

## State Support for Local Early Learning Councils

This resource was prepared for a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) State in response to a request for examples of States that support local Early Learning Councils. Local Early Learning Councils are public-private partnerships that work to align and strengthen a comprehensive early childhood system and to coordinate funding coming into the community from various funding streams. The direct provision of services is not a core function of a local Early Learning Council. Membership generally includes early childhood experts, parents, practitioners, local governments, public school administrators, health/mental health and human services providers, business leaders, advocates, and representatives from philanthropic and faith-based communities.

To address this request, ELC TA reviewed the *State Profiles of Successful Public Private Partnerships* website prepared by the Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Five States ([Arizona](#), [Colorado](#), [Iowa](#), [Maryland](#), and [Oregon](#)) were identified as States that support local Early Learning Councils. ELC TA also consulted State webpages for these States for additional information.

A description of the varying characteristics of these five local Early Learning Councils includes an overview of the relationship between the State and the local councils, their mission and goals, governance structures, sources of funding, types of activities, and plans for evaluation. The Appendix provides a profile of each initiative.

### Description of Local Early Learning Councils

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#### 1. Overview

State support for local Early Learning Councils can be formalized through legislation or through collaborative agreements.

- In three States (**Arizona**, **Colorado**, and **Oregon**), State-level support for local Early Learning Councils is legislatively mandated.
  - **Arizona** – 2006 legislation funds early childhood services using a tax on tobacco. The State Advisory Council, known as First Things First and 28 regional partnership councils are staffed by First Things First employees. Council members are volunteers.
  - **Colorado** – 2007 legislation established local Early Childhood Councils. This was the culmination of work that began in 1996 with legislatively mandated councils in local communities or regions that were known at that time as Consolidated Child Care Pilots.
  - **Oregon** – 2013 legislation created 16 regional and community-based Early Learning Hubs.

- In **Iowa** and **Maryland**, support for local councils grew out of a coalition of State agencies, organizations, and community partners.
  - In **Iowa**, Early Childhood Iowa was founded in 2001 as an alliance of State agencies, organizations, and community partners, and works with Early Childhood Iowa Areas.
  - **Maryland**'s local Early Childhood Advisory Councils grew out of strategic planning for Maryland's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant.
- **Arizona, Iowa, Maryland, and Oregon** have a network of local Early Learning Councils that cover all or most of the State.
  - In **Arizona**, First Things First's 28 regional partnership councils cover the entire State.
  - In **Colorado**, 31 Early Childhood Councils serve 58 of the 64 counties.
  - **Iowa**'s 39 Early Childhood Iowa Areas represent all 99 counties.
  - **Maryland** created 24 Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils that include all local jurisdictions.
  - In **Oregon**, 16 Early Learning Hubs cover the entire State.

## 2. Mission and Goals

The following goals guide the work of the local councils in these five States:

- Increasing access to high-quality early childhood education and promoting school readiness (**Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Maryland, and Oregon**).
- Supporting stable and nurturing families (**Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, and Oregon**).
- Increasing access to health care (**Arizona, Colorado, and Iowa**).
- Coordinating a high-quality early childhood system that is integrated and comprehensive (**Arizona and Oregon**).
- Promoting early childhood social, emotional, and mental health development (**Colorado**).
- Ensuring early childhood educators and health professionals are well-prepared, highly skilled, and well-compensated (**Arizona**).
- Increasing public appreciation of children's early years (**Arizona**).
- Promoting safe and supportive communities (**Iowa**).

## 3. Governance Structure

- In three States (**Arizona, Iowa, and Maryland**), a State Board/Advisory Council provides infrastructure and oversight to local boards for local planning and collaborative delivery of services.
  - In **Arizona**, regional partnership councils are part of the First Things First's governance structure.
  - In **Iowa**, local Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards must demonstrate to the Early Childhood Iowa Stakeholders Alliance that they have the capacity to efficiently and effectively administer the responsibilities and authority of their geographic area.
  - In **Maryland**, the Early Childhood Advisory Council provided planning grants for 24 Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils in Maryland counties and Baltimore City, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation provided leadership coordination to local councils.

