline with milestones for activities should be included. Please note, grant funds may be used for activities such as strategy development, education, communications, marketing, and advocacy but may not be used for direct lobbying.

**OUTPUTS:** These are direct products of the project activities. Proposals should describe the project outputs and a proposed timeline for completion. Proposals should include indicators to measure whether the outputs were met. Different types of indicators — process, quantity, and/or quality—may be more appropriate to measure outputs for different projects.

- **Process** – Process indicators measure progress on implementation of project activities. Process indicators may measure whether certain milestones in a project were completed. Examples include the development of a new committee or completion of research on the cost to increase wages within the proposed timeline.
- **Quantity** – Quantity indicators measure how much of the activity, output, service, or approach is delivered and may also measure size, frequency, or level of exposure to an intervention. Examples include the number of students enrolled in a concurrent enrollment program or the percentage of those polled supporting public funding for compensation.
- **Quality** – Quality indicators describe how good or bad something is. For example, a quality indicator may measure participants’ satisfaction with an apprenticeship program or the incorporation of provider input into a compensation initiative. Quality indicators help ensure outcomes (e.g., programs must be of high-quality for participants to gain new knowledge or learn new skills).

**PROJECT OUTCOMES:** Outcomes are the result of the activities or services provided – such as changes in behaviors, knowledge, skills, or conditions. Proposals should identify outcomes at three times: during implementation, at the grant’s conclusion, and in the future. Additionally, proposals should discuss how the project outcomes will be assessed during the project.

### Intermediate and Long-term Outcomes

Proposals should identify intermediate and long-term outcomes that may result from the implementation of the project. It may not be feasible to attain these outcomes during the grant term; for some projects this will be possible, and for others it will not. However, we would like to better understand how you think the proposed strategy will impact your transformative goal and the Initiative’s goal for increasing recruitment, retention, and compensation of an effective, qualified workforce.

## Appendix B: Initiative Theory of Change

Below is the Initiative's Theory of Change for Increasing Recruitment, Retention, and Compensation of an Effective, Qualified Early Childhood Workforce. It demonstrates how local project activities might lead to intermediate and long-term outcomes that will impact recruitment, retention, and compensation of an effective, qualified workforce.

