

# Some Thoughts about State Roles in the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships





***BUILD was founded by the members of the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative and is staffed by a team of early childhood experts and experienced leaders.***

Learn more about BUILD and early childhood systems work by watching this short video:



## About BUILD

BUILD brings together the people who set policies, provide services and advocate for children from birth to age five to ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive.

Taking a systems approach, BUILD partners with state leaders working in early learning, health/mental health/nutrition, and family support and engagement. BUILD provides guidance, leadership training and capacity building.

BUILD also acts as a network that convenes state and community leaders, online and in-person, to share best practices, resources and strategies, with a focus on integrating family and child-serving systems, advancing quality and racial equity. BUILD leverages 50-state learning to provide customized technical assistance that is designed to meet the unique needs of states and communities.

## Why it Matters

With increasing evidence from brain science, we know that the first five years of a child's life set the foundation for all future growth and development. We also know that investments in early childhood improve health, school readiness, and ultimately, the ability to be a part of an educated workforce critical for our future prosperity. Creating effective early childhood systems in states and communities is the only way to ensure the healthy growth and development of each and every child.

## Addressing Racial Disparities

Today, race and place are predictive of children's health, development and school and life success. To address these disparities, systems-building work can be neither "colorblind" nor passive. It must intentionally level the playing field in terms of power so that public action, allocation of resources, and oversight are shared responsibilities of a representative leadership. In BUILD's systems work, all actions are assessed to ensure impact is equitable for children and families of diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds and for families of diverse socio-economic status.

## Work with BUILD

With a staff of seasoned experts including researchers and evaluators, BUILD provides customized and targeted technical assistance, financial support and professional development opportunities to early childhood leaders in the public sector and the private advocacy and foundation community.

## BUILD and the EHS-CC Partnerships

In addition to being a support system to partner states and hosting a learning community for all 50 states, BUILD seizes opportunities to advance high-quality comprehensive early childhood systems. The EHS-CC Partnerships represent one such opportunity.

For additional information, go to [www.buildinitiative.org](http://www.buildinitiative.org) or contact Susan Hibbard, Executive Director, at [info@buildinitiative.org](mailto:info@buildinitiative.org).

# Early Head Start–Child Care Partnership Grants Program: State Roles to Make the Most of It



**The federally-funded Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships represent an opportunity to advance high-quality, comprehensive early childhood systems focused on the youngest children with the greatest need.**

In 2014, Congress appropriated \$500 million for Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships (EHS–CCP) to increase the supply of high-quality infant and toddler care within states. Through this initiative, Early Head Start grantees partnered with center-based and family child care providers who agreed to meet Early Head Start Program Performance Standards and provide comprehensive, full-day, full-year services for eligible infants and toddlers and their families. Such partnerships had been created before, especially under the \$1.1 billion expansion of Early Head Start through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. But the 275 grantees benefiting from the FY2014 funding and the next round of grantees who will be supported by \$135 million FY2016 funding provide a unique opportunity for state leaders to help communities make the most of this funding to develop high-quality, comprehensive systems for babies as part of their states’ birth-to-age-five or birth-to-age-eight system. State leaders should not view EHS–CCP grants as only a federal-to-local initiative. The grants are an opportunity for states to carry out their responsibility to ensure that the early childhood systems we build are of high quality and achieve equitable outcomes for all children regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, or language.

## Variations in State Involvement

The state is a critical player in terms of ensuring quality, efficiency, and equity, so in exploring the potential of Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships, we are investigating what role states can play and what we can learn from state-level work in the first round of Early Head Start–Child Care Partnership grants. To do this, we will first examine the state-level EHS–CCP grantees, then look at one state that, while not the grantee, played a significant role in its EHS–CC Partnerships and close with some general findings about the potential state role.

The Early Head Start–Child Care Partnership grant opportunity offered by the US Department of Health and Human Services is an excellent example of how a cross-sector partnership at the local level can improve quality and increase the capacity of child care providers and programs. Some of these EHS–CC Partnerships are also good examples of how state leaders can help local efforts be more effective, efficient, equitable, and responsive to the needs of young children and their families.

