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Find the application here: https://ami.grantsolutions.gov/HHS-2018-ACF-OCC-TP-1379

Writing a *Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five* Application that Will Continue State Progress toward Greater System Efficiency, Higher Program Quality, and Improved Child Outcomes:

An Application Guide[1]
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Introduction

No one knows better than a state administrator how difficult it is to coordinate federal and state early childhood programs. State early childhood administrators—often housed in different agencies—have responsibility for numerous programs designed to support young children and their families. These programs frequently have different program goals, eligibility criteria, and standards, which makes coordination exceptionally difficult. In some cases—as with the federal Head Start program—state administrators have little control over the program, creating an additional set of coordination challenges. In contrast, other programs, like the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program, give states greater control and flexibility over the delivery of services. These differences across programs make it challenging for states to create an early childhood system that is easy to access and navigate for families who are low income and/or face barriers to opportunity.

Despite the challenges, states have made significant progress in creating coordinated systems. Through the use of State Early Childhood Advisory Councils, Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge grants, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grants, MIECHV, and other federal and state coordination opportunities, state early childhood systems continue to evolve. Across the country, states are utilizing new governance structures, building stronger early childhood workforce and professional development systems, improving the

way they measure and support program quality, and creating data systems to better coordinate and utilize information for system improvement. States are also addressing the access to and quality of care for infants and toddlers and are working to meet new challenges such as infant and early childhood mental health and supporting children with a high number of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

The new Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) program provides states with a historic opportunity to design and implement an early care and education system that gives equitable access to high-quality programs for all children and families. This federal funding allows states to engage in a thorough needs assessment, robust strategic planning process, and other activities intended to rally stakeholders around a common vision and goals for young children.

Given the anticipated number of grants and the requirements of the application, the PDG B-5 grant seeks to meet states where they are in their current system-building efforts and help them take bold steps forward. The grant will afford nearly every state the opportunity to think critically about its current early childhood system, assess system needs, and develop a plan of action. The grant also provides funding to implement key improvement initiatives and activities to meet state needs once a strategic plan is in place.

This application guide is designed to help states take full advantage of this opportunity. It draws from the principles of implementation science, behavioral economics, and other methodologies to help states think holistically about the grant application, and to use the grant funding in a way to set and meet new goals for the state system. States can think of the PDG B-5 grant –and its 40 expected awards—as a planning support for their next phase of early childhood systems building.

To that end, this guide:

- Provides a set of steps states can use to approach the PDG B-5 funding opportunity;
- Highlights specific areas of state early childhood systems where coordination and collaboration are most important for leveraging existing funding to:
  - maximize parental choice,
  - strengthen the delivery and quality of existing programs,
  - address the persistent inequitable access to early childhood opportunities faced by low-income and racially diverse families;
- Offers recommendations and resources that support stronger state partnerships with Head Start programs; and
- Provides a template and process to create a logic model for the application that drives the needs assessment and strategic planning process.

It is important to note that this guide is meant to provide a logical approach to addressing the criteria in the FOA but is not intended to be a substitute for the FOA. Applicants should use this guide in conjunction with the FOA and carefully read the FOA to make sure that every criterion within each section has been addressed. The FOA represents the official requirements for the grant application.

What are the purposes of the grant from the federal perspective?

The FOA highlights three purposes of the grant that are well-aligned with the goals of states' early childhood system building efforts. The PDG B-5 grant goals are:

1. To develop a strategic plan, informed by a needs assessment, which facilitates collaboration, coordination, and quality improvement activities for existing early childhood programs to support school readiness and improve transitions into the K-12 system by aligning and strengthening the delivery of existing programs. Through implementation of the strategic plan, states are expected to more efficiently use resources to align and strengthen the delivery of existing programs; coordinate service delivery models; improve participation of children in programs; improve program quality while not limiting availability to services; expand parental choice and knowledge of existing programs; and enhance school readiness for children from low-income and disadvantaged families, including during children's transition into elementary school.

2. To encourage partnerships across Head Start providers, local governments, Indian tribes, local education agencies, and faith-based and community-based organizations to improve coordination, program quality, and service delivery.

3. To maximize parental choice by ensuring that parents are provided the information and resources to make informed choices about their child's early care and education setting and by promoting parent and family involvement in early care and education settings.

For the specific language related to the purposes of the grant, see page 2 of the FOA.

The goals of the grant are broad enough to allow states to pursue what they believe are the most important next steps in building an integrated early childhood system. This grant provides the opportunity for states to think boldly about what is needed to break down the persistent barriers

that families face in accessing high-quality early childhood programs and services before school entry. The application offers states flexibility in designing their plan and encourages states to build on existing plans and goals when developing the strategic plan (page 3).

Key details about the application

The application is due on November 6 for all states except North Carolina and South Carolina, both of which have until November 20 to submit an application. The grant range is from $500,000 to $15,000,000, and a 30% match is required. The application is limited to 75 pages. The page limitations include a project summary (1 page), table of contents (1 page), project description (65 pages), and appendices (8 pages). Applications are to be divided into two files: the project description, including the summary and table of contents, and the appendices.

The application focuses on five core activities:

1. Conducting or updating a periodic needs assessment,
2. Developing or updating a strategic plan,
3. Maximizing parental choice and knowledge about the state's mixed delivery system,
4. Sharing best practices, and
5. Improving overall quality of early childhood care and education activities.

The application narrative is divided into twelve sections that include the five activities listed above. The additional sections seek to understand the state's current system and vision for change (mixed delivery description and vision statement), rationale for the proposed approach (logic model), when the work will be implemented (timeline), the state's capacity to implement the approach (organizational capacity and management), how success will be measured and tracked (evaluation plan), how the work will be sustained (sustainability), and how much it will cost (budget and budget justification). **Table 1** outlines the order and point allocations. The table provides the overall point total for each section, but it is important to note that the point allocations are further divided for specific questions within each section. (See page 47-51 of the FOA.)

The division of the application into so many separate sections might make it difficult for states to articulate an overall vision for the system, so it will be important to take a step back from the application to devise a plan and then integrate the plan into the various sections of the application in a way that scores well based on the criteria. Steps for doing this are described below. An alignment of the steps to the FOA is provided in the next section to show how the bigger picture thinking and planning relate to the required sections of the application.

Table 1: PDG B-5 Section Order and Point Allocation

1	Introduction	0
2	Project Summary/Abstract	0
3	Expected Outcomes	0
4	Project Approach (see Activity sections below)	
	Activity 1: B-5 Needs Assessment	10
	Activity 2: B-5 Strategic Plan	9
	Activity 3: Maximizing Parent Knowledge and Choice	7
	Activity 4: Sharing Best Practices	7
	Activity 5: Improving Overall Quality	8
5	Organizational Capacity and Management	8
6	State B-5 Mixed Delivery Description and Vision Statement	8
7	Timeline	7
8	Program Performance Evaluation Plan	12
9	Logic Model	9
10	Sustainability Plan	4
11	Budget and Budget Justification	11
12	Bonus Points[2]	5

[2] All applicants are eligible to receive 5 bonus points if the reviewer determines the state has a "meaningful plan" to measure the unduplicated number of children being served in each existing program. An additional 10 bonus points are available for specific applicants that have not previously received Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) or Preschool Development Grant (PDG) funding and that obtain a score of 70 or better on the application. The full list of the 24 states that are eligible for these bonus points can be found on page 52 of the FOA.

Approaching the Application

While highlighted throughout the FOA, coordination and collaboration are not the ultimate goals of state systems building. Instead, coordination and collaboration are strategies to achieving greater efficiencies and program quality that improve child and family outcomes. Therefore, a state's overall goals for child and family well-being should be the North Star that guides the approach to the application. Positive child and family outcomes result from effective service delivery, which is only possible with a robust, well-coordinated state-level early childhood infrastructure. Early childhood governance, workforce development, quality improvement, early intervention, data, community engagement, and linkages with other state systems are all critical elements to achieving high-quality, impactful, and sustainable early care and education programs that make a difference for children and families.

