

Community-Based Planning for Expansion: A Resource Guide



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Introduction

Background

As part of the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Renewal and in partnership with the Illinois Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development, Illinois Action for Children (IAFC) implemented the Community-Based Planning for Expansion (CBP) project. The CBP project was developed in response to over 20 years of data that consistently showed high unmet need for early childhood education and care (ECEC) services in certain communities. Between 2020 and 2022, the CBP project provided support in 14 communities to strengthen community systems and to identify community-level applicants for federal and state funding.

The CBP project supplied communities with systems knowledge, demographic data, and planning capacity to plan for how they would take advantage of projected increases in ECEC funding. The goal of the three-year project was to promote the readiness of the participating communities to successfully compete for funding to expand publicly funded ECEC services.

The publicly funded services that were the focus of the planning project included Prevention Initiative, Preschool for All, Preschool for All Expansion, Head Start, and Early Head Start.

This resource guide was developed to support community groups that are interested in using a proactive approach to closing the gap between the number of children eligible for publicly funded ECEC services and the capacity for serving eligible children. Ideally, this process will be used in advance of any announcements of grant opportunities so that a community plan for expansion of services can be developed collaboratively in anticipation of ECEC services funding announcements.

This resource guide includes materials to support community groups in leading a planning process to expand access to ECEC programs, specifically publicly funded programs, through a collaborative process. This guide includes a description of community-based planning for expansion of ECEC programming, an overview of the process, links to resources within different sections, and an appendix with planning templates and additional materials.



What is Community-Based Planning?

Community-based planning is a collaborative process designed to expand access and develop new high-quality ECEC programs in communities with unmet need through a guided planning process. This process leads to an understanding of a community's need for services, which services parents want and need, and how programs can partner and coordinate to better serve children and families. Community-based planning can also strengthen relationships among stakeholders, develop local leadership, and foster community ownership of recommendations.

Why do Community-Based Planning?

The purpose of conducting a planning process is to plan for expanding ECEC services intentionally and proactively, specifically for publicly funded services. In an authentic community-based planning process, there needs to be an emphasis on including parents and the general community as much as possible. Too often, providers, grant funders, grant recipients, local government officials, and other groups have been making decisions on behalf of families and their communities. Oftentimes policy or practice do not result in the outcomes that are intended because marginalized groups are not included in the decision-making process. Sometimes even more harm is done to those with the least access to resources and opportunities. To improve access to services and expand programming that families need and want, parents and the community must be a part of the planning process.

Benefits of the planning process

- Building trust and relationships among community stakeholders
- Tailoring services to provide families what they want and need
- Identifying potential partnerships and funding sources to better align services to community need
- Understanding and eliminating barriers families face in accessing existing services

For more information or resources, please reach out to the Community Systems Statewide Support Team at Illinois Action for Children at partnerplanact@actforchildren.org.

Access and Equity

The CBP process is an opportunity for communities to closely examine the access that families have to ECEC services and the equity of those services across the community to families that need and want services. It is important to plan for quality services that are targeted and allocated equitably to improve the outcomes for children who are negatively impacted by systematic inequities. Through years of community systems work, communities have named racial inequity as a primary force amplifying other forms of existing inequities and access issues. As a result, the CBP process was designed to prioritize racial equity in its approach.



Racial equity: We define racial equity as both an outcome and a process.

As an outcome: We achieve racial equity when race no longer determines how one fares in society; when everyone has what they need to thrive, no matter where they live.

As a process: We apply racial equity when those most impacted by structural racial inequity are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives.

Racial inequity is consistently identified as a fundamental factor in disparate outcomes for families attempting to access quality ECEC services and resources. The CBP process can help to advance racial equity in the community. When racial equity is achieved:

- All people, including people of color, have access to what they need to be owners, planners, and decision-makers in the systems that govern their lives.
- Resources, opportunities, rewards, and burdens are fairly distributed across groups and communities so that those with the greatest challenges are adequately supported and not further disadvantaged.
- Past and current inequities are acknowledged and accounted for, and all people, particularly those most impacted by racial inequities, are provided the infrastructure needed to thrive and participate.
- Systems and policies that affect children and families are consciously designed, reframed, or eliminated in a robust and dynamic process to promote greater justice.
- Everyone benefits from a more just, equitable system.

In addition to racial inequities, there are other ways that ECEC services and resources are unevenly distributed across communities. This planning process can help a community identify and begin to address inequitable access to services that might exist for certain families and children, including:

- Families with limited resources
- Children with disabilities
- Immigrants and refugees
- Families whose native or primary language is not English
- Families that live in rural areas or areas with transportation barriers

Any of these inequities will have a negative impact on how ECEC services are available, accessible, and provided to the community. Some of those ways are outlined below:

Ways Inequity Impacts ECEC	Ways to Address Inequity
Underfunded programs and services	Advocate for policy makers to increase funding
Undervalued and underqualified workforce	Ensure affordable access to training and education programs for staff
Limited or difficult access to services	Assess service location and ensure services are available in rural areas and/or providing transportation to services
Incomplete EC data or a lack thereof	Capture data to identify gaps in services
Uneven quality in programs and services	Attract and maintain a qualified workforce with competitive pay and benefits
Family voice ignored and no shared power	Prioritize family voice and decision-making

It is important to critically examine services in your community to address racial and other inequities. The CBP process encourages communities to prioritize the voices of those most impacted by systemic inequities.



Community-Based Planning Process

The community-based planning process has five main phases.



1. Engage Stakeholders

Engaging stakeholders is the first step in the planning process. This includes letting community members know about the planning process prior to implementation.



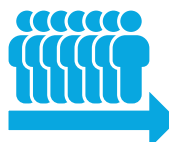
2. Form Planning Group

Next is forming a planning group. These are key stakeholders that have an interest in or currently provide publicly funded ECEC services, especially those serving key priority populations.



3. Planning Sessions

Planning the meetings and session topics and diving into the data is the third phase. This includes scheduling meetings and preparing agenda and materials throughout the process to communicate with stakeholders.



4. Data Collection & Community Engagement

Data collection and community engagement are the fourth phase. Your planning group will determine what data is needed, make an engagement plan, and conduct outreach during this phase.



5. Program Design

This phase requires summarizing what you've learned throughout the process and making sense of the data to determine which programs or program combinations meet the needs of the community and families.

We will outline the details of each phase on the following pages.

Prior to beginning the process, you may want to use the Initial Planning Tool in Appendix A. This tool will assist planning groups with assessing their community needs and capacity to expand ECEC enrollment slots. The assessment should be completed collaboratively by the planning group or by members individually prior to one of the first planning meetings. Once completed, this tool serves as a starting point to document how the group might improve working together throughout the CBP process.



Community-Based Planning Process

1. Engage Stakeholders

It's critical to foster stakeholder engagement and support from the beginning of the process. In exploring the expansion of publicly funded ECEC services, a community might identify two groups: a stakeholder group and a planning group.

We define a stakeholder group as the individuals and organizations in a community who have an interest in, who are consumers of, and/or who are affected by the accessibility to quality ECEC services.

We define the planning group as the individuals and organizations in a community willing to work on identifying the need for ECEC services, developing strategies to address the need, and implementing a plan to align and/or expand services. In some communities, the stakeholder group and planning group might have the same members. In other communities, the planning group might be a subset of the stakeholder group.

There are an almost infinite number of people who could be stakeholders. Theoretically everyone in the community cares about and will be impacted either directly or indirectly by increasing ECEC funding and services for families with young children.

It is key to engage stakeholders early on and inform them of the value of participating in the planning process. This includes communicating the purpose and highlighting the proactive nature of this project to stakeholders across the community. Many times planning for ECEC services is done when funding opportunities are announced. The community-based planning

process aims to result in a shared, long-term plan for applying for or amending competitively funded services to meet the needs of children and families across the community.

In addition to creating buy-in early on, continuous communication is important throughout the planning process. Here are some considerations for ongoing stakeholder engagement:

Audiences

There are a variety of stakeholders involved in the process. Stakeholders might include individuals and organizations/groups, planning team members, the community at large, specific groups from which you want to collect data and obtain feedback. Consider your audience and the best way to reach the specific individuals and groups.

Type of communication

Each specific audience will likely respond more readily to their preferred form of communication. Consider using a variety of communication methods such as: phone calls, emails, meetings (in-person, virtual, or hybrid), sharing meeting summaries, presentations, reports, related materials (hard-copy and online articles video links, etc.), focus groups, website and/or social media.

When engaging stakeholders, it may be helpful to complete the Early Childhood Community Landscape template in Appendix B. This template will help identify key stakeholders to engage in the planning process for publicly funded services.

2. Form Planning Group



A diverse planning group provides various perspectives, knowledge, and expertise when planning for applying for early childhood funding. Planning group members can help with highlighting issues in the community, connecting to key groups such as families and other community members, data collection and analysis, problem-solving, as well as providing capacity and resources, among other functions.