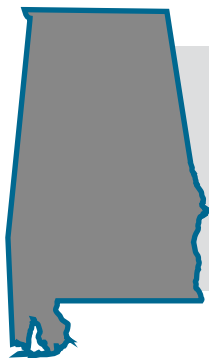
In this paper, BUILD highlights a selection of examples of partnerships between state and local leaders as part of the last round of EHS–CC Partnership grants. Some of these partnerships feature states as an EHS–CC Partnership grantee. Others are examples of strategies in which the state facilitates and supports the work of local grantees. As you consider the new EHS–CC Partnership grant opportunity, we urge state and local leaders to consider carefully what roles and functions are best carried out at the local level and which benefit from state-level leadership.



The District of Columbia and six states (Alabama, California, Delaware, Georgia, Pennsylvania and South Carolina) received state-level Early Head Start–Child Care Partnership grants in the first round of funding. Below, we provide a brief synopsis of Alabama, Georgia and Pennsylvania’s EHS–CC Partnership approaches and show some highlights of the Washington, DC model. In the next section, we share how Washington, which is not a state-level grantee, supports local grantee efforts and facilitated their alignment with and connection to components of the state-level systems. We close with findings that incorporate what we learned from interviews with leaders from all seven state-level grantees as well as from Washington state.

## State-level Grantees

The Early Head Start–Child Care Partnership grant competitions allow states to apply to be a state-level grantee. Below are profiles of three states and the District of Columbia that applied and were awarded EHS–CCP grants in 2014.



### Alabama: Department of Human Resources (DHR)

Award: \$41 million over 5 years

Alabama’s Department of Human Resources received the entire federal EHS–CC Partnership grants allocation for Alabama in the first round – \$8.3 million per year. It partnered with the Departments of Public Health and Early Childhood Education as well as Auburn University, the Alabama Community College System and two partners supported by W.K. Kellogg Foundation funding—Jefferson State Community College and the University of Alabama.

## Why the State Decided to Apply

State early childhood leaders wanted to:

- Assure that Alabama received the full allocation of resources – something less likely to happen if numerous local applicants apply for varying amounts;
- Leverage new and existing state resources to support local-level services; and
- Better align the state and local early learning system efforts.

## The State Approach

Alabama partners with seven existing Head Start programs. These programs have capacity and a deep understanding of the Head Start model. Their job was to recruit the participation of child care centers that now are implementing Early Head Start services in their centers. In addition, the state partnered with Auburn University to recruit family child care homes, build their capacity and provide the homes with necessary ongoing support. The state holds these eight contracts and the Head Start programs and Auburn University manages all the subcontracts with the centers and homes. Other state partners include the Department of Public Health, the Children’s Cabinet (which is Georgia’s State Advisory Council), and the Alliance for Education Agency Heads.

In addition to these contractual arrangements, the Department of Human Resources partners with other state agencies to provide the comprehensive services required by Early Head Start and to leverage and align with other state resources. These partnerships have resulted in:



- **Health Care Coordination:** DHR created a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Health (DPH) to provide health care coordination to all families participating in the EHS-CC Partnerships.
- **Priority for Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs:** Children (ages 0-3) identified as having special needs were given priority for participation in the EHS program.
- **Alignment with pre-Kindergarten:** The Department of Early Childhood Education agreed to apply for the US Department of Education's Preschool Development grant and to align those potential resources (which it received) as well as the existing state pre-K funding with the EHS-CCP funding wherever possible.
- **Priority Access to Subsidy:** DHR allocated 80% of its subsidy funding to support families participating in the EHS-CCP programs through a dual enrollment system. Child care providers then received both subsidy funding and EHS-CC Partnership grant funding to provide a more stable pool of funding and to support the program's high-quality requirements. The state approved a continuity of care line item to assure that a child could participate even the parent's subsidy-eligibility status changed.
- **A Parent Council:** A state-level Parent Policy Council was established to serve as an advisory body to the EHS-CC Partnership grant.
- **Alignment with QRIS:** Although the state's QRIS is still in the pilot stage, all EHS-CC Partnership programs will be required to be enrolled and rated under the QRIS once it is fully implemented.
- **Leveraging Private Sector Resources for Professional Development:** DHR applied for and received a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to strengthen the professional development system for the workforce. This grant provides additional resources to the EHS-CC Partnership program's teachers and leaders.
- **State Match:** DHS is now requesting a legislative appropriation to support the EHS-CC. This appropriation will serve as the state match.