While the PDG application is focused on five core activities and includes 12 scored sections (and other required sections that are not scored), it is important to approach the application with an overall strategy that can then be written into the different sections. Below, one way to approach the PDG application is outlined that uses a state systems-building perspective. Using a series of steps, states can reflect on the ECE system and its connection to health, mental health, workforce, income support, food, nutrition, and other systems; determine goals for children and families; and establish the system-building activities that will be used to move the current system forward to meet state goals. The steps do not follow the progression of the application. Instead, they outline a way to build the content of the application that can then be inserted into the appropriate application sections to address the criteria (see next section). **Figure 1** provides and alignment of the steps to the sections of the FOA.

Step 1: Define terms and describe the state early childhood system

The FOA asks states to define key terms that will be used in the application (needs assessment section) and to provide a description of the state's early childhood mixed delivery system (mixed delivery section and vision section). These tasks represent a starting point to approaching the application and will define the scope of the state response.

Defining key terms

The first task of the needs assessment is to describe how the state defines key terms, including "quality early childhood care and education, availability, vulnerable or underserved, and children in rural areas" (page 26). Given the application's focus on coordination, key questions when defining terms are:

What terms are defined differently across different policies, programs, and regulations?

How are the definitions different and what are the implications of the differences for coordination and collaboration across programs?

In defining "vulnerable" or "underserved," the state is defining the target populations that are addressed by the system.[3] One de facto way a state defines vulnerable populations is by who is eligible for the different programs. Accordingly, it is important to note how income eligibility (e.g., below poverty level, 250 percent of poverty level) and categorical eligibility (e.g., children in foster care, homeless children) differ from program to program in the state. As part of the needs assessment, the state may want to consider proposing an analysis of the ways different programs define their eligible population and key programmatic elements, and how they align or do not align across programs (**see Table 2**). This task will be particularly important when identifying partnerships and existing resources to improve "policy alignment" through the strategic planning process (page 48).

When analyzing definitions, eligibility, and programmatic elements across programs, it is important to note that the FOA defines "B-5 Early Childhood System" broadly (page 6) and includes a host of early childhood, nutrition, and health programs, as well as programs for children with disabilities and developmental delays.

Describing the state early childhood system and mixed delivery system

Through a description of the early childhood mixed delivery system, the state is required to describe the agencies, policies, programs, public and private organizations, and other stakeholders that will be a part of the coordination, collaboration, and quality improvement efforts outlined in the application (page 49). The broad definition of "B-5 Early Childhood System" means that states should describe a "wide range of early childhood care and education programs and services that strengthen, engage, and stabilize families and their infants and young children." This requirement provides states with the opportunity to talk about governance, and formal and informal coordination efforts among state agencies,

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[3]MIECHV's statutory language defines priority populations, which might provide a good reference.

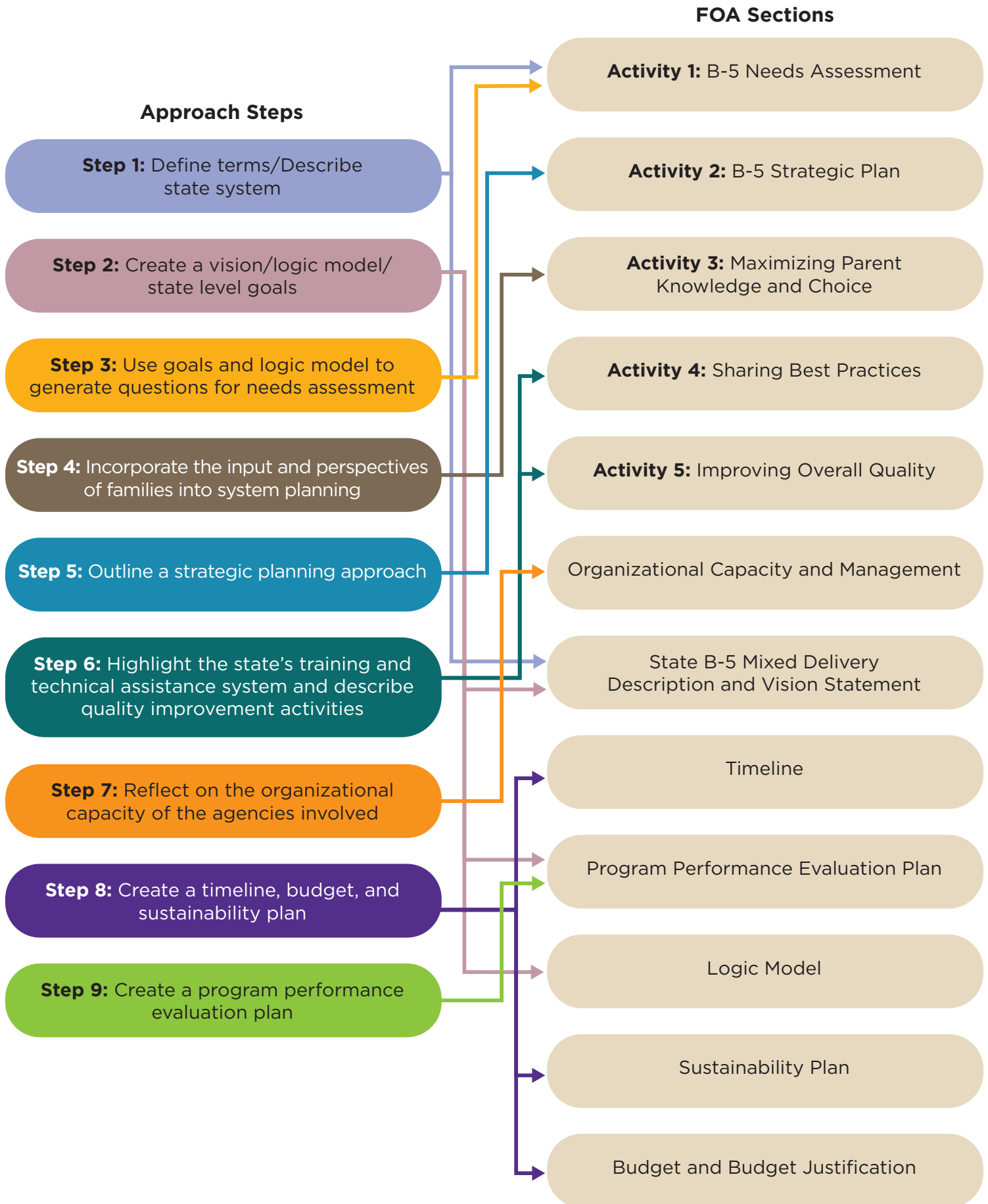# Figure 1. Alignment of Approach Steps to the FOA Sections

Approach Steps

Step 1: Define terms/Describe state system

Step 2: Create a vision/logic model/state level goals

Step 3: Use goals and logic model to generate questions for needs assessment

Step 4: Incorporate the input and perspectives of families into system planning

Step 5: Outline a strategic planning approach

Step 6: Highlight the state's training and technical assistance system and describe quality improvement activities

Step 7: Reflect on the organizational capacity of the agencies involved

Step 8: Create a timeline, budget, and sustainability plan

Step 9: Create a program performance evaluation plan

FOA Sections

Activity 1: B-5 Needs Assessment

Activity 2: B-5 Strategic Plan

Activity 3: Maximizing Parent Knowledge and Choice

Activity 4: Sharing Best Practices

Activity 5: Improving Overall Quality

Organizational Capacity and Management

State B-5 Mixed Delivery Description and Vision Statement

Timeline

Program Performance Evaluation Plan

Logic Model

Sustainability Plan

Budget and Budget Justification

Table 2. Example Table of Alignment on Key Terms and Programmatic Elements

Program Element/ Program	Child Care & Development Block Grant	Head Start	MIECHV	State Preschool Program	Part C	Part B	Add programs here
Eligibility							
Enrollment Process							
Quality Standards							
Quality Supports & Improvement							
Family Engagement							
Financing Mechanism							
Outreach Approach							
Community Engagement							
Governance							
Other elements…							

regional coordination bodies, and other state partners that support the state's early childhood system. In describing the current mixed delivery system, the state must describe the range of early care and education programs in which children are served and identify "key partners," "progress and successes," as well as "hurdles and challenges" (page 49).