- In **Colorado**, each local council defines its own governance structure and must have a fiscal sponsor to receive funding. Statewide non-profit organizations provide support to the 31 councils.
- In **Oregon**, the Oregon Department of Education, Early Learning Division, provides funding and support to Early Learning Hubs for local planning and collaborative delivery of services and is responsible for holding Hubs accountable for outcomes. Hubs select a local organization to provide primary support for the council.

### 4. Funding

States support their local Early Learning Councils using designated taxes, State General Funds, and Federal grant monies.

- **Arizona** funds local councils using an additional tax on tobacco products.
- **Colorado, Iowa, and Oregon** fund local councils using State General Funds.
- **Colorado** uses Child Care and Development Block Grant funds, and local councils raise additional funds.
- **Maryland** used RTT-ELC funding with assistance from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Local Early Learning Councils obtained State funding by submitting applications and applying for grants.

- **Arizona** administers statewide initiatives, and awards regional and statewide grants through competitive Requests for Grant Applications.
- In **Colorado**, every three years local Early Childhood Councils respond to a Request for Applications created by the Office of Early Childhood in the Colorado Department of Human Services.
- In **Maryland**, local councils responded to a Request for Proposals to request support.
- In **Oregon**, local communities completed a Request for Applications to be accepted as one of the first cohort of Hubs.

### 5. Activities

See the Appendix for a partial list of activities supported by local early learning councils.

### 6. Evaluation and Outcomes

- **Arizona** has 10 school readiness indicators that are designed to guide and measure progress of the local councils.
- **Colorado** has three program benchmarks that outline priority goals for Early Childhood Councils.
- **Iowa** requires all Early Childhood Iowa Areas to collect and report performance data from the programs and services they fund during the fiscal year. The data are then compiled and shared from a State perspective in the State annual report.
- **Maryland** requires the local early childhood councils to submit an annual evaluation report and quarterly progress reports on the action plans that they have undertaken.
- **Oregon** requires Early Learning Hubs to report on seven metrics, which are listed in the Appendix.

## **Additional Resource**

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*Transformation Zones – an Early Learning Improvement Strategy*, is a State Technical Assistance Resource prepared by Early Learning Challenge Technical Assistance (ELC TA) for a RTT-ELC State. Transformation zones (also referred to as achievement zones, community hubs, early childhood hubs, empowerment zones, innovation zones, investment zones, and promise communities) are geographic areas where States concentrate funding and technical assistance services to support strategic systems-level work. In general, they are areas the size of one or more counties or school districts. Ten RTT-ELC States included Transformation Zones as key projects in their RTT-ELC grants. This resource includes a description of their transformation zones, information about local implementation teams, a list of key issues for States to consider, and lessons learned from RTT-ELC States as they have implemented transformation zones. The *Transformation Zones* Appendix provides specific State examples about the criteria RTT-ELC States used to select communities and the services States and communities are providing. <https://elc.grads360.org/services/PDCService.svc/GetPDCDocumentFile?fileId=16241>

## Appendix: Detailed Information about Local Early Learning Councils in Five States

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### Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board (First Things First) (FTF) - Regional Partnership Councils

<http://www.firstthingsfirst.org/>

*Arizona Profile: Successful Public-Private Partnerships* (Italicized text is taken is directly from the report)

#### 1. Overview of First Things First

*The Early Childhood Development and Health Board (ECDH), also known as First Things First (FTF), was created through a voter-approved initiative in 2006 that enacted an 80-cent per pack tax increase on tobacco products to sustainably fund early childhood services in Arizona.*

*FTF is a state board agency and staff members are state employees. The state board and 28 regional partnership councils are staffed by FTF employees. All board members and regional partnership council members are volunteers.*

*The 28 local Regional Partnership Councils (which include 18 geographically defined councils and 10 local tribal land council*

#### 2. Mission and Goals

*Six system outcomes were identified by the Task Force, and inform the work of FTF:*