In any community, there may already be a collaboration, council, or coalition that engages in efforts related to services for young children and their families that is ready to take on planning for expansion of ECEC services. On the other hand, a community may not have such a group. Use parts of this guide as needed for the type of community with which you are working.

How do you form a planning group?

The planning group typically includes key stakeholders who can fill specific roles. Those specific roles might include:

- **Influencers:** not always people with a formal position in the community but who influence what happens in the community.
- **Connectors:** who can connect you to important resources and people you might otherwise have difficulty connecting with; may not necessarily be leaders with formal positions in the community.
- **Content experts:** with expertise to successfully apply for and be awarded funding.
- **Those with lived experiences:** who may shed light on issues or opportunities unknown to the planning group.

With the help of your planning group, you will be able to create a shared agenda. A shared agenda outlines the work the group agrees to do together—this can include goals and objectives. The agenda, goals, and objectives will all help the group set tasks and timelines.

When forming a planning group, you first need to identify key people, groups, and/or organizations from among the larger stakeholder group to include, then determine and implement a plan for engaging them. A planning group made up of cross-sector representatives of the community would be ideal; the more diverse the group, the better. In convening a planning group, there should be a particular effort made to reach out to stakeholders who have traditionally been marginalized, such as people of color, people experiencing homelessness, and people whose first language is not English, to name a few, so that their experiences may be centered and addressed through the planning process.

In identifying key people, groups, or organizations, consider again who are influencers, connectors, content experts, and those with lived experiences. In order to engage them, you will need to consider what you know about the stakeholder and things that may impact whether or not they choose to join you in the CBP process. Apply each of these questions to the potential members as you think about the individuals, groups, and organizations you are seeking as planning group members:

- What are their goals, programs, and/or aspirations?
- What's in it for them to join you in this process?
- What can they or their organization bring to the table?
- Where do your interests, values, and/or goals overlap?



- Are there specific contributions or roles you want them to make or have?
- How will you work to bridge differences (e.g., race, culture, power, education level)?
- How will you compensate certain people (e.g., parents who provide their expertise about ECEC services)?

There is no ideal planning group size, but there should be a minimum of five organizations represented in the planning group so that one or two organizations or individuals do not dominate the conversation and the decisions.

After considering the full planning group members, consider who might be part of the core planning group. The core planning group is three to five key stakeholders who agree to help with organizing and logistics of the planning process. These three to five individuals may meet more frequently to

keep the planning work moving along. Core group meetings might be needed to plan full group meetings, engage other key stakeholders, or conduct data gathering and analysis work between meetings.

In Appendix C you will find a table that outlines potential planning group members. It is not meant to be exhaustive, but is intended to jump start your thinking.

3. Planning Sessions



The planning work of the CBP process happens over time and incrementally. It's important to have regularly scheduled meetings for the planning group to come together and do the work. An initial step with the planning group should be to schedule meetings and meeting topics. In Appendix D you will find the CBP Process Plan. This template can help you outline the planning group's meeting topics and schedule.

The template calls for a check-in at about six months into the planning process. This is to reflect on the group's process, ensure the plan for the remaining work makes sense in light of what the group has learned so far, and answer new or outstanding questions.

Initial data and project kickoff

It's important to set the stage for stakeholders by describing the purpose and methodology of the planning process. Sharing initial data on the slot gap, or the gap between publicly funded ECEC services available and the children potentially eligible for services, is a good starting place.

What is an ECEC services slot gap?

The slot gap is the difference between the number of children who might be eligible for publicly funded services and the capacity of existing service providers in the community. The number of children eligible for publicly funded services is often broadly defined as the number of children living in families who earn less than 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL). Specific programs have different eligibility criteria, so it is important to consider those details later in the process. Typically, one would calculate the slot gap for children birth to age three and children age three to five separately since state and federally funded programs provide distinct services for each age group.

For this initial look, using 200% FPL for income eligibility captures the income eligibility requirements for most state funded programs. Federally funded programs (such as Head Start and Early Head Start) have income eligibility of 100% FPL.

Capacity vs. Enrollment

The terms "capacity" and "enrollment" refer to two different perspectives on the way a program states how many children it serves.

Capacity has to do with "How many children can our program serve?" There are two components to capacity: funding and space. Identifying capacity related to funding answers the question, "How many children does the funder expect us to serve with this grant?" Identifying capacity related to space answers the question, "How many children can be served in this building based on the minimum requirement for square footage per child?"

Enrollment has to do with "How many children are currently receiving our program's services?" This number is fluid as families begin or stop receiving program services during the year. The enrollment number is not the same as the attendance on a given day. Some funders may require periodic reporting of enrollment throughout the grant period.

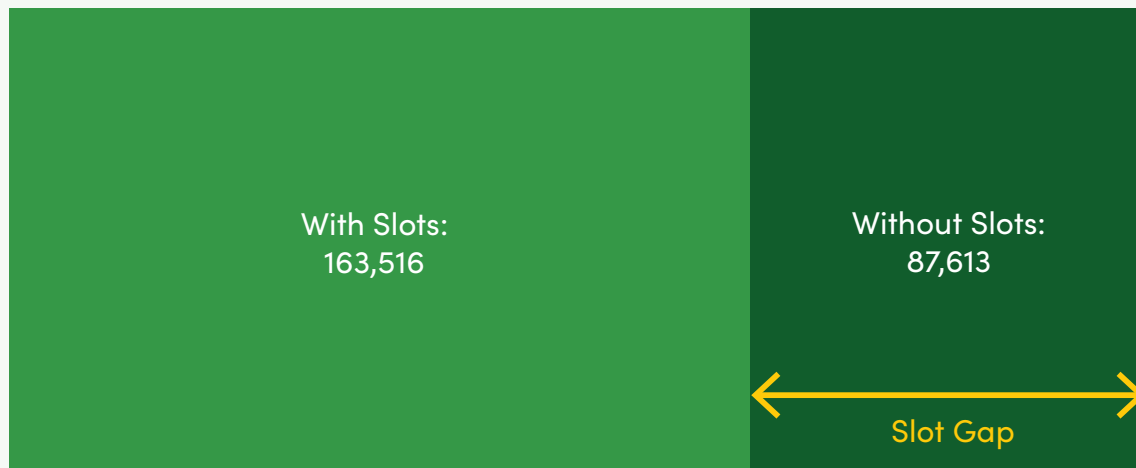


Below is an example of how a community's slot gap could be illustrated:

0-2 Year Olds

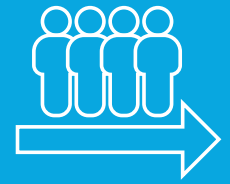


3-5 Year Olds



Total children eligible for services minus number of slots = Slot Gap

4. Data Collection and Family Engagement



Throughout the planning process, the planning group will want to collect quantitative and qualitative data that describe the status of ECEC services and needs in your community. Looking at what both state and federal grant applications request for justifying need, you will want information such as:

1. **Community Demographic Data:** How many children ages birth-to-five live in the community? What are the socio-economic characteristics of families? What languages are spoken by families in your community?
2. **Community Collaborations:** Are there existing community collaborations in your community working on ECEC services and coordination?
3. **Early Childhood Education and Care Programs:** What ECEC programs exist in the community and what is their capacity and enrollment?
4. **Community's Gap between Services Capacity and Services Need:** What is the slot gap for children ages birth to three? Three to five?
5. **Parent Need for and Interest in Services for Their Child:** What services do parents want and need in their community?
6. **Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce** What are the ECEC workforce considerations and needs?
7. **Early Childhood Education and Care Facilities:** What are the facilities considerations for the types of ECEC services needed?
8. Is there any other locally identified information that indicates or emphasizes the need for services?

For a more thorough discussion of items one through eight, see the Community and Early Childhood Education and Care Data Categories document in Appendix E.

Collecting data is a key part of making data-informed decisions; it can help provide evidence for what you already know and have experienced in your community. The data you collect will also be useful when it comes to applying for funding to expand the reach of early childhood services in your community. In this section, you will find guidelines for your data collection process and questions to consider for your data analysis.

IAFC partners with Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) to assist communities in accessing, analyzing, and understanding community-level data. IECAM collects and reports on ECEC data and community characteristics at a variety of geography levels. They provide the information in a report, database, and community maps.

Key Guidelines for Data Collection:

As you begin to collect data, there are some key things to keep in mind.

- **Aggregating data/disaggregating data:** Aggregating data helps you look at the big picture; disaggregating data helps you look at the details. Consider which level(s) of data would be useful for each type of discussion, analysis, and decision-making—you might want more than one level of the same types of data in order to create a complete and nuanced picture. Be sure to identify your data sources and time frames.
 - **Aggregating data:** Describe to what extent and/or the ways the data are aggregated.
 - **Disaggregating data:** Break down data to look at different subgroups, geographic areas, demographic factors, etc. so that you can deepen your understanding of how different groups of children and families are doing. For example, you can disaggregate by race/ethnicity and by location to understand if certain groups are accessing services and certain groups aren't.