Step 2: Create a vision, set state-level goals, and develop a logic model

Step 1 provides important context for the FOA's requirements to create a vision, set goals, and develop a logic model for the state early childhood care and education system that will "increase quality, coordination, alignment, and efficiency of programs and services" (page 49). These are important aspects of the application, and ones on which it will be necessary to enlist key stakeholders to clearly articulate a vision and goals, as well as suggest specific activities used to meet the goals. It will be important that the goals and implementation of activities be measureable because the FOA requires a performance evaluation plan that describes how the state will monitor implementation of the activities and the progress towards the goals. The program evaluation plan is discussed in more detail in Step 9 below.

Creating a Vision

The vision should be bold and compelling, and describe how your state aspires to achieve ambitious goals for young children through system and resources coordination. It should address the continued development of the B-5 Early Childhood State System (page 25) and is particularly important because the FOA asks that the expected outcomes and evaluation plan align with the vision (page 30), how key partners will be leveraged to achieve the vision (page 49), and how the vision will be refined based on progress toward the goals (page 27). It will be important when defining a vision to think about where the state would like the system to be after a specific period of time. The state may have a five- or ten-year strategic plan already and the state application can describe how PDG B-5 grant funding can move the state forward in achieving the long-term goals of the plan. Or, the state might choose to use the funding timeframe. Since there is potentially the opportunity for four years of funding from the PDG B-5 grant program, it makes sense to envision what the state system might look like after four years of successful grant implementation.

Developing the Logic Model and Setting Goals

Next, it will be important to operationalize the state vision through the creation of a logic model. The application explicitly calls for a logic model that articulates the project goals and objectives and "demonstrates a clear association between goals, objectives, activities, outputs, intended short-term and long-term outcomes, and the plans and procedures for achieving them" (page 50). The logic model is the heart of the application, creating connections among the vision, goals, and the activities that will be used to achieve the vison and goals. The logic model is a visual depiction of the state's plan and it should be "well-defined, clear, concise" and demonstrate the "conceptual framework for the project" including strong links to program activities (page 50).

Logic models provide a roadmap to specific goals or expected outcomes. To support the development of goals for the logic model, **Figure 2** provides examples of goal areas that can be included. Goals should be set at the system, program, family, and child levels. While this may seem like a difficult task, it is important to note that states have many of these goals already in place. For example, the expectations outlined in state child development and early learning standards can be the foundation for goals for child development, learning, and well-being. In addition, many states have developed, or are in the process of developing, family engagement frameworks that articulate a state's goals for families with young children. If not, the *Head Start Parent Family and Community Engagement Framework* (HSPFCE) clearly defines these goals. Using the goals of the HSPFCE framework has the added advantage of aligning the family engagement goals of the state with Head Start, which is a primary goal of the application funding. Family engagement is a key component of Activity 3 in the application (page 48).

Program-level goals are also an essential part of the application. The FOA uses the word "quality" over 40 times in reference to the improvement of early childhood care and education programs. Accordingly, the definition of quality discussed above, and the state's goals for quality improvement, must be key aspects of the application. At the program level, a state Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) represents quality goals for some early care and education programs. However, as discussed in Step 1, states may want to examine and make consistent the common elements of quality across different program types (e.g., home visiting, Head Start, pre-K, etc.). It will also be important to think about the quality characteristics of early care and education programs that are most predictive of the child development and early learning outcomes. These include ECE programs' focus on serving nutritional foods, teacher-child interactions, and other key features of quality. It is also important to note that the FOA specifically mentions "ECE facilities and facility related concerns," suggesting that goals should also be set for improving early childhood facilities.

At the system level, goals should be developed for different parts of the state early childhood system, including governance, workforce development, program quality measurement and improvement, early intervention and early childhood special education, data systems, and monitoring. It will also be important to keep equity in mind in the goal-setting process and ensure that the goals work toward a system where race and income do not determine a child's earliest learning experiences and outcomes.

The goal-setting process is essential to the application because it helps to operationalize the vision and drives the activities that will be used to enhance the current system to meet the goals. Equally important, the goals will be used to measure progress using a continuous quality improvement process (page 30). As such, it will be important to ensure that the goals are specific and measurable, and that they identify what can be accomplished in the short term and long term. The application does not define short term and long term, but it will be important to articulate what can be accomplished during the initial grant period (one-year) and what can be accomplished if years 2-4 are funded.

There are methodologies that provide guidance for the goal-setting process, including *Results-Based Accountability*[4] and *SMART (Specific-Measurable-Achievable-Relevant-Timely)*. Goals should be directed at a **population** (e.g., dual language learners), **organization** (ECE programs), **or agency** (Department of Health/Department of Education) and articulate a measurable positive **change**. It will be important to review the state's current goals in this way and establish new ones as necessary.

Given the emphasis on program performance evaluation (page 30), it is important to identify indicators for each goal as part of the goal-setting process. An indicator is a measure which helps quantify progress towards a goal. These might include measures of:

- skills/knowledge (e.g., three-year old developmental health and social-emotional well-being indicators, kindergarten entry assessment scores; teacher–child interaction; quality ratings)
- behaviors (e.g., number of parents quitting a job because of child care problems, percentage of ECE teachers using an evidence-based curriculum)
- circumstances (e.g., percentage of parents with secure employment, adverse childhood experiences [ACEs] scores)
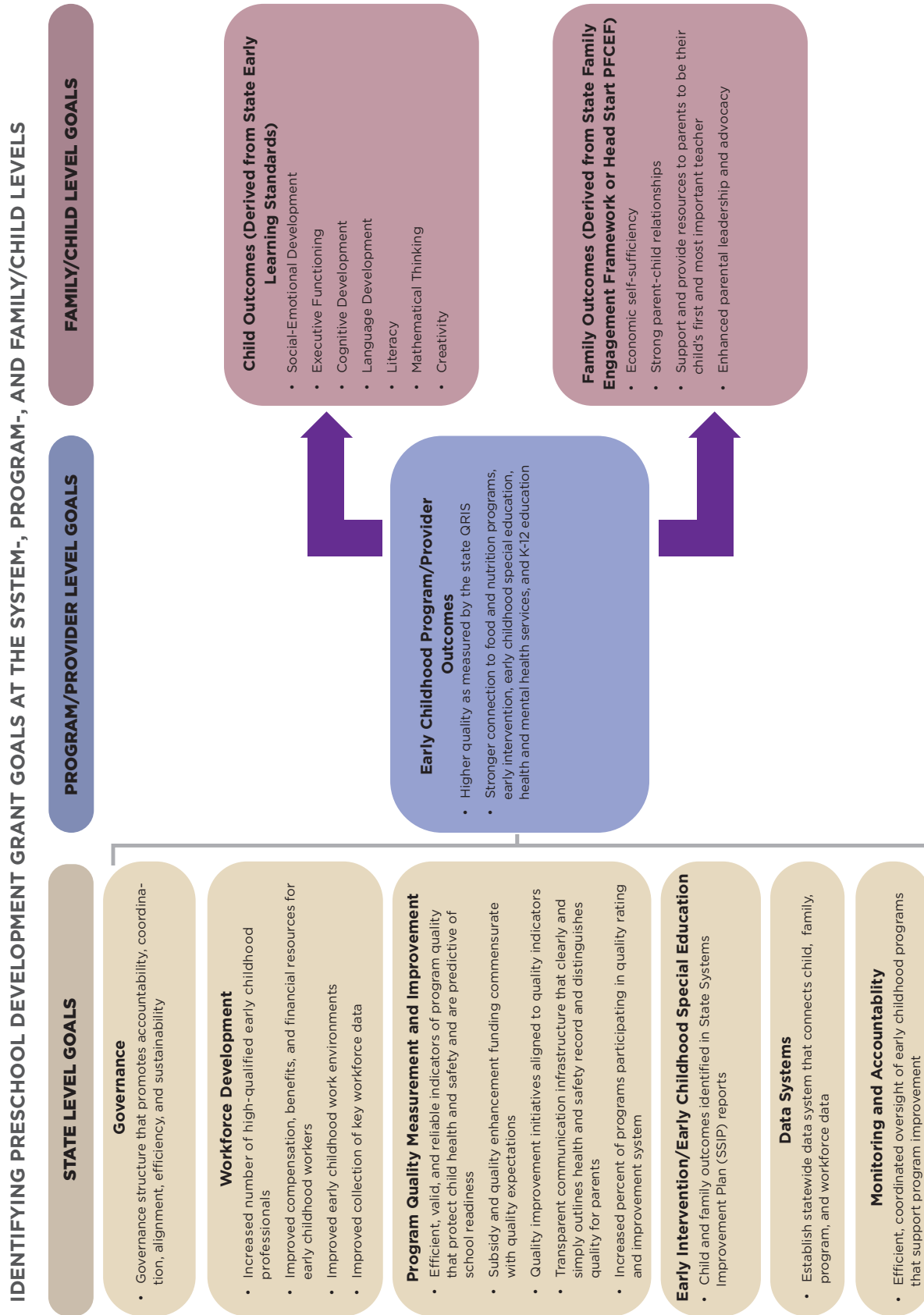
Making Connections between the Service Areas and Goals