- 1. All children have access to high-quality, culturally responsive early care and education that promotes their development;*
- 2. All children have access to high-quality preventative and continuous health care including physical, mental, oral, and nutritional health;*
- 3. All families have the information, services, and support they need to help their children achieve their fullest potential;*
- 4. All early childhood education and health professionals are well-prepared, highly skilled, and compensated based on their education and experience;*
- 5. The early childhood system is high-quality, centered on children and families, coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive.; and*
- 6. All Arizonans understand the importance of the early years and the impact of early childhood development, health, and education on Arizona's quality of life. As a result, they substantially support—both politically and financially—a model system that delivers these benefits.*

#### 3. Governance and Partnership Members – Local Councils

*FTF uses a shared governance model that combines consistent state infrastructure and oversight with strong local community involvement in the planning and delivery of services.*

## Local Regional Partnership Councils

*The 28 local Regional Partnership Councils (which include 18 geographically defined councils and 10 local tribal land councils) are comprised of volunteers who determine which early childhood services will be funded in their communities. According to statute, each council has 8 specific seats which must include a parent; a child care provider; an early childhood educator; a public school administrator; a health service provider; and a representative from the business, philanthropy, and faith-based communities; plus 3 at-large seats, for a total of 11 members.*

*The Regional Partnership Councils are responsible for completing a regional needs and assets report, completing an annual regional funding plan, soliciting grant proposals, recommending grant proposals to the Board, implementing and monitoring the programs, increasing parents and providers' awareness of resources and information, and soliciting private grants.*

*Additional information about the local councils (which are a part of the FTF structure and not independent nonprofit agencies) can be found on the FTF Web site at*

*<http://www.azftf.gov/pages/yourregionalcouncil.aspx>.*

## 4. Funding and Other Resources

*FTF is funded entirely through a dedicated 80 cent tax additional tax on tobacco products. There is no legislative appropriation.*

FTF administers statewide initiatives and awards regional and statewide grants through competitive Requests For Grant Applications. Funds are allotted to Arizona communities based on their population of young children (birth to age 5), and emphasis placed on getting resources directly to children and families through a network of community providers. Additional information is on the FTF Web site at <http://www.azftf.gov/WhoWeAre/HowWeWork/Pages/Funding.aspx>.

## 5. Activities

### **Program Quality and Access**

**Quality First** is a quality support program that partners with over 900 regulated programs in child care centers, family child care homes, and schools to enhance early learning in areas proven to help children thrive.

**Family, Friend and Neighbor** help relatives, neighbors, and friends caring for young children in their homes expand their early learning and child care skills by providing classes on brain development and early literacy.

**Summer Transition to Kindergarten** exposes children who may not have had an opportunity to attend preschool to the routines of school so they may be ready to succeed in kindergarten. Additional FTF strategies provide other early learning programs such as scholarships to help more families and young children access quality child care and preschool, support for child care staff to attend college courses and earn degrees in early childhood, technical assistance to child care programs in areas such as dealing with behavioral challenges or promoting healthy habits in children, and incentives to keep the best teachers working with Arizona's youngest children.

### **Family Support**

The **Arizona Parent Kit** is provided to every family of a newborn upon discharge from an Arizona hospital or birthing center. The kit includes DVDs about healthy parenting practices, an 80-page resource guide, and a book to encourage parents to begin reading immediately with their child. The **Birth to 5 Helpline** allows all Arizona parents to call in with questions about their infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. The line is toll-free statewide and staffed by early childhood development specialists, registered nurses, disabilities specialists, early literacy specialists, and mental health counselors.

**Family Resource Centers and Community-Based Classes** provide families with children, age birth to 5 years access to information and education on a variety of child development and health topics. The centers are established and classes are offered in areas of the community where families naturally congregate.

**Home Visitation programs** provide participating families of infants and toddlers with information and education on parenting, child development, and health topics while assisting with connections to other resources or programs as needed. Home visitors deliver one-on-one coaching and interaction tailored to the needs of individual families.