- **Supplement publicly available data:**
While many data sources are publicly available and free to access—such as the IECAM data, birth statistics, unemployment rates, etc.—there is far more information that may not be publicly available or accessible in an organized format. Obtaining this information will require building relationships with key stakeholders, accessing input from groups not typically at the table (such as families not already receiving needed services), and removing barriers to providing input (such as providing child care at focus group meetings).
- **Consider developing data-sharing agreements:** As you build relationships with key stakeholders, you may want to explore developing data-sharing agreements so that you can get information that isn't publicly available or isn't available disaggregated by subgroups. For example, you may want to survey local child care providers to gather information regarding current enrollment vs. capacity and number of families using Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). A provider may be uncomfortable sharing such information without a written data sharing agreement that the information will be kept confidential and/or aggregated with the same information being gathered from other providers. Whether or not data sharing agreements are used, information about families, their income, their family make-up, etc., should never include personal identifiers such as names, addresses, etc.

Please see Appendix F for a template to collect ECEC enrollment across a community.

- **Share data with key stakeholders:**
Data should be shared so that everyone in the planning group can make data-informed decisions and work to help all children and families in your community.

Parent and Community Engagement

After you've formed your planning group and you have begun digging into the data about your community, there are at least two groups critical to the planning process that you want to engage in the process: parents and ECEC providers. While you may have one or more parent or provider in your stakeholder group or planning team, input is valuable from as many families and providers as possible when drawing the picture of ECEC services and needs in your community.

We define “parent” as any adult caregiver who interacts with early childhood systems in support of their child, including but not limited to biological, adoptive, and foster parents; grandparents, legal and informal guardians; uncles, aunts, and adult siblings.

In the CBP process, community refers to the range of agencies and members, at all levels, who provide services, care, and education to young children and their families.

See the following page for illustration.



Parents and providers can provide insight and nuance about the ECEC system that the quantitative data cannot provide. The publicly available data is oftentimes released on a delayed schedule (for example, data for 2022 will not be available until 2023) because of data collection protocols. Sometimes the data that communities want or need to understand about services are simply not available. Conducting outreach and engagement with parents and ECEC providers offers a method to better understand the local ECEC landscape and the needs of the community.

Why engage parents and community members in the planning process?

- Parent and community engagement is unique to each community.
- Intentional parent and community engagement leads to stronger partnerships and better alignment between and among parents, community members, and ECEC providers.
- Parents are their child's first and best teacher.



Ideal parent and community engagement is successfully achieved when parents and community members participate in the planning process and share responsibility and expertise to inform services planned in their community. Parent and community engagement results in early childhood services that are co-created and co-maintained by parents and community to provide equitable, high-quality accessible services to all children and families.

When developing a plan to engage parents and the community consider the following questions:

For what are you engaging parents and the community and why?

Clarity in your ‘what’ and ‘why’ will help in planning how you engage parents and community members so that you reach your desired outcomes. A planning group should engage parents in order to align early childhood services to family need and identify barriers to accessing ECEC programs and services. This step is a key area where you can apply equity driven practices.

What do you hope to learn?

Insight from parents and community can provide information on: barriers parents face with accessing ECEC services; what services parents and community want or need; benefits of the services for families and children; parent preference for ECEC services (including language, location, and program schedule, etc.)

How will you engage parents and the community?

There are a variety of ways to do this outreach. Some of those methods could be:

- **Surveys:** have the potential to reach lots of parents, especially those not currently involved in early childhood education and care services.
- **Focus groups:** can provide targeted outreach, allows for digging deeper into specific issues.
- **Small in-person meetings:** might feel more comfortable to some parents, reaches a good number of parents, serves to ascertain general thoughts and experiences, but might be challenging to determine a specific group’s experiences.
- **One-on-one meetings:** allows for flexibility, take longer to carry out.
- **Parent cafes:** might feel like a more natural format for parents, serves to gather general thoughts and experiences, but might be challenging to tease out a specific group’s experiences.

Consider whose input you want and what you hope to learn when determining how you will engage parents, families, and community members. You may want to leverage existing relationships and resources with other service providers in the community as an outreach strategy. Engagement work is also an opportunity to build capacity and promote leadership and the power of parents.



Who is conducting the engagement activity and with whom will they engage?

When thinking about your engagement plan consider who from your planning group or community will be doing the actual outreach and engagement. It's important to make sure you're doing outreach in the preferred language of those you are hoping to gain insight from. You should also consider power dynamics. For example, if you send a principal versus a parent engagement staff or even another parent to interview families, they may respond differently.

When thinking about who you will engage it's important to be very intentional about getting representative input from those you want to learn from most. This is also an opportunity to hear from parents and families who are traditionally not included in planning or decision-making processes. Consider representation of racial, linguistic, economic, and cultural diversity of your community.

Where will you engage families and community members?

Think about meeting families where they are—grocery stores, food pantries, social service providers, libraries, laundromats, parks, etc. Parents are busy with caring for their children, working, and many other responsibilities and it may be easier to connect with them in these settings.

Whom to include, how you include them, and when you include them will all vary by stakeholder. For example, once you've collected your data you may want to reach out to specific populations such as parents, community organizations, and child care providers for help with analyzing or

contextualizing the data. When considering where there might be space to add or expand programming, you may need to work with non-profit organizations, school districts, and the local government office that oversees zoning and permits. Key points at which we would recommend seeking additional stakeholder input include:

- When assessing community strengths and opportunity areas
- When determining whether to collect additional data
- When analyzing and making meaning of data
- When deciding on what action steps to take towards program model planning

Refer to Appendix G for potential questions to ask parents in focus groups or on surveys. You can also find resources for parent engagement on the Partner Plan Act website: www.partnerplanact.org/ppa/parent-engagement-resources.

Making Sense of the Data

As the planning group collects data about their community, it's important to take time to reflect on what you've learned so far and whether there are gaps in the information.

These are some suggestions for questions to help you jump start conversations about your community data with your planning group and any additional stakeholders. You can also use these to plan for sharing information and obtaining input at focus groups, community meetings, school board meetings, etc.

- What do you notice about this data? What stands out to you?
- Is there anything that concerns you? Why?



- Is there anything that surprises you? Why?
- Who needs to be at the table to work with us? Whose viewpoints and insights are we missing?
- Are all children and families being served equitably? If not, who needs more support?
- What data do we want to disaggregate (by race, gender, location, etc.) to understand if there are inequities/disparities in our community?
- What do parents, child care providers, and/or other community members think about the data?
- What else sparks our curiosity?
- From whom or where could we obtain more information?

Check out data resources on the Partner Plan Act website including the Early Childhood Collaboration Data Learning Course:

<https://www.partnerplanact.org/home>.

How will you design programming to meet community needs?

To this point, you have collected and analyzed demographic and community data that describes the status of ECEC services. You have also analyzed the data to better understand gaps between the availability of publicly funded ECEC services and families' need for and interest in services. Take note: You may need to gather data and conduct analysis for more than one cycle before your planning team feels ready to start deciding which services are needed and how to design programming to meet the need.

5. Program Design



As you work toward designing services that address the gap(s) between capacity and need, it may be necessary to learn more about key components of program design. Some of these components of program design are publicly funded program models, blending and braiding programs, workforce, and facilities.

There are federal and state grants for providing ECEC services. Each publicly funded program sets requirements for group or class size, adult to child ratio, minimum number of days and hours for service delivery, staffing qualifications, and auxiliary services (such as mental health, child health, and family support).

Below is a description of a few early childhood program services and program model(s) you may want to consider as you determine how to meet your community's needs. These programs are awarded through a grant application process. Using the grant award, the grantee might deliver all the required services, might subcontract (delegate) all the required services, or might deliver services in partnership with one or more entity.

Federally Funded Programs and Services

- **Early Head Start:** for pregnant individuals and children from birth-to-three
- **Head Start:** for children ages three to kindergarten entry

State-Funded Programs and Services

- **Prevention Initiative:** for pregnant individuals and children from birth-to-three
- **Preschool for All & Preschool for All Expansion:** for children age three to kindergarten entry
- **Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP):** for children from birth through age 13 whose parent(s) need childcare in order to work or attend school/training; subsidy is accepted by most child care providers.

Locations and Schedule for Programming

These ECEC programs can be provided in school-based settings, early child care centers, and family child care homes. Home visiting programs take place in the family's home.

Each program's schedule can vary based on the program and funding type. For birth-to-three programs that take place in a center the schedule is typically full-day (at least six hours per day). For programs for three to five year olds, there can be a full-day or part-day schedule.