A second key aspect of a logic model is to make connections between the areas and goals. Does a program's improvement on a state's QRIS actually produce better outcomes for children in that program? QRIS validation studies are an excellent example of trying to measure the connection between program- and child-level goals. Another example is: Will changes in state early childhood workforce policies increase program quality in a way that improves child and family outcomes? These connections between system elements are essential to early childhood system coordination and improvement. One way to connect different system components is to think about the logic model as a series

[4]See, for example, The Results-Based Accountability Guide (2010).

of "IF-THEN" statements. For example, if the state implements policies to support teacher qualifications and educational supports, then teacher-child interactions in early childhood care and education programs will improve. If teacher-child interactions improve, then child outcomes will improve. A logic model that gets a state to its desired goals and vision through a logical sound set of IF-THEN statements is the goal of this step of the process.

Figure 2

IDENTIFYING PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT GOALS AT THE SYSTEM-, PROGRAM-, AND FAMILY/CHILD LEVELS

FAMILY/CHILD LEVEL GOALS

Child Outcomes (Derived from State Early Learning Standards)
- Social-Emotional Development
- Executive Functioning
- Cognitive Development
- Language Development
- Literacy
- Mathematical Thinking
- Creativity

Family Outcomes (Derived from State Family Engagement Framework or Head Start PFCEF)
- Economic self-sufficiency
- Strong parent-child relationships
- Support and provide resources to parents to be their child's first and most important teacher
- Enhanced parental leadership and advocacy

PROGRAM/PROVIDER LEVEL GOALS

Early Childhood Program/Provider Outcomes
- Higher quality as measured by the state QRIS
- Stronger connection to food and nutrition programs, early intervention, early childhood special education, health and mental health services, and K-12 education

STATE LEVEL GOALS

Governance
- Governance structure that promotes accountability, coordination, alignment, efficiency, and sustainability

Workforce Development
- Increased number of high-qualified early childhood professionals
- Improved compensation, benefits, and financial resources for early childhood workers
- Improved early childhood work environments
- Improved collection of key workforce data

Program Quality Measurement and Improvement
- Efficient, valid, and reliable indicators of program quality that protect child health and safety and are predictive of school readiness
- Subsidy and quality enhancement funding commensurate with quality expectations
- Quality improvement initiatives aligned to quality indicators
- Transparent communication infrastructure that clearly and simply outlines health and safety record and distinguishes quality for parents
- Increased percent of programs participating in quality rating and improvement system

Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education
- Child and family outcomes identified in State Systems Improvement Plan (SSIP) reports

Data Systems
- Establish statewide data system that connects child, family, program, and workforce data

Monitoring and Accountability
- Efficient, coordinated oversight of early childhood programs that support program improvement

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Step 3: Use data, goals, and logic model to generate questions for the needs assessment

The vision, goals, and logic model should help to uncover and better understand the key questions that should be answered in the needs assessment. **Appendix A** provides a list of potential questions for the needs assessment along with resources that can help support additional questions by goal area. It will also be important to address the FOA requirements for the needs assessment on pages 26 and 27, which include such items as:

- The current quality and availability of early childhood care and education, including for vulnerable or underserved children and children in rural areas;

- The unduplicated number of children being served in existing programs and the unduplicated number of children awaiting service in such programs (to the extent practicable);

- Gaps in data or research about the quality and availability of programming and supports for children birth through five, considering the needs of working families, as well as those who are seeking employment or receiving job training;

- Developmental screening and referral rates;

- ECE facilities and facility-related concerns;

- Barriers to the funding and provision of high-quality early childhood care and education services and supports, and opportunities for more efficient use of resources; and

- Transition supports and gaps that affect how children move between early childhood care and education programs and school entry.

An important aspect of this step of the process will be to inventory currently existing state needs assessments, reports, and strategic planning efforts and align them with the needs assessment questions to identify gaps. These reports and plans may include, but are not limited to:

- The Child Care and Development Fund plans

- State- and district-level Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plans

- Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Evaluations and Sustainability plans

- MIECHV program reports

- Needs assessment and strategic plans conducted by state advocacy groups or regional bodies

- State Systemic Improvement Plan to improve results for children with disabilities

- State and community plans generated by executive or legislative branches, or public-private partnerships

- Reports generated through technical assistance provided by various national organizations

Additional information about federally-mandated needs assessments can be found here: http://www.buildinitiative.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/BT5%20PDG/2018.10.1NeedsAssessmentV3.pdf

These examples do not provide a comprehensive list of state resources from which to draw needs assessment data. Surveying key stakeholder groups to gather all relevant needs assessments and strategic plans in the state will be an important part of the planning process. This is particularly important given that states will not be able to use funds for quality enhancement until the needs assessment and strategic planning process is completed. Therefore, it will be important to build off the state's existing work to allow the state to complete the activities related to program quality more quickly.

In addition, a goal of the needs assessment process should be to understand the experiences of those "living the system." While the structure, financing, and policies of ECE system components matter a great deal, implementation science shows that the success of the system is also contingent on the behaviors, buy-in, and decision-making processes of individuals at all levels of the system. These stakeholders include families, ECE educators and other direct service providers, administrators, and policymakers. Even a well-designed program will be unable to produce outcomes if individuals are not aware of it, do not take up the program, do not implement the program with fidelity, or fail to sustain the work. As such, it will be important to get stakeholder perspectives on their experience with the system as part of the needs assessment process.

With the collection of state needs assessment resources and the experiences of stakeholders, the state can describe how it will fill the gaps with additional "data or research to support collaboration between programs and services and maximize parental choice."

Step 4: Incorporate the input and perspectives of families into the state's early childhood system planning

A key feature of the FOA is the incorporation of parent/family perspective and parent choice in all aspects of the state's work, including engagement in the assessment of need, strategic planning, and execution of the work. There are several key areas where parent perspective and/or services are highlighted.

The FOA takes a broad perspective on family engagement, emphasizing the importance of informing parents and families about their options in a way that is culturally and linguistically sensitive (page 28). In this way, the commitment to diverse delivery is a central commitment to parents to ensure that they have choice. States have an opportunity to ask about the best strategies, from a parent perspective, to help families learn about and seek out quality ECE options for their infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. The FOA stresses that states meet parents/families where they are and that the consumer awareness and education strategies that support their connection to ECE services should consider various populations of families (i.e., fathers, parents who speak a home language other than English, families the state identifies as most vulnerable, children with developmental delays and disabilities, or suspected delays and disabilities). There are many ways for the state to hear from families, including community meetings, focus groups, surveys, task forces, and social media, to ensure that the needs assessment and planning work is built on parent perspective and voice.