### **Preventative Health**

FTF supports healthy children by providing access to screenings for oral health, medical, and developmental issues, and by creating opportunities for families to learn about brain development, nutrition, healthy weight, and physical activity.

FTF also helps families identify health insurance options and connects them to available health care. In underserved areas, FTF funds training in needed specialties, such as speech therapy for children, and offers incentives for health care providers to work in smaller communities.

FTF also works with early childhood health partners to increase collaboration and maximize health resources. For example, FTF's investments in health promotion and disease prevention are used to leverage additional resources, such as Federal grants, that allow these efforts to serve more young children and their families.

## **6. Evaluation and Outcomes**

Using further stakeholder and partner input, FTF identified 10 School Readiness Indicators that are designed to guide and measure progress in building an effective early childhood system in Arizona.

These indicators and state level benchmarks for 2020 are available at

<http://www.azftf.gov/publications/Documents/Arizona%20School%20Readiness%20Indicators%20-%20April%202014.pdf>.

### **Colorado - Early Childhood Councils**

<http://www.coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.com/support-resources-guides>

[Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance of Colorado](#)

[Colorado Profile: Successful Public-Private Partnerships](#) (Italicized text is taken directly from the report)



## 1. Overview

*Following the Colorado General Assembly's establishment of Consolidated Child Care Pilots in 1996, several communities established coalitions to strengthen local early childhood systems and better serve children birth – age 8. Over time, more communities joined this effort, ultimately leading to legislation (HB07-1062) in 2007 when the Consolidated Child Care Pilots were renamed Early Childhood Councils (ECCs) and expanded from 17 Pilots serving 30 counties to 31 ECCs serving 58 of the 64 counties in Colorado.*

## 2. Mission and Goals

*The ultimate goal of ECCs is to improve the quality, access, and equity of services across all four domains of early childhood: (1) early learning; (2) family support and parent education; (3) social, emotional, and mental health; and (4) health by building the foundations of a strong system using the Early Childhood Colorado Framework as a guide.*

## 3. Governance and Partnership Members – Local Councils

*Each Council defines its own governance structure and must have a fiscal sponsor to receive funding. ECC members include a broad representation of local community stakeholders, including policymakers, business leaders, early childhood professionals, parent consumers, and advocates.*

*The ECC Leadership Alliance (ECCLA) was established to bring the 31 local councils together to support each other, align efforts, communicate grant management information, provide local input on policy for early childhood, and share expertise and lessons learned about how best to improve the system of services. In 2013, ECCLA became a 501c3 nonprofit membership association with all 31 Councils as members.*

## 4. Funding and Other Resources

*Councils currently receive funding on a 3-year grant cycle administered by the State of Colorado's Department of Human Services through its Office of Early Childhood from the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant funds for Quality Improvement. However, this grant does not fully fund Council work. Councils address this shortfall by leveraging funds from other sources and fostering local partnerships to support the building of this early childhood system.*

## 5. Activities

*The Councils are a critical piece of early childhood services delivery throughout the State. They focus on advancing programs, resources, and support around early learning; family support and parent education; and social, emotional, and mental health. They work to bring together local partners to improve the quality and availability of early childhood services for children and families in their communities. While not all Councils offer direct services to children and families, they do work with partners in order to ensure that services are available.*



## 6. Evaluation and Outcomes

The Colorado State Department of Human Services' Office of Early Childhood has recently redefined the program benchmarks as outlined in the following priority goal statements:

1. ECCs will engage in activities to promote transitions of the children in their communities, which includes transitions from infant to toddler classrooms, toddler to Pre-k classrooms, and transition to kindergarten;
2. ECCs will engage in activities to promote family engagement in Quality Rating and Improvement Systems;
3. ECCs will carry out actions to improve the quality rating of all licensed early learning programs in their ECC areas;

### Iowa - Early Childhood Iowa Areas

[http://www.state.ia.us/earlychildhood/local\\_system/index.html](http://www.state.ia.us/earlychildhood/local_system/index.html)

*Iowa Profile: Successful Public-Private Partnerships* (Italicized text is taken directly from the report)

#### 1. Overview

The Iowa Community Empowerment Board, founded in 1998, was composed of state agency heads and gubernatorial appointees, and supported 58 local Empowerment Boards representing 99 counties in developing and implementing strategic plans focused on the healthy development of children from birth to age 5.