- **Full day (at least six hours/day):** includes Preschool for All Expansion and Head Start
- **Part-day (at least two and a half or three and a half hours per day):** includes Preschool for All and Head Start

Please see Appendix H for detailed descriptions of the publicly funded programs in Illinois.



What is the right mix of programming and funding streams to ensure availability of services for eligible children in your community? The model(s) you choose will depend on whom your program will serve and the needs of families in your community. Program partnerships may be necessary in order to meet families' needs.

Questions to consider include (not necessarily in this order):

- How many children by age group (birth-to-three; three-to-five year olds) will you serve?
- What program locations meet the need: school-based, center-based, home visiting, family child care or a combination?
- Are child care services needed so parents can work or attend school/training?
- If center-based programming is identified, what type of classrooms: Part day, School day, Full workday; school year, year-round?
- Based on community identified factors that are limiting or preventing school readiness, are there priority populations for services?
- Are facilities accessible to families? Are more facilities needed to improve accessibility?
- According to staffing requirements of the funding source, is there a pool for hiring qualified staff?
- Are there other questions particular to your community, such as transportation needs for eligible families?

Based on your answers to these questions, there are a number of program and funding options available, each with its own guidelines for determining eligibility of families. For example, families with income at or below 100% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL) are eligible for Head Start/

Early Head Start. To qualify for Preschool for All/ Preschool for All Expansion and Prevention Initiative, a child must first be assessed as at-risk for academic failure and family income must be at or below 200% FPL.

If full day or year-round services are a need, Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) revenue can be used in conjunction with state or federal program money. To be eligible for CCAP, families with income at or below [225% FPL](#) must be working or in school/training and meet other **CCAP eligibility requirements**. Families using CCAP are responsible for paying a co-payment for child care, even when the child care is in conjunction with services operated by a publicly funded program.

By using a collaborative approach to data analysis in discussion of possibilities for programming, partnering, and decision making, your planning group can develop the short- and long-term plan for aligning and expanding ECEC services in your community. Your plan may focus on re-alignment and/or addition of services, or it may be more expansive and include addressing other factors such as facility needs, workforce issues, and/or community awareness about child development. The scope of the plan depends on the energy and vision of your planning team as well as stakeholder willingness and ability to commit to shorter or longer term outcomes.



Combining Publicly Funded Programs and Combining Funding

There are some key terms important to understanding how programs might be combined to meet family needs and interest. Programs themselves can partner and/or funding sources can be combined.

Program partnership refers to bringing together individual programs, organizations, or agencies to strengthen and improve services for children and families. There is a continuum of program partnerships that can be explored in this process from program coordination to collaboration.



When it comes to combining funding there are two key terms to understand: blending and braiding. Blending is when funds from two or more separate funding sources are combined within one program budget to pay for a unified set of services to a group of children/families without accounting for which funding source pays for which costs or portions of costs. In other words, with blended funding models, costs do not have to be allocated and tracked by individual funding source.

Braiding funding is using funds from two or more funding sources to pay for a unified set of services to a group of children/families, but revenues and expenditures are allocated and tracked as to funding source. In braiding, cost allocation methods are required to assure that there is no duplicate funding of service costs and that each funding source is charged its fair share of program and administrative costs.

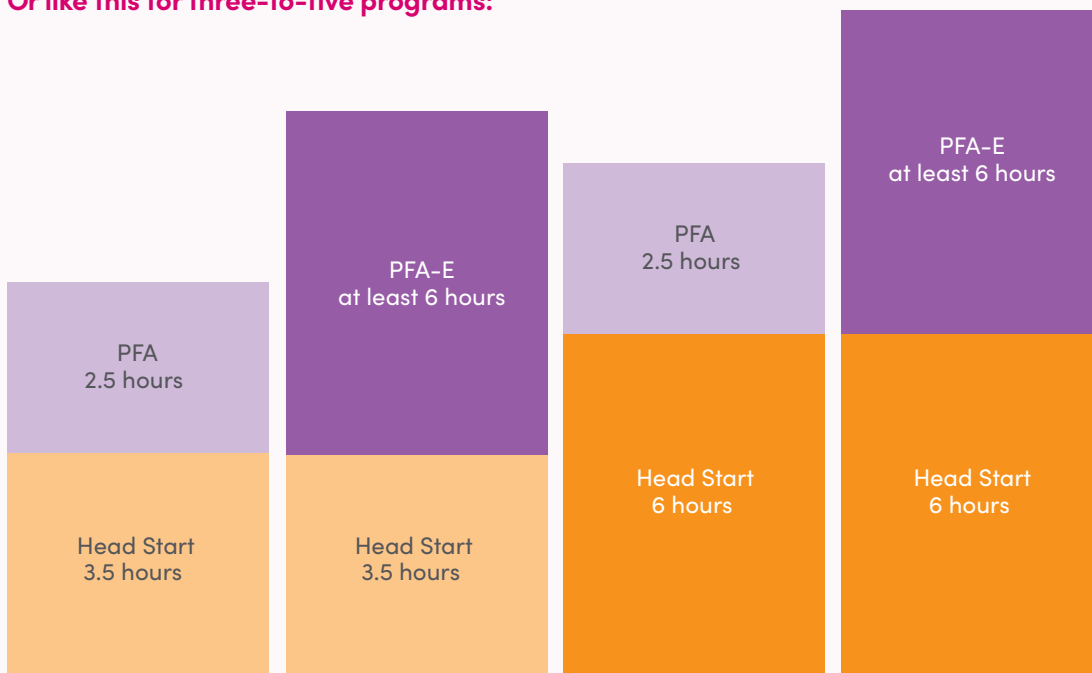


Program combinations can be implemented by a single grantee, or through the partnership of multiple grantees. Funding combinations are when a single grantee uses more than one funding source to create programming that isn't possible with revenue from one funding source.

The possibilities for combining programs by a single grantee or multiple grantees could look like this for birth-to-three programs:



Or like this for three-to-five programs:



Funding combination options look similar to the program combinations above; however funding combinations only arise when a single entity is operating combined programming to increase services for a specific group of children. An example is a part-day Head Start grantee awarded a Preschool for All Expansion grant for full day services to create a classroom operating 9.5 hours. When combining funding, the options look similar with the addition CCAP revenue to provide a “working day” of year-round programming. CCAP can be combined with any individual grant or combination of grants (see Appendix H, for more information about CCAP).



Workforce

Having a professionally prepared and adequately compensated workforce is necessary to achieve positive outcomes for children and their families. Typically each funding source has requirements as to the minimum educational qualifications and perhaps experience qualifications, for some, if not all staff. Each funding source may also set requirements for its expectations as to salaries and benefits for employees funded by its grant(s). Further, some funders require formal human resource systems and professional development policies and procedures. These factors need to be considered in developing the plan for aligning and expanding ECEC programming.

In order to recruit and retain a quality workforce, some elements must be in place.

- **Human Resources (HR):** HR systems need to create and enforce policies and procedures and to ensure consistency in compensation and professional development.
- **Comprehensive Supports:** Services need to support staff wellness, health, and mental health (well-being).
- **Professional Development (PD):** Individual PD plans and reflective supervision/coaching are critical to move staff towards increasing and maintaining qualifications and excellence.
- **Compensation:** A competitive salary and benefits compensation plan that promotes increased qualifications.

There are various expectations for early childhood staff qualifications and salary minimums, depending on the age of children served and the program model. New program grant applications may set salary minimums for teaching, home visiting, and family support roles or the planning group may identify a community-wide need to increase compensation to retain local ECEC staff.

Based on the data you have collected, including community needs and program space data, you can develop specific classroom and group plans (e.g., how many children need services; how many birth-to-three rooms and/or preschool classrooms, based on group-size requirements of possible funder(s) and, as applicable, child care licensing regulations, etc.) which will help you develop a staffing plan.

In Illinois as well as nationwide, there is a significant teacher shortage and nationwide there is a decline in the number of people completing teacher preparation programs. This presents a challenge that will require consideration of multiple strategies/solutions, such as the following:

For new and existing programs there are questions about Pathways In

- How do you bring new people into the profession?
- What opportunities are there to employ parents/family members and students?

For existing programs there are questions about Pathways Up

- What are the hopes, goals, and ambitions of your staff?
- How can you support them towards those goals? (e.g., access to scholarships, time to pursue higher ed, support system)

Retention

- As staff move through the qualification process, how will you incentivize them to stay?
- How can your salary schedule encourage retention?

Higher Education

- How will you partner with institutions of higher education to support staff?



- What are the opportunities to increase and improve partnerships? (e.g., student teachers, practicum experiences, career fairs, internships, shadowing, and volunteer opportunities)
- When/if student teachers come to your program, how can you ensure that it is a meaningful experience?

Staff will need guidance and support to navigate professional development and the higher education system with things such as goal setting, assessing transcripts, discussing degree/certificate options, applying for scholarships, connecting to a support network of peers and leaders, and continuing flexibility. Who will be or is responsible for helping staff achieve their educational goals?