Alabama leaders worked hard to create an excellent plan to leverage resources, align programs, and maximize the federal grant opportunity. Many stakeholders helped shape the plan. State leaders convened numerous broadly representative meetings, with multiple systems serving children and families and a wide geographic reach participating, and organized stakeholder focus groups to get input and feedback on the plan.

Nevertheless, early implementation has involved significant challenges. The state agency was not set up to administer this kind of program funding or to undertake the necessary monitoring. It took time to establish this capacity. And, while Auburn University regularly undertakes program contracts, it also needed to build capacity for such significant direct work with family child care programs. Everything took longer than had been anticipated.

## Key Lessons Learned to Date

- **Planning is essential** and expect start-up to take at least double the amount of time anticipated.
- **Talk to stakeholders early in the planning process.** Build broad support for and engagement in the development of a state application.
- **Leverage existing resources** through cross-agency agreements and MOUs.
- **This is an opportunity to align the state's early learning system** through coordination with state pre-K, federal pre-K funding, QRIS, and the public health system.





## Georgia: Bright from the Start, Department of Care and Learning (DECAL)

\$22 million over 5 years

Georgia's DECAL leaders met early on with the state Head Start Association to discuss the potential of a state-level application and to get its support for the parameters of that proposal. This DECAL-Head Start Association collaboration was a key to the state's success. DECAL leaders emphasized that their primary interest was to partner—not compete—with local-level grantees. Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning partners with Sheltering Arms and Quality Care for Children (a child care resource and referral agency), five child care learning centers and 16 family child care homes to deliver Early Head Start Partnership services. DECAL has MOUs with the state's Departments of Public Health (IDEA 619, Part C) and Human Resources (Division of Family and Children Services, which serves children in foster care), and partners with the Children's Cabinet (Georgia's State Advisory Council), and the Alliance for Education Agency Heads. In addition, DECAL has been using its role as the subsidy administrator to support the state's seven other EHS-CC Partnership grantees. Georgia's approach is an example of how a state can both be an applicant and a partner to local-level grantees.

### Why the State Decided to Apply

In applying for the grant, the state's goals were to:

- Improve quality and access by delivering Early Head Start services in partnering child care centers and family child care homes;
- Build hubs and the infrastructure and management systems to support children and families in these high-quality programs; and
- Leverage the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) to build an integrated service-delivery system.

### The State Approach

To meet these goals, DECAL created an early childhood hub model, partnering with existing Early Head Start and Head Start grantees, a child care resource and referral agency, and other community-based entities that support the comprehensive delivery of dental, mental health, and nutrition services to all participating programs. The advantages for these organizations to apply together with the state include:

- **State Expertise:** The idea of a partnering with independent child care facilities was daunting to many of the existing grantees. DECAL's existing child care expertise and its responsibility for licensing, subsidy, QRIS, professional development, state pre-K, and the Child Care and Adult Food Program, brought experience and resources to the partnership that appealed to existing local grantees.
- **Child Assessment, Monitoring, and Oversight:** The state purchased the child assessment programs (Child Plus and GOLD) for everyone to meet the child assessment requirements and it handles the reimbursement requests and is responsible for the monitoring and oversight process.