The FOA is not limited to hearing from families and ensuring that families get information that is valuable and timely for them. It also includes important commitments to develop families as their children's first and most critical teachers (page 28). This provides states with opportunities to pursue contextually specific strategies that could range from more specific support for family engagement at the systems level as well as support within the operating services of ECE programs.

At the same time, the parent section of the FOA recognizes that families may benefit from connections to many other services for their young children. To this end, it stresses health, mental health, and wellness supports (often offered by other federally funded initiatives such as the Special Nutrition Program for Women, Infant, and Children, Children's Health Insurance Program, Title V, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Medicaid) and requires states to describe how they will collaborate and coordinate with these programs. Special attention is also paid to families who are concerned about their child's development, and how they are referred to evaluation and services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C and Part B (Section 619). Importantly, the FOA goes beyond collaboration here, and as with the provision of linguistically and culturally sensitive information, it directly focuses on the importance of creating inclusive ECE programs for children with developmental delays and disabilities, whether infants, toddlers, or preschoolers. Strategies for inclusion may also touch upon the requirements under Activity 4, regarding sharing best practices to reduce duplication, leverage financial and other resources, and increase program quality, collaboration, and efficiency of B-5 services.

Another dimension of parent engagement and involvement is seen in the issue of transition, with the FOA calling out the opportunities and need to support families as their children transition within the B-5 system and its services, and also as children move into elementary school. Careful understanding of strengths in this area as well as gaps to address them can be incorporated into the plan for supporting parents.

Finally, in keeping with the emphasis in the FOA on collaboration and maximization of what already exists, states are required to ensure that collaboration occurs with those parts of the ECE system that already have a strong focus on parent engagement and empowerment, including the Child Care and Development Fund program, Child Care Resource and Referral networks, Head Start, and any other partners in the state that are focused on ensuring that parents have access to sufficient supply to give them choices.

This section of the FOA covers a lot of ground and provides states with many opportunities to build on their own strengths in working with families, to incorporate a family point of view into program design and delivery, and to address gap areas.

Step 5: Outline a strategic planning approach to the state vision and system, program, family, and child goals

The strategic plan builds on the logic model and connects it to the performance evaluation plan developed in Step 9. The FOA requires that the strategic plan provide recommendations for collaboration, coordination, and quality, as well as partnership opportunities, and should describe activities that will help existing programs better serve children and families (page 48).

With the vision, short- and long-term goals, and needs assessment questions in place, the strategic planning process section should focus on a description of a process for how the state will identify the activities to achieve the vision and goals, and how the activities will be implemented. The purpose of the strategic plan is to describe how implementing specific activities will better serve children and families in existing programs and how the activities will increase the overall participation of children in the state.

It may be helpful to map the process of what it would take to make progress toward a goal using the indicator that measures that goal. For example, if a goal is to improve the quality of early childhood programs and the indicator is "Percentage of families receiving child care assistance that select a 3- to 5-star rated provider," the question becomes: What activities will the state implement to achieve the goal? As part of the strategic planning process, states may again want to engage stakeholders who directly experience the system (families, providers, and caseworkers). In this example, the state would work with stakeholders to examine each step of a family's journey obtaining and filling out an application for child care assistance, being notified of eligibility, connecting with the provider, and communications.

The FOA requires the state to describe how it will identify and engage stakeholders who are "meaningfully impacted" by state programs. Of all stakeholder input, this is perhaps the most important to the achievement of the state's goals. It can be obtained through listening sessions, interviews, and surveys of families, ECE program staff, and other direct service providers. This input can help to identify actionable strategies and the steps it will take to execute them, as well as what is needed to promote awareness, take-up, fidelity, and sustainability of program effects and how individuals' motivation, ability, and environmental context affect success of implementation.

For each of the questions identified in the needs assessment, the state will ultimately want to identify in the strategic plan the activities that help meet the need and achieve state goals. The state must determine what has to **change at the system/agency/program level** to achieve the goals. Activities should address the questions of what the state will do (action), the extent to which the state will do it (intensity), and how well the state implements the action (fidelity).

The state may want to evaluate potential solutions and strategies against criteria such as:

- **Impact:** How strongly will the proposed strategy impact progress as measured by the indicators?
- **Feasibility:** How politically/logistically feasible is the proposed solution?
- **Specificity:** Is the strategy specific enough to be implemented?[5]

There are a number of examples of early childhood strategic plans that may be helpful as the state considers its application. Below are the links to a variety of plans, both state and local:

Colorado	https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5679be9605f8e24bd8be467a/t/593057b9b8a79bf724644865/1496340410014/ECL-C+Strategic+Plan+and+Action+Plans.pdf
Delaware	http://www.greatstartsdelaware.com/resources/EarlyChildhoodStratPlan.pdf
Massachusetts	https://eecweb.eec.state.ma.us/docs/strategicplanformatted.pdf
Missouri	https://dss.mo.gov/cbec/pdf/strategic-plan.pdf
New Jersey	https://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/njcyc/plan/201415.pdf
New York	http://www.nysecac.org/about/strategic-plan/
Philadelphia	http://sharedprosperityphila.org/documents/RunningStart_MainReportSinglePages.pdf

Step 6: Describe the state's current training and technical assistance system, its capacity to generate and identify best practices, and the connection to national sources of best practices

The FOA requires states to address best practices that reduce duplication of effort, leverage financial and other resources, and increase program quality, collaboration and efficiency of B-5 services, including improving transitions across programs and into the early grades. As part of the requirements for this area, the state must describe how it will provide technical assistance to local communities and community-based organizations, and on what topics, and must also describe partnerships and opportunities to work with researchers, national TA centers, state agencies, national organizations and others to ensure that they have a way to identify and disseminate best practices. The scoring focuses on identification of the best practices to reduce duplication of effort, leverage financial and other resources, and increase program quality, collaboration, and efficiency of B-5 services; and the provision of statewide TA at the local level to disseminate these best practices.

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[5]Adapted from The Results-Based Accountability Guide (2010).

Since the FOA assumes that the state will provide TA to assure dissemination of the best practices, ensuring a good understanding of the current training and technical assistance system is necessary. This system may itself reside in multiple programs and agencies, so taking a broad point of view about what constitutes the system and how components might be best leveraged would itself allow for increased collaboration.

In addition to ensuring a good understanding of the current TA system, identifying the topics for the best practices—and the rationale for those selections—is critical. This might include funding integration (whether at the state level by combining funds and more efficiently distributing them to providers or by reviewing barriers at the administrative/provider level and overcoming them) and unified eligibility and enrollment opportunities for families (which also could relate to parent choice and knowledge discussed above) so that they do not need to try and identify multiple programs (state pre-K, Head Start, Early Head Start, child care assistance) and apply for each separately and undergo separate enrollment processes. At the same time, this could also be approached at the policy level to see if single eligibility standards could be put into place for families. Other topic areas might include shared services or quality improvement approaches that span the variety of ECE programs and could be better leveraged and applied. It will be important for states to conduct a review of what already exists that can be more thoroughly disseminated and applied across the diversity of ECE programs and possible settings, and what the gaps are so that these can also be addressed.

A wide variety of national organizations may be helpful as states seek to understand best practices. At the federal level, the Administration of Children and Families provides training and technical assistance, at no charge to states, through a variety of national centers. These are described at https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/. **Appendix B** provides a list of national organizations that may have valuable information and practices to contribute.

Step 7: Reflect on the organizational capacity of the agencies involved in meeting the vision and goals and the capacity that will be required to be successful

The FOA places a high priority on the successful implementation of the activities recommended in the strategic plan. Implementation is mentioned in nearly every section of the FOA and the program performance evaluation plan is designed to measure how successful the state is at implementation. Implementation science outlines three types of "drivers" of successful implementation: capacity of the staff, expertise of the leadership, and organizational context and processes. These interrelated facilitators of change are all necessary to shift knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors at the classroom, program, and state level.