Facilities

Early childhood education programs operate in buildings that are required to meet certain specifications to serve young children. However, true quality in ECEC facilities is not only about the health and safety of the space. There are a variety of facility environmental aspects that impact quality, including indoor air quality, temperature, adequate ventilation, noise reduction, optimal lighting, furnishings, and more. Well-designed ECEC facilities enhance child development and program quality.

There are a variety of factors to consider in ECEC facilities planning. Some of the considerations and questions below can help start the conversation about facilities when thinking about starting or expanding programs:

Health and Safety

- What current facilities are available that meet health and safety standards for licensing or other regulatory requirements?

Quality

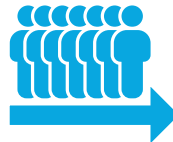
- How is the space designed or how can it be redesigned to positively impact quality? (Such as sinks and counters at child-height, physically divided spaces for different age groups, good natural light, etc.)

Expansion

- For programs with additional space needs, how could existing facilities be repurposed or renovated to serve specific age groups?
- For any new facilities' needs, is there space that can be renovated or is new construction required?

For additional support around facilities, a planning group can find resources and consultation by reaching out to IFF.

Conclusion



Creating a Plan

Once you have explored the data for your community, gathered input from families and other stakeholders, and considered program models, your planning group is ready to document the plan for expansion. Creating the plan will include identifying a provider or providers to apply for expanding publicly funded ECEC services.

This plan should be considered a living document that should be revisited and edited based on changes in your community, services available, and family preferences.

Reporting Out and Final Planning Agreements

Throughout the planning process, the planning group will collect a lot of valuable information about your community by the end of this process. To demonstrate respect for everyone's contribution to the project, the planning group should want to share the results of months of work with stakeholders and the community. Here are some questions to answer in developing a report to share:

- Who (individuals and/or organizations) was a part of the planning group?
- Who else was part of this process and at what point? Why?
- What outcomes did the planning group seek?
- What data did the group collect? How was data collected?
- What questions were considered in the analysis of the data?
- What did the data analysis show?
- What is the plan for moving forward? What are the measures (activities, timelines, etc.) for assessing progress?

If you would like this in an easy, fillable PDF form as a resource, see the Community Reporting Template in Appendix I.



Appendices

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Appendix A:

Initial Planning Assessment Tools

Initial Community-Based Planning Assessment

Purpose: This tool will assist planning groups with evaluating their communities' needs to expand early childhood education and care (ECEC) slots. The assessment should be completed collaboratively by the planning group or by members individually prior to one of the first planning meetings. Once completed this tool offers information for possible goals of the planning process and stakeholders that the group may want to engage.

Community-Based Planning Early Childcare Education and Care (ECEC) Overview

- 1. Describe ECEC in your community. What are the strengths and assets? What are the challenges and needs?**
- 2. What are the core reasons for why your community has not applied or has not been successful in applying for state or federal funding for ECEC slots?**
- 3. Which stakeholders in your community do you think are aware of the ECEC slot gap?**
 - Community leaders
 - School board members
 - School superintendent
 - School District Early Childhood Director
 - Community-based providers (child care centers, child care homes)
 - Head Start and Early Head Start providers
 - Other (please specify)
- 4. Which stakeholders in your community do you think need to be made aware of the ECEC slot gap?**
 - Community leaders
 - School board members
 - School superintendent
 - School District Early Childhood Director
 - Community-based providers (child care centers, child care homes)
 - Head Start and Early Head Start providers
 - Other (please specify)
- 5. What information would your community benefit from to help address the slot gap?**
 - Workforce
 - Data on early childhood education and care
 - Licensing regulation
 - Facilities support
 - Outreach to families
 - Blended and braiding funding
 - Variety of Program models (Early Head Start, Head Start, PFA, PFA-E, PI)
 - Other (please specify)
- 6. What type of programming is most needed in your community?**
 - Infant and Toddler
 - Preschool
 - Not sure

Community-Based Planning Stakeholder Assessment

This brief assessment is meant to help gauge your community’s needs as it relates to readiness to engage in a collaborative approach to planning for expansion of ECEC services.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Notes
ECEC stakeholders in my community are in regular communication, have formed relationships, and share resources (staff, funding, space, etc.) for early childhood programs and services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
ECEC stakeholders in my community have set roles, expectations, and/or responsibilities focused on improving or increasing early childhood programs and services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
ECEC stakeholders in my community have a shared agenda including goals, objectives, tasks, and/or timelines regarding improving or increasing early childhood programs and services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
ECEC stakeholders in my community know about different early childhood program models (e.g., Head Start, Preschool for All, Prevention Initiative) and knows what programs are needed in the community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
ECEC stakeholders in my community know about budgets and fiscal models for early childhood programs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
ECEC stakeholders in my community have a professionally prepared and adequately compensated workforce.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
ECEC stakeholders in my community have facilities available for increasing early childhood programs and services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

Appendix B: Early Childhood Community Landscape

Publicly Funded Early Childhood Education & Care Services

Organization Name	Program Services Offered	Program Location (Center-based, home visiting, family child care) Frequency and Length of Sessions
row 1		
row 2		
row 3		
row 4		
row 5		

Eligibility Factors	Slots by Age and Total Capacity	Publicly Funded, Fee for Service, or Subsidy Available	Service Area
row 1 continued			
row 2 continued			
row 3 continued			
row 4 continued			
row 5 continued			

Early Childhood Collaborations and/or Groups

Name of Collaboration/Group	Purpose of Collaboration/Group	Membership Entities or Types of Individuals at the Table
row 1		
row 2		
row 3		
row 4		
row 5		

Meeting Frequency	Is Collaboration Funded? If yes, by what entity?	Parent Participation Yes or No?	Service Area
row 1 continued			
row 2 continued			
row 3 continued			
row 4 continued			
row 5 continued			

Appendix C: Identifying Community Stakeholders

The table on the following page may be helpful in finding interested stakeholders, planning group members, and/or contributors of additional input and/or analysis. This list below is not meant to be exhaustive and there may be others not listed that will be crucial for you to include. This list is to jump start your thinking. (This table could be expanded to include columns useful for listing who will contact which individuals or organizations, due dates, or other useful information.)

As you consider each entity/group in the Member Category column, be mindful of identifying someone for the Organization or Individual column who can make decisions for the organization or who can be an effective liaison with the decision-maker(s) of the organization. Further, for some organizations or groups, more than one representative may be appropriate, such as inviting both a school board member and a teacher from the local school district to join the planning team. Complete the “Potential Contribution” column as best you can anticipate for each member you consider as to what his/her/their contribution might be such as time, expertise, funds, building use, access to policymakers, connection/access to families, etc. If you are using a table for tracking membership contacts and commitments, you would have more than one row for an organization/group if more than one representative joins the planning group, as in the school district example.

Appendix C: Identifying Community Stakeholders, continued

Member Category	Organization or Individual	Potential Contribution
Parents/Families		
State Funded Preschools		
Part C IDEA Coordinator/Providers (Early Intervention)		
Part B Local Education Agencies (Special Education)		
Local Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)		
Head Start/Early Head Start		
School Districts (Pre-K, Kindergarten, High School, Before/After School Care)		
Homelessness Services		
Publicly or Privately-Funded Home Visiting Programs		
Licensed Child Care Centers		
Licensed Family Child Care Home Providers		
Social Services		
Parenting Class Providers		
Health Entities & WIC		
Faith-Based Services		
Local Government Officials		
Business Leaders/Chamber of Commerce Members		
Park Districts		
Colleges & Universities		
Mental Health Providers		
Libraries		

Appendix D: Community-Based Planning Process Plan

Purpose

This Process Plan is meant to outline the goals, and planning strategy that the planning group will work through. This Process Plan can be used to make the initial plan as well as to review the strategy partway through the process. This midway check-in allows the planning group to adjust the overall planning strategy as needed.

Community and/or School District:	Date:
Core Planning Group Members:	

1. Planning Group Goal(s)

Clearly outline the goal(s) of the planning group. What is the group aiming to achieve with expansion planning?

--

2. Outline the timeline and meeting schedule for the planning sessions

Estimate the number of meetings and timeline for supporting the planning process.

Month	Community-Based Planning Topic	Meeting Goal

3. Reflect on the following topics, and identify actions needed for future planning sessions.

	Reflect on your community and planning group to note key insights.
<p>Strengths What strengths does this planning group and community have?</p>	
<p>Opportunities What opportunities does the planning group and community have for expanding ECEC slots?</p>	
<p>Barriers What barriers might this planning group and community face in expanding ECEC slots?</p>	
<p>Parent and Community Engagement How can the group engage parents and the community in the planning process?</p>	
<p>Racial Equity What are the equity considerations that need to be taken into account so that the community does not perpetuate or exacerbate inequities?</p>	

Community-Based Planning for Expansion: Six Month Review

Date:
Planning Group Participants (highlight any new participants):

4. UPDATE: Planning Group Goal

How is the planning process helping the planning group reach its goals? Have the goals of the planning group changed? Explain any changes to group's goals.