- **Governance:** The membership of Georgia's State Advisory Council and Alliance of Education Agency Heads meets the Head Start requirements. DECAL also established a Parent Policy Council to meet that requirement. The input from the Policy Council is shared with DECAL's Commissioner and, ultimately, the Governor, State Advisory Council and Alliance of Education Agency Heads.
- **Subsidy**
  - **Priority Access:** DECAL provides priority access to subsidy funding for all EHS-CCP participants. This access includes those funded under the state grant as well as the seven local grantee recipients. In fact, DECAL drafted the response to the subsidy section of the EHS-CCP application and shared that with all local applicants. This was a way of being supportive to other applicants and it ensured alignment.
  - **New Process:** DECAL has created a subsidy grant process, instead of a voucher/certificate process, for which all local EHS-CC Partnership grantees are eligible to participate. The grant amount is calculated based on the number and percentage of slots that the EHS-CCP grantee proposed in the grantee's federal application for children who are eligible for EHS services and also determined to be eligible for subsidies. The grant agreement assures that each EHS-CCP grantee agency and its partners can maintain at least 25% in needed subsidy funds as a base payment regardless of the fluctuation in numbers of children. The grant agreements provide consistent and predictable subsidy funding that, when added to the EHS-CCP funding, helps partners budget and provide the required comprehensive services, lower ratios and group sizes, qualified teachers, and broad-scale family engagement activities.
  - **Alignment with EHS Requirements:** DECAL trained and coached the local grantees' staff to assist them in determining family eligibility for subsidy and Early Head Start at the same time. DECAL staff reviewed the local grantees' files to ensure uniform process and adequate documentation. Local staff now also collect rosters—a new element for EHS—so that the state can report the requirement data for children serviced by CCDF.
- **Alignment with QRIS:** As a condition of all the additional support by the state, all programs are required to participate in the state's QRIS. Programs that had not previously participated in the QRIS are guaranteed bonuses.
- **State Match:** The state provides the 20% match through legislative appropriation to the EHS-CCP.

DECAL has leveraged the partnership as an opportunity to focus on continuous quality improvement, which benefits all programs and systems. The state hired FPG Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill to conduct a statewide, representative study of quality across licensed child care centers and Georgia's pre-K programs in 2008-2009. The plan now is to repeat the studies with a sample of the EHS-CCP sites as well as with other EHS and Head Start sites. This will help the state gauge the change in quality since Georgia implemented Quality Rated, its QRIS, as well as the EHS-CC Partnerships.



## Key Lessons Learned to Date

- **Start small** rather than attempting to implement EHS-CC Partnerships statewide at the outset. This allows time to plan, pilot, and work out the kinks in the system. The Head Start requirements are a heavy lift but the outcomes for children, families, programs and the state system are worth it.
- **Respect the local grantees;** pay attention to the relationships, partner with them, and learn from them. There can be suspicion at the beginning that the state is trying to take over. Emphasize the partnership approach and the mutual gains of the partnership.
- **Acknowledge and address the need for internal capacity building.** DECAL had to build its own capacity to provide training and technical assistance to local grantees. For instance, local Head Start programs needed additional support in determining eligibility for subsidy; DECAL developed the capacity within subsidy staff for this training and built a monitoring systems to review programs.



## Pennsylvania

\$27.5 million over five years

## Why the State Decided to Apply

Not surprisingly, the Department of Human Services, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, applied for a state-level EHS-CC Partnership grant; Pennsylvania was a veteran grantee for Early Head Start, having received the first state Early Head Start grant several years earlier.

## The State Approach

- **Subsidy as Base Funding:** In planning for the EHS-CC Partnership grant, state leaders focused on subsidy as the base funding with EHS layered on top of it. This experience has supported state leaders in strategizing about how to fund children through multiple funding sources to better support the cost of higher quality in child care.
- **Every Hour is an Early Head Start Hour:** Previously, Pennsylvania broke the day into the EHS portion (8 am to 4 pm) and then two hours of wraparound care. Now, every hour is EHS time whereby all the EHS standards must be fulfilled no matter how many children there are in a program. That makes a difference in thinking about funding. The reimbursement approach, EHS layered on top of subsidy, was designed to further address the issue of programs needing additional revenue to support the cost of delivering this model.
- **Communities of Practice:** Communities of Practice were created to allow hubs supporting the local implementation of EHS-CC Partnerships to learn from each other. Additionally, these Communities of Practice support individual programs and teachers learning from each other. State leaders arrange occasional meetings and conference calls to facilitate cross-learning opportunities.