In 2001, Iowa leaders founded Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) Stakeholders, an alliance of stakeholders focused on building a coordinated state early childhood system.

ECI is a collaborative, comprehensive partnership that promotes and invests in a comprehensive system of early care, education, health, and human services in Iowa that improves outcomes for children. ECI was founded on the premise that communities and state government can work together to improve the well-being of the State's youngest children by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of early care, education, health, and human services provided to families with children from zero through age 5. ECI's efforts unite agencies, organizations, and community partners to speak with a shared voice to support, strengthen, and meet the needs of all young children and families.

#### 2. Mission and Goals

The Iowa state legislature has designated the following result areas:

- Healthy Children;
- Children Ready to Succeed in School;
- Safe and Supportive Communities;
- Secure and Nurturing Families; and
- Secure and Nurturing Early Learning Environments.

Goals for each result area are delineated in ECI's strategic plan, which is available at [http://www.state.ia.us/earlychildhood/files/how\\_to\\_get\\_involved/StrategicPlanRevised2009.pdf](http://www.state.ia.us/earlychildhood/files/how_to_get_involved/StrategicPlanRevised2009.pdf).

### 3. Governance and Partnership Members – Local Councils

#### *Local Board Structure*

There are currently 39 ECI Areas that cover the entire State; each area with its own leadership and locally developed community plan. The purpose of an ECI Area is to enable local citizens to lead collaborative efforts in strategic planning, oversight, and managing of programs and the funding made available to the ECI Area for such programs by federal, state, local, and private sources.

Each Area Board is comprised of volunteers that meet a citizen representative definition or are an elected official. ECIA Boards are required to have representation in the perspectives of business, consumer, education, faith, health, and human services. These requirements ensure that ECIA Boards are citizen-led and that the general interest of children and families is primary in all decision-making.

In order to remain a designated ECI Area and continue to receive funds, an ECIA Board must demonstrate to the ECI State Board that it has the capacity to efficiently and effectively administer the responsibilities and authority of its geographic area. This is evaluated via a Levels of Excellence (LOE) Rating System process. The LOE system rates each Board's performance through principals of local accountability, ongoing collaboration, and continuous improvement and self-evaluation.

### 4. Funding and Other Resources

ECI is funded via two major state programs: Early Childhood Grants [Department of Human Services] and School Ready Grants [Department of Education].

- **Early Childhood Grants:** The Iowa State Legislature appropriates state General Funds for community Early Childhood Grants to enhance quality and capacity of child care. Early Childhood Grants are awarded to all Community Empowerment Areas via a formula. In FY 14, this grant program received \$6.23 million in state General Funds.
- **School Ready Grants:** The Iowa State Legislature appropriates General Funds for School Ready community grants to support comprehensive services for children ages birth – 5. Grants are distributed via formula. In FY 14, this grant program received approximately \$22 million in State General Funds.

### 5. Activities

ECI has 20 partners. The complete list is available at [https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/iowa\\_profile.pdf](https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/iowa_profile.pdf)

### 6. Evaluation and Outcomes

The ECI State Board collects and reports statewide indicator data to quantify and track progress toward the statewide results. Further, in FY 2011, the ECI State Board also adopted consistent program measures that are required to be reported by all programs funded with both Early Childhood and School Ready Grant dollars.

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All ECI Areas are required to collect performance data from the programs and services they fund during the fiscal year. This information is submitted in the local ECIA annual reports to the ECI Office. The data is then compiled and shared from a state perspective in the ECI state annual report. In order to increase the consistency of the data reported, all areas must report the same program measures for the services funded.