--

5. UPDATE: Summarize the coordination that this community has done to expand ECEC slots.

What coordination or outreach has been completed by the planning group?

--

Appendix D: Community-Based Planning Process Plan, continued

6. UPDATE: After six months of work, reflect on the following topics and identify actions needed for future planning sessions.

	Note any key insights or changes
Strengths What strengths does this planning group and community have?	
Opportunities What opportunities does the planning group and community have for expanding ECEC slots?	
Barriers What barriers might this planning group and community face in expanding ECEC slots?	
Parent and Community Engagement How has the group engaged parents and the community in the planning process?	
Racial Equity What are the equity considerations that need to be taken into account so that the community does not perpetuate or exacerbate inequities?	

7. UPDATE: Outline the timeline and meeting schedule for the planning process for the remaining six months.

Estimate the number of meetings and timeline for the community with the planning process.

Month	Community-Based Planning Topic	Meeting Goal

Appendix E:

Community and Early Childhood Education and Care Data Categories

For the planning process, a planning group may want to consider the following data about their community:

1. Community Demographic Data

- Number of children by age (birth-to-three and three-to-five year olds)
 - Number of children by age (birth-to-three and three-to-five year olds) under 100% and 200% Federal Poverty Level (FPL)
 - Location of families with children 5 years and younger
 - Household English proficiency
 - Working families with children
 - Race and ethnicity
 - Priority populations
 - Families experiencing homelessness
 - Recent immigrants and refugee families
-

2. Local Community Collaborations

What is the community collaboration landscape? What are existing collaborations or community groups working on?

- Local early childhood collaborations and their strategic plans/priorities and current and past efforts
-

3. Early Childhood Education and Care Program Data

What is the community's current early childhood education and care (ECEC) landscape for publicly funded programs?

- Current ECEC provider capacity and ECEC provider capacity over last four years
 - Publicly funded programs (Head Start, Early Head Start, Preschool for All, Preschool for All-Expansion, Prevention Initiative, IL Department of Health Services Home Visiting Programs)
 - List of publicly funded provider name, location, capacity
 - Enrollment by programs in the region (as data is available)
- Child Care Assistance Program Usage
 - Number of children receiving CCAP compared to the number of children eligible (200% FPL)
- Additional data to consider:
 - Licensed ECEC provider capacity (child care centers, family child care homes, family child care group homes, license-exempt)
 - School district programs
 - District funded preschool program name, location, capacity
 - Family friend and neighbor care (as data is available)

4. Community's Slot Gap

What is the gap between the total number of children potentially eligible for publicly funded early care and education and the program capacity in the community? What is the gap between publicly funded programs and children eligible for publicly funded programs in the community? Consider the following data:

- Gap in publicly funded program by potentially eligible children (birth-to-three and three-to-five years old at 100% and 200% FPL)
-

5. Parent Engagement

What are parent preferences for early childhood care and education programs and services in your community? What are parent experiences with access early childhood care and education in the community? What barriers do parents face with accessing early childhood care and education in the community? Consider the following data:

- Conduct outreach and engagement with parents through surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc., to get parent insight and perspective on ECEC services and programs
-

6. Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Data

What is the early childhood education and care workforce landscape in the community? What are the challenges facing ECEC workforce in the community? What initiatives exist within the community? How diverse is the ECEC workforce and is the workforce representative of the communities they serve? Consider the following data:

- Conduct outreach and engagement with providers and teachers through surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc., to get insight and perspectives on ECEC workforce in the community
-

7. Early Childhood Education and Care Facilities

What ECEC facilities needs are there in the community? Are ECEC services accessible and available to parents and families who need them?

Appendix G:

Sample Focus Group and Interview Questions

Community-Based Planning: Family Focus Group, Survey, and Interview Questions

Survey/Interview Questions

Demographic/Household Questions

1. Do you have children under age five?
2. What ages are the children that live in your household?
3. What is your relationship to the children in your household?
 - a. Single parent
 - b. Married parent
 - c. Grandparent
 - d. Other _____
4. What neighborhood do you live in? (If you're not sure about the neighborhood, what street do you live on?)

Services and Supports

5. What services and supports do you need or want for your child or children?
 - a. Possible responses: child care, housing supports/rent or mortgage assistance, health care, mental health services
6. Are you receiving the services and supports you need for your child or children?
7. What do you find difficult about accessing services?

Child Care and Education

8. Have you ever used child care (such as school, preschool, daycare, home visiting, early childhood experiences) for your child? Why or why not?
9. What are the two most important reasons you chose the child care services you did?
 - a. Possible responses: quality, location (close to home or work), cost, caregiver is a relative, children are happy in the program, program accepted subsidy/assistance, good learning or educational program, how I felt when I visited, nationally accredited program, teacher spoke my family's native language
10. Final question: What's your dream or ideal?

Follow Up Interest

11. Would you be willing to answer additional questions about this? If so, could you provide your name and phone number?

Focus Group and Interview Questions

- As a parent of a child younger than five years old, what services and supports would help your family and/or your child?
- What services and supports that you need or want are not available to you?
- What have been your experiences with finding services for your family in this community?
- What do your family and friends think about this community's services and supports for families with young children?
- What is it like trying to access the services and supports you need/want?
 - What has been impossible to find/access?
 - What gets in the way?
 - Why do you think this happening?
- What local programs/people have been helpful to you in finding and obtaining services and supports for your family?
 - In what ways?
- What local programs/people have not been helpful to you in finding and obtaining services and supports for your family?
 - In what ways?
- Do you feel you have a say in decisions made about family/child services and supports in this community or for your own family/child?
 - If so, describe your experience(s) when you have been asked to provide input or make decisions.
- Do you think resources and opportunities are available to all residents in a fair and equal way in your community?
- Have you experienced rules that made it difficult to receive services or supports for your family/child?
 - If so, describe your experience(s) when this has happened.

Provider Questions

- What are your thoughts on current childcare availability in our community?
- What services and supports do families with children 0-5 years old need that are not available to them?
- What advice would you give to parents seeking child care or early childhood education in our area?
- Are resources and opportunities related to child care available to all residents in a fair and equitable way in your community?
- If yes, how does that happen?
- If no, how could that be addressed?
 - What formal or informal policies or procedures make it difficult to provide child care services?
- What ideas do you have that would improve or fix some of the barriers you experience in providing care?
 - What are your biggest workforce successes? What are your biggest workforce challenges?

Appendix H: Early Childhood Education and Care Programs and Services Overview

Program	Early Head Start (EHS)
Program Description/Goals	Early Head Start (EHS) programs serve infants and toddlers under the age of three and pregnant individuals. EHS programs provide intensive high quality, research based, comprehensive services to foster school readiness and promote a healthy pregnancy for expectant individuals.
Services Provided	EHS programs must provide family development and engagement services, early education and child development, health, and mental health services, and, for pregnant people, prenatal and postpartum education and supports for physical and emotional well-being. Programs must provide each child developmental screenings and health screenings, with referrals when warranted, ongoing child assessment, and transition services. Programs must ensure children with a delay/disability receive services consistent with their Individual Family Service Plan.
Administrative Agency/Dept	Administration for Children & Families Office of Head Start
Funding Source	Federally-funded grants are administered through the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Administration for Children & Families Office of Head Start (OHS) directly to the grantee. Possible funding models include: one grantee operates Head Start and Early Head Start for the community or one grantee operates Head Start and another grantee (or more than one) operates Early Head Start. Grants are for a five-year project period with annual continuation applications. Funding is subject to the federal budget and approval process. Each grantee's funding level is the same from year to year unless there is a budget cut or increase to current grants, or the program is successful in writing an expansion grant or reduction application. OHS informs programs when supplemental or expansion applications may be submitted. OHS can decrease a program's funding based on lack of enrollment. No fees may be charged to enrolled families for EHS services.
Ages Served	Infants and toddlers under the age of three, and pregnant people.
Eligibility/Target Population	At least 90% of enrollments must be families with income at or below 100% of the federal poverty guidelines. Children from homeless families, and families receiving public assistance such as TANF, SNAP, or SSI are categorically eligible. Foster children are eligible regardless of their foster family's income. In addition, each grantee must create and implement a list of weighted criteria of family/community environmental, economic, and demographic risk factors for determining priority for enrollment. Target population includes income-eligible pregnant individuals and families meeting locally determined at-risk factors. At least 10% of enrollments must be children with a delay/disability identified prior to or during program participation.
Setting	Programming can be delivered as home-visiting services with visits to each child/family and group socializations; center-based services; or family child care services in a child care provider's home or family-like setting.
URL Source	https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohs/about/head-start OR https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/