- **Selection Criteria:** State leaders created seven different approved selection criteria (instead of one) in order to respond to the diverse need across the state in urban and rural areas. The tailoring of selection criteria also allowed for addressing consistency as families transition from Early Head Start to Head Start.
- **Supportive Partner:** Seven other EHS-CCP grants were funded in the state. As a state-level grantee, the priority is that all other grantees are successful in their local implementation. Information and opportunities to share successes and challenges are scheduled with the Head Start State Collaboration Office, the Pennsylvania Head Start Association, and the other EHS-CCP recipients.

## Key Lessons Learned to Date

- **Address legislative budgetary authority within your state.** Make sure you are having the conversations appropriate to your legislative and budgetary process to assure you have spending authority in place.
- **Consider governance requirements.** Plan for your governance structure well in advance under the requirements of EHS in order to avoid delays. Pennsylvania's steering committee approach to governance did not meet the requirements so the committee eventually created a five-member governing board. Ask questions up front about what governance approaches will be approved.
- **Local Program Recruitment.** Program recruitment can take significant time. The plan for local recruitment should be developed in the application phase. Then convert that recruitment plan into the materials necessary for community programs to apply.
- **Build and utilize relationships to support success.** Work through your state's Head Start Association to reach a consensus on the approach to a state-level application to avoid competition and tension with potential local grantees. After receiving the grant, continue to use the state association as a source of additional input and feedback from local grantees to understand what is and is not working.
- **Address the cultural and requirement differences between Head Start and child care.** The Head Start and child care cultures are different as is the language and terminology. Facilitate understanding among leaders from the different programs and clarify the differences in requirements, monitoring, and paperwork.



## Washington, DC<sup>1</sup>

\$4.65 million over 5 years

## Why the District Decided to Apply

The District of Columbia's pre-Kindergarten program successfully expanded access to quality early education and care for the city's three- and four-year olds. The Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grant was seen as an opportunity to create a system of support for its infants and toddlers and address the need for continuous, comprehensive quality child care for this age group. Through the creation of networks and hubs, supported by layered funding, the District is building capacity to expand the Early Head Start model in child care programs that serve a high proportion of children in the subsidy program.

<sup>1</sup> <http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/QIN%20Overview.pdf>

## The City's Approach

Washington, DC used the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grant to develop the Quality Improvement Network (QIN) as an element of its city system for early success. Its goal was to:

- Implement a community-based system of supports aligned to the comprehensive, quality standard of EHS;
- Leverage all available funding sources (local, federal) across District government to facilitate comprehensive services and enhance the quality of child care for infants and toddlers; and
- Ensure that children with high needs have access to these high-quality early learning opportunities in their community.

The QIN combines the annual \$930,000 EHS-CC Partnership grant for quality technical assistance and coaching with a local \$1.8 million investment for comprehensive services and \$6.5 million in local child care subsidy for full-day, full-year slots, which is made up of federal TANF and CCDF dollars.

QIN benefits to child care partners include:

- Job-embedded, continuous, professional learning and technical assistance;
- Guaranteed full payment for a negotiated number of subsidy slots at the gold rate when program maintains overall 85% monthly enrollment—not tied to individual child attendance;
- Assistance with recruitment to fill vacancies;
- Support with transitions to pre-K; and
- Salary bonuses for teachers and priority for staff in programs that help with degree attainment.

The city selected three hubs, two serve center-based child care partners and the other supports a network of family child care homes. The chart below breaks out roles and responsibilities.

## Roles and Responsibilities

	OSSE	Hubs	Child Care Partners
<b>Families, Outreach and Enrollment</b>	Support outreach and enrollment activities.	Conduct outreach and enrollment activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish and maintain nurturing relationships with children and their families;</li><li>• Support families as their child's most important teacher; and</li><li>• Help transition families.</li></ul>
<b>Eligibility</b>	Establish payment system and extend eligibility requirements.	Coordinate Early Head Start intake with subsidy eligibility intake.	Support subsidy eligibility intake.