In this section, it will be important to make the case for the current organizational capacity of the state agencies implementing the grant, but also assess and improve the capacity[6] of the agencies and organizations that will implement the changes proposed. As states take stock of the infrastructure necessary for supporting implementation efforts, they should consider the following questions based on principles of implementation science:

Implementation "Drivers"

Competency Development
Selection
• What are the state and local agencies and organizations that will be implementing the strategic plan? Who will indirectly affect implementation (e.g., other state agencies, trainers, coaches, program administrators)?   • What is the current organizational capacity of these groups? What supports are they going to need to implement the activities proposed in the grant?
Training and Coaching
• Who will need to be trained (e.g., agency staff, early care and education providers, kindergarten teachers, program directors, principals, administrators, trainers)?   • What methods of training will be used (e.g., preservice vs. on-the-job; online vs. in-person vs. hybrid)?   • What barriers prevent access to or effectiveness of training?   • What supports will be available to reinforce training content during implementation?   • What types of ongoing coaching supports will be used?
Performance Assessments
• How will fidelity to the activities be defined, measured, and ensured?

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[6]Resource on capacity building self-assessment tool can be found here: https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/capacity_building_self-assessment_tool.pdf

Organizational Supports	
Data Systems	
• What system(s) will be used for tracking data? • How will data be used formatively to inform programmatic decisions and guide the design of the activities? • What will the evaluation protocol be to assess roll-out? What will be the methods for identifying barriers to implementation and how programs are problem-solving these barriers?	
Facilitative Administration	
• What supports are or should be in place to keep staff informed, organized, and moving toward the project goals?	
Systems Interventions	
• What processes are or should be in place to coordinate with external systems on the availability of funding, organizational, and human resources necessary for the implementation of the program?	
Leadership	
Adaptive Leadership	
• What supports are necessary to ensure that leadership can manage the changes necessary for implementation? • What approaches will be used to identify and respond to challenges and barriers that will emerge in implementation? • What is the communication strategy for why the innovations proposed in the grant are better than current practice?	
Technical Leadership	
• What skills or knowledge are required from leadership to support implementation? • What supports are necessary to ensure that leadership has the technical ability to manage the changes necessary for implementation	

In addition to these guiding questions, there are other resources that may be helpful, including information from the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) and the State Capacity Building Center. CEELO has outlined the key characteristics that define effective state offices of early learning that can help states articulate their organizational capacity and needs.[7] The State Capacity Building Center also has valuable insights into the role of leadership in early childhood systems building, particularly in building internal teams and external coalitions that effectively manage systems change.[8]

Step 8: Create a timeline, budget, and sustainability plan

States will need to develop a project timeline and budget for the key activities that will be completed with grant funding. Given the initial year-long timeframe, it is important that the timeline be realistic and take into account the capacity of the agencies conducting the work. It is unclear whether a no-cost extension can be granted in a way similar to past grants and what implications an extension in the first year might have on receiving additional funding in years 2-4, if it is available.

It is important that these pieces are clear, well organized, and realistic to all partners involved in the application. The budget should clearly provide detailed information on the direct costs, personnel, travel, equipment, and supplies associated with all activities included in the grant proposal, and include start and end dates for the grant activities and the individual/entities responsible for each activity.

States will also need to establish a shared vision and action plan for sustaining the work accomplished with PDG funding beyond the federal grant cycle. Engaging in a sustainability planning process as part of the grant activities allows states to document the action steps they will need to take to assess and sustain the key activities of the grant. States should first consider which of the project components in their grant application will need to be sustained beyond the grant cycle to achieve long-term impact for their early childhood system. The plan should reflect the resources required to finance key project activities, both short- and long-term, as well as sustain collaboration efforts in the state. Resources to support sustainability planning include: Sustainability Planning Framework - QRIS National Learning Network and the Build Initiative's *Community Systems Development Toolkit, Section 3E: Developing and Supporting Financing and Sustainability Structures*, which can be accessed here: http://www.buildinitiative.org/Resources/CommunitySystemsDevelopmentToolkit/Section3WorkingTogetherTakingAction/Section3E.aspx. The State Capacity Building Center's System Guide also has a chapter on sustainability, see: https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/systemsbuilding/sites/default/files/media/SystemsBuildingResourceGuide3_PrintFile.pdf

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[7] The CEELO paper on effective states offices of early learning can be found here: http://ceelo.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Highly_Effective_SOEL_June_2018.pdf
[8] The State Capacity Building Center has several resources. An overall guide is found here: https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/systemsbuilding/ A capacity assessment tool is found here: https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/systemsbuilding/sites/default/files/capacity_building_self-assessment_tool.pdf.
Another paper on systems building can be found here: https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/systemsbuilding/sites/default/files/media/SystemsBuildingResourceGuide%201_PrintFile.pdf

Step 9: Create a program performance evaluation plan

The FOA asks for a plan to measure the success of activities in meeting the goals and objectives of the project (page 30). Numerous elements within the application—vision, goals, expected outcomes, activities, and logic model need to align with the program performance plan. The ultimate goal of this plan is continuous quality improvement (CQI). Accordingly, it is important that the plan incorporates measures of progress toward the project goals and also provides information to determine why progress is or is not being made. Typically, when activities do not produce the desired outcome, it can be either that the activities are not implemented with fidelity or the activities were not correctly chosen to produce the desired outcomes with the target population.

Accordingly, the following three different types of measures should be included in the program performance plan:

- **Outcome measures:** These measures capture the impact of the activities on a desired population. Outcome measures could include the percentage of children who are school ready as determined by the state's kindergarten readiness assessment; the number and percentage of children in high- quality programs as measured by the state's quality rating and improvement system; and the percentage of early care and education providers achieving a specific credential.

- **Process measures:** These measures capture how well the activities are implemented. For example, if the state provided infant and early childhood mental health training as part of its quality enhancement activities, process measures would measure the number of trainings that were conducted, the quality of training, and the number of providers who attended.

- **Financial/cost measures:** These measures capture the activities' "bang for the buck." The FOA asks specifically for "metrics necessary to examine proposed…cost.." These measures would track spending on the proposed activities and what is being "bought" with the grant funding.

All three measures are vital to a continuous quality improvement process and help to answer the basic questions:

- Did we accomplish our goals for the project?

- Why did or didn't we accomplish the goals?

- Was it worth the cost? Was proper financing provided to accomplish the goal?

The work done in the visioning, goal setting, and strategic planning process discussed above should set a strong foundation for developing the program performance plan. Accordingly, the work done as part of this section of the application will be related to identifying new data sources and data collection protocols, determining who will analyze data and how, and creating a feedback loop to those implementing the activities as part of a continuous improvement process.

Connecting the Process to the Application Criteria

The steps outlined above will help states think about the application from a system-building perspective and generate key content. This content will then have to be organized into the application format within the allowable number of pages (75). One challenge will be to use the page allocation efficiently to ensure that the criteria within each section is addressed without going over the page limit. A straightforward way of addressing this challenge is to start by allocating pages to each section in a way that is proportional to the number of points the section is worth. Applicants are required to submit the application in two files: (1) the project description with a suggested total of 65 pages; and, (2) appendices that include the letter from the governor and organizational charts.

Table 4 below provides suggested page allocations for each section based on the number of points the section is worth. While applicants will not have to adhere strictly to these section page allocations, it does provide an overall guide as well as a reminder that applicants should use the most pages on the sections that are worth the most points. The point allocations are based on the suggested 65-page allocation for file 1, but applicants can use more pages for file 1 and fewer for file 2 if desired.

Table 4: Proportional Page Allocation Guide

Section	Proportional Page Allocation
Required pages: Project Summary/Abstract and Table of Contents	2
Project Approach (see Activity sections below)	26.5
Activity 1: B-5 Needs Assessment	6.5
Activity 2: B-5 Strategic Plan	6
Activity 3: Maximizing Parent Knowledge and Choice	4.5
Activity 4: Sharing Best Practices	4.5
Activity 5: Improving Overall Quality	5
Organizational Capacity and Management	5
State B-5 Mixed Delivery Description and Vision Statement	5
Timeline	4.5
Program Performance Evaluation Plan	8
Logic Model	6
Sustainability Plan	3
Budget and Budget Justification	7

Organizing the content for the application

This guide is intended to provide a logical process for thinking about the next steps in state system-building efforts that can be used to support the PDG application. While the steps above do not follow the progression of the application, the content derived from the steps can be used to populate the different sections. **Figure 1** on page 5 provides an alignment of the steps of the process with the application sections. It will be important for states to look closely at the criteria for each section to ensure that content created through the steps address all of the criteria within the section.