Appendix H: Early Childhood Education and Care Programs and Services Overview

Program	Head Start (HS)
Program Description/Goals	HS programs provide intensive high quality, research based, comprehensive services to preschool age children to foster school readiness.
Services Provided	HS programs must provide family development and engagement services, early education and child development, health, and mental health services. Programming can be delivered as home-visiting services with visits to each child/family and group socializations; center-based services; or family child care services in a child care provider's home or family-like setting. Programs must provide each child developmental screenings and health screenings, with referrals when warranted, ongoing child assessment, and transition services. Programs must ensure children with a delay/disability receive services consistent with their Individual Education Plan.
Administrative Agency/Dept	Administration for Children & Families Office of Head Start
Funding Source	Federally funded grants are administered through the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Administration for Children & Families Office of Head Start (OHS) directly to the grantee. Possible funding models include: one grantee operates Head Start and Early Head Start for the community or one grantee operates Head Start and another grantee (or more than one) operates Early Head Start. Grants are for a five-year project period with annual continuation applications. Funding is subject to the Federal budget and approval process. Each grantee's funding level is the same from year to year unless there is a budget cut or increase to current grants, or the program is successful in writing an expansion grant. OHS informs programs when supplemental or expansion applications may be submitted. OHS can decrease a program's funding based on lack of enrollment. No fees may be charged to enrolled families for HS services.
Ages Served	HS programs serve children from age three to kindergarten-entry.
Eligibility/Target Population	At least 90% of enrollments must be families with income at or below 100% of the Federal poverty guidelines. Children from homeless families, and families receiving public assistance such as TANF, SNAP, or SSI are categorically eligible. Foster children are eligible regardless of their foster family's income. In addition, each grantee must create and implement a list of weighted criteria of family/community environmental, economic, and demographic risk factors for determining priority for enrollment. Target population includes income-eligible pregnant individuals and families meeting locally determined at-risk factors. At least 10% of enrollments must be children with a delay/disability identified prior to or during program participation.
Setting	Center-based, family child care home, or home visiting services
URL Source	https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohs/about/head-start OR https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/

Appendix H: Early Childhood Education and Care Programs and Services Overview

Program	Prevention Initiative (PI)
Program Description/Goals	Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) Prevention Initiative program provides intensive, research-based, and comprehensive child development and family support and engagement services for expectant individuals and families with children from birth-to-three to help them build a strong foundation for learning and to prepare children for later school success.
Services Provided	Services include child development/education, parent education, and family development and engagement. Programs must ensure children with a delay/disability receive services consistent with their Individualized Family Service Plan.
Administrative Agency/Dept	Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
Funding Source	Funded under the Early Childhood Block Grant, PI funds are distributed by ISBE to eligible applicants including school districts, social service agencies, and other entities on a competitive basis every five years. Each PI program's funding level is the same from year to year unless there is an ISBE budget cut or increase to current PI grants, or the program is successful in writing an expansion grant. ISBE informs programs when supplemental or expansion applications may be submitted. ISBE can decrease a program's funding based on lack of enrollment. No fees may be charged to enrolled families for PI services.
Ages Served	PI services are for at risk pregnant individuals and children birth-to-three.
Eligibility/Target Population	Eligibility is based on multiple factors; no single factor establishes eligibility. To establish a child's at-risk eligibility, programs must first administer a research-based developmental screening to determine the child's developmental status. In addition, for a child and/or pregnant person's eligibility determination, the program must create and implement a list of weighted criteria of family-need indicators plus family/community environmental, economic, and demographic risk factors for determining eligibility and priority for enrollment.
Setting	Center-based or home visiting services.
URL Source	https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Early-Childhood.aspx

Appendix H: Early Childhood Education and Care Programs and Services Overview

Program	Preschool for All (PFA)
Program Description/Goals	Preschool for All (PFA) program provides high-quality early education center-based services for preschoolers, to provide children with a foundation of knowledge and skills that allows them to be successful throughout their school experience.
Services Provided	Center or school-based child development/education, comprehensive developmental screenings, parent education, and family involvement.
Administrative Agency/Dept	Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
Funding Source	Funded under the Early Childhood Block Grant, PFA funds are distributed by Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to eligible entities on a competitive basis every five years. Each PFA program's funding level is the same from year to year unless there is an ISBE budget cut or increase to current PFA grants, or the program is successful in writing an expansion grant. ISBE informs programs when supplemental or expansion applications may be submitted. ISBE can decrease a program's funding based on lack of enrollment. In the ISBE funding application guidance, ISBE has historically indicated the expected average cost per child. This provides the applicant a means of identifying the funding level for which it applies.
Ages Served	Children aged three to kindergarten-entry age.
Eligibility/Target Population	Eligibility is based on multiple factors; no single factor establishes eligibility. To establish a child's at-risk eligibility, programs must first administer a research-based developmental screening to determine the child's developmental status. In addition, the child or family must meet at least two criteria from a program-created list of weighted criteria for family-need indicators plus family/community environmental, economic, and demographic risk factors for determining eligibility and priority for enrollment. ISBE seeks to address two priority groups: (1) children who have been identified as being at risk of academic failure, and (2) children whose family's income is less than four times the federal poverty guidelines, and who are determined by multiple weighted at-risk factors. Program must ensure children with a disability receive services consistent with their Individualized Education Plan.
Setting	Center or School
URL Source	https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Early-Childhood.aspx

Appendix H: Early Childhood Education and Care Programs and Services Overview

Program	Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE)
Program Description/Goals	Preschool For All Expansion (PFAE) program expands access to a full school day of high-quality early education services to children in high-need communities.
Services Provided	Child development/education, parent education, and family involvement. Programs may also offer mental health, dental services, and family support referrals. Programs must ensure children with a disability receive services consistent with their Individualized Education Plan.
Administrative Agency/Dept	Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
Funding Source	Funded under the Early Childhood Block Grant, PFAE funds are distributed by Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to eligible entities on a competitive basis every five years. Each PFA/PFAE program's funding level is the same from year to year unless there is an ISBE budget cut or increase to current PFAE grants, or the program is successful in writing an expansion grant. ISBE informs programs when supplemental or expansion applications may be submitted. ISBE can decrease a program's funding based on lack of enrollment. In the ISBE funding application guidance, ISBE has historically indicated the expected average cost per child. This provides the applicant a means of identifying the funding level for which it applies.
Ages Served	Children aged three to kindergarten-entry age.
Eligibility/Target Population	Eligibility is based on multiple factors; no single factor establishes eligibility. To establish a child's at-risk eligibility, programs must first administer a research-based developmental screening to determine the child's developmental status. In addition, the child or family must meet at least two criteria from a program-created list of weighted criteria for family-need indicators plus family/community environmental, economic, and demographic risk factors for determining eligibility and priority for enrollment. ISBE seeks to address two priority groups: (1) children who have been identified as being at risk of academic failure, and (2) children whose family's income is less than four times the federal poverty guidelines and who are determined by multiple weighted at-risk factors.
Setting	Center or School
URL Source	https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Early-Childhood.aspx

Appendix H: Early Childhood Education and Care Programs and Services Overview

Program	Early Intervention (EI) Part C IDEA
Program Description/Goals	Early intervention provides supports and services for families to help their children younger than three years old meet developmental milestones.
Services Provided	Early intervention services include evaluations to determine if a child has a delay/disability, development of an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). This is for any child with a delay/disability, service coordination, and supports so a child can meet IFSP goals. Transportation, counseling, translation/interpretation, assistive technology and family training & support are some of the collateral services provided.
Administrative Agency/Dept	Illinois Dept. of Human Services
Funding Source	Illinois Dept. of Human Services; additionally, families with income above 185% federal poverty level pay a fee on a sliding scale for direct services like physical, developmental and speech therapy.
Ages Served	Children birth-to-three years old.
Eligibility/Target Population	To qualify for EI services, a child must be younger than 36 months and have a significant delay in at least one area of development, have a condition that is known to cause disability or delay, OR be at high risk for a substantial developmental delay.
Setting	EI services are typically provided in a child's natural environments—the home, child care, library, a relative's home, or other places where a child routinely spends time.
URL Source	https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30321

Appendix H: Early Childhood Education and Care Programs and Services Overview

Program	Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Part B IDEA
Program Description/Goals	Early childhood special education services for children are provided through local school districts and special education cooperatives. Professionals with training and expertise in special education services implement the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B, by supporting the educational needs of young children and families.
Services Provided	Early childhood special education professionals and related services personnel provide specialized educational and therapy services to children with a disability in a variety of settings. In addition, families and early childhood providers may request information about appropriate expectations for children’s development.
Administrative Agency/Dept	Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
Funding Source	School districts in Illinois receive local (property taxes), state (appropriated by state legislature), and federal (appropriated by Congress) funds to support special education.
Ages Served	Children age three to kindergarten–entry age.
Eligibility/Target Population	To qualify for special education services, a child must qualify in one of 14 categories defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as established by a multi-disciplinary team using age appropriate assessments.
Setting	EC Special Educaion services can be delivered in various settings, such as early childhood programs, preschool, child care, Preschool for All, Preschool for All Expansion, Head Start and other early childhood settings. The setting may be identified in a child’s Individualized Education Plan or the result of the parent’s choice.
URL Source	https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Early-Childhood-Special-Education-Services.aspx