	OSSE	Hubs	Child Care Partners
Quality Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the funding, governance structure, policies, and procedures; and</li> <li>• Provide professional development and technical assistance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build systems to support quality;</li> <li>• Assess partner TA needs to meet EHS standards;</li> <li>• Provide EHS 101 training; and</li> <li>• Provide coaching and learning activities.</li> </ul>	Participate in coaching, technical assistance and professional development activities.
Monitoring and Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track and monitor hubs; and</li> <li>• Streamline licensing and subsidy monitoring of child care partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct on-going monitoring of child care partners; and</li> <li>• Maintain compliant status with the Office of Head Start.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide services in accordance with EHS standards; and</li> <li>• Implement policies and procedures to ensure compliance with federal grant requirements.</li> </ul>
Teachers	Ensure teachers receive salary bonuses.	Manage salary bonuses for child care teachers.	Support teachers in pursuit of higher education degrees, and compensate them accordingly.
Comprehensive Services	Ensure delivery of comprehensive services and supportive transitions.	Coordinate the provision of comprehensive services.	Support families in accessing comprehensive services.
Target Populations	Establish selection criteria that assures the priority populations are served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish targeted recruitment and enrollment practices; and</li> <li>• Enroll the priority population.</li> </ul>	Help recruit and enroll eligible children and their families.
Partnerships	Facilitate partnerships with other city agencies.	Facilitate partnerships with community-based organizations.	Facilitate partnerships with families and assist them in accessing services and supports.
Data and Evaluation	Work with external evaluator to conduct an implementation and impact evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate data reporting;</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate documentation of compliance with HS Performance Standards; and</li> <li>• Participate in evaluation of the QIN.</li> </ul>	Participate in evaluation of the QIN.

## Key Lessons Learned to Date

- **Shared vision builds commitment.** DC stakeholders benefitted from the shared vision of the QIN; they have demonstrated their deep commitment to goals of the QIN, the growing collaboration within the network and its strong leadership. This is important when creating change since there are bound to be challenges to overcome.
- **Working toward a big goal can mitigate challenges to collaboration.** DC stakeholders see the QIN and the hub model as transforming a past culture that made interagency collaboration difficult. In addition, the collaboration has spread beyond the public sector to include Hub partners and providers.
- **Clarify roles.** Collaborations involve many players. Defining and clarifying roles is critical to ensuring success.
- **Timelines need to take into account the need to build trusting relationships.** Speedy timelines can often hamper the important foundation of trust and respect needed between partners. Relationship development takes time.



- **Creating communities of learners improves quality.** The high standards and funding aren't the only drivers of quality. Fostering peer exchange and a culture of learning is increasing information sharing and enhancing a culture of continuous improvement.
- **The financial instability of child care partners must be taken into account.** When there are timing issues with grant awards, child care centers that have lowered their ratios can face significant financial strain, which can undermine their capacity to follow the plan.
- **It's never too early to begin thinking about sustainability.** Adjusting plans to reflect more reasonable timelines and to incorporate learnings to continuously improve quality is the first order of business, but the improved quality and new structures to support collaboration will be short-lived without an early emphasis on long-term financial sustainability.



## Washington State

### The State Approach

Washington state, while not seeking to become a state-level grantee, used the EHS-CC Partnerships grant opportunity as impetus to strategize about how the state could best support the local grantees and better integrate and align their work with state-level systems-building efforts. Washington's approach provides an example of the importance of working with local grantees to better align and integrate Early Head Start and Head Start into the state's early learning system.

Washington developed the **Washington Statewide Consortium for High-Quality Infant/Toddler Services** to support applicants in the 2014 federal Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grant opportunity. The Consortium brings together state agencies and statewide associations, public-private partnerships, local grantees and other regional and local early learning leaders working together on shared goals for infants and toddlers. The Consortium's goals center on increasing the availability and affordability of high-quality care for infants and toddlers. Once the 18-month implementation period began, the Department of Early Learning (DEL) Head Start Collaboration Office and CCDF administrators convened the EHS-CC Partnership grantees and their child care partnership teams with state agency leaders representing licensing, child care subsidy, Early Achievers (the state's QRIS), and professional development to develop strategies for support and implementation of key areas. EHS-CC Partnership Grantees in partnership with DEL, Region X Office of Head Start and Office of Child Care and state partners from the Department of Social and Health Services, Child Care Aware, the State Association of Head Start, and ECEAP worked to prioritize specific contributions of statewide resources to best support this initiative. Statewide organizations are asked to provide resources to local programs as outlined in the chart on the following page.