### Maryland - Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils

<http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/advisory-councils/local-early-childhood-advisory-councils-lecacs>

*Maryland Profile: Successful Public-Private Partnerships* (Italicized text is taken directly from the report)

#### 1. Overview

Twenty-four Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils (LECAC) are part of Maryland's efforts to create a seamless Birth-to-Grade 12 reform agenda, which includes ensuring that all young children and their families are supported in the State's efforts to overcome school readiness gaps. The Local Early Childhood Councils each develop a local action agenda to support Maryland's goals and strategies for quality early childhood education.

The local councils grew out of the strategic planning for Maryland's Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC), which identified a gap in structured early childhood local leadership in the State.

#### 2. Mission and Goals

The mission of the 24 LECACs is to implement the action plans that were developed in support of school readiness. The focus is on supporting school readiness for specified populations of children including children from low-income families, children with disabilities, and English Language Learners (ELL).

#### 3. Governance and Partnership Members – Local Councils

Each local council has between 15 and 30 members including representatives from public schools, local government, early childhood, family support, families, libraries, and human services, among others.

#### 4. Funding and Other Resources

In the first phase of development, initiated with federal RTT-ELC funding, a total of \$1.1 million was made available across the 24 local advisory councils. Maryland developed a funding formula that took into account items such as child population, disability, and ELL factors to determine the particular amount for each Council. This funding is used to implement the Action Plans developed by each local advisory council. In addition, modest start-up funding of \$3,000 was provided to each Council. Activities in the action plans are often offered in conjunction with local partners.

Support was offered to each Local Early Childhood Advisory Council through a Request for Proposal process.

## 5. Activities

*Each local advisory council creates its own unique action plan, with a focus on supporting children from low-income families, children with disabilities, and children who are ELLs.*

*Local councils use resources to simultaneously support professional development of early childhood professionals; encourage family engagement and support work with health care professionals on strategies such as Reach Out and Read; support early childhood participation in EXCELS, the Maryland QRIS; and promote overall community engagement.*

*Local councils typically form subcommittees at the local level to carry out their action plans, employing the results-based accountability and results-based facilitation skills that were developed during the training provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Other activity trends occurring locally include use of social media to reach families and a focus on partnerships to accomplish their objectives.*

## 6. Evaluation and Outcomes

*The local advisory councils are required to submit annual evaluation reports and quarterly progress reports on the action plans that they have undertaken. Regional Leadership Booster Sessions will be conducted in late 2014 and early 2015 by the Annie E. Casey Foundation to focus on what has been accomplished, what still needs to be done, and how to achieve sustainability.*

## Oregon - Local Early Learning Hubs

<https://oregonearlylearning.com/early-learning-hubs/>

*Oregon Profile: Successful Public-Private Partnerships* (Italicized text is taken directly from the report)

### 1. Overview

In 2013, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 2013 creating 16 regional and community-based Early Learning Hubs.

*An Early Learning Hub is a coordinating body that pulls together resources focused on children and families in its defined service area. Under the Early Learning Hub model, all of the sectors that touch early childhood education—health care, early childhood educators, human and social services, K-12 school districts, and the private sector—have a common place to focus their efforts, resources, and strategies with a shared purpose. Hubs are designed to coordinate existing community services in a more direct, effective, and family-centric way. Hubs are not intended to become direct service providers themselves.*

### 2. Mission and Goals

*The Early Learning Hubs, which focus on early childhood education, health linkages, and family stability, are part of the State's 40-40-20 goal to build a seamless system of education from birth to*

*college and career. The goal calls for 40 percent of students to receive a bachelor's degree or higher; 40 percent of students to receive an associate's degree or certificate; and the remaining 20 percent to earn a high school diploma. Early childhood is a critical strategy to realize the goals. To help realize its part in the Oregon 40-40-20 goals, the ELC has set the following 3 outcomes for its overall work:*

- Children who are ready for kindergarten;*
- Children who are raised in stable and attached families; and*
- Systems that are integrated and aligned into one early learning system.*