Appendix H: Early Childhood Education and Care Programs and Services Overview

Program	Home Visiting IDHS
Program Description/Goals	The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Division of Early Childhood (DEC) Home Visiting Program supports pregnant people and parents with young children birth-to-five who live in communities that face greater risks and barriers to achieving positive maternal and child health outcomes.
Services Provided	Using one of four evidenced-based home visiting models, staff visit families regularly to: support healthy pregnancy practices and care of newborns and young children; provide each child a developmental screening and, based on screening results, a referral for services; encourage early language development and early learning; teach positive parenting skills; support families' work toward their goals for the future; connect families to other services and resources in their community. The allowable program models include: Healthy Families America, Nurse-Family Partnership, Parent as Teachers and Early Head Start Home-Based (home visiting). Use of the EHS model does not require or imply that the provider must be an EHS funding grantee.
Administrative Agency/Dept	IDHS Division of Early Childhood
Funding Source	With its 2022 funding announcement, DEC is consolidating state funded Healthy Families Illinois and federally funded Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) programs. In FY23, there will be a single IDHS Home Visiting program supported with both MIECHV and state home visiting funds.
Ages Served	Families with children birth-to-five.
Eligibility/Target Population	Providers must follow the eligibility requirements of their chosen program model. Further, agencies must prioritize eligible families based on: Low-income; pregnant individuals younger than age 21; a history of child abuse or neglect or involvement with child welfare services; a history of substance abuse or needing substance abuse treatment; use of tobacco products in the home; parents or children with low student achievement; child(ren) with developmental delay or disability; families with a member serving or who formerly served in the Armed Forces. Programs may add to these criteria to identify more specific populations for enrollment.
Setting	A family's home.
URL Source	https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=134500 and https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=36636

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Program	Home Visiting MIECHV
Program Description/Goals	Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV) was designed to expand voluntary, evidence-based home visiting program to improve the outcomes for pregnant women and families, particularly those considered at-risk. Families choose to participate in home visiting programs, and partner with health, social service, and child development professionals to set and achieve goals that improve their health and well-being.
Services Provided	<p>Home visitors and families develop strong relationships and trust through meeting regularly and addressing families' needs. Home visitors, support healthy pregnancy practices, provide information on topics such as breastfeeding, safe sleep, preventing unintended child injuries, and nutrition, encourage early language development and early learning at home, teach positive parenting skills like reading, playing, and praising good behaviors, work with caregivers to set goals for the future, continue their education, and find employment and child care solutions and connect families to other services and resources in their community.</p> <p>Models include the following:</p> <p>Healthy Families Illinois (HFI) – Assists expectant and new parents identified as having a significant risk for child abuse/neglect to reduce that risk through intensive home visiting services.</p> <p>Parents as Teachers (PAT) – Provides information, support and encouragement to expectant parents and parents with children ages zero-to-five.</p> <p>Early Head Start (EHS) – Home Based (EHS/HB) – Supports and enhances the continuum of infant and toddler growth and development; support parents to fulfill their parental roles and move toward self-sufficiency.</p>
Administrative Agency/Dept	Federal level-Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) State level Illinois Department of Human Services (fiscal lead) and the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (programmatic lead)
Funding Source	Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA)
Ages Served	Pregnant women and families with children up to kindergarten entry.
Eligibility/Target Population	<p>HFI – determined through either the eligibility screen or Parent Survey to be at risk for child abuse and/or neglect and participants should meet at least one MIECHV Priority Population; prenatally or within two weeks of birth or at any time based on program's eligibility.</p> <p>PAT – participants should meet at least one MIECHV Priority Population; prenatally or at any time based on the program's eligibility.</p> <p>HS/EHS – determined in accordance with the Early Head Start/Head Start performance standards and participants should meet at least one MIECHV Priority Population.</p>

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Program	Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
Program Description/Goals	The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) assists low income parents with child care payments.
Services Provided	The Illinois Department of Human Services' (IDHS) Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies work together to help families obtain the information and resources they need to find and select the best child care for their child.
Administrative Agency/Dept	Child Care Resource & Referral agencies throughout the state
Funding Source	CCAP is funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services using a mix of State and federal funding. Parents pay a co-payment to the provider that is based on family size and income, the number of eligible children in care, and the type of care (age of child and number of hours of care).
Ages Served	Families with children younger than age 13. Families who have a child with documented special needs may be eligible for CCAP for that child until the child is 19 years old.
Eligibility/Target Population	To qualify, a family must 1) live in Illinois and 2) have a need for child care: one parent in a single-parent household, or both parents in a two-parent household, must work or attend an eligible educational activity, 3) have children younger than 13 that need care while the parent(s) is(are) working or going to school, and 4) have family income at or below specified allowable limits, generally up to 200% of federal poverty level. Children with documented special needs may be eligible up to the age of 19.
Setting	1) Licensed Child Care Centers, Family Child Care Homes, Group Family Child Care Homes; 2) License-Exempt Child Care Centers and License-Exempt Family Child Care Homes; 3) Child Care by Non-relatives—in the child's home; 4) Child Care by Relatives—in the relative's or child's home
URL Source	https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30355

Appendix H: Early Childhood Education and Care Programs and Services Overview

Program	ExceleRate Illinois
Program Description/Goals	ExceleRate Illinois is a statewide quality recognition and improvement system for licensed child care centers, licensed family/group child care homes, school-based preschool programs, and Head Start/Early Head Start Programs (with center-based and/or family child care options) designed to make continuous quality improvement an everyday priority among early learning providers. The program establishes standards for helping infants, toddlers and preschool age children develop intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally. It provides a framework for early learning professionals to identify opportunities for improvement, increase their skills and take steps to make positive changes. ExceleRate Illinois also recognizes early learning providers for their ongoing efforts to improve the quality of their care by awarding Circle of Quality designations: Licensed, Bronze, Silver, and Gold.
Services Provided	ExceleRate serves families and specific early childhood programs. 1) For parents, the Circles of Quality rating system provides parents with an objective means of verifying that an early learning program makes quality a priority. ExceleRate offers parents a searchable database of qualifying early learning programs including licensed child care centers, school based preschool and licensed family child care homes. ExceleRate also offers resources to expand parents' understanding about whole child development and how families and programs can support learning for infants, toddlers, and preschool children. 2) For early childhood entities, ExceleRate Illinois provides standards, guidelines, resources and supports to help programs make sensible changes that lead to better quality outcomes. Programs that participate in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) receive an add-on to the child care rate they can bill CCAP if they have a Silver (10%) or Gold (15%) quality designation.
Administrative Agency/Dept	ExceleRate Illinois is administered through Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) under the joint direction of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, the Illinois Department of Human services (IDHS), and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).
Funding Source	ExceleRate is funded by IDHS and ISBE.
Ages Served	N/A
Eligibility/Target Population	There are two groups served by the ExceleRate program: parents and specific early childhood program providers (licensed family/group child care homes, licensed child care centers, school-based preschool programs, and Head Start/Early Head Start programs with center-based and/or family child care home options).
Setting	N/A
URL Source	www.inccrra.org

Appendix I: Community-Based Planning for Expansion Plan Template

Purpose

This template for the Community Plan is for planning groups to document their plan for expansion. Basic information about what program funding the planning group intends to apply for and how many slots will be requested can be recorded here. Any additional coordination or projects that result from the planning group's work can also be captured.

Community and/or School District:	Date:
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Slot Gap Organization(s) Applying

Which organization (or organizations) will be applying for state or federal funding?

Program Funding

What funding type(s) will the organization apply for?

- Prevention Initiative – Center-based
- Prevention Initiative – Home-based
- Early Head Start – Home-based
- Early Head Start – Center-based
- Preschool for All
- Preschool for All-Expansion
- Head Start – Home-based
- Head Start – Center-based

Slots Requested

How many additional slots will be requested for the community? Designate the number of slots by age: children birth-to-three and three-to-five.

Program Model

What program models (part-day, full school day, child care, etc.) do families need?
For what age children?

Location

Where in the community are more classrooms and services needed to deliver those models?

Facilities

What are the construction and renovation needs and plans?

Community Coordination

Are there potential partnerships between school districts and community-based organizations (blending funding, partnering or combined programming between community-based organizations and school districts, transportation coordination, etc.)? Are there potential government and private funding partners?

Are there any additional impacts resulting from the planning process (new partnerships formed, increased community knowledge about early child care and education, shifts in community mindset)?

Workforce

Are there any administrative or staffing needs as a result of the planning process?



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