Statewide Organization Member	Contribution of Statewide Resources
Department of Early Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) pilot (enrollment-based subsidy structure) and evaluation;</li> <li>• Streamlined policies for licensing, subsidy, and QRIS;</li> <li>• Priority access to services, including: Infant/Toddler Consultation and Infant/Toddler credential pathway; and</li> <li>• Support to reach the expected quality rating of level 3 or higher.</li> </ul>
Thrive by Five Washington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connections with Coalitions and early learning programs to increase community-level collaboration.</li> </ul>
University of Washington - Childcare Quality & Early Learning Center for Research and Professional Development (CQEL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching Supports and shared learning/practice opportunities; and</li> <li>• Priority access to infant/toddler professional development resources.</li> </ul>
The Educational Service Districts Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School readiness supports; and</li> <li>• Connections to schools.</li> </ul>
The Washington Association of Infant Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritized access to infant &amp; early childhood mental health training and resources.</li> </ul>
Child Care Aware of Washington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Achiever (EA) supports;</li> <li>• Coaching coordination;</li> <li>• Priority access to scholarships; and</li> <li>• Liaison &amp; outreach assistance to reach EA child care sites.</li> </ul>
Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP Programs (WSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination with ECEAP/HS programs; and</li> <li>• EHS program supports.</li> </ul>

The Consortium creates opportunities for technical assistance, updates from state-level leaders as well as peer exchanges to share strategies, challenges, and successes. It facilitates feedback loops and input into the development of additional state resources. To date, these have included tips for recruiting/enrolling new families, communications strategies to promote local efforts and updates on new rules and legislation.

In some sense, the Consortium has become a learning and innovation lab for state leaders. The state uses input from the local leaders to guide its efforts. Currently, the state is piloting priority subsidy contracts with members—much like the Georgia grants—in place of the former voucher system. The state hopes to roll this out to all QRIS program participants.

## Benefits from the EHS-CC Partnership Grant to the Statewide System

Leaders provided numerous examples of what they see as benefits to the statewide early childhood system including:

- **Increased Understanding of Need across the State:** If the state oversees the community needs assessments and if the assessments are conducted statewide and on an ongoing basis, the state can better ensure a match between the needs of children and families and the resources of the state. Additionally, the state can ensure that the elements of quality and focus of those services is appropriate to the children and families being served.
- **Improved integration and alignment:** The state can use the grant(s) as a strategy to better integrate and align Early Head Start and Head Start grantees, resources and participating programs and families into the overall statewide early learning system. Through this integration, partnerships and coordination will occur across programs and systems, thus advancing the state early childhood system. In addition, as exemplified by Alabama and Washington State, states have the opportunity to reconfigure existing structures, agreements and contracts for particular services to foster alignment.

- **Improved Utilization of Resources:** A state, with its bird's-eye view, knows where funding is inadequate. The grant provides an opportunity to layer funding on top of existing but inadequate resources in a particular area in order to raise the quality of the particular services being provided. States are able to seek out places where this opportunity will maximize existing assets, at both the state and community level. Alabama, Georgia and Pennsylvania were all strategic in their approaches to layering funding through this grant opportunity.
- **Emphasize Equity throughout the Approach:** Some state applicants focused on supporting the families with young children who were underserved and marginalized and noted how a state grant would well position it to reverse the effects of poverty. Other states indicated that they are advancing equity by reaching teachers, some of whom are at the federal poverty line themselves, who wouldn't have been reached otherwise.
- **Provide Higher Quality Care through EHS-CC Funding combined with Subsidy:** A state grantee can assure that a large percentage of the EHS-CC Partnership slots go to families with young children who are subsidy recipients. Partners get both the subsidy funding and EHS grant funding. In this dual enrollment system, providers are able to offer higher quality services because one slot is drawing from two pools of funding. This assures stable income for the provider as well as adequate funding to maintain the level of quality needed. As a result, children on subsidy can go from getting basic care to getting much higher quality care and many more comprehensive services.