Appendix A: Needs Assessment Questions

GOVERNANCE			
Guiding Questions for Needs Assessment	**Information currently exists in state**	**Information must be gathered through needs assessment/ strategic planning**	**Resources and supports**
Which offices and agencies have responsibility for administering the following programs? • Child Care and Development Block Grant • Head Start State Collaboration Office • IDEA Part C (Early Intervention) • IDEA Part B, Section 619 (Early Childhood Special Education) State Prekindergarten Program • Medicaid • CHIP • WIC • Title V Maternal and Child Health Programs • Healthy Start • CACFP • MIECHV			• A Framework for Choosing a State-level Early Childhood Governance System • Vision to Practice: Setting a New Course for Early Childhood Governance • Putting the Pieces Together for Infants and Toddlers: Comprehensive, Coordinated Systems • New Early Childhood Coordination Requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): A Toolkit for State and Local Educational Agencies, Head Start Programs, and the Early Childhood Field
For the offices or agencies that have responsibility for early childhood programs, what formal agreements or memoranda of understanding currently exist between agencies, and for what purpose (including data-sharing agreements)? How well are they working? Is the purpose being achieved?			• State Early Learning Leads • Directory of State Early Learning Contacts • State of the States on Systemic Improvement Planning: A National Overview of Phase I SSIPs • States' selected SIMRs for Part C
What cross-agency working groups or advisory councils currently exist and for what purpose? Who created them (are they statutory, gubernatorial or more ad hoc)?			• States including their data systems in their SSIP improvement strategies for Part C • States including their fiscal systems in their SSIP improvement strategies for Part C
How well are they working? Is the purpose being achieved?			
How is state-local governance supported by the state's current governance structure? How well is this working? Is the purpose being achieved?			• States including governance in their SSIP improvement strategies for Part C • States including quality standards in their SSIP improvement strategies for Part C
What are the most pronounced barriers for stakeholders (parents, programs, etc.) created by the current governance structure and how do the barriers impact service delivery?			• Populations in State SIMRs for Part C
How are stakeholders—early childhood programs, teachers, families and children engaged by the current governance structure?			• 619 Involvement in State SSIPs • Annotated Version - OSEP Transition Checklist for Reviewing Transition Documents under Section II.A.10 of the IDEA Part C Grant Application
If the state already has a strategic plan, how well does the current governance structure support the achievement of the goals of the strategic plan?			• Self-Assessment for an Early Childhood Transition Infrastructure • State Early Childhood Inclusion Self-Assessment

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT			
Guiding Questions for Needs Assessment	**Information currently exists in state**	**Information must be gathered through needs assessment/ strategic planning**	**Resources and supports**
What are the demographic and educational characteristics of the ECE workforce? How do they vary by position, age group served, program type (e.g., Head Start, center-based care, home-based care, state pre-K)? *Examples:* race, age, languages spoken (and whether these match children in their care), education levels			• The Early Childhood Workforce Index 2018 • Early Childhood Workforce Resources
What factors affect educators' access to and engagement with professional development? Is professional development coordinated across program type? *Examples:* areas of need (e.g., content, age-group, etc.); barriers to in-service professional development; percentage of educators who want to continue their education and supports they need to do so			• Enhancing Teaching Conditions to Support Quality Teaching: Discussion Guide • Additional resources on teaching and learning
What is the economic well-being of early educators? How does this vary by age group served, educational attainment, and program type? *Examples:* hourly wages, benefits received, percent of educators receiving public subsidies or experiencing financial hardships			• Colorado's Early Childhood Workforce Survey • The Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory
What are annual turnover rates and the consequences of turnover? How does turnover vary by job role, program type, etc.? Are there teacher shortages for ECE? Where are they? *Examples:* what percentage of teachers/directors intend to leave their jobs; when teachers leave where do they go; what is the impact of turnover on programs, families, and children; what strategies are being used to retain teachers; what personal, workplace, and policy factors are associated with turnover/retention?			• ZERO TO THREE Competencies for Prenatal to Age 5 (P-5) Professionals • IDEA Section 618 Data Products: Static Tables including Personnel data for Part B/619
What is the strength of ECE program and instructional leadership in the state? What policies does the state have to encourage the growth of partnerships between strong leaders of community-based programs, and school principals who know how to support early learning programs in their schools, and partner with programs outside them?			• Reports on the IDEA Early Childhood workforce by the Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC) Data Reports and Literature syntheses
How do teachers perceive their work environments and personal well-being? *Examples:* What are common job frustrations; what motivates staff to stay in their jobs; what are levels of occupational burnout and depression; what personal, workplace, and policy factors are associated with teachers' burnout and depression?			• State Early Childhood Inclusion Self-Assessment

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)			
Guiding Questions for Needs Assessment	**Information currently exists in state**	**Information must be gathered through needs assessment/ strategic planning**	**Resources and supports**
What factors affect educators' access to and engagement with higher education? How well is the state's network of institutes of higher education (IHEs) supporting the ECE workforce? *Examples:* what is the distribution of programs offering degrees in ECE; what are gaps in content focus across IHEs (e.g., infants/toddlers, dual language learners, early mathematics, family engagement); what are the requirements and age-group focus of field-based learning experiences; what is the faculty capacity to support ECE students; what student supports are available through IHEs for non-traditional students (e.g., financial aid, convenient class times/locations, academic/skill support, cohort models, etc.); what are the degrees and credentials that are offered and how do they map to where incumbent teachers are; how difficult/easy it is for ECE teachers to articulate from community college to 4 year schools? What is the status of articulation agreements?			

PROGRAM QUALITY MEASUREMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Guiding Questions for Needs Assessment	Information currently exists in state	Information must be gathered through needs assessment/ strategic planning	Resources and supports
What percent of early care and education programs receive CACFP in the state?			• Building Early Childhood Facilities: What States Can Do to Create Supply and Promote Quality
What is the cost of quality early care and education in the state?			• Preschool Program Quality Assurance System Discussion Guide
What is the condition of early childhood facilities in the state?			• Defining and Measuring Access to High-Quality Early Care and Education (ECE): A Guidebook for Policymakers and Researchers
What is the current quality of early childhood care and education overall? And for vulnerable or underserved children? How does quality vary by urban and rural areas? What is the current availability of quality early childhood care and education overall? And for vulnerable or underserved children? How does availability of quality vary by urban and rural areas?			• Supporting Babies Through Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) • CLASS Brief: Understanding and Using CLASS for Program Improvement • Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education Settings: A Compendium of Measures, Second Edition
What are the healthy eating practices of early care and education settings in the state?			• Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment Tool
How many providers are participating in the states' QRIS? If participation is voluntary, what incentives/ benefits and barriers/costs most affect providers' decisions to participate?			• Georgia Farm to Early Care and Education: Overview and Strategy 2017-2020 • Evidence-based Interventions + Tools
What evidence is there of the QRIS tool's reliability and validity? • Does the composite rating scale truly represent one dimension or should separate scales be reported? • Are the selected quality indicators predictive of desired outcomes? • Are scoring methods sensitive enough to detect meaningful differences in quality? • Do quality levels differentially predict child outcomes? • What evidence is there of inter-rater reliability?			• Early and Often: Showing up in Preschool Matters 2.0 • Best Practices in Creating and Adapting Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Rating Scales • The Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Evaluation Toolkit
What evidence is there that quality supports offered by the state meaningfully affect program quality? What are providers' experiences of these supports?			• Behavioral Economics and Social Programs: Innovative Solutions to Child Care • Behavioral Insights for Child Care: Lessons from the BIAS Project
Do families know about, access, and use QRIS ratings to select high-quality care? What are parents' experiences of the QRIS?			• Application of Behavioral Economics to Child Care • Nudging Parents
Do early childhood programs in the state collect attendance data in a way that allows them to identify chronically absent children?			• Child Care Aware 2018 state Fact Sheets what does Child Care look Like in Your State • Preschool Inclusion Finance Toolkit 2017.
Does the state have data on the amount of back-and-forth talk/interaction taking place between providers and children in infant and toddler programs? How is this data currently factored into quality assessments and the allocation of professional development resources?			• Early Childhood Programs Comparison Worksheet • Determining Costs Inclusive Worksheet • https://www.lena.org/ • https://www.theounce.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Early-Ed-Essentials-Snapshot-Mar2018-Ounce-Consortium.pdf • https://www.theounce.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Organizing-Early-Education-Validation-Mar2018-Consortium-Ounce.pdf