*While the ELC is not prescribing a specific program model or approach for how a community chooses to get results for its children, there are several goals that are part of the Early Learning Hubs.*

*Many processes and strategies are determined at the regional hub level, but for consistency the Early Learning Hubs focus on the following goals:*

- Outcomes, specifically, a shared set of outcomes. Progress metrics and targets will be set to locally appropriate levels, but all Early Learning Hubs are moving toward the same global outcomes;*
- Improving results for the highest-risk children;*
- Families and meaningful relationships with the people who are being served;*
- Integration across the five sectors: K-12 education, health, social and human services, early childhood education, and business;*
- Data use for continuous improvement; and*
- Coordinating effective systems and funds.*

### **3. Governance and Partnership Members – Local Councils**

*The State's authorizing law, HB 2013, allows for as many as 16 hubs in a State with 36 counties, thus requiring cross-county collaboration with each community to decide which will serve as the backbone organization. An emphasis was placed on using existing organizations such as United Way, Educational Service District, or Community Care Organization. As of summer 2014, 14 organizations had been selected with only one new nonprofit created as the Hub itself.*

*Hubs define their own geographic area, and demonstrate certain governance and partnership requirements in their applications to serve as Early Learning Hubs. This includes a transparent process for selecting the members and partners, and includes both public and private entities, locally based parents and service recipients, human social service providers, child care providers, health care providers, and representatives of local governments from the service area as specified by the state law. In the initial applicant round to establish the Early Learning Hubs, all of the organizations that applied demonstrated the required cross-sector engagement to support governance, planning, and implementation.*

*Local communities responded to Requests for Application. The Oregon Department of Education, Early Learning Division is the primary funder and ultimately responsible for holding Hubs*

accountable for outcomes. Its staff also provides support and technical assistance to the Hubs and operates a Hub Learning Collaborative, consisting of monthly webinars and quarterly in-person meetings.

#### **4. Funding and Other Resources**

*The Legislature allocated up to \$4.7 million in General Fund dollars to be distributed to the Hubs over the biennium funding period that Oregon uses. Each Hub was funded at \$15.46 for each at-risk child they proposed to reach. The Early Learning Division developed contracts with each of the Hubs specifying the activities they would engage in, how they would use their funds, and how they would keep administrative expenses below 15 percent. The Hubs' contracts also specify targets for seven metrics.*

#### **5. Activities**

*The Early Learning Hubs are not intended to be direct service providers and are required to carry out the following activities:*

- 1. Coordinate the provision of early learning services to the community served by the Hub;*
- 2. Include service providers, parents, community members, county governments, school districts, and other stakeholders in the creation of the Hub;*
- 3. Align services coordinated by the Hub with the services provided by public schools;*
- 4. Align services coordinated by the Hub with services provided by Coordinated Care Organizations and county public health departments;*
- 5. Integrate efforts across health, K-12 education, human services, early education, and the business community using coordinated and transparent budgeting, and through a governing body with representation of each of the above sectors as well as parents of children using early learning services;*
- 6. Demonstrate an ability to improve results for at-risk children;*
- 7. Leverage additional private and public funds including in-kind support; and*
- 8. Keep administrative overhead at 15 percent or less.*

#### **6. Evaluation and Outcomes**

*Hub contracts include yearly targets for the following metrics:*

##### *Kindergarten Readiness:*

- Increase the number of children served by high-quality early learning environments as measured by the Quality Rating and Improvement System; and*
- Improve readiness of kindergarten as measured by the statewide Kindergarten Readiness Assessment.*

##### *Family Stability:*

- Increase the number of children who receive developmental screening prior to age 3; and*
- Increase the number of children with access to a patient centered primary care home.*

### System Coordination

- Increase the number of at-risk children served across the system;
- Decrease the cost of service (decreasing administrative overhead); and
- Decrease the age for onset of services.

The State has contracted with Education Northwest to conduct a qualitative evaluation of the Early Learning Hubs.

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## *State Support for Local Early Learning Councils*

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