## Top Advantages for Local Partners of Significant State Involvement in EHS-CC Partnerships

1. **Assumption of Risk:** The state is able to assume the risk of managing funds and monitoring, alleviating partners of those burdens.
2. **Capacity to Leverage:** The state often handles licensing and CCDF funds, administers the food program and state pre-K, and holds other federal grants such as RTT-ELC and MIECHV. It is able, therefore, to leverage all these resources as part of the EHS-CC Partnership approach. The state can also facilitate the provision of comprehensive services by developing the necessary MOUs and coordination with other systems such as health and TANF that are touching the families.
3. **Connection to Subsidy:** Because the state administers subsidy, it can assure all EHS-CC Partnership applicants that they will have access to the subsidy dollars and the state can modify existing policies to better support local programs.
4. **State Capacity to Work with Federal Leaders:** Just like subsidies, the state can leverage its political clout to work with federal leaders to coordinate training and technical assistance and to use resources efficiently, provide continuous quality improvements and advance equity. The state also has greater capacity than a local grantee to work with federal leaders to align and coordinate monitoring in order to reduce duplication and decrease the burden on grantees.
5. **Engage the State in Understanding and Addressing Local Challenges:** Local-level leaders have been layering funding for years. The EHS-CC Partnership grants better inform engaged states about the state-level policy changes needed to support better alignment of state and local efforts. Through partnering, local programs are engaging in a unique collaboration with the state, which will support addressing local challenges.



## Some Challenges of having the State Serve as Grantee

1. **Building Partnerships with the Local Head Start/Early Head Start Programs:** While several advantages exist for Head Start programs that partner with states through the EHS-CC Partnership grant, some Head Start programs and leaders perceive a competition with states applying for the grant. Communicate with your state's Head Start Association and local grantees from the very start and seek to create an approach that is a win for states and for Head Start – and, most importantly, a win for young children and their families.
2. **Working within Bureaucratic Systems:** State governments do not generally work at the direct program level, which is the primary focus of this grant. Some state grantees, such as Washington, D.C., Georgia and Pennsylvania, have overcome this challenge by creating hub models. Slow-moving bureaucracy and the challenges of legislatively-approved budgets can severely hamper a state's ability to move on implementation as quickly as needed.
3. **Planning for a Governance System:** The governance requirements of an EHS grant are complex and may prove cumbersome for state grantees to negotiate. On the other hand, one governance structure through a state-level grantee may be more efficient than the individual governance of every local-level grantee. State grantees need to fully understand the requirements, create a governance plan tailored to their state context, and vet the potential for approval of that plan well ahead of receiving the grant.

## Conclusion

While there is a learning curve for states that have never been grantees before, the benefit of having the responsibility and opportunity to use the EHS-CC Partnership grant to advance high-quality care in dynamic ways has proven worth the challenges. States that have resisted applying for an EHS-CC Partnership grant because they lack a deep bench in providing direct service should reconsider. Current EHS-CC Partnership state grantees have demonstrated that their role is not to provide direct service but to use their expertise to improve quality and access, build hubs, and create infrastructure and management systems to support young children and families in programs, and to leverage CCDF and other systems to make sure the necessary funding and supports are in place.

State grantees have demonstrated strong partnerships with Head Start and Early Head Start and have been an important support system for—not competitors of—local grantees. Among many other benefits, state grantees have helped break down silos across agencies and programs and are bridging the divide between state and local leaders and programs. The potential for a more effective feedback loop between the state and local levels and a stronger family voice in state-level decision-making should not be minimized.

**Whether or not your state chooses to apply to be a grantee, make sure to make the most of the opportunity.** Washington state provides an excellent example of a strategy to maximize the benefits of these local grants and advance the development of its state-level early childhood system. In addition, many of Georgia, Alabama and Pennsylvania's strategies can be adopted or adapted regardless of whether your state decides to apply to be a grantee.

The Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grants present a significant opportunity to support the infants and toddlers in your state and community and can be an important part of your statewide systems development plan and financing. As you develop applications, keep the big picture in mind. Make the most of this opportunity to be responsive, efficient and effective in advancing a system that promotes healthy child development and learning for the youngest children, especially those with the greatest needs.



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