EARLY INTERVENTION/EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION			
Guiding Questions for Needs Assessment	**Information currently exists in state**	**Information must be gathered through needs assessment/ strategic planning**	**Resources and supports**
How many children currently receive services from the states early intervention and early childhood special education programs? What percent of the population are being served by age? What percentage of the state's children with special needs are served in inclusive settings? What is the percentage of children suspended or expelled from early childhood programs overall and by race?			• Building Inclusive State Child Care Systems • Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation: Sample Needs Assessment • The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center • ZERO TO THREE Early Intervention Resources • IDEA Section 618 Data Products: Static Tables including Child count and Demographic data for Part B/619 and Part C • ECTA Center Web page on Resources Related to Suspension and Expulsion • The HHS and ED joint Policy statement on suspension and expulsion in Early child hood Settings • Child Care State Capacity Center Building Center Building a Comprehensive State Policy Strategy to Prevent Expulsion from Early Learning Settings

DATA SYSTEMS			
Guiding Questions for Needs Assessment	**Information currently exists in state**	**Information must be gathered through needs assessment/ strategic planning**	**Resources and supports**
Does the state collect a common set of education data elements at the early learning and K–12 levels that can be tracked at the individual child level over time?			• Early Childhood Data Collaborative
Does the state have a way to link data for an individual child across state agency data systems?			• Using Coordinated Data Systems to Guide Early Childhood Education Policies
Does the state have unique identifiers for early childhood educators and early childhood programs?			
Does the state collect and can it connect the following data elements: • Child and family demographic information, including indicators identifying the criteria that States use to determine whether a child is a Child with High Needs; • Early Childhood Educator demographic information, including data on educational attainment and State credential or licenses held, as well as professional development information; • Program-level data on the program's structure, quality, child suspension and expulsion rates, staff retention, staff compensation, work environment, and all applicable data reported as part of the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; • and Child-level program participation and attendance data. • School readiness data?			• The 10 Fundamentals of Coordinated State Data Systems • The DaSy Data System Framework • DaSy Data Culture Toolkit • DaSy Data Governance and Management Toolkit
What capacities does the state have in place to analyze and utilize available data, from individual agencies or across agencies?			• Early and Often: Showing up in Preschool Matters 2.0
What is the culture of data use in the state? How does the state act on the data it has available?			
Does the state have a data system to track chronic absenteeism in state-funded early childhood programs?			

MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY			
Guiding Questions for Needs Assessment	Information currently exists in state	Information must be gathered through needs assessment/ strategic planning	Resources and supports
What are the current caseloads of the state licensing specialists?			- Quality Compendium - QRIS 3.0 Tools and Resources - Expand Monitoring and Technical Assistance - Licensing Caseloads: Finding the Right Ratios of Licensors to Providers. - State of the States on Systemic Improvement Planning: A National Overview of Phase I SSIPs - States' selected SIMRs for Part C - States including their data systems in their SSIP improvement strategies for Part C - State Early Childhood Inclusion Self-Assessment

DEMOGRAPHICS

Guiding Questions for Needs Assessment	Information currently exists in state	Information must be gathered through needs assessment/ strategic planning	Resources and supports
What does the current population of children under five look like in the state? • Children in poverty? • Children in rural areas? • By race/ethnicity? • Children who are dual language learners?			• IDEA Section 618 Data Products: Static Tables including Child count and Demographic data for Part B/619 and Part C • KIDS COUNT Data Center
What percent of early care and education programs receive CACFP in the state?			
How many children are on waiting lists for existing programs?			
What is the unduplicated number of children being served in existing programs?			

Appendix B: National Organizations

Federal Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System

- Afterschool and Summer Enrichment
- Child Care Data and Reporting
- Child Care State Capacity Building
- Development, Teaching and Learning
- Early Childhood Health and Wellness
- Parent, Family and Community Engagement
- Program Management and Fiscal Operations
- Early Childhood Quality Assurance
- Subsidy Innovation and Accountability
- Tribal Early Childhood
- Research Connections

National Early Childhood Organizations

- National Head Start Association — https://www.nhsa.org/
- AIR — https://www.air.org/topic/education/early-childhood-and-child-development
- Bipartisan Policy Center — https://bipartisanpolicy.org/person/linda-smith/
- BUILD Initiative — http://www.buildinitiative.org/   https://qrisnetwork.org/
- CEELO — http://ceelo.org/
- Center for the Study of Child Care Employment — http://cscce.berkeley.edu/
- Child Trends — https://www.childtrends.org/
- CLASP — https://www.clasp.org/
- Council of Chief State School Officers — https://ccsso.org/
- Education Development Center — https://www.edc.org/
- First Focus — https://firstfocus.org/
- Florida Lastinger Center — http://lastingercenter.com/
- Migration Policy Institute — https://www.migrationpolicy.org/
- National Black Child Development Institute — https://www.nbcdi.org/
- National Conference of State Legislature — http://www.ncsl.org/
- NGA Center for Best Practices — https://www.nga.org/bestpractices/
- NIEER — http://nieer.org/
- RAND Corporation — https://www.rand.org/topics/early-childhood-education.html
- Urban Institute — https://www.urban.org/
- First Five Years Fund — https://www.ffyf.org/
- Mathematica Policy Research — https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-focus-areas/early-childhood
- New America Foundation — https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/early-elementary-education-policy/
- Opportunities Exchange — http://opportunities-exchange.org/
- Reinvestment Fund — https://www.reinvestment.com/   https://www.reinvestment.com/childcaremap/
- Brookings Institute — https://www.brookings.edu/
- Erikson Institute — https://www.erikson.edu/

- Frank Porter Graham Center for Child Development — https://fpg.unc.edu/
- Ounce of Prevention Fund — https://www.theounce.org/
- Alliance for Early Success — http://earlysuccess.org/
- American Enterprise Institute — https://www.aei.org/scholar/katharine-b-stevens/
- Board on Children, Youth and Families of the National Academies — http://sites.nationalacademies.org/dbasse/bcyf/index.htm
- Campaign for Grade Level Reading — http://gradelevelreading.net/
- Center for American Progress — https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/view/
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities — https://www.cbpp.org/
- Child Care Aware of America — http://www.childcareaware.org/
- Committee for Economic Development — https://www.ced.org/policyissues/education-issues
- Council for a Strong America — https://www.strongnation.org/
- Duke Center for Child and Family Policy — https://childandfamilypolicy.duke.edu/
- Education Commission of the States — https://www.ecs.org/
- Foundation for Child Development — https://www.fcd-us.org/
- Georgetown University Center for Children and Families — https://ccf.georgetown.edu/
- Harvard Center for the Developing Child — https://developingchild.harvard.edu/
- NAEYC — https://www.naeyc.org/
- National Academy for State Health Policy — https://nashp.org/
- National Implementation Research Network — https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/
- National Women's Law Center — https://nwlc.org/issue/child-care-early-learning/
- NORC — http://www.norc.org/Pages/default.aspx
- Save the Children — https://www.savethechildren.org/
- T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood National Center — http://teachecnationalcenter.org/t-e-a-c-h-early-childhood/
- Unidos US — https://www.unidosus.org/issues/education/
- ZERO TO THREE — https://www.zerotothree